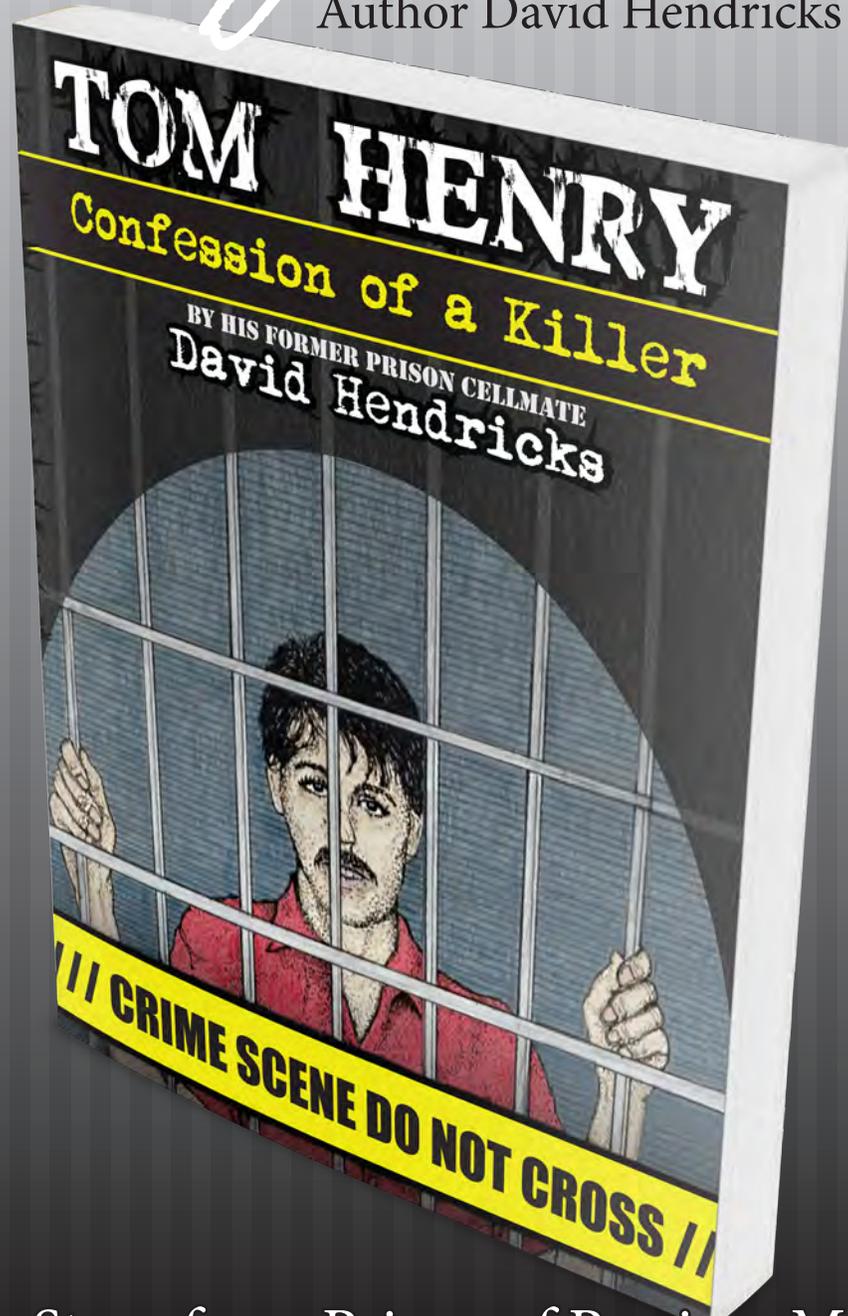


David Hendricks

Author David Hendricks



A True Crime Story from Prison of Passion, Murder, Jailbreak, Salvation, and Life on the Lam.

"It's easy to label someone like Tom Henry as a monster, to suggest that he doesn't share our humanity. This is a comfortable but dangerous fiction—comfortable because it allows us to feel superior to the madman, dangerous because it enables us to ignore the truth..."

For media inquiries, contact press@authorhendricks.com - For additional information, visit www.authorhendricks.com

TOM HENRY

Confession of a Killer

Why did I write *Tom Henry*?

When I tell people about *Tom Henry*, almost everybody asks me the same question: “Why would you write this story?”

In 1983 I was twenty-nine years old with a wife and three children, a successful businessman fulfilling my dream to design orthopedic braces, and a Christian—I’d done missionary work in Bolivia and was a Bible-reading believer down to my toes.

That life ended when I returned from a business trip to discover my wife and children viciously murdered in our home.

From the moment I showed up I was the first and only suspect. One year in hell later I found myself convicted of a quadruple murder and given a never-get-out prison sentence.

