

## Reviews

"By far the most striking feature of A Rebel Life, however, is the energy which fizzes and snaps at every turn. Kalafatis's language is violent and forceful, expressing an intense and visceral anger. The voice lying underneath this anger, however, is tender and filled with softened emotion, particularly discernible when evoking memories of his brother. There is absolutely no doubt that this is an authentic narrative voice, rough and rasping but also poetic and sophisticated." - 3:AM Magazine (UK), Charlotte Stretch

"  
With  
its caustic journaling of a bum's life, reminds me very much of  
Bukowski (but I bet lots have made that connection)...Interesting  
stuff, honest and powerful." - Incendiary Magazine (Netherlands), Richard Foster

"An interesting exploration of socioeconomics and urban conflict in the home, family, and community. It combines the readability of a novel with the educational content of a political tract and discusses many important issues." - Book Pleasures (Canada), Christopher Friesen

"From the point of view of an author who watched tradition collapse firsthand, A Rebel Life: Murder by the Rich contains observations of how the American dream isn't as it appears, and how the less affluent are swallowed whole by the system." - Good Times Magazine (NY, USA), Dave Wolff

"This is one of those books you won't put down once you've picked it up. Dealing with death, drugs, capitalism, classism, homelessness and violence this book is definitely worth checking out since it's a true story lived by the author himself." - Mutiny Zine (Sweden), Christer

"There's a great passage where he gets stabbed and lies bleeding on the street, scared, but excited because this will get him a reputation. That sums it up really. If you haven't been through that you were never a punk." - Summer of Hate (Sweden), Karl Backman

"For those who feel that they haven't had enough good choices in life, this should be a booming affirmation. For those who came up in the punk rock/ hardcore squat scene, this should be a sad trip down memory lane. For those who like a tear jerker or a revenge novel, this has all of the best elements of both. You can cry and get mad reading this book." - Neo-Zine (PA, USA)

"The ending is brilliant, when he finally gets his revenge in an unexpected way." - ASICE (Dutch)

"The presentation of these stories is where this book really shines. Peter's narrative and writing style not only allow the reader to get a vivid picture of what's happening, but to feel every bit of emotion he did in the stories." - The Punk Vault (Illinois, USA), MXV

"Through the haze of rage and grief that kind of tragedy must inspire, Peter recounts the events that lead to his brother's demise to explain why he refuses to accept that Archie was to blame for his own death." - Razorback (Texas, USA), Lauren, Ed.

"The letter that Peter wrote on the last part of the book for his son is actually inspirational." - NB Zine (Philippines), Corix

"A Rebel Life" is a true story about life and the continuous battle against the system" - eEMPTY Zine (Romania), Mircea

"Peter Kalafatis is one of those writer who we stumble upon and thank God for all the trauma that he's been through, otherwise we might not have such fascinating stories to interpret." - Voices Magazine (Colorado, USA) - Featured Article , Alkatraz

"I really do think the author is on to something, at least to some extent, with his accusations of the wealthy keeping the working classes from better education and opportunities" - Ear Damage (Alabama, USA), CS

"A smart rebellion, the book is tinted with sociopolitical analysis that might seem extreme to some, but it is an interesting read to anybody with an open mind" - Herlaka (Texas, USA)

'A Rebel Life' is an excellently crafted novel that tells a compelling story, but more importantly throws a spotlight on the disgusting and inherent inequalities of the capitalist system, demands class-consciousness, and strongly argues that until equality has been achieved, "there can be no war but the class war". - Free Society (Canada)

To say I was pleasantly surprised would be an understatement as the book I received had absolutley NOTHING to do with what my original perception was. No...this was something different...something more fierce, yet still loaded with deep heartfelt emotion and even a bit of educational value. What I received was a book with meaning , substance, and a message which we all should heed and take to heart. -Metal Beer Horror (New Jersey)

{mospagebreak title=3:AM Magazine (UK)}

Rebel Ink

3:AM Magazine Website (UK)

The recent slew of confessional autobiographies, commonly dubbed &ldquo;misery memoirs&rdquo; has met with mixed responses from the media. One of the most critically successful, James Frey&rsquo;s A Million Little Pieces, was very publicly revealed to be a heavily embellished version of true events. Frey&rsquo;s novel, though excellent, relied on exciting plot twists and staggering developments. A Rebel Life rallies against this formula, reinstating the concept of a life story as a cultural study and a mood piece.

---

Kalafatis&rsquo; powerful debut strongly evokes the stark grittiness of the 1980s New York drug culture. The narrative

alternates between the present day, as he prepares for the funeral of his younger brother (having died from a suspected overdose) and another life, ten years prior, of gun crime and street violence. The message that rings throughout with immovable force is Kalafatis's belief that it is the rich, with their elitist hierarchical systems, who are to blame for his brother's death.

The book works extremely well as a literary novel, rather than just functioning on the level of real-life drama. There are a number of artistic flourishes in Kalafatis's narrative; especially well-drawn are the various dream sequences, located in a surreal and symbol-driven otherworld. For the rest of the novel, Kalafatis is committed to his strong portrayal of New York, and in particular the subcultures embedded within the city.

By far the most striking feature of A Rebel Life, however, is the energy which fizzles and snaps at every turn. Kalafatis's language is violent and forceful, expressing an intense and visceral anger. The voice lying underneath this anger, however, is tender and filled with softened emotion, particularly discernible when evoking memories of his brother. There is absolutely no doubt that this is an authentic narrative voice, rough and rasping but also poetic and sophisticated.

