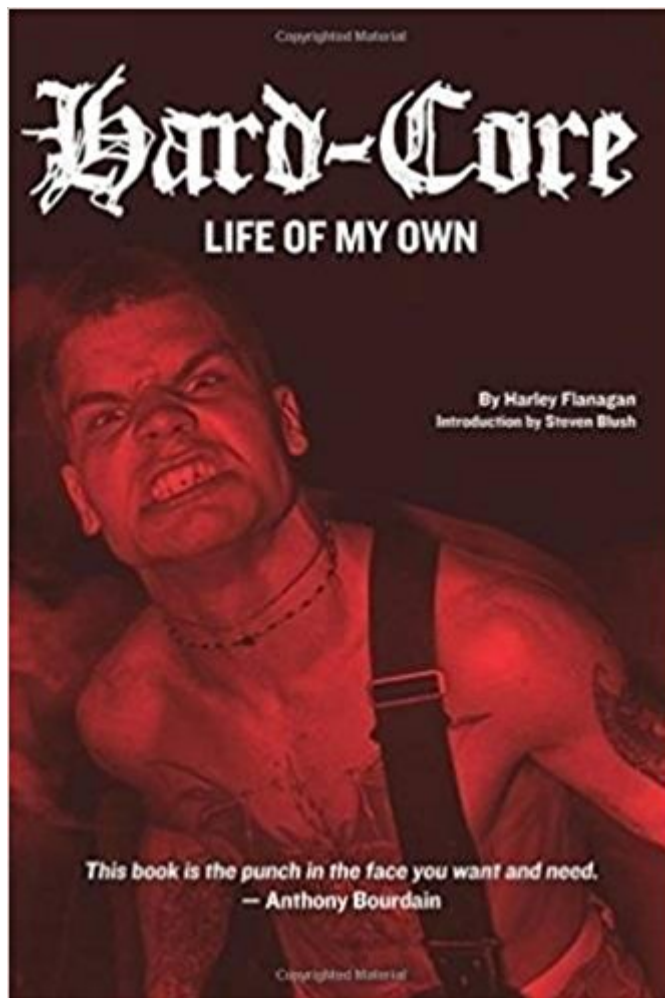


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# Hard-Core: Life Of My Own



## Synopsis

Harley Flanagan provides a fascinating memoir: a child prodigy and family friend of Andy Warhol and Allen Ginsberg, at a young age he became close to many stars of the early punk rock scene like Joe Strummer of The Clash and was taught to play bass by members of the famed black punk band Bad Brains. He started playing drums for the New York punk band the Stimulators when he was 11 years old; playing at places like Max's Kansas City with some of the most notable names of the punk scene. He then went on to start the notorious hardcore band Cro-Mags. From the memoir's introduction by American Hardcore's Steven Blush: "Harley Flanagan is not like you or me. Most of us grew up in relative safety and security. Harley came up like a feral animal, fending for himself in the '70s Lower East Side jungle of crime, drugs, abuse and poverty. By age 10 he was a downtown star at Max's Kansas City and CBGB, drumming in his aunt's punk band The Stimulators, and socializing with Blondie's Debbie Harry and Cleveland's Dead Boys. Everyone thought it was so cute, but it wasn't." Currently a black belt and an instructor for the famed Renzo Gracie Jiu-Jitsu Academy in New York, Harley was never shy: making friends with important figures like Lemmy Kilmister of Motörhead, defending himself in street battles, and finding media play and court battles after former band members betrayed their one-time friend and bandmate. Of his much anticipated memoir, famed author and celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain explains: "Don't even pretend to talk about New York... if you don't read this." "This book is the punch in the face you want and need."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Harley Flanagan's incredible story is not just the history of New York hardcore, of which he is a founding father, but a history of New York itself. It's all here, an amazing series of unlikely coincidences, catastrophes, accomplishments and associations. Chances are if it happened in New York and it was important and interesting, Harley Flanagan was somewhere in the room. If you care anything about music history, punk rock, hardcore or just a ripping good story, this book is the punch in the face you want and need." - Anthony Bourdain

**Harley Flanagan:** Harley Frances Flanagan (born 1967) is the founder and bassist of the hardcore punk band, the Cro-Mags. When he was nine, Flanagan published a book of poetry with a foreword written by family friend, Allen Ginsberg. When he was eleven he was playing drums with the New York punk band the Stimulators. He is a father, husband and Renzo Gracie JiuJitsu instructor living in NYC.

