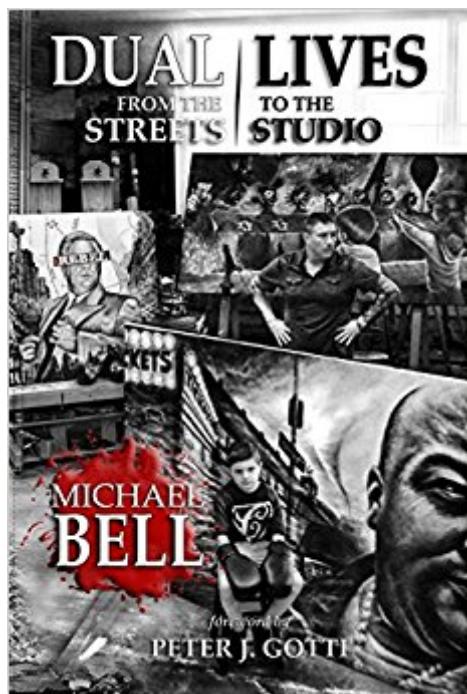


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# DUAL LIVES: From The Streets To The Studio



## Synopsis

In *Dual Lives*, renowned American artist and 3-time national award-winning "Teacher of the Year" • Michael Bell has written an inspiring and brutally candid memoir that chronicles his meteoric rise to becoming one of the most highly decorated public school teachers in America, all the while, living out a storied and often controversial professional painting career as "Mob Artist" • to America's most infamous. Go behind the scenes with his intriguing clientele on how these friendships also fueled his career "from John Gotti to Al Capone's great-nephew, Dominic Capone to numerous actors from "the Sopranos", "Goodfellas", "A Bronx Tale", and more. Then, take a roller coaster crusade through the ever-changing, volatile landscapes of the art world and a US public education system that has begun placing more of an emphasis on "data mining" than on "building relationships." This is the ultimate story of overcoming extreme adversity and being a true champion for today's youth from someone still in the trenches, still at the top of his game. And, in the education arena, Bell has done the unprecedented. His students have earned tens of millions in scholarships; 7 back-to-back NAEA Rising Star Awards in art "an award presented to just one student artist in the entire nation annually; and 8 Scholastic Art National Medalists 3 years straight. Bell also discusses the impact of his family life on his art "on the tragic stillbirth of his sister; on his lifelong relationship with his Grandmother, Violet, a self-taught artist from Lyndhurst, New Jersey; on his inspiring son, Carmen, ("Lil' C"), and his battles with Autism while on his quest to become a Golden Gloves boxing champion. Then there's Bell's notorious cousin Vinnie, who was part of the longest double-murder trial in the history of the State of New Jersey. Learn how Bell, himself, went from being a troubled youth once facing twenty-years-to-life to saving one of his own students from a similar fate nearly two decades later.

*Dual Lives* is passionately written, and just as courageously vulnerable as the compelling narratives found within Bell's paintings. So, ride shotgun alongside Michael Bell throughout his meteoric rise across two very different worlds "from the streets to the studio. Excerpt from the Foreword by PETER J. GOTTI DECEMBER 16, 2014 Hello Michael, this is Peter Gotti. Please contact me as soon as you possibly can, I have a time sensitive project that I need to come to decision on immediately. Thanks, Michael. "At the time of that phone call, I had no idea that Michael Bell would have such a profound effect on my life, like he would so many others. Up until that moment, I only knew of Michael 'the Artist', who, for whatever odd reason, my father, John Gotti, saved and savored a letter from, many years prior. I had little idea of Michael Bell the teacher, father, husband, inspiration, complex leader, and most important of all, true friend. You will learn from Michael that pictures are filled with stories, and each of us has a story to tell. Thus, on that December day, my

family and I were blessed enough to have Michael enter our souls, where he will reside until his last breath. Michael proves on a daily basis what is possible if you show your students that you truly care and if you are willing to go all the way, commit heart and soul to entering the studentâ™s world one can and will 'make champions.' Along the balancing act of exploring the complex mind that Michael is blessed and cursed to have...youâ™re left to wonder if the perfect storm of unique personalities, characters, family, and steady burning fire inside him contributed to the creation of Michael 'the Teacher' and his fascinating and thoroughly impressive record in public education. My belief is...Michael hasnâ™t even begun to paint his masterpiece." - Peter J. Gotti

