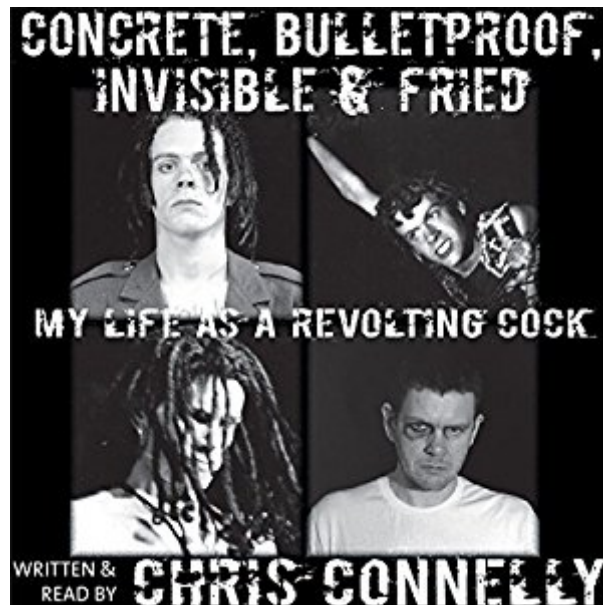


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Concrete, Bulletproof, Invisible And Fried: My Life As A Revolting Cock



Synopsis

When hardcore industrial rocker and Ministry supremo Al Jourgensen recruited Chris Connelly as a singer for the Revolting Cocks, the young Scottish lad could hardly have imagined the mayhem that was about to ensue. As an integral part of Jourgensen's Mad Max-like mutant family of musicians, Connelly joined a drug-crazed travelling circus. Live shows were transformed into an ear-splitting redneck disco from hell, under the influence of a mind-boggling cocktail of every conceivable narcotic, with sleazy strippers and even reports of live cattle on stage. As well as Jourgensen and all the Wax Trax! crew, the book features cameo appearances by Ogre of Skinny Puppy, Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails, Killing Joke, Jah Wobble, and Cabaret Voltaire. Despite the unrelenting chaos, both Ministry and the Revolting Cocks have been immensely successful; Connelly appeared on two US gold albums (The Land of Rape and Honey and The Mind is a Terrible Thing to Taste) and worked as songwriter on the million-plus selling platinum album Psalm 69: The Way to Succeed and the Way to Suck Eggs. Connelly's superbly written, funny, irreverent, and sometimes downright scary memoir is one of the finest portrayals of a man trapped in the eye of a post-punk industrial storm this side of Armageddon. Chris Connelly was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and now lives in Chicago where he has pursued a successful solo career.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Connelly is articulate, surprisingly humble and filled with anecdotes. From that standpoint, it's an excellent book for anyone who wanted to know what was really going on in the WaxTrax scene of the late 80's and early 90's. He pulls no punches, nobody is painted as perfect, there's little hero

worship, and yet all the major players are humanized to a degree that, despite many flaws, they still seem sympathetic. Al Jourgensen particularly - he gets ridiculed for his affectations and self-involvement, lambasted for his spiralling drug problems and fondness for sycophants, and yet it still seems that Connelly regards him with a bit of genuine affection (even if they haven't spoken for years). What's particularly refreshing is his candor about his own problems and career trajectory. It could've easily slumped into a sex/drugs/rocknroll hardcore aggrandizement, or a paen to now-clean living, but it manages to avoid either boasting or becoming maudlin, no easy feat. Connelly tells it like it was - chasing the highs, chasing the booze, chasing the girls while fully realizing the ridiculousness of the situations, and he doesn't preach about how he's cleaned up his life. His writing style, though could've used an editor. It reads more like a blog, complete with bursts of all-caps, the occasional dangling sentence fragment, and the sort of onomatopoeia one doesn't usually find in a memoir. Not that this is bad, mind you, but it can be a little distracting to be reading a detailed narrative of a Pigface show and have to stop and go back to parse out a sentence that didn't seem to make sense. All told, though, it's a fun, quick read.

Chris Connelly (ex-Fini Tribe, Revolting Cocks, Ministry, Pigface, Murder Inc., The Damage Manual) gives a vivid, fascinating behind-the-scenes account of his experiences in the Chicago industrial music scene between the years 1987 - 1995, and his roller coaster relationship with Ministry's Al Jourgensen. For fans of the above-listed bands and anything released on Wax Trax! Records in the late 80's, there is an invaluable amount of information detailing the creation of several songs from The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste, Beers Steers & Queers, Linger Ficken' Good, and more. Chris recounts his relationships on and off the road with a who's who of industrial/alternative musicians, from such bands as Skinny Puppy, Killing Joke, and Cabaret Voltaire. The book details rampant drug/alcohol abuse on tours and in the studio, wild post-concert parties, damaged relationships, personal tragedies, musical highlights and lowlights, written to make the reader feel like he/she was re-living the whole experience with him. Chris paints a very fair, but disturbing picture of a drug-addicted, out-of-control tyrant in Al Jourgensen, whose unpredictable personality makes for unlimited tension many times throughout the book. The book is not all 'doom and gloom', however, and boasts several funny stories that at times will have you laughing. Chris gives detailed tour journals for Ministry's Mind tour in 89-90 and Psalm 69 tour in '92, the Pigface tours for Gub and Fook in '91/'92, and RevCo's Beers Steers & Queers Tour in 90-91. There are also details from band rehearsals and 'one-off' shows that were performed. Popular Chicago clubs Medusa, Exit, and The Metro/Smart Bar (among others) get plenty of mention. At 223 pages, it's a fairly quick read.

I always felt Chris Connelly was one of the more articulate, interesting, and diversified members of the cyber-biker 'industrial rock' circus swirling around Ministry's Al Jourgensen, and so I'm excited that he was able to get a book-length bio of that band's most interesting years into print before Jourgensen did. When THAT happens, this will surely provide a valuable alternate history to the inevitable grand-standing and historical revisionism coming from Ministry's overlord of aggro (and hair extensions, which Connelly describes in a hilarious manner that I won't give away). I have a very tangential but still kind of intimate connection to this scene, so the nostalgic effect I get from reading a litany of hallowed Chicago nightlife institutions like Smart Bar, ChicagoTrax, Cabaret Metro etc. will not be replicated in every reader. Closeness to this culture has increased the "page-turner" quality of this book for me, but only by a little- it's still an eminently great read in a literary world swamped with boring paint-by-numbers rock confessionals written by, say, someone who was Bowie's keyboard tech for 3 shows in 1981. There's often nothing more tedious than listening to someone else's 'drug' stories, or even someone else's detailed descriptions of their soundchecks and daily road routines, but Connelly re-animates this age-old format with wit, conviction, and even healthy doses of humility. Some of the pharmaceutical hijinks are actually laugh-out-loud funny, and there's an exhausting scorecard of such described: even one experience outlined in this book would be a life-defining event that you warn your grandchildren about, for the Revolting Cocks it's just what happened to them on that particular, er, Wednesday evening.

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