



Diary of a Madman: The Geto Boys, Life, Death, and the Roots of Southern Rap

Brad "Scarface" Jordan , Benjamin Meadows Ingram

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One of *Rolling Stone*'s Best Music Books of 2015

From Geto Boys legend and renowned storyteller Scarface, comes a passionate memoir about how hip-hop changed the life of a kid from the south side of Houston, and how he rose to the top-and ushered in a new generation of rap dominance. Scarface is the celebrated rapper whose hits include "On My Block," "Mind Playing Tricks on Me" and "Damn It Feels Good to be a Gangsta" (made famous in the cult film *Office Space*). The former president of Def Jam South, he's collaborated with everyone from Kanye West, Ice Cube and Nas, and had many solo hits such as "Guess Who's Back" feat. Jay-Z and "Smile" feat. Tupac. But before that, he was a kid from Houston in love with rock-and-roll, listening to AC/DC and KISS.

In *Diary of a Madman*, Scarface shares how his world changed when he heard Run DMC for the first time; how he dropped out of school in the ninth grade and started selling crack; and how he began rapping as the new form of music made its way out of New York and across the country. It is the account of his rise to the heights of the rap world, as well as his battles with his own demons and depression. Passionately exploring and explaining the roots and influences of rap culture, *Diary of a Madman* is the story of hip-hop-the music, the business, the streets, and life on the south side Houston, Texas.

Diary of a Madman: The Geto Boys, Life, Death, and the Roots of Southern Rap Details

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Author : Brad "Scarface" Jordan , Benjamin Meadows Ingram

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From Reader Review Diary of a Madman: The Geto Boys, Life, Death, and the Roots of Southern Rap for online ebook

Janell says

Funny how you can actually hear his voice telling the story as you read. one the my favorite artists!!

Michael Fischer says

Scarface/Face/Brad Jordan is noted for his honesty, humility, and vulnerability. Watch him squirm in an interview when the interviewer suggests he's in the top 10 or 15. It's not an act or false modesty. He is genuine, the real deal, which is why he's wicked on the mic and beloved by fans and fellow rappers not named Lil Troy. He was one of Pac's closest friends. Jay-Z and Nas adore him. As the back jacket reads, he's "your favorite rapper's rapper."

"Diary of a Madman" does not disappoint. The Scarface you see in public is the Scarface you see on the page. For instance, most fans of hip hop already know he was locked up in a Houston mental ward as a youth. You will encounter expanded bits of this story and others you've heard in Jordan's raw, conversational voice. Complaints? Not many. It accomplishes its mission as a celeb bio. The book could use more developed scenes. Sometimes, the chapters rely too much on exposition, but overall this is an engaging read for fans of hip hop.

Jason says

Probably more like 3.5. I really liked this and Scarface has lots of cool things to say... Just wish he would have gone into things a bit more. The best moments are when you feel him talk about vulnerabilities, where he is opening up and going to that deeper level. I definitely liked this just found myself wanting a bit more of What Jordan thought or felt or more of each story, more detail.

Les says

Off the Bat Caveat: His whole deal with drugs, dealing them, women and child support is bedrock stereotype and though there are complexities, ultimately reads as a copout. (He tried it with the master/slave/court thing, which is shades of true while ignoring a key point and absolving the non-absolvable.) And yet...this was a great read because there is so much more to it and him. I'm not a hip-hop head like some, but "The Diary" is in my Top 5 and it was intriguing to explore the mind behind it. Face does NOT hold back. It seems he "wrote" this book at a turning point and I'm glad he did as the level of reflection and perspective makes reading this a true experience. Beyond that, I share a lot of his perspective on "regional" rap and though you shake your head at times reading this (for a variety of reasons - neither his come up nor his upbringing would lead most to greatness), he has a shifting balance of bravado, self-confidence and humility that is rare. What's more, he's hilarious without trying to be - which I think anyone who is a fan of his work knows. Finally, he's a true artist and lyricist and this is more than anything a self portrait of an artist as he sees himself and all things. It's not literary, but rather literal and the ghost writing is well done. Face is so up front about his

