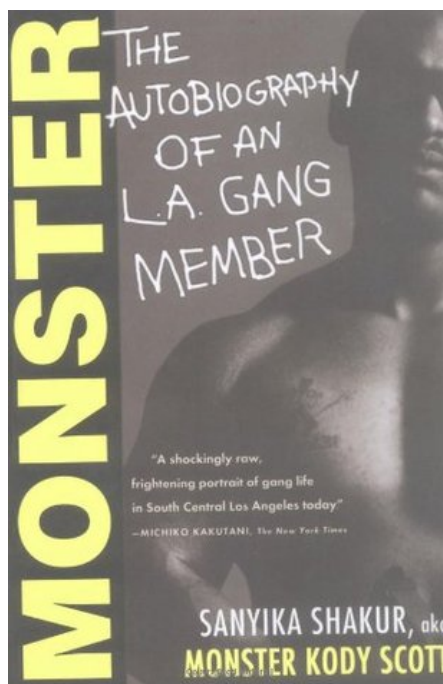




Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member

Sanyika Shakur

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"After pumping eight blasts from a sawed-off shotgun at a group of rival gang members, twelve-year-old Kody Scott was initiated into the L.A. gang the Crips. He quickly matured into one of the most formidable Crip combat soldiers, earning the name "Monster" for committing acts of brutality and violence that repulsed even his fellow gang members. When the inevitable jail term confined him to a maximum-security cell, a complete political and personal transformation followed: from Monster to Sanyika Shakur, black nationalist, member of the New Afrikan Independence Movement, and crusader against the causes of gangsterism. In a document that has been compared to *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and *Eldridge Cleaver's Soul on Ice*, Shakur makes palpable the despair and decay of America's inner cities and gives eloquent voice to one aspect of the black ghetto experience today."

Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member Details

Date : Published June 29th 2004 by Grove Press (first published January 1st 1993)

ISBN : 9780802141446

Author : Sanyika Shakur

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Biography, Mystery, Crime, True Crime, Autobiography, Memoir



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From Reader Review **Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member for online ebook**

Julianna Garner says

This book lets the reader get an insight to life as a gang member, and what exactly there motive is for. The main character, Monster Kody Scott (the author), is telling his young life as a gang member. Kody started at only 11, almost doomed from the start, he was in and out of juvenile detentions, shot, and even went to jail in maximum security. Kody Scott was a part of a LA group of crips called the North Side Eight Tray Gangsters. Although Kody brought it upon himself, for being involved in many criminal acts. He had an unfair advantage, he had lost a basic human right of equality as a child, because he was black and from the hood he knew and everyone else knew he stood no chance. He couldn't go to a nice school his mom wanted to send him to , because on the way there he was almost shot while in the school bud, and he was one of the few black boys and looked at funny. People discriminated against Kody, causing him to follow in the only path he knew how to without getting killed, killing right back in return. This book is an amazing way to get on a different level, than media exploits. Gives you a different perspective on gangs and their motives.

Eva Leger says

I have yet to join a gand, hehe, but this seems like a good portrayal of what the life would be like. I did like that he didn't seem to be glorifying the gang life but at the same time the few racist remarks included bothered me. Probably what bothered me most of all was his likening the gang to the army and military, likening a drive-by shooting to a war, things like that. Overall it was a good book with a good story, good ending, good lessons, and good writing.

Alonzo says

“The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member” by Sanyika Shakur also known as “Monster” Kody Scott is a raw frightening portrait of gang life in South Central, Los Angeles. In the sixth grade he joined the Eight Tray Crips. During his early days of being in the gang, he left a man in a coma and disfigured. Police told bystanders the person responsible for it was a “monster, thus giving him his nickname.

Kody Scott was raised with no father and a hard working mother who was never able to be home. He then became a gangmember from his lack of guidance and for the anger her held inside of him. I feel that this book shows the capabilities of someone with the no guidance in their life. It gives a clear and vivid portrait of the dangers and frightening problems that are happening in our poor areas. I also feel it shows that no one is ever bound to the life that they have and that you can change, if you commit yourself and thrive to do better with your life.

PrincessofthePage says

I read this book when I was about 20 years old and in college as a part of an English class. I loved it. I've read several other's reviews on here from people who didn't like it, but this is why I did:

- As an autobiography from a gang member I didn't expect Ernest Hemingway style of writing. I think it brought realness to the book of who this person was, even though I'm sure this book went through a lot of editing to even get to this point.

