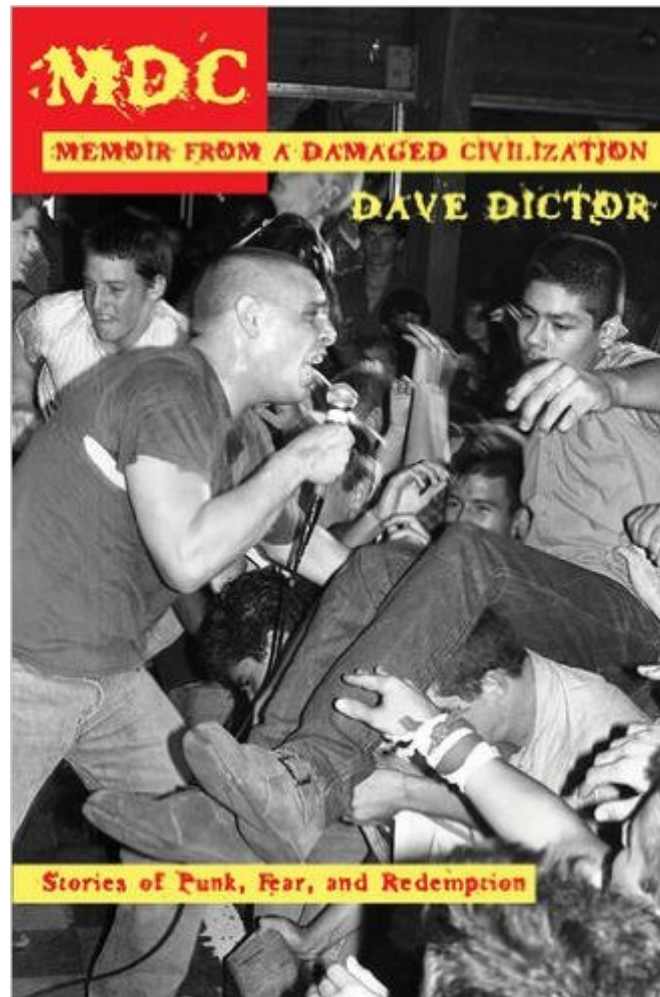


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MDC: Memoir From A Damaged Civilization: Stories Of Punk, Fear, And Redemption



Synopsis

A searing punk memoir by an American original rebelling against conformity, complacency, and conservatism with his iconic band, MDC. From the time Dave Dictor was young, he knew he was a little different than the all-American kids around him. Radicalized politically while in high school, inspired to seize opportunities by his hard-working parents, and intrigued with gender fluidity, Dictor moved to Austin, and connected with local misfits and anti-establishment rock'n'rollers. He began penning songs that influenced American punk rock for decades. MDC always has been in the vanguard of social struggles, confronting homophobia in punk rock during the early 1980s; invading America's heartland at sweltering Rock Against Reagan shows; protesting the Pope's visit to San Francisco in 1987; in 1993 they were the first touring US punk band to reach a volatile Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Dictor's narrative is a raw portrait of an American underground folk-hero who stood on the barricades advocating social justice and spreading punk's promise to a global audience. Part poet, renegade, satirist, and lover, he is an authentic, homegrown character carrying the progressive punk fight into the twenty-first century. Dave Dictor is singer, lyricist, and founding member of legendary American punk band MDC (Millions of Dead Cops). Since 1979, Dictor has toured throughout the world with MDC, releasing more than nine albums with MDC that sold more than 125,000 copies. MDC continues to tour, playing over sixty concerts each year. Dictor's MDC song, "John Wayne Was a Nazi," was featured in the best-selling video game Grand Theft Auto 5. He appeared in the film American Hardcore and resides in Portland, Oregon.

