



Burning Bed: The True Story of an Abused Wife

Faith McNulty

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Recounts the tragic story of Francine Hughes, a battered wife who in desperation murdered her abusive husband, detailing their marriage, the deterioration of their relationship, the murder, and the trial that followed.

Burning Bed: The True Story of an Abused Wife Details

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From Reader Review Burning Bed: The True Story of an Abused Wife for online ebook

Florence (Lefty) MacIntosh says

Ignore the crappy cover, title & blurb; this was one important book in it's day. The story of Francine Hughes became a rallying cry for a growing movement to change domestic violence laws. Ranks divided on the verdict, 'she got away with murder' or 'justice was served', everybody had an opinion...whatever. More significant than the verdict was that people were finally talking, it couldn't be swept under the rug anymore. Read it so long ago that I can't honestly comment on the writing style. I do remember being riveted and one haunting detail; the day she snapped he had forced her to burn all her secretarial text books because he couldn't tolerate an 'educated' wife.

Interesting, published over 20 yrs ago and I'm still finding it listed on DV Intervention sites. Anyway, please don't just write it off as dated drivel. Think of it as a turning point for change.

I really hate the cover.

Chana says

Terrible, terrible story. And true.

Francine Hughes, after fourteen years of spousal abuse at the hands of her husband, sets a gas accelerated fire around the bed of her sleeping, drunk husband who had spent the day drinking and abusing her.

When you read the story the words are written as if a reasonable and innocent woman, who might otherwise have never experienced violence, was caught in a situation so horrible that the only way out was to murder her husband. Actually he was her ex-husband but he refused to leave.

I had mixed feelings about the acquittal, jury handed down a decision of temporary insanity. It was pretty clear that if she didn't kill him he was going to kill her. But the self-defense excuse was not going to fly because he had been asleep when she killed him. I think it was self-defense and not temporary insanity, but the lawyer chose well in his decisions on how to best save Francine from a life in jail. The book also makes it seem like she was close to her kids and all they needed was the father out of the picture.

So the story ends on a positive note with Francine walking free.

But go ahead and read about her life after this book. She was partying and doing drugs, her kids were already traumatized by the abuse they had witnessed, and the horrible way their father died. A few years after the trial Francine marries a man who becomes a, well I guess you could say hard-line strict, step-father, physically abusive and, if the youngest child Nicole is telling the truth, sexually abusive. I think it might have been better for everyone if Francine had served her life sentence and I don't know if the kids could have been rescued or not, but it would have been nice if someone had tried.

<http://www.people.com/people/archive/...>

Probably the most important thing about this book, and all the publicity around the case, is that it helped to change perception about spousal abuse. When Francine was growing up spousal abuse was the business of the family and nobody else's business. Her father abused her mother. She grew up seeing it, and to a large degree it was part of the culture of male dominance in which she lived. We understand a lot more now about the psychology of abuse, its causes and effects. It doesn't mean we have things under control though. From what I read, the third son Dana also became an abusive husband. We have more social services to help battered women and children, but it is far from a sure thing that these victims can get the help they need, that

they can recover and not become the next generation of abusers.

Also, I am not sure about the accuracy of what I have said here; I read a book and read some on line articles and comments. Her granddaughter says her grandmother did not marry another abusive man and that we should stop acting like we know her family when we don't. She has a point.

<http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Discuss:Wha...>

Josephine (Jo) says

This was a heart rending true story and it made uncomfortable reading throughout most of the book.

The story of Francine Hughes and her marriage to Mickey is almost unbelievable and yet all too true.

Francine married Mickey when she was just sixteen and he was several years older, Francine had been taught by her mother that a wife must be dutiful, keep the home spotless and to respect her husband. Mickey was an inadequate and uneducated man who felt that Francine 'belonged' to him and that he had the right to tell her what she could and could not do.

Francine was a very naive and kind girl who tried so hard to keep Mickey happy and he just took her efforts for granted. They had not been married for long before Mickey started to be abusive, both verbally and physically, Francine did nothing to provoke him and she never retaliated. Over the years they had four children and Mickey continued to beat Francine even whilst she was pregnant. As the years went by the abuse got worse and worse and Francine was in constant fear for her life, she attempted to leave on numerous occasions but lack of money and support and the ambivalent attitude of the police made it impossible to get totally away from Mickey and she ended up having to go back to him even after she managed to secure a divorce.

