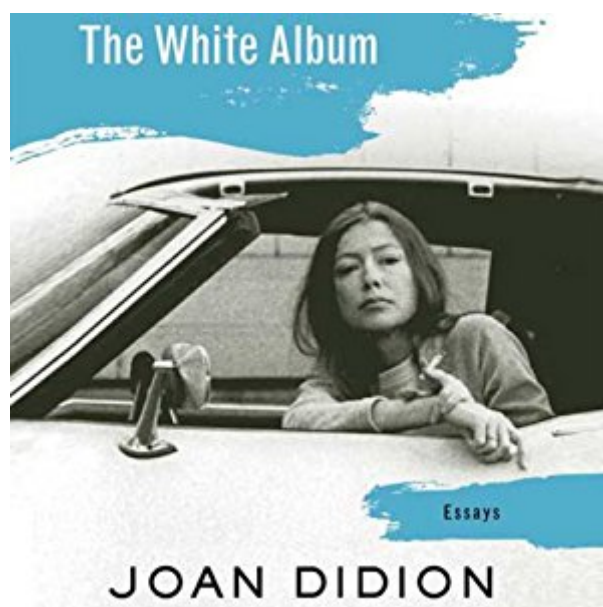


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The White Album



Synopsis

First published in 1979, *The White Album* records indelibly the upheavals and aftermaths of the 1960s. Examining key events, figures, and trends of the era - including Charles Manson, the Black Panthers, and the shopping mall - through the lens of her own spiritual confusion, Joan Didion helped to define mass culture as we now understand it. Written with a commanding sureness of tone and linguistic precision, *The White Album* is a central example of American reportage and a classic of American autobiography.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Customer Reviews

Joan Didion always seems to look out at you from her book jackets in a straightforward, level-headed way, yet her readers will know she has a somewhat cockeyed view of life. Very Californian, as she quotes Bernard De Voto, "The West begins, where the average annual rainfall drops below twenty inches." But hardly sunny, she's dark, dark: she has made the literature of nervous breakdown her own. We saw it in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem: Essays* (FSG Classics); *Play It As It Lays: A Novel*; and *A Book of Common Prayer*; as in "*The White Album*," the book at hand here; essays first collected and published in 1979. She eyes the 1960s, and California, quite closely; she sketches the 1960's so well, in fact, she might almost have imaginatively invented them. It's all here, the Manson family, the Black Panthers, the historic doings at the University of California, Berkeley. She says "...there were odd things going on around town. There were rumors. There were stories. Everything was unmentionable, but nothing was unimaginable. This mystical flirtation with the idea of 'sin'-- this sense that it was possible to go 'too far,' and that many people

were doing it-- was very much with us in Los Angeles in 1968 and 1969. A demented and seductive vortical tension was building in the community. The jitters were setting in.

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