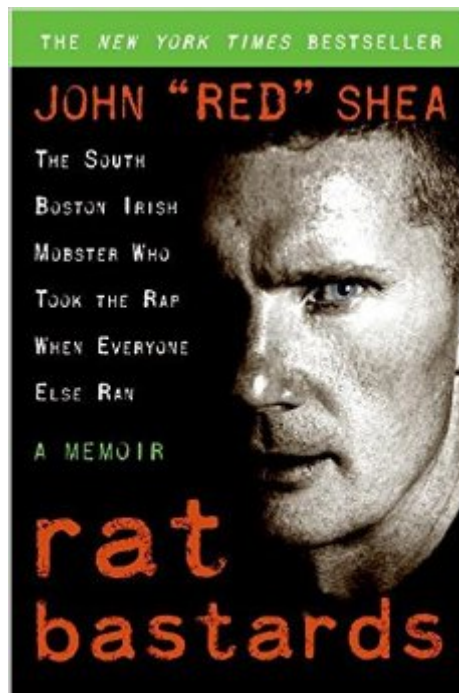


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# Rat Bastards: The South Boston Irish Mobster Who Took The Rap When Everyone Else Ran



## Synopsis

John "Red" Shea, 40, was a top lieutenant in the South Boston Irish mob run, led by James "Whitey" Bulger. An ice-cold enforcer with a red-hot temper, Shea was a legend among his peers in the 1990s South Boston, as much as John Gotti, Bugsy Siegel, and Al Capone were in their time and place. When the actor and producer Mark Wahlberg, raised in nearby Dorchester, learned of a script based on Shea's life circulating in Hollywood, he immediately committed to playing the gangster on screen. A major feature film project is now in development. From the age of thirteen, when he started robbing delivery trucks, to the age of twenty-seven, when he began serving a twelve-year federal sentence for drug trafficking, Shea was a portrait in American crime—a bantam-weight, red-headed terror, brutal with his fists and deadly with a lead pipe, a baseball bat, or a knife. At fifteen he was selling marijuana. At seventeen he was handling Bulger's cocaine. At eighteen he was loan sharking and laundering Bulger's money. At twenty, initiated into Bulger's inner circle at the point of an Uzi, he was running a multimillion-dollar narcotics operation for his mentor. *RAT BASTARDS* was the first-ever, firsthand account of mob life that wasn't told by a rat. Red Shea did his crime, then did his time—and never informed, unlike Henry Hill of *Wiseguy*, Sammy "The Bull" Gravano of *Underboss*, and so many others. Holding fast to the code of his upbringing, he remained a man of honor.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have read all Irish mobster books. This is the most far fetched book I have read so far. First of all, the first 4 pages made me throw the book across the room. I don't think anyone cares about Shea's

ventures in the hotel room, about how "too beaucoup" he is. I decided to give it another read and actually began to enjoy the story. The enjoying ended when he started to speak on his recollection of what happened between himself, Whitey, Weeks and Flemmi. Although I don't think Weeks book is the complete truth, I think Shea is 100% fiction compared to this. I personally love the one quote where he says that Bulger says "do you know who I am, I am Whitey Bulger!".....I think every Boston book has made it clear that he was not referred to as Whitey, especially to his face. Shea attempts to make it seem as though he was Bulgers equal. I have no doubt that he is tough, but he makes Kevin Weeks look like a pansy. Atleast Weeks had the courtesy to be honest in his opinion of Shea, but let the facts be known. I did enjoy the story, and finished the book but it is the worst book in its class as far as Im concerned.

I am SO glad I read this via a library and didn't pay a cent for it! Johnny Shea is the ultimate example of the self-serving, ignorant Southie project product. Absolutely NO redeeming value to Shea or his fictions. An embarassing project, one which should never have been put to publication. In a world of insecure, self-important criminals attempting to cash in on their connections to Bulger, Shea stands apart as uniquely loathsome. A MUST not-read.

If you're just getting into what has now become a genre of Irish/Southie/True Crime books, definitely start with the ones done by the writer/reporters, ie, Black Mass, Westies, and Paddy Whacked - books with multiple sources and footnotes and everything - instead of the biographies. I've now read all the Southie books except for Kevin Weeks', which I'm only kind of looking forward to after this one and Pat Nee's. This is the conclusion I have come to. If you're just interested in this book, it is, essentially, one big self-inflicted ego stroke minus numerous details that would have added to the intrigue of the tale. There are almost no interesting, well-developed or enlightening stories aside from the tales of prison life. The biggest thing I came away with from this book is that Shea feels the need to tell you how tough he is at least once in every single chapter. Frankly, it gets tiresome and takes away from the story. Shea turns from a would be protagonist (if you buy into the "admirable" qualities the main character portrays) into someone you hope will at least bring something redeeming to the table in the end. It doesn't happen. This one had potential. Unfortunately, the egomania, the lack of details, and the lack of developed stories take away from the impact. As mentioned, read the compilation books first, followed by All Souls (truly excellent), Street Soldier (what this book could have been, ie, very authentic and interesting, even if horrifying), and A Criminal and An Irishman (Nee, it seems, is one of the only genuine stand-up guys). From there, the

rest are pretty much the same.

It is amazing to see a book so riddled with erroneous information still selling. It is a pure disgrace. I'm sad to say that it just doesn't matter that Shea has fabricated the majority of his memoir. In a recent Boston Globe article, journalist Shelley Murphy found the retired police officer that Shea claims offered him a deal to rat on Whitey and walk away from 20 years in jail. Guess what-the retired officer says, "It just didn't happen!" But still the beat goes on-people do not care. What has happened to America-have we all become idiots.If I was from Southie I would stand up and call out Shea for his series of misnomers. It would become my Southie responsibility to lead a movement that stops Shea for misleading the readers. Shea is using his Southie roots to steel money from those of us who have always been fascinated by the strength of this fabulous Irish city.I've read all the Southie books and by far the best one in my opinion is the one we hear nothing about-"A Criminal & an Irishman" by Pat Nee.

I found this book to be one of the most accurate of all the books I've read on or about James Whitey Bulger. Shea sounded like a stand up guy who lived by his convictions. Yes he was a thug and a criminal, but in my 25 years in law enforcement I have found stand up people come from all walks of life. I enjoyed this writing much better than some reporter who just has his own agenda and doesn't always write the truth. Yes, there have been some good books by reporters. Black Mass bring one of them. The reporter I'm talking about has written many books on this subject. The \$\$\$\$\$, seems to be the driving force and not the truth. Bulger was probably one of the worst criminals Boston and South Boston has had or will have. He lived a lie, and Shea told that story as well as his own. I would recommend Rat Bastards to anyone who wants to read a factual account of South Boston. has about the best selection of writings on this subject.

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