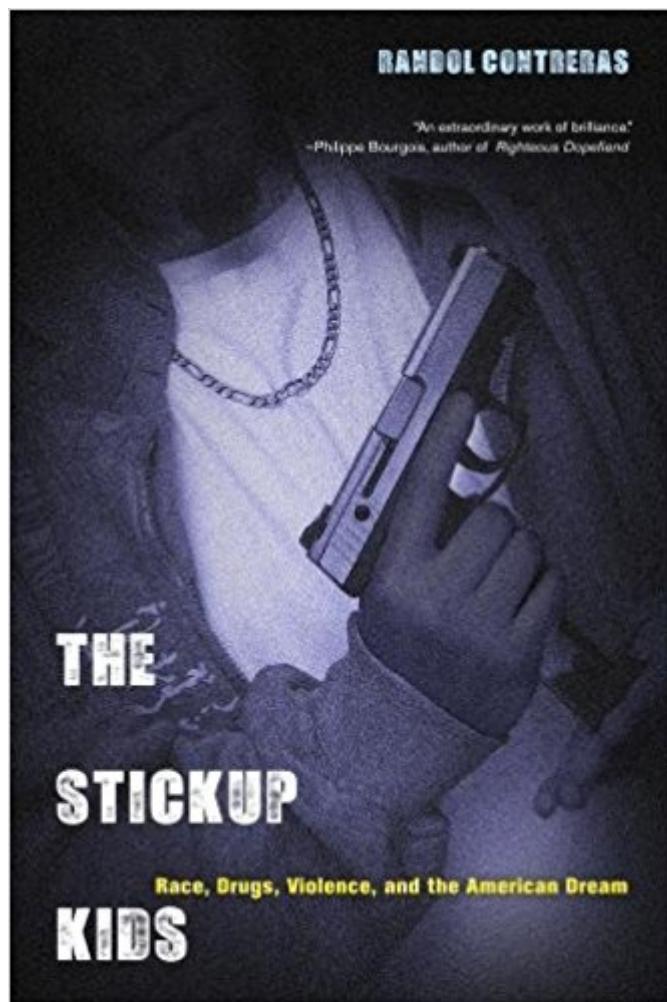


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The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence, And The American Dream



Synopsis

Randol Contreras came of age in the South Bronx during the 1980s, a time when the community was devastated by cuts in social services, a rise in arson and abandonment, and the rise of crack-cocaine. For this riveting book, he returns to the South Bronx with a sociological eye and provides an unprecedented insider's look at the workings of a group of Dominican drug robbers. Known on the streets as "Stickup Kids," these men raided and brutally tortured drug dealers storing large amounts of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and cash. As a participant observer, Randol Contreras offers both a personal and theoretical account for the rise of the Stickup Kids and their violence. He mainly focuses on the lives of neighborhood friends, who went from being crack dealers to drug robbers once their lucrative crack market opportunities disappeared. The result is a stunning, vivid, on-the-ground ethnographic description of a drug robbery's violence, the drug market high life, the criminal life course, and the eventual pain and suffering experienced by the casualties of the Crack Era. Provocative and eye-opening, *The Stickup Kids* urges us to explore the ravages of the drug trade through weaving history, biography, social structure, and drug market forces. It offers a revelatory explanation for drug market violence by masterfully uncovering the hidden social forces that produce violent and self-destructive individuals. Part memoir, part penetrating analysis, this book is engaging, personal, deeply informed, and entirely absorbing.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"An important book. . . . Not your typical ethnography. . . . [This is] a story told from the inside out." (Michael B. Greene PsycCRITIQUES 2013-07-01)"Hard-hitting, gravitating, and reflexive . . . Dr. Contreras shines in providing readers a greater level of complexity and nuance to understand these experiences." (Robert J. Duran Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice and Criminology 2014-10-01) "At once a sensational, detailed, stomach-churning account of extreme violence and a sober, solid piece of social science research that makes a number of important contributions to our understanding of how violence is situated in structural, cultural, historical, and, especially, situational context. . . . finely wrought, first class social science . . . profound." (Mercer L. Sullivan Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Books 2015-01-01)"The Stickup Kids provides a unique insight for researchers, criminal justice representatives, advocates, and policy-makers who want to improve the overall well-being marginalized and segregated racial and ethnic minority communities. . . . A valuable addition." (Journal of Criminal Justice Education 2015-04-04) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The Stickup Kids is an extraordinary work of brilliance; complex critical theory woven fluidly through a gripping narrative of intimate personal experience. Contreras is a genuine, organic intellectual a la Gramsci. His is a brand new voice that challenges elitist ways of doing fieldwork and analyzing theory in academia. Rich and honest, this work deserves to be a classic ethnography of U.S. inner-city suffering. —Philippe Bourgois, author of *Righteous Dopefiend*; In The Stickup Kids, we witness the trickery and tactics of robbing drug dealers, torturing them to reveal their money stash, and the talk and emotions by which all this is normalized. Contreras gets us closer to the lifeworld of violent professional criminals than any previous researcher. —Randall Collins, University of Pennsylvania; Contreras is that rare breed of ethnographer who studies race, poverty and crime from the ground up and from the inside out while avoiding the traps of moralism and paying due attention to structural forces. His carnal dissection of the double marginality and built-in liminality of drug robbers in the South Bronx offers a dense, penetrating, and poignant account of the murky intersections of street violence, economic destitution, ethnoracial anguish, and masculine hubris. The Stickup Kids is a book to ruminant and emulate. —Loïc Wacquant, author of *Body & Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer and Urban Outcasts*

