



Dead Kennedys: Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables: The Early Years

By Alex Ogg

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Despite releasing records only on independent labels and receiving virtually no radio play, Dead Kennedys routinely top both critic and fan polls as the greatest punk band of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Their sound was inventive and tetchy, and front man Jello Biafra's lyrics were incisive and often scathing. This chronicle—the first in-depth book written about Dead Kennedys—uses dozens of firsthand interviews, photos, and original artwork to offer a new perspective on a group that was mired in controversy almost from its inception. It examines and applauds the band's key role in transforming punk rhetoric, both polemical and musical, into something genuinely threatening and enormously funny. Author Alex Ogg puts the local and global trajectory of punk into context and, while not flinching from the wildly differing takes the individual band members have on the evolution of the band, attempts to be celebratory—if not uncritical.

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Dead Kennedys: Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables: The Early Years By Alex Ogg Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #128542 in Books
- Published on: 2014-07-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 6.25" w x .50" l, .56 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages



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Editorial Review

Review

"This story, told efficiently by a veteran chronicler of punk, reveals that the American underground in the late '70s could match the best of the British punks when it came to political commentary paired with feisty music." —John L. Murphy, [popmatters.com](#)

"This is an extremely interesting, well balanced and long overdue account of the story of one of punk's most important bands." —Andy Higgins, [massmovement.co.uk](#)

"The Dead Kennedys tale is as complex and contradictory brilliant as any journey through punk rock can be with their tight knit musical brilliance and their acidic commentary on the bedenimmed neoliberal consensus of late seventies America." —John Robb, [louderthanwar.com](#)

"This book is an essential pick-up for anyone with an iota of interest in the DKs and Punk in general. Highly recommended." —Pete Craven, [caughtinthecrossfire.com](#)

"Alex Ogg has accomplished a rare task with his new book. . . . Ogg manages to present all sides of the band's history, speaking with all sides of the now-warring members. More surprisingly, it's actually entertaining." —[nuthousepunks.com](#)

"This book encapsulates perfectly the time when punk was a movement and not an scholastic subject." —Mark Diston, *the Register*

"This first major work on America's massively influential punk band will be pounced on and devoured by the huge Dead Kennedys global fan-base." —Kris Needs, *Classic Rock*

"It's a well-balanced and informative account . . . the pages just seem to turn themselves." —Andy Higgins, *Razorcake*

"The Dead Kennedys couldn't get arrested (creatively speaking) in America and turned toward British indie label Cherry Red to release *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables*, which, in the author's words, 'outclasses *London Calling*, or the Sex Pistols' and the Ramones' debut albums.'" —Matthew Duersten, [lamag.com](#)

"A must have item for anyone interested in this original and distinctive band and their sneering yet creative take on the Punk Rock form." —Roger Batty, *Musique Machine*

"Ogg's directness and his attention to detail make this among the best biographies you will ever read. The book recounts a vital chapter in US Punk history and delivers its narrative with style, focus and sincerity."
—Steve Scanner, scannerzine.com

About the Author

Alex Ogg is a freelance writer and journalist whose work has appeared in numerous publications, including the *Guardian* and the *Times*. He is the author of several music titles, including *The Hip Hop Years: A History of Rap* and *No More Heroes: A Complete History of UK Punk from 1976 to 1980*, and the coauthor of *The Art of Punk*, which was named a 2012 book of the year by the *Independent*. **Ruby Ray** is a former staff photographer for *Search & Destroy* magazine, for which she photographed acts such as Dead Kennedys, Devo, Flipper, the Sex Pistols, and X. Her work has been collected in *From the Edge of the World: California Punk, 1977–1981*. She lives in San Francisco. **Winston Smith** is an artist known for his use of "hand-carved" collage. He first came to prominence through his collaborations with Dead Kennedys, for which he created numerous album covers, inserts, and flyers. He lives in San Francisco.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Veronica Roberts:

Nowadays reading books become more and more than want or need but also become a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. The advantages you got of course the knowledge the particular information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of book you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with training books but if you want really feel happy read one with theme for entertaining like comic or novel. The actual Dead Kennedys: Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables: The Early Years is kind of guide which is giving the reader erratic experience.

Leonard Bartow:

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