

How Did I Do That? A Life of Risk and Reward

Bill Dutcher

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How Did I Do That? is a lighthearted memoir about gaining personal wisdom by asking the right questions.

Bill Dutcher's reflective memoir *How Did I Do That?* responds with wonder to his lifetime of atypical experiences.

Dutcher grew up in northern Oklahoma in the seminal years following World War II. From the beginning, he had a penchant for adventure. In childhood, he led a neighborhood group of self-described "Little Rascals," and he grew to love sports, especially basketball. Later, he played the game against Michael Jordan, Kevin Durant, and Marques Haynes. He studied journalism and served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War, after which he started multiple businesses.

Though its prose is blunt and matter-of-fact and its style is anecdotal, making frequent use of casual non sequiturs, the book's various pieces are linked by their recurring emphasis on Dutcher's "entrepreneurial spirit." Authentic details capture the time periods in specific, cinematic fashion, while friends and family members are developed in terms of their clever sayings, some of which had long staying power in Dutcher's life. Indeed, a focus on moments with others dominates the book, which avoids taking itself too seriously throughout.

Scattered across the book are nostalgic black-and-white photographs dating from Dutcher's early childhood into contemporary times. They give added context to this story of Dutcher's life, illuminating moments that otherwise remained distant. They also help to anchor the anecdotes that they illustrate in terms of their visual details, some of which remained dormant in the book's textual recollections.

With awareness that memories are fallible and fickle, the book's tone is humble and direct. There are stories in which Dutcher is bested; he describes his younger self as a troublemaker and a clown. But his book also devotes as much attention to everyday, even mundane, moments as it does to major life events; both are discussed in terms of the emotions that arose because of them, which are captured with clarity and understanding. Thus, a childhood conversation with an uncle is addressed as having been deep and meaningful, though Dutcher no longer remembers the specifics of what that conversation was about: it was the act of having a true conversation with someone he respected that stuck with him.

The lighthearted memoir *How Did I Do That?* gathers the recollections of a normal guy from Oklahoma who gained his wisdom by asking the right questions.

QUIN SONNER (August 15, 2022)

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