



Hit Hard: A Story of Hitting Rock Bottom at the Top

Joey Kramer, William Patrick, Keith Garde, Nikki Sixx (Foreword by)

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“If ‘sex, drugs, rock ‘n’ roll’ is what you want, it’s what you’ll get in these photo-laden pages. Kramer’s style is honest, straightforward and pulls no punches.”

— *Publishers Weekly*

Cash meets *The Heroin Diaries* in *Hit Hard*: Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer’s moving and inspiring story of fighting personal demons, as well as a wildly glamorous, crazy, drug-addled, behind-the-drum-set look at one of the greatest bands in rock n’ roll history. From never-before-told Aerosmith war stories across their entire 40 year career to Joey’s own struggles with addiction and depression, *Hit Hard* is only the second authorized biography of the band—following the *New York Times* bestseller *Walk This Way*—and the first autobiography from any Aerosmith band member.

Hit Hard: A Story of Hitting Rock Bottom at the Top Details

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From Reader Review Hit Hard: A Story of Hitting Rock Bottom at the Top for online ebook

Tammy says

This book has been on my 'to read' list since it came out. Not your typical sexdrugsandrockandroll memoir, although we certainly get a sense of all of these aspects in the classic tale - boy picks up an instrument, boy meets the right people in the right place at the right time, boy allows his excesses to take over his life, boy lives to tell the tale (that last part varies sometimes - in the classic tale...)

What stood out for me in this memoir was Mr. Kramer's obvious love for his art. Sure, there was sex - but that was usually relegated to a throw away line. Sure there were drugs - and his portrayal of his addiction and recovery as well as the depression that resulted from numbing his feelings with alcohol and drugs for so many years was the primary focus of the book. But the segments that really stood out for me came early in the book when he talked about learning his instrument. His passion was obvious in these segments. I went away feeling like rock in general and drums in particular were his life.

I would've given this book more stars if more time had been spent discussing what he obviously loves and is passionate about and less time had been spent on the same old psychobabble I've read a million times before.

But it's his story, and this is how he chose to tell it - this is where he chose to place the emphasis. I'm glad I finally moved it from the 'to read' to the 'read' column.

Sarah says

I always feel like an asshole when I don't like someone's memoir. I mean, who am I to say that your life story (or the way you've chosen to tell it) is anything other than beautiful? Unsurprisingly, this is not the first time I've struggled with this. Remember Tweak by Nic Sheff? That one may have been the worst memoir of all time. (Good news for you, Kramer!)

Long story short, after years of grappling with the "I hate your memoir but don't feel good about it" issue, I've come to the conclusion that, while I may not be justified in judging the content of someone's story or their own interpretation of their life, I AM allowed to experience and express my reactions to their book via tiny online review blog.

And my reaction to Hit Hard? I was pretty damn bored.

I think Joey Kramer (drummer for Aerosmith for those of you who, like me, are generally rock n' roll naive) had a hard life, and I think there are elements of his story that are worth writing down, even if for no other reason than to provide some cathartic experience for Kramer himself. But that's really all this was: him getting things off his chest with little to no regard for the attention span of the reader.

I had such a hard time engaging with the narrative; the whole thing just seemed like so much fluffy, repetitive bullshit. Like he was regurgitating all of his "ah-ha!" moments in therapy. "Oh yeah- life IS about more than drugs!" "Oh yeah- maybe I AM trying to numb out the pain associated with my daddy issues!"

Over and over and over again, we revisit the same one-liners. For those of you who don't want to read the whole book (which I recommend that you don't—spend your valuable time elsewhere), here's a thorough summary:

- 1) Daddy hit me.
- 2) I got famous.
- 3) I used drugs to numb myself.
- 4) That's bad so I went to therapy a lot.
- 5) I re-discovered the same things about myself 500 times over the course of 40 years and tell you about each identical revelation using identical vocabulary until my editor says I can't use anymore pages.

THE END.

Sorry, Joey. You seem like a great guy and maybe in another context Aerosmith would seem like an interesting band, but man— that was a long 11 chapters.

Allison says

Joey Kramer's book is all about him - surprise surprise, right? It's an autobiography, of course it's about him! But it's about his struggles through life, it's not just a name-dropping, I'm a kick-ass rock star type of book.

Joey Kramer tells you everything. He tells you about frequently crying like a baby as a grown man, he tells you about shitting his pants because he was so strung out, he tells you about the guilt he feels for missing out on his son's childhood because of drugs. He shoulders some of the blame for his marriage ending, instead of pushing it off onto his ex-wife, who wouldn't be able to defend herself.