I suffered through more than seven years of incarceration before the legal system found me not guilty. During those years, a best-selling book was published about my case: *Reasonable Doubt*, by Steve Vogel.

Tom Henry was one of the first inmates I met in prison. In a place populated by violent inmates and ignorant guards, he stuck out as a guy you could count on for sound advice, a helping hand, or a light-hearted witticism just when you needed it.



Henry and Patty dressed for Prom

At a time when I struggled not to lose my faith, Tom Henry was a testimony to God’s love in a sea of moral darkness—not the kind of “witness” who drums his religion into you but one who lives his faith even in the depressing conditions of prison life.

A good man.

I found it difficult to reconcile this goodness with the fact that this particular good Christian man had murdered two people. And not just murdered—he’d struck the head of the woman he loved, the mother of his child, with his rifle, over and over again, so severely that parts of the stock broke off.

It’s easy to label someone like Tom Henry a monster, suggesting that he doesn’t share our humanity. This is a comfortable but dangerous fiction—comfortable because it allows us to feel superior, dangerous because it enables us to ignore the truth that within each of us lies the capacity for evil.

I wrote this book because I discovered in Tom Henry a man whose life demonstrates violence and gentleness, cruelty and compassion, selfishness and benevolence. The only way to reveal the complexity of the man was to tell the whole story of the man.

And I wrote this book because Tom Henry’s story is hands down the best story I’ve ever heard.

Questions about Tom Henry

Q: Does Henry feel like his being saved purges his guilt of his crimes?

A: Henry believes Jesus paid the price a righteous God exacts for sin, and by accepting Jesus, he is forgiven of all, even the most heinous, sins. But Henry is acutely aware that, in a judicial sense, he must pay for his crime. God has forgiven him; man has not.

Q: What do you think should happen to Tom Henry?

A: I think he should be released. He’s a good man who did a horrible crime. I agree he needed to go to prison for a long time. He has. By the time he next sees the Parole Board in March of 2013, he’ll have been incarcerated more than 30 years and he’ll be 65 years old. It’ll be time.

Q: Do you talk to Henry?

A: He calls me, but only occasionally, because he has limited phone privileges and two families to call. We do write—he writes more often than I do.

Q: Did you see any violent tendencies in Henry while in prison?

A: No. The stories he told me showed an aggressive, sometimes-violent personality, but I never saw that in his behavior in prison.

Q: You’re an advocate for Henry’s release. Are you going to attend Henry’s parole hearing to speak for him?

A: I wish I could but I can’t. It’s held inside the Menard Correctional Center, which I’m not allowed to enter, because I’m a former inmate.

For more Q & A, visit www.authorhendricks.com where you’ll find photos, sound clips and more!

Tom Henry - A Story Unlike Any Other

In 1983 the author, a Christian Businessman, arrived home from a sales trip to discover that his wife and three children had been brutally murdered. A year later he was convicted and sent to prison. He was innocent.

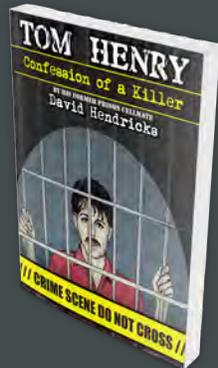
In prison he met Henry Hillenbrand, known as the card man because he sold homemade greeting cards. Henry told David an incredible story. In 1970, after murdering the woman he loved and the man he found her in bed with, he had executed a daring escape from jail by cutting through his cellblock's iron cage and the bars of a window and rappelling from the third floor with a rope he braided from a sheet.

During 13 fugitive years in Missouri, he had remarried and fathered two boys, defended himself in court, attempted suicide, converted to Christianity, and been recaptured by the FBI.

In this book, the two imprisoned convicts endure riots, shakedowns, and gang extortion attempts while the formerly godless murderer—now a believer—dictates his story to the formerly Christian family man—now a skeptic.

One is trying to get his story out; the other is trying to get himself out.

Throughout, the goodwill and humor of both men emerges. Early on, when David wants to write this book, Henry advises him:



“Be careful what you wish for, Hendricks. When I was a child, I wanted bunk beds.”

Questions about *Tom Henry: Confession of a Killer*

Q: Why would you write this book? Your own story is so compelling, why write someone else's and not your own?

A: Well, I think this one is plenty compelling too. I do hope to write my own story next. As with *Tom Henry*, I've already got the title, *Triple Jeopardy*. Now all I need is eighty thousand words and, to quote the immortal Alexandre Dumas, “they'd better be the right ones.”

Q: Is *Tom Henry* really a true story?

