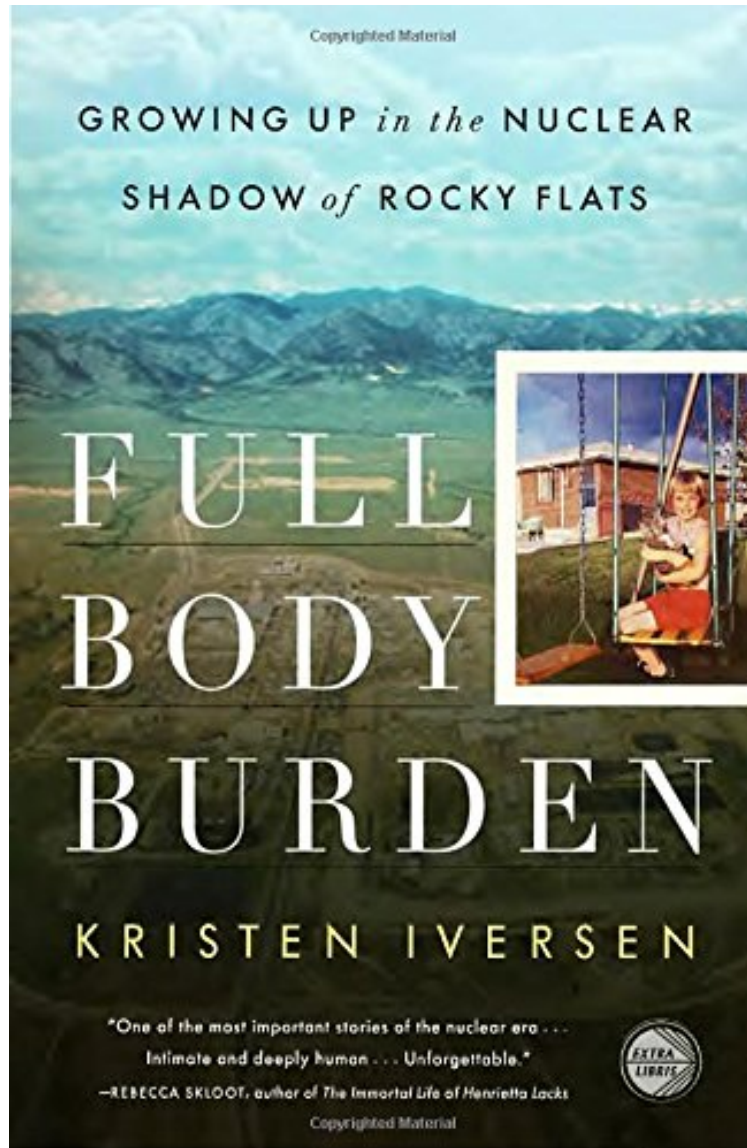


(Download) Full Body Burden: Growing Up in the Nuclear Shadow of Rocky Flats

# Full Body Burden: Growing Up in the Nuclear Shadow of Rocky Flats

*Kristen Iversen*

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**Kristen Iversen : Full Body Burden: Growing Up in the Nuclear Shadow of Rocky Flats** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Full Body Burden: Growing Up in the Nuclear Shadow of Rocky Flats:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. I'm Living the Aftermath of Rocky Flats By S. Scarborough I grew

