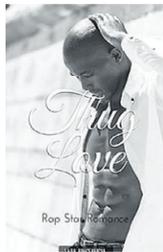


EBOOK OF THE WEAK

Each week, we scour Amazon's list of recently published eBooks to find the most outrageous trash-erotica, libellous tell-all, outlandish conspiracy theory and bizarre personal memoir to share with you, our dear readers.



This week's selection is: *Thug Love: Rap Star Romance - Gangsta Luu Hiphop Rap Romantic Ghetto Luu Erotic Hood Short Story*, Lady Aingealicia, Amazon Digital Services LLC 20 pp; \$3.77

The best pop culture conspiracy theory suggests an incestuous relationship between the music industry and private prisons. According to legend: In 1991, the music industry secretly agreed to promote gangsta rap so that there would be an increase in young offenders to lock up. Music executives invested heavily in these private prisons to reap the rewards. In an anonymous letter sent to Hip Hop Is Heard in 2012, details of this meeting were described, including its strict non-disclosure agreement, which is why – duh! – the evil plot has been kept under wraps. Case closed. But what about eBooks? Thug Love is clearly an attempt by the connivance of the powerful to bring gangsta rap to portable readers. *Dustin Parkes, National Post*

FIVE TAKEAWAYS FROM WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

BOOK REVIEW

**Women and Leadership**  
Deborah L. Rhode  
Oxford University Press  
224 pp; \$32.95

ASHLEY CSANADY

If you're looking to feel better about women's place in the working world, Deborah L. Rhode's *Women and Leadership* won't help. Her detailed examination paints a depressing picture of how limited women's progress in the United States has been (and Canada isn't faring much better). But it's important to know this in order to correct it. Here are your takeaways:

**1** Politics is a terrible place for women. Canada has more representation than the U.S. at some levels, but Ottawa's first female mayor Charlotte Whitman highlights how far behind North America remains. "Whatever women do, they must do twice as well to be thought half as good." Rhode shows how women have no room for error, and even the smallest mistake is taken as a sign a powerful woman is only there to fill a quota.

**2** Management is no better. "There are more men named John running S&P 1500 companies than there are women," Rhode writes. When women reach the top, they often face a glass cliff such as taking over a failing company. And when pursuing the corner office, self-promotion "is also disproportionately punished." Unlike men, ambitious women are seen as power-hungry.

**3** The law supports gender equity so the practice of it should too, right? Ha! Women face double standards when billing hours; if they aren't doing enough, it's seen as a failing of gender. Women of colour are often used as tokens to sign new clients. Have a case involving race? Firms often pitch a black lawyer to work on it, even if it's outside her area of expertise.

**4** Academia isn't as enlightened as you think. Rhode does offer a glimmer of hope before shutting it down. "The relatively greater progress that women have made in academia also fosters the perception that the 'women problem' has been solved" – despite the fact women take up more than half of undergraduate spaces but "account for less than a quarter of college presidents and a third of chief academic officers at doctoral institutions."

**5** Corporate boards – need I say more? Hard quotas have closed this gap in Norway, and Ontario has adopted "comply or explain" mandates for companies to increase female representation or explain why they can't. But Rhode notes that the misperception that there simply aren't enough leaders in the pipeline and the (wrong) attitude that quotas undermine meritocracy have prevented women's advancement in corporate boards.

Weekend Post



ACTIVIST STREAK

DAVID FRANCE REMEMBERS THE PEOPLE ON THE GROUND WHO STOPPED AN EPIDEMIC

ZANE SCHWARTZ

**D**avid France is one of the small group of journalists that get widespread attention for book-length investigative stories. Though he has so far failed to break into the top tier occupied by writers such as Jon Krakauer (*Into The Wild*) or Jane Meyer (*Dark Money*), if anything will do it, it will be his latest, *How to Survive a Plague*.

France's previous books explore the difficult experiences of gay Americans. Our *Fathers*, published in 2004, built on the Boston Globe's exposé of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church (the movie *Spotlight*, based on the Globe's reporting, won the Oscar for Best Picture in 2016). *The Confession* (2006) was co-authored with New Jersey governor Jim McGreevey, who came out as gay in 2004 when a former lover threatened to expose him. Though both books received positive reviews and decent sales, France's real success came with his 2012 documentary film *How to Survive a Plague*, to which this book is a companion. The documentary won a Peabody Award and a Directors Guild Award, and was nominated for an Oscar and two Emmys.

Somewhere between the moral panic-inducing New York Times article, "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals," and the death of the author's partner from AIDS-related pneumonia, the strength of France's latest book becomes clear: This is not a traditional history of AIDS. It is more of a memoir, all raw emotion and lingering rage. France's personal history is too deeply intertwined with the history of AIDS activism for an antiseptic analysis.

The book's subtitle, "The Inside Story of How Citizens and Science Tamed AIDS," asserts a totality of sorts, an idea that this is the book that will explain how the fight against AIDS was won, but France has produced a history that is less than complete. This book focuses on the United States and the mostly white gay activists who fought for a cure. The many other groups who were struck by AIDS, such as intravenous drug users and Haitian people, are not a focus. Nor are the millions who died in Sub-Saharan Africa before an effective

BOOK REVIEW

**How to Survive a Plague: The Inside Story of How Citizens and Scientists Tamed AIDS**

By David France  
Signal  
640 pp; \$34.95

drug was found in 1996 – and continue to die in huge numbers today. The best parts of *How to Survive a Plague* are the ones France experienced himself. He was there for many of the key moments in the fight to find a cure for AIDS in the United States as a reporter for the *New York Native*, one of the only publications to cover the disease in its early days.

