

## GG Allin My Prison Walls

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The world is a fucked-up place. This is a fact that I'm reminded of daily by posts on the internet and strange encounters walking the streets of New York. It is this fact that GG Allin, the deceased frontman and lead rebel-rouser for the Murder Junkies (among other bands), embraced. Seeing through a filter of drugs, alcohol and punk ethos, he created a world vision that constantly pitted good vs. evil. Allin himself was not necessarily on either side of that divide, instead straddling the line as it suited him in his battle to defend rock & roll from corporate interests, and in the process, offend as many people as possible. He became infamous for attacking his audiences and smearing his bodily fluids and excrement on himself and others. His performances were the stuff of legend, especially after he began promising to kill himself onstage. He never followed through on his promise, instead dying of an overdose in 1993, but it wasn't for a lack of trying.

In 1989, Allin was arrested for "assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder" of a woman he had apparently cut and bit as part of their coital relations. (Allin insisted at his trial that she was a willing participant and had done the same to him.) He ended up spending three months in the Jackson State Penitentiary in Michigan, and during that time he kept a journal, which is the centerpiece of My Prison Walls (Aggronautix), a recently released limited edition collection of his memoirs from this time. In addition to the journal, which is titled "30 Days in the Hole" and is reproduced here in Allin's handwriting, the book includes GG's mission statement (typed for effect, apparently), as well as his correspondence with friends, family, and most notably, serial killer John Wayne Gacy. This is augmented with portraits of GG made by other convicts, as well as plenty of Allin's own artwork, which consists mostly of self-portraits and depictions of carnal acts.

While not really the coffee table book you want out when mom comes over, My Prison Walls reveals the duplicitous nature of Allin. While descriptions of things like masturbating for the prison's security cameras might seemingly indicate otherwise, Allin wasn't simply a deranged madman. As his letters show, he possessed a heightened self-awareness and seemed to understand that such depravity fed into his image. It's as if each and everything unspeakable act was part of the construct of GG Allin, and he wanted to capture it all. Did he anticipate that one day someone might be pouring over his thoughts? Perhaps that's why he bothered to title his journal. There's a reason Allin is still remembered 20 years after his death, and it's not simply because he ate his own shit (both literally and figuratively). He had managed to destroy any demarcation of taboos in his life, becoming a living embodiment of the kind of primal instincts that rock & roll has always sought to tap. My Prison Walls is by no means anything revelatory, but it at least shows that he wasn't just an animal frothing at the mouth during his imprisonment. There aren't any great lessons to be gleaned from reading this book, but it's at times a fascinating look into the mind of punk rock's most notorious practitioner.



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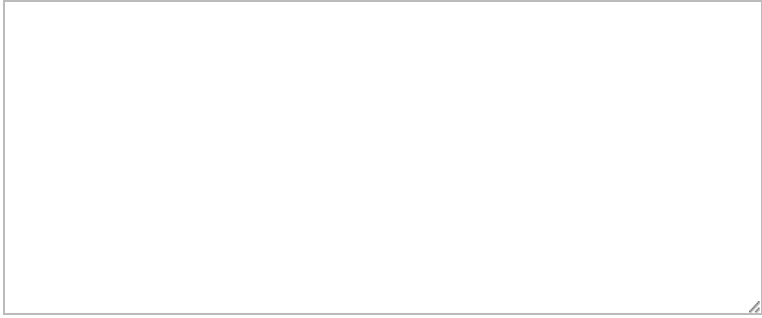
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