



Undeterred: KKK Target, KKK Witness

Tracey Brame

CreateSpace (May 30, 2017)

\$17.99 (374pp)

978-0-692-82275-3

Undeterred is a vivid and important memoir about real evil hiding in plain sight.

A frightening narrative of conspiracy, racism, and hatred in midwestern America, Tracey Brame's *Undeterred* is a disturbing work of nonfiction drawn from the author's personal experiences.

While attending the United States Military Academy, Brame survives a rape. The event is so devastating that she is left with post-traumatic stress disorder and amnesia, leaving her ill-equipped to face an even greater terror at home in Indiana—the Ku Klux Klan.

Brame's first-person, chronological account presents a clear portrait of an inquisitive, overachieving child who becomes a friendly and unafraid adult—characteristics that eventually put her in harm's way.

The narrative follows Brame from childhood to West Point, and then from an army career into civilian life. The story is filled with details about the army, and, later, the civilian industries in which she works.

The people who populate those worlds are clearly and credibly described. They cover the spectrum, from the nurturing grandparents who raised Brame to the scheming KKK operatives plotting to destroy her. The narrative brings them to life with a convincing mix of realistic dialogue, action, and physical description.

The book also details the tactics the KKK employs to harm Brame and frighten her away in Bloomington and Indianapolis. The "organization," as the KKK's members refer to it, couldn't tolerate a successful African American woman operating in its territory.

Throughout, the writing is personal and conversational. With the intimacy of firsthand experience, Brame relates being showered with abuse at doctors' offices, being drugged, having her home and computer bugged, and receiving death threats.

As these grim episodes unfold, Brame's PTSD blocks her awareness of danger and her dissociative amnesia makes it hard for her to recall the threats themselves or who made them. To the author, the KKK operatives appear to be speaking nonsense or just having bad days; this unexpected reaction to their intimidation efforts frustrates them.

Brame does spell out how this odd situation is possible. She explains that PTSD closes the sufferer's mind to danger. Such explanation is crucial since Brame constantly shows herself oblivious to situations that would make most people flee screaming. The book does not address how Brame overcame her amnesia to write about her experience in such detail.

Undeterred is a vivid and important memoir about real evil hiding in plain sight. The memoir also works as a cautionary tale, suggesting that the dangers of hatred and racism fester when and where they are least suspected.

GARY HENRY (June 6, 2017)

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