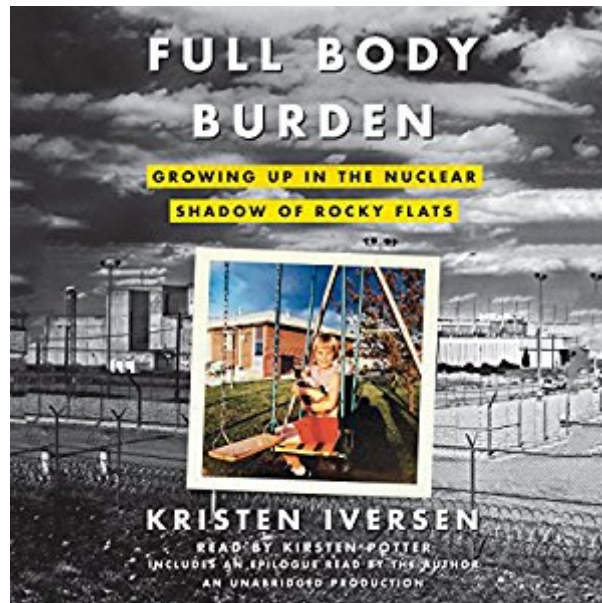


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# Full Body Burden: Growing Up In The Nuclear Shadow Of Rocky Flats



## Synopsis

Full Body Burden is a haunting work of narrative nonfiction about a young woman, Kristen Iversen, growing up in a small Colorado town close to Rocky Flats, a secret nuclear weapons plant once designated "the most contaminated site in America." It's the story of a childhood and adolescence in the shadow of the Cold War, in a landscape at once startlingly beautiful and - unknown to those who lived there - tainted with invisible yet deadly particles of plutonium. It's also a book about the destructive power of secrets - both family and government. Her father's hidden liquor bottles, the strange cancers in children in the neighborhood, the truth about what was made at Rocky Flats (cleaning supplies, her mother guessed) - best not to inquire too deeply into any of it. But as Iversen grew older, she began to ask questions. She learned about the infamous 1969 Mother's Day fire, in which a few scraps of plutonium spontaneously ignited and - despite the desperate efforts of firefighters - came perilously close to a "criticality", the deadly blue flash that signals a nuclear chain reaction. Intense heat and radiation almost melted the roof, which nearly resulted in an explosion that would have had devastating consequences for the entire Denver metro area. Yet the only mention of the fire was on page 28 of the Rocky Mountain News, underneath a photo of the Pet of the Week. In her early thirties, Iversen even worked at Rocky Flats for a time, typing up memos in which accidents were always called "incidents". And as this memoir unfolds, it reveals itself as a brilliant work of investigative journalism - a detailed and 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. Here, too, are vivid portraits of former Rocky Flats workers - from the healthy, who regard their work at the plant with pride and patriotism, to the ill or dying, who battle for compensation for cancers they got on the job. 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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.

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!

We are only as sick as our secrets and Kristen Iverson 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 Iverson 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.

This is a well written book detailing the Rocky Flats Nuclear Lab's work environment, the government and corporate cover-ups, and the tragic illnesses and loss of life as a result of the aforementioned. This account hit home on a personal level, because someone close to me died from a brain tumor since she was one of the countless "downwinders." I lived near the plant for a few years, unaware of possible deadly repercussions. It is a very worthy read.

Having owned a home that backed up to Bridledale, I was, shall we say, caught up in this book, knowing many of the people mentioned. I was complacent and woefully ignorant of the dangers all

around me. I am angered that development continues and at the unwillingness of people to look at the facts. They continue to bury their heads in denial, because it would change their dreams of having a pristine dream home. I'm angered that the city and county governments approved these plans for development. It's clearly ALL about money and greasing the palms of the developers that the government is in bed with. The citizen matters little to these people. Thanks to Kristen for writing this book, and for the brave people that fought to close Rocky Flats down.

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