The only aspect of A Rebel Life which fails to contribute to its considerable success is the single-minded rebellion against the rich, which rears its head continuously and without discrimination. This philosophy, which underpins much of Kalafatis's storytelling, often feels clunky and obstructive within what is otherwise a tight and well-crafted narrative. Jeany, Kalafatis's wife, is the rational and clear-thinking voice of reason throughout this blind resentment, but her words ultimately lack the power of her husband's convictions.

Though it may feel stretched beyond its limits, this is an argument that nonetheless takes the confessional memoir in an interesting direction. By attacking "the rich", A Rebel Life neatly subverts the hypocrisy of the American Dream, exposing the unalleviated subculture of poverty that rests beneath it. By "conforming", as Kalafatis sees it, and pursuing a path of education which leads him out of this subculture, he equips himself with the necessary distance to review the world he has left behind him. The funeral of his brother marks a conflict between Kalafatis's growing sense of purpose and identity, and his urge to revive the anger which was so characteristic of his former self.

Though this is, essentially, a book about moving forwards, we are lucky for this relentless grip on a troubled beginning. For it is with the spirit and voice of his old New York self that Kalafatis is able to paint lurid and affecting pictures of a devastating and frustrated world.

#### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Charlotte Stretch lives in Brixton where she is a freelance writer. She is currently working on her first novel.

First published in 3:AM Magazine: Thursday, May 17th, 2007.

{mospagebreak title=Incendiary Magazine (Netherlands)}

Incendiary Magazine Website (Netherlands)

I was tempted to quote Ginsberg's howl at the beginning of my review, (You know, "I saw the best minds of my generation" and all that) but thought better of it. This is an angry enough book, I warn you. The story is about the struggle Peter Kalafatis faces to come to terms with the death of his brother, which in turn has led him to question pretty much everything about his own life.

The book's structure is pretty rigidly orchestrated, chapter by chapter, between flashbacks of Kalafatis's past life on the streets and the events leading up to (and including) his brother's funeral. I know it's not the most original narrative way of dealing with these sort of issues, and there is a lot of personal question-and-answer stuff that sometimes drags the book to a snarling halt - and in turn makes us non former street junkies feel a bit bloody uncomfortable - but Kalafatis's jerky, (sometimes apoplectic) style is suited to describing the events he portrays. There's not really a lot of space for literary flannel.

There are some tremendous bits of action - if a bit ghoulish - such as the killing of an old man by Kalafatis's street gang, and the running maul which sees Kalafatis almost lose his life; but credit where credit's due, he tells it as he sees it. You never feel as if he's dramatizing matters; I can imagine the author cocking a snook at my literary poncey-ness if I mention Cyril Tournier's *Revenger's Tragedy*, but *A Rebel Life* and the aforementioned play definitely share their respective narrator's feelings of self-loathing and desperate determination to solve the world's problems with a single crushing blow. It also, with its caustic journaling of a bum's life, reminds me very much of Bukowski (but I bet lots have made that connection).

There is an ending of sorts, and mercifully he steers clear of becoming too moralising or boringly self-help obsessed. The only real quibble is that he repeatedly sets himself up as some kind of recalcitrant willing to learn after each mistake, (and subsequent self-discovery); which does lead the reader to scream "well, get on with it then, and tell us everything when you've finished"; but I suppose life was never lived in a straight line;

Interesting stuff, honest and powerful.

Words: Richard Foster

{mospagebreak title=Book Pleasures (Canada)}

Book Pleasures Website (Canada)

When Peter Kalafatis was thirteen years old he ran away from his Brooklyn home. He was fed up with the verbal and physical abuse he suffered at the hands of his parents and though he implored his younger brother, Archie, to stay home, the two spent a cold night in 1983 wandering the streets of their neighborhood. Eventually, as the night wore on, Archie's breathing became so labored, due to his asthma, Peter had to carry him home.

Kalafatis lasted two more years, enduring abuse at home, and racial violence at his school before packing his bags and hitting the streets for good. This was the beginning of his rebel life; a life that would envelop him in a fog of drugs, gangs, and street violence. Eventually, his brother would join him and be consumed by his own life on the streets.

In 2005 Peter's mother found Archie dead in his apartment. His brother's death was earth shattering news for Peter. Especially since he had spent the previous ten years removing himself from the streets and removing all the traces of the streets from himself; but had been unable to help his brother out in a similar manner.

The loss of his brother opened up a vein in Peter's mind that ran with the blood splattered concrete he used to call home. It brought back memories, opened wounds, and clouded his thoughts as he tried to reconcile the death of his brother with the greater class struggle that he felt he'd been fighting his entire life.

So angry was Peter over the death of his brother that he began plotting his revenge, a violent culmination of his thought process, part retribution, part political statement, that threatened to destroy everything he had worked so hard for.

At times philosophical, at times polemic, *A Rebel Life: Murder by the Rich* tells, in visceral detail, the story of Peter Kalafatis. His passage from angry child into a youth of mindless rebellion, to that of a mature, responsible, adult who can clearly see and elucidate the elementary injustices in our society.

Centered on the loss of his brother, Kalafatis uses recollections, reconstructions, and allegorical dreams to convey his message of disaffection with the status quo, while relating several incidents from his own past. Throughout, he constantly returns to his notion of where the ultimate responsibility for his brother's death lies: at the feet of the rich.

