



Chase Your Shadow: The Trials of Oscar Pistorius

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The definitive account of the rise and fall of South African Olympic and Gold Medal-winning Paralympic sprinter Oscar Pistorius, from his personal and athletic success to the murder charge that rocked the world and put both the man, and post-Apartheid South Africa, on trial.

Oscar Pistorius made history as the first amputee to compete against able-bodied runners at the 2012 London Olympics. A hero in his native South Africa, the “Blade Runner” as he is known for his futuristic prosthetic legs, became a global icon of resilience and determination.

But less than a year later, Pistorius rocked the world once again when he shot his girlfriend, model Reeva Steenkamp, through a closed bathroom door in the early hours of February 14, 2013. Charged with murder, he claimed self-defense, contending that he had acted in a blind panic, imagining an intruder had broken in. But as the investigation moved to trial—during which the prosecution sought to prove that he killed her in a rage after an argument—a picture emerged of a traumatized individual fascinated with guns and assailed, behind the heroic facade, by anguish and self-doubt.

Acclaimed journalist John Carlin follows the trials of this fallen champion, detailing his fraught upbringing, his almost superhuman rise to athletic glory, and the mysterious circumstances surrounding Steenkamp’s death. At the center of Pistorius’s story is South Africa—a young democracy stained by a history of racial disparity and levels of criminal violence that are among the highest in the world.

Thoughtful and probing, *Chase Your Shadow* offers a piercing look at this intriguing modern tragedy, bringing to life a complex figure and the troubled land that shaped him.

Chase Your Shadow: The Trials of Oscar Pistorius Details

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Jennifer says

What a surprise this book is. This was well written and brought to light many of the issues surrounding this case. It tries to be fair and balanced, asking us are we judged on the worst decision of our lives. He clears up a lot of the rumors around the incident and paints a full portrait of Oscar as two men, a brash, driven athlete and celebrity and an insecure man struggling with fear in a violent culture. Judge Masipa is also well drawn and Carlin strives to show how the South African legal system works and her many challenges in this case. I appreciated the cultural approach to this case in the book. He places this incident and trial clearly in the South Africa of today which was new to me.

Victoria Mars says

Si te preguntaste por qué un hombre tan exitoso, valiente y amable como Pistorius pudo dar muerte a su novia, debes leer este libro.

Si no lo quieres leer, acá una súper resumen: es el fiel reflejo de un país tremadamente dividido y paranoico.

Lalo Patiño says

Buena historia, no conocía a Óscar. Sin embargo me pareció un tanto pesada. El autor no sale una y otra vez de lo mismo, podrías no leerla y no pasa nada.

Maria Victoria Sanchez says

Este libro es una traducción bastante española del libro en inglés. La verdad yo no soy alguien muy interesada en la vida personal de los deportistas pero este libro me lo recomendó una persona con una biblioteca muy bien curada entonces me atrevo a leerlo. Se lee muy fácil, la narrativa es fluida y bien conectada. Me gustan mucho las citas que hace el escritor antes de cada capítulo. Es muy interesante no por el retrato que pinta de un héroe caído sino porque hace muy investigación del personaje y de la sociedad que dio pie para que este existiera. Esto es periodismo de investigación, esta muy bien documentado y vale la pena.

Joanne Lewis says

The very public trial of Oscar Pistorius, accused of killing his then girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp on Valentine's Day in 2013 was subject to a worldwide media frenzy. Not least, because here was a man who had seemingly triumphed over adversity to become a sporting hero in the eyes of many, only to completely destroy his life and that of the Steenkamp family on that fateful night.

In this book, John Carlin presents a thorough, almost biographical portrait of Pistorius, from his early days as a child in South Africa right through to the intricacies of the lengthy trial.

Opinions remain extremely divided as to Pistorius' guilt or innocence despite the trial outcome but Carlin strives to present all sides of the argument, leaving the reader to form their own verdict.

Oscar's vulnerabilities and flaws are explored in equal detail, building up a perfect portrait of the athlete as a powerful and determined man, yet as a soul plagued by fear and insecurity as a result both of his upbringing and disability.

Incredibly well-researched and balanced and drawing on many personal testimonies, this is a gripping and fascinating insight into the life of the "Blade Runner".