struggles, deficiencies and poor decision-making, without begging to be understood. Actually, he doesn't have to - man, he's had some raw deals, but he's handed them out too. It's lowkey masterful. And then there's the fun stuff - what he thinks of Cube, his perspective on Southern rap that predated him, being a record label exec, his experiences of Tupac, and what he really thinks of all his albums. The book actually reads like a written LP, which is by design. The chapters are arranged and titled by his song and album titles, which permits him to tell his story in a largely, but not strictly, sequential manner while also traveling back in time when most needed. So - I enjoyed it, but it was a needless stretch to have the subtitle include the roots of "Southern" rap when it's really Houston or Texas rap in terms of his experience and perspective. But hey, books are like albums - ya gotta get 'em sold.

Shakeia says

I started and finished this book in a few very focused hours because it was entertaining and conversational. Scarface has loomed large in hip hop for me for as long as I can remember and I was surprised to find out about this book.

He opens up about a very personal issue right off the bat and seems to be very open throughout. There were points where I kind of side-eyed his "lessons" on life and death, and he flat out lost me at the very end, but overall, I enjoyed it.

That said, 3.5 stars.

If you're a fan of hip hop, definitely give this a read.

David Dacosta says

The early 1990s are responsible for making me more receptive to other regional representations of Hip Hop outside of New York City. Ice Cube's departure from NWA, and his subsequent solo albums deserve credit for that change. This prepared me for the Geto Boys in 1991. "Mind Playing Tricks on Me" really came out of nowhere. One minute it wasn't there, and the next I was hearing it in regular rotation on R&B radio. I was struck by Scarface's opening verse - "At night I can't sleep/I toss and turn/Candle sticks in the dark/Visions of bodies bein burned/Four walls just starin at a n*gga/I'm paranoid/Sleeping with my finger on the trigga/My mama's always stressin I ain't livin right/But I ain't goin out without a fight/See, every time my eyes close/I start sweatin/And blood starts comin out my nose."

"Diary of a Madman" has a very conversational style. It's clear that co-writer Benjamin Meadows-Ingram conducted a series of interviews with Scarface and compiled the majority of the book's content through dictation. The candor of Face's recollections of his life and music career allow for instant accessibility for the reader. Through his music, he's always been raw and real, whether his aim was to evoke emotion or create an ominous mood, he did so with unshakable truth. The same can be said about the telling of his life story.

Having been a fan since the early days, I particularly enjoyed learning the backstory surrounding solo and group albums, and the inner workings of Rap-A-Lot, the Texas based label Face recorded the bulk of his music for. There's definitely some revelatory bombs along the way. First-rate memoir.

Ms. Reader says

I received this book from Goodreads First Reads in exchange for an honest review...

A very quick read, leaving you hungry for more details and information. He goes into a lot of personal depth, but loses you at the end with his "life lessons". Fantastic read for anyone who is a true Scarface fan.

Max says

Diary of a madman was vary inspirational. I love Scarface music, I recommend anybody that's trying to make it in this music industry, to read this book.

Tanyesha says

Although I grew up listening to Scarface and a few other Rap-A-Lot artist, I never considered myself a Scarface fan. He had some great hits that I knew word for word, but his music was really before my time. This book offered some really good insight into his life and what he was going through when he made his greatest hits. He also confirms some of the "rumors" we've heard about the industry "top people".

kerrycat says

Fast-paced, down and dirty look at the dark side of the author's early life and music career. The details leave little to the imagination, so readers looking for the harsh reality of the business will be riveted. The author's refusal to give up in spite of the circumstances of his youth and the many roadblocks to success and happiness he encounters ("I don't know no quit" "failure was not an option") will inspire those in similar circumstances to keep working towards their goals and believe in themselves.

kelly says

I've been a Scarface fan for ages, so when I heard that he had a book about his life I jumped at the chance to read it. All in all, it's a very entertaining book--the chapters are short and Scarface's narration is more conversational than your traditional autobiography. At times I wish he had gone a little bit more deeper with certain personal details, but he sticks to the facts and just moves it forward, perhaps a little too quickly. He did have a lot of interesting things to say, I liked this book.