While his exploration of structural injustice is not new, his ability to put a personal face on it helps drive the message home. His story also clearly demonstrates the difficulties every political radical faces when trying to evangelize friends, relatives, and neighbors, and rally them to an unpopular or unfamiliar viewpoint.

But the most intriguing part of his story, of his time living on the streets, is often overshadowed by his overzealous, neo-Marxist peachiness. Rather than showing us the class war in action, Kalafatis spends a lot of time editorializing about it, which is unfortunate because his story of life, tragedy, survival, and release from the streets would be enough to sustain this book.

A Rebel Life: Murder by the Rich is an interesting exploration of socioeconomics and urban conflict in the home, family, and community. It combines the readability of a novel with the educational content of a political tract and discusses many important issues. This book is an important contribution to understanding the causes and consequences of youth rebellion and violence.

The above review was contributed by: Christopher Friesen-Writer and Book Reviewer from Canada.

To read Christopher's Interview with the author [CLICK HERE](#)

{mospagebreak title=Good Times Magazine (NY, USA)}

Good Times Magazine Website (NY, USA)

A Rebel Life: Murder by the Rich

Written by Peter Kalafatis

All And None Press

If you thought you know everything about the punk generation.... think again. From 1955 to 1998 the angst of James Dean's Rebel Without A Cause evolved to the intelligence of Eric Bogosian's SubUrbia & James Merendino's SLC Punk! But even the latter two movies only scratched the surface of the nihilistic rejection of traditional values. From the point of view of an author who watched tradition collapse firsthand, A Rebel Life: Murder by the Rich contains observations of

how the American dream isn't as it appears, and how the less affluent are swallowed whole by the system.

In the mid 1980s, writer Peter Kalafatis accepted the nihilism of American punk instead of the promises made on TV screens of fulfillment by wealth. Seeing his family struggle and receive only a small piece of the pie led to his decision. He lived as a punk and an anarchist for a decade, until confronted with the choice of leaving or dying. But conforming to society was no more the answer than street life, it only created more confusion regarding the upper classes. Then came the news that Kalafatis' younger brother Archie, who made a similar decision to rebel, died of a drug overdose.

Aside from the stereotypical judgment that punks blame society for the sake of blaming society, Kalafatis concluded that his brother's death was as much a result of upper class greed as his refusal to become part of the machine. With his former life turned on its head, grieving of his brother's overdose, Kalafatis was agonized with a choice of seeking revenge by violence or seeking justice by holding society responsible where it fits. Asserting that only those who can see beyond society's promises and distinguish "the game" as it is are accountable for their actions, Kalafatis seeks to educate his own kid to halt society's corruption by diagnosing and exposing it. Then will change become meaningful.

- Dave Wolff

{mospagebreak title=Mutiny Zine (Sweden)}

Mutiny Zine Website (Sweden)

"A Rebel Life" is a true story based on writer Kalafatis own past, growing up in the streets of New York during the 80's where reputation is everything, and about the three days in 2005 that leads up to his own brother's funeral. After hearing about his younger brother the writer is forced into a battle within his own head. How should he deal with it? This is a story about either conforming to the system that you hate or staying true to the streets where you will get killed sooner or later.

This is one of those books you won't put down once you've picked it up. Dealing with death, drugs, capitalism, classism, homelessness and violence this book is definitely worth checking out since it's a true story lived by the author himself. This is his debut novel and it's very well written. I'm keeping my eyes open for further works by Peter Kalafatis.

- Christer, Mutiny Zine

{mospagebreak title=Summer of Hate (Sweden)}

Summer of Hate Website (Sweden)

The old stories are interesting and sometimes entertaining, and a lot of it is reminding me of my own 80's too. Beatings, stabbings, squats, crime. Things were of course a lot rougher on the streets of New York, and most of us European punks weren't in any gangs, but many of my readers will recognise situations and problems Kalafatis writes about. There's a great passage where he gets stabbed and lies bleeding on the street, scared, but excited because this will get him a reputation. That sums it up really. If you haven't been through that you were never a punk.

Unlike say Aimee Cooper's *Coloring Outside The Lines* this doesn't cover bands, gigs or even the local punk scene, but only the drug, drink and violence side of punk rock. That makes it rare.

It's a very angry work, focused on one thesis; the rich rule the poor and that's why Kalafatis' life has been shit and that's why his brother died. While there's obviously a lot of truth to that statement, the constant spelling out of this gets a little repetitive. This starts out as a great book that sort of fizzles out to a pretty good book with no particular ending.

One thing I really like about the philosophical message in this is that it never gets sentimental. There's not a trace of revolutionary romanticism here, which has gotta be a first for a book with an attached reading list of Fidel Castro, Karl Marx, Che Guevara and Malcolm X among others.

There's a lot of survivor's guilt and questions of what he could have done to prevent his brother's death in the book's present parts, but they all end the same. The rich murdered him because he was born poor. There's a sort of build up to Kalafatis doing something to revenge him (here; shoot some random rich family), but he never does. Then the book just ends. Which is what normally happens in life I guess.

If you're looking for a book on 80's punk and hardcore this is not it, but I think it's well worth finding. As a counter part to mainstream media this is great. Read it, think about it, but don't necessarily believe it.

