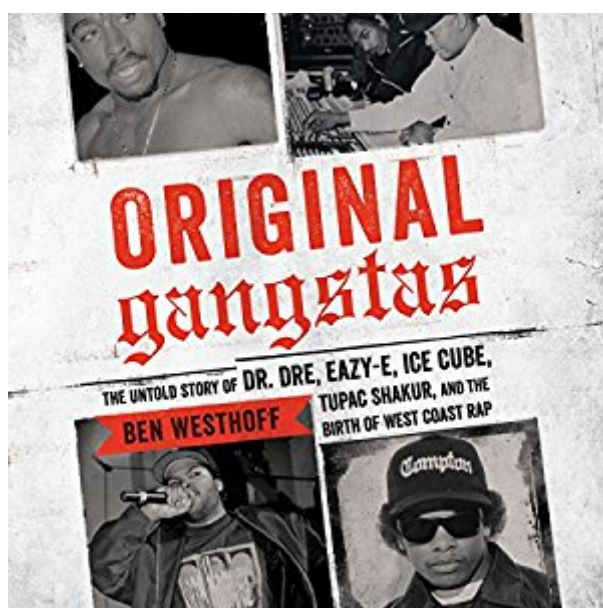


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# Original Gangstas: The Untold Story Of Dr. Dre, Eazy-E, Ice Cube, Tupac Shakur, And The Birth Of West Coast Rap



## Synopsis

A monumental, revealing narrative history about the legendary group of artists at the forefront of West Coast hip-hop: Eazy-E, Dr. Dre, Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg, and Tupac Shakur. Amid rising gang violence, the crack epidemic, and police brutality, a group of unlikely voices cut through the chaos of late 1980s Los Angeles: N.W.A. Led by a drug dealer, a glammed-up producer, and a high school kid, N.W.A. gave voice to disenfranchised African Americans across the country. And they quickly redefined pop culture across the world. Their names remain as popular as ever: Eazy-E, Dr. Dre, and Ice Cube. Dre soon joined forces with Suge Knight to create the combustible Death Row Records, which in turn transformed Snoop Dogg and Tupac Shakur into superstars. Ben Westhoff explores how this group of artists shifted the balance of hip-hop from New York to Los Angeles. He shows how N.W.A.'s shocking success led to rivalries between members and record labels and eventually a war between East Coast and West Coast factions. In the process hip-hop burst into mainstream America at a time of immense social change and became the most dominant musical movement of the last 30 years. At gangsta rap's peak, two of its biggest names - Tupac and Biggie Smalls - were murdered, leaving the surviving artists to forge peace before the genre annihilated itself. Featuring extensive investigative reporting, interviews with the principal players, and dozens of never-before-told stories, *Original Gangstas* is a groundbreaking addition to the history of popular music.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

N.W.A. blew up on hip-hop, entertainment industry and the political realm like a mushroom cloud

leaving debris on middle America, law enforcement and the Constitution. Their international influence is still felt today. On the heels of the hit movie *Straight Outta Compton* comes this awesome new book, filled with new details, such as Easy-E's hustling days, and Ice Cube's relationship with the Nation of Islam and Jewish Defense League. It's great learning how some of these important relationships were made, succeeded and disintegrated into a financial battle royal. It's impossible in any other profession for young men in their late teens and early twenties to become influential millionaires, this book made me feel like an insider toward understanding the entire process. I now wish this could be used as a blueprint for a Netflix Series.

*Original Gangstas* is a fun and entertaining read. Westhoff packs a lot of detail into an easy-to-read book that puts you in the center of the action. At the same time, Westhoff is a dispassionate observer who reports without injecting any obvious bias into the longstanding debates, disagreements, and mythology surrounding the events that led to this category of music. His years of interviews and thorough investigation paid off with never before heard details that give context to the foundation and growth of a new music genre and the struggles of the artists (and businesspeople) who made it happen. I found his descriptions of the interviews particularly interesting - the additional detail, while not fundamentally necessary to the story, made me picture myself in his shoes as he sat through countless discussions. I wholeheartedly recommend this book!

Mr. Westhoff's latest installment of hip-hop lore, *Ben* tackles the behemotic tangled mess that is the origins of rap culture in the West. While the recent film *Straight Out of Compton* revived intrigue in the mysterious story of NWA and West Coast rap, it did not do complete justice to the truth nor had a concrete foundation of detail. There was much left to be desired. Much of what is known of West Coast hip-hop is left to anecdotal accounts or interviews by those who were in the circle of NWA, Tupac, Eazy-E, Ice Cube, etc. Many of those who pioneered rap culture in the West are not alive today. Mr. Westhoff's incredible research, which took a number of years, digs down deep and gets to the truth and dispels the myths. We learn the nitty gritty details of the personal lives of NWA, Tupac, Eazy-E, Ice-Cube, etc. We discover connections between rap groups that were otherwise unknown. Ben also addresses the social and political turmoil of the time with excellent commentary. There is no other book, nor documentary around currently that is as descriptive and as detailed as this book. There is so much detail that it feels as if you are there with the rap icons themselves. This is what journalism is about, and Mr. Westhoff slams it out of the park. Ben sets an example for how

journalism should be done. I don't want to spoil the book, but I wish it were longer! I would not be surprised if someday in the far future this book becomes required reading in a college class for the Studies of Hip-Hop Culture. EVERY FAN OF HIP-HOP MUST HAVE THIS BOOK IN THEIR COLLECTION!

Original Gangstas is a thorough and engrossing telling of the rise of West Coast Rap. Mr. Westhoff did extensive research, interviewed countless people, and sifted through fact, opinion, and hearsay like the professional journalist that he is. The characters are all portrayed as the very real, very flawed, and very talented individuals they were. While other books and films chose to ignore some of the darker aspects of these individuals' character and story, Mr. Westhoff dives right in and shows both the good and the bad. He is a true fan of the genre and that helps him express just how groundbreaking this music was as he tells the story of the people who made it. If you are interested at all in music, hip-hop culture, race relations, or the tragic drama that ended the young lives of Eazy-E, Tupac, Biggie, and others, this is a must read.

Entertaining from cover to cover. Lots of myths debunked, lots of fun - cited - backstories explained that I didn't previously know existed. So many knots and loose ends unraveled and tied up, in what is probably one of the most politically charged and complex times in rap music. A must read for anyone into hip-hop. I even read the acknowledgements it was that good.

This book is an exceptional read. It presents the story of West Coast rap in a way that is both interesting and loaded with information you're not getting anywhere else. Ben Westhoff's talent for research is really evident throughout the book - he comes through with a lot of unique content. The story is so compelling and easy to read that it's hard to put the book down once you get going. I would recommend this to anyone who has any interest in rap. I absolutely loved it, and I am even using it as a source for my senior history thesis.

I'm truly enjoying Ben Westhoff's book, "Original Gangstas." He brings to life the story of all these macks in a compelling, easy-to-follow manner. I can tell that Westhoff has a journalistic background - the book feels very measured, ethical, and well-researched. These characters are so mythical that he almost couldn't lose. I'm pleased to observe that the book doesn't stoop to salacious levels, even while managing to report some pretty hardcore adventures. Really a great book, I'd recommend it to everyone.

As of this writing, this is the absolute best resource you're gonna find when it comes to the details on West coast rap/gangster rap history. There's a lot of conflicting information out there, but the way it is told in this book appears to be the most factual account available. No bias; if there are multiple versions of an incident that the author cannot independently verify, he will give you them all and let you make your own judgement. As close to flawless writing as you'll find on this subject. A must read if you're interested in rap history.

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