France chronicles medical breakthroughs, key protests and over 650,000 deaths. He describes reading the headline "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals" in 1981 and originally dismissing it as part of the newspaper industry's ubiquitous homophobia – not realizing

IT IS MORE OF A MEMOIR, ALL RAW EMOTION AND LINGERING RAGE.

the article was referring to what would become known as AIDS, a disease that would kill so many people he knew and loved.

France describes attending a funeral for a friend. Then another. Then another. It is clear the experiences still sit with him. At the end of the book, while chronicling the death of a man, Spencer Cox, who stopped taking the drugs that might have saved him, France writes: "What was clear was that living had proved more than he could handle. As was said about the great Holocaust writer Primo Levi after he lugged to his death, Spencer Cox had never left the camps. Maybe none of us did."

In an interview with the Nation-

al Post, France argued that many of the modern-day victories of the LGBT+ movement – employment non-discrimination, legalization of same sex marriage – were built on the backs of AIDS activists: the people who wrapped Sen. Jesse Helms's house in a condom, interrupted mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral with a giant condom and scattered the ashes of dead AIDS activists on the White House lawn.

He described moving to New York just before AIDS became widespread and going right to the gay ghetto: "After the beginning of the modern movement, we developed these pockets of gay people, gay ghettos. Those ghettos were really solid defensible places where you were less likely to be killed and we fortified those neighbourhoods. And when I moved to New York I moved to the gay ghetto, that's what you did."

France sees parallels between the silence from Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush as thousands of Americans died of AIDS, and Donald Trump's proposals to ban Muslims and deport Hispanics. He points to the wins activists were able to gain despite the reluctance of political leaders to hear them, arguing that it was easier for the public to ignore the crisis because ignorance and bigotry towards gay people was so widespread. (A Gallup poll taken in 1986 found that 57 per cent of people thought sex between consenting gay or lesbian adults should be illegal.)

France says things have changed though: "We've won the hearts and minds struggle, so even if a campaign is waged against us or against the Muslims or against liberalism, I think we're in a place where we all have a lot of allies to fight back with."

This book is particularly relevant for Canadian readers as the nation struggles with its own resurgence of AIDS. The HIV infection rate in Saskatchewan is about double the national average and the infection rate on some reserves is on par with certain African countries. So far, Saskatchewan's deadly outbreak has received minimal press coverage and little government attention. France's book offers a blueprint on how to change that.

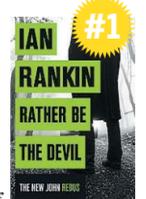
Weekend Post

The National Post Bestseller List is reported weekly by a different Canadian bookstore, featuring local favourites alongside national hits.

This week's list is courtesy of Winnipeg's McNally Robinson Booksellers (mcnally-robinson.com).

HARDCOVER FICTION

1. **Rather Be the Devil** by Ian Rankin (Orion)
2. **Do Not Say We Have Nothing** by Madeleine Thien (Knopf Canada)
3. **Have I Got a Story for You: More Than a Century of Fiction from The Forward** by Ezra Glinter, ed. (W.W. Norton)
4. **The Witches of New York** by Ami McKay (Random House Canada)
5. **The Whistler** by John Grisham (Doubleday)



PAPERBACK FICTION

1. **Secret Path** by Gord Downie & Jeff Lemire (Simon & Schuster)
2. **The Break** by Katherena Vermette (House of Anansi)
3. **Wenjack** by Joseph Boyden (Hamish Hamilton)
4. **Living Secrets** by M. K. Stoddart (McNally Robinson)
5. **The Best Kind of People** by Zoe Whittall (House of Anansi)



HARDCOVER NON-FICTION

1. **Scandinavian Comfort Food: Embracing the Art of Hygge** by Trine Hahnemann (Quadrille)
2. **The Marriot Cell: An Epic Journey from Cairo's Scorpion Prison to Freedom** by Mohamed Fahmy (Random House Canada)
3. **Live Close to Home** by Peter Denton (Rocky Mountain Books)
4. **The Capitalist University: Higher Education in the United States, 1945–2016** by Henry Heller (Pluto Press)
5. **Waiting for First Light: My Ongoing Battle With PTSD** by Roméo Dallaire (Random House Canada)

PAPERBACK NON-FICTION

1. **An Army of Problem Solvers: Reconciliation and the Solutions Economy** by Shaun Loney (Self-published)
2. **Abandoned Manitoba: From Residential Schools to Bank Vaults to Grain Elevators** by Gordon Goldsborough (Great Plains)
3. **Boiling Point: Government Neglect, Corporate Abuse, and Canada's Water Crisis** by Maude Barlow (ECW Press)
4. **The Road to Little Dribbling: More Notes from a Small Island** by Bill Bryson (Doubleday Canada)
5. **This is That: Travel Guide to Canada** by Chris Kelly, Pat Kelly and Peter Oldring (Tite Group)