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"In Michael Bell, I found an artist with the rare ability to render reality in a modern photorealistic style combined with the creative composition of an old master. When I sought out the cover art for my book, Michael was not only my first choice as an artist, he was my only choice. In this literary work, realism is rendered, not by color and line, but by the words of an amazingly talented man, who rose to become an educator, an artist, and a philanthropist. It is an inspiring story." - JOHN A. GOTTI, Bestselling author of SHADOW OF MY FATHER "No one would accuse Michael Bell of modesty. He is a tough guy with a big heart who cares deeply and sincerely about the power and importance of art to bring communities together and to heal deep emotional and psychological wounds. His connection with and impact on his students is inspirational. In Dual Lives, a very uplifting story unfolds." - ERIC FISCHL, World-renowned painter, sculptor, and bestselling author of BAD BOY, MY LIFE ON AND OFF THE CANVASÂ "A life lived in art comes in many forms. Few people have combined more than one of these art-inflected lives into one lifetime like Michael Bell." - JERRY

SALTZ, Senior Art Critic, NEW YORK MAGAZINE "An unusual memoir by a professional artist who has become an inspiring and Award-winning art teacher in public schools full of disadvantaged youth. It is very different from just about any other teacher memoir I have read." - JAY MATHEWS, Washington Post columnist and New York Times bestselling author of WORK HARD. BE NICE. "Dual Lives is the exciting story of Michael Bell, artist to America's most infamous and art teacher to kids who have scooped up millions in awards for their work. He deftly weaves his poignant personal story with those students who have thrived under his guidance. Discover the keys to your own creativity and mentorship in this unique book." - DANIEL H. PINK, New York Times bestselling author of DRIVE and A WHOLE NEW MIND "When you think of an artist and creator, you think of Michael Bell. Being an artist is something you're born with. It's talent one has in their blood that drives itself through the human body and puts a thought or idea on canvas for the world to see. I'm so proud of my best friend and brother for his accomplishments. Money can't buy talent. It does, however, buy the talents' creations." - DOMINIC CAPONE, Actor, producer, and great-nephew of late mob boss AL CAPONE "Art is within all. Our life experience shapes art's form and texture as it inversely changes us. Michael Bell knows the power of an artful life better than most. He has helped countless students find their first steps of self-discovery on their own creative paths. As a mentor, his inspirational approach is made manifest in his protégés as they find something greater within themselves. Art transforms, and Bell is there as lives are transformed by the challenge of growing in the ageless hands of art--and Michael Bell." - DAVID J. LEESON, Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer "Really great work. I love the way he captures someone, in his art and in his book. He is truly an artist with a vision." - JOSEPH R. GANNASCOLI, Vito from THE SOPRANOS, celebrity spokesman and entrepreneur "While it is true that boxing is about sport and competition, boxing is also about overcoming, building confidence. This book will truly highlight that." - PAUL MALIGNAGGI, 2-time world champion fighter, SHOWTIME/CBS boxing analyst "Always hang on to what you believe in. Never what you see . . . 'Cause what you see might just be an illusion." - STEVE MARTORANO, Celebrity cook, owner of CAFÉ MARTORANO'S and the real life ROCKY of South Philly

Michael Bell is a renowned American Artist, most famous for his gangster series paintings and his infamous portrait painting clientele, which includes John Gotti, Dominic Capone and numerous actors from *the Sopranos*, *Goodfellas*, *A Bronx Tale*, and more. He's also a father, fighter, boxing enthusiast, anti-bullying and Autism activist. Bell has also excelled in the field of education, playing a vital role in pioneering the worldwide "Visual Journaling" movement. Bell is a

National Board Certified Teacher and a 3-time national award-winning public school âœTeacher of the Yearâ • that has been honored with: the Los Angeles Good Shepherd Shelter Community Service Award, the College Boardâ™s William U. Harris Award of Excellence, the NAEAâ™s National Art Honor Society Sponsor of the Year, the Washington Postâ™s Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award and the Dr. James E. Douthat Outstanding Achievement Award from Lycoming College. Bell is also a 7-time NAEA Rising Star Award-Winning Art Educator (2010 â€“ 2016) and a 3-time Scholastic Art National Medalist Educator (2014 â€“ 2016). Bell has a BFA from Lycoming College and an M.Ed in Art Education from Towson University.

