



A Father's Story

Lionel Dahmer

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On July 23, 1991, Milwaukee chemist Lionel Dahmer discovered - along with the rest of the world - that his son Jeffrey was a murderer who, over a period of many years, had carried out some of the most ghastly crimes ever committed in the United States.

A Father's Story cannot claim to have discovered the ultimate solution to the enigma of either the criminal or his deeds. It is, in fact, not the story of Jeffrey Dahmer at all, but of a father who, by slow, incremental degrees, came to realize the saddest truth that any parent may ever know: that following some unknowable process, his child had somewhere crossed the line that divides the human from the monstrous.

This memoir is not a refutation of charges, an attempt to change the record. It is both a touching family memoir and a haunting confession - the searing account of a man who never relented in his effort to fathom the deepest quarters of his son's affliction, even as they pointed to his own.

A Father's Story Details

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From Reader Review A Father's Story for online ebook

David Brown says

An important but unfortunately poorly written work.

When serial killers are apprehended, we hear all about their crimes and the horrible acts they committed. And to a lesser extent, we are get a sense of the victims and their families, but very rarely do we ever hear from the family members of the killers and what they must go through as they are often turned into pariahs for what their children/siblings did. This makes Lionel Dahmer's book A Father's Story such an important work. However, as Dahmer repeatedly states, he has "an analytical mind" so the work tends to toward calculated prose, that gives very little emotional insight into what his experience was like, so that the book boils down to little more than a litany of events from Jeffrey Dahmer's childhood and trial, making it difficult to empathize with him or his wife.

Hoever, Dahmer should be commended for avoiding sensationalism and trying to capitalize off his son's crimes. The book is simply, as the title states, a father's story, sort of Dahmer's way of working through and trying to understand how his son could possibly be capable of the horrible acts he committed.

The book does give some insight into what may have caused Jeffrey Dahmer to become the killer the world know him as. Jeffrey Dahmer was born into a perfect storm of hereditary and environment. Lionel Dahmer bravely confesses his own early experiments with perversity, a long stint as a pyromaniac culminating in almost burning down a neighbors garage, attempting to hypnotize a girl when he was thirteen in the hopes of "having [his] way with her" and his own dissociative personality that was a lesser version of what developed in his son. Also, Jeffrey's birth mother, Joyce was greatly mentally disturbed (what mental disorders she exactly had, Dahmer never states) and was on numerous medications while pregnant with Jeffrey; and Dahmer correctly questions what effect all of this had on his son.

Throughout the book, we sense the immense feeling of guilt Lionel Dahmer feels that he somehow through his own genes and faulty parenting contributed to what his son became, and through this alone are given a glimpse into the suffering the Dahmer family went through.

Monzy S says

This is one of the most underrated and rarest books, it took me forever and great effort to find it but it was well worth it.

Lionel Dahmer shares his and his son's tragic and sad story and provides some theories on why his son came to be a pedophile and necrophiliac monster, you could sense while you're reading the book that he's in unbelievable mental anguish, guilt ridden, blaming him self for it and his wife and struggling to make sense of what happened and trying to rationalize it.

Amazing book, was written with an emotional depth and great sincerity.

Flora says

Okay -- I make no apologies for reading a lot of "true crime," but let me just say that this particular book stands out from the crowd. One would assume that Lionel Dahmer wrote (or did not write) this book either to capitalize on or atone for his son's crimes ("I Was Jeff Dahmer's Dad!"); what's unexpected is the candor, humility, and thoughtfulness of his account, and the little ways in which its genuine strangeness bypasses "shock value." (His descriptions of his own childhood pyromania are pretty amazing, as are his expressions of sad, mild sympathy for his son.) In many ways, this is the novel I wouldn't mind reading about the math-professor father of a serial killer. Jeff Dahmer we know; *this* is the interesting man.

DAISY DISNEY says

It is so sad that Jeffery 's father feels so much remorse for what his son did. I can't begin to imagine the nightmare that has become of this man's life after his son committed such gruesome crimes. Throughout the book Mr. Dahmer questions himself if he should have known what his son was up to and tries to figure out if there were signs in Jeffreys childhood that he was disturbed.

Many books have been written about this serial killer but only his father can give an internal insight on the killer before he became infamous.