- Karl Backman

{mospagebreak title=NEO-ZINE (PA, USA)}

NEO-ZINE (PA, USA)

This is a memoir novel about the life of Peter Kalafatis who left home at 13 years old to live in the streets. Peter was involved in the punk/ hardcore street gang scene, and has the scars to prove it. Peter and his brother were involved in violence and drug use throughout the time that they spent living in the squats, and later in their parent's basement. He even helped to start one of the largest suburban street gangs (Strong Island Boys.) Involvement in gun fights, having been stabbed, and getting a girl pregnant are some things that lead Peter to try to improve his lot by going to college. He is now a grown man with a wife and a child (who lives at the grandparent's home.) His brother, Archie was not so lucky. Archie died from the same hard life of drugs and violence that Peter was trying to put behind him. This causes our author to wax ragingly philosophical about the cause of his brother's death. Most of these explanations end at one place...The rich people of the world are responsible for the pain, suffering, and death of the working class and poor. One of the statements that impressed me the most was "If responsibility is a consequence of a deliberate and conscious action, then the ones who have all of the choices and the knowledge to choose correctly are not only responsible for their actions, but also the actions of the ones affected most by their choices." This book is easy to read, and even the more philosophical parts are simple enough for the basic reading skills. There is some abrupt language and some graphic violence, so this isn't for the young bible school kids. It also takes more than a few anti-capitalist turns, so this isn't for the blindly patriotic either. For those who feel that they haven't had enough good choices in life, this should be a booming affirmation. For those who came up in the punk rock/ hardcore squat scene, this should be a sad trip down memory lane. For those who like a tear jerker or a revenge novel, this has all of the best elements of both. You can cry and get mad reading this book. I didn't agree with everything in these pages, but the author was able to put me in his place, and at least make me understand why he came to these conclusions. I won't tell you how, but Pete does get his revenge.

{mospagebreak title=ASICE (Dutch)}

ASICE Website (Dutch)

"A Rebel Life" is a book about the New York hardcore scene in the eighties. Just so you know: hardcore music isn't really a part of the book, but a part of the independent ideology (fuck the system) is. Or more specifically: the story is told while the main character (Peter himself) lives in squats on the lower east side of Manhattan, does drugs and goes to hardcore and punk rock shows at CBGB's. Years later, he manages to find a place for himself within the system he despised so much. When his brother dies, he can't help but blaming the rich upper class for it. He wants revenge. In every chapter the story switches from 2005 (the three days from the death of his brother until his funeral) back to the 80's and 90's, so you'll understand where Pete's anger and hatred towards the rich comes from. From the moment Pete's brother Archie dies, he can't think of anything else but revenge on the rich. While reading about his thoughts and his background you get a good look into Peter's character. I don't know if the book is completely autobiographical, but if so I think it's very brave of him to open up psychologically. And the ending is brilliant, when he finally gets his revenge in an unexpected way.

{mospagebreak title=The Punk Vault (Illinois, USA)}

The Punk Vault Website (Illinois, USA)

Peter had a rough life growing up. His lousy home life and abusive parents led him to leave home for a life on the streets at age 15. Not too long after that, his younger brother followed him and they both were out on the streets fighting to get by and eventually abusing drugs. Peter eventually grew sick of the streets and wanted a better life for himself, cleaned up his act, got married and was on the road to finally becoming a little bit successful.

A phone call from his family changed all that. They called to inform him that his younger brother had passed away, most likely due to a drug overdose. You see while Peter managed to get himself clean and off the streets, his brother didn't. This news immediately sent a rush of rage and emotion through Peter and opened up a flood of memories from the past as he tried to deal with the how and why of losing his brother and what he was going to do about it.

This becomes the basis for A Rebel Life: Murder by the Rich. Peter tells the story of his brother's death and the tidal wave of rage and emotion it opens up in him. It alternates between present day dealing with the events of his death along with flashbacks of his life on the streets. The stories intertwine together perfectly and you can see the how basis of his current rage and hatred towards the rich stemmed back to the life on the streets, discovering punk rock, drug abuse and violence. As the book progresses, it seems like Peter is going to regress back into the person he was out on the streets.

The presentation of these stories is where this book really shines. Peter's narrative and writing style not only allow the reader to get a vivid picture of what's happening, but to feel every bit of emotion he did in the stories. In reading this, you can almost hear the anger come off the page in many scenes, just as you feel as sad as he does over his loss. You also can feel a little tired of hearing how the rich are responsible for all the world's problems including the death of his brother, just like his wife and friends were. At times you may think it's a cop-out, an easy way to point the blame anywhere else but one's self, but having not endured the life of the author and his brother, my outlook on life isn't quite the same despite my similar interest in punk rock.

The theme of punk rock was pretty minimal in the book as it wasn't the story being told, it merely was the basis of some of his theories as well as scenery for the much bigger story of a man coming to grips with a terrible loss and how it makes him question his decisions and his life in general. It also is a tale of a man coming to terms with the decisions he has yet to make. The book is equal parts heart wrenching and thought provoking and occasionally disturbing.

At 188 pages, it wasn't a very long read, made only shorter by the fact that it is so gripping, it was really hard to put down. If I could find any fault with this book, it would only be that I wish there was more stories told from the past as I was completely fascinated by the ones that were shared in this book. I give this my highest possible recommendation and I'm even pestering my girlfriend to read it and hopefully make her book club do the same!

- MXV

{mospagebreak title=Razorback (Texas, USA)}

Razorback (Texas, USA)

Peter's bitter first novel is a memoir written shortly after his brother Archie's suicide. Through the haze of rage and grief that kind of tragedy must inspire, Peter recounts the events that lead to his brother's demise to explain why he refuses to accept that Archie was to blame for his own death. His argument: That the ruling class keeps members of the lower class- such as his brother- oppressed and ignorant enough that Archie had little choice but to succumb to violence and drugs and eventually killed himself because of it.

