



Long Drive Home

Will Allison

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A riveting second novel by Will Allison, author of the acclaimed *What You Have Left*. A happily married suburban father makes a mistake that results in a teenager's death and sends his own life into a devastating tailspin. Written as a confessional letter, the book is a fascinating and moving cautionary tale that explores the moral ambiguities of personal responsibility as it chronicles a father's desperate attempt to explain himself to his daughter—even though he knows that in doing so, he risks losing her forever.

Long Drive Home Details

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Author : Will Allison

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From Reader Review Long Drive Home for online ebook

Hira says

"Long Drive Home" by Will Allison may be a relatively small book of only 224 pages, but it packs a huge punch for the reader. Undoubtedly this novel will leave a huge impact on any one who is lucky enough to pick up this book. The beauty of this novel lies in the simplicity with which the author has tackled an immensely complicated and intricate subject. The premise is clear, and the question is: What happens when a single mistake, made in an unknowing and angry moment, causes your world to implode? Glen Bauer is a loving husband, and a doting father - the kind of man who can do no wrong in his family's eyes. And yet, on one afternoon, one act of sheer frustration results in him becoming a criminal, a reckless driver and a careless father.

Slowly marinating in his own guilt, Glen walks a fine line between complete denial and constant fear of being found out. Above all else, he is constantly plagued by knowing that his daughter was in the car on that fateful day, and worse things could have happened. As he deals with the dead teenager's grieving mother, the constant questioning by the police, as well as the constant fear of being sued - Will's own family disintegrates as his marriage spirals downwards.

The book is told from Glen's perspective, in the form of flashbacks, and a letter running along the narrative, in which he confronts his own demons and comes clean to his daughter - even at the risk of forever losing her love and respect. It is a simple narrative, written in simple language, and very evenly paced. There are no major twists and turns, but the narrative fluidly moves along, with nary a dull moment. Although there were times where I, like the main character and Juwan's mother, wanted so badly to just find out where it would all end. For me, this book was an extremely tense read. A dreadful knot kept tightening in my core, as I kept reading along. There were definitely a few moments in there, when I actually put the book down, to take a few deep breaths. And when the book came to a close, I visibly sighed with relief. However, although all that may seem like I am recommending against reading this book - I feel like this is one of those books that one MUST read, in order to gain a perspective on life. To gain the valuable lesson that every action has a reaction, a consequence. "Long Drive Home" is definitely a novel I will hold close to my heart, because it is just representative of many such stories untold, and it is surely a story that I will keep in mind, "to remind me to be careful."

judy-b. judy-b. says

All you need to know about Glen Bauer you learn in the first few pages of Long Drive Home, but it takes the rest of the book to believe it. Will Allison distills Glen's life to a single day and also tracks how the choices Glen made that day reverberate through to the present. Glen is as honest with the reader as he is with himself, which is to say: not. He may fool himself, but the honest reader will see Glen's ultimate deceit.

Glen causes a fatal accident, then lies about it. His daughter was with him when the accident happened, and her forthright innocence begins to undo Glen and his deception.

What Glen cannot see in himself (never mind admit) -- besides arrogance and hubris -- is a subtle racism

fueled by a subcutaneous fear. Glen so lacks self-awareness that he doesn't know how his little admissions, e.g., "Maybe I did it because he was black" coupled with what he does not say -- "We didn't want to go because we would be the only white people there" -- expose more than he realizes is even within him.

You will withhold judgment, however; not because Glen's actions are excusable or because his character is beyond reproach, but because if you are honest with yourself, you know that that could be you on the page.

Will Allison creates wonderfully flawed characters, people I don't necessarily like but whom I love reading. He uses a subtle touch, walks the reader down the path without telling you what's a flower and what's poison ivy; he gives you enough to figure it out on your own. Plus he's a great person.

Like him on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WillAllisonA...>

Roxanne says

First, I do not know how anyone could rate this book with one star?

Allison's characters were all very believable to me and I thought the plot was very well thought out.

If you are honest with yourself, you will admit you could easily be Glen.