Marissa says

I read this book in one afternoon, finding it impossible to put down once I started. I was shocked to find Lionel Dahmer's writing so compulsively readable, well-written, and hauntingly open. I cannot imagine what it took to examine all of his own inner demons, to analyze them and dissect them, in the hopes of being able to understand the horrifying actions of his son. I find it abominable that people can be so hateful to parents of murderers, especially parents like the Dahmer's who, like so many others, do what they believe is a good job raising their children and guiding them to be decent, law-abiding citizens. How do you cope when finding out the life your son has led is not only different, but one that will attach him to infamy? How do you reconcile the son you love unconditionally has ended the lives of so many other beloved sons? I cannot imagine it. But I applaud Lionel Dahmer for writing his memoir, charging and challenging parents to be more aware of their children's' struggles, to not let them fade to the periphery like he did, in hopes of saving a future child from the dark path his son went down. A reality check for all, especially parents, this is a heart wrenching book that gave me a very different perspective of the notorious Jeffrey Dahmer.

Shaun says

This book presents a rare opportunity to see an evil man, whom most of us dismiss as an abomination, through the eyes of a loving parent.

It's hard enough to wrap one's head around the atrocity known as serial murder, now imagine that that the serial murderer is your son.

Except Lionel Dahmer didn't have to imagine. Instead he had to somehow unify the son he thought he knew and loved with a monster capable of unthinkable acts of violence.

A Father's Story is clearly Lionel Dahmer's attempt to understand his son's evolution into one of the world's most renowned serial killers with particular emphasis on his personal role. Where did he go wrong? Did he

pass on to Jeff some genetic predisposition, some biological need for absolute control? Was he too distant, too oblivious? On the other hand, was it his son's alcoholism? His wife's use of barbituates and other drugs during her pregnancy? Was it somehow related to a childhood surgery in which Jeff feared his penis had been cut off?

The answers to these questions are interesting, but not as interesting as the process. In that sense, I'm not sure Lionel's insights into Jeff are particularly worthwhile in terms of what they reveal about Jeff, but they are certainly worthwhile in terms of what they reveal about him and about human nature in general. Throughout the book Lionel needs to find a narrative about his son that he can live with, one that he can accept, one that resonates.

To me, an outsider, the obvious answer to a question like Jeffrey Dahmer is that he is simply a sociopath. He lacks a conscience and the ability to empathize. He sees people, relationships, and the world in terms of their ability to meet his needs, whatever those needs might be. Not all sociopaths are killers, of course. And just like anything, sociopathy probably exists along a spectrum. However, sometimes you have the perfect storm. What starts off as a normal curiosity about anatomy turns into an odd preoccupation with bones and entrails that is somehow eventually linked to Jeff's sexuality. He feels isolated by the violent and perverse nature of his fantasies. He is also gay in a time when people just aren't gay. His parents are in a volatile and unhappy marriage. He turns to alcohol and becomes an alcoholic. And then fate provides him an opportunity to live out a recurring fantasy. He comes across a shirtless hitchhiker, whom he takes home and eventually murders.

Lionel, however, isn't happy with the "perfect storm" scenario, which is admittedly vague and non-specific. After all, this is his son, his offspring, his responsibility. It was he, Lionel Dahmer, who unleashed Jeffrey on this world. He needs answers. Real answers. Ultimately, he feels guilty and he needs to know if he is somehow to blame.

Bottom line: this is a compelling read. That said, I think we learn more about Lionel in these pages than we do about Jeffrey. I recently watched the famous Stone Phillips interview with Jeffrey, his father, and his mother. For the most part, Jeff was a fairly average kid, who grew into a awkward teen whose alcoholism went unnoticed by his parents who were distracted by their own problems. He had odd fantasies about laying down with unconscious men. Fantasies he couldn't share with anyone. Eventually, he crosses a line that once crossed propels him further into his perversions. Throughout the interview, what struck me about Jeff was his repeated assertions that everything he did, he did because he wanted to. I was attracted to these men. I wanted to have sex with them without having to deal with their sexual desires. I didn't really want to kill them. It was a means to an end. A selfish end. At one point he discusses his conversion to creationism. He reveals he was once an atheist and seems to suggest that had he believed in God, he would not have done what he did. He actually suggests and seems to believe in that moment that without a belief in God there is nothing to deter someone from hurting others.