- While it had realness, it had the thrill of fiction. I kept wondering, "Did all of this really happen??!!" I'm sure details are sketchy, as is any autobiography, or any story taken from one person's point of view. Yet, knowing enough about gang life (not firsthand, but from enough sources over the years) I could believe the accounts.

-It opened my eyes to a world that I knew of but tried my hardest to stay away from. I grew up in Detroit so gang life was introduced to my world in junior high. Certain classmates at age 12 and 13 were in gangs. One former classmate is currently STILL in prison (after being in and out of juvie) for murder and weapon charges. It's real.

-It peaked my interest. The history books don't tell you about this part of America. But after reading this book I delved deeper into it, going to the library and searching on line for more real-life stories. I researched the various gangs in America and how and why they were formed. The information I found lined up with what I read in Monster.

Though I do not condone the actions and killings of a gang member, I am fascinated by it at the same time. It's the reason why we watch so many TV and movie dramas about murders and other criminals. We are intrigued and we get a guilty thrill into learning more about WHY and HOW someone would do such terrible things, while secretly getting entertainment from it all.

So I leave it there. I loved this book and will one day read it again. I may not feel exactly the same way once I do, as I am 10 years older and mind is different now, but this book helped to get me to the mindset I have today.

Jordan Allen says

Before reading this book I was under the assumption that people choose to participate in gangs. After reading this book I know that it is way more complicated. Sanyika does a fantastic job explaining, not justifying, why gang life in South Central is simply a part of life: "My participation came as second nature. To be in a gang in South Central when I joined- and it is still the case today- is the equivalent of growing up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, and going to college: everyone does it."

Sanyika transforms himself from banger to revolutionist. His descriptions were extremely disturbing, but introspective and honest.

Here is a list of what I took away from the book:

- Gang life is a symptom of oppression. The Crips were founded in 1969- in the midst of the civil rights movement. Gangs were created to instill a sense of stability within the black community. "Black-on-black violence is a result of white-on-black violence."
 - The only effective way to change a culture is from within.
 - No matter what the circumstances are, individuals have the power to transform.
 - What is your place as an individual in society?
-

Annette says

Wow, my liberal guilt meter must already be on full because I fucking hated this autobiography. I encourage everyone to skim the other reviews to understand why it is so highly rated and who is doing the rating. However, I will not bite.

Ok, "Monster" Kody fucking shoots PEOPLE a/k/a HUMAN BEINGS without so much as a fore or afterthought. He writes about these murders as if they are "points" to be gained in a game and nothing more. I was expecting to see Kody redeem himself in the end. I was hopeful when a Muslim preacher came in and struck a nerve with the boy (who I believe was 15 at the time and in prison).

But woe...woe...Kody simply redirected his Eight Tray Gangster CRIPS hatred of the Sixties over onto those evil white people who he refers to as "Americans" (me?) that oppress him by assuming he should get a fucking day job instead of rollin thru the hood all day long shooting people & getting high on PCP. Fucking oppressive bastards! Oh, and woe, woe that Monster has to spend time in PRISON for assault and battery after he KILLS people.

You know how I know how Kody is not redeemed? Read the "prose" closely. "We strapped up" "we went hunting for a mark" "we grabbed our enemy"... "THEY then shot him." "THEY then cut his damn arms off" "THEY kept his arm..." Yeah. Doesn't even take responsibility for his own goddamned actions.

And shut up about this gang lifestyle being "inescapable" for the love of all that is holy. I mean, only ONE kid got expelled for flinging gang signs in the school photo. There are a lot of kids that are "off limits" to being killed because they are "civilians". So shut up about being in a gang is "safer."

I was hoping that Kody, after finding he is indeed not a nigga', but a "New Afrikan" would get out of prison and maybe mentor young gangbangers to get out of banging. But no...want to know how it ends? If not, don't read the following:

He is thrown back in prison for assaulting a dude and stealing his van. But wait...Monster is the one wrongly captured by the racist and evil pigs! You see, the dude was a CRACK addict who wouldn't stop slinging on the corner, and Monster just was trying to do the right thing and has to 'confiscate' the crack addict's van. Woe. WOE to the parolee that does not call the police to take care of crack addicts! WOE WOE to the neck-tattooed 'former' banger who rather than stand by his self-asserted moral rectitude and go in front of a jury instead pleads to 7 years.

