



An American Demon: A Memoir

By Jack Grisham

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An American Demon is Jack Grisham's story of depravity and redemption, terror and spiritual deliverance. While Grisham is best known as the raucous and provocative front man of the pioneer hardcore punk band TSOL (True Sounds of Liberty), his writing and true life experiences are physically and psychologically more complex, unsettling, and violent than those of Bret Easton Ellis and Chuck Palahniuk. Eloquently disregarding the prefabricated formulas of the drunk-to-sober, bad-to-good tale, this is an entirely new kind of life lesson: summoned through both God and demons, while settling within eighties hardcore punk culture and its radical-to-the-core (and most assuredly non-evangelical) parables, Grisham leads us, cleverly, gorgeously, between temporal violence and bigger-picture spirituality toward something very much like a path to salvation and enlightenment. An American Demon flourishes on both extremes, as a scary hardcore punk memoir and as a valuable message to souls navigating through an overly materialistic and woefully self-absorbed "me first" modern society. An American Demon conveys anger and truth within the perfect setting, using a youth rebellion that changed the world to open doors for this level of brash destruction. Told from the point of view of a seminal member of the American Punk movement — doused in violence, rebellion, alcoholism, drug abuse, and ending with beautiful lessons of sobriety and absolution — this book is as harrowing and life-affirming as anything you're ever going to read.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Jack Grisham finally, irrevocably, puts to death the slander that the early Los Angeles punk scene was 'plastic.' The first true literature to come out of our pathetic little punk lives, *American Demon* is haunting and awakens monsters. But it should come with a warning label: it's a dangerous book. Read Patti Smith's *Just Kids*. Then read this. But only if you have the courage to follow poetry as far as it can go." —Paul Roessler, producer, composer, musician

"If you've ever found yourself unable to turn away from witnessing an accident, crash or natural disaster, you'll read *American Demon* straight through, like I did. Jack Grisham's memoir is as original as it is horrifying. I couldn't put it down." —James Frey, bestselling author, *A Million Little Pieces* and *Bright Shiny Morning*

"[N]ot for the timid. . . . a meld of Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray* with *Fight Club* and *A Clockwork Orange*, [Grisham] offers a savage poetry with an undertow of wit. In his lens, not-so-quiet Los Angeles suburbs become awash with dysfunction, revolt, and violence. Yet in the end he offers a sense of recovery as well." —*Houston Press* (May 5, 2011)

"[A] brutal and artful memoir. . . . [Grisham] is a poet of pathology, an uber-punk in a nest of vipers." —*www.PopMatters.com* (May 9, 2011)

About the Author

Now in heavy demand as a public speaker, Jack Grisham currently receives thousands of calls a month from individuals and organizations seeking his advice, expertise, wit, mentorship, and support, especially on drug and alcohol-related issues. Grisham is a master hypnotherapist and resides in Huntington Beach, California. He spends his time with his family, surfs, and voluntarily offers his services to his community.

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The most successful serial killers are always the boys next door—gentle children of summer, flashing smiles like soft breezes through a park, sharpened knives wrapped in grass-stained Levis. I was akin to these monsters. I was camouflaged and deadly, a viper smiling in the dark.

To be a truly great demon you've got to be attractive—no one sensible gets taken in by a goon. I was born with summer-blond hair, a soft evening smile, and the sweetly dark taste of defiance slashed across my lips—a scrawny, scuffed up teddy bear with a voice that could string words like lights across a carnival midway. Believable, that's what I was: a perfect distraction for the careless mark.

They never saw me coming.

Some of the evil fucks I later ran with were way too ugly to be of any real use. The cops read them like a

beacon flashing on a street corner. But not me—the code of the demon, my code, was to fit in, to move from the inside out, to slide into their world, to lodge myself against their love, and then to attack from beneath the skin.

When people refer to demons, they invariably claim we come from the underworld. God, I hate that cliché. It makes us sound like we're all hanging around in a bondage cavern, trying on leather gear and waiting for tricks. And while I do love the smell of leather and I thoroughly enjoy caves, I tortured people for fun, not profit. The concept of a demon coming from underground is pure shit.

If you want to know where demons truly come from, I'll tell you: we're from right here. We exist in a shadow that lies over your world—a kind of transparency of evil that some demented teacher laid out on an overhead projector. We move around you, through you, in you. We are your fathers, your sisters, your lovers. We are your next-door neighbors. We come and go as we please—although it's a bit harder to leave when we've taken residency in a body. The old Hebrews used to call their angels "Those who stand still," and the name they gave themselves was "Those that walk." If a demon was ever called anything, it was usually prefaced with a very terrified "Oh my God!"

I I I

I think, before we go any further, I should take a moment to clear things up. This is a memoir, not a biography. If you want facts, I suggest you call the local authorities—they're loaded with trivial information on my human form. If you're looking for a discography, or yet another failed rocker's tale, then grab your laptop and pop my name into your search bar—I've left a trail of electronic dust from here to Mars. I'm not going to give you those things or comfort you with what you think is the truth. This story isn't for you—the voyeur feeding on the destruction of a man. This is a story for those that find themselves too far from home, a traveler's tale of monsters and bad ends. It's a story for those that think there's something golden at the end of the road—when there isn't.

I I I

I stepped onto your world in the Bay Area of San Francisco in 1961, but I didn't stay there long. I was quickly shuttled down to Long Beach—a working-class town chock-full of blue-collared laborers, retired navy men, hustlers, homosexuals, and squares.

My human father was in the military so they'd moved often. He was a junior officer with, at the time, three other children—two boys and a girl. Biologically speaking, I was the sport: a spiritual mutation that crawled out of hell into humanity.

I remember the way my father smelled in his khaki clothes: sweat, grease, and the lingering stale mint of a menthol cigarette clinging to his hands. Often his breath carried the strong smell of alcohol and desperation. My father was a worker, one of those cats with that crazy "do anything you can to feed your family" ethic—something, to this day, I still can't understand. If I was in his shoes, struggling like he did to pay our bills, you want to know what I would've done? I would've split; I would have headed off to Mexico and left us to fend for ourselves. You know, fuck 'em if they can't take a joke.

I later found out that my father's dad had run out on him and his siblings. Maybe that's what influenced his sense of family duty and honor, but if that's the case, my father took care of us out of resentment, not out of love. It was more like a "fuck you" to his old man, than a "love you" to us. No wonder he was always stressed out.

My mother—bless her shaming heart—was another product of a failed marriage.

One day I checked the statistics on divorce in the 1930s, and I discovered that people were fifteen times more likely to kill themselves than they were to walk out of a fucked-up marriage. What does that say for my parents? Their moms and dads must have been beating the living fuck out of each other if divorce was a better option than death.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alan Torrez:

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive right now, people have to do something to make these people survive, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated it for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a reserve your ability to survive increase then having chance to stand than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading any book, we give you this *An American Demon: A Memoir* book as basic and daily reading e-book. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Joe Stearns:

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Victoria Manson:

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Timothy Pace:

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