I read this and Evolution of a Cro-Mag back to back. I suggested other people interested in HC roots and, particularly, the Cro-Mags, do the same. That said, and under the full understanding that this is a memoir, the actual writing style is a bit erratic. It was hard to follow sometimes. I was cool with it though and enjoyed what I learned about Harley and his side of the John vs. Harley war (a side I have not heard yet and this book might be the only mainstream access to that side of the story). I do feel pulled by both sides but I know I can not get caught up in it as a grown man. Still, my youth was influenced by the Cro Mags so I got mad-respect for both of them regardless of the truth.

A MUST read for any CroMags fan, NYHC fan, crossover period metal fan, 80s and/or 70s punk fan, or ANYONE interested in a good read about a true punk/hardcore legend, straight from the horse's mouth. Love him or hate him, take sides or don't, this is a great read. Doesn't pull any punches, and doesn't attempt to smear anyone else's name. Anyone familiar with the Cromags, is undoubtedly aware of the static the members have with each other; Harley says it like it is. Great stories from his years as a pre-pubescent drummer for The Stimulators, playin' Max's Kansas City and CBGB and subsequent touring, his time in San Francisco in the notorious Vat days, and back to the L.E.S. to finally start CroMags for better or worse, and continues on through kids, marriage, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu with the world famous Gracie family, and gives his side of the story regarding the headline making 'incident' in NYC at a performance by current CroMags line-up led by front-man John Joseph, at the CBGB Festival at Webster Hall. Flanagan's book is entertaining, to the point, and

FEELS honest (I wasn't there, so it isn't my business! hahaha), and throughout it all, he still maintains love for his brothers in arms despite the eternally waged conflict that will forever be attached to the CroMags name. At the end of the day, it seems some kind of peace has come out of the age of quarrel, even if it appears the past won't be mended, at least some personal version of closure is attained. In short: Read this s\*\*\*- it's a killer book. -Hammerin' Hanke (DuRT-Head Army)

I knew Harley from just about the time the CroMags started. I was just another hc kid hanging out in the scene, not a musician or sell known character like he was. his band was my favorite in the NYHC scene and I saw almost every early show they played at CBs. Even then Harleys reputation preceded him. On stage he was an wild animal, stirring up all the young crazy kids like me, bouncing off the walls to the beat of Harleys sick bass lines. Since I was part of the world described in this book, I can vouch for its authenticity. he didn't have to embellish anything since the truth is way more exciting! Not only is the subject matter fascinating(at least to me) but his writing style is great. I couldn't put this book down. way to go Harley.

What a compelling read! This book tells it like it was back in the late days of punk and the creation of hardcore. This is essential reading for any modern musician who thinks they know what went down back in the day! I knew alot of these stories (they are legendary if you were around the scene back then) but I learned a whole lot more about this warrior who fought through so many obstacles and never gave up!

One of the best books to come out in a long time, not only for music fans but for anyone who want to read about life and struggles on the streets. Shows the real nitty gritty of what old New York used to be and a great history of Punk and NYHC music. You get a little bit of everything here in this power packed book of well over 400+ pages. I highly recommended Hard-Core Life of My Own it does not disappoint.

A reader doesn't need any advance knowledge about Harley Flanagan or New York hardcore to enjoy this book. Flanagan has led such an incredibly unique life from day one that it makes for a great read no matter how much or little the reader knows about the Cro-Mags or music generally. It's also a great book about New York in the 70s and 80s—the street life and LES music scene. It's all told with a straight up, convincing, in-your-face narration that makes the reader rally to the guy and wish him the best going forward. Excellent read, highly

recommend.

I'll preface this review by saying I hadn't even heard of Harley Flanagan until I came across an article in the NY Times prior to the book's release, and I knew little about the Hard Core music scene. I am glad I went with my instincts and read this book, it is an eye opener. As someone who was forced to grow up and fend for himself starting at a very early age, Harley's life story is quite incredible. Sure there was drugs, some bad decisions, and violence that have you wondering how he survived. But ultimately, it is a very open and honest story, holding nothing back and letting the reader know how it really was. The story culminates with an incident where it seemed his entire life was about to come apart, but as was often the case when he was at rock bottom, things turned out as okay as possible. I can very much recommend this book.

Awesome on the edge of my sit couldn't put it down. Harley has had an amazing life up to this point and I'm sure will only improve. I can't imagine going through life basically on my own at such a young age and come out the other end as wise and positive and lets not forget successful. This is one tough smart guy that has fought for everything he has and isn't bitter. I met Harley when he was staying in San Francisco he was probably around 13 - 15 years old and wise way beyond his years. I didn't know him really well met him through Marc Dagger let me say they are both great people that you want on your side Cheers you all great book well written with some great stories Its a must read for all that were there..... and survived..

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