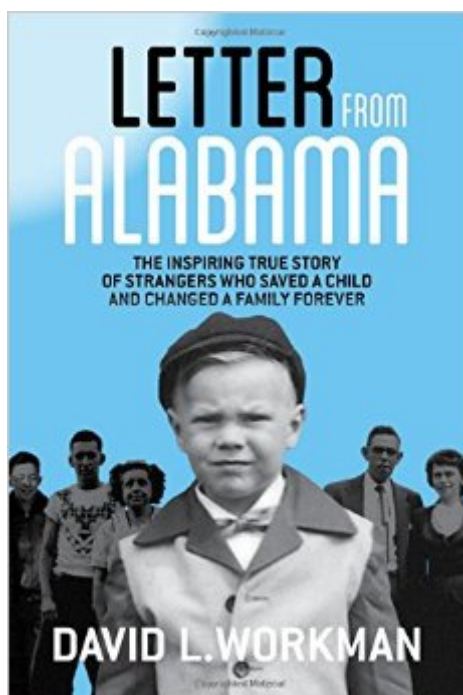


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# Letter From Alabama: The Inspiring True Story Of Strangers Who Saved A Child And Changed A Family Forever



## Synopsis

David's life could turn out very, very badly. His mother dies suddenly when he is an infant. Then at age two, he is gone. Vanished, with his father, and abandoned in a far-away place. His future hangs on a Letter from Alabama, a piece of paper that must travel hundreds of miles in an envelope. Then it must land in exactly the right place in a busy office where nobody is under any obligation to read it or pay any attention to it. This is the true story of that letter, and all that will transpire because of it. It's the story of human failure, and human triumph. Forgiveness and redemption. It is a testament to, and a prayer of thanks for, good and decent people everywhere who stand up for a child when they don't have to when they have nothing to gain and perhaps much to lose. It's a tribute to those who see the potential in a young person and give that person a chance to be the best that he or she can be. They are the heroes for whom this story is now committed to writing.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Letter from Alabama" is a well-written and compelling memoir written in the third person by David Workman, whose story is fascinating, at times sad, even tragic, at other times happy, but ultimately redemptive. Born in 1950 in Ohio to a woman whose first husband left her for another woman and who is now remarried, David's mother dies a year later within 24 hours of giving birth to his younger sister, Cynthia. His father, George, who has trouble keeping a job and battles alcoholism, disappears with him, eventually leaving him with a woman in Alabama. After caring for little David for six months, this woman writes a letter to the Dayton, Ohio paper on the hope that it will get published and that someone who knows David will see it. Almost miraculously, this happens. The

remainder of the story is of how David's family, particularly his older half-brothers, step in and rear him, and how, through having a caring family, he is able to succeed in life. Workman's memoir is not just well-written but well-researched as well. As a result, we are given information not just about his progenitors who came from Alsace-Lorraine and settled in middle Ohio, but also about what life was like in mid-twentieth century America. I received an electronic copy of this book from the author in exchange for writing an honest review, which I am happy to provide. This book is definitely worth reading. I became hooked in a few minutes and could barely put it down until I had finished it.

David Workman's memoir provides an inspiring, often bittersweet portrait of a boy growing into a manhood shaped and guided by loving, nurturing family. His mother dead, his father disappeared, the toddler is taken in, cared for, and eventually joins a unique, loving family. The book follows Workman from those early years through a life of personal and professional triumphs as a son, brother, husband, father, journalist, editor, writer. Full disclosure: I was lucky enough to know Workman in high school, to benefit from his knowledge working with him on our school paper, and I take pride in thinking of him as a friend. However, that personal connection aside, this is a fine, well written book that blends his personal story with the greater events of American life in the second half of the 20th Century. Workman's celebration of family deserves to be read. R. Headley.

I found the style a little strange. David is a retired newspaper writer and editor from the days when that was still a craft to be proud of and it shows very much in his writing. The thing is that he is writing about his own life and family in a semi-dispassionate third person voice that can create a bit of a mental disconnect at times because you know he is writing about himself. Thinking back over the story though, I'm not sure there was any other way he could have told the story he wanted to tell. The book is sort of a combination auto-biography, family history, and homage to the people important to him in his life. I find family histories and connections fascinating, and David's life certainly had some extraordinary occurrences that made it a story worth telling. The thing is, although it was told, for the most part, in a newsman's factual style, I often found myself tearing up over bits of the story. This isn't a long story, but I found it well worth the time I spent reading it and suspect I will think on aspects of it for some time.

I got my heart broken by David Workman. Seriously. This heart-wrenching memoir is a dangerous weapon! Set in the 1950s, Letter from Alabama tells the story of a letter sent by a woman to a newspaper in Dayton with a weighty mission – “to return a boy to his family. Without any

guarantees, she hopes that someone will recognize the boy from her description and get back to her about it. And so David's adventure begins. This skillfully written biography covers a lot of subjects, including history, parenting, adoption, and most importantly, the heroism of ordinary people. It tells the story of unconditional love, care, and forgiveness, and of those who aren't afraid to take a chance for somebody else's sake. Every page filled me with thrill, and the cry-baby that I am, I had to make a pause sometimes to distract myself from the avalanche of emotions that followed. But there's another reason why I called this book a weapon – it also has a great inspirational side to it, the side that reminds the reader of what's important, and that teaches a lot of life lessons. The tone of the book reminded me of some of my favorite movies: *Chocolate*, *Malena*, and *Life is Beautiful*. Though they have almost nothing in common, plot-wise, they follow the lives of ordinary people – and still result in miracles. It's a beautiful, beautiful story, and I recommend it to anyone who doesn't shy away from simple stories because they often have the most incredible meaning! I received a copy of the book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Reading a novel based on a true story could turn out either really amazingly well (*Into the Wild*) or very, very bad (well, I don't want to get into trouble so let's leave this one to your imagination). David Workman's richly detailed *Letter From Alabama* fortunately falls into the former type of novelization, and I was very thankful for that discovery. *Letter From Alabama* is a timeless piece of fiction. Telling the true story of a letter published in a small town newspaper in May 1952, Workman successfully manages to keep a neutral point of view in the often myriad of plot developments that can sometimes be difficult to endure. Tackling the overarching and weighty themes that often are depicted in many modern literary masterpieces, Workman's weaving of the power of forgiveness and unconditional love of family demonstrates his clear talent of storytelling. For a story that takes place in the 1950s the plot is strangely modern in its tone and subject matter. Topical themes such as blended families, broken families, and inspiration are not entirely out of place of the recent best sellers that are based in present-day. Workman's depiction of a small child who is coming of age is relevant, timely, and timeless. Have you ever gotten tired of reading *Catcher in the Rye*? Didn't think so. There's always something soothing about hearing and reading about stories that portray a character's maturation into adulthood. Workman cleverly demonstrates the fatalistic and randomness of life. He delves into the chances people sometimes take to help others and further them along on their journey, whatever that may be. We have all known a child like David. In *Letter From Alabama* Mr.

Workman does not shy away from articulating in impressive prosaic style that the power of the human soul will always prevail, and there will invariably be that person willing to take a risk to make someone's life just a little bit better.

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