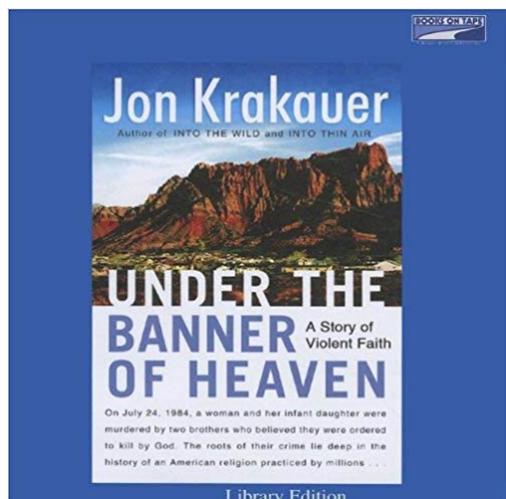


Under the Banner Of Heaven, Unabridged Edition *by* Scott Brick, Jon Krakauer



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Reviews of the *Under the Banner Of Heaven, Unabridged Edition* *by* Scott Brick, Jon Krakauer

Detenta

A friend recommended this book as a horror story. We are both fans of Jon Krakauer and he has a lot of credibility with both of us. Jon does a fair and factual history of the Mormon church and the rise of polygamy and the FLDS. While the Mormon church has denounced polygamy and the FDLS, this sect continues to thrive in Arizona, Texas, Mexico, Canada and they are now moving into South Dakota. In addition to the background and history, Krakauer zeroes in on several stories of individuals within the church, their exploitation and their escapes. He doesn't sensationalize the stories but uses the stories to explain the impact of the absolute control the FLDS prophets have over all the inhabitants

in these FDS communities where they make their own laws and take advantage of federal and state social programs even while they openly disdain the government. Why a horror story? The people in these communities are emotionally, physically and sexually abused. Men of 40 and 50 take "brides" who are 12 and 13 years old. Their parents willingly give them over to these prophets thinking it will assure them a place in heaven. These people think this is normal and the rest of society is heathen. It is an alternative universe, but it goes on here in the US.

The Apotheoses of Lacspar

For me the book is 'a page turner' for i could not put it down following the first ten pages. Learning of the development of the LDS faith through Joseph and his followers is clearly explained and w/out prejudice. The information regarding FLDS families enables one to understand the evolution of plural marriages, [which are deplorable --- my personal opinion]. Had no idea why the book was purchased, other than having previously read one of his books. Great writer! Will purchase more of his books.

Wenaiand

An excellent, thought-provoking dose of realism. Loved the audio book as it is read by the actual author. This story speaks to many who are disgusted with the hypocrisy and violence often associated with religious fundamentalism. Very well organized, well-written, and a pleasure to absorb. Highly recommended.

Rko

If you're looking for a super-accurate, in-depth history of Mormonism, this may not be the book for you (check all the 1 star reviews from LDS members taking Krakauer to task). If you're looking only for information around the Lafferty murders, this may not be the book for you.

Krakauer has taken the Lafferty murders and examined them, but realized that in order to explain the motives of the murderers, a person needs at least an introductory lesson in Mormon Fundamentalism. Of course, to get to the Fundamentalists, you have to know a little about Mormonism's history and creation and it's gradual changes away from it's original "fundamental" tenants. So the book ends up being less about the murders and their motives and more about the "backstory" of Mormonism. I, personally, was interested to read this because I don't know much about the history of LDS and it's fascinating as a modern American religion. And to be honest, there isn't much to say about the Lafferty murders: the men believed that murder was justified because God instructed them to do it. They were not clinically insane, but rather very fervent in their religious beliefs and thus (at the time of publication in 2003) both were imprisoned. Krakauer does go through a moment-by-moment retelling of the murders which is gruesome and maybe a little unnecessary (also: repetitive; the crimes are already described several times during the book and since the murders themselves only took minutes, there isn't much to add in each retelling). The only relevant information that I could find in the description of the crimes is the method of execution -- again from the brothers' revelations from God and the need for them to be symbolic.

Regardless of whether the history of the LDS church is 100% accurate is not important (sorry, LDS readers). Krakauer doesn't paint anyone as heroes or victims, but rather offers a pretty unbiased view of the proceedings. Obviously, if you have a lot of emotions invested in either side of the stories, you might feel under-represented, but for an outsider I thought it read pretty straight-forward. And really the background was to give you insight as to how the Laffertys arrived at a certain place and time and why they believed that God would order them to murder their sister-in-law and niece. The history of Mormons moving across America and the troubles that they faced and their eventual alignment with the US Government in order to control the Utah Territory (which included ending the practice of Polygamy; a major schism with the Fundamentalists) -- all of these feed into the shared history of almost anyone with LDS heritage (frankly, almost everyone on the West Coast of the US) and directly into the crimes committed by the Lafferty brothers.

I agree with other reviewers that Krakauer's inclusion of the Elizabeth Smart story was a bit odd... it felt jammed in at the last minute. And although some reviewers (LDS members) question Krakauer's theories about Smart's abduction being made easier because of her religious beliefs, again I have to agree. People outside the Mormon church (and its offshoots) don't really have a good grasp on the spirit of obedience that these people have. A young girl like Elizabeth Smart likely WOULD believe an adult man (priestholder) commanded her that she must go with him and follow his orders. The case is very complex and I'm sure psychologists have had a field day trying to puzzle it out, but I agree that Krakauer's assertion is correct: if the girl had been from any other faith (or no religion at all) she most likely would not have willingly kept herself hidden and declined the many opportunities to escape.

All in all, I think this was an interesting backgrounder into Mormon theology and the roots of the church. If it's not 100% accurate, I don't really care -- I'm not looking to be converted either way.
Charyoll

I haven't read anything else by Jon Krakauer, which is odd because I admired and enjoyed this book a great deal. Actually, I just finished "Under the Banner of Heaven" for the second time. Some of it is pretty alarming, well at least to me because I am a liberal. Having been raised Catholic I know what it is to leave a church you love because of some of its teaching. I think probably all religions have teachings that are incongruent with reality.

At any rate, I recommend this book. I have "Missoula" all lined up on my Kindle app.

Nirad

Before you buy, be aware that the author is an atheist. There is a constant subtle belittling of any type of belief in God, you get the feeling that he finds faith ridiculous & something for unintelligent people.

There are some very interesting historical tidbits about the LDS church & its beginnings that I did not find in other books (I've read about 20). Some of the footnotes are fascinating. It is more about Mormon history & how the violence & control developed than about the one incident of murder in 1984 that is referred to on the cover.

Voodoolkree

I'm glad I read this, but I am almost horrified at the fundamental sects. As a woman and a mother, I cannot fathom wanting my daughter to grow up uneducated and thinking it is fine to share her home with another woman. The fact that these wives are subjected to being little more than slaves is appalling. The murders are chilling because of the innocent lives taken, but also because of the justification of the murderers that they were demanded by God.

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