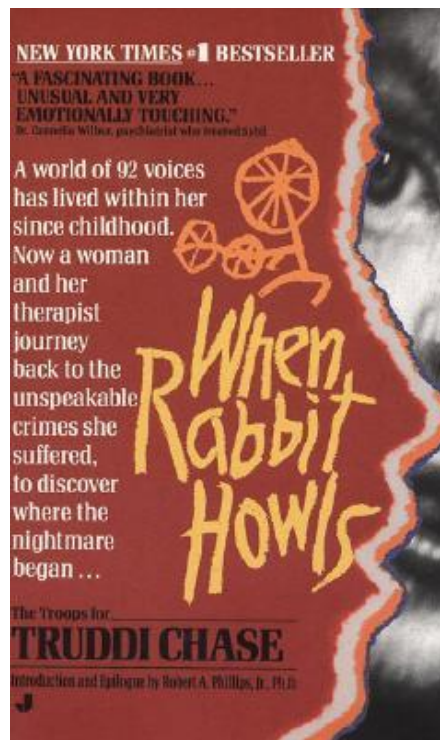




When Rabbit Howls

Truddi Chase , Robert A. Phillips Jr. (Contributor)

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Truddi Chase began therapy to discover why she suffered from blackouts. What surfaced was terrifying: she was inhabited by 'the Troops'-92 individual personalities. This groundbreaking true story is made all the more extraordinary in that it was written by the Troops themselves. What they reveal is a spellbinding descent into a personal hell-and an ultimate deliverance for the woman they became.

When Rabbit Howls Details

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From Reader Review When Rabbit Howls for online ebook

Lisa says

As a clinical psychology student, I found the introduction far more valuable than the content of the book, for in the introduction the therapist revealed enough of his methods to discredit every single word that was written by the patient herself. Nothing she wrote or came to believe about herself can be trusted.

From 1985 to 1995 an estimated 40,000 Americans, most of them women, were told they suffered from multiple personality disorder. The author of this book is one of those people. She entered therapy due to generalised anxiety, and after 6 years of 'recovered memory therapy' that employed techniques such as hypnosis and participation in group therapy with victims and perpetrators of child abuse, this woman who had no prior complaint of sexual abuse or voices in her head came to believe that she had been repeatedly and brutally sexually assaulted by her step-father from the age of 2, and that 90+ separate personalities had formed as a coping mechanism to help her survive this abuse.

In reaction to reading this book, I immediately ordered Elizabeth Loftus's book on "The Myth of Repressed Memory", "Creating Hysteria: Women and Multiple Personality Disorder" by Joan Acocella, and "Sybil Exposed: The Extraordinary Story Behind the Famous Multiple Personality Case" by Debbie Nathan.

It concerns me that consumers of books such as this have no context from which to critique its validity, and shames me that members of my chosen profession were so disastrously wrong on so many things, so recently in our past.

Micaela Why says

So, Truddi Chase survives a horrific childhood. She develops 92 personalities as a way of dealing with both the terrible things that happens to her and the subsequent memories that they leave behind-- each personality is responsible for a different set of memories, so the whole thing doesn't have to hurt or overwhelm her at once. The person known as "Truddi" is basically an empty shell that the personalities use to make themselves known.

It's also a true story.

I couldn't stop reading it. My right eye is all bloodshot as a result.

The only drawback is that now I think everybody has a multiple personality disorder, myself included.

Lindsey says

No matter who you are, this book will affect you and make you think.

From the introduction on, my desire to keep an open mind was at war with skepticism. On the one hand, multiple personality is an unusual topic, to say the least, and even stranger than Sybil, this book was written by the personalities themselves--the "Troops for Truddi Chase" as they call themselves. Naturally one would not expect it to read like any ordinary book. On the other hand, a label that says "NF" with some official-

looking numbers after it on the spine does not make the contents necessarily true.

For some reason, though, I didn't want to look up Truddi Chase until after I finished the book. I guess I needed to come to terms with the story on my own, which was difficult, because it really read like a science-fiction novel, just like Dr. Phillips warns in the intro.

Once I had resolved to just read and decide how I felt about it later, it was completely engrossing. My heart went out to Truddi and "the woman" and Elvira, and Lamb Chop, and I adored Twelve and Miss Wonderful, and Mean Joe. I hated the stepfather and although I know in my head that it would be wrong to kill him, I am not positive that I would not have done it, myself. I was also continually impressed by Dr. Phillips' kindness and acceptance and willingness to understand. That is not something you can learn in Psych 101. If he wasn't born with that kind of understanding, he worked and sweated and suffered to earn it. As a story, it held my attention.

