

The book "8 ball chicks" essay



Eight Ball Chicks concise By Laura Anderson The book " 8 Ball Chicks," written by Gini Sikes. It is a thrilling yet shocking book about girls in gangs. The book explains in horrific detail the roles and existences of the girls in these gangs. Sikes traveled to several different cities to experience the life of girl gangsters.

She traveled to Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Milwaukee. Through these travels, she became immersed in the lifestyles of each gang and had first hand accounts on what it was like to be in a gang. Sikes met many girls whom she could not believe what had persuaded them to live like they did. Most of the girls wanted to just fit in with something, to have power or be safe.

Sikes recognized that all these girls were victims of their environment, so she sought out to see what she could present to show other people that children of poverty need a good education to be able to succeed and have a successful life. However they didn't know how to go about it. Gang life was all they knew because they grew up in it, and they were taught it. They would talk about their dreams outside of the gangs.

Some of these girls were unable to achieve these dreams due to their lack of education (mainly because of their environment). Most all of the girls she meet grew up in poverty. Also because of poverty, a lot of their parents where just as bad as their kids. Some were raised by single mothers who slept around or were even prostitutes.

Other girls were molested by their mother's boyfriends or their stepfathers. These girls had had a bleak out look for their future. Really all they knew how

to do was survive . So all of them turned to gangs. When a girl was initiated into gangs they had a couple of choices, get " jumped in" (beat up by x amount of girls for x amount of time) or in an example for Part II the girl would roll dice and whatever number the dice amounted to was the amount of guys the girl would have to sleep with at once. They would call it a " train".

Most girls would choose that option. Once in a lot of these girls who joined gangs were basically viewed a sex objects. These girls would end up a pregnant at a young age . They were raped and beaten by their boyfriends.

The abuse was endless , violence was just a way of life for them. By the end of the book some or most of these girls quit these gangs due to motherhood or the desire to want more. Here is one of their stories. TJ was a member of the Lennox gang and the " Play Girl Gangstas. " When TJ was in the 9th grade, her mother moved to Lennox for cheaper housing due to her parents split. TJ was a good student until she moved to the Lennox, because TJ didn't like her new school her grades dropped.

When her grades dropped, she was put into lower classes. In these classes, she meet Lennox gang members and so became influenced by them. Soon some male gang members began to notice her because of her looks. She enjoyed the attention she received so soon enough TJ began partying and hanging out with the guys at night.

She felt love in comfort with them. She met a guy named Shotgun (who beat her up so bad once that she had endured a miscarriage), which in turn made her even more popular with in the gang. As a result of her growing popularity

she had a choice either to join the " Play Girl Gangstas" or get beaten up. Soon after she was initiated she began breaking into cars, stealing, and doing pretty much anything that would build up her reputation within that gang .

Soon TJ became violent on account of the death of so many of her friends. In one part of the book Sikes describes how in retaliation of the death of her friends Rosa's little brother . TJ disguised her self as a man and went out look for the boys killer. When she found him or what she thought was him she killed him point blank with a gun.

By the ending of the book TJ ended up getting married and moving out of Lennox. She had a child at the age of 22. After she had her baby, her husband left her. TJ found comfort in the church. TJ realized that the life she led while living in Lennox was not one she wanted to continue. She said that wanted to educate her child and teach her about he bible.

TJ wanted to teach her child right from wrong and not let her end up the way she did. She end up working in a factory and also took her self off of welfare. She showed that through all she had gone through their was always a light at the end of the tunnel. A lot of the reason why I believed these girls ended up like this was due to the fact of the poverty stricken communities. Social Disorganization theory best describes this.

It states that delinquency occurs when the social control among traditional primary groups like parents, schools and the neighborhood breaks down because of the social disarray within the community. When this occurs girls and boys look else where for acceptance and love. Which is why most of

them turn to gangs. Turning to gangs however seal some of its members fates, such as death and jail. Another reason why I think these girls become delinquent or become involved in gangs is because of the Labeling theory.

People label them because they are poor or come from bad neighborhoods as bad kids. So eventually they just take that identity. I mean if you think about it, if people keep calling you a bad kid over and over again after a while wouldn't you just accept it because that's what people expect of you? This book was a very good read. It was very eye opening. More than what I expected. It was a very well written book about the hidden lives of young girls in gangs.

My hearts went out to these girls. I could feel where they were coming from. I could see why they made some of the decisions that they made. I loved the way Sikes told their story the way it was. She did not sugar coat it and basically showed you what it was like to be a young girl in a poverty stricken part of society. One of my favorite parts is at the end of the book where TJ goes to Kiwanis' Good Friday brunch.

She goes up and speaks in front of everyone dressed in her gang attire. She gets on stage and takes out her arrest record and reads it out loud (which when she unrolled almost hit the floor). She talks about how everyone there has a perceived notion of her because of the way she was dressed. Then she goes on to talk about how she found refuge in the church and slowly she begins to undress.

She shows that underneath her baggy gang attire she was wearing a nice burgundy pant suit. At the end of her speech she says " When you were a kid

like me, don't judge her by her clothes. There might be a child of God underneath. " I love that part because it shows just because the person may be in a gang that does not mean that they are a bad person. It also shows that people can change.

One of the main issues that I found very interesting about how gang life and sexual abuse go hand in hand. Before hand to reading this book I had no idea that girls in gangs were abused so badly by the men around them. How they would degrade them and use them as sexual objects. One part of the book that I found out which I consider highly disturbing was allegedly three girls had sex with a supposedly HIV infected guy as a form initiation, and how sex with multiple men was a normal form of initiation. Also how these guys expect these girls to have sex with them whenever they want and when they refused the boys beat them up and then rape them. After a while these girls just give in to these men because of the fact to don't want to get beaten up.

One sad part is where you read about Alicia a 17 year old girl who lived with her abusive boy friend. One night after he beat her up she went to a friend's house to take a bath and on the way home she cut through a rival gang territory. While walking she was stopped by rival gang members one of whom she knew, Freeze. They huddled around her and called her names (mainly because she was in a rival gang) and then Freeze put a gun to her head and said she would have to pay. Then he raped her. That sad part about it she never reported her rape because Freeze warned her if she ever told anyone and he went to jail he would have his gang hunt her down and kill her.

While talking to Sikes she pretty much played it off as a way of life around there. As a woman I was really repulsed by that because in my mind the worst thing you can do to a woman is rape her. She holds that for the rest of her life. The fact this book showed that sexual abuse is so common in gang I think is a good thing. We need to know these things, because if we don't hear these stories then really they are assumed to have never happened. Basically if you can't see it if never happened.

We need to find ways to solve this sexual abuse. For example by programs that reach out to these girls who have been sexually abused by gang members and find ways to help them and get them away from that life. As a result of reading this book a lot of my views on gangs have changed. I don't view gangs just as cold blooded killers, drug dealers or thugs. I now see them as lost souls who mainly join gangs on account of the fact they come from bad homes, neighborhoods and schools just look for a place to belong.

They basically just want acceptance for people to love them. Every human seeks out those feelings. They are basically just kids caught up in a wasteland with really nothing to turn to. In turn pressures of the street overcome them.

We shouldn't look at the kids as the problem but actually the environment that they come from. Hopefully one day I will become an adolescent counselor. I have always wanted to reach out and help people, mainly kids. Reading this book has given me more insight into the adolescent mind. We all go through adolescence differently, and seeing from many different angles would obviously help me in seeing why kids turn out the way that they do.

We need to study and understand their thought process and why they come to these decisions . Further more makes me want to learn more about the problems kids face today and what ways society as whole can to try to change these problems and help these kids so that they can have a prosperous future.