I felt angry and sorry for Glen. His wife Liz's line was drawn in the sand indicating just where she stood in the situation and relationship. At first I thought her reaction was a bit over the top, but then after finding out she grew up with an attorney for a father, I began to waiver. Was she really just being very smart?

Days after reading this book, I've replayed in my mind all of the times I've been aware of spouses not being honest with each other. This bothers me because I have always been honest with my spouse and I am 99.9% sure my husband is honest with me. However, I want that to be 100%.

This book reminded me of a real situation that happened a few years ago. A wife who happened to be the principal of an elementary school was going to drop off her toddler at daycare that morning because her husband had a dentist appointment. I think it was the first day of school and she had a lot on her mind. She had broken her daily routine and forgot to drop off her toddler. The child died from being in the car all day in the offensive heat. Her purpose for living these days is to make people aware of what happened to her. Her teaching words are to slow down and be in the moment. (I know this sounds very Oprahish.) She had a change in her routine and her brain overload caused her toddler to die.

A small action (or, perceived action) can have devastating consequences. Glen was in one panic, Liz in another. The young man did things he should not have done. You can take precautions, but in certain circumstances, are any of us confident in how far we will or will not go? Not me.

I did not know what to think about reading the first chapter of Allison's first book at the end of this book. Is this a new trend for authors?

I enjoyed this book and I am anxious to read his other book. Job well done!

Donna McBroom-Theriot says

Sins of the father and the innocence of a child; oh, what a tangle web we weave, when at first we do deceive. I read this book in one sitting. It was a book that I could not make myself put down. It held me spellbound. It brought back thoughts of things I have done that could have taken a very wrong turn. I guess that makes this confession time.

I live along a bayou going that runs to the gulf; one road in, and one road out. Due to a bridge closure, the traffic has been very heavy. I was on my way back from the market the other day and a truck came up behind me at a higher rate of speed, and began following very close. The driver was driving erratically and it was making me nervous. It is a two-lane highway and very few passing straight aways. You can only drive as fast or as slow as the car in front of you. It is a test for any person's patience and this day was no different. I normally show my brake lights and slow down a little to get the vehicle behind me to back off a little. It gets the other driver's attention and they realize that they are a little too close. That morning, the driver was extremely aggressive and the first opportunity he had, he roared past me, cut back in front of me nearly clipping my vehicle and slammed on his brakes. Fortunately, my instincts had kicked in as he was passing me and I backed off for my safety. When he cut back in and slammed his brakes, I was stilled forced to slam on my brakes in order to avoid hitting him. He then floored it and proceeded to pass two more cars. A simple tactic, meant to garner attention to safety, which has worked so many times in the past, pushed someone over the edge.

I was stunned. As my mind began to organize my thoughts, all of the scenarios of what could have happened began flashing through my brain. That is what this book is about; the consequences of our actions, how the most mundane or unusual happenings have an effect on our reactions to everything else for the rest of the day. It is about how rage, in its smallest form, can have catastrophic consequences on our own lives, and those who are dearest to us. This story chronicles how a sliver of anger can turn us into someone we cease to recognize.

I found myself, repeatedly, holding my breath, and having to remind myself to breathe as I was reading this book. The characters are so real. The character's reactions are so real. As I sat there with this book in my hands, I felt as though I could have been reading about my own life; I think you will too.

You can read an interview with the author on my blog at: <http://mylife-in-stories.blogspot.com...>

Cindi says

This review originally published on Utah Mom's Life Blog : <http://utahmomslife.blogspot.com/2011...>

Will Allison's second novel Long Drive Home is the story of one bad decision. One second. One reaction. And the many consequences that follow.

It could happen to any one of us and perhaps that is what makes this novel so powerful. Get behind the wheel of a car and suddenly many of us seem to forget that there are other real people driving the other cars on the road. The dangerous driver speeding and weaving in and out of traffic on the freeway without a care for the safety of others can make us angry. How do you react?

In Long Drive Home, Glen gives in to his road rage. He only means to scare the reckless driver. His one quick action will cause a deadly reaction by the teenage driver and set in motion a series of events and decisions that will drastically change Glen and his family's lives.