One of the most emotional parts was when he went to see his abusive father, who was wasting away from Alzheimer's.

"His face was like a mask. The disease had taken everything, even his ability to smile or talk. This big strong guy, this soldier who had stormed the beaches at Normandy to fight the Nazis was now helpless, stiff and hunched over, his muscles wasted away from not being used. It broke my heart, and I thought, This is the raging monster who had terrorized me when I was growing up?"

Throughout the book, Joey delves deeply into the complicated relationship with his dad, even sharing the letter he wrote after his father's death, forgiving him. I won't lie - I bawled uncontrollably during those sections. My heart went out to Joey for what he went through with his father, but then I was so proud and inspired that he forgave his dad.

Joey's battle with depression is very common, but it's always hard to believe that other people know how you're feeling. "...this depression was just one big hole, and I was right at the edge, looking down into the darkness, and the darkness had a gravitational pull all its own. I didn't want to go down there, and yet I couldn't pull away."

The book is about Aerosmith too, of course - he is the drummer. But it's not bragging about what he had, lost, and got back. It's about trying to define himself in another way: "Who are you, Joey Kramer? Who are you without Aerosmith?" I was forty-five years old, and it was time for me to have an answer."

It's not a self-help book, but there are a lot of nuggets of advice in there that I had to make note of. Here are a couple:

+ "I was learning to recognize that the minute I assumed something about what someone else was thinking or feeling about me and I got into defending against that assumption, not only was I giving life to a committee of enemies in my head, but I was the 'chairman' of that committee. Maybe most important, I began to hear the concept that we are not what other people feel about us or think about us."

+ "...that okay feeling has to be independent of how others might try to make me feel. ... The trick for me is having the right kind of boundaries - knowing which feelings belong to me and which are yours."

Disclaimer: Yes, I love Joey Kramer. But I'm not biased - I hate musicians that complain they never ever wanted to be famous, that they just wanted to play music - even when all they wrote about in their journals was how to book more shows, how to get in with this agent, how to get more public exposure (coughKurtCobaincough). I hate celebrities who use their fame to bring attention to themselves for any little thing, as a soapbox to force their views on the public.

It's easy to read a review from someone who is biased and think it's all bullshit. And true, maybe you wouldn't like this book, and maybe you think Aerosmith is a shitty, money-grubbing band. That's fine. But this is an honest story, and a powerful one, and it's clear to see the point of the book is not to make Joey look cool. I know he made money from signing the book deal, writing the manuscript, and from each copy sold. But I honestly think that he wanted to get his story out there.

"You don't have to be a rock star to crash and burn. The details of our stories may be different, but as humans, our pain is the same. ... I tried to convey a story that - while uniquely mine - is so relatable that it serves to deliver a universal message of hope and the process of healing."

And that's refreshing to hear from any celebrity.

Larry says

If you are searching for an insider's look at the debauchery of the rock n' roll life or an in-depth exploration of Aerosmith, this is not the book for you. Read "Walk This Way" for the Aerosmith scoop and any book about Elvis Presley, the Grateful Dead or Led Zeppelin for the crazy life of a rock star. "Hit Hard" is a book about self-discovery and self-realization, and a pretty poor one at that. There are dozens of better rock books out there and dozens of better recovery/mental health books available. I was hoping for a balance of both but got an overview of each aspect of Joey Kramer's life. I am really tiring of these "Poor me, I am a sad, lonely rock star." books. Toughen up. You haven't work a real job since high school and you have more money than most people. You don't like your life? Change careers, change friends, move on. If you, the music fan, have already seen Metallica's film, "Some Kind of Monster," there is no reason to read this book. You have heard enough whining by millionaire, child-men who can't get along with their best friends.

Kramer spends as much time complaining about his manager as he does describing the writing, recording, and touring for the first 4 Aerosmith albums. How about some balance here? The last chapter is not even worth reading.

Mike Ruhl says

Joey Kramer is the man!

I love Aerosmith and I knew they had a rough go but this book was a very insightful look at the hardships Joey Kramer went through to crawl back to the top of his game. An excellent read for anyone who was in need of finding themselves and recovering from pain.

Chip'sBookBinge says

As a long time fan of Aerosmith, I was very excited and looking forward to reading Hit Hard, knowing the struggles of Joey Kramer and his combative relationship with Steven Tyler, which was hinted at in the long-form video for The Making Of Pump. But now having just finished the book, I'm very disappointed with the results of reading it. The best way I can describe Hit Hard is that it's a "self help" book disguised as a Rock and Roll Biography. While reading through the book, I felt cheated as a reader and fan because a lot of stuff is just glossed over, moving on to the next thing.

