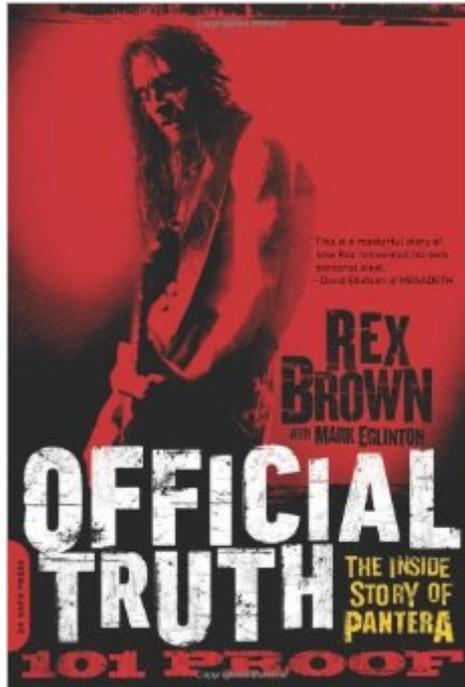


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Official Truth, 101 Proof: The Inside Story Of Pantera



Synopsis

Few heavy metal acts survived the turmoil of the early 1990s music scene. Pantera, featuring the peerless guitar playing of the late "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott, was different. Instead of humoring the market, the band demanded that the audience come to them by releasing a series of fiercely uncompromising platinum albums, including *Vulgar Display of Power* and *Far Beyond Driven*—albums that sold millions of copies despite minimal airplay. This is the previously untold story behind one of the most influential bands in heavy metal history, written by the man best qualified to tell the truth about those incredible and often difficult years of fame, excess, and tragedy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Full disclosure first: Pantera is easily one of my Top 5 favorite bands of all time, and from the early to mid-nineties it provided me with the perfect soundtrack for dealing with frustration and proudly waving the metal flag at a time where most of my beloved 80s idols either wussed out or disappeared from the face of the Earth... what I'm trying to say here is that since Pantera is a huge deal for me, in theory, I should love this book, and that's what makes me so uncomfortable, because I don't, and I find it very disappointing. Some reviewers have pointed out that the main flaw in this book comes from the fact that we're reading one member's point of view, but I don't find that especially bothersome. Most Pantera fans (me included) consider that the band's early break up was a consequence of Phil Anselmo's drug problems, personality issues and side projects. While Rex

doesn't outright contradict that position, he seems to give Vinnie Paul's difficult personality and the accumulated grind of more than a decade of endless touring a much more prominent role on the band's demise. Obviously, it would be incredibly stupid for me to contend Rex's version since I wasn't there, but he does go out of his way to make Vinnie Paul look bad at every possible opportunity, which can be the result of both sour grapes and unresolved issues between those two. That said, Rex clearly states at the beginning of the book that he tells only his side of the story and his interpretation of the events as they unfold, with no real pretense of objectivity, so nobody can fault his honesty: in fact, the book includes a lot of snippets wrote by other important players in the Pantera story (most notably, Phil Anselmo and Rita Haney, Dimebag's lifelong girlfriend) which give a different angle on the particular incidents Rex is commenting. Said snippets also give Phil an invaluable opportunity to share with the fans the pain he suffered after Dimebag's death and his forced absence on his bandmate's funeral, so nobody can really accuse Rex of being exploitative or insensitive. My main issue with the book is how sparse and underdeveloped it is. The incredible story of three musically gifted Texan misfits who, after struggling for years as a local band meet an incredible frontman from New Orleans and become one of the most popular heavy metal bands in history, achieving platinum sales with no radio or MTV support at a time when their music was considered dead and buried commercially takes barely two thirds of a 300 page, large type, double space book! Also, the most of the story is told in a confusing, rambling style (I find it hard to believe there was a professional writer helping Rex with this), so most of the time, really interesting or important issues are barely touched, like Vinnie and Dime's father role in shaping the band's early years and the bad blood over royalties the band had with him that almost ended up in a lawsuit. Even trivial anecdotes seem badly underwritten: for example, Rex mentions that at one point, while trying to work out his relationship with his wife during a vacation "things" got out of hand and they both ended up in jail. Now, I don't expect a sordid late 80s Osbournes / mid 90s Lees tale of domestic violence, but I would've appreciated a little more details there... was this a case of drunk and disorderly conduct or a serious incident? So that's my main beef with this book: instead of giving you a clarifying, insider's perspective on the Pantera story it actually raises a lot of questions that aren't fully answered. Maybe if this book was about 50 pages longer and a little more focused on telling the story of a band's rise to heavy metal dominance and it's tragic downfall, it would've been much more valuable... as it stands, it's just a disappointingly lame, underwritten rock bio that even hardcore Pantera fans like me will find barely amusing.

