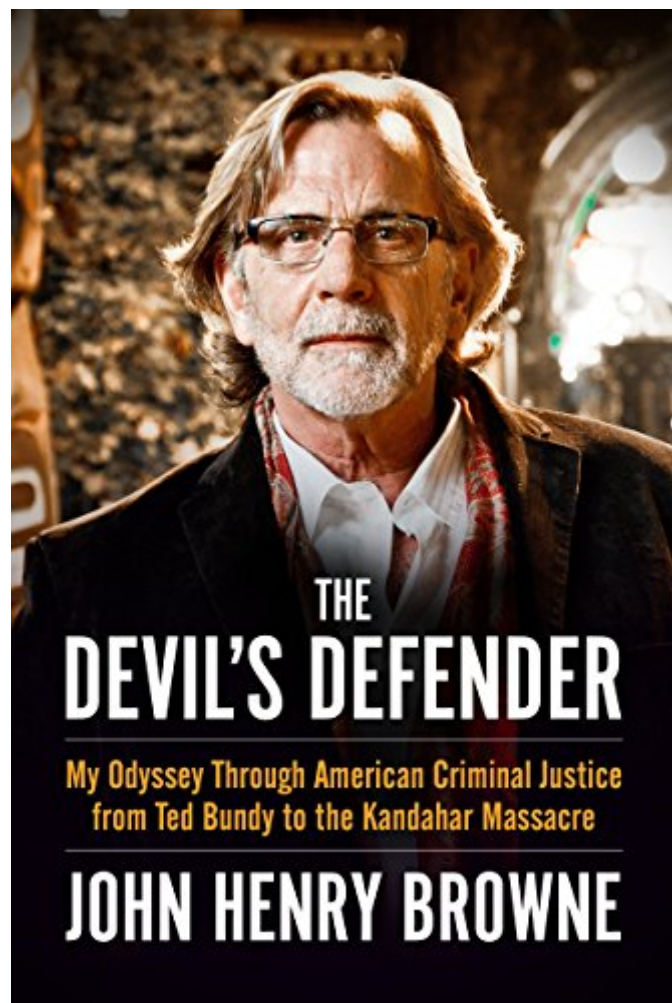


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Devil's Defender: My Odyssey Through American Criminal Justice From Ted Bundy To The Kandahar Massacre



Synopsis

In the tradition of bestselling legal memoirs from Johnnie Cochran, F. Lee Bailey, Gerry Spence, and Alan Dershowitz, John Henry Browne's memoir, *The Devil's Defender*, recounts his tortuous education in what it means to be an advocate "and a human being." For the last four decades, Browne has defended the indefensible. From Facebook folk hero "the Barefoot Bandit" Colton Moore, to Benjamin Ng of the Wah Mee massacre, to Kandahar massacre culprit Sgt. Robert Bales, Browne's unceasing advocacy and the daring to take on some of the most unwinnable cases "and nearly win them all" has led 48 Hours' Peter Van Sant to call him "the most famous lawyer in America." But although the Browne that America has come to know cuts a dashing and confident figure, he has forever been haunted by his job as counsel to Ted Bundy, the most famous serial killer in American history. A drug- and alcohol-addicted (yet wildly successful) defense attorney who could never let go of the case that started it all, Browne here asks of himself the question others have asked him all along: does defending evil make you evil, too?

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Customer Reviews

I was totally enthralled by this book, but need to give a caveat: I used to practice law in Seattle. I even worked on one of the cases in this book and knew several of the people Browne writes about. I can't recall ever having had the pleasure of meeting the author, although I certainly knew of his existence. Nevertheless, reading about cases and people I used to know makes the book far more interesting to me than to the average reader, and in that sense, I might not be the most objective reviewer with respect to how exciting the book is. But it is exciting! At one level Browne writes like a true crime writer. He worked on some of Washington's most fascinating criminal cases and his memoir covers them: Ted Bundy, the Wah Mee massacre, the Wenatchee child molestation ring, the Barefoot Bandit, and the Kandahar massacre. At times when Browne uncovers fraud in the system and gets his client off, you will feel like cheering for him. But the book goes deeper: At its heart is Browne's opposition to the death penalty -- how he developed his legal philosophy and how he implements it in the courtroom. And at times, Browne becomes very personal. His honesty about some of the less pleasant aspects of his life touched me. The book's biggest bombshell? Without a doubt, Bundy's confessions to Browne. Browne offers the reader information about Bundy and his murders we didn't know about before. Sometimes Browne's account of Bundy's criminal exploits deviates from the known facts. For instance, other books claim that Bundy stole the jailor's clothing and stole his escape car in his second jailbreak, but Browne claims Bundy had an accomplice who provided the car and clothing. I wish Browne would have explained the deviation, e.g., was that the version Bundy told him?

When I first heard that John Henry Browne was writing a book about his life, and in particular his association with Ted Bundy, I knew it was a book I would order as soon as it was available. I anticipated it would be a very good book and I was not disappointed. Whatever one thinks of Browne's political beliefs or his thinking on progressive issues, *The Devil's Defender* is an enjoyable and very informative read. I must also say that I found it extremely interesting as he delved into what Ted Bundy told him about the murders, including Bundy's confession of an alleged murder of a boy when Ted was just a boy himself. Is such an allegation true? Bundy could be lying, of course, but he could also be telling the absolute truth. What matters here is that (according to Browne) Bundy confessed it, and as such, the author was right to add it to the book. Now, there are a couple of things I'd like to address: When Browne speaks of his life and those things he experienced while dealing with Bundy, he's telling the reader what he absolutely knows to be true, and as such, it all appears to be flawless. However, there are some egregious (and avoidable) errors that have crept into the book that should be corrected for future editions. While I will not name them all, I will give

two examples that should especially stand out to readers who are familiar with the Bundy case: In at least three places Browne states that Bundy was arrested in Lake City, Florida (where he killed his last victim, 12 year-old Kim Leach), when of course, Bundy escaped Lake City unmolested by authorities, only to be arrested in Pensacola, Florida days later.

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