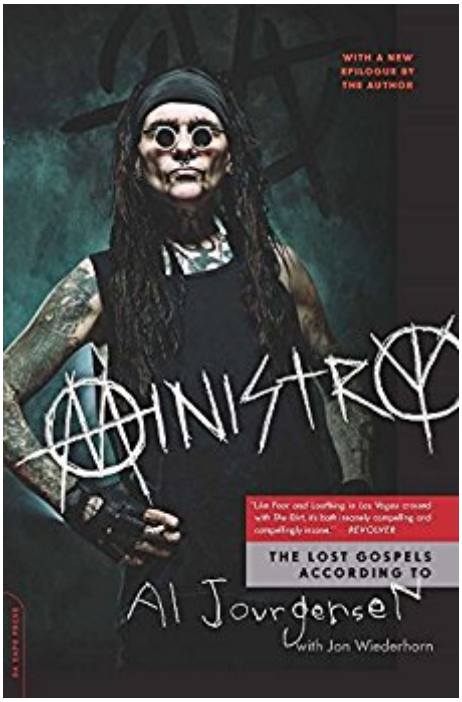
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Ministry: The Lost Gospels According To Al Jourgensen



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Synopsis

Ministry: The Lost Gospels is both ugly and captivating, revealing a character who has lived a hard life his way, without compromise. Jourgensen, one of the most innovative and prolific artists ever to pick up a guitar, mandolin, harmonica, or banjo, wanted to be a musician, yet became a rock star. And fame and fortune almost killed him. An IV drug abuser from the age of fifteen, Jourgensen delved deeper into heroin, cocaine, methadone, and alcohol for twenty-two years before cleaning up, straightening out, and finding new reasons to live. Filled with humor, heart, decadence, and tragedy, Ministry depicts the epic life of a renegade iconoclast.

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Customer Reviews

I don’t normally read biographies of famous musicians. I’ve never subscribed to the belief that their lives are somehow more interesting just because they’re famous, nor am I enough of a sycophant to really give a s*** how the other half lives. However, this proved an exception. Jourgensen’s long had a reputation for being a larger-than-life, out-of-control, nihilistic, and completely self-destructive drug addict; which, granted, probably describes about 80% of all musicians with any degree of notoriety. However, his antics are the stuff of legend - aliens, Spielberg, ostriches - yeah. They’re sufficiently

outrageous that other musicians who've crossed paths with him get dragged into on-camera interviews and questioned about them. So I was curious. I glanced through the preview pages, read enough to know that I had to have it, and pre-ordered it - something I never do - and even put down the book I was in the middle of reading to give this one priority.It didn't disappoint.Folks, this is riveting s***. I won't lie; the depravity in this thing is off the charts. I've currently burned through about 2/3 of it (I'm at the Gibby Haynes "Intervention"), and I feel like I need a shower and there isn't enough soap in the world. It's outrageous, depraved, and at times absolutely horrifying, but it's also laugh-out-loud funny. Assuming all of this is true (as far as Al experienced it anyway), and that none of it is embellished for entertainment value, the Dos Equis guy has nothing on Al - stolen cars, IV drug use, stints in an orphanage and mental institution, electro shock therapy, group sex with mental patients, car crashes, alien abductions (with Al, at one point, going so far as to claim extraterrestrials stole his pregnant wife's unborn fetus) - and that's just his childhood. We haven't even gotten to the music industry yet. Once it gets to his music career, things get insane: rampant drug use, stabbings, overdoses, more car crashes, arrests, bestiality, women with blood pouring out of their genitals, severed animal heads, transvestites, bags of bodily fluids, Branch Davidians - if you think you get the idea, you really, really don't...So far, it's covered everything that I hoped it would: the Arista debacle, the Wax Trax era, the '88-'92 lineup, Al's involvement with Puppy's Rabies album, the first RevCo show, Burroughs, Leary, etc. I should probably be mortified by some of this s***, but I'm laughing uncontrollably at a lot of it, and I'm not sure what that says about me. Al's chance encounter with Madonna at a new wave club in the early 80s is priceless (she reappears later in the book in an anecdote involving Mike Scaccia that had me laughing just as hard). The origin of Lard and Al's first sessions with Jello Biafra are worth the price of the book alone. There are also two tour bus incidents so far, one involving some sort of pipe bomb firework, and another involving Anthrax, a groupie, and a pizza that I won't spoil here, but it's good stuff. However, some of it's no laughing matter, like Al and his first wife having to hide their track marks from their daughter's teacher, Jeff Ward's suicide, William Tucker slitting his own throat, Al getting drunk and shooting at Jello Biafra's feet, and so on. A lot of other celebrities and/or musicians get dragged into the madness - Biafra, Ian MacKaye (who gets drunk!), GWAR, Trent Reznor, Layne Staley, Gibby Haynes, El Duce, Ice Cube, Anthrax, Johnny Depp, Tool, etc. Again, I'm only 2/3 of the way through it, but few people emerge from encounters with Al unscathed, and even he's died three times already.As far as Al the person goes, I'm not sure what to think. He seems like an a**hole, but the older Jourgensen in poor health telling the story is at least a strangely likeable a**hole, while the younger variant is so extreme I wouldn't want to have known him, even if his antics are often fun to