Will Allison writes well and has the gift of brevity, which is nice for a change. His style is simple yet brilliant and he has a deep understanding of the human mind and conscience. It is a powerful, frightening and riveting tale.

In this novel, Allison created believable and realistic characters and puts them in a situation where one man's ethics, responsibility and honesty will be tested to the limits. A person's true character and values emerge in the crisis and the natural instincts to place blame, to escape, and to hide the truth can unfortunately replace a person's integrity. A person's actions have consequences that affect others.

Honestly, it was at times a painful novel to read but it did inspire a lot of thought about how I hope I would handle a similar situation. I've been talking with my husband about the various issues brought up in the book and because of the various topics to discuss, including roles and loyalty in marriage, Long Drive Home would be an excellent choice for a book club.

For those who care, this novel is also refreshingly free of possibly offensive material such as foul language and intimate scenes.

By the way, the cover of this book uses the same picture that a recently published YA novel used. Don't be confused.

I received a free copy of the book from the publishers in return for my honest review. I received no additional compensation.

Diane Chamberlain says

I wanted to shake this guy to make him do the right thing, and he did the wrong thing at almost every turn. Yet I understood why, and that's the sign of a good storyteller. I like characters who are neither black or white but shades of gray, and Allison gives us a couple of flawed all-too-human beings in this story.

Kellie says

This was a story about a guy, Glen Bauer, who decides to teach a young teenager a lesson and ends up causing an accident that kills the kid instead. Glen decides to protect himself and his family by lying to the police. From here, you think the story is going to focus on the lie and the legal consequences. When, in fact, it does focus on the lie but the impact on Glen himself and his family is more apparent. This is why I like this author. There is always a message and it's not necessarily the obvious one. I really did not care much for the characters in this book. Glen and his wife Liz are both so flawed I couldn't pick a side or feel compassion for either one of them. Of course, you feel for the six-year old who gets caught in the middle of this tragedy. The book is short. I read it in a day. In a way, I'm glad it wasn't very long, the sadness of this story was almost too much to bear. This does not mean I didn't like this book. Quite the contrary. I read What We Have Left

earlier this year and loved it. This is a talented author. One I highly recommend.

Peter Derk says

The premise is pretty good. A guy is driving his daughter home from school, and as they head into the neighborhood they come across a maniacal driver, a guy who cuts them off, nearly bashes right into their car, and then speeds around the block. As he's coming back around at about 80 MPH, the father driving his daughter decides to jerk the wheel towards the other driver and then back the other way, an aggressive driving move to try and slow the guy down.

Well, it works, slowing him down from 80 to 0 when he jumps the curb, plows into a tree and dies.

Okay, that's the first 15 pages or so, and from there it feels like it's going nowhere.

The father feels guilt, which is understandable, but he's constantly trying to keep his daughter from telling anyone what he did, but he's not even sure she knows and he mostly worries about it instead of actually talking to her and finding anything out. Also, a detective keeps nosing around like there's something going on, but what is unclear. What is he looking for when a car going 80 in a residential area crashes into a tree and the driver, without a seatbelt, is ejected from the car? How is that not case closed?

Furthermore, what is a 7 year-old going to say about her father's driving that would incriminate him in any way? 7 year-olds don't know how to drive. They don't even know the proper ratio of peanut butter to jelly, so what could her opinion possibly be?

There was really nothing to feel for the main character, the father, before I quit reading. He made a dumb decision, and I couldn't help but feel like, "Okay, either cop to this thing or not. But just decide and move on."

Laura says

This is a YA book without a YA character, unless you count the victim. Told from the point of view of the father, the story begins innocently enough with a drive home with Glen's 6 year old daughter Sara in the back seat. Confronted by a reckless driver, Glen jerks his car in the direction of the seemingly irresponsible kid to scare him. The other car goes off the road, hits a tree, and the young driver is killed instantly. Glen's first impulse is to lie about his actions - even though Sara saw the whole thing. The reader becomes privy to the unraveling of what was a happy suburban life and gets an up close view of Glen's ensuing psychological and emotional efforts to come to grips with his guilt while trying to spare his family the unintended consequences of his culpability.