I would argue a conscience and empathy keep atheists like me from hurting people to get what we want. I would further argue that most of us are born with some innate sense of "right" vs. "wrong." Society and societal norms further shape and develop our sense of morality. Religion may certainly play a role. But clearly a lack of a Savior or Creator was not Dahmer's problem. His lack of conscience, his lack of empathy, his inability to consider the cost of fulfilling his own perverted fantasies (genetic, learned, or some combination thereof), these were Dahmer's problem.

One final afterthought. There were signs. It seems there are always signs. Jeff was withdrawn at home. (okay, so lots of teens are withdrawn at home). Jeff was an alcoholic. (okay, so lots of kids hide drug or alcohol abuse from their parents). As a teen, Jeff never dates or talks about girls. (okay, so some guys are shy and awkward about the opposite sex.) Jeff drops out of college and is repeatedly drunk. (okay, so not everyone is cut out for college. He certainly isn't the first young man who just can't get his act together.) Jeff stole a male manikin from a store, which his grandmother finds in his closet. (okay, okay, so some adult

males do stupid things). Jeff is convicted of molesting a 13 year old boy. (Ah...hmmm...okay, so this was definitely a red flag.) Jeffrey seems obsessed with pornography. (big deal...right?) Jeff performs weird experiments on dead animals...using various chemicals to dissolve their bones. His grandmother, whom he lives with, reports strange odors coming from her basement. (I don't know...pretty weird). Jeff installs a state of the art security system in his small rundown apartment. He puts a lock on his bedroom door. He buys a large freezer so he can buy meat on sale? (I know, I know. Hindsight is 20/20. But there were serious signs, particularly the molestation.) How does a man who drugs and molests a 13 year old boy fall through the cracks? That's a question worth asking ourselves. Forget why Jeff did what he did. I'm not sure we (society) could have stopped the anomaly that was Jeff...but we certainly identified him early on. Why then did we just let him go?

Paul Bryant says

This is a very difficult meditation on blame and a dignified, moving and quite riveting exercise in soul-bearing and self-laceration by a stoic harshly condemning his own stoicism and trying with his scientist's rationalism to be even-handed whilst facing the hardest question : how did this human being, your son – who you were entrusted with - go so wrong? Lionel Dahmer comes up with at least four suggestions, all inadequate.

I found out that after this book was published that Joyce Dahmer, Jeffrey's mother, interpreted it as a direct attempt to blame her, the mother. After this book was published she broke her silence. She agreed to take part in a tv programme in which Jeff, Lionel and herself discussed their lives. It's all on Youtube. I'll come to that in a moment.

Back to Lionel. He describes a terrible marriage with Joyce. They were unsuited to put it mildly. Lionel was withdrawn, cold, unemotional, passive, these are all his words, and Joyce was demonstrative, emotional, the complete opposite. Joyce had a whole catalogue of emotional and physical problems, which were incessant for years, and Lionel frankly states that he stayed away from her as much as possible, and buried himself in his untroubling laboratory. Many heated arguments ensued, in some of which Joyce became somewhat violent.

Lionel describes episodes from Joyce's pregnancy :

At times, her legs would lock tightly in place, and her whole body would grow rigid and begin to tremble. Her jaw would jerk to the right and take on a similarly frightening rigidity. During these strange seizures, her eyes would bulge like a frightened animal, and she would begin to salivate, literally frothing at the mouth. p34

Joyce didn't remember any of that *at all*. Lionel says the doctor could find no physical reason for these attacks and thought the condition was psychological (but she was not referred to a psychiatrist at that point). Joyce was already on a whole 20-pill drug regime, and the doctor added phenobarbital.

In the tv show Joyce says this is all rubbish. She was outraged. She announced she was writing her own book, provisionally called "An Assault on Motherhood", but said that she didn't want to cast any blame on Lionel as she perceived him to have blamed her. She says :

Jeff's condition was proven to have nothing to do with his upbringing – I don't want parents frightened to

death thinking that the little things they do or the little things they miss are going to result in them having a child that is going to cause all this pain and anguish.....I want to get across that we as women just can't take this kind of thing anymore if something bad happens to our son.

Your heart goes out to her. Yes, Lionel is saying – maybe the drugs given to my wife harmed my son in the womb. But hang on, is that actually blaming Joyce? No – more like blaming the ignorance of the doctor. But she interprets this as blame the mother. It is true that Lionel makes a point of including Joyce's decision not to breastfeed – that does sound perilously close to calling her names. But at that point Joyce had read only excerpts, so maybe she would have discovered later that in fact Lionel blames himself :

Rather than having developed a natural fatherhood, I had learned, as if by rote, what a father should do.

