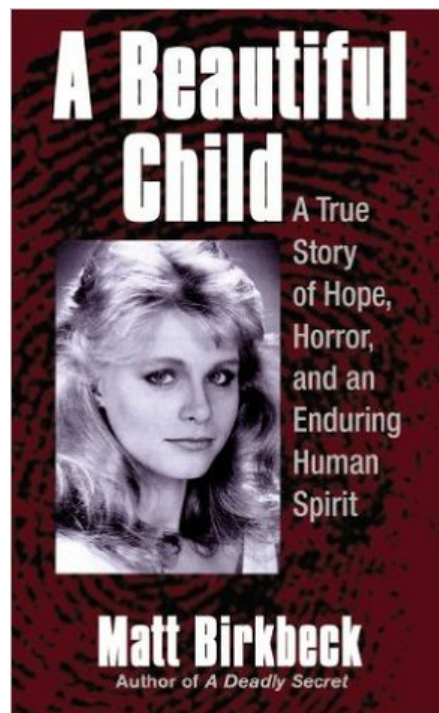




A Beautiful Child

Matt Birkbeck

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Sharon Marshall was a brilliant and beautiful student whose future was filled with promise. But her murderous, fugitive father had drawn her into a lifetime of deception that became one of the most baffling cases in the annals of American crime.

A Beautiful Child Details

Date : Published April 2nd 2005 by Berkley (first published 2004)

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From Reader Review A Beautiful Child for online ebook

♥ Marlene♥ says

on Tuesday, May 22, 2007 I wrote about this book....

Wow this was such a good read.

Finished reading this on May 12th 2007

This was such a sad story . it grabbed me from page 1.

It is so shocking and unbelievable. Reading the description of the book you would not know

It is sad they still don't know who Sharon really was. Where her real parents are , what happened.

I hope that one day this will be solved. Planning to check the authors site so now and then. He keeps us readers updated about the cases in his books.

I Highly recommend this book to True Crime Fans.

10

Meconopsis Lingholm says

absolutely harrowing.

Heather Murphy says

A terrible occurrence. Do Not Read for fun! Only if you have to 'cause you're going through something similar and get some kind of therapy from realizing you are the only victim out there. I finished it in hopes to find some resolution. But all I came away with from reading this book is fear and sadness. It describes in much detail the actions and effects of a man that did horrific things to children. I would rather live my life in complete ignorance that people like that even exist.

Amy says

Heartbreaking story. I would find myself getting so angry while reading this book. I wanted to strangle this man. Death row is too good for him. No one ever found out who "Sharon" really was! Or where he buried her son's body. This man was a disease on the world. It was horrible that this girl had to live like that. This man should NEVER have been allowed to walk the streets as a free person again after molesting the 4 yr. old in the first place. This book opens your eyes to our law & legal system & it's not pretty.

Mia says

This is an incredibly sad story about a brilliant, likable girl who endured abuse at the hands of a man claiming to be first her father, then her husband for most of her short life. Although Matt Birkbeck is not an exceptional writer, "Sharon's" story is fascinating and heartbreaking enough to hold the reader's attention. Through my work with a volunteer organization (<http://www.doenetwork.org>), I was familiar with Sharon before reading this book. Though Birkbeck tends to skip around and use strange sentence structure, I appreciated his attention to detail in gathering all the information he could find about this unique case.

Yes, it's true. There is no happy ending. However, it does give us a reminder to speak up and listen to our instincts when we think there's something amiss.

Sabrina Rutter says

<http://www.mattbirkbeck.com/blog/fina...> is one of the best written true crime books I have ever read! Birkbeck didn't just sit at his computer and let information flow to him, he went out and did his own research and interviews. Given the quality of writing and detail I would say Sharon Marshall's story effected him the way it effected all those involved with the Floyd investigation. It's a heartbreaking mystery that's impossible to not leave a lasting impression.

Sharon's story leaves so many asking how, why, who, and where. I myself started searching through missing persons files while reading this, even going so far as to join Websleuths Crime Sleuthing Community to discuss this case with others who want answers. This is not a story that will be forgotten by those who read it. This is the kind of story that will shake you someplace deep inside and make you want to take action to help find the answers to all those questions.

Ron Day says

I read this book two weeks ago and I'm still thinking about it. It's the true story of a young woman who doesn't appear to be what she says she is. That's all I can say without giving it away. It's an incredible story and a very, very good read. It's the kind of book that you won't put down. The author: Matt Birkbeck, is an investigative journalist and he does a remarkable job sorting out all the twists and turns and putting it into one cohesive storyline. It's a very disturbing story, but unfortunately it's all too real and true. I urge any parent or anyone who deals with children to read this. Amazing book.

Rita says

I have read many, many TC stories that brutal in the telling but this story was heart-breaking. It left me breathless because it was so sad. I salute those dedicated detectives Bob Shock, Mark Deasaro, FBI Special Agent Joe Fitzpatrick and all the police agencies involved for their endless search to try and find Sharon's birth place, her beginnings and why it ended so horribly.