up in the neighborhood just south of Bridledale and Meadowgate. I also went to school with Kurt. Kristen's book has brought back SO many memories. We didn't know what was going on at Rocky Flats. In fact, my parents never even mentioned its existence. In their eyes it was a perfect place to raise children, but we knew that a lot of people in our neighborhood seemed to die of some type of cancer and that has always seemed strange to me. I'm now 47, and was just last week diagnosed with an unusual skin cancer. I've had other issues as well. I went to the doctor this time because another childhood friend from the neighborhood died last month of melanoma and I wanted to be proactive for my own health. I'm not sure we'll ever know the extent of what went on at Rocky Flats. They are currently building another sub-division even closer to the plant than where Kristen and I lived. The dust can be seen blowing for miles on a windy day. I can only imagine what is being unearthed there and being allowed to blow toward Denver. I thank Kristen for writing this book. Many of us from the neighborhood have reconnected because of it and are able to share our stories. Hopefully, there won't be a new generation to add to our growing list of fallout casualties.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I COULD NOT PUT THIS BOOK DOWN! By JimmyBlues Kristen Iversen has written a piece of non fiction that comes from her very soul and which will forever live in the hearts and souls of those who are fortunate enough to learn of and read FULL BODY BURDEN; an inspirational work in which Kristen cleverly weaves both her investigative journalist skills with what can only be described as her own natural gift of expression through her use of beautiful prose. Kristen is not only a very talented writer, she is a poet, whose artistry is carefully and impeccably woven throughout her writing like a fine tapestry. FULL BODY BURDEN is a timely indictment - not only of the nuclear industry in America - but of the abject corruption and inhumanity of the military industrial complex itself. This frightening, yet wonderful book, exposes just the very tip of the iceberg in regard to the myriad other conspiracies this government is concealing from the American people. Highly recommended!

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. We're Only as Sick as Our Secrets.... By Linda A. Gentry We are only as sick as our secrets and Kristen Iversen has turned the spotlight on the "sickness" created by Rocky Flats, our government and our judicial system via her book, "Full Body Burden: Growing Up in the Shadows of Rocky Flats". I'm wondering just how many many secrets (granted - some/many secrets are warranted and needed) governments around the world are keeping from us. Kristen's book has opened the door and the eyes of citizens living in the shadows of nuclear facilities. I lived in the Arvada area in the 1960's and 1970's moving to Missouri in 1979. I never really knew what went on at a plant only 3 miles from our home and didn't really think about Rocky Flats after we moved. I was on my Facebook page checking out my friends on the Growing Up In Arvada Page (keeping tabs on my beloved Arvada) when Kristen's announcement of her book showed up. My interest was piqued and I downloaded the book. While reading late one night I nearly fell out of my chair when my daughter's childhood best friend (Kris Haag) was mentioned in the book. Less than two weeks after we moved away I received a phonecall from Kris' mom, Judy. She told me that Kris' leg had just been amputated mid-thigh due to cancer. She was 11 years old. I remember vividly breaking the news to my daughter, Becki, and how crushed she was. Then, less than five months later, late at night I again received a phonecall from Kris' mom telling me that Kris had just passed away. We were devastated!! I had never put two and two together until reading about Kris in Kristen's book. Then the pieces of the puzzle surrounding Kris' cancer began fitting together as well as answers to my questions as to why such a beautiful little girl was taken so young. Kristen Iversen does a beautiful job of putting the pieces of the nuclear facility puzzle together and sheds the light on how citizens and a grand jury fought to rectify what was happening to an area at the foothills of the beautiful Colorado mountains and the city of Arvada and a threat to the city of Denver itself. I highly recommend this book. Compelling reading. By the way, I not only purchased the book for my tablet, I have also purchased five other copies for my children and a hard copy for me.

Full Body Burden is Kristen Iversen's story of growing up in a small Colorado town close to Rocky Flats, a secret nuclear weapons plant. It's also a book about the destructive power of secrets both family secrets and government secrets. Her father's hidden liquor bottles, the strange cancers in children in the neighborhood, the truth about what they made at Rocky Flats best not to inquire too deeply into any of it. But as Iversen grew older, she began to ask questions and discovered some disturbing realities. As this memoir unfolds, it reveals itself as a brilliant work of investigative journalism a shocking account of the government's sustained attempt to conceal the effects of the toxic and radioactive waste released by Rocky Flats, and of local residents' vain attempts to seek justice in court. Based on extensive interviews, FBI and EPA documents, and class-action testimony, this taut, beautifully written book promises to have a very long half-life. Now with Extra Libris material, including a readers guide and bonus content