A Rebel Life is set up in the usual memoir style, jumping back and forth between Peter's reaction to his brother's death and his memories of their fucked- up childhood. The passion and description that Peter puts into his writing is outstanding, but the plot gets kind of monotonous. Not that it's not interesting- I definitely finished it in one night- but the present-tense parts have a short time span of three days, and his memories are focused almost exclusively on gangs, fights, and junkies.

But getting back to the main theme of this book: Who is to blame for Archie's death? Peter's answer is clearly "the rich," but unfortunately, he never specifically points out who those enemies of his are. People who make over twenty grand a year, or the entire capitalist system? Assumedly because he is too overwhelmed with anger, Peter fails to focus that energy into any sort of productive social or political action. Instead, he starts thinking about the "street justice" he knew when he was younger, and obsesses over guns, blood, and revenge. It's frustrating to read Peter's murderous ranting, because I wanted him to rise above the same mentality that contributed to his brother's suicide. And just after when I had given up hope that Peter wouldn't come to that realization, he ends his obsession with getting even- and the book- with the sweetest revenge there is.

- Lauren, Ed.

{mospagebreak title=NB Zine (Philippines)}

NB Zine (Philippines)

translated

(This zine come out of the Philippines. The text might be a little hard to understand for English readers, but I have included it because it is interesting to read this reviewers perspective.)

The book is written like a novel so you will get to be interested in every flip of the pages, the story never fail to bore me and actually reminds me of my struggle when I was on the street, I was also into street violence, drugs and alcohol but it all changed when I discover punk and hardcore in my teenage days. I just didn't understand and wondering why Peter and his brother are into violence and gangs since they have embraced punk and hardcore, because punk and hardcore is not just actually music of Rebellion and a life style, and I believe it is not about gangs and violence, it is about raising fist of equality, peace and love, punx is political, punx and protest not punx and guns. What I don't like about their story is that; they called themselves "punx" but they are into gang violence, because this could led into misconception for the reader who haven't known the real meaning of punx, or maybe, I guess at that time when they were on the street, they haven't met people in the "underground" punk and "counterculture", or maybe they are in the wrong punk scene who are into gang violence.

It keeps on flashing my memory back when I was reading this, like stealing the groceries store for an alcohol, food and stuffs like that to survive while on the street, but the difference is; we are not into violence, we fuck the authority, we squat, we hitch hike to different places for a political cause and actions, sabotaging establishments that could cause effect for the environment.

For me, I agreed that Peter's younger brother was been "murdered by the rich." He's a real **HARDCORE** for me, and I hail him! Because he don't want to be like them, to become slaves by those fucking capitalists, he didn't leave the street but the worst thing is that; he didn't leave the violence, become close minded and irresponsible. Peter's way of thinking is actually amazing, to become a working class is not about becoming sell out, but removing his tattoos for the sake of a decent job is "UNHARDCORE" for me, because they were talking about "HARDCORE FOR LIFE" when putting ink in their body with his brother when they were on the street.

This is just an opinion of the reviewer, a constructive criticism since this book is a true to life story, not questioning the life's integrity. But anyway, you will learn a lot of lesson about the authors story, actually this book is very interesting and has a very intelligent way of thinking from the author, of his deep thoughts and ideologies, ideas for his actions of what he believe in, the letter that Peter wrote on the last part of the book for his son is actually inspirational. I guess, I believe he is now into communism ideas, fighting for the rights of a working class and to have a real democratic shit. Well, Fuck the System! Viva La Revolution!

— Corix

{mospagebreak title=eEMPTY Zine (Romania)}

eEMPTY Zine Website

(Romania)

Translated

""It's a true story about life on the streets of New York in the early '80s: gangs, drugs and looking for a meaning in life.

At the beginning of the '80s, Peter was just a kid from Brooklyn in a gang of punks, painfully watching the sacrifices his parents made for putting food on the table. They worked for serving the rich in a restaurant. Their anger towards the rich grew stronger. So in order to survive in that world, Peter and his brother join a local gang, which was like a second family to them - the hardcore scene. By the time he was 16, Peter was living on the streets, tattooed from head to toes, sleeping in squats and of course around drugs and alcohol. He started looking for his place by embracing the punk and anarchist groups in east Manhattan. Overdoses, shootings and street violence made Peter ask himself many things, and after many years spent in the streets, it was time for him to choose: to leave the streets or to die there.

Peter chose to leave that life behind and to become part of the system.

After ten years of trying to understand the existence of his class, Peter is brought back to life by another event: his brother is found dead after a drug overdose.

He comes to the conclusion that this corrupt and unfair system in which they were caught in since birth is the result of upper class manipulation, in order to preserve their social status.

His brother was indirectly murdered by the system he was fighting and so the criminals had to be brought to justice. Peter's dilemma was: "how?" This crime had to be punished, Peter wishes to make this system end once and for all.

"A Rebel Life" is a true story about life and the continuous battle against the system (mostly crooked and unfair). It is a manifesto against the massive division of the working classes by the well-known criterias such as race, religion, etc. "My Brother's justice", the final chapter of the book (a letter from Peter to his child), a conclusion which the author wants to share with all of us: "The rich killed your uncle: their system goes on every day and nobody has brought them to justice. Your uncle was killed early in life and they made it look like it was his own fault. He died of an over dose in a life full of suffering, a life he did not choose. Nobody consciously chooses such a life. Archie paid the final price for not conforming. Tese are the rules: you either fit in or you die.