However, it is hardly a feel-good book. I am very picky about what I read--language, lewd detail, violence. There was a great deal of that, simply because of the nature of the subject, and I found this difficult to read. Some of the material will always haunt me and make me ill every time I think about it. But I don't regret reading it. These horrible things really did happen, and they happen to other people, too, and while I prefer subjects of a more uplifting nature, I'm not going to hide my face and plug my ears and chant nonsense words when I'm confronted with it. It wasn't gratuitous guck, by any means; When Rabbit Howls is an accusation, a means of closure for Truddi Chase's Troops, and an effort to save other victims from the suffering what they went through. And it is told with a hope and humanity that leaves the reader saddened, but not despairing when they reach the end.

And I did look up Truddi Chase after I finished. She died just last year at the age of 74.

Stephy says

I read this book, and others, because I am treated for DID. Dissociative Identity Disorder in women is not infrequently the end result of sexual abuse at a very young age. So it is with the subject of this book. It was very brave of her to write it, and I don't doubt that the writing helped in the recovery. It is a difficult book to read, with lots of triggers for survivors of sexual abuse at any age, male or female. The author did some incredibly hard work to get through the trauma she experienced, and this is one instance of a person writing about their experiences in therapy being appropriate. I'm glad she wrote it, glad I read it, and I give it to women I know who were sexually abused children. You would be horrified at how many women have been abused. Roughly speaking statistically, one in three.

The longer I live, the more I see Dissociation as an incredibly useful defensive skill for young children (Or anyone) put in horrendous situations. naturally, it is preferable to be able to control dissociation, but especially early on, it just is not. I find that Meditation and self-hypnosis have helped me a great deal in learning to control dissociation.

Love says

I can not imagine one parent being this abusive let alone two....What a sad sad story.A must read.

Alyson says

This book is damned disturbing. I honestly don't know what to think about it. I saw the "author" on Oprah, and I still don't know if I believe it or not. I have a degree in psychology, and multiple personalities/abnormal psych have always been a particular area of interest to me but this....

I really don't know if I can believe it or not....If it's true, then it's definitely one of the most harrowing and disturbing stories I have ever read, and if it's not, it's some damned convincing writing.

One way or another, horrific childhood sexual abuse occurs through the whole thing, not for the squeamish.....

Shanon says

A friend had this book delivered to me through Amazon just as I was about to take a 4 day greyhound trip cross country. I read it through twice, crying in front of strangers at several intervals. The tale is heartbreaking. Multiple Personalities and Dissociative Identity Disorder are two topics that have always fascinated and horrified me. There are some experiences that a person cannot face having lived through, the mind breaks, shatters, hides bits to protect itself and even changes facts. Or realities. Unable and/or unwilling to face that experience, the mind gets lost within itself. If the person is to survive, they must find some way to cope, and madness is a tempting escape.

Truddi Chase was a victim of the worst kinds of abuse from a sickeningly young age. The core personality was essentially destroyed, several layers of personalities developed. Some were unaware of one another. Some knew others. Some interacted. Only one new all, and it was his job to protect the rest from the deepest part of the cave.

Truddi, however, only knew enough to recognize missing time, blackouts. She went to a doctor who agreed to help her, having no idea what he was getting involved with.

The tale is written by many of the personalities, and with the help of other personalities. Nearly all of them are given a voice, and in the process the full story is uncovered.

With her doctor's support, Truddi chose to share the tale. Knowing some would refuse to believe, some would mock... But also knowing that others would see, understand, recognize... and some of those would be people with similar stories who might desperately need that lifeline to cling to.

It happened, she survived, they can too.

Whether real or fiction, the message is intense and the tale devastating.

Erin says

i'm probably a terrible person. i read Sybil long ago and i loved the book (well..."loved" is not an appropriate adjective here, but i'm sure you get my meaning) and i thought the movie was incredible as well. without getting too tmi, i related a little too closely to the experiences Sybil went through. however, i found When Rabbit Howls to smell distinctly fantastical. i had an incredibly hard time believing in descriptions about how the lights would flicker when different personalities would show themselves, or how the tapes the psychiatrist would take during sessions would someone inexplicably become staticky when one of the "troops" were present. i gave the book 2 stars because nevertheless, i feel for an abused child no matter whether the story being told is true or fiction, but my bullshit meter went off so many times while reading this that i just couldn't completely believe. and that's fine, because you really wouldn't want to believe that such things happened to a little girl.

for a more believable account of dissociative identity disorder, check out the graphic novel Cuckoo. it is beautifully illustrated by all of the personailities and the story is touching and harrowing and full of hope and healing.