.com A QA with the Author Why did you write the book? Rocky Flats was the big secret of my childhood. No one knew what they did at the plant; the rumor in the neighborhood was that they made household cleaning products. We knew nothing about radioactive and toxic contamination. My childhood was also shadowed by the secrecy surrounding my father's alcoholism. My family was very close and loving but also troubled. I wrote the book to learn what really happened at Rocky Flats, to learn everything I could about plutonium pits and nuclear weapons and the crucial role the plant played during and after the Cold War. I also wanted to understand my family and the broader context of what it

meant to grow up during the seventies. Secrecy at the level of the community and at the level of family turned out to be a central theme in the book. One of the great ironies of my life is that I spent several years as a travel writer in Europe, looking for good stories to write about, and the biggest story turned out to be quite literally in my own backyard. My family and our neighbors were Cold War warriors, as the plutonium workers themselves were called, but no one told us. How is Rocky Flats a global issue? The 2011 accident at Fukushima, following the tsunami, reminded the world in a terrible way that we cannot ignore the threat of radioactive contamination, whether it comes from nuclear power plants or nuclear weapons sites. The world has experienced many nuclear disasters in recent years, including accidents at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine, the Mayak facility in Russia (the sister plant to Rocky Flats), Rocky Flats in Colorado, and other former nuclear weapons sites around the United States such as Hanford and Fernald. The health effects of short-term, high-level radioactive contamination are fairly well known. What are the health costs of long-term, low-level radioactive exposure? Scientists and physicists continue to debate the topic, but one fact is for sure: there is no safe level of exposure to plutonium. One millionth of a gram, particularly if it is inhaled, can cause cancer. Rocky Flats happened in my backyard, but in a sense it is happening in everyone's backyard. Many of us live in close proximity to former nuclear weapons sites or nuclear power plants with inadequate safety provisions. And, at a time when we are supposed to be decreasing our nuclear arsenal, the U.S. government is talking about producing nuclear triggers again. We need to pay attention. Was it hard to write so intimately about your family? I believe that the most powerful way to tell a story is through personal, everyday experience. Every person on the planet has a story that is both ordinary and extraordinary. My siblings and I swam in the lake behind our house and rode our horses in the fields. We had, in many ways, a blessed childhood. And this kind of experience is one that many readers will share. What makes our story unique is that it connects, in ways that we never anticipated, to a broader historical and political narrative. The story of the 1969 fire at Rocky Flats which very nearly destroyed the entire metro Denver area is all the more powerful when you realize that my family was having a very pleasant Mothers Day brunch at a nearby restaurant. We had no idea what was going on and neither did other Coloradoans. It was only by including the experiences of me, my family, my neighbors, and my coworkers at Rocky Flats that I could truly bring the story to life. It was indeed a challenge to write intimately about things that, as a family, we were never supposed to discuss, including my father's drinking. And yet the end result was a tremendous sense of clarity and understanding. What surprised you most during your research for the book? I was surprised, and continue to be surprised, by the secrecy surrounding this very dramatic story. What happened at Rocky Flats, during the Cold War and up to the present moment, is crucially important not only to Colorado but to the entire country. But so much of the story has been hidden over the years, and now it is in danger of being forgotten. Recently I stayed at a hotel just a few miles from the Rocky Flats site, and the young man at the front desk had grown up in Colorado. He'd never heard of Rocky Flats. Of those people who do know the story--or part of it--many believe that Rocky Flats is old history, that it's irrelevant and insignificant. They believe the land is safe and the story is over. After all, you can't see or smell plutonium. Yet we cannot forget the story of Rocky Flats. The effects will linger far into the future. There were many other surprises too. During my research, I was shocked to discover how many tons of MUF, or Missing Unaccounted For plutonium, was missing, even to the present day. And the history of the 1989 FBI raid on Rocky Flats is fascinating. I believe it's the only time in the history of the United States that two government agencies--the FBI and the EPA--have raided another agency, the Department of Energy. Winner of the 2013 Colorado Book Award Winner of the Reading the West Book Award in Nonfiction A Mother Jones Best Book of 2012 A Kirkus s Best Book of 2012 An Atlantic Monthly Best Book about Justice "Full Body Burden is one of the most important stories of the nuclear era--as personal and powerful as "Silkwood," told with the suspense and narrative drive of The Hot Zone. With unflinching honesty, Kristen Iverson has written an intimate and deeply human memoir that shows why we should all be concerned about nuclear safety, and the dangers of ignoring science in the name of national security. Rocky Flats needs to be part of the same nuclear discussion as Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and Fukushima. So does Full Body Burden. It's an essential and unforgettable book that should be talked about in schools and book clubs, online and in the White House." Rebecca Skloot, author of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks "What a surprise! You don't expect such (unobtrusively) beautiful writing in a book about nuclear weapons, nor such captivating storytelling. Plus the facts are solid and the science told in colloquial but never dumbed-down terms. If I could afford them, I'd want the movie rights. Having read scores of nuclear books, I venture a large claim: Kristin Iverson's Full Body Burden may be a classic of nuclear literature, filling a gap we didn't know existed among Hersey's Hiroshima, Burdick and Wheeler's Fail-Safe and Kohn's Who Killed Karen Silkwood?" Mark Hertsgaard, author of Nuclear Inc. and HOT "This terrifyingly brilliant book--as perfectly crafted and meticulously assembled as the nuclear bomb triggers that lie at its core--is a savage indictment of the American strategic weapons industry, both haunting in its power, and yet wonderfully, charmingly human as a memoir of growing up in the Atomic Age." Simon Winchester, author of The Professor and the Madman and Atlantic "Why didn't Poe or Hitchcock think of this? Full Body Burden has all the elements of a classic horror tale: the charming nuclear family cruising innocently above the undercurrents of nuclear nightmare. But it's true and all the more chilling. Kristen Iverson has lived this life and is an authority on the culture of secrecy that has prevented the nation from knowing the truth about radioactive contamination. This is a gripping and scary story." Bobbie Ann