Lionel is withering about his inability to see what he thinks was in front of his eyes, the depth of Jeff's problems, his social withdrawal, his teenage alcoholism – no friends, no girlfriends, no interests, no sports, no music, a failure at everything he turned his hand to. One term at college – expelled , never went to any classes. One spell in the army – kicked out for alcohol problems.

A parent will always want to forgive, smooth over, downplay, minimise, believe that a problem is just a phase, not make a mountain out of a molehill. The parents of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were in the same dilemma – they suspected, they worried, they confronted, they accepted explanations they shouldn't have, what could they do? Even when Jeffrey gets a prison sentence for sexually abusing a 14 year old boy, Lionel remains doggedly optimistic – this will be the short sharp shock he needed. Now he'll turn the corner. Well, he didn't.

Finally Lionel begins to see ghastly points of similarity between him and Jeff – the emotional vacuity, the desire for order and control. Searching back in his own life he produces this remarkable attack on his own mother, a woman he has previously spent pages praising :

Even more telling was my mother's tendency to finish things for me. I would start some task, working slowly through it, as I always did, and suddenly my mother would appear, and in a few quick strokes, either of mind or hand, she would finish it for me. Even though done in a helpful, loving manner, it was a gesture that powerfully reinforced my sense of myself as slow and inept [and fostered an] infuriating sense of weakness and inferiority

You can see his intelligent restless miserable questioning, picking up every psychological stone, is the answer under here, maybe this one, could it be this? Over here? Why did my son kill 17 men?

The trial of Jeffrey Dahmer was to determine if he was guilty or not guilty by reason of insanity – prison or mental institution? In these cases the victims' families wait breathlessly for the verdict – they know the guy will be locked up for life, but they need this one last thing, they need for the murderer to be sane. So when Jeffrey Dahmer was found guilty and sane by the jury they cheered and wept. They needed to be able to blame him, with no ifs and buts. He did it, not his mental illness. He did it because he wanted to. He didn't have to do it, he chose to do it. Evil. 100% guilty as sin. We don't want no doctors muddying the waters. Murder in the first degree. We need to blame with a clear conscience.

The following people have been blamed for the crimes of Jeffrey Dahmer:

His mother (the pregnancy drugs, plus her general craziness and temper)

His father

His paternal grandmother (for screwing up his father)

and

Jeffrey himself.

What did Jeffrey say about this matter of blame and responsibility? He's asked this question in the interview. He says very firmly that all this shoving the responsibility onto this person or that person or alcohol or drugs, it's all bullshit. I did it. The blame is mine and mine alone. But wait... he says a little more than that :

I always believed the lie that the theory of evolution is truth, that we all came from the slime and when we died that was it. So the whole theory cheapens life. And I started reading books that show how evolution is a complete lie. I've since come to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true Creator.

So... maybe if the theory of evolution had not poisoned Jeff's mind to the extent where he thought human life was cheap and worthless, he wouldn't have killed all those men. So, maybe, the guy who should get the blame is

Charles Darwin

It's a theory.

Rebecca McNutt says

This is one of those books that I find very difficult to suspend bias over, as I imagine many other readers would, too. Here we have the story of a man who raised one of the most infamous serial killers in America, a man so heinous that his crimes continue to perpetuate our culture to this day, what with films like 2017's *My Friend Dahmer* and constant warnings about going to strangers' houses alone. That said, at the same time it's also impossible not to have some sympathy for Dahmer Sr., who as a father rationalized his son's odd activities as "hobbies" and never thought in a million years that he was killing innocent people and eating them. With a mother who left the family for career pursuits and Dahmer moving in with a grandmother as a young adult, his father was separated from Jeffery's life for much of the time that the murders were taking place. Still, with a pang of guilt this story reflects in hindsight about how there was always something a little shifty about Jeffery, and it's a warning bell to all to keep an eye on things that just don't seem right, even if it might be nothing. It's undoubtedly disturbing and not for every audience, but it's still destined to be a welcome addition to any true crime fan's collection.

Hannah says

Every parent knows this one unavoidable truth: worry comes with joy when we look at our children. We worry when they are little; Is that cough the flu? Is that rash chicken pox, or something worse? When they go to school, we worry how they will act in the broader world opening up to them; Are they ready and eager to learn? Will they be kind and respectful of others? As they mature different worries appear to replace the old ones; Will someone break their heart? Will they do something stupid and dangerous (just like I did), but not make it out alive to grow old and live to tell the tale?

