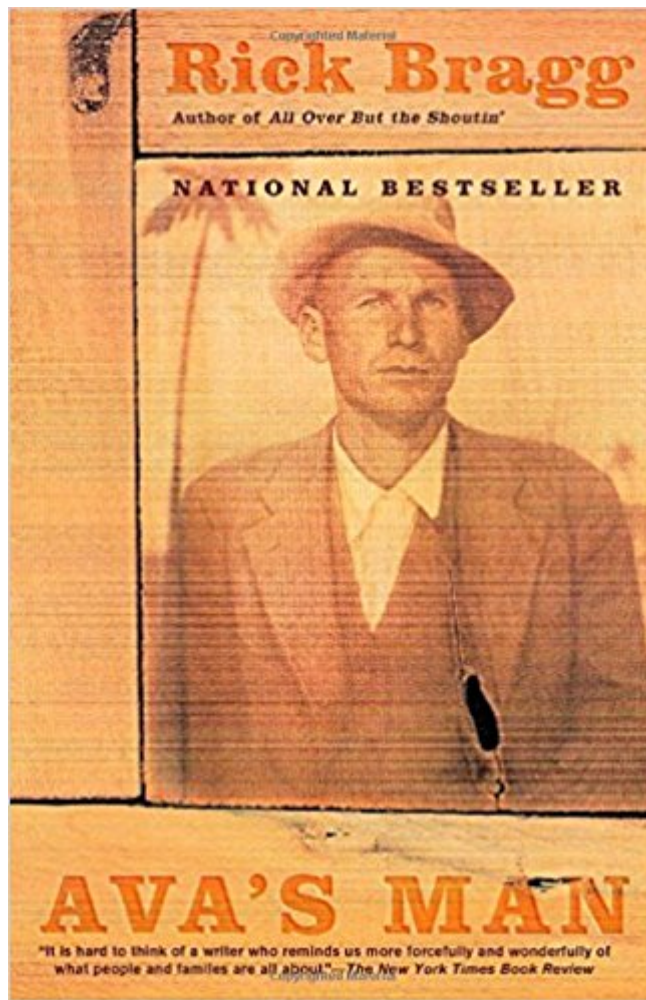


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# Ava's Man



## Synopsis

With the same emotional generosity and effortlessly compelling storytelling that made *All Over But the Shoutin'*™ a national bestseller, Rick Bragg continues his personal history of the Deep South. This time he's writing about his grandfather Charlie Bundrum, a man who died before Bragg was born but left an indelible imprint on the people who loved him. Drawing on their memories, Bragg reconstructs the life of an unlettered roofer who kept food on his family's table through the worst of the Great Depression; a moonshiner who drank exactly one pint for every gallon he sold; an unregenerate brawler, who could sit for hours with a baby in the crook of his arm. In telling Charlie's story, Bragg conjures up the backwoods hamlets of Georgia and Alabama in the years when the roads were still dirt and real men never cussed in front of ladies. A masterly family chronicle and a human portrait so vivid you can smell the cornbread and whiskey, *Ava's Man* is unforgettable.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The same fierce pride and love that animated *All Over but the Shoutin'* glow in Rick Bragg's new book. In fact, he informs us in the prologue that it was the readers of his bestselling 1997 memoir about his mother's struggle to raise three sons out of dire poverty who told him what he had to write about next. "People asked me where I believed my own momma's heart and backbone came from ... they said I short-shrifted them in the first book." Bragg sets out to make amends in this heartfelt biography of his maternal grandfather, Charlie Bundrum, who with wife Ava nurtured seven children

through hard times that never seemed to ease in rural Alabama and Georgia. "He was a tall, bone-thin man who worked with nails in his teeth and a roofing hatchet in a fist as hard as Augusta brick," writes Bragg, "who inspired backwoods legend and the kind of loyalty that still makes old men dip their heads respectfully when they say his name." Charlie's children adored him so much that 40 years after his premature death in 1958 at age 51, Bragg's elderly aunts and mother began to cry when asked about him. Chronicling Charlie's hardscrabble life in the flinty, expressive cadences of working-class Southern speech, Bragg depicts a rugged individual who would find no place in the homogenized New South. The marvelous stories collected from various relatives--Charlie facing down a truckload of mean drunks with a hammer, hatchet, and 12-gauge shotgun, or brewing illegal white whiskey in the woods ("He never sold a sip that he did not test with his own liver")--are not just snapshots of a colorful character. They're also the author's tribute to an oral culture with tenacious roots and powerful significance in the American South. --Wendy Smith