I recommend this book somewhat highly not so much for the writing or the characters, but for the opportunity to explore the ramifications of personal dishonesty. Our very first response to personal responsibility may be to protect ourselves, but the long-term result may be worse than we could imagine. That's a message not often seen in our culture.

Recommended without reservation to YA readers interested in this subject.

Tina Peterson says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book - although I'm not quite finished with it yet. Glen Bauer is a father on his way home from picking up his 6 year old Sara. During the drive one thing after another happens and what turns out to be a very bad day happens. On the way home he is involved in a traffic accident in which a teenage boy is killed. What ensues is a first person account of Glen's story, the guilt he feels, the soul searching and the decision he makes about what could of been his role in the death of this boy.

After the accident happens and Glen is being questioned you can feel his worry and "almost" panic as he is questioned by the detective. He begins by telling half truths ("Yes, I think I came to a full stop", "No I don't think there was a dog or cat in the road", "No I don't think the kid was driving erratically") and as his lies increase so does his worry that he will mess up. Then he has to worry about Sara knowing what happened, saying the wrong thing to the therapist, to the detective, at school, to her mother, on and on and on. Years pass by and the pressure, the worry and the fear increase and it begins to affect his marriage, his relationships and his work.

What stood out to me as I read this book was Glen's decision to write a letter to his daughter. In the letter he describes the true story of what happened and then leaves it in her hands regarding whether or not she would take it to the police. I can't imagine the relief and the fear of what could happen when he places it all in his daughter's hands.

One thing I've been asking myself as I was reading the book is: If I caused or think I caused an accident would I do the right thing and step forward or would I take the chance and lie about it? Knowing that everyone would know what I had done, letting my anger control my behavior, the pity - or - derision that my neighbors or friends would feel toward me and then living with the guilt for years. I don't know if I could lie about it and live with the guilt forever without any redemption.

Ultimately, I hope I would do the right thing. You?

Barbara says

This is one of those stories that reminds us that we are all interconnected, and every decision we make can have far-reaching, and sometimes tragic, consequences.

Glen, an ordinary man, drives his daughter home, flips off a cop, succumbs to a moment of road rage, and changes his life and the lives of his family and of strangers, forever. He never intended to hurt anyone, just to vent a little frustration. But after one thoughtless deed his life moves forward on a course he cannot correct. The law never finds him guilty of a crime, but over the next few years everything he holds dear, including his wife and daughter, is stripped from his life.

The story is a true page turner, it moves fast and I found myself both blaming and sympathizing with the protagonist. No one is a real villain in this story, not Glen, not his wife, not the young man who dies. Glen is not the only one who suffers for his misdeed, and when he almost gets away blameless, I felt a mixture of

relief and pain. The one true feeling is his determination that his daughter never suffer any feeling of guilt for his actions that night on the empty street.

The Long Drive Home is an emotional journey for the reader, and one that may make the reader stop and think every time he or she feels herself giving in to the temptation to act first and worry about the consequences later.

Jinky says

(3.5)

It sure was a long drive home for Glen Bauer! Too bad he wasn't carrying a four leaf clover or a rabbit's foot, poor man! What seemed to be any ol' day became a nightmare ... all because he gave into road rage.

After being accosted and emasculated by a stranger in front of his six year old daughter, Glen was understandably left hot under the collar and it spilled over to the rest of his drive home. Which eventually lead him to decide to teach another driver a lesson that consequently ended in fatality. Yikes! That sparked another human emotion, fear. He didn't want to go to jail so he had to lie, he had to omit details ... he had to cover up. And the twist was his wife's solution to the problem. How crazy was that?!

What's catchy about this book was that it gave the reader a shock/scare factor. The reader is left questioning himself ...like, "Goodness, that could happen to me but surely I wouldn't have gone that far in the hole, right?" or "Once I make a mistake I own up to it, right?". Scary indeed. Our decisions make us.