Gayle Slagle says

Diary of a Madman by Brad "Scarface" Jordan provides an excellent insight into the influences and roots of the Southern rap culture. While it does an excellent job of exploring the world of hip-hop, covering both the music itself, as well as the business end of the evolution of Southern rap, the strength of the book lies in the

personal revelations into the life of Brad Jordan. Jordan tells his story without excuses and never tries to do anything other than to present the facts of his life. It tells the story of a child growing up in Houston, Texas, who dropped out of school in the 9th grade and began selling crack and rapping at a very young age. The book also addresses in an honest and compelling way some of the problems and inequities in society. This is one quote that I feel explained this quite well: "America is always looking for something to blame for the reason why it's destroying itself. First it was jazz that was destroying America, then it was rock and roll, then it was disco, then it was rap. But you know, I think America is destroying America. Our country is built on a foundation of rules and laws and belief systems that date back to the 1700's and 1800's It's breeding hate. It's deeper than a record. Hate goes way deeper than that." *Diary of a Madman* tells a compelling story that will be enjoyed by those interested in the music industry and the musicians who are a part of it, will be enjoyed by those who enjoy an exploration into the inner life of a person who has made some mistakes in life, but who embraces who and what he was and is and faces his inner demons, and will be enjoyed by those who are willing to take an honest look at society.

Phil Overeem says

A very unfiltered and bitter memoir. Man's had some serious ups and downs, and he doesn't excuse himself. Doesn't quite reach to last year's *DEEPLY ROOTED*.

Steven Jones says

As I have grown older and seen the icons of the musical genre I grew up on start to age and begin to reflect I have been especially interested in reading the stories of their rise and dealing with fame. This was a very interesting book because it is timed to be way more reflective than a lot of others which exist more to take advantage of current popularity and cash in a lot of times if you look at them. (DMX's early memoir, Mase, and Snoop all did autobiographies over a decade ago) This seemed like a great opportunity to really have a lot of self reflection.

Now to be honest, there is a decent amount of reflection and admissions by Brad Jordan aka Scarface, whether it is talking about his battles with depression and time spent in the hospital system or use of drugs and pills later on to cope. However, the insights often stop just short of being truly informative. That is the largest issue I have with this book just because there are more chances to talk about life growing up in Houston and we kind of don't get those. For instance when Scarface talks about the differences between North and South Houston they are all superficial and he never really drops in any anecdotes or stories to further illustrate the divide and it's affects other than to say his family members were upset he signed to the North Side's Rap-a-lot records.

Part of this has to do with how Face presents himself, and it's not to say it's a fabrication, but the fact there are stories he can't or won't tell because they in effect 'belong to someone else' is limiting and an issue I can see cropping up in more hip-hop or rap memoirs to come. I totally understand 'minding your business' but there are times when these things affect you and some insight is needed from your personal perspective.

One thing I will say I liked is that he was pretty truthful about his relationships with others like J. Prince and Tupac whom every rapper has to include in a story it seems for credibility but while Face says they had a close relationship at times when they were together he also admits he couldn't be too close because Pac had a tendency to be unpredictable and it wasn't good for his individual life. We don't normally hear that about Pac though we pretty much all see it.

Overall this book was good but it really kind of scratched the surface in some areas where I feel like it could have possibly pushed a little bit further just to really dig in like some of Scarface's classic rap verses. For rap fans you have to read it because this is one of the biggest icons in rap.

David says

Great story of a hip hop legend. Really good insight into his past and his career journey.