This parental worry will continue, to varying degrees, for all parents, forever.

But for most parents the world over, these and similar worries are the only ones they will have to face. For Lionel Dahmer, a whole new set of worry was opened up for him in relation to his child, a son he called Jeff.

Did my boy commit these horrific murders? Why didn't I see the signs? How did my own boy spiral down to a place I couldn't reach, and couldn't fix?

Reading this book, I couldn't fathom what ring of hell Lionel Dahmer existed in (and probably still exists) as he grappled with the reality of his son, and the dark choices that son made. Dahmer recaps his life as father to Jeffrey, and struggles to find answers to what happened. Some of his theories are like looking for a needle in a haystack. Other theories have weight, but there is no way to measure their validity. The sadness and the inescapable reality of a book like this is that Dahmer, like the rest of us, will never *really* know what made his son do what he did. He can speculate; he can point a finger at this situation or that situation; he can look inward and berate himself for all his failings as a parent. But sadly, there isn't an answer. As a reader, I came away with an enormous amount of sympathy for Lionel, his x-wife, their family, the victims and their families, and all the potential of those victims torn away by Jeffrey Dahmer's heinous acts. Looking at all the baby and boyhood photos of Jeffrey, it wasn't hard to sympathize for the potential that was lost in Jeffrey himself.

But no answers.

Lionel Dahmer writes what I felt was a candid, honest struggle to come to terms with his son and his actions. It's one of those books you read and are honestly glad you don't have to ask the kind of questions he was forced to ask himself as a parent. There but for the Grace of God...

Lee Battersby says

Jeffrey Dahmer will long be remembered as one of the most gruesome and appalling serial killers of all time. But if there was any hope that the reader might gain any insight into his mental makeup by reading this memoir, by the man who should have known him better than any other, it is quickly dashed.

Lionel Dahmer reveals himself as a cold, emotionally distant father and husband who's greatest influence upon his oldest son seems to have been to create an atmosphere of such utter disregard and disinterest that Jeffrey's withdrawal into an interior landscape of cruel and twisted emotional violence is not only hastened, it is almost ensured. Between long, rambling barely-coherent attempts to place his son's crimes into the context of his own failings as a person (Not a revelation goes by without an accompanying "Perhaps I had been naive..." or accompanying admission that Dahmer Senior had also had similar desires "but never took them that far", as if he is so desperate to claim *any* sort of emotional connection that he is willing to take some sort of pale credit for his son's monstrosities.) and slimy, ham-fisted attempts to place the blame for Jeffrey's behaviour on anybody else but him-- particularly his first wife, the fragile and quite-obviously emotionally bullied birth mother of his son's, Lionel gives us less an insight into his son's psyche than a pure view of a father and husband of stunning emotional disassociation: a weak, deluded, egotistical and loathsome little man whose multiple failings read like a litany of dissemblances and pitiful excuses.

A final chapter, added after Jeffrey's death in prison, simply adds a film of utter loathing to the reading experience, as father somehow contrives to tie in a possible redemption for his son with an incoherent, self-serving diatribe about the righteousness of intelligent design.

This could have been a searing odyssey of truthfulness and revelation, giving the reader real insight into a father's relationship with one of the most notorious monsters of our time. Instead, it is a worthless smattering of excuses, self-justifications, and oily smarminess. It is an utter disgrace.

Andrew Bourne says

Under what criteria can this book be judged? I've decided that it cannot be, or at least I cannot—and certainly yellow stars are inappropriate. Is there a comparative piece of writing? Perhaps the only thing more idiosyncratic than the crimes Jeffrey Dahmer committed is this curious analysis by his father, which is more autobiography than criminology or portraiture. If it is sensationalism (like so many other books about serial murder), then he certainly has a bizarre method for doing so; if it is a clarification of facts, then it is incomplete and meandering; if it is an apology, it is sincere but just totally weary from years of apology. It is what it is. Lionel is befuddled and so am I.

Much of the most monstrous details of Dahmer's actions were unknown to me. When he stood trial in the early 1990's I was fairly young, and I remember equating him with Poe's Tell Tale Heart... in that, a murdered body was carefully dismembered and hidden away in a home. I vaguely knew that the whole affair was wrapped up in sexuality somehow, but remember mostly the mechanics of its concealment—notably, Dahmer's freezer, ultimately impounded by police, as seen on television. This book only provides occasional and cursory gruesome details, and understandably so. I looked elsewhere and found calculated necrophilia, human taxidermy, trepanation, and cannibalism—all ultimately at the rate of one murder per week.

