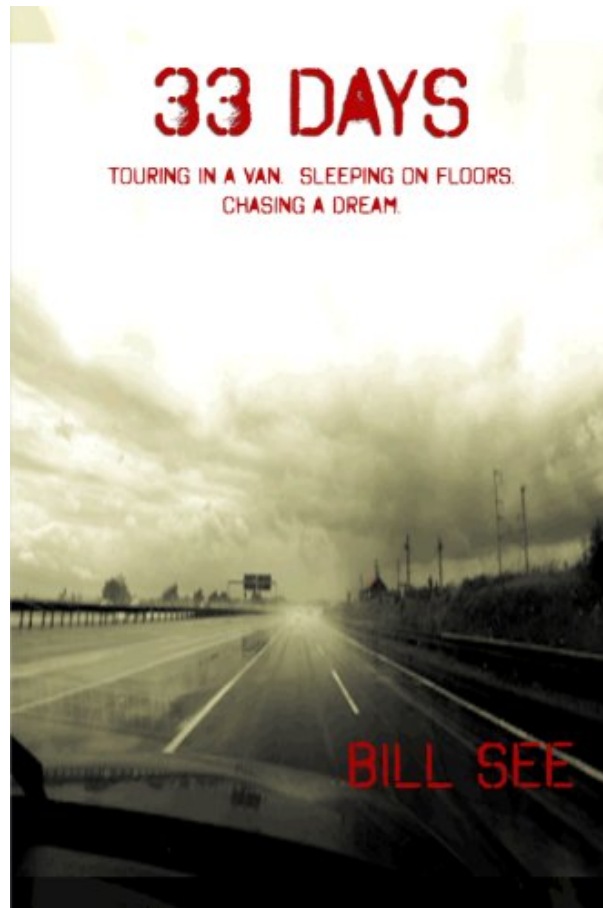
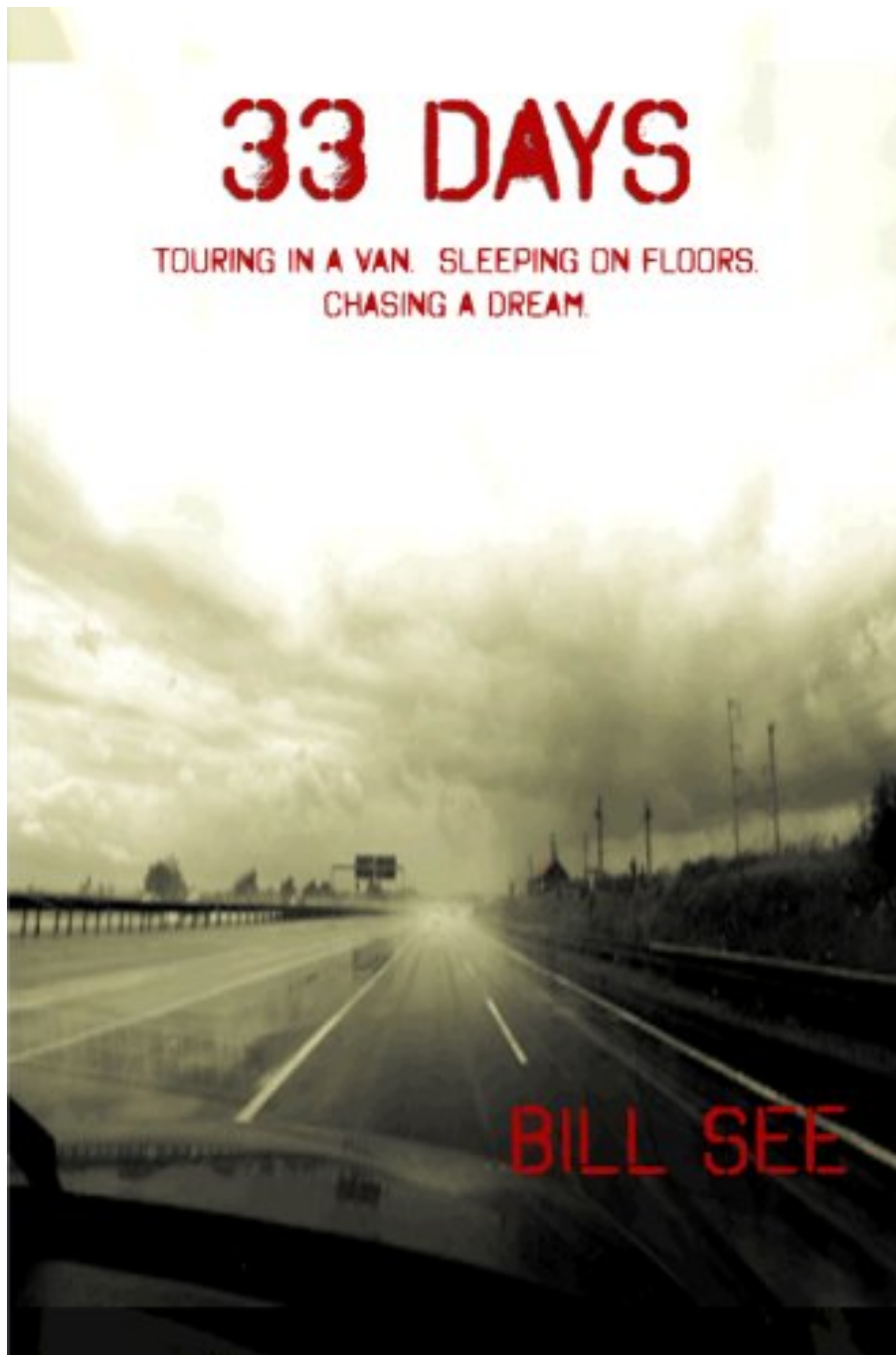


