



50 Shades of Nika: The Criminal with the Biggest Victim Complex

REVIEW BY: MARIA SHAIKH | Copy Editor

Infamous UTD felon Nika Nikoubin's new autobiography "Who is Nika Nikoubin? A Bloody Las Vegas Hotel Story" is larger than life, dramatically illustrating the high-profile March 2022 attempted murder for which Nikoubin was recently sentenced to probation. Despite its theatrics and tell-all details, however, this book sports a flaw that is crippling: Unless you like atrociously written, dishonestly true, victim-complex-ridden money grabs, you would be better off reading a phonebook.

Nikoubin's crime was perfect headline fodder. She accompanied her blind date to a hotel, blindfolded him, and in the middle of sex stabbed him in the neck twice. When speaking to police, Nikoubin described the attack as revenge for the U.S.'s murder of a Iranian general, which she later denounced as part of her delusional state. Her victim survived, and Nikoubin was convicted of two counts of false imprisonment with a deadly weapon, receiving a probation sentence in August 2023 after arguing she was in a manic state but was now medicated and working with a psychiatrist. After Nikoubin's crime was discovered by campus students and she was banned from the news, mass media caught hold of her story. Nikoubin quickly capitalized on the found fame, grinding out auto-tuned covers of other people's music, hosting concerts, and other regressive press, starting a podcast ... and publishing this book.

"Who is Nika Nikoubin?" is a chronological account of Nikoubin's life, starting from her early childhood in Tehran, through her adolescence in Lubbock, Texas, to her tumultuous college years, marked by struggles with trauma, depression and manic episodes. No detail is spared when discussing her drugged-out trip to Vegas, the attempted murder, the sex act leading up to it, her police custody and weeks of jail time and her subsequent freedom and fame. Nikoubin claims the book was written for other girls with mental health struggles, which would be a nice sentiment if the book were even slightly respectable.

Despite being manic, stressed and incoherent, she recalls precise details, timelines and her mental state. It is notable that the Salma Hayek narrative didn't emerge until she started giving interviews with the press. While I don't doubt that Nikoubin was having a psychotic episode during the crime, we cannot be certain that the details provided in the book are true. She certainly has no problem with the minor factual errors littering her book, with the minor claiming UCLA is the top college in America, or is a "hit single" and that she produces as well as sings. She has much to gain from the media spotlight by embellishing her story. Frankly, her recollection cannot be trusted.

The questionable factuality of Nikoubin's account is not even my main issue with the book. What brought tears of rage to my eyes about her victim, Nikoubin cares never giving him a line of dialogue, nor even regretting hurting him, displaying remarkably little sympathy. Even the book cover betrays this blindfold like what she used on her victim, the felony she committed into an erotic, mysterious adventure.

To Nikoubin, her victim isn't a person worth about neatly killing him, but a warm body that simply happened to be affected during her mental break. She egregiously refers to him as "George Clooney" while calling herself "Salma Hayek." Everything in her work centers around her, while he steps existing as a person as the knife lodges in. The irony is especially

clearly being considering how, at Nikoubin's sentencing, the victim on. By dredging this case up repeatedly through ventures like the book or her new podcast, she denies him the privacy he seeks. And despite his request for privacy, she spares no unnecessary graphic detail on the acts preceding the crime. His wishes mean nothing to her. Instead of respecting her victim, Nikoubin is more interested in portraying herself as a victim of the story. She justifies her crimes hadly upon her and how he asked for pain and sympathy where she deserves none.

The book's narrative only works if we view Nikoubin as a helpless victim reacting to separate circumstances, shifting the blame onto the man she stabbed. The truth is that Nikoubin may have had a psychotic episode, but that does not magically absolve her of the crime. Nikoubin herself admits that in Vegas, she stopped taking her medication, and had someone already diagnosed with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. And in the months since, while she may be adhering to probation requirements, her public behavior shows that she feels little guilt or accountability for what happened.

Ceaseless discussion follows of how the crime impacted her — how jail traumatized her and the media judged her — yet not a thought is spared to the man she tried to kill. She spends more time rambling on how the photo of her published in the press was not pretty than she does considering her victim.

"I supposed the attempted murder charge was also not a petty crime."

"From living in Berkeley [sic], I was exposed to everything from cryotherapy to veganism."

"I was hallucinating [sic] a snake around my shoulders just like the dance scene from the movie [Dusk Till Dawn]."

"I SAID 'SORRY' AND RAN OUT OF THE ROOM NAKED WITH A BUTT PLUG STILL INSIDE ME."

—NIKOUBIN
SENSATIONALIZING, AS ALWAYS

Throughout the book, she insists, "I'm not a victim," implying like one at first while nominally denying her self-centered attitude. It is astonishing how the perpetrator of two felony stabbings can talk like she is the only one suffering.

A more niche but extremely noticeable flaw with Nikoubin's autobiography is its sloppiness. Evidently, it has not seen an editor's desk; typos pepper every page, incoherent paragraphs are strung into messy narratives and long sections are boring, unneeded fluff. It is obvious that Nikoubin tried to maximize the page count; the font is huge, and each page is drowning in unnecessary song lyrics, evoking a chapter book meant for fourth graders. At the same time, much of the biographical portion is needlessly detailed and painfully irrelevant to the "bloody Vegas hotel story." It reads like a rough draft, not a professional publication.

Nikoubin struggles to decide whether this book is an actual autobiography or a theatrical justification of her crime; ultimately, she settles for falling at both.

What might have redeemed this book is a positive message. Nikoubin claims in her conclusion that she wrote it for girls who struggle with mental health issues, but that message rings exceptionally hollow. Nowhere is her self-interested, dramatized account in any consideration of her audience, or trying to make herself seem sympathetic, of bipolar disorder or schizophrenia or trying to destigmatize them for the audience. She doesn't explain how she's healing and what she'll do differently this time. She spends half

the book discussing all the negatives of medication but doesn't explain how they can help and why she ultimately chooses to take them — hint, a court order.

For someone trying to understand bipolar or schizophrenia, the book's overuse and under-explanation of terms like "manic" offer little insight. For a young girl with a mental disorder, reading about a graphic crime with very little follow-up or explanation of Nikoubin's recovery might imply that these disorders guarantee eventual criminality. At one point, Nikoubin discusses how a ten-day psychiatric ward stay couldn't help her, but expects us to uncritically believe that working with a psychiatrist once a week has completely healed her. How can Nikoubin's book help others when we can't even be sure her own mental health is under control?

Nikoubin just wants to talk about herself under the guise of being a "mental health advocate." This book doesn't offer any advocacy for anyone, or showing that it doesn't shatter stereotypes, or case personal growth, despite the odds, or offer any proof that crises like these are avoidable. It just fetishizes a mania-induced crime for the sake of profit.

I strongly recommend against buying this book, even to read it ironically. Purchasing this book financially supports Nikoubin and her attempt to revise the tragic event into a sympathetic, eye-catching cash cow that exploits her victim despite his wishes. The best way to respond to Nikoubin's desperate clawing for time is to ignore her instead of listening to her. Don't feed her need for attention; let this story — and her treason — fade into obscurity. You already know exactly who Nika Nikoubin is.