witness (at least from the safety of my living room armchair). There is a human side to him, in which he touches on his grandmother, wife and daughter, dog Lemmy -- even Tim Leary (whose picture he claims he still carries around in his wallet), but you only get fleeting glimpses of it before he delves back into all the debauchery. His timeline of certain events is questionable despite the ghost writer supposedly having fact-checked them. He also blames the music industry for his drug addiction, despite his own admission that he was using IV drugs in his early teens. In fact, the only musicians he seems to speak fondly of (other than Paul Raven) are the musicians he ran with who were also drunks and/or junkies (e.g., Scaccia, Gibby, Phildo, Ogre, Duce, etc.). He has nothing whatsoever good to say about Chris Connelly, repeatedly calling him a "charlatan" but without explanation. And he absolutely loathes Paul Barker, who the book attempts to portray as some kind of villain (his wife, Angie, in her "intervention" segment, makes some rather serious allegations against Barker but provides no evidence - and refers to winning a lawsuit filed by Jourgensen that was, in actuality, tossed out of court).Even more bizarre, Jourgensen despises his signature music and seems to resent his fan base as much as he does label execs for trying to steer his sound one way or another. He expects his fan base (i.e., consumers) to buy his signature records and has no problem taking credit for the influence they've had on countless other musicians. But then he wants to be released from any obligation to play material from these records live (and still expects fans to pay to see him in concert despite also admitting that he hates performing and would rather be anywhere other than on a stage). They always say, "You should never meet your idols..." - something Al even states in the book. This is probably why the amorphous `They' say it in the first place.Again, I have no idea how much truth there is in any of this, but I'm rating it for sheer entertainment value alone.

Great read! Fun, easy, eye opening and very funny. I actually lived in Chicago at this time. I saw Al out and about and partied with pretty much all of the people in this book. I Would walk by Trax studio heading to a friends and would wonder what craziness was happening in there? Well, I have an even better idea and I am not sure what was more crazy my own thoughts or reality. I had know idea Al actually lived in Colorado and was an excellent baseball player.The story about the Ramones show in Boulder in 79 and the 40 people there that ended up starting bands and becoming a huge part of the counter culture. Al, Jello Biafra and the guys who started Wax Trax records. It reminds my of the infamous Sex Pistols show in Manchester and the 40 people there that would go on to start bands such as Joy Division, New Order, the Smiths, Buzzcocks, etc. If you like Ministry, get this book. Even if you hate Al and Ministry it is highly recommended read.SirGraves

If there ever was a rock star whose stories should be told, it’s Uncle Al! I just got this book and I can’t put it down. Being into metal, I have been a Ministry fan since the early 90s and I couldn’t wait to get my hands on this book! Al has lived a crazy and insane life and we’re lucky to have him around still. I am sad that Ministry is breaking up apparently for good, but I hope Uncle Al lives forever. Possibly the only guy in the world who smokes crack that I root for, Al was responsible for the heaviest sounding band of pretty much all time. There is no one Ministry album that you could honestly say is no good, but even at their worst, Ministry is still better than 99.99% of all other bands ever. Period. It’s a damn shame that Mikey died so young, and I’m sure Uncle Al is still grieving. This book is what a rock ’n roll memoir should be: Sex, drugs, and rock ’n roll. Nobody had more sex, more drugs, and nobody ever rocked as hard as Al. Go back to 1991..... the song ’Scarecrow’ from Psalm 69 is so hard and crushing that I have actually blown out some speakers blasting this behemoth of a song. The other artists’ honest and insightful stories about Uncle Al are sometimes hilarious, sometimes despicable, but 100% honesty. The crazy things that Al has seen and done are insane and most people would never admit to, but I appreciate the sincerity and honesty of the stories. Extremely entertaining, you won’t be able to put this book down! Should go down in history as the greatest and wildest rock ’n roll book ever! Sure, the Beatles and Elvis sold more records, were more famous, etc., but who lived Al’s life and lived to tell the tales!? Nobody! That’s who. Long live Al Jourgensen.

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