If you're looking for inside information about Aerosmith and Steven Tyler and the rest of those that make up the band, you are in for a rude awakening. This book isn't your typical rags to riches memoir. This is about Joey Kramer and his depression that came from years of psychological warfare inflicted upon him as a child at the hands of both his Father and Mother, and then later on his Wife, Steven Tyler and Aerosmith band Manager Tim Collins.

If it sounds like I'm ragging on the book, I'm really not....kinda. Just be aware that this is a different kind of book than the norm. I applaud Mr. Kramer for taking a different route than the tried and true format. It just would have been nice to get a little more insight into the band and the wealth of stories related to the creation of some of their biggest masterpieces, which obviously isn't what this book is about anyway. This book just seems like it's a bit undercooked here.

I have to point out that there are 2 things that stuck with me after reading the book. His reconciliation with his Father at the end was absolutely heartbreakingly sad and will leave even the most jaded person on the planet in tears. And the story regarding the band's Manager is pretty riveting in watching a man do anything to retain control of his golden goose by way of pitting everyone within' Aerosmith against each other.

I can't really recommend this book unless you're looking for something a bit different. So, you have been warned.

Nikky3 says

I enjoyed how real this book was. He made a real effort to make this book relatable and you can really tell he is hoping you learn from his mistakes.

I did however hate the horrible font changes .

Christine Heffernan says

Grest

This is a very

Raw and real look into the world of depression. I felt like he described the disease and its symptoms as I felt them perfectly. I wish he went into more detail on what therapy sessions were like.

Luciano says

There were parts of this book that were absolutely riveting. I'm still amazed that a human being, with this level of talent, can sink to the bottom the way Joey Kramer did. Sometimes the story flounders, but luckily for only a page or two. Kramer weaves a story drawing from both his upbringing in an abusive home and the rise, fall and rise again of Aerosmith, which deliver a real emotional punch. You have to give the guy credit for having the balls to write something with so much depth and be willing to tackle his personal demons and wrestle them to the ground. Many other people in this same situation wouldn't be alive to write a book

Paul Lyons says

Engaging autobiography by Joey Kramer, the longtime drummer for Aerosmith. As a drummer, and Aerosmith fan, I appreciated getting to know about Kramer's life, and struggles with family, drugs, alcohol, injury, abuse marriage, money, music and more drugs. Yet also as a drummer, and a fan of Aerosmith, I was left disappointed by "Hit Hard."

I suppose I was hoping Joey Kramer's book would be an explicit "tell-all," with great stories about being a drummer, and being in a band like Aerosmith. Yet "Hit Hard" is not that book. The author writes like a man who is still very much part of Aerosmith, and does not want to burn any bridges in the telling of the band's story through his eyes. Sure there are a few band, album/road stories here and there...but many of the details are left out. Perhaps Kramer does not remember them, which is possible considering his drug and alcohol intake back then.

We learn much about Joey Kramer's troubled, abusive yet mutually beneficial relationship with Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler, yet almost nothing about his relationship with his other bandmates. I had read years ago that Steven Tyler actually played drums on an Aerosmith song instead of Kramer...why isn't THAT in the book? Also missing is Kramer's thoughts about the music Aerosmith was making...and his experiences recording some of their classic albums. So, yes, as an Aerosmith fan, I was let down.

What the author focuses on instead is his recovery from years of abuse from others, as well as self-abuse. "Hit Hard" itself seemed like another part of Joey Kramer's recovery program. Kramer spends a lot of time focusing on reclaiming his life from the people he allowed to control and abuse him...namely his father, and Steven Tyler. He learned to bury his pain by hiding with his toys, then later by drugs and alcohol.

Joey Kramer's decent into drug and psychological hell, and subsequent road back to self is indeed an interesting one (at times) and the book serves as a documented affirmation of his new, healthy outlook on both life and love...which is great. Well, at least the idea is great. What's missing, however, are the specific details that endear the reader to the author's plight.

The problem is that too many details and incidents are either glossed over, or spoken about in a broad way.

One never feels that one is experiencing Joey Kramer's story with him as it happened, but rather at a great distance, and in the past tense. A few years ago, Eric Clapton wrote a stellar book about his life and recovery from all forms of self-abuse that was fascinating, moving and shocking. THAT's what I was hoping "Hit Hard" would be. Instead, the reader gets only a taste of the incredible life Joey Kramer has had through the years.

