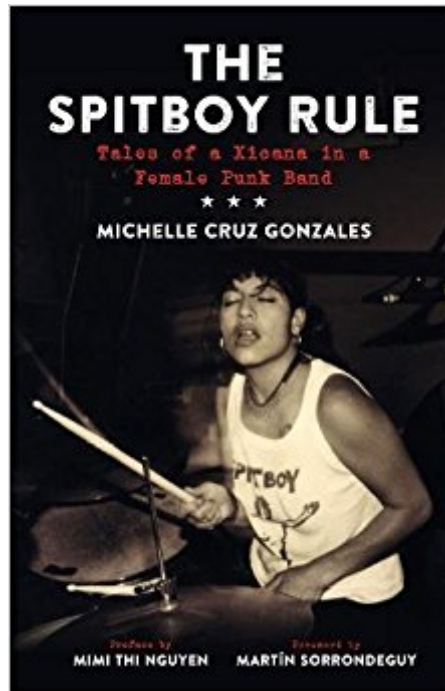




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# The Spitboy Rule: Tales Of A Xicana In A Female Punk Band



## Synopsis

Though not a riot grrl band, Spitboy blazed trails for women musicians in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond, but it wasn't easy. Misogyny, sexism, abusive fans, class and color blindness, and all-out racism were foes, especially for Gonzales, a Chicana and the only person of color in the band. Unlike touring rock bands before them, the unapologetically feminist Spitboy preferred Scrabble games between shows rather than sex and drugs, and they were not the angry manhaters that many expected them to be. Fully illustrated with rare photos and flyers from the punk rock underground, this fast-paced, first-person recollection is populated by scenesters and musical allies from the time including Econochrist, Paxston Quiggly, Neurosis, Los Crudos, Aaron Cometbus, Pete the Roadie, Green Day, Fugazi, and Kamala and the Karnivores.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Spitboy Rule is a compelling and insightful journey into the world of 1990s punk as seen through the eyes of a Xicana drummer who goes by the nickname Todd. Todd stirs the pot by insisting that she plays hardcore punk, not Riot Grrrl music, and inviting males to share the dance floor with women in a respectful way. This drummer never misses a beat. Read it!"

• Alice Bag, singer for The Bags, author of *Violence Girl: East L.A. Rage to Hollywood Stage, a Chicana Punk Story* "In this book Michelle Cruz Gonzales tells the history of the influential all-female hardcore punk band Spitboy while at the same time, revealing the story of her own search for identity."

• Anke Kalau, OX Fanzine "The Spitboy Rule is a highly recommended read for anyone interested in gender/ethnic studies, Spitboy, the punk scene in which it existed, the often

contradictory and landmine-ridden political climate of that scene, or simply a memoir about living an extraordinary life." —Jimmy Alvarado, *Razorcake* —"Best punk memoir that I've ever had the privilege of reading. In a punk scene dominated by middle-class, white males, you can't forget Spitboy, four brave women playing music with the intensity of an out-of-control forest fire. Gonzales's involvement and presence in the punk scene, in particular, was significant because she represented a radical, feminist, person of color, and she reflected a positive change in the scene for the Bay Area. Gonzales's memoir, chronicling her unique experience and perspective, occupies an important moment in the punk saga. This is a must-read for anyone still dedicated to social justice and change." —Wendy-O-Matik, author, *Redefining Our Relationships: Guidelines for Responsible Open Relationships* —"Incisive and inspiring, Michelle Cruz Gonzales's *The Spitboy Rule* brings the 1990s punk world to life with equal parts heart and realism. Her story becomes a voyage of self-discovery, and Gonzales is the perfect guide — as she writes in rapidfire drum beats about epic road tours, female camaraderie, sexist fans, and getting accused of appropriating her own culture." —Ariel Gore, *Hip Mama* —"Michelle Gonzales's punk rock account is inspiring on many levels. For outsider artists, women musicians, or anybody who has ever felt the desire to forge an identity in uncharted territory, this book is detailed, heartfelt, and historically important. Briskly told in clean, conversational prose, *The Spitboy Rule* is an entertaining read and functions as an important historical, critical, and sociopolitical document of pre-internet DIY music." —Jesse Michaels, vocalist, *Operation Ivy*; author, *Whispering Bodies* "The Spitboy Rule follows the difficult and courageous journey of a young woman who wasn't afraid to venture into a mostly white underground scene, to hold mirrors up to the faces of her worst critics." —Charlie Vázquez, *Huffington Post* "The stories and observations in *The Spitboy Rule* benefit from years of reflection, schooling, and life lived . . . It is a privilege to grow older, to have the chance to reflect on the formative struggles and building of consciousness that happens when we are young." —Leilani Clark, *KQED* "Gonzales's memoir convincingly brings the reader right back into the mentality of being a teenager; the trap of simultaneously looking to fit in and stand out, and an exhausting oscillation between self-consciousness, self-righteousness, vulnerability and outright stubbornness." —Chanelle Adams, *feministing.com* "Stories of epic road trips, high-intensity punk shows, and dealing with sexist fans are told with phenomenal good humor and the wisdom of hindsight inserted wryly into the narrative." —Sara Century, *bitchmedia.org* "The Spitboy Rule is an inspiring story of self-discovery by a proud Xicana artist and a defiant look back at the San Francisco punk rock

underground that continues to inspire outsider youth and musicians around the world."

