



Lo-Life: An American Classic

Jackson Blount, George "Rack-Lo" Billips

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Lo-Life: An American Classic takes the reader on a trip to New York City in the early 80s—a time when crime and violence ran the streets. The infamous Lo-Life gang emerged from this tumultuous time. Formed by crews of teenagers from the Brownsville and Crown Heights neighborhoods of Brooklyn, they made a name for themselves by dressing head-to-toe in expensive Ralph Lauren clothing, or “Lo.” Polo apparel—and other preppy 80s fashion labels like Guess, Nautica, and Benetton, among others—represented an aspirational lifestyle for these kids from rough neighborhoods just struggling to get by. Fighting for style and survival, the Lo-Lifes targeted these brands, and would acquire them by any means necessary, including stick-ups, shoplifting, and hustling. A reign of terror ensued, when your new winter coat could make you the target for a robbery—or worse.

What started as an informal gang uniform organized around clean designs and bright colors, became a devotion to a lifestyle brand, and eventually created an association between the streets and luxury that would fundamentally change the fashion industry. *Lo-Life: An American Classic* documents the personal collections of exclusive archival vintage photographs amassed by the crew and interviews with original members, presenting the first comprehensive oral history of this notorious New York collective.

Lo-Life is the remarkable story of a small group of teenagers fighting to make a name for themselves who eventually made themselves seen, heard, and emulated globally.

Love and Loyalty!

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