The book was written by Peter Kalafatis for his brother Archie: "this story is a personal one, which i owe to my younger brother so he can be brought back to life." "With all the love and respect for my younger brother. This book is for you."

This book is also dedicated to all those who staid true to their beliefs, to all who did not yet fit into the system and to those who did not forget the meaning of the word "revolution".

{mospagebreak title=Y Sin Embargo Magazine (Spain)}

y sin embargo magazine Spain

A Rebel Life son las memorias de Peter Kalafatis, un neoyorquino cuyo hermano acaba de morir por una sobredosis de heroína. El marco narrativo son los tres días previos al funeral, entre los cuales se intercalan recuerdos de distintos

momentos de su vida. Viviendo en las calles desde los 16 años, Peter atravesó la existencia de los hardcore punks,

cubierto de tatuajes, durmiendo en edificios abandonados, robando comida, llegando al asalto y a volverse adicto a la heroína; peleaba en las calles varias veces a punto de acabar muerto. Tanto en los tiempos &ldquo;buenos&rdquo; como en los malos, existía en él cierta desesperación por

no poder hacer nada diferente a lo que estaba haciendo. Quería algo mejor, pero no podía imaginar qué era eso.

A lo largo de las memorias yace una rabia profunda: enojo por ser incapaz de pensar más allá de las calles, por la violencia de sus padres, por no tener dirección y no querer tomar ninguna dirección que se le hiciera posible. Y en el momento de escribir la memoria: por haberse sold out. Peter ya es otro profesional más, le han quitado los tatuajes, asistió a la universidad hasta alcanzar el postgrado, tiene una SUV. Recuerda nostálgicamente su vida

callejera, y se considera aparte de los de su nueva clase social. Dice, They might have made me conform to their system, but my mind is my own and it shall be free.

La pregunta que surge es: ¿puede uno realmente salirse del sistema? Aun en las márgenes de la sociedad, las drogas que se compran, la cerveza que se bebe, el dinero que se roba, la intervención de la policía, todo se arraiga en la misma fuente. De ahí, tal vez, la ira más profunda: odiar el sistema pero no poder escaparse de él.

Peter está convencido de que la gente no tiene control cabal sobre sus acciones, que la sociedad predetermina sus posibilidades, y su percepción de cuáles son estas. Por ende, tampoco son totalmente responsables por ellas. Su hermano ha muerto de una sobredosis, pero según Peter, fue murder by the rich. Está uno de acuerdo ó no, el libro plantea varias ideas que merecen consideración. ¿En qué medida sí nos predetermina la sociedad en ciertas elecciones? ¿Cuál es la alternativa para un individuo que no aspira a ser rico, ó vivir la vida tradicional, pero que tampoco quiere quedarse en su situación actual?

Actualmente se percibe más que nunca una resignación frente a la hegemonía de las clases dominantes. Que siempre controlarán la legislación que les mantiene en poder, y que les permite enriquecerse con cada vez más impudencia. La preocupación de Peter es una que tiene mucha gente consciente: ¿Cómo vivir dentro de este sistema sin entregarse a él?

{mospagebreak title=Voices Magazine (Colorado, USA)}

Voices Magazine website

(Colorado, USA)

(Click the link above to view the Article in Voices Magazine)

Peter Kalafatis is one of those writers who we stumble upon and thank God for all the trauma that he's been through, otherwise we might not have such fascinating stories to interpret. His path wasn't easy but he brings you there by defining the past and laying it out there for all to eat.

Peter wrote the book *A Rebel Life: Murder By The Rich* which is a true story about life growing up in Long Island, dealing with the mishaps of young gang life. Trying to find one self and dealing with the loss of a brother. The book asks many questions about race and life and what separates up into classes. It's a timeless book with an easy flow and right number of pages. I highly recommend it for those of you out there who can read. For the rest of you, go learn how to read first then pick this book up.

{mospagebreak title=Ear Damage (Alabama, USA)}

Ear Damage Website

(Alabama, USA)

Peter Kalafatis is the latest in a long line of old punks and Gen Xers to recap his formative years. But unlike many who look back fondly on their glory days, by highlighting culture, music, and happier experiences, Kalafatis recollects on his rough and tumble upbringing and coming of age in New York's cut-throat boroughs and hardcore punk scene. But really, *A Rebel Life* is Peter trying to make sense of his brother's death by overdose. Kalafatis basically clams that the rich have got his brother's blood on their hands because of "manipulation of the wealthy class to maintain their status." Despite somewhat unclear explanations of his stance and seemingly misdirected anger, I could see what Kalifatis is getting at. Societies have been known to systematically keep their working classes and other minorities from education and means to acquire wealth and bring themselves out of poverty, and drugs have without a doubt been a powerful tool of "the man", directly or indirectly, to help keep a boot on the neck of the poor and working class in America for at least the past 30-40 years. Let's not even get into how hard it is to get health insurance if you're labeled a drug addict. But&hellip;having stated all that, basis of this book still seems like a bit of a stretch. Peter and his brother ran away from home at an early age, joined and started gangs, did drugs and lived a violent "one day to the next" lifestyle. Death by any means could have come at any time for either one of them. His brother could have lived to a ripe old age of 34 or 35, which was pretty much the case in this instance. Regardless of the reasons, if you spend most of you're life doing drugs and living a violent lifestyle, 34 years could end up being a long time. Anyway, not a bad read overall, and I really do think the author is on to something, at least to some extent, with his accusations of the wealthy keeping the working classes from better education and opportunities. But it also seems he can't accept that his brother had a part in his own demise. [CS]

