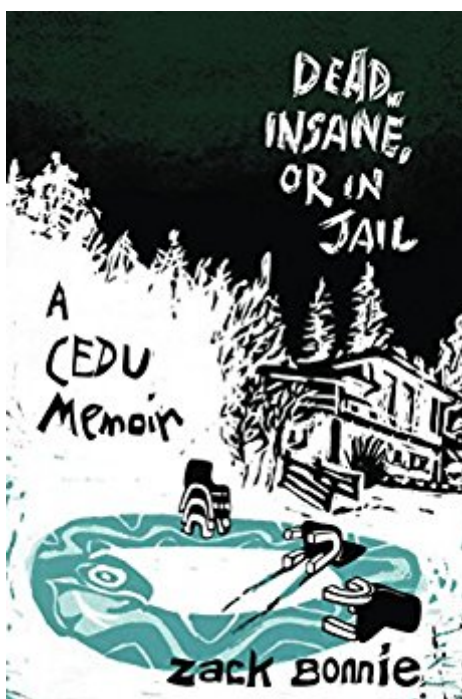


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# Dead, Insane, Or In Jail: A CEDU Memoir



## Synopsis

Zack Bonnie was fourteen when his parents sent him to a "Troubled Teen" facility. The author takes readers there, in a thrilling psychological read. Sequestered where bizarre cult-like techniques become the norm, see for yourself exactly what the controversy is about. Should we mold a child's behavior using the tools of brainwashing? With coarse, brutal dialog and authentic source materials, this nonfiction memoir, the first in a series, exposes the secrets and tells it all. *Dead, Insane, or in Jail: A CEDU Memoir* is named for the range of options open to the author at 14, if he ran away from the cult his parents inadvertently inducted him into. This is the first time he has told his story. And it's a doozy. Too many people can relate to this account, unfortunately. Although Rocky Mountain Academy has closed its doors, several hundred residential teen-treatment programs, religious reeducation camps, and places that commit spiritual assassination still operate without oversight in the United States. Imagine (or remember) being a confused teenager. Now imagine that the only solution your parents can devise is sending you away to be "fixed." Zack's touching, true account of being trapped in the "scared straight" industry just might be the book your reluctant teenage reader has been seeking. Barbara J. Danis Literacy Specialist / Coach Zack Bonnie's work is a gift to those interested in the history and dynamics of coercive residential teen-treatment programs. With gut-level insight, humor and frankness, he describes the inner experience of a precocious 14 year-old who was engulfed and overwhelmed by these bizarre, yet legal, forms of psychological abuse. Marcus Chatfield, Author, *Institutionalized Persuasion* It is sad the abuse of teenagers to tough love programs by mis-informed parents and politicians did not end with the revelations concerning the concept originator Synanon. To be stopped eventually, stories like this must keep being told. Paul Morantz, Esq. Author, *Escape: My Life Long War Against Cults* It's often hard to describe how traumatic and damaging "troubled teen" programs for young people are. This important perspective from someone who lived it offers a vivid portrait of hell that is sold as therapy. Maia Szalavitz Author, *Help At Any Cost: How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids* In the tradition of *Darkness At Noon*, Zack's history puts the reader into the life that too many "survivors" experienced, and he does this in a finely crafted page-turner. Philip Elberg, Esq. Zack Bonnie's memoir is a riveting tale of shame, intimidation, coercion, and frank abuse in the name of "treatment." The continued existence of programs like CEDU should be considered a national disgrace. Christopher Bellonci, MD Zack Bonnie's book sheds light on the larger concerns of many families, then and now. Well-meaning parents are vulnerable to programs like Rocky Mountain Academy. Although it was closed years ago, many more such facilities have been established. These schools and programs take good money from families, and

harm their children, all the while masquerading as therapy programs. I join Zack in advocating for regulation and reform so that facilities like RMA can no longer manipulate and harm entire families. Robin C Bernhard, LCSW, MEd, BCN Thank you, Zack. Your book succeeds on so many levels â “ as autobiography, as social criticism, as just a good story â “ I hope you make a million dollars. John Bodine, Rocky Mountain Academy Alumnus

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Wow. I promise you that once you start reading this you will either not want to put it down, but have to, or want to put it down but won't be able to. Intense, honest...insane. incredibly well written. You feel like you are there...again, or for the first time.

