



Dance with the Devil: A Memoir of Murder and Loss

David Bagby

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Immortalized in the spellbinding documentary *Dear Zachary*, this angry, raw, and brutally honest memoir of murder and loss chronicles a system's failure to prevent the death of a child.

In November 2001, the body of a young doctor named Andrew Bagby was discovered in Keystone State Park outside Latrobe, Pennsylvania, five bullet wounds in his face, chest, buttocks, and the back of the head. For parents Dave and Kate, the pain was unbearable?but Andrew's murder was only the first in a string of tragic events.

The chief suspect for Andrew's murder was his ex-girlfriend Shirley Turner?also a doctor. Obsessive and unstable, Shirley Turner lied to the police and fled to her family home in Newfoundland before she could be arrested. While fending off extradition efforts by U.S. law enforcement, she announced she was pregnant with Andrew's son, Zachary. The Bagbys?hoping to gain custody of Zachary?moved to Newfoundland and began a long, drawn-out battle in court and with Canadian social services to protect their grandson from the woman who had almost certainly murdered their son. Then, in August 2003, Shirley Turner killed herself and the one-year-old Zachary by jumping into the Atlantic Ocean.

DANCE WITH THE DEVIL is a eulogy for a dead son, an elegy for lives cut tragically short, and a castigation of a broken system.

Dance with the Devil: A Memoir of Murder and Loss Details

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Author : David Bagby

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From Reader Review Dance with the Devil: A Memoir of Murder and Loss for online ebook

Lauren Marie says

Wanted to read this book as soon and the documentary Dear Zachary ended. Its so hard to understand how this story could happen in 1st world country--- who lets a accused murderer out on bail and then gives the person their children to raise?

This story evoked so many emotions in me from anger to sadness but unconditional love and strength is what really stands out in this book. By the end I wanted to jump through the pages and hug the Bagby's and cry with them. I have never met them but reading this story and watching the documentary has shown me two of the strongest, most loving people I would ever have the pleasure of meeting. Great book, some legal jargon which is why I think watching the movie makes the book easier to read.. Although not a necessity. Book or movie... This story needs to be heard so that laws can be changed!

Kate says

I saw the documentary...and I am speechless. I read on Netflix it's best you know nothing about the story, and that is so true. I was truly shocked when I watched it. And now I want to read the book.

Tiffany says

Having watched the documentary about this case, I really needed to read this book. Written by the father of the murder victim, you learn all the details that led up to his son's murder and the preventable murder of his grandson. What he and his wife went through is truly disgusting. While they could not have foreseen the murder or their son, Andrew, they did everything they could to keep their grandson, Zachery, safe. While battling the extremely long court system in Canada, they did all they could to keep things civil between themselves and the accused murderer of their son. I don't think I could have done what they did. This book was very well written, and straight to the point. While keeping a matter-of-fact tone throughout the book, bursts of emotion break through and you can really feel the pain that the Bagby's went through. Not only do you get the whole story of how the justice system failed, but Dave goes on to explain how it should be fixed. He has clearly done his research of the law and proposes many ways that this type of tragic event could be prevented in the future.

Janell P says

I wanted to read this book because I saw a snippet on MSNBC or one of those late night shows, (about the last 7-10 minutes of the show) that was actually the television version of what had taken place back in 2001. While watching the few minutes of the show, I could not believe that what the woman in the 'story' had done (at the end of the show/book) (and don't want to give away the ending here).

But the story seemed familiar somehow. I had a recollection that I had heard the story before. I recalled my friend, J went to church with and knew the parents of the murdered son. I actually remember hearing J tell me that she got a phone call from these parents telling her that their son who was studying back east to be a doctor had been killed. Of course, they were devastated but they were getting ready to go across country and see if they could find out who had murdered their only son.

This book, written by the father of the murdered son is not a story I would typically read but I feel compelled to know what happened not only because I was trying to figure out why the woman in the book did what she did, and that J had known these people. So I'm reading it. It is a well-written, terribly tragic story. J loaned me the book. It's an autographed copy of a horrific event in this family's life.

Elizabeth says

One of the most heart-wrenching books I have ever read. I cried all the way reading this, and also while watching the documentary. I truly commend the Bagby's commitment to exposing (and trying to bring about change) a corrupt judicial system, even in the midst of their tremendous loss.

Karen says

I was lucky to get my hands on a copy of this hard to find book and was glad I did. It's just as heartbreaking as the documentary "Dear Zachary", which I HIGHLY recommend watching. I suggest you keep any heavy items out of reach because you will want to throw them at the television screen & a box of tissues because you will need them.

The book was written by David Bagby the father of Andrew Bagby, a well loved family practice doctor who was murdered by a sociopathic, evil, spawn of Satan woman named Shirley Turner. The grief felt by David & his wife Kate can be felt through the pages. David & Kate are saints having to endure years of waiting for justice due to Canada's lousy & severely flawed system of letting dangerous people free on bail.