"You've seen the movie Some Kind Of Monster? What happened to METALLICA was not dissimilar

to what happened in PANTERA," explains bassist Rex Brown in his new book. The 260-page hardcover was co-authored with Mark Eglinton (who wrote James Hetfield: The Wolf At Metallica's Door), and features a forward by Dug Pinnick of KING'S X. Also contributing passages throughout are: Rex's sister, original Pantera singer Terry Glaze, the late Dimebag Darrell's girlfriend Rita Haney, former managers Walter O'Brien, Guy Sykes and Kim Zide Davis, as well as producer Terry Date, among others. This all-encompassing memoir begins with Rex's childhood, in which he had grade nine algebra class with Pantera drummer Vinnie Paul, and was selling drugs out of the Fotomat kiosk at age 17; a self-described "hoodlum." Pantera released their debut, Metal Magic, in 1983, and when Rex looks back at that period in time, he comes across rather cocky: "I didn't really need to practice. The only reason I was there was for everyone else's benefit." The extent to which Rex speaks disparagingly of the Abbott brothers is rather upsetting: "Vinnie was... a complete liability." "Dime wasn't the most intelligent of guys." "Vinnie didn't have any kind of style or sense of class, none whatsoever." "Dime pissed me off so many times I can't even count." "It was so awkward watching Vinnie's pathetic attempts to get laid." And that's just a small example of the barbs constantly being thrown. Vocalist Phil Anselmo is not immune to the mudslinging either: "Phil is 20% brilliance / 80% nonsense." That being said, there is a particularly hilarious story of Rex trying to teach Vinnie and Phil how to ski in the Swiss Alps. Rex also fesses up about his substance abuse: "The problem with weed is that it really (messes) with your whiskey drinking." He later admits, "A lot of my alcohol dependency can be traced back to when relations in Pantera became very stressful." Ultimately Rex was diagnosed with acute pancreatitis and had his gallbladder removed. And of course - December 8th 2004 - the night Dime was murdered on stage by a deranged fan is dealt with. "It shook me profoundly," states Rex. "All the petty (stuff) that had plagued us seemed completely meaningless... Life got harder after Darrell's death. I still think about him every single day. If my words have been critical, I do have a lot of empathy for his brother." Rex's tenure in REBEL MEETS REBEL, DOWN, and his current band KILL DEVIL HILL are also discussed. Completing the package is 16 glossy pages of black and white photos. In closing, Rex admits, "I'm not a saint, nor have I ever aspired to be one. I've simply tried to shine some perspective and insight onto my life so far."

I approached the book with a great deal of preconceived notions about it "after reading reviews here and at other places. Most people's problem with 'Official Truth, 101 Proof' seems to be how one-sided the book is and how Rex seems to portray himself as a total badass "or the only cool/mature dude in the band... And well... This is pretty much true. But it is also pretty much

the disclaimer “ Rex’ side of the Pantera story, the way he saw it and the way he felt about it. And he does make that clear pretty early on as well. So once you approach it with this mindset, it is just a good rock biography about a great band and what went down with it behind the curtains. And obviously the things that happened between the members of Pantera are far less inspiring or great than the music they recorded together... but this is hardly Rex’ fault, isn’t it? I do recommend the book to all Pantera fans.

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