Sam says

the unanswered question before and after this book is why did he shoot? A review of the Oscar Pistorius situation but no answers.

Carol says

The plot is all over the place with slow story progression. not recommended

Rita Ciresi says

I'm not sure how I stumbled upon this book; I was looking at some disability narratives and this must have come up on the search engine. I'm also not sure why I started reading this, as I don't follow track and field and although I was aware that there was a disabled runner who had competed at the Olympics, I didn't know anything at all about Pistorius nor was I following this trial. What compelled me to read beyond the first chapter? I was curious to see which side I would land upon. I thought the author did a very good job of showing both sides of the story. Along the way he taught me a lot about the difference between the legal system in South Africa and the system here in the U.S. He also educates the reader about violence in South Africa, in particular, violence against women. I would compare this book to Nina Burleigh's **THE FATAL GIFT OF BEAUTY**, which ostensibly is about the trial of Amanda Knox, but which also ends up being about the Italian judicial system and the difference between Italian and American attitudes toward women. Both books leave you wondering: what really happened?

Chris Steeden says

Valentines Day Feb 14, 2013 at around 3.13am in the four-bedroom luxury gated home at Silver Woods estate, Pretoria, South Africa four shots were fired by Oscar 'Blade Runner' Pistorius into a closed bathroom door killing his then girlfriend and model Reeva Steenkamp. She was hit in the arm, head and hip. They had been together for only 3 and a half months. He thought it was an intruder and that Reeva was in bed. Well that was the story that Pistorius went with anyway.

This is how the book starts and then covers a little biography of the couple starting with Pistorius who was born on 22 November 1986 with deformed legs / feet (Fibular hemimelia) and had both legs amputated below the knee at the age of eleven months. This ended up being a great decision by the parents Henke and Sheila. Henke soon separated from Sheila and she then died at the age of 44 through drink. Oscar adored her and she would never see him become the World champion Blade Runner. He had to board at Pretoria Boys High School and in the holidays he would stay with his aunt Diana (his mothers sister) or with Uncle Arnold and his wife Lois (where his younger sister Aimee lived). He also had an older brother called Carl. It was with rich Uncle Arnold that Oscar stayed with after he was let out on bail awaiting the murder trial. It was when he was 14 that he fell and broke one of his prosthetic legs that his grandmother, Gerti, went and took him to a local place to get it fixed. There a junior doctor, Francois van der Watt then worked with a plane engineer to come up with more modern legs for running.

You see Oscar as the caring person that meets with a family from Iceland whose child who was also born with fibular hemimelia then you hear about some of the reckless antics he gets up to. Letting a gun off in a restaurant, driving too fast, drinking too much and then crashing a speedboat in 2009 where he ended up with a broken jaw, the bones of one eye socket smashed, broken ribs and the loss of three litres of blood. He runs against able-bodied athletes at the London 2012 Olympics where he made it to the semi-final in the 400 metres.

The court gets access to some WhatsApp conversations with him and Reeva which are quite startling but do they really help the prosecution? One year and 17 days after the fatal shooting the trial starts on March 3, 2014 and televised around the world.

The book is really interesting as it certainly makes you think when you hear about Pistorius' insecurities and the way he was brought up. Did it change my initial judgement? Probably not, but it does make you look at it in a different way.

KJ says

Fair play to John Carlin – he really has pulled out all the stops to be fair in this account of Pistorius's life and crimes, assembling witnesses who have nothing but good things to say about the so-called Blade Runner. Having spent time in South Africa, Carlin is also good on local detail but, in my humble opinion at least, his main drawback is that he's a man.

Having spent more than a decade living in Johannesburg I am fairly aware of the type to which Pistorius conforms and, sorry as I am to resort to David Attenborough style language, the old-style Afrikaner is a riot

of fine manners and courtesy when he feels that he has found a woman from whom he can extract a regular supply of sex. When this situation changes, however, the gloves are off.

I don't think that I'm the only woman in the world to suspect that Oscar Pistorius murdered Reeva Steenkamp in a fit of rage after an argument. The man was a hair-trigger accident ready to happen and not all the people in the world saying that he would walk on water to breastfeed a disabled child are going to change my mind.