A: Yes, I can vouch that, to the best of my ability, every word of it is true. I say “to the best of my ability” because I really did take pains to verify everything I could. If a reader finds anything they feel is not factual, I urge them to go to the contact page of my website, www.authorhendricks.com, click on the “errata” button, and tell me about it, so I can make the next version even more accurate.

Q: How long have you been working on this book?

A: Probably two years in prison, one year in 1996, and the last two years, which makes five. In the process I slowly produced 1,100 pages of manuscript, then painfully pared it down to a 300-page book.

“Tom Henry is one of the best true-crime books I've seen in fifty years as an editor. It feels so authentic. The incidents and anecdotes show us how this often reckless, at times feckless, always generous-hearted guy could have committed these murders.”

-Renni Browne,
founder: The Editorial Department,
author: *Self-Editing for Fiction Writers*



Q: Did you take into account the feelings of the victims of this crime and how they would feel having their lives exposed?

A: Yes. Henry's daughter, who is called Winkie in the book, was a huge help to me in resetting my perspective on the tragedy Henry caused. She read Streator portions of an early manuscript and gave me excellent, if tough, feedback. I've since edited those passages to go easier on the victims' families. Even Junior, a gambler, drinker, and genuine character, got the gentle treatment. Not one witness I talked to said anything good about him, yet he was the father of Patty, so I pulled my punches when it came to him.

Q: What is your motivation for writing this book?

A: Steve Vogel, the author of a book about me, told me, “I wouldn't have written *Reasonable Doubt* if it hadn't fallen into my lap.” *Tom Henry* fell into my lap. I did, however, have a motivation for writing it. I hope this book causes people who have thought of Henry only as a murderer to understand that “there's a man inside the monster,” a good man who did a bad thing.

About the Author, David Hendricks



David Hendricks, the author of *Tom Henry*, was born in Chicago in 1954 and stayed in suburban Chicago until after he graduated from Northwestern Medical School's Prosthetic-Orthotic program there. He married Susan Palmer in 1973 and they had three children. In 1983, when David was 29, an intruder entered his home and murdered his family. David was immediately suspected, quickly charged, and convicted a year later. In prison he met Henry Hillenbrand, a double murderer who told David his story while they celled together. In 1990, the Illinois Supreme Court ordered a new trial for David, based upon inadmissible evidence the jury had heard at his first trial, and after evidence of the real murderer had been revealed. David was retried and acquitted. He lived and worked for nearly 20 years after that before writing the book, *Tom Henry*.

Questions about David Hendricks

Q: You now have the ability to fund an investigation into your family's murder. Why haven't you?

A: While I was in prison, evidence about my ex-brother-in-law bringing home bloody scrubs after the murders came to light, so I sent a private investigator to question him. He said he got them from a doctor at the hospital where he worked. The doctor, it turned out, hadn't worked at that hospital until four months later. The investigator returned to the suspect, who then clammed up. At that point our investigation was stopped. Without the coercive powers of the law, we were powerless to do more. My point is you need more than money to do a crime investigation. You need the enforcement authority of the law to be able to bring pressure to bear to make suspects talk and, if they don't, to arrest them and, if you have the evidence, to try them. That kind of power cannot be bought.

Q: How did you deal with the loss of your family?

A: My wish for you is that you can't even imagine the pain. But try—think about being informed that your entire family has been murdered, then within minutes being hauled to a police interrogation room and questioned all night long. It hurts like hell, and the pain doesn't just go away. Years later, after I was released, a psychologist friend advised me to dwell on memories of my family, to embrace them, even when they caused pain. I did so and yes, many times they did cause pain, but other times they made me smile, and as time went on, the good memories overcame the bad ones.

Q: Did writing *Tom Henry* reopen any old wounds?

A: As I wrote I thought of one of my favorites writing quotes: "There's nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein." –Red Smith. In spite of the pain, however, writing this book was a cathartic experience and I think I'm better for having undertaken it.

As I recently told a friend who was commenting on my success,
"I've led a charmed life—if you don't count that one part in the middle that was pure hell."

TOM HENRY

Confession of a Killer

This book, *Tom Henry*, is a book unlike any you've read before. It is a true story, not an account suggested by a true story, not a novel based on a true story—it truly happened this way.

I, David Hendricks, really was sent to prison unjustly, where I met Tom Henry, a man who really told me the story of how he shot two people, escaped from jail, lived for 13 years as a fugitive under an assumed identity, and finally attempted to commit suicide, an act which resulted in his re-birth as a committed Christian, three years after which he was recaptured and re-incarcerated.

The story Tom Henry told me had the ring of truth, yet it was so incredible I felt compelled to travel to Illinois and Missouri, Minnesota and Florida, to talk to witnesses to confirm Tom Henry's stories. I got confirmation, all right, and with it even more stories.

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