•afar.com "If you love punk music, or just want to read more about the experiences of a Xicana woman in a historically white male scene, check this book out." •David Nilsen, fourthandsycamore.com

Michelle Cruz Gonzales played drums and wrote lyrics for several bands during the 1980s and 1990s. Her writing has been published in anthologies, literary journals, and Hip Mama magazine.

Michelle teaches English and creative writing at Las Positas College. She lives in Oakland, CA.

Mimi Thi Nguyen is associate professor of gender and women's studies and Asian American studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is the author of *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages*. For the last fifteen years, Marti Sorrondeguy

has been the singer of the openly queer punk band Limp Wrist. Sorrondeguy recently completed his third photography book, *En Busca De Algo Mas*.

Michelle's intelligent, sincere and passionate writing certainly makes this book worth reading. Plus, it is about an era of music that has seen the different and often sad paths that artists took. Michelle, obviously, went in a positive direction. My favorite part is when she brings the band to see her grandmother. A window onto her soul, she describes the visit with restrained but wonderful insight. Her observation that she was raised in an environment in which creativity was embraced [be it, sewing, crafting, cooking, gardening] is a powerful message to hold closely. Art is essential no matter what it is or how it is taught. This book made me aware of my role as a parent to keep the message of art alive and significant. My son, a professional drummer, was captivated by the story. Not because of the music parts but because Michelle didn't hold back about "the road" and its foibles.

Second favorite book!

A great story about a Chicana girl. That was in a punk band.

I have been a fan of Gonzalez' writing for many years now on her blog. Though I know nothing about her band and next to nothing about the era of Punk Rock (except that they were weird looking kids), I found her book thoroughly enjoyable to read! A fossil, I date back to old Bohemian days of the late 50s, the Beat Generation, the Hippies, the Civil Rights Movement, and now the Senior

Citizen brigade, so I readily identified with this story of young, Punk Rocker woman, Chicana, artist and poet, trying to play serious music, to iron-tough and demanding audiences, wanting what all artists, or humans for that matter, ultimately seek: love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Being a Chicano artist myself, I empathize with Michelle's struggle to find her place in a White World. What an amazing story she has to tell! Funny, tragic, insightful and unflinchingly honest. I highly recommend this book to all artists, musicians and poets, and all young people convinced they are "different" and trying to make their mark in an seemingly uncaring world.

Somewhere between Gloria Anzaldua and Cherrie Moraga's groundbreaking *This Bridge Called My Back* anthology and the superb oral history *Please Kill Me, The Spitboy Rule* expands ordinary notions of punk rock and feminism. Michelle Gonzales, drummer and co-founder of the band Spitboy, relates Michelle Gonzales' effort to forge an authentic identity as a punk rock Xicana who marches to a different set of beats. Her story of negotiating the vexed landscape, cliques, sects and ideologies of 90s female punkdom has a resonance far beyond the local, and it's an absolutely fascinating read, especially for those who like to paint outside the lines. Gonzales as a prose stylist is crisp, direct and nuanced as her music. Highly recommended.

This is a really incredible book about race and gender in the 90s punk scene. Punk thought of itself as so counter-cultural and anti-patriarchal, and yet, as Gonzales's book shows (and anyone familiar with the scene remembers), racism, classism and sexism were as common there as in the society at large. The book isn't all political musings, either--lots of great discussions of touring the world, collaborating with other bands, and the songwriting process. A really insightful and inspiring read.

Gonzales gives a glimpse into a life most of us have never lived--even if we were punks. What's exceptional is that it provides voice and history to punk in California that goes beyond the typical. Latinx are often invisible if we assimilate into the white world well enough. She gives power to the idea that you can fit and not fit at the same time and exactly why that is. More books should take on class and race in this way. It's not talked about often enough. Thoroughly engaging read.

I was not at all involved with the "punk scene" of the 90's...and you don't need to have been, to relate to Gonzales. This book is very real, fiercely honest--discussing race and class, music, belonging, and not-belonging. I whole heartedly recommend this book to anyone who wants a good read! Undoubtedly, you too will make a personal connection, or two, with Gonzales.

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