Frieda Adkins says

Sometimes, our minds can't even begin to comprehend what is happening, and so to protect ourselves, a darker place is created where we can hide. But when these dark places are too deep – the damage is so severe – we can't always find our way back out, so alternate realities take over. I can certainly see how the mind of a child so young could split (even multiple times), and how her true self left entirely. Think about recent news: Young kids being raped at 11, 12 by couches and clergymen; how most never told a soul because they were so destroyed inside from guilt. Truddi Chase was two...a toddler...and when most toddlers her age were still learning to walk and talk, she was being repeatedly raped...and the abuse didn't end until she was 16. Yeah, I think it's very possible to leave your mind, as I believe happened with Truddi Chase.

Jackie says

If you want to take a hard, disturbing and frightening look at what sexual abuse in such awful forms can do to a child then this is the book you must read. I caution young people reading this because it is pretty awful.

I was horrified at what I learned this poor little girl suffered but she endured with the mental scars to prove it. People scoff at multiple personality disorder but it is real. This is a very creative way to survive multiple traumas endured at an early age.

Truddi Chase passed away two years ago. She left behind a story I will never ever forget.

Thomas Smith says

Arguably the best and most realistic book available on the subject of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). Though it is certainly fashionable to doubt the very existence of DID today, those who do so seem to be reacting more to the possibility of Truddi Chase's harrowing upbringing rather than what it caused psychologically. Since I am married to a multiple myself, I can assure any doubters that stories like Chase's happen all the time. Such damage may well be happening to someone right this minute. To dismiss such stories out of hand doesn't do much to help attract those with DID to the help they need. Who wants to seek

help for something they are told does not exist?

Ronni says

Not a fun read, but very interesting, particularly if you are interested in psychology. I actually didn't finish the last 3rd of the book in detail, kind of skimmed through it. It was very graphic in parts, which was hard to get through. I think what held me back from really liking it was that it is supposedly true, but the inner skeptic in me kept wondering if it was all true, how the author was able to pen this book "through" her other personalities in the manner she did. Multiple personality disorder/DID sure is a fascinating thing though.

Megan says

Well that was interesting and does give insight into DID and abuse. But I felt like a was trying too wade through it by the middle of the book.

Lori Sacks says

The subject matter of this book struck very close to home, which made it a difficult read. It was so difficult to experience it as the reader that it took me 4 tries and almost 6 years to get through it.

It is not the writing that is difficult to read it is witnessing, even through the written word, the experience of the writer.

It is a book that will always have a place of honor on my bookshelves because it is a book of true heroism and filled with hope.

Reading this book brought me to understand how the mind works to help the body to survive, no matter the trauma or challenge being experienced. It also helped me to understand the behavior of both friends and family who had experienced abuse in early childhood and how those experiences formed their personalities and the way they function in the world.

Cher says

Do I believe in hundreds of distinct multiple personalities existing within one person? Nope, though I do believe in dissociative identity disorder's. Do I believe she had/has a total break with reality due to childhood trauma? Yes. Do I believe she burns out lightbulbs with the extra electricity generated by the complexity of her mind crammed so full of personalities fighting one another for dominance? Nope. Do I believe her stepfather sexually abused her and it was annoying of her to make the reader wade through 400 pages to then blame all her problems on that? Yes.

There is so little actual substance in this book, it's easy to see why it has been hailed as more fiction than fact. it does not read like a memoir at all but rather a detective story with a pat horror ending.

Beth says

I found this book alternatively fascinating, unbelievable, horrifying and silly. I had heard elsewhere that there has been some speculation that the book is not legitimate but in fact is fabricated. When the story line became a little too weird (as in parts about reading minds and paranormal stuff) then that speculation kept running through my mind and I became a very cynical reader.

I also found the book hard to read in places because of the way it was written (supposedly) from a first person narrative through the various people that Truddi became through her Multiple Personality Disorder.

And my final criticism is that in some places it simply became repetitive and dull.

