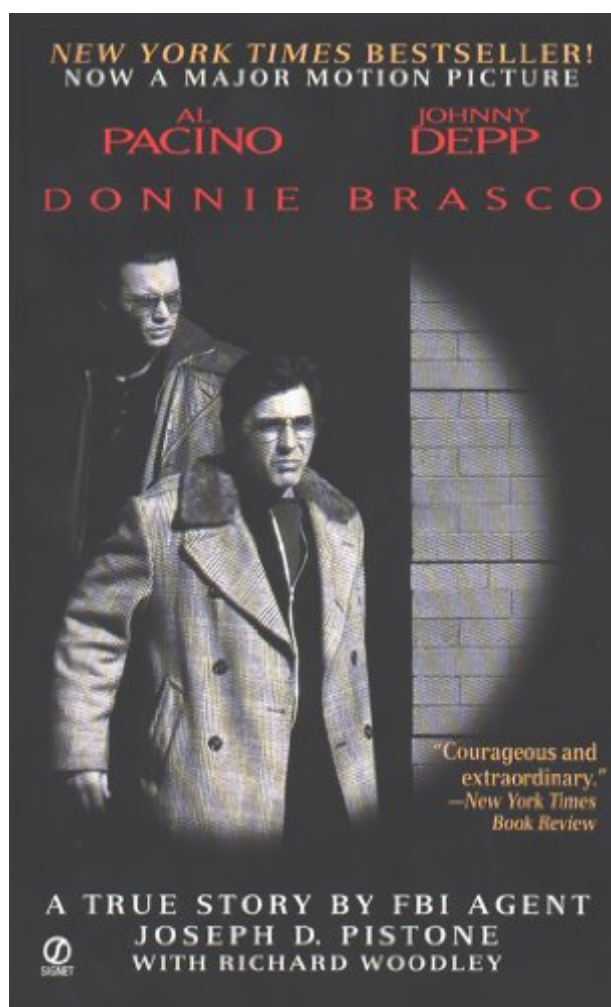


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Donnie Brasco



Synopsis

Posing as jewel thief "Donnie Brasco," FBI agent Joseph D. Pistone carried out the most audacious sting operation ever, working undercover for six years to infiltrate the flamboyant community of mafia soldiers, "connected guys," captains, and godfathers. Now his unforgettable eyewitness account brings to pulsating life the entire world of wiseguys; their code of honor and their treachery, their wives, girlfriends and whores, their lavish spending and dirty dealings. With the drama and suspense of a high-tension thriller, Joseph Pistone reveals every incredible aspect of the jealously guarded world he penetrated...and draws a chilling picture of what the mafia is, does, and means in America today.

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Customer Reviews

I'd put money that you've already seen the movie. What you wanna know is if the book is any good/better/different, right? I'd say different. For example in the book "Donnie" is much older, perhaps over forty - his kids are in high school, whereas as I recall Jonny Depp's Donnie was late twenties/early thirties perhaps, with pre-school-ish kids....Maybe that's not a big deal. A bigger difference is much of the tension in the book comes from one of Donnie's early connections and

sparring partners, Tony, who feuds with Lefty over "control" of Donnie - this is a very important strand in Donnie's rise in the Mafia, and as I recall wasn't in the movie at all. Bottom line is there is far more in the book than the bare bones story told in the film, and it's a well told tale. Forgettaboutit, just buy it....

Before you run out and spend \$3 bucks to rent the movie from Blockbuster or Hollywood Video, read this book. It starts off simple enough: an agent sent to infiltrate the Mafia in NY/NJ area in the late 70s. But "Donnie Brasco" is a much more complex novel than some man faking his identity. Joseph Pistone (Donnie Brasco) was forced to use his street wits, common sense, and just plain luck against ruthless killers, thieves, crooks, addicts, and other general degenerates. Pistone was forced to abandon his family (wife and children) for months on end, and be on assignment for the FBI. He made friendships and forged alliances, posing as jewel thief Donnie Brasco in order to ingratiate himself into the inner workings of the Mafia. Brasco became so close to many members of Bonnano families and their wiseguys, that when it came out that Brasco was an FBI agent posing as a wiseguy, many were in disbelief. One Bonnano affiliate in particular, Sonny Black, was fond of Brasco and thought of him as a son. He allegedly said that he had no ill feelings toward Brasco, because he was just doing his job. (Months later, Sonny Black was found murdered in a trunk. His hands had been cut off--a symbol that Mob security had been violated.) Pistone takes the time to explain in such a way without sounding boring or grating. He explains the slang, the situation, the characters as if you were there standing over his shoulder. This has to be one of the best Mafia books out there. Don't sleep on this one.

