

# [PDF] Bourgeois Blues: An American Memoir

**Jake Lamar - pdf download free book**

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**Books Details:**

Title: Bourgeois Blues: An American

Author: Jake Lamar

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## **Description:**

**From Library Journal** Lamar has written an insightful account of growing up as a middle-class African American in a household with an abusive father. Using background narrative as well as personal incidents, he describes his youth in the New York City of the 1960s and 1970s, with particular focus on life in a dysfunctional family. Following his graduation from Harvard, Lamar was employed by Time magazine as one of a very few blacks on the staff. He eloquently depicts the struggle of the middle-class "black Bourgeois" to assimilate into white society while also striving for mutual acceptance and recognition by other blacks. An underlying theme is Lamar's eventual reconciliation with his father. Librarians should take note that there is a great deal of obscene language. An optional purchase for most collections.

*-Michael A. Lutes, Univ. of Notre Dame Lib., Ind.*

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**From Kirkus Reviews** Growing up in the black middle class and attending Harvard, Lamar, a former associate editor at Time, had a foot in two worlds and feared he ``was terminally ambivalent." That ambivalence, as evident in this captivating memoir, seems rooted in Lamar's relationship with his domineering, abusive father. It's 1988 and Lamar, who hasn't heard from his father in five years, receives a phone call from an investigator looking into his father's business dealings. Jake, Sr., who became one of the highest ranking black officials in New York government during the Lindsay years, was determined that his son attend Harvard and become a lawyer. (When the acceptance letter arrived, Lamar's father ``whooped triumphantly. `We did it! We got into Harvard!' ") A workaholic and philanderer who would disappear for days at a time, Lamar, Sr., was also insanely jealous of his wife, bullying and smacking her around in front of the children: she eventually left their Bronx home and was hospitalized for depression. Experiencing hard times and bankruptcy, the elder Lamar saddled his son with a \$25,000 debt to Harvard (his other children were left to fend for themselves), didn't attend the 1983 graduation, and refused to return his son's calls--whether out of jealousy or anger over his son's career choice is unclear. His progressively deteriorating personality led his son to feel that ``Every success I achieved was a measure of revenge." When the two briefly reunited in 1988, the father, though proud of seeing his son's name in Time, asked not one question about his life, job, or well-being. Crediting his father for his drive and determination despite the damage done, Lamar notes that ``He did the best he could." Painful and illuminating, and a far more perceptive look at the black bourgeois experience than Stephen L. Carter's *Reflections Of An Affirmative Action Baby* (p. 902). -- *Copyright* ©1991, *Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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