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Customer Reviews

Update: Currently on my third reading and now think of it as a classic hero's journey. It's a punk version of the story of the journey of Odysseus. I love this book. What follows is a more feeble and earlier review. Full disclosure first: I've known Dave casually since ca. 1969 when he showed up among my cohort of friends in high school. And since I've never seen or heard the guy do or say a mean-spirited thing to anyone - in my experience he has always been cool - I'm completely biased in his favor. That said, I loved reading this. The quality of the prose is erratic and often turbid with clichés (like a lot of my own writing) but not so much that it gets in the way of the content which if you are like me and don't know much about the history of punk, is likely to leave you alternately gasping for air and doing whatever you do when you are bewildered. And there are just as many moments where the story is so lucid it feels like a living thing bouncing around in your hands. Passages about touring in cold-war era Eastern Europe with their images of behind-the-iron-curtain punks are full of vibrant noise and images. At times I found myself laughing out loud when Dave writes about his relationships to other bands and their members. I mean, who with any sense of humor could resist a line like "We recommended The Dicks, DRI and the Crucifucks?" But the best that Dave's book gave to me, was the story of his personal journey as it paralleled the birth and development of the idea of punk. It seems to me that at some point in the early days of their ontogeny Dave and a lot of punks realize that they are super-pissed off at everything that seems to be "imposed" on them i.e. pop-cultural and sometimes family cultural stuff that they believe that they had no role in constructing. Why they chose to create the idiom of punk to tell the world how they feel is pretty obvious and frankly, retrospectively it seems like the most logical choice given that its antecedent (rock) had by then largely given up complaining about anything other than personal crap like sexual infidelity or having done too much or too little of one or another drug. That Dave and his cohort of Stains (and later, MDC) and Dead Kennedys, The Clash saw that "rock" was dead as a form of protest, walked away from it, made up something if not entirely new (I mean, punk is a form of rock) then new enough to have a unique identity is more than inspiring to me, it's humbling. I wish I could say whether or not the political agenda of Dave's brand of punk has been effective. I'd like to believe it has, but I can only begin to imagine how to prove it. Ah, screw it. I believe it.

This book is excellent, and left me wanting more. It is especially interesting to folks who grew up listening to music in the early and mid 80s, that was at that time, very much NOT of the mainstream. It is without question a testament to how things were at one time, and the book fills me with a sense

of nostalgia that only Dave Dictor can supply or understand. I hope one day things can move in the direction they were moving when Dave's MDC were hitting the streets and clubs, to attempt to educate the masses in regards to the dangers of right wing acceptance, which during the Reagan years, could be a dangerous angle to approach. I had the cassettes, and I formed a band, and MDC were one of the groups that we listened to, and talked about. Dave Dictor's book is filled with tragedy, romance, excitement, and also contains the wisdom that only a man who has lived like Dave has, can properly convey.

Love them or hate them, MDC was a huge part the San Francisco punk scene. Dave Dictor does a great job describing his part of history, defending the things he is passionate about, and even admitting when he was just being an arrogant jerk. Equal parts documentary and tail of redemption, "Memoir from a Damaged Civilization" is a great companion piece to Henry Rollins' "Get in the Van". Dictor really benefits from being able to look back in hindsight, rather than telling his story from inside the blur those years must have been.

A great heartfelt memoir that brings you through this punkrock icon's journey. I was lucky to have played bass and recorded and toured with MDC in the 90s and I can attest to the fact that he's one of the most genuine, non-jaded people that have been at the forefront of the political hardcore scene from day one (almost 40 years!). This book is so well-written you won't be able to put it down. Even if I didn't love Dave to death personally I would love this book. Erica Liss

The first time I seen Dave on stage was 1981 Mabuhay Gardens I had only been living in San Francisco Since November 1980 so I had been there about 8 months. They were Amazing. Energy plus. I casually knew him from the scene and going to shows hanging out at the Vats. Dave is an amazing person with a heart bigger then life itself. MDC MEMOIR FROM A DAMAGED CIVILIZATION IS A MUST READ. If you were there in the beginning San Francisco early 80's the music the people the lifestyle or even if you weren't. You need to read this book. It made me laugh at times made me cry brought back memories. Dave brings it all back to life for me within the pages of his book. The stories of traveling Through Europe playing behind the Iron curtain going where most bands did not dare to travel. And he tells it how it was before the current main stream acceptance that there is today the battles the fun the frustrations. Read for yourself you won't be disappointed.

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