Excellent depiction of the crack era in NYC from a completely different perspective than I am used to reading about. Randol describes growing up with close friends who become successful drug

dealers then imploded into destruction. You get the low down from a street angle not from some sociologist looking in. This story is personal. You can feel the intimacy within the writing. The academic aspect to this book is just as fascinating. Dominicans vs Dominicans, willing to tear each other apart to succeed in reaching the american dream which in reality is the cause of this epidemic. I am from NYC and lived this period first hand but this book gave me a completely different perspective on the subject. Props for the lyrics to 80's rap songs from Special Ed and Kool G Rap !

Being born and raised in the South Bronx and a current student studying culture and violence, this helps combine what I've witnessed over the years with the theories and social influences that can potentially be challenged and changed for future generations. I cringed as I read about my neighborhood but was able to ask relatives about their experiences when the "Bronx was burning". Excellent book and highly recommended.

Immersed in this book! Great read for sociology majors!!

This book is part of my criminology class required reading good book

I have heard great things about this ethnography, but I didn't enjoy it as much as my peers. I say read it, you might like it better than I did. It does have some fascinating parts about the history of areas of New York.

Amazing little book. I say little because it is so good you end up finishing the book in about a day or two. I thoroughly enjoyed Contreras' work because he, in my opinion, balanced his research with his personal past experiences and explains its sociological significance . The most interesting, capturing academic work I've had the pleasure of reading. Definitely a great read and would highly recommend it.

This book was very well written. The author has a great advantage for this type of research: he has insight into the daily lives of the individuals that he researched and lived it himself. I wish that he had used this strength to write a true ethnography, however. Rather than staying true to pure ethnography and writing objective literature on a very specific culture, he had an agenda. Several times he cited the macro issue of institutional racism and the failure of American capitalism as forces behind the poor decisions and behaviors of his interviewees. Although I generally agree that

these are important in understanding behaviors, they are by no means to blame for individual decision making. For example, how can the author cite that the institutions failed his colleagues, when several of them had legitimate opportunities for success that America institutions provided them (one was a football star at a prominent southern university, etc). He is confirming that the United States provides economic opportunity to individuals of all demographics. Moreover, the author himself disproves this. He is successful, articulate and made it out of a very difficult struggle. What I loved in the beginning was the author's use of history, which he also could have used to his advantage. He could have built on Bourgois' review of spatial isolation, and provided hope to these populations. Most of the American population is connected to immigrants, who fought racism, economic and social isolation less than a hundred years ago, but who have assimilated into the American economy. I think that Contreras had a huge opportunity to write an ethnography on par with Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, but he missed the mark.

as described

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