I won't spoil what happens while Shirley is walking the streets a free woman but will say God bless David & Kate for their brutal honesty, immense patience, heartbreaking loss and inspirational perseverance.

Lesley says

I have to be honest, I've stopped reading this at 27%.

Whilst I know (from the documentary) that the story would be worth reading, I just got completely bored of the legalities, which is what the book has consisted of after Andrew was murdered, through to Zachary being born. After that I've ploughed through pages and pages of legal processes, which frankly don't interest me in the slightest.

What I wanted to read was the family and human side of the story. I am not a lawyer, I am not a law student - the legalities don't interest me, even though I was initially interested in reading of the ineptitude of the Canadian courts and social work systems.

I should have just stuck with the documentary.

Ali says

It pains me to award only two stars to a book written by David Bagby, but I want to use the Goodreads' ranking system more accurately. And this book was... okay.

To clarify, David and Kate Bagby are five-star people, and *Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father* is a five-star documentary. I expected this memoir to satisfy my craving for MORE--more about the extraordinary Bagby family, more about the production of *Dear Zachary*, more about the public officials responsible for Zachary's death... more, more, MORE!

But this memoir is merely a chronological retelling of the case against Shirley Turner. Bagby's writing is proficient but lacks the raw emotion expressed by him in the documentary. Because of this, I recommend learning about this case and these super-human people via Kurt Kuenne's film rather than this memoir. (Ugh. It hurt my heart to write that.)

But I digress...

Shirley Turner, how I wish David Bagby had Dexter-ed your sick, twisted, cruel, manipulative self! But I'll settle for the Bagbys more rational approach to their rage:

"With renewed thought came renewed rage; not just at Shirley, but at the blindness--the willful blindness--of those in positions of power who refused to stop her" (222).

The Bagby's advocacy is truly inspiring, and although I skimmed a handful of pages related to David Bagby's general recommendations, it's clear their heartbreak has affected positive change in multiple broken systems. There's little solace in that, though, after reading the CDR that characterized Zachary's death as entirely preventable (273).

But the most haunting aspect of this story for me? The recorded phone calls between the Bagbys and Shirley when they shared custody of Zachary. Shirley's nonsensical ranting, David's measured responses, her invalid--not to mention ironic--concerns about Zachary's care, his firm insistence that Zachary would want for nothing. These extraordinary people went to great lengths to spend even an extra hour with their grandchild--sharing a pool with their son's murderer, babysitting for her at a moment's notice, dealing with her jealousy and shit-talking and emotional breakdowns. Most people--including myself--would not be capable of such resolve. Simply stated, the world needs more David and Kate Bagbys.

Laren says

Andrew Bagby is murdered in the US by a woman who was angry that he broke up with her. That woman then escapes to Canada while evidence against her is gathering, and then she has his baby while the extradition process drags on. When another man scorns her during this time, she kills herself and the baby, all to the horror of Andrew's parents.

I had already watched a documentary about this case. Titled "Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father" it was made by one of Andrew's friends who wanted to document Andrew's life for the son he never got to meet, Zachary. It focused on the people who loved Andrew who were offering their love to Zachary too. But when Zachary was murdered by the same woman, it turned into a testament of love and strength for Andrew's parents.

The book is written by Andrew's father, and it has a different focus than the documentary. It focuses more on the aftermath of their son's murder, especially the arduous task of getting Canada to extradite an accused murderer back to the US, even when there was no death penalty on the table for her. It also tells of the lengths they went to in order to stay in contact with their only remaining link to Andrew, their grandson Zachary, although it involved continued contact with the murderer of their son, kept neutral by superhuman efforts. He is very frank about their grief, and is very detailed on how the Canadian system failed to protect Zachary from a woman known to be under suspicion of murder already. The book ends with a very well-thought-out entreaty to the Canadian legal system to reform their bail and surety laws, and he outlines how he sees such changes as still in keeping with their Charter of primary concern in Canadian's rights.

This is an utterly horrifying look at how preservation of the accused's rights can go too far. If you don't enjoy a lot of detailed legal wrangling in your true crime, you may want to skip this one. But if the legalities of crime interest you, this is a must read. It is about the Canadian legal system, but some of the problems in their system parallel problems in the US legal system.

Stephanie says

After seeing the documentary about this case, "Dear Zachary," I was itching to get my hands on this book. Unfortunately, it went out of print and is very expensive to purchase. No one in my entire library system owns it either (30+ libraries), so I wound up having to get an interlibrary loan and have this book shipped to me from another state. Yes, I went to great lengths to read this book and I'm glad I did!