Am I supposed to sympathize with a person who blames all of his murderous and animalistic behavior on people he has never even met (me)? Hello? I give to charity! I mentor inner-city children! I don't car jack people! I don't shoot people! I don't have a bunch of illegitimate children whom I ignore! I don't make people drink cups of my own piss! WHO IN THE HELL IS OPPRESSING "YOUR PEOPLE", MOTHER FUCKER? YOU ARE. WAKE THE FUCK UP AND WRITE PART II.

I'm glad this punk ass is still in prison.

He can't find me through goodreads.com, can he? If he can, I was just kidding, and this book is totally sweet and gets 5 stars!

Cory says

Simply put, a very haunting tale of L.A. ganglife.

Byron says

Well, that escalated quickly!

Author Sanyika Shakur a/k/a Monster Kody Scott goes from graduating the sixth grade to committing multiple homicides in this book's first few paragraphs -- not pages, mind you, paragraphs!

And it's just downhill from there. Over the course of the next few chapters, he racks up a body count that would be implausible in a damn Terminator movie. You wonder how he can admit to so many killings with minimal concern for being arrested for them.

Granted, there's the fact that he's been in and out of jail -- and more in than out -- since he was not quite an adult. The second half or so of this book, which isn't as interesting as the first half (which is downright riveting) takes place in the joint.

Because this is a book, and because it's written by a guy who's spent a significant amount of time in the pokey (of course the author uses the word "overstand" every few sentences), there's a redemption story arc involving some hate group-esque black nationalist organization.

It doesn't quite ring true, and a quick consultation with the Google reveals that the author has only continued to commit carjackings and what have you. I'm hesitant to criticize this book, lest he knows how to use the Internets. It's an amazing book though anyway.

Khashayar Mohammadi says

I read this book as a part of a book exchange I have with a coworker, and his obsession with biographies forces me to delve into my least favorite genre of literature. I have never cared much for biographies, and I doubt if any book, no matter how fantastic can change that about me.

all that set aside, the book was written well, and it provided a lot of insight into the life of an L.A. gang member, and American gang members in general. I can't really see the point of the book, since it didn't really have a clear direction, it progressed in chronological order without rhyme or reason and concluded quite suddenly with only a handful of pages to conclude and provide a "Message" of some sorts. Its a great autobiography as far as autobiographies go but I honestly didn't get the point.

Melanie Samay says

Kody Scott's transformation to Sanyika Shakur

Sanyika Shakur's, aka Monster Kody Scott, *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*, was published in 1993. Featuring literary tropes, the style flows, everything is explained easily for the reader, and yet the book is hard to read. It's difficulty lay not in the writing but in the content and the emotions they evoke. Without glamorizing gang life, Sharkur describes his rise through the ranks of the Crips gang. After brutally disfiguring someone, Kody is nicknamed Monster, and redefines himself by his new moniker. By the time Kody is 16, he has been shot on two separate occasions, with a total of 7 bullets entering his body.

Read more at SoIFollowJulian.com: <http://soifollowjulian.com/2013/08/18...>

Huda says

This book was a very interesting book and shows how gang life really is. I liked this book because it shows how he transitioned from a gang member into a revolutionist. I would like to read the other books that he has written also.