Lionel splashes around in his personal failure as a husband, a father, a citizen, whatever. But none of it is worse than my own family. He tries out the blame shoe on everybody and everything—media, drugs, Mom, school, genetics, and mostly himself. His writing isn't captivating, it is sentimental and emotionless at the same time, often forgivably hokey, but I couldn't put it down. Is he lying about anything? I just don't know, can't know.

To say that this book humanizes Jeffrey Dahmer is incorrect, it does have the effect, and horribly so, of making me, and I might assume almost any reader, consider that as aberrant as this situation is, it is shared culturally in America today, and even personally. Lionel whether intentionally or not draws a line from his fucked up family to your fucked up family. I feel guilty, I feel paranoid, I apologize on behalf of all humans to...I don't know to whom...to all humans.

Joshua Nomen-Mutatio says

The most interesting and emotionally challenging book I read during my bygone period of fascination with the sorts of issues that delve into the supremely dark sewers of human nature -- and serial killers certainly fit and (greatly define) the bill.

It's heartbreaking and of course covers all the obvious and familiar terrain of how gut-wrenchingly awful Dahmer's crimes were, but with an added twist (i.e. his *father* is writing it) differentiating it from the standard true crime genre narrative. This is the kind of twist which really gets ones moral examination gears spinning, and indeed spinning futilely in circles quite often. Something that really challenges the extents and limitations of empathy, sympathy, pity, and so on.

Antonio De la rosa says

I didn't know who Jeffrey Dahmer was. I only knew that this was a book by a father over his son, a serial

killer. As a father I was compelled to read this book. It was partly because of the morbid curiosity about a nightmare that feels so very far away and yet so vivid: the unstoppable process of utter damnation of your child. Partly because one always wants to find answers, even when the formulated questions are so impossible. What I take out of this book is something geometrical.... we are the space of our isolation, we are the space defined within our limits, the limits change, the isolation remains.... sometimes it grows so much that we even forget that there is something else outside. Worlds alongside other worlds, reaching without hope, clashing, breaking.

Jamie Brooks says

I can't even describe how interesting this book was. Maybe it's because secretly I am a sicko who wants to know more about the minds of serial killers and their families. Once I started reading this I could not put it down, it was just that good. You could tell how much Lionel loved his son and how heart broken he was when he found out about Jeffrey's secret life. I highly recommend this book.

Doris Jean says

I did not like the book because I did not like Lionel. There were flashes of attempted sincerity, but overall I felt he wanted me to think him a hero and was manipulating the book even to the point of confessing his own arson and his high-school bombing that had not been discovered so that I would approve of him. I do not. There were signs he should have seen but he denies them. I thought he wanted to blame the mother Joyce, who no doubt was mentally unbalanced also. Lionel seems to me to be a psychopath.

Joyce, in a later interview, was shocked at the things Lionel said about her and she said to Stone Phillips in the interview on youtube that the things in the book were false. I am also suspicious of her truthfulness. She distanced herself from Jeffrey from his beginning as a baby by not nursing him, to the end of her mothering of him at age eighteen by abandoning him to live alone in their home. She left him her car and he promptly picked up hitchhiker Steve Hicks and murdered him and cut him up. She must have seen some signs.

This book gave me no understanding of Jeffrey Dahmer, he is just evil. I believe Satan is the Father of Lies, and Jeffrey and his family seem his disciples, in my opinion.

Jeffrey seemed like Lionel, both seemed untruthful, ruthless, willful, manipulative, egotistical and just evil. These traits probably go back in ancestors and forward in descendants unless weeded out.

Both Jeffrey's mother and Lionel's mother seemed untruthful deniers. Jeffrey's grandmother lived with him in her house while he murdered at least four people and had their bodies in the house. She had a nose which smelled (death odors), eyes which saw (his doll-mannequin), ears which heard (males voices partying). She covered up for Jeff and pretended he was harmless and innocent, but finally asked him to move out. She knew!

Bad families are no excuse for personal evil. Admittedly, they are a deterrent to mental health. The lies brought out by this book are great for psychology and analyzing, but the book left me with an unpleasant feeling of disgust and slime.