Ã¢Â-Story telling is a powerful art form. Stories can inspire us, move us and guide us through life's battles. Stories are a way to reach out to people; they help us make an emotional, deep connection to others. Michael Bell, a nationally recognized educator and renowned artist, is a master story teller. He is able to engage people in powerful ways through the stories he shares in his autobiography, *Dual Lives*. All great storytellers since the dawn of time, have dealt with fundamental conflict between subjective expectation and cruel reality. Bell raises the bar of storytelling and changes lives with his compassion and empathy. He paints his profound and inspirational message very simply. It's the stories of our lives that shape us. They define our purpose, our passion and our "why". Michael Bell develops a recurring theme throughout his book that weaves his personal stories of conflict, educational beliefs, loyal connections and career successes into an intricate tapestry. He places emphasis on a critical component; the art of building & sustaining relationships. Bell discusses his belief, that education and life, is about helping people discover, refine, and develop their gifts, talents, passions and abilities; and then helping them discover how to use those gifts, talents, abilities in ways that benefit others and oneself. He proudly shares with you the accomplishments of "his kids" and their numerous programs & scholarships they've been awarded. As well as, his beloved son's well being and progress after being diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Bell continues to mention that the great irony of existence is what makes life worth living and it does not come from the rosy side. He reminds us that the energy to live comes from the dark side. It comes from everything that makes us suffer. As we struggle against these negative powers, weÃ¢Â-re forced to live more deeply, more fully. It's this constant battle that leads us to our fullest potential and most glorious achievement. *Dual Lives* is a pleasure to read. Bell's style is direct, raw, and lucid. It is written with a great sense of humor too. This warrior welcomes us into his world, his accomplishments, and his battles. You not only feel like a part of his family, but he leaves you wanting another serving of

Sunday dinner.

I didn't know what to expect when I picked up this book, had no idea, but I enjoyed it so much I couldn't put it down. It's hard to say in just a few words the way this book touched me. There are so many levels to this man's journey and in each of his experiences, a new story that will keep you reading. This book is very intriguing, very inspiring and very real! Michael tells his story in a very clear, brutally honest way but with so much love and compassion! Michael, with all his rough edges, makes you not only want to be a better person but makes you realize that you CAN be a better person, leader, parent, friend. I picked up this book for a very personal reason, the chapter entitled "Angelina". Angelina is my daughter and Michael wrote about the time he spent with her dad and I at the hospital when we found out our daughter was going to lose her battle with cancer at the age of 11. One call from Louie, Angelina's dad and Michael left his family with only the clothes on his back and came to Philly to be with us. For 10 days Michael never left us, he slept on the floor of Angelina's room every night for 10 days and he writes about that time in his book. It gave me comfort to read about that time from Michael's perspective as for me, it was the saddest time of my life and still feels surreal. Beyond the chapter about Angelina, this book inspired me in ways I would never have imagined. From Michael's passion for everything he does, his art, his teaching, his compassion for his students, friends and his family. The way his life intertwines with so many other rich characters in his book and how he never judges people but instead learns their stories, talks to them, gets to know them. You'll learn about Michael's accomplishments in Art and teaching and you'll meet many of his students, colleagues, clientele and fellow artists. You'll also meet Lisa, Michael's wife and how together they fight for their son Carmen's well being after being diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The first person I bought this book for, besides myself, was a dear friend who also happens to be a teacher. I think all teachers should read this book but I also think anyone and everyone should read this book! This is a story that would make a great fictional movie but it's all non-fiction and Michael's friends, family and associates are all very colorful which makes this a fantastic read! Buy this book!

An amazing read from a talented, accomplished and creative artist. Very well written autobiography. Michael Bell's life is very interesting from start to present (from learning how to use his first paintbrush from his Grandmother to developing his unique style reflecting his own inner being). Learning how to "draw a line from your life to your art that is straight and clear" pretty much

sums it up. From the time that he was a little boy to pursuing his dreams and making them come true both on canvas and through his leadership. A true motivating leader and dedicated family man. Life hasn't always been easy but through his dedication and vision- he is making everything happen. It's very hard to put the book down because his story is very fascinating and well told . His paintings are one of a kind and I can't wait to seek him out for my next painting. Michael Bell has a deep understanding of one's needs. He's a true visionary that is able to capture real life through his work by understanding his client's needs through emotion and simple communication . His students are surely never to forget him and neither are his friendships and relationships that have developed over the years with the infamous John Gotti Jr. and family who have commissioned him out for paintings of their own including the cover of John Junior's book "Shadow of My Father". I give this book 5 star rating

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