



JUDEE HOWARD

AUTHOR & SPEAKER · www.judeehoward.com
contact@judeehoward.com · 605 · 941 · 1183

Press Kit

What you need to know to sound like you've read the book
(but you really should read it!)

SUMMARY

You Can't Try a Dead Man: The Untold Story of Injustice is the story of a man wrongfully convicted and the woman (author) who came alongside him in the fight for his freedom 25 years ago. They have been married over 20 years.

In 1981, in Sioux Falls, SD, Jeff Howard was tried for the murder of his roommate. The book chronicles what can happen when things go terribly wrong in our system. It's often been said we have the best justice system in the world. But even still, it is far from perfect.

The case against Jeff Howard was built on circumstantial evidence and the State's key witness, a man called Pete. Pete came forward the day following the murder, implicating Jeff. Jeff had left town the day of the murder and Pete's story sounded plausible. The police focused almost exclusively on Jeff. In fact, later when Pete tried to back out of testifying the State's Attorney told the judge they did not have a case without Pete. Pete was persuaded to testify.

Jeff always maintained his innocence but was alone in his fight for his freedom. That is, until 1993 when he met Judee Howard. Through her involvement, others became interested in his case and began investigating. Evidence was discovered that was not known by Jeff's attorney at the time of the trial. And people have since come forward with new information.

Highlights about the case:

- Jeff was convicted of First Degree Murder in 1981 and sentenced to Life, without the possibility of parole.
- A little over two years after the trial, the key witness took his own life – but not before telling people he was the one who committed the murder.
- Jeff's last day in court was for a Writ of Habeas Hearing in 1996 but did not result in relief.
- In 2004, the Board of Pardons and Paroles unanimously recommended Jeff for a commutation of his sentence, to a number of years that would have made him eligible for parole just two months later. The Governor denied the board's recommendation 6 ½ years later on his last day in office. No reason was given.

More to the story:

Jeff was not on a good path before his imprisonment. Five years into his sentence he cleaned up and changed the path he was on. He took advantage of programs inside and began to learn how to be a better man. He turned his life over to Jesus Christ in 1993, about the time the author met him.

Soon after meeting Judee, Jeff shared his story. It didn't sound believable at first. The story he told was incredible, and she wasn't inclined to believe him. But, there was a genuine quality to Jeff that made her curious and want to check out his story, which eventually led her to finally believe him.

In the meantime, the love between them blossomed. It would be some years before they were married. But in 1998, stepping out in faith that God would take care of them, they did just that.

In 2003, a group of law students learned of the case and joined them in the fight for Jeff's freedom. They presented their findings to the parole board in 2004 and Jeff was granted a unanimous recommendation to have his sentence commuted from life-without-parole to a number of years, making him eligible for parole. In 2010, 6 ½ years later, the then Governor denied the full board's recommendation as he was leaving office, without giving a reason. He went on to run for another public office.

You Can't Try a Deadman: The Untold Story of Injustice is one of forgiveness, freedom, and endurance.

Back cover of the book:

"It is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer." *Sir William Blackstone*

As Jeff hitchhiked across the country, his mind was focused on getting clean, sober, and starting over, again. As a 27-year-old, Jeff had been in and out of trouble most of his life. He began drinking at the age of nine and using hard drugs in his late teens. He couldn't seem to leave it behind even after four stints in treatment and two in prison.

But, while planning how to get his life back on track, events unfolded that would dash his hopes and dreams to pieces. Unbeknownst to Jeff, his roommate had been murdered the morning he left town, and Jeff was deemed the likely suspect.

This sounds like the start to a good, suspenseful, fiction novel, but, tragically, you're about to read an absolutely true story. *You Can't Try a Dead Man* will challenge you to ponder your expectations for our justice system and consider whether there's more to a story than what you're hearing.

Intertwined in Jeff's story of a seemingly insurmountable challenge, this book will help you rediscover the true meaning of freedom and forgiveness.

Product Details

- Publisher: Author Academy Elite
- Release Date: July 6, 2018 – on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and various other outlets
- Language: English
- Available in Paperback, Hardback, and e-book; soon available in audiobook

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judee Howard's first book, *You Can't Try a Dead Man: The Untold Story of Injustice*, is the true story of Jeff Howard, and how she entered his story 25 years ago. Her desire is not only to share what happened to Jeff and why we should care, but also because many of us find ourselves in stories we would not have chosen for our lives, ourselves. It is a story of forgiveness and freedom that we can all relate to as we journey through life's difficulties, some of them seemingly insurmountable.