The basics of the story are this: Andrew Bagby was a young doctor involved with an older doctor, Shirley Turner. When he broke things off with her, she killed him and fled the U.S. for Canada. She later revealed that she was pregnant with his son. Zachary was born a short while later. While she was out on bail and awaiting extradition to the U.S., she killed herself and one year old Zachary.

I really wanted to know more about the story and the background of the case after seeing the film. This book was actually written by Andrew's father, so I was really glad to see his perspective. It was extremely informative and fascinating, and dives much more into the case than the movie is able to. It's a heartbreaking story and my stomach literally hurt whenever I thought about what happened to Zachary, an innocent baby. Even though this book was sometimes painful to read, there's a certain beauty in the great lengths that David and Kate went to in order to take care of their grandson, Zachary, before the horrible tragedy.

Some of the legal jargon, particularly towards the end of the book, was a bit dry and difficult to understand at times. Ultimately though, it was necessary to include since the Bagbys are going to great lengths to try and get bail release laws changed.

If you've seen "Dear Zachary" and want to know more, I'd recommend you track down a copy of this book, too.

Melanie says

After helping Kurt Kuene with his documentary Dear Zachary: A Letter from a father to his Son I was honored that David Bagby sent me his book as a thank you. There is only so much that Kurt could fit in an hour and a half and I learned so much more by reading things from David's own words. The Bagby's lived a nightmare that no person should ever have to go through and I admire their courage and strength. The world is a better place because David and Kate are in it!

Susan says

Being from Newfoundland,I was well aware of the happenings in this book as they were happening. Even before the ultimate tragic end,I strongly felt that it was a crime within itself that that woman had that defenceless child. David Bagby has written such a poignant account of the sordid happenings and has brought both Andrew and Zachary alive on the pages. His arguments towards the refusal of parole for alleged murderers is superb and really shows how idiotic the laws can be. Yes,Shirley Turner should have been innocent until proven guilty, but to be out on parole(with her sureties only needing to provide their signatures and not a red cent,another crime towards the innocent!!) and allowed to play Russian Roulette with her baby's and other people's lives is totally ludacris. David and Kate Bagby must have been saints to have had to tolerate personal dealings with their only child's murderess,and basically have to grovel to her to even see their precious only-ever grandchild.Yet,they did whatever they could for the sake of Zachary.Most people (myself included) would have made away with Shirley Turner the first chance they got.Why should they have even been put in that insane situation in the first place? David expresses his intense rage and his intense patience with Turner superbly. His wife and himself also were quick to not harvest bitterness towards Turner's children,relatives,etc. Yes,they were innocent as well, but I feel it takes a big person to rise above it all and not harbour animosity towards those people. There are so many questions raised:why was there no psychological profile done on Turner as she awaited trial?Why did child protection services not do their job and protect (or even follow closely) Zachary? Why didn't the many people who witnessed Shirley Turner's disturbing behavior and intense wrath make an issue in the courts more of it? Wasn't anybody willing to step up(besides the Bagbys) and try to rescue that baby???I knew what Zachary's fate would be long before it was written about here but it was shattering to read of it from his grandfather's perspective. This book just reinforces the obliviousness and callousness of " the system" towards victims and its sick preoccupation with criminals' rights. Society as a whole should take the lessons derived from this book and just pray the same tragedy never befalls their own family. This is a fascinating,horrific and humbling read.

Laura Blake says

I read this book in a single day on 2 airplanes several months ago. This is the most moving and incredibly outrageous true story I've ever heard.

This book was written by a grieving father, and it takes you through the most unbelievable story of love and loss, with a bizarre and horrific twist. I cannot imagine how these parents endured such slow torture.

The author happens to be an engineer, so his writing is every clear and concise. The time line is perfectly laid

out, and all of the details create a vivid picture in my mind.

Equally as powerful throughout this book are his genuine descriptions of his and his wife Kate's feelings throughout this roller coaster of a nightmare that stretched out over years.

The book is written with such an intimate tone, that I feel like I'm sitting with the author and having a conversation. For some reason, these people just moved me.

I first heard about them when I caught the tail end of a Dateline that was on about their story. I found myself in disbelief, and had to find out more.

There was a documentary made about their story called "Dear Zachary". You can download it from itunes. I highly recommend watching this.

After watching the documentary, I went and bought the book. I thought I knew the whole story, but the documentary doesn't cover half of what you read in this book.

This is a story that you'll care about deeply.

I highly recommend the book and the documentary.

Kelly Gallagher says

This is an amazing true story that was...well, not conveyed with the same fiery delivery seen in the film "Dear Zachary..."

Honestly, the film was one of the most compelling, surprising, unsuspecting pieces of miracle I've ever seen...so sad that I doubt I could ever see it again. The book...came up short.

Cecelia says

I can only imagine this book to be heartbreaking. The movie had me in tears and in rage all at once.