The book was based on the true life events of agent Joseph D. Pistone, and is nothing short of perfection. It tells the story of the real mafia life, which is not often portrayed on paper. Agent Pistone's book takes the reader into the life of the capo's and the soldiers of the Bonanno family. Its is a very interesting book, and also a great fim starring Al Pacino and Michael Madsen. I work in a bookstore, and have read numerous mafia books, and this is one of my favorites.

"Donnie Brasco" the movie, while compelling, contains numerous glaring inaccuracies that will jump out at you while reading the book. Two of the most galling are that Pistone (Donnie) cared what happened to Lefty (Al Pacino's character), when in fact Pistone never lost sight of the fact that Lefty was a bad guy. Also, the movie makes it seem as though Pistone's superiors interfered with his operation and did not appreciate him. The book clearly dispells this distortion. Pistone's account of

life in the mafia compares with Nicholas Pileggi's "Wiseguy" as compelling reading. And it will dispell any remaining notions that mob life is glamorous. Lefty's memorable movie scene in which he prepares to meet his death is at least one moment in which the movie keeps to the spirit of this great book.

Yeah, I say that this book was better than the movie only because you learned a lot more details and Joseph D. Pistone tells the EXACT story. The movie starring Johnny Depp and Al Pacino was great but since reading the book you learned that it was twisted around a little. (Im not taking anything away from the movie because I loved it) Joseph D. Pistone went undercover for 6 years in the Mafia, and penetrated deeper than anyone has ever gone as an FBI agent. He is one of the main reasons for the Mafia's decline in todays world and this book does an excellent job of telling about the things that he came across while undercover. I highly recommend this book to anyone who watched the movie and enjoyed it, to anyone who is a Mafia fan, or to anyone who likes a good non-fiction book. Pick up this book, never a dull moment and filled with tons of interesting things.

Joe Pistone is a real American Hero. The former F.B.I agent spent six Years deep undercover as Donnie Brasco, a jewel thief, and infiltrated the Mafia, penetrating it's upper eschalon and bringing their power structure crashing down around their heads, resulting in over 100 convictions... Pistone, along with Richard Woodley, does a great job of bringing real-life Wiseguys like "Lefty Guns", "Sonny Black", and Tony Mirra to life on the printed page, and even though I know Pisone survived his ordeal (He obviously did- He wrote the book!), I was still constantly worried about him. Any fan of true-crime will love Donnie Brasco!

I loved the movie, so I read the book. As usual in those cases, the book is much better. It was interesting to see changes that had to be made to make the movie short enough to hit theaters. I was surprised that the aspect of the movie where the main character was yelling at and, at one point, slapped his wife, was completely invented. I don't know why Pistone (who was heavily involved in production) let that happen. The biggest revelation to me was that he was undercover for SIX YEARS. That's crazy. Six years of moving his family around to keep them safe, maybe seeing them a day or two a month. Six years of being one mistake away from being murdered, without any hope for leniency, if his true identity was ever discovered. Also, although I thought Johnny Depp was great in the movie, the movie didn't do Pistone justice, skipping the part about how he spoke Italian, had grown up in areas touched by the mafia, and actually took extensive lessons in dealing with

jewels to back up his story of being a jewel thief. Another huge aspect left out of the movie was how many crimes (non-violent) Pistone participated in as part of his cover. Even more gripping is the amount of violence he was able to prevent, while trying to appear eager to get his first hit in order to protect his cover. If you like the movie, read the book.

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Donnie Brasco

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