



Leaving Dirty Jersey: A Crystal Meth Memoir

James Salant

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With his nickname, Dirty Jersey, tattooed on the inside of his left forearm, James Salant wanted everyone to know he was a tough guy.

At the age of eighteen, after one too many run-ins with the cops for drug possession, he left his upper-middle-class home in Princeton, New Jersey, for a stint at a rehab facility in Riverside, California. Instead of getting clean, he spent his year there shooting crystal meth and living as a petty criminal among not-so-petty ones until a near psychotic episode (among other things) convinced him to clean up.

In stark prose infused with heartbreaking insight, wicked humor, and complete veracity, Salant provides graphic descriptions of life on crystal meth -- the incredible sex drive, the paranoia, the cravings. He details the slang, the scams, and the psychoses, and weaves them into a narrative that is breathtakingly honest and authentic. Salant grapples with his attraction to the thuggish life, eschewing easy answers -- his parents, both therapists, were loving and supportive, and his family's subtle dysfunctions typical of almost any American family.

Exploring the allure and effects of the least understood drug of our time, *Leaving Dirty Jersey* is that rarity among memoirs -- a compulsively readable, superbly told story that is shocking precisely because it could happen to almost anyone.

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