Wise Cat says

I went to the library to pick this up when it was hot as hell, and it was worth it from the first word. It's pretty much a page turner, and I wanted to read this after recently finishing Joe Perry's book, *Rocks: My Life In and Out of Aerosmith*. I felt it a good idea to read Joey's book while Joe's was still pretty fresh in my mind. Also, it was in Joe's book I discovered Joey wrote on years earlier.

Getting Joey's side of the story was just as eye-opening, and I had no idea he suffered from depression for years. As someone who has a friend that struggles with this, I had to read this.

The second half of the book was much better and more personal than the first half. It didn't feel quite as personal as Joe's, maybe because it's about 100 pages shorter. During the first half, I thought I might just give it 3 or 4 stars, but 5 it is!

I'm no prude, but the "f word" was used a bit much for me.

Only things I didn't like about it was there was no index, some of the photos are not dated or people not identified in it, and every few pages a sentence or short paragraph would appear in a much larger and bold font. That was hard on my eyes. I don't know why it was done that way, as I didn't see anything out of the ordinary in the text that was formatted that way. It didn't stand out anymore than anything else on the page.

Great photos, but again some not dated and they seemed to be in kind of random order. He might look older in one picture, then the one a few pages later he looks younger. In some, I recognized the person in the picture, like one of Joey and Dustin Hoffman. But in others, I don't know and I wish it said. There was one where he was photographed with a boy or girl (hair is very short so I can't tell). I wondered is that his stepdaughter? A young fan? It was frustrating to me there was no identification.

A picture of Joey and a woman, at the end, could be either April or Linda. There's no pictures of April at all in the book, unless that was her.

I missed the index because I used it frequently in Joe's book. Sometimes I'd want to jump ahead to a certain time, like when they worked with Run DMC, and see what Joe says about that. So I'd look up Run DMC, read about that, then go back to where I left off. I was just so eager to see what he said about working with certain artists.

Joey didn't say much about this aspect of his career, or what he thought of up and coming bands like Guns and Roses opening for them one time. (Joe was impressed with them)

I wish Joey had written more about his relationships with Joe, Brad, and Tom. He did go into what he felt was his tumultuous relationship with Steven, his dad, and April. I also wondered about his relationships with his 3 younger sisters. Were they close? Did they get into the music business at all?

After reading both books, I feel like I "know" Joe better than I know Joey, but of course now I know way more than I did before. These famous people, whether actors, musicians, or authors are just as human as we are. But we forget, at least I do.

For some reason, when I was much younger, I never had an interest in reading about a celebrities' personal or early life. I guess it would burst that bubble of idolization I've had of them. But now as an adult, I see them as people who have unusual talents that most of us don't have, yet they are still human.

His father was an abusive bastard, no matter what his philosophy of parenting was about.

Joey's a real survivor. And those eyes----they look so sensitive and deep. You can tell by those eyes what a decent, compassionate guy is in there. He really opens up about a lot of things, and that takes a lot of guts.

Unlike Joe, he didn't write much about other artists he admired or mentored him. An exception is Jon Bonham, who he admired. Joey regretted that Jon died before he could ever see him play or meet him. I was touched about how he went to visit Jon's grave, saying his peace (piece?). I wish I knew what he said, but of course some things can be private. :-)

It took guts for him to discuss depression and mental illness. There is still way too much stigma in this country about it. Hearing of it from a famous musician can bring it out in the open even more.

The title is perfect as well: Joey WAS "hit hard": By his dad, by Steven (verbally), and by fame/fortune. And he survived.

Michael says

A really good book about Aerosmith's longtime drummer. This book provides a look into depression and abuse. Aerosmith fans will be fascinated by Kramer's relationship with Steven Tyler. It's obvious Joey Kramer idolizes the singer, and yet sometimes Tyler is the reason for most of his problems. I think this is a must read book for Aerosmith fans.

Patrick Sprunger says

I do not dispute the assertion made somewhere early in *Hit Hard* that Aerosmith is "America's number one rock and roll band." They are far from being America's *best* band, did not produce anything important, nor did they have any integrity to speak of. However, they were *constant*. Aerosmith provided power anthems and jock jams for multiple generations - on the strength of material that was perennially new (one generation had "Dream On," another "Angel," and another "Cryin'" (and so on, I expect)). While the other big names in classic rock existed only in the form of old hits from yesteryear, on constant heavy rotation on oldies stations for thirty solid years (see: Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, and Lynyrd Skynyrd), Aerosmith was tangible: They were on (contemporary) FM radio, on MTV, on the covers of magazines, had t-shirts at the mall... Hell,

you could go see them on tour or on Saturday Night Live. And it was always *new** music - not some nostalgic recap of 70s glory days. And they played consistently priapic, bone-headed blues rock. Everyone - from the most jaded punk rocker or hipster to the lamest conservative baby boomer - has a soft spot for good old fashioned, bone-headed blues rock with a ghoulish-yet-flamboyant frontman and a gaggle of ugly dudes in clown clothes playing a bunch of fucking guitar solos. It's when we let our defenses down for a brief moment and settle into some primordial resting state. Or something.