# **33 DAYS: TOURING IN A VAN. SLEEPING ON FLOORS. CHASING A DREAM. BY BILL SEE**



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It's an interesting time for putting out books, particularly for self published authors. Much like a few years ago with the music industry. For me, D.I.Y. is in my blood from putting out my own records, touring, self-generating hype, and making people take notice. We (Divine Weeks) got signed to a bigger label that way so I don't see marketing a self published book all that differently. I see young bands today utilize facebook, youtube, twitter and blogs and wish we would have had those at our disposal back in the day. Promoting 33 Days is like my chance to modernize the old D.I.Y. punk ethos I learned from Black Flag and the Minutemen. I think I have a unique insider's perspective having watched the music industry revolutionized by the internet during my band days, and now I'm entering the literary fray while arguably the same thing is happening to it. The music industry was torn down by people going DIY, and I never shed a tear over it. If the insular exclusive world of the publishing world is blown open by self publishing, I'm all for it.

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Bill See  
Los Angeles, CA

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This harrowing, deeply personal, coming of age, on the road memoir follows critically acclaimed 80s indie alt rock band Divine Weeks' first tour in the summer of '87. Liberated from alcoholic upbringings and rigid cultural constraints, all they have is their music and each other's friendship. The road is filled with yuppies, brothels, riots, sleeping on floors, spiked drinks, DJs with no pants, and battles with racism. They set out on the road to discovery to drink in all they could and maybe sell a few records. They grew up instead.

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- Format: Kindle eBook

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Bill See

Los Angeles, CA

Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

33 Days Along Star Stream

By Grady Harp

33 DAYS: TOURING IN A VAN, SLEEPING ON FLOORS, CHASING A DREAM places author Bill See in a new career. This is one of those breakthrough books that very quietly begins as a need form a writer to share a magic period in his life but ends up being one of the more sensitive and touching stories of how a young man joined his companions in blazing a trail of courage to shoot for the stars instead of settling for a flatline life. Yes, this is a memoir about the 33 days in 1987 when Bill See and his best friend Raj Makwana (this side story alone is worth reading as it sculpts the life of a mistreated Indian lad who happened to have the good fortune of finding his soul mate in Bill See), his other best friend George Edmondson, and Dave Smerszinski, together known as the Divine Weeks who with Road Manager Ian Bader toured the United States without capital, completely dependent of the good will of others for survival and how that experience changed them all.

Though the Divine Weeks was a famous band in Los Angeles they felt the need to go for broke on a now or never trip to see if the rest of the world would listen, would care, would 'get it' in their form of musical communication. The story is rich in those crazy wonderful memories of guys able to leave it all behind, work out their personal issues among friends, and take that leap that so few of us, especially in today's economic climate, dare to do. It is a story of humor, of tenderness, of the hard side as well as the soft snuggle of humanity and Bill See writes it with a style that is intoxicating.

33 DAYS is a challenge to all of us. In sharing his memoirs of a trip and experience of a lifetime he somehow encourages that hidden secretive spot in each of us to simply go for it while and when we can. In creating the sights, the smells, the hunger, the laughs, the noise and the solitude of being on the road in the height of discomfort just going for a dream, he offers not only some philosophy worth reading but also a really fine novel! There is a very good movie lurking in these pages...Grady Harp, March 11

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

True Indie Rockism!!!