Judee Howard worked as a social worker for over 20 years in the non-profit world. She loves creating a safe place where people feel they belong and can be themselves. Besides being married to Jeff, Judee has three sons and loves devoting time to them and their families. She values authentic relationships and enjoys spending time with friends and meeting new people.

Website: www.judeehoward.com

WHY THIS STORY IS IMPORTANT

- Wrongful convictions happen. Sir William Blackstone said, “It is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer.”
- The National Registry of Exonerations reports as of June 18, 2018; there have been 2,236 exonerations and a total of 19,610 years lost to the people who were wrongfully convicted.
<http://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/about.aspx>
- On a personal note: When a person goes to prison, their memories of the outside world stops at that point in time. They hear of things, but they don’t experience them, and they miss out on a lot. The same is true for the people who knew Jeff before he went to prison. Their memories stop at knowing the troubled young man who was sentenced to prison for life many years ago. Having met many people from Jeff’s past, and hearing how sad many people are about where he ended up, it seems important to tell Jeff’s story and who he has become.
- It is important that we know wrongful convictions happen and our system does not always work how it should. When faced with a real-life face and story to this issue, hearts are moved to set things right.

Resources:

Graph depicting exonerations by year, DNA and non-DNA cases

<http://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/Exoneration-by-Year.aspx#>

Exonerations in the United States, 1989 – 2012 Report by the National Registry of Exonerations, June 2012. Gross, Samuel R., and Shaeffer, Michael.

http://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Documents/exonerations_us_1989_2012_full_report.pdf

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING – BOOK ENDORSEMENTS

"You Can't Try a Dead Man is a poignant and inspiring true story that will leave you questioning true justice. I started working on Jeff Howard's case when in law school and have now been practicing law for over 13 years. Jeff's case still inspires me to find justice for every single client who comes my way."
—Jan Olson, Attorney at Law

"Judee Howard has written a must-read primer for anyone interested in entering the criminal justice profession. *You Can't Try a Dead Man* teaches us the premise that our American justice system, although the best in the world, is not perfect. I am grateful to have been involved with Jeff's case as a law student and for many years since. My life and profession have been guided by witnessing Jeff and Judee's true story, their faith, and the love of Christ. Experience it for yourself." —Matthew L. Olson, Attorney at Law/Chief Judge of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe

"I have worked in the legal field for over 25 years and became involved in Jeff's case in 2012. I truly believe this is a case where an innocent man was convicted and sent to prison. Occasionally our court system fails. In this case, we strive to correct that failure and allow Jeff to live the rest of his life a free man. Judee Howard not only tells a compelling and true story, but she also captures the equally important personal aspect that we cannot afford to forget." —Kara Duncan, Paralegal

"Judee Howard is a friend and a woman of integrity. She loves Jesus with all her heart and lives out daily what she believes. This is her story that deserves to be told. It's a story of injustice and long suffering. It's a story of faith in the midst of dire circumstances. It's a testimony that God is good no matter what. Judee and her husband Jeff are evidence that God's love knows no boundaries. And the love between a man and a woman knows no limits. Their story will touch your heart and inspire your faith." —Linda Outka, Leadership Coach, Speaker, Trainer, Founder of Breakthrough Solutions, Inc.
Author of Pebbles in My Shoe: Three Steps to Breaking through Interpersonal Conflict

"I highly recommend this book on many levels. First, many on the outside have no idea how complex our court and corrections system can be. Judee and Jeff's story illustrates this complexity. On another level, since I have known this couple for many years, their story illustrates the redemptive power of faith in helping one to cope with broken situations. Jeff and Judee help us to see the ability of Christ to wring good out of any situation." —Rev. Dennis Thum, Dean of the Chapel at University of Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls SD; Former Chaplain/Religious Activities Coordinator at the South Dakota State Penitentiary

INTERVIEW TOPICS/QUESTIONS

In our interview, we can talk about the fact that there is increasing awareness of people who were wrongly convicted – actually innocent – and the amount of time they’ve spent in prison before being exonerated. (see resources above)

It can happen right here in South Dakota.

Sample Interview Questions

- What prompted you to write *You Can’t Try a Dead Man*?
- Tell us what the book is about, who should read it? Why?
- What do you hope to accomplish by writing this book?
- What do you think went wrong initially in Jeff’s case? (I’d rather not go into the details of what we’ve tried and what has and hasn’t worked – it is part of the story in the book)
- How did you meet Jeff Howard?
- What made you decide to marry him?
- You and Jeff have been married for more than twenty years (known each other almost twenty-five). What has sustained you and your marriage?
- Why would someone believe your story?
- Where can our audience get their copy of *You Can’t Try a Deadman*?
- Are you available for speaking?
- What are ways we can connect with you?