Indra says

This was one of the most twisted true crime books I've ever read, and one of the saddest. It wasn't that the writing was so fantastic on its own--though it was just fine--in my opinion, it was the combination of the writing, the facts of the case, and the people who shared their recollections with the author. I thought the extra background material was important since this cold case had to reconstruct everything from the memory of others. I want to believe nothing like this could happen today, but I believe that it could...much like Ann Rule's "Green River, Running Red", this book serves to remind the reader that the victims' lives had an impact on those they knew and they were once someone's child, parent, friend, star student...I was struck, as many readers may have been, that Sharon Marshall could doubtless have achieved anything she wanted in life if she had only been born into different circumstances.

Angela says

This book is hard to rate for me! Michael Anthony Hughes was my foster brother!! I named my first child after him! Seeing his story unfold in print was a difficult thing to read. I knew he had been through a lot and I knew a little about how he came to be a foster child but to read about the things that I didn't know was heartbreaking.

For years I would look into the eyes of little boys wondering if they could be my Michael. 15 years later I still think about him often and I hope he knows how much we all love him!!!!

Anne Hawn Smith says

This is the story off a young girl who was abducted by a man (or she was given to him by her father) when she was about four to six years old. She was a beautiful child even then, but she managed to be an exceptional student who received a scholarship to Georgia Tech and a stunningly beautiful young woman. She wanted to be an astronaut and it appears as if she would have achieved that goal had she been allowed to. Instead, her father put her in stripper bars and basically became her pimp. Eventually he was implicated in her death.

I just finished this and found it to be impossible to put down. It is amazing to think about all "Sharon" accomplished in school, knowing what her home life was. I can't help but think of what she could have done in a nurturing home. Her abductor blamed all his trouble and bad behavior on his upbringing and yet he provided such a horrible life for her and she rose above it. What a tragedy all around.

My feelings about then end of the book are divided. It is amazing how much law enforcement has improved in the area of missing children. Where once there was little done nationally and local law enforcement didn't get involved until the child was missing 24 hours, now there are the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, America's Most Wanted, and numerous other groups to help families whose children are missing. Local law enforcement have the child's description on the police database within the hour, but still too many children are abducted and murdered.

Jessica says

I find true crime books interesting to read once in awhile. The same way that I found my "social deviance" psychology class in college very interesting. To see how the brain can go so horribly wrong as a result of genetic anomaly (or more often as a result of abusive upbringing) is fascinating (while still sad and tragic.) Any way, true crime isn't a category of book that I would buy new or keep for my bookcase, but once and awhile I see one at a 2nd hand store or a thrift store and pick it up. This was one of those. It's the story of the one girl who was kidnapped at about 4 years old and raised by her abductor, who was a sick man (pedophile, murder, psychotic at a minimum.) She lived with him as his daughter until about the age of twenty, then he married her. Then at the age of 23 he killed her. She had a son left behind that went into the social services system. He kidnapped the son and within a month killed him too. The book was about the law enforcement officials multi-year investigation to try to figure out how many offenses this guy had done (including at least one other murder) and trying to figure out who this girl really was. She was kidnapped so young & lived under so many aliases it was about impossible. It was a horrible story, but interesting to read about the evolution of missing child legislation from the 1970s till today. Before the 80s all missing children were assumed to be runaways. Most were never even investigated. Most law enforcement offices had a required waiting period before they would even take down a written report (and they show that the quicker police pursue, the more likely they are found alive.) Anyway, if you find true crime interesting, it was well done.

Dale Stonehouse says

This is the heartbreaking story of a young girl/woman with one of the most difficult soul missions I have ever seen. Universally liked and admired despite being a lifelong sexual and emotional abuse survivor, her spirit was damaged but never broken. Her death became an obsession of investigators in several states, but ultimately her identity was not known by book's conclusion. The story of Suzanne/Sharon/Tonya is unlike any other.

Rachel says

Say your best friend is beautiful, smart and popular. But then you find out that her dad is crazy (like he bursts in the room during your sleepover brandishing a gun). You stay friends, but you know something's very wrong with her home life.

Imagine years later, you find out you didn't have an inkling of how bad it really was.

A Beautiful Child presents a true case of deception, murder and abuse that proves the adage truth is stranger than fiction.

It starts with the death of a young woman and follows the attempts of investigators (and the author) to find out who she was. But that's not even the half of it.

The true crime genre is filled with junk titles; books of poor writing and reporting that seem to have been produced to titillate. They have more in common with porn than literature.

But some are not that at all. Some, like A Beautiful Child, simply reveal a fascinating (if disturbing) story of the world around us.

SPOILER ALERT

This is something I would never do, but the book departs so radically from true-crime conventions that I

can't help but address it. So, if you're still with me, what I'm trying to say is this: The mystery is unsolved. At the end of the book, "Sharon's" identity is still unknown, as is the body (or location) of her son. Floyd never confesses anything, nor does the DNA prove anything. The story is so bizarre and intriguing that it would be hard to argue this is a flaw. But as a reader, it's maybe the most shocking revelation of the book.

Shaun says

["Sharon" (real identity still unknown) suffers at the hands of a severely disturbed pedophile "Warren" (who becomes her father after he kidnaps her as a young child, and eventually her husband after sh
