



Nuestra Familia - A Broken Paradigm: John "Boxer" Mendoza's Personal Journey into a World of Deception, Betrayal and Redemption

By John "Boxer" Mendoza

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This book is about one of California's most violent Hispanic prison gangs that thrives both within the prison system and on the streets of Northern California. It's an undiluted story about my own personal journey, told by me, and how I muddled away almost 20 years of my life, wallowing in this criminal cesspool. I walk you through an arcane underworld, using my own experiences, offering a comprehensive inside look into how the Nuestra Familia transforms young undeveloped minds into polished pre-disposed killing machines. It's also an open-ended description about how I rose to the top of this criminal organization and how I fell in the face of flawed politics, personal agendas, and self-serving unethical motivations. This exposé exhibits how a self-delusional, naked greed and a cannibalistic organization lost sight of its purest fundamentals and entrenched itself in a heightened state of paranoia. This book is not about self-glorification or self-embellishments. The stark brutality of what took place here should serve as a de-glamorization of the gang philosophy and the perilous lifestyle I lived.

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Editorial Review

From Kirkus Reviews

"First-time writer Mendoza tells the story of his rise through the ranks and his ultimate escape from a powerful criminal organization.

The character John "Boxer" Mendoza turns to drugs and crime at an early age, so it's perhaps inevitable that the violent robberies he commits land him in jail. There, he becomes a member of the gang Nuestra Raza, an extension of *Nuestra Familia*. Mendoza is in and out of prison for drugs and parole violations, until the day when the three-strike faces a long stretch, and his loyalty to NF is suddenly in question. The book concentrates on Mendoza's time in NF, although in the foreword, Mendoza explains that he doesn't want to glamorize the gang life. Instead, he reveals an unvarnished world where violence reigns. The narrative is sometimes cold, merely relaying the events that lead to the next incarceration, and it's hard not to view Mendoza as apathetic. But he shows his emotion in response to NF's malicious treatment of certain members, leaving some of them to fend for themselves, and he regrets disappointing his ailing wife, Vicki, especially when he's in jail and she's left alone. The author clearly knows how to tell a story: He opens the narrative with the police raiding his house and dragging him outside; he discusses the disconcerting Operation Black Widow; and he's prone to metaphors. Surprisingly, the book's highlights are Mendoza-free: The novel reveals the fascinating origin of the Mexican Mafia, as well as the NF's response to the Aryan Brotherhood, a certain attention-grabber.

Stark in its portrayal, but more riveting and embroiling than brutal or repellent."

Review

Reading a memoir of a prison gang member is unusual fare for those completely unfamiliar with the correctional system of the United States. *Nuestra Familia - A Broken Paradigm*, by John "Boxer" Mendoza, has all that and is a comprehensive look at the psychology of gang life. The author provides an extensive history and recounts the fourteen laws of the NF. Mendoza bought into the original cause and was a superb student of the gang's tenets and constricting rules. He waged war on his perceived enemies and "earned" money for the NF in and out of jail, but his loyalty bought him nothing after twenty years. The text is eloquent and loaded with words that leave one to wonder how the author acquired his language skills. Mendoza's purpose in writing *Nuestra Familia* is to "deglamorize" the gang lifestyle, and he accomplishes that goal. It is also an intriguing read for viewers of shows like *Lockdown* on the National Geographic Channel and *Gangland* on The History Channel. Dindy Yokel, Clarion Review

About the Author

John "Boxer" Mendoza was a high ranking NF member who had risen to the top of one of California's most violent prison gangs. He spent over 20 years functioning in this criminal organization and became one of the most loyal and dedicated members. After years of pushing the gang's street agendas forward and operating as a "Regimental Street Commander", he was finally arrested and indicted with several other members. During the eight year long prosecution, which eventually led to several more indictments, the detraction amongst the gang festered and resulted in the defection of dozens of other prominent members. This story describes the choices Boxer made and the path he ultimately chose. His decisions changed the NF and all those involved.

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