Mason, author of *Shiloh and Other Stories* and *In Country*"Kristen Iversen has written a hauntingly beautiful memoir that is also a devastating investigation into the human costs of building and living with the atomic bomb. Poignant and gracefully written, Iversen shows us what it meant to come of age next door to Rocky Flats--Americas plutonium bomb factory. The story is at once terrifying and outrageous."Kai Bird, co-author of *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*"The fight over Rocky Flats was and is a paradigmatic American battle, of corporate and government power set against the bravery and anger of normal people. This is a powerful and beautiful account, of great use to all of us who will fight the battles that lie ahead."Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* and *Eaarth*"Part memoir, part investigative journalism, *Full Body Burden* is a tale that will haunt your dreams. It's a story of secrecy, deceit, and betrayal set in the majestic high plains of Colorado. Kristen Iversen takes us behind her family's closed doors and beyond the security fences and the armed guards at Rocky Flats. She's as honest and restrained in her portrait of a family in crisis as she is in documenting the incomprehensible betrayal of citizens by their government, in exposing the harrowing disregard for public safety exhibited by the technocrats in charge of a top-secret nuclear weapons facility. For decades the question asked by residents living downwind of the plant was 'Would my government deliberately put my life and the lives of my children in danger?' The simple and irrefutable answer was 'Yes, it would . . . in a Colorado minute.'"John Dufresne, author of *Louisiana Power Light and Love Warps the Mind a Little*This is a subject as grippingly immediate as today's headlines: While there is alarm about the small rise in radioactivity in the food chain, one reads in these pages about how a whole region lived in the steady contaminating effects of nuclear radiation. Kristen Iversen's prose is clean and clear and lovely, and her story is deeply involving and full of insight and knowledge; it begins in innocence, and moves through catastrophes; it is unflinching and brave, an expose about ignorance and denial and the cost of government excess, and an intensely personal portrait of a family. It ought to be required reading for every single legislator in this country.Richard Bausch, author of *Peace and Something Is Out There*About the AuthorKRISTEN IVERSEN grew up in Arvada, Colorado, near the Rocky Flats nuclear weaponry facility.She is director of the MFA program in creative writing at the University of Memphis.Visit her website at [KristenIversen.com](http://KristenIversen.com).