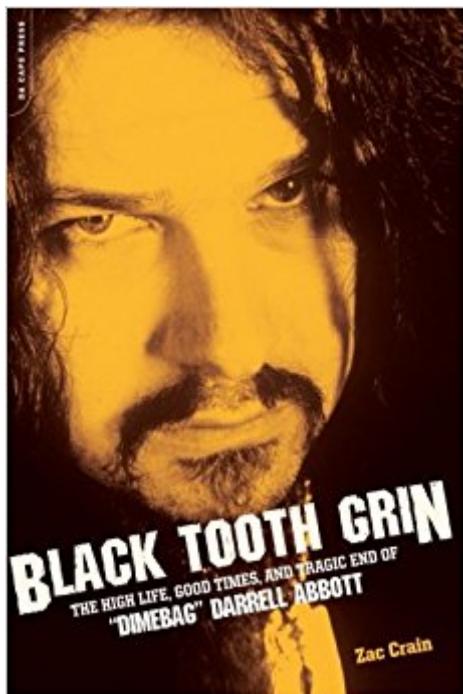


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Black Tooth Grin: The High Life, Good Times, And Tragic End Of "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott



Synopsis

Black Tooth Grin is the first biography of Dimebag Darrell Abbott, the Texas-bred guitarist of the heavy metal band Pantera, who was murdered onstage in 2004 by a deranged fan 24 years to the day after John Lennon met a similar fate. Darrell Abbott began as a Kiss-inspired teenage prodigy who won dozens of local talent contests. With his brother, drummer Vinnie Abbott, he formed Pantera, becoming one of the most popular bands of the '90s and selling millions of albums to an intensely devoted fan base. While the band's music was aggressive, Dime was outgoing, gregarious, and adored by everyone who knew him. From Pantera's heyday to their implosion following singer Phil Anselmo's heroin addiction to Darrell's tragic end, Black Tooth Grin is a moving portrait of a great artist.

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Customer Reviews

This biography by Crain is an unauthorized one, because of this there are a lot of details left out, it's still a worthy read for the hardcore Dimebag enthusiast. Much of the books content is taken from magazines, interviews, and the few friends of Dime who were willing to share their experiences. Nobody from the Abbot/Pantera camp makes any statements in the book, outside of quotes taken from different interviews. Due to this approach there are a lot of details left out, however most of the core details are intact. The book feels to at times skate over periods where there is little documentation of Dime or Pantera's history. It also feels as though it's content is stretched extremely thin at times. The author constantly reminds the reader how great a guitarist Dime was, or

how much he liked to drink and party. While both of these statements are true, it feels as though the book reverts back to these reminders for the sole purpose of filling a few more pages. While the book does have many flaws, one must remember that it is an unauthorized biography, and with what Crain had to work with he did a fairly decent job. For a hardcore Dime or Pantera fan, it is definitely worth reading, however you will not get the full story from this, just an in depth overview.

Enjoyed this book and have been inspired to revisit the Pantera catalogue again and also order a Dimebag t shirt. Whilst the book is unauthorised, Crain does a credible job of telling Dimebag's story. I would have liked more details about Darrell and Vinnie's strained relationship with their father and also the romance between Rita and Darrell. I would recommend this book to any fan looking for a quick and entertaining read. The only thing that really disappointed and angered me was the aftermath of the shooting. On top of the loss of Dimebag, I cannot believe how several people who were at the Alrosa Villa that night later started legal proceedings against the club owners. I will never understand why the US has such a culture involving everyone suing each other and laying blame for what was clearly a sad and freak occurrence.

The book begins with a preamble describing the horrible events of the night Dime was murdered. We all know what happened, but not exactly HOW it happened, and the author does a great job of describing the events with edge of your seat tension. The rest of the book chronicles the rise of Dime/Pantera into the realm of Metal Gods. A couple of things stood out. Dime was such a gifted player, a veteran of the club circuit at the ripe age of 17, obliterating his competition, some which were years older than him. Second it shows just how honest, unassuming and sincere Dime was in life. Not to mention how down to earth, he and Vinny lived with their mom well after Pantera became a national act, and one of their first acts of generosity was to make sure SHE was taken care of. Vinny and Dime were the perfect Yin/Yang. Dime represented the good time rock and roll, Vinny was the heady business type with very underrated savvy in a cutthroat business. A great deal of time is spent on the typical 'backstage' antics, but a lot of time is spent on the evolution of the band from a hair metal outfit to the bludgeoning juggernaut that Pantera became, all through it, we get glimpses of Dime's humanity through touching anecdotes that remind us just how special he was as a human being. Dime loved to party, but it never interfered with his true love: guitar shredding, and this theme is repeated throughout the book. My only criticism was that I would have liked a little more perspective from the "outcast" Phil Anselmo, his take, his thoughts etc...but then the book is about DIME, really, and it's a minor criticism....well worth a read!

In his first book and the first unauthorized biography of metal rocker, "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott, author Zac Crain provides us a fast, yet detailed account of the life and death of the larger-than-life musician. It is an easy read because it is a joy to read. An accomplished writer about the music scene, Crain knows the lingo and understands what is important to his readers, those devoted to "Dimebag," his band Pantera and the final iteration of that band, Damageplan. Fans who clamor for information on Abbott the man, his character, musical influences (though, of course devotees know about his affinity for KISS and Van Halen) and his associations with other musicians will find a wealth of information in these pages. Crain has talked with former band members and those in the media, such as Juliya Chernetsky, host of the FUSE network's metal show to provide a full picture of "Dimebag" the generous guy, the partier, the musician. Black Tooth Grin, named after the whisky and cola shot drink "Dimebag" loved to down, and pour for others, gives the reader a thoughtful look at Abbott's beginnings in Arlington, Texas, a suburb of Dallas and his development as a skilled guitarist with an instantly recognizable sound to his morphing into a business person of sorts. Crain never merely chronicles "Dimebag's" life and career. Perhaps more importantly and impressively, Crain draws conclusions and suggests causes and effects but never at the expense of the facts. In other words, Crain does not marshal or manipulate mention of incidents in Abbott's life to support his own theories of the whats and whys of "Dimebag's" success, failure, even of his murder. That is exactly what we want in a biographer. As Crain writes, "No one can predict the butterfly effect of the countless--and usually innocuous--coin flips that happen every second of every day." But Crain's volume is not fluffy. In the pages following that observation, he details the circumstances that caused Atco Records scout Mark Ross, stuck in Texas when Hurricane Hugo struck North Carolina, to check out the band. Crain continues the story by explaining that a self-conscious Pantera gives what band members consider a constrained performance in the presence of Ross and think they've blown it. As they see him walk out the door, (as it turns out, only to return from a visit to his car and a phone call confirming his intent to sign the group), they kick into high gear and play with their signature abandon. This kind of fully fleshed out information makes the book a compelling read. Black Tooth Grin tells the story of a man whose end we know. But Crain frames the story nicely by beginning with references to that ending. When, in the chapter titled "Slaughtered" Crain recounts the murder in detail, it is the most illuminating description of the tragedy that ended Abbott's life that has been written. On December 9, 2004, MTV.com published a story about the murder. At the time, the available sources were the 911 call transcripts and the words of eyewitnesses. The article references "amateur video footage" that investigators have yet to study.

For his 2009 book, Crain studied the "video of the incident, unwittingly captured by the band's own camera" and poured through hundreds of eyewitness accounts. His account is thoughtful, thorough and chilling. *Black Tooth Grin: The High Life, Good Times and Tragic End of "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott* by Zac Crain, 2009 Da Capo Press is a must read for metal fans.

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