{mospagebreak title=Herlaka (Texas, USA)}

Herlaka Rose

(Texas, USA) July 2007

'A Rebel Life: Murder by the Rich' is an autobiographical tale by Peter Kalafatis, detailing his hard life on the streets, and how he coped up with the death of his beloved brother. While his brother died because of an O.D, Peter ties up his death to the harsh system in which we are entangled, with the rich on top of the system, which inescapably leads to lower classes being pushed down more and more into the gutter. Kalafatis not only relates the hardships that a young teenager with a strict upbringing living on the streets brings on, but also analyzes how the system will keep people down, and blames his brother's death on the rich and the system. He does make some good points, the one that most comes to mind was 'how could anybody willingly choose this lifestyle' while referring to his brother's addictions. His story tries to open eyes to a flawed system and believes strongly that there should not be rich, instead just one class, ending poverty in that way. He suggests a different type of rebellion, not one of tirades against the system or lashing out by vandalism and delinquency, but rather invading the system, and overcoming it. A smart rebellion, the book is tinted with sociopolitical analysis that might seem extreme to some, but it is an interesting read to anybody with an open mind, and it will ring more than one bell with many people.

So Speaks Herlaka!

{mospagebreak title=Free Society (Canada)}

Free Society

(Canada) November 2007

'A Rebel Life' is the true story of a murder, presented in novel format, narrated by someone close to the victim, his own brother. In the course of telling the story of his brother's death and presenting his argument for foul play, Peter is also telling his own story, as well as presenting a damning indictment of the social form.

Peter's story begins with his upbringing in a working class Greek family in Brooklyn, NY, USA, and chronologically traces his development into a

rebellious teenager. In 1985, at fifteen, Peter leaves home for life on the streets of New York, sleeping in squats (abandoned buildings) on NY's Lower East Side. Shortly after, his younger brother Archie leaves home to join him. Peter illustrates defining moments in his life, which led him to move from the LES to Long Island where his parents moved, but the trouble doesn't end there. Peter and Archie are determined to continue living hard even though they are out of the fire of the LES, starting a gang called Strong Island Boys and becoming engaged in conflict with rival youth gangs in Long Island. There are several more defining events that finally lead Peter to make a concrete decision that leads him out of drugs, gangs and violence and into university. At the same time, Archie has continued to live a life of chaos, and when he dies, Peter cannot shake the suspicion that he died from drugs.

In terms of the literary style of 'A Rebel Life', there are a number of interesting characteristics. The first is the confessional style of the writing, making the reader open to the narrator's inner thoughts. This, combined with narrative structure really supports the presentation as "words of a man's psychotic break". The narrative structure, starting three days prior to the funeral, documents Peter's reaction to his brother's death, using flashbacks chronologically to tell his story that brought him to his current perspective. Peter also uses dreams to help illustrate his perspective, and to reveal some of his innermost thoughts on Archie's death. Accompanying each chapter is a quote from revolutionaries, writers, philosophers, etc&hellip; that relates to the content of the chapter. There is also a reading list provided at the end of the book, which is a great idea to direct readers to further reading from top quality sources.

The most important aspect of 'A Rebel Life' is the communication of an analysis of the social form. Kalafatis places the struggles of him and Archie within a much larger scope: the omnipresent class struggle between the toiling class, and the class that survives by the toil of others. "We are born into this unfair system with realistically limited choices and the illusion of unlimited possibilities. In the end, the great lie is we are how we are because of our choosing and the great truth in this unfair system is that the more money means the more choices". Peter demonstrates this successfully through the course of the novel, and in doing so successfully argues his case for foul play in the death of Archie. The novel also touches on issues of identity, gender, conformity and authority. The cover of the edition that I received also perfectly illustrates the state of the working class&hellip; The picture depicts a soldier thrusting his bayonet into the stomach of a worker. Robert Minor originally created this illustration in 1916 as propaganda against the First World War. The illustration came near the end of a time when there was much greater international solidarity amongst the working class. This was a time when sectors of the working class could still see clearly how going to fight a war for the interests of the rich was akin to killing brothers and sisters. This is an effective depiction of the dealing and use of drugs, as well as the violence, between members of the working class.

'A Rebel Life' is an excellently crafted novel that tells a compelling story, but more importantly throws a spotlight on the disgusting and inherent inequalities of the capitalist system, demands class-consciousness, and strongly argues that until equality has been achieved, "there can be no war but the class war".

- Free Society (Canada)

{mospagebreak title=Metal Beer Horror (New Jersey)}

Metal Beer Horror

(New Jersey) January 2008

A REBEL LIFE: Murder By The Rich

Written by Peter Kalafalis

Published by All Or None Press, January 2007

168 Pages, First Edition

Dave Wolff from AUTOEROTICSPHYXIUM ZINE had sent me a message through MySpace a while ago, asking me if he had sent me a copy of something called "A Rebel Life". I didn't know what the hell he was talking about, thinking it was something related to the death of DAMAGEPLAN / former PANTERA guitarist "Dimebag" Darrell Abbot. I honestly had no idea what he was talking about, but I felt something creep into my gut and start to choke me, thinking that it was some sort of tribute cd with terrible bands doing terrible versions of terrible PANTERA songs "in tribute" to the fallen guitarist. Little did I know that it was a book, thinking to myself "Great...now I gotta read about this terrible guys terrible death" and not thinking anything more of it.

