



What Happened to Christopher: An American Family's Story of Shaken Baby Syndrome

Professor Ann-Janine Morey PhD

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A tragedy and a trial placed Ann-Janine Morey in an ideal position to write this wrenching exploration of the havoc wreaked on a family by Shaken Baby Syndrome. As an alternate juror in a 1995 murder trial in Murphysboro, Illinois, she observed a case that has become too common: that of an adult caregiver shaking to death a baby. A seasoned researcher and published scholar, in this book Morey witnesses the court proceedings firsthand, comes to know the families of the toddler intimately, and augments her observations and interviews through research into Shaken Baby Syndrome. The result is an agonizingly human tale supported by the evidence of science, sociology, and criminology.

Morey's *What Happened to Christopher* memorializes the short life of nineteen-month-old Christopher Attig (1992–1994). To reveal what Christopher meant to those closest to him, Morey conducts extensive interviews with the child's parents and grand-parents. She also interviews the officials involved in the case to set the scene from a legal and police angle. Gary Lynn Gould, who was convicted of and imprisoned for killing Christopher, did not answer Morey's requests for interviews.

Morey characterizes her investigation as a "story of quiet horror because it takes place in a way and a setting that could be any town and many families." Nonetheless, Morey's narrative skill transforms Christopher into much more than an ordinary child, senselessly slain. He is Christopher, irreplaceable and unique. And by the time she reconstructs Christopher's final days and the aftermath of his murder, Morey has depicted the principals in the case so deftly and imbued them with such humanity that we experience their torment and their hope.

Morey also provides a juror's insight into the trial. By showing what happened to Christopher Attig and by presenting the accumulated findings relative to Shaken Baby Syndrome, she seeks through education to help prevent future deaths like Christopher's.

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Mary Perez:

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