By christine r

33 Days: Touring In a Van. Sleeping On Floors. Chasing A Dream is based on indie rock band Divine Weeks' first foray into "touring" (a loose term by any means) in the Summer of 1987. Inspired by "DIY elders" Minutemen & Black Flag, See and his other bandmates seize the moment of their time as a local popular band in LA to spread their live music beyond LA's insular perimeter, hop into a van rented to them by the good graces of a friend as none of them even have credit cards to experience life 'On the Road'. It is a fun blast from the past for Indie Rockers as the author references the music of the time -- Husker Du, Meat Puppets, The Replacements, FIREHOSE, The Smiths, Jane's Addiction and of course R.E.M. throughout the book.

The author is adept at creating atmosphere of what it must of been like traveling in a van with 5 guys whose probably sole sustenance was big box cereal, pizza & beer (ew!). His descriptions of the venues they play are nuanced giving you a true feel for life on the road as an indie band. This was not a band backed by a major record label by any means. Affording gas money and basic needs such as safe tires for the van are a constant challenge for these guys.

The main characters in the book, or bandmates and "tour manager" (another loose term) are all engaging with different plights in life. Lead singer Bill is insightful, poetic and ever challenging his bandmates. Guitarist Raj is battling his family's cultural expectations. George, the Bassist with a nagging girlfriend at home is truly at a crossroads trying to decide whether or not to pursue Grad school for English Lit. Drummer Dave is the practical one of the group remembering to bring a toolbox (for van repairs) while Bill has only managed to remember his mix tapes and journal. Ian, the "tour manager" offers the non-musician perspective.

As Raj, the guitarist is of East Indian descent, race relations are dealt with in a spot on natural way, never didactic. You can still find some ignorant person in a bar who sadly believes the color of your skin is the most crucial aspect of one's being and there is a significant scene where Raj is picked on by an invariably low brow scary woman for being a "Paki". It is one of the many heartfelt and poignant moments in the book where friendship trumps all and strengthens the band's intent.

In some respects the book is 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' as See shares insight to his upbringings, a classic case of a dysfunctional family. See's writing is emotionally touching without ever becoming sappy or self-pitying. Raised by a single mother and his grandparents without ever knowing his father, music is a form of salvation for him. Now was Divine Weeks the long lost band of the '80's? Most likely not but if you venture on to the book's website to listen to the band's music you can hear their simmering soulfulness, songs written with integrity and solidly crafted music that is undeniably rockist.

If you appreciate good music with integrity (obviously quite a relative term), some of the bands referenced, even straight-up Classic Rock (See is an avid Stones & Who fan) or wonder what it's like to chase your dream no matter how scary or impossible it might seem, you will enjoy this book. It is truly a story of friendships, how they grow and are challenged over the course of being 'On the Road' together -- basically a life and dream affirming, humorous coming of age story.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

33 Days

By BigAl

Sex, Drugs, Rock and Roll. Many people see the life of a touring rock band as one long party. A life of limos, jets, and tour buses with roadies and groupies taking care of all your needs. For some bands it is. For most it isn't.

In "33 Days" Bill See tells the story of the first national tour of Divine Weeks, a Los Angeles based band,



during the summer of 1987. As the subtitle explains, instead of jets and groupies it was "Touring In A Van, Sleeping On Floors, Chasing A Dream." "33 Days" is also the story of what the majority of bands that make it past the local level experience: Playing in clubs where a sellout means a couple hundred people, not tens of thousands and weeknight shows where you hope you'll make enough to earn gas money to make it to your next gig -- ten or twelve hours down the highway.

The music fan in me liked "33 Days" for the inside look at what touring is like for the kind of band I've gravitated to for the last several years. I had a clue - multiply a pittance of a cover charge by forty or fifty and compare that with a quick barebones estimate of expenses. But, you can't get a sense of the highs and lows unless you live it, even if only vicariously. For those interested in such things "33 Days" delivers.

All readers, even if they don't give a hoot about the workings of the music business, will still find a compelling tale. In many ways, this is a classic coming-of-age story. For See, this tour is a chance to escape his dysfunctional family and test his own limits. Many of his band mates have home issues they're also working out. How this group of young men come together as a team while dealing with their individual issues is a story anyone could learn from and enjoy.

As an avid reader of indie books, I frequently cite recent music business history as an explanation of where the publishing business is going -- "33 Days" is a primer on how that will happen. Indie authors who lament how much work it takes to get their book noticed could learn from the ethos of See and Divine Weeks.

\*\*Originally written for "Books and Pals" book blog.\*\*

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