Kevin Eleven says

Monster: The Autobiography of An L.A. Gang Member tells the story of Monster Kody Scott and his time growing up as an Eight Tray Gangster Crip in South Central Los Angeles. During his youth, Monster shows his loyalty to the set by shooting opposing rival gangs, (often times killing them) robbing civilians, committing grand theft auto and defending the hood (he grew up on Florence and Normandie) at all costs. Moreover, what makes his personal account hit home is the fact that he lays down the foundation of gangbanging and how the culture attributed to his own logic and theory of living in a highly dangerous working-class environment. In the chapter, "Can't Stop, Won't Stop" he writes, "At sixteen I felt twenty-four. Life meant very little to me. I felt that my purpose on earth was to bang. My mind-set was narrowed by the conditions and circumstances prevailing around me" (Shakur 102). He later says, "I recognized early that where I lived, we grew and died in dog years. Actually, some dogs outlived us" (Shakur 102). Over the next twelve years of his life, Monster continued to gangbang, although less drastically then before, as he slowly but surely began to shift his thinking towards black pride, unity and nationalism through the teachings of Islam. In between his many stints in prison and jail, he educates himself and comes across the literatures of Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, Fidel Castro, and the Black Panther Party which solidifies his transition into the man he later became in Sanyika Shakur. What Shakur's autobiography represents is an abomination of black people amongst one other. With the constant war and murders between the Eight Trays and Rollin' Sixties, we learn that the number one killer of Crips is actually not Bloods but Crips themselves from different neighborhoods with circumstances tying up into the grotesque affairs. It is because of this matter that when Shakur discovers his own perspective, he decides to remove himself from gang life and focuses his attention for the fight and struggle of all black people. This is shown in the book's final page as he says, "Gangsterism continues. But more importantly, the struggle to eradicate the causes of gangsterism continues. And it is this struggle to which I am dedicated" (Shakur 377). After viewing the aftermath of his own wrongdoing and that of others, Shakur's choice to fight against the repression of his own people shows that a 360 mental shift is possible but it must be done with the willpower that one uses when he chooses to indulge in any matter or action of his choosing. For someone who was once a gangster, how gangster is that?

Beth says

This was a bit of an odd book. There were moments when I just wanted to put it down because it was moving slowly, was weighed down by the prose of someone trying way too hard, and reading the dialect of the dialogue was headache-causing at times. There were also moments where the book just flew by and I found myself getting involved with the characters, starting to feel like maybe I was understanding some of the allure that the Bloods or the Crips might have had for a young person. Of course, I'm not from South Central LA nor do I have any real experience with hardcore gangs from major inner city areas, but this book did a good job of explaining just why gangs are flourishing and why they might not be all bad. It also does a

wonderful job of detailing the crimes, the monstrosities, and the insane level of violence facing most (if not all) of the young men and women in gangs today.

Overall, a very interesting book. It was a little political and a little too wordy and preachy for me to give it more than three stars, but I feel that it was a worthwhile effort to get through it.

Ana says

When you read that gang book that makes you feel gangsta. #gangstarapmademedoit

I've been eyeing this book for quite awhile now. To quote Pac, *'I didn't choose the thug life, the thug life chose me.'*

Book playlist:

2Pac - Dear Mama
2Pac - Life Goes On
2Pac - Ghetto Gospel
2Pac - Hail Mary
Eminem - Space Bound
Gangsta's Paradise - Coolio feat. L.V.
Kendrick Lamar - Humble
Macklemore & Ryan Lewis - Downtown
The Notorious B.I.G. - Juicy
Future - Mask Off
Salt-N-Pepa - Push It
RUN-DMC - It's Tricky
Beastie Boys - Make Some Noise
G-Eazy & Kehlani - Good Life
The Weeknd feat. Daft Punk -Starboy
Wiz Khalifa feat. Charlie Puth - See You Again
The Chainsmokers - Sick Boy
Jay Z feat. Alicia Keys - Empire State of Mind

Andrew says

I felt that this book was just ok.

Nothing wrong with the content or anything, it's just the content kind of turned me off. The life of a Crip is

not something I ever want to be a part of, espically after reading this. All the senseless killing just to make a name for yourself. Hunting groups of people down "not from your block" just to kill them. It so senseless, but it's seen as "the way of life." And there is no remorse to be found within for all the "enemies" killed.

What really got me was when they tried to steal a van for a hit. The owner of the van fought them off, stole one of their guns and shot at them. This is a guy defending his stuff, his property, but to these gang members it was a dumb guy that stopped them, so he had to be hunted down and dealt with. Really? Someone disrespects you so you kill them, to stand up for your stuff, but this guy who did the samething is now a target.

Like I said senseless violence.

The author does come around in the last two chapters while in jail, again, but I'm not really sure it's a real change. Instead of "let's gangbang and kill each other" mentality, it's now just a "we are all black brothers, let's fight everyone else." Pretty much the same philosphy I would say just an expanded form of hatred.

I would be interested in an update to this book, seeing as it was written in 1993. I'm curious if the author has changed his mind on things in the last 19 years.

So give this a read if you want to feel a bit depressed about youth culture from the 80's and early 90's in South Central LA.
