



Once Upon a Time: A True Tale of Memory

Harry N. MacLean

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Recounts George Franklin's 1990 trial in a California courtroom for the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl, after his daughter testified she had witnessed the crime but had repressed the memory for twenty years. Reprint.

Once Upon a Time: A True Tale of Memory Details

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From Reader Review Once Upon a Time: A True Tale of Memory for online ebook

Margie says

While this was a good book detailing the lives of the Franklin family and their abuse by their father, there were SO many details and information that I got bogged down in places and almost wanted to put the book away. I enjoyed the authors book "In Broad Daylight" and would probably read something else written by him.

Catherine L Sever says

Me,our, murder, and the law

A lot of info not needed. Storyline drug out way too long. We still do not know if guilty or innocent. Feel no closure to story.

Carol says

I abandoned this book after 269 pages. I read it for my IRL True Crime book club and only 1 out of 6 participants finished it; those of us who had not finished it prior to meeting agreed we had no interest in investing additional time into it. For several good reasons.

Mr. MacLean needed a good editor. This book is at least 150 pages longer than it should be, and there's a great deal of repetition that adds no value. It is a research dump of every single fact MacLean observed. For example, he provides details on the facts and outcomes of cases being tried in adjoining courtrooms. I kid not.

Child sex abuse. Multiple children over the years, including at least one infant. Sexist and homophobic statements that grate on one's nerves - even if you try to give him the, 'well, it was published in 1995' excuse.

Pass on this one.

Jessica says

I really enjoyed the fact that the author wrote about the different participants' reactions and opinions to portions of the trial, throughout the book. Very engaging. I felt that it ran a little long (maybe too detailed) but overall, this was a fascinating portrait of a very twisted family.

David says

Interesting topic (repressed memories), and an interesting murder trial, but it was tedious and long. The details on the case were rehashed over and over, but the final outcome of the trial was a given based on the actions of the trial judge. The reversal of the outcome was also deserved. The judge should have been removed from office for his actions and rulings. The woman who brought the charges against her father should have been prosecuted.

Anne Vandenbrink says

8-year old Eileen, from a dysfunctional, family witnesses her father molesting and killing her best friend, Susan. From Eileen's repressed memory, 20 years later, she turns her father in. A very challenging read, full of details, but held my interest because it's true.

Charlene Nelson says

Memories and childhood trauma

I had this book for about 3 years and this book had me from the very first page. I couldn't put this book down the author has a writing style that keeps you wanting more and almost like a story. He doesn't bore readers at all I would definitely read more books from this author. This book is amazing and it shows the flaws with the judicial system. Great book

Linda Munro says

This book tells a true story, a story of physical and sexual abuse of a family of 4 children living in a middle class California neighborhood during the 1960's. It also tells the story of the murder of an eight-year old child, the best friend of one of the girls in the aforementioned family. After a 20 year gap, the story picks up when Eileen, the best friend of the murdered child suddenly recalls watching her friend being raped, then murdered by Eileen's father.

This brought the issue of repressed memories into the courtroom. The book discussed the trial and the ultimate finding by the jury of guilty for the murder charges, although the man was never charged in the abuse cases.

It was a book that was tough to read. My immediate feeling was that any man who could sexually molest his children could be guilty of murder; but, repressed memories are still a topic I know far too little about. While I believe the man should have been charged with the rape of his daughters, I'm not sure if he should have been charged with the murder of a child. I just cannot say that I am convinced of the repressed memory syndrome.

SouthWestZippy says

Good true crime book. VERY hard to read due to subject. It is about Eileen Franklin who accused her father of sexually attacking and murdering her best friend.

Jlsimon says

This book is exceptionally well researched. It delves into the reliability of the recovery of repressed memory by means of hypnosis. After listening to this book I cannot say that my opinion of this pseudo-science has changed. Like the author of this book, I would not say they are all planted, but it is very sketchy business.

Johnny Bennett says

Once Upon a Time suffers from details. This interesting book is laid out like a court case recounted by an overworked and underpaid public defender. Everything is logical and ordered. Most of the relevant facts are there. The specifics, some more gory than one cares to read, seem to be all there. But the excitement never shows up. In the end, it's just the tension of knowing that keeps one reading to the end. How will the trial end?

This book also suffers from being written two years too early. Having followed events in the late eighties and early ninety, this book was published in ninety four. New details arise in ninety six that change the ending. Be sure to google George Franklin Sr. for the actual details of the end. Compelling, interesting, but certainly not exciting. Nor for the faint of heart. Certainly not for children. Incest, rape, violence, and murder are detailed in this courtroom history.

Betsy Boo says

A fascinating look at repressed memory syndrome which swept the nation in the 80's and 90's. (Think McMartin Preschool and the hundreds of lawsuits children filed against their parents for "recovered memories" of abuse). Also a good view of the criminal justice system at work. I found myself in the jury box, realizing that there really wasn't enough evidence to convict this man, but he was such a scum-bag I couldn't help feeling he deserved what he got. But was justice served? I recommend this for anyone interested in psychology or the legal system.

Jean says

I found Harry N. MacLean's recounting of this murder case to be quite compelling. Since I don't usually read this genre, I am not sure how it compares to others. I do know some of those who reviewed this book found the repetition of facts annoying, but to me it seemed reminiscent of court proceedings and realistic and helpful.

I listened to this book and felt the narrator did an excellent job - I suspect I could listen to her read anything,

even my shopping list and find it pleasant.

How grateful I feel for not having grown up in that household and not having to serve on that jury

Laurie Stoll says

Once Upon A Time is a very well written story of a true crime.

I remember hearing about the crime and controversy in the news regarding this story many years ago. The author did an excellent job trying to sort through fact and fiction.

Amy says

Received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads

This was a fascinating story of a very dysfunctional family and a strange trial. The account was very well written and documented, but maybe with too much detail. By the time I finished I felt like I had been at the trial...I was exhausted. That's both good and bad...the detail made you feel like you were there, but it was tedious at times. I would definitely read another by the author.