I've never thought much about Aerosmith though, despite the fact they are one of my most precious guilty pleasures. The constancy that defines them makes them also somewhat invisible - at least as far as people go. I was aware of Joey Kramer, though. He and Tom Hamilton (the tall, pleasant looking bass player) seemed nice. Like the Mike Nesmith and Peter Tork to Steven Tyler's and Joe Perry's Micky Dolenz and Davy Jones. I was pretty interested, from the get-go, in what this unassuming, cheerful-looking man would have to say about his life in a vapid, libidinous, arena rock circus show. I know why it was hard for Mike and Peter to be Monkees (it wasn't living in the shadow of Davy and Mickey - Peter and Mike were marginally creative people and just hip enough to detest the stink of what that manufactured "band" said about the state of art in America). What must one of the "nice ones" in this cultural travesty have to say? Come on, you've got to be interested too.

It turns out: not much. I'm not certain Joey Kramer even goes on record as saying he *likes* Aerosmith's music (though he must). I'm not sure Joey Kramer actually knows how to explain what he likes about music. This isn't a bad thing. For a lot of people (see: a lot of Aerosmith fans), music isn't something to be enthusiastic about or exult in. For them, music is just something that's always around, like scenery. And while it's to be appreciated, it is not necessarily worth close investigation. I think Joey Kramer is probably one of those people. Again, it isn't a bad thing. It's one of humanity's common permutations. I say all this because Joey Kramer - like me - probably hasn't done a lot of active thinking about Aerosmith himself. I feel like he just kind of went along with it and had fun. After all, it scored him tons of drugs and sexual gratification and he owns multiple Italian sports cars.

So this book isn't really about Aerosmith. After I got past that little expectational setback, I found I really didn't mind letting Joey Kramer unpack all his psychological baggage on me. (That's what this book is actually about: Joey Kramer's psychological baggage. Joey had a mean dad and a terrible mother. He was a poor student and fucked around a LOT. Not cool fuck around, though. Like, *playing in cover bands and getting hepatitis because you're a fuckup who lives in squalor* fuck around. He was in a series of abusive relationships. And he had to learn about them in order to resolve them. And now he's discovered inner peace and wants to tell you about it.)*

I mean, why *not* hear Joey Kramer out? He's the *nice one*, for God's sake! You've spent your whole post-pubescent life listening to Aerosmith. You can repay the man this small courtesy. No, the book is not what you thought it would be about - and it's badly (well, maybe not *badly* - more like *very modestly and simply*) written. But you can take two or three evenings out of your busy life to hear Joey Kramer out. That's all I'm saying.

...Okay, that might not have been the most rousing recommendation. And it is, after all, very badly (no, modestly) written. And it isn't any more interesting than hearing your overweight, born-again Christian cousin tell his story about what changed *his* life. But let's say you've already got the book. Or see it for a dollar somewhere. Go ahead and read it. What'll it hurt? Again, don't you sort of owe the drummer from Aerosmith a few hours of your time?

* Note I do not say "original" or "innovative" or even "topical." I say "*new*."

**Oops, I spoiled it.

Aaron says

Pretty superficial as far as rock and roll memoirs go. A lot of the "good stuff" gets glossed over (examples: the gas station incident, how he met Linda, his relationship with Linda, fatherhood). Some things we already knew get treated as somewhat anecdotal.

I was surprised to learn that Joey was the last member of the band to submit to sobriety. Other books on this band have sort of painted him as the one who partied less and perhaps needed rehabilitation less. Joey's account is the opposite story: a saga of a man who didn't want to let his bandmates down so he partied in secret. I also enjoyed the explanation of why Tim Collins was eventually let go.

Ultimately, though, I was disappointed in this memoir. I'm a huge fan of Aerosmith and think their rhythm section is the most underrated in rock music today. I was expecting more about his depression and its effects on him, but most of his talk about the disease is a recounting of the psychobabble he has learned over the years. For a person suffering from depression, he comes off as being more than a little bit megalomaniacal at times.

Tom Kavanagh says

another drug addict story