Carlin does put up a good fight, however and this is well worth reading, mostly impeccably researched and grippingly written.

Stephan says

Not a huge fan of this book, but that's not to say that others won't enjoy it. It's pages inform of Oscar's early years and new found success. If you're looking for a book that informs in complete detail the murder case, skip this book. I would really like to see a forensic psychologist dive into Oscar's brain and past the same way one did for Casey Anthony and Scott Peterson.

Dalila Tremarias says

-Truly well-written report. The author gives a very professional, and serious perspective of the case. No matter what point of view you had before reading the book, this is really good. He avoids the sensationalism. And he included many details, little details.

-We cannot forget that even though it is a very sad and dramatic story, it is real life. This really happened. Hard to believe, though.

-It covers: Oscar's bio, Reeva's bio and their careers, their families, their relationships, South Africa as a society, the night of the crime, the court case, and short bios of most of the people involved/related to the couple. This gives you a wide perspective of the case.

-It is good to whilst reading, do some quick online research, too. Read some of the news written at that time, watch some reports. There is a lot of material online.

-You reach a point when everything looks the same story and words all over again, repetition again and again, but no, it starts with the night when the crime happened and when you reach the chapter about the court and Oscar declaring about that night, not everything is the same and some details have been added. Key points.

May says

A ciertas personas las endiosamos como si fueran parte del Olimpo pero al final de cuenta no sabemos si son buenos o malos. Oscar Pistorius, el único discapacitado que pudo correr en unos JJOO asesinó a su novia. Pero más allá, hay un hombre lleno de inseguridades y miserias. Un niño que vivió con una madre alcohólica y paranoica que dormía con un arma debajo de su almohada. Un padre ausente. Una doble amputación de piernas. En esta excelente crónica de John Carlin se evidencia que más allá del bien y el mal somos humanos con fortalezas y debilidades, inseguridades y certezas. Si el asesinato fue con o sin intención sólo lo saben dos personas, él y Reeva. Siempre quedará la duda.

Kerry says

Before reading this excellently reported book, I always assumed Oscar Pistorius got away with intentional homicide. I didn't believe his version of the night that ended with his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp dead -- that he accidentally shot her four times, through a closed toilet door, because he believed he heard an intruder in his home. However, the author does a great job of presenting both sides, and all the evidence, and it really makes you wonder.... The book also is a biography of sorts of Pistorius, who was born with congenital defect in both legs and underwent amputation at 11 months old ... a decision made by his parents and that led to him becoming one of the world's most recognizable athletes. He never would have had the tremendous success as a Paralympian -- and Olympian -- had his parents chosen corrective surgery instead. For all his talent, though, Pistorius also struggled with anxiety, largely because of his limitations when not wearing his prosthetic legs. One of his greatest fears was having his house being broken into....and that's what he believed was happening the night that Reeva was killed. The book details his long trial and the judge's decision to find him guilty of culpable homicide...saving him many years in prison....but at any rate, Pistorius' career is over and his life will never be the same. The book also is a great study of the politics and social fabric of South Africa, which also had a great influence on the man once called the Blade Runner.

Aida Perez says

"Cuanto más triunfa, más grande es el ídolo; pero cuando comete un error y se cae, mayor es el monstruo en el que se convierte. Cuando las cosas funcionan, todo el mundo aplaude y eres un héroe; pero cuando van mal, aparecen los *invidiosos*, los envidiosos, y ahora gritan con fuerza, celebrando su fracaso." -Paolo Urbani.

Solo Oscar Pistorius a ciencia cierta sabe que paso realmente la noche del 13 de febrero de 2013, en lo personal no pude armar un juicio de 'el si queria matarla' o 'el es inocente'. Estoy totalmente en contra de aquellos que con los ojos cerrados culpan a un hombre o lo defienden porque realmente no saben que paso y cuales eran los motivos lo unico cierto es que el apreto el gatillo y solo eso asumo en lo personal como verdad.

El libro me parecio ¡excelente! presenta de forma detallada pero sin resultar tedioso todos los detalles del juicio, de la vida de Pistorius y su entorno, es el primer libro que leo de John Carlin y creo que quedé enganchada a leer sus otros textos.