Having said all that, if in fact this book is legitimate and real, it tells of a fascinating phenomenon and explores the world of MPD in a unique manner. And the abuses this woman went through is horrifying. The fact that she survived it intact in any way shows just how strong she was as a person.

S. Div. says

I first read this book when it was originally out, after seeing Chase on Oprah. I was a teen. A turnkey event in my healing, I was deeply impressed not only by Chase's courage to have survived such a childhood, but to have written about it to help others. That said, the book is very difficult to read, as it's written in a variety of voices and styles. How could it not be? Still, it's hard to read, in that it doesn't flow with the literary smoothness that a finished book should. Yet, for that reason it clearly elucidates the mindspace and challenges in moving through life as a person with severe dissociation and a radically different perception of time/space. I do not advocate that anyone in crisis read this book. It is extremely triggering and not to be approached lightly. A classic re-wounding/denial family dynamic is detailed. Chase holds nothing back, within the parameters of her memory, regarding survivor guilt toward her siblings, confusion and dissociation from sex as an adult, grieving her lost childhood, and the tribulations of therapy as an adult. Her willingness to bare her story is amazing, but doing so from within her varied personalities for a culture that largely still fictionalized such psychological reorganization is extraordinary. Read with care.

Jeremy says

A more modern take on the "Sybil" account of Multiple Personality Disorder. This book moves more quickly and is a bit more graphic than "Sybil" as it was written more recently. Although, it may not make you a firm believer in the disorder it will certainly make you think twice before doubting the possibility that it does exist.

Kerri (Book Hoarder) says

If you're at all interested in psychology and the potential of the human psyche to both splinter and protect itself, then you should read this book.

It's both dark and fascinating, especially if you've had any interest in child psychology or human nature, like I have... And I'll freely admit being fascinated with the ways the human mind can react to stress and abuse.

The book is not necessarily an easy one to read, I should say that upfront. Previously known as multiple personality disorder, Dissociative Identity Disorder is the topic of much speculation and glamorization through the movies and other avenues, but is quite compelling when you look at the actual case studies.

Even now we don't know much about DID, and it's still being studied - Trud迪 Chase's story came about long before psychologists knew as much as they do now, and I think her story is pretty important. She passed away in 2010, but I hope that she will be remembered for years to come.

Carolyn Gerk says

I don't know how to rate this book.....

It confused me, it scared me, it intrigued me and it saddened me. It is an unbelievable non fiction account that literally makes me question a time or two if it can really be true. It portrays the incredible strength of the human mind in the face of adversity and even the weaknesses of it.

The reader walks along with 'the woman' and her doctor getting a first hand telling of moment to moment life with multiple personalities and attempting to extract knowledge from each hidden persona. Unlike Sybil, When Rabbit Howls is not written clinically, but emotionally. I could not bring myself to read large portions at a time as the horrible abuse that The Troops recount got under my skin and made me sick to envision.

It is an amazing story, and almost feels like a fantasy. Even having read it, I still feel like I could have no idea what someone like this could possibly be going through, it's horrific and frightening and one hundred percent engrossing.

At the very least, I should hope all readers take away from this book a sense of hope and maybe even a sense of guilt for ever having felt like their life was tough. I am amazed this woman is still alive, though the book indicates that the true, 'first born' self is dead due to horrors she could not cope with and never returned from. It is shocking and completely enthralling to watch as personality after personality unfolds, some are born and some die and more selves are created less from the original, but from each separate self.

I hope this book encourages people to think about how magnificent and mysterious the human mind and spirit are, and the help people to realize what abuse and violence can truly do to a child.

I hate to be a jerk, however, and accuse anyone who, if she did go through all of this, of being less than truthful, but while I may believe in the extreme abilities of the human mind to protect itself, I cannot go as far as to say I am convinced that the narrator's light bulbs burnt out and her car didn't work as a result of 'too much energy' in her body. That is a little too science fiction for me, and, honestly, not really a necessary touch. The story is already so over the top shocking that I doubt the reader needed more to seal the deal and buy into what is happening.

When Rabbit Howls is extremely interesting. Fascinating, even if some of it is rather speculative. Even if you do not believe in the extent of the 'woman's disorder, the fact that she survived at all is worth applauding. Shocking and alarming and encouraging in some ways. Very sad, not for the reader who internalizes things. You may not bounce back so quickly from this one.