I've got mixed feeling about the brevity of the novel. The story did give insights to human emotions in its characters but it left me wanting more. I'm not sure I like the abrupt ending to *let the reader mull over the moral lesson* kind of ending. Something was amiss for me but I can't explain exactly what. Maybe I want to know what Sara ended up thinking. Perhaps there is a sequel? ;)

Overall, a small book that packs a big punch!

Jinky is Reading

Amy says

I have really mixed emotions about this book. First, it could happen to anyone and that scares me. It is a reminder that one action can have such unintended, devastating repercussions. It made me question how I would react and what I would do in situation. Haven't we all been accosted by someone that left us simmering...spilling over into our day and affecting others. Who hasn't been reactive in a driving situation??!! The topic and premise are timely and relatable....and real. Will make me think about being reactive in the car to other people. It also makes you realize just how much we have to lose in a blink of an eye.

I really did not like the mother and felt her actions were rash and filled with self-preservation, obviously not an equal and loving relationship to begin with.....yet if I had to be honest, I know people in my own family

who would do the same thing in order to save their money and protect themselves, leaving "loved" ones to flounder after an erroneous act. I am also surprised the child saw so much in the car.....my experience, most kids are riding along and not paying that close in attention. Finally, the ending was abrupt. Why was he even writing this letter???? I kept expecting to read that the daughter found it while he was no longer around. It just ended way to suddenly and without real explanation. BAM...DONE...and onto a chapter in one of the author's previous books. And the cover...well, I do see "Sicky" the tree and the young girl, but not the best choice.

Mary Chrapliwy says

This well thought out tale by Will Allison was spellbinding, nearly impossible to put down. It's a story about how the actions of two people behind the wheel, can alter the destiny of both of their families. We know at the outset that Glen is the cause of a fatal car accident ... but is he really? We all know that the driver who was killed was guilty of reckless driving ... but was he really? You ponder these questions as you read Will Allison's tale and the fact that you are pondering this, and things aren't really so cut and dried, is what shows the skill of the writer weaving this tale.

This story is told in first person point view from the point of view of Glen, our main character. Allison keeps point of view very consistent throughout and he shows real mastery of writing. During the story we are treated to multiple excerpts of a letter that Glen is writing to his daughter that she will not receive and read until she reaches age 18. These letter excerpts were so personal, so touching, so well written that I would have liked to see more of them. When the second excerpt appeared, I was taken by surprise, a pleasant surprise. The problem is, there were also a couple points in the plot that were a little unbelievable. That's why I would say it was almost perfect, but not quite.

This is not so much a thriller or police procedural as a tale about how an action can have long range consequences and about regret that can nearly cripple you. The reader goes on a journey through pain and darkness with Glen as he tries to work his way to the other side of a moral wrong toward the light. It's a very good book, definitely worth reading.

Cheryl says

Glen Bauer would consider himself a pretty good driver. He always stopped at red lights and used his turn signal. Though that all changed all day. A young man talking on the phone and driving a Jag cut in front of Glen, nearly missing hitting him and just kept driving. Glen decided to let the incident pass and take his six year old daughter, Sara home. Glen is approaching their driveway, when he spots the young driver again. This time Glen decides to teach the man a lesson. Glen steers the car towards the man. The man loses control of the car and it flips over heading towards Glen and Sara. At the last moment the car is stopped by a tree. The outcome is not good...the driver who's name is Juwan Richards is dead. The only witnesses to the accident are Glen and Sara. Glen thinks that he might have gotten away with vehicular manslaughter but Detective Rizzo will not stop until he discovers the true.

I read this book in one sitting...literally. I was glued to my chair and could not tear my attention away from this book until the very last word. This is the first book I have read by this author. After reading this book, I plan to go back and read his first novel, What Have You Left? This was definitely a character driven story.

This book was told in the first person by Glen. Throughout the book was inserts of parts of letters that Glen wrote to Sara. In the letters, he explained what he was experiencing, what drove him to his actions, and lastly, he asked for Sara's forgiveness. Sara was so smart for a six year old. She was wiser beyond her years. The ending to this book was a strong one. Mr. Allison reminded me of another author, Michael Baron. They both really know how to write a good story that makes you feel something for the characters...good or bad.