It has taken me some time to review this book as I have had mixed feelings about it. These type of places such as CEDU, Straight Inc. and so on should not even exist, for starters. There needs to be regulation and close oversight on any institution that promotes attitude adjustment, etc. Granted, back when this transpired, the internet was not up to speed so parents really did not know much

other than what they were told. On the other side of things, it is clear that the author, as a teen, was out of control. He ran away multiple times, smoked pot, did not take his medication and so forth. Consequences were a foreign concept to him, at least that is what it seemed by his writing. So, some sort of intervention was needed, but not the type that he received. At times, it is hard for me to sympathise with his plight, and at others it is painful to read what happened to him. So, it is hard for me to rate this book. But I think it is a necessary read for any parent that is considering this sort of course. There are alternatives.

As a fellow survivor of an abusive treatment program (WWASPS) I was deeply moved by this stunning work. Zach takes us back, over 28 years ago, as he describes in incredible detail his experiences in being the victim of CEDU and SUWS. For anyone remotely interested in the dark underbelly of institutional psychiatry and the horrors of the troubled teen industry, I highly recommend this book. Parents, educational consultants, fellow survivors, therapists, and regular people with consciences need to read this and understand the incredibly traumatic effects these programs have on young people.

This gave me a clearer picture of what my son experienced. Certainly the parent workshops didn't come close. I am still appalled by the fraud this program committed, as well as my gullibility. This is a must read for all CEDU parents.

The story line of this compelling memoir inspired me to write a review. The author adeptly peels away layers and layers of secret spiritual abuse often witnessed in the same manner in which cults are shaped. As disturbing and distressing as it is to read, it is a daring and courageous move by the author to expose many harmful practices still permitted to be applied, under the guise of treatment today. As a sociologist who had heard of ritualistic attack therapies, I thought I knew what I was getting into when opening this book. I am reviewing it because I was inspired by the encompassing messages embedded in Mr. Bonnie's memoir. I learned what goes on behind closed doors revealing untold human rights violations for children. I encourage all those interested in changing the trajectory of prisons for profit to read this powerful book. Institutions like CEDU must have regulatory eyes over their shoulders at all times or be shut down completely. Margaret Turner, Ph.D.

Zack Bonnie does a superb job of describing the verbal and emotional abuse that my own son experienced at Rocky Mountain Academy. This school has since been forced to close its doors, but

in the interim has done untold damage to scores of troubled youth whose parents shipped them off to a place that was supposed to be a safe haven but turned out to be a house of horrors. It is unlikely that any of their parents would fly into a rage if their son or daughter dirtied the bathroom mirror while flossing their teeth. Nor would they gather them in groups with their friends so they could verbally abuse each other until they reduced one another to tears. Nor would they entice young girls to fondle themselves in order to drive the boys crazy and then tell them not to touch each other or encourage the boys to vent their sexual frustrations with other boys. Yet all of these parents paid dearly for the privilege of having unqualified staff with their own troubled backgrounds do these very things and much worse. If parents did these things to their own children in their own homes, they would no doubt receive a visit from the local police. But RMA staff could get away with it because they were miles from the nearest town in a secluded location with no supervision. What a relief that one responsible parent finally took them to court and shut them down.

An incredible, compelling true tale of the authors own experience of a behavioural modification programme. He was sent by his parents to Rocky Mountain Academy as a young teen to curb his rebelliousness, and the harsh reality of this new life in remote Idaho is told. The highly questionable & unregulated methods used at the camps shock regularly throughout. The confusion, fear and abandonment the new recruit feels are recounted without self pity and remarkable recall and honesty. Highly recommend this book

A struggling page turner. A very courageous writer sharing an intimate account of his struggles as a precocious, intelligent, non conformist & yes, defiant/determined adolescent abandoned & betrayed to so called "therapeutic treatment facilities". I look forward to Book Two: Dead, Insane, or in Jail: Overwritten. Congratulations, Zack! Well written, gut wrenching, shameful truth of your forced exile and the experiences you survived.

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