To

say I was pleasantly surprised would be an understatement as the book I recieved had absolutley NOTHING to do with what my original perception was. No...this was something different...something more fierce, yet still loaded with deep heartfelt emotion and even a bit of educational value. What I recieved was a book with meaning , substance, and a message which we all should heed and take to heart.

"A Rebel

Life : Murder By The Rich" is the true life story of author Peter Kalafalis, his younger brother Archie, and all of the shit that they dealt with which led to rather tragic and unfortunate events in their lives which culminated in Archie's death from a drug overdose which, the author feels, was indirectly caused by "the system" which keeps the rich content and the masses (aka: the middle class and the poor) under their thumbs. His anger at "the system" came from him watching his parents (Greek immigrants) toil for people who, he felt, were keeping his parents down and were slowly killing their vision of the american dream day after day. At the age of sixteen, he hit the streets of New York City and fell into a life of hardcore punk rock music, drug abuse, and violence for the sake of violence as a way to rebel against his parents and "the system" which they had , unwittingly, become pawns in...a "system" which he wanted absolutley no part of.

Ten years

later (and after having his younger brother, Archie, follow in his footsteps), he decided that he had enough of the nihilism and decided to join "the system", leaving his former life behind him. While Peter left his life behind to become a part of a system which he passionatley hated, his brother stayed behind and ultimatley paid the price for his refusal to bend and conform to a system which he felt he had no use for while his older brother caved in to it. The refusal to leave everything behind is what Kalafalis blames his brothers death on. Kalafalis also expresses his own remorse, feeling that if he didn't do what he had done his brother might still be living today.

In reading the

book, you can tell that the author is being genuine, sincere, and "real"...this is not a work of fiction, created for the sole purpose of "entertainment". This WAS Kalafalis's life...NY Hardcore, pointless nihilism, misplaced anger, drug abuse...everything you read here happened, but is written in a way to seem like it is a work of fiction. THAT is what makes his story so engrossing. You can tell that it is personal and that his story is both heartfelt and remorseful. Kalafalis never comes off as seeming like he is fake or phony. Despite the political substance of the book (the class struggle between the middle class and the poor who the rich use to acquire more wealth while giving nothing back to those who truly work for everything) it seems like he doesn't neccesarilly preach to the reader, either. His writing style has alot to do with it.

He paints portraits with his words

that make the reader feel more like they are observing the events that take place instead of being placed as an outsider or being told how to view his world. I felt more like I was a fly on a wall, watching everthing going on firsthand, instead of feeling like I was reading a book. Kalafalis has a very "visual" style of writing...almost cinematic

in a strange sense. This is the kind of story I could imagine a young Martin Scorsese making into a film...almost like a modernized, semi-political "Mean Streets". The words he carefully uses to paint his backgrounds for the events which take place here is marvelous and truly shows Kalafalis as someone who really took his time writing this book instead of just throwing something together in a haphazard way and saying "here's my story". His descriptions of events and places are never glamorous or pretty because the events and places weren't glamorous or pretty. This is raw and dirty reality...none of his actions are ever glorified and it never seems like he is patting himself on the back or celebratory in his actions.

When he describes his feelings is when the book is at its apex mainly because he doesn't resort to the literary trick of "well I did that, BUT...". NO! Nothing is ever justified or explained to put a happy ending on a bad situation and it's this honesty with himself and the readers which is what keeps the reader enthralled in this seedy slice of life that Kalafalis has carved out for us. You can feel his remorse, blaming himself almost as much as "the system" for the passing of his brother, and it stays with the reader until the end of the book. It is because of this that the book is a success...it would be easy to just say "well, "they" did this to my brother" and leave it at that. The fact that Kalafalis takes so much of the blame (after all, if he didn't leave in the first place, none of this probably would have happened) makes him truly human and makes this book the page-turner that it is.

Kalafalis is clearly wearing his heart on his sleeve here, angry at a system designed to keep the working class down, yet smart enough to realize that nothing is going to change any time soon ("blood for blood" is what they WANT us to perpetuate, so he refuses to give into the simple solution of bloodlust) unless there is a true revolution where we, as a society, tear "the system" down only to build it all back up again and use "the system" as a level playing field for all involved within it.

The political leanings on display here are typical for many of today's youth who are confused about where they stand in life and what their personal internal politics are and what they should be instead of what they are being told they should be. When I was sixteen years old, I kind of felt like I was in the same boat as Kalafalis was...emotionally confused and not seeing an end to the problems around me because I was too blind to realize the simplest of truths. I believed in the same things that Kalafalis says that HE believed in...anarchy, misguided politics, confusion and misplaced conflict, mindless aggression and hatred, so I can relate even more to the story because when I was at the age Kalafalis starts this book at I wasn't much different in my way of thinking and seeing the world.

I know I'm not a smart enough man or a good enough writer / critic to give this book the praise that it truly deserves, and I'm not enough of a reader to really compare this with much else that I have read in my life. Having said that, Kalafalis's book is a triumph in every sense of the word. It's a parable about the dangers of drugs, it's a call to arms for the working class to band together and face the real enemy in all of its more

insidious forms. It is also telling the reader that there is hope for all of us to break the system and live the kind of free life which we are all entitled to through the rite of birth. Most of all...this is a tribute to a life which many people who spew out hackneyed "fuck the system" kind of bullshit don't have the balls to live for themselves. In the words of the author...

"Live as a true individual and change the world"