I have always believed that you should not take a life under any circumstances, but reading this book I cannot see how Francine was going to come out of the relationship alive. No one was able to give her sufficient help for her to break away and I started to think that Mickey deserved what happened to him. The way he treated Francine, the children and even the family animals was for me a reason to lock him up and throw away the key. I felt that because of Mickey's own inadequacies and lack of education he felt the need to take out his frustration on those who were weaker, I have heard this described as 'kick the cat syndrome' and that is just how it seemed to be with Mickey.

When Francine did what she did, she was in shock and at the limit of human endurance, I cannot truthfully condemn her action, she had suffered intolerably and had been driven to the edge of insanity. Despite her dreadful ordeal over fourteen long years Francine managed to maintain her lovely kind nature and her sense of gently naivety, she prayed daily and had trust in God that He would give her the strength to endure.

This is a tough read but one that shines a light of what is going on in so many homes all over the world. It all happened in the 1960's and 70's and in some countries the laws have changed for the better but domestic abuse is still a very difficult subject to discuss and a lot of women (and men) suffer in silence or do not get the help that they need from the authorities.

I simply wanted to shout at Francine, run, and keep running!

Emily says

I loved this story. When I was in high school, a teacher recommended it to me, and I checked it out of the library. Fast forward about 7 years, I took it out of the library again without remembering I had already read it. It's even better now than it was 7 years ago. I would recommend this story to anyone, to me, it is definitely a look into the face of domestic abuse.

Angela says

This was a haunting one. I first read it as a teenager and it shaped what I thought about jerk men! Not for me!

Elizabeth says

I read the book and saw the movie. The movie was really good, but the book was more graphic and detailed. It is one of those books one does not want to put down. I highly recommend everyone read it.

Carol says

A true crime story of the living nightmare Francine Hughes endured during the late 1970's in Mason, Michigan. An intense, but fast read detailing both physical and verbal abuse as well as cruelty to animals at its worst dished-out by Francine's husband Mickey. I agree with the results of the trial and feel that **Justice was Served**.

Thought the book was better than the movie.

Theresa Alan says

Although this book is thirty-five years old, unfortunately, much of it could have been written about a story that happened this week. Though in larger cities there are shelters for women like Francine Hughes and her children, they're usually filled to capacity. Francine was poor and not well educated. The binds that her husband Mickey and his family put on her is tough to read about. Her story could have ended very differently.

I'm a sucker for true crime books in general, particularly ones that deal with gender issues, so I enjoyed this. This is a fast-paced book about an important subject.

Eric says

I read this book in the mid 1980's, it was a great book that shed light on a huge problem that had been ignored for way too long. I am from Shaftsbury, Michigan which is a short distance from where this took place, so it made it even more interesting. The guy in the story got just what he deserved and everyone I knew thought that she did what she had to do.

Amy schelkopf says

the burning bed was one of my sixth grade book reports-i have always liked to read and cheated because i had probably read it in fifth grade--my teacher chatted with my mom about my choice of book for these papers-my mom always let me read her personal books and she still does-this is something i have always really liked about her-

Carey Shea says

I read this book when it came out years ago. I found it frightening and horrific. This poor woman was constantly abused by her husband both physically and mentally. In the end she couldn't take it anymore so she set her husband's bed on fire while he was sleeping in it and killed him. Then there was the court case against her. She got off as not guilty because of all the abuse they were able to prove. They made a movie of it a few years after the book was released and I saw that too. Farrah Fawcett played the abused woman and she did an amazing job. I could not believe it was Farrah Fawcett because they made her look so downtrodden. The movie was (I think) a made for TV movie. I can't remember. It should have been in the movie theater because of how violent it was. I highly recommend this book.

Rebecca McNutt says

A triumphant and bittersweet story of a woman who overcomes years of abuse in the only way she knows how, *The Burning Bed* is both sad and yet inspirational all at once.

Beverly says

Another true crime. This one is about an abused wife who murders her husband by setting a fire around his bed while he is sleeping. Fourteen years of marriage, four children, and many many many beatings, any one of which could have killed her, and she had had enough.

I thought it was an interesting look into the life of the abuse. There was a movie made on this book starring Farrah Fawcett, if that appeals to you more!

☆?♥☆ **Unsolved Mystery** ☆♥?☆ says

I had a review posted but Goodreads ate it.

Jenny says

Excellent book. The man deserved to die.