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In less capable hands, this biography could have been mawkish and mundane. Instead, Bragg's telling of his maternal grandfather's life is eloquent and touching, and his spare prose is alive with fresh metaphors and memorable sentences. Bragg never knew Charlie Bundrum, who died prematurely at age 51 in 1958; the story of this proud, flawed, loving and much-loved hero of Depression-era Appalachia is derived from family and community oral history. Interestingly, this book emerged because readers of Bragg's bestselling book about his mother, Ava (All Over but the Shoutin'), wanted to understand the force that drove her to be such a strong figure. Few actors could have read this work as well as the author has. Bragg's Appalachian accent, slightly polished by Northern living, adds authenticity to the fine, funny and painful anecdotes that made up his grandfather's life and to the feelings each story encompasses. His smooth reading enhances the rhythms and sounds of his prose, rendering with genuine sincerity his deep admiration for his people and for the vanishing culture they represent. Simultaneous release with the Knopf hardcover (Forecasts, Aug. 6). (Aug.)nCopyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I just finished this book and I found it rather good. It was written by a grandson who had never met his grandfather, but he did a good job of channeling him through interviews with other family members and people who knew him. He was a man who lived about as impoverished life as could be possible without starving to death, times were hard beyond our belief. There were no social

programs to help feed or shelter a family in the early part of the 1900's. He did make moonshine to supplement his meager support of his growing family and his efforts to evade the law were quite ingenuous. He was a good man and in spite of his short comings, he did have principles and held himself to a higher standard, sort of. I felt I knew a lot about people surviving hard times and the great depression, but this added to what I already knew, there's always more to learn. I'd recommend this as a good read.

I discovered Rick Bragg's writing with his book about Jerry Lee Lewis. This is the third book of Rick's I have read, and even got my husband into reading them and he enjoys them as much as I do. Since we grew up in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in N.C. in similar circumstances, we can relate every paragraph to someone we knew or our upbringing. Don't know which of his books to start next.

Of course, this book is great, especially if you were raised in an East Alabama textile town, as I was. I see so much that rings true for me. How I wish I knew enough to write about my grandmother, Rosa Carol Byers Shields, who was born in an ox cart and lived to see electricity, indoor plumbing, and men on the moon. Rick, you done good. Again.

I was taken back to stories told by my late husband, an Alabama boy, born and bred. He was raised in a dirt floor cabin. He taught this city girl how to make biscuits, fried green tomatoes, cook speckled butter beans. He was full of tales about the family. . . like the one about an uncle that got poisoned and died from snake venom. No, he weren't bit. He got pair of used boots from someone that did and the fang was still stuck in it. I will never be sure I believe that one.

Loved this book so much that I bought five copies for my husband's brothers. Their parents were born and raised in Gadsden Alabama during the same time frame Ava's Man takes place. We all now understand so many things about their parents....how they were raised, their environment, the rough times they had. I have read everything Rick Bragg has written, each book is better than the last!

After reading about the authors grandfather, a grandfather he never met, I feel I know him, like him, and wish I had met him in his lifetime . An intimate account of a time past, simpler times, and a bygone era.

I have read it twice. I know someone like Charlie Bundrum. I am so glad that there are people like Rick Bragg that can make you love someone just by telling the true story of their life. What a way with words!!!

An interesting bio of a salt of the earth Southern family during and after the depression. 3 generations. Good people. Some readers may not be able to relate to the goodness of the subjects.

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