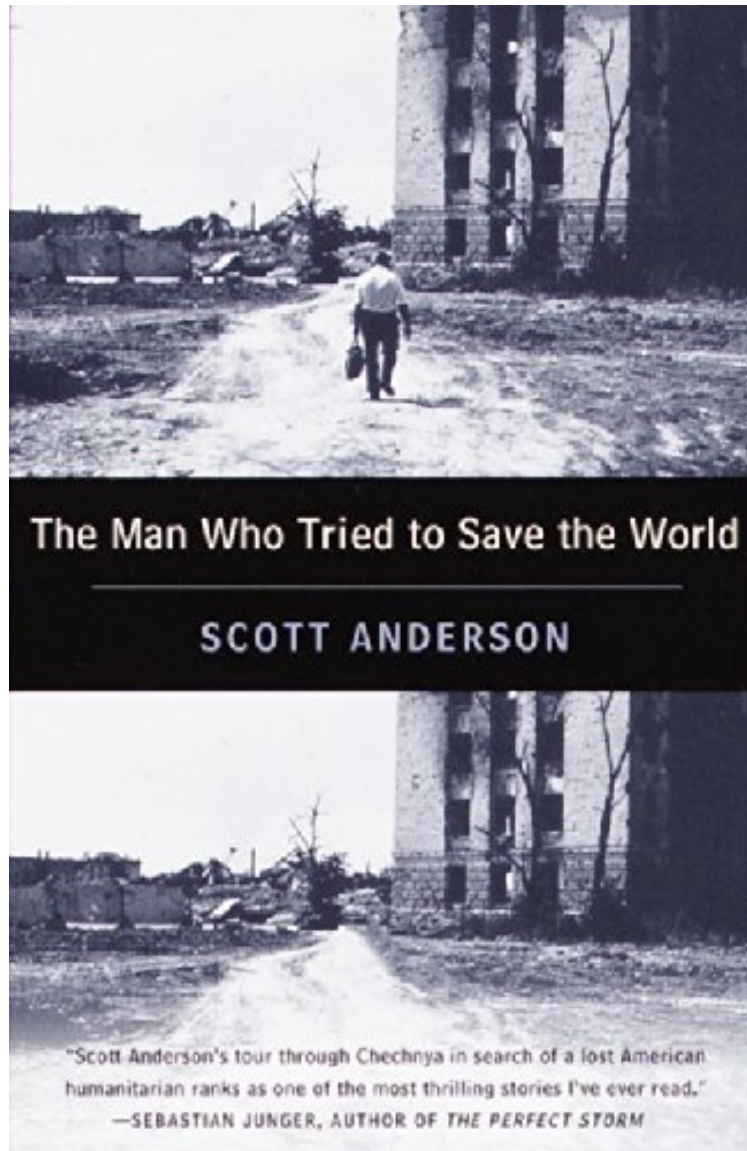


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# The Man Who Tried to Save the World: The Dangerous Life and Mysterious Disappearance of an American Hero

Scott Anderson

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**Scott Anderson : The Man Who Tried to Save the World: The Dangerous Life and Mysterious Disappearance of an American Hero** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Man Who Tried to Save the World: The Dangerous Life and Mysterious Disappearance of an American Hero:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Maintains its relevancy - a great read  
By Andy Orrock  
Anderson's book is two great tales in one: a brief history of the Chechnyan conflict; and the amazing life of Fred Cuny. Writing this review right after the conclusion of the recent Chechen-led, mass-hostage-taking in Moscow, I have come to fully appreciate the continued relevance of Scott Anderson's great piece of journalism. Chechnya was, in Fred Cuny's words, the "scariest place I've ever seen." [Read about this guy's incredible life and you'll understand the magnitude of that statement.] The book is filled with many tales of the desperation, fighting power, guile and pluck of the Chechnyan people. In short, it's no surprise to me (and certainly not to Scott Anderson, I bet) that despite Vladimir Putin's assiduous efforts, the terror has made its way to Moscow. If you think one life can't make a difference, then you don't know about Fred Cuny. What he did in Sarajevo during the Bosnian conflict will blow your mind.  
4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The Life of a True Hero  
By George Padar  
I worked with Fred Cuny during DESERT STORM in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He was enormously competent in formulating effective solutions to complex problems in a collegial manner. Fred was totally dedicated to helping people deal with stresses of humanitarian crises. He was very friendly and worked well with the military and humanitarian relief agencies. The world lost a consummate humanitarian. I miss his friendship and kindness to people in need.  
George Padar  
COL USAR(Ret)  
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A cold slap to the Western worldview  
By Justin F. Gaynor  
I read this book several years ago and remember only a few things clearly. First, I gained a real appreciation for the degree to which Western governments leave their citizens in relative peace. Second, the story of Grozny was absolutely horrifying. And third, the author has done a wonderful job of finding a story to tell, and telling it well. Kudos to Mr. Anderson for bringing this (well, the parts that are knowable) into the open.

A swashbuckling Texan, a teller of tall tales, a womanizer, and a renegade, Fred Cuny spent his life in countries rent by war, famine, and natural disasters, saving many thousands of lives through his innovative and sometimes controversial methods of relief work. Cuny earned his nickname "Master of Disaster" for his exploits in Kurdistan, Somalia, and Bosnia. But when he arrived in the rogue Russian republic of Chechnya in the spring of 1995, raring to go and eager to put his ample funds from George Soros to good use, he found himself in the midst of an unimaginably savage war of independence, unlike any he had ever before encountered. Shortly thereafter, he disappeared in the war-torn highlands, never to be seen again. Who was Cuny really working for? Was he a CIA spy? Who killed him, and why? In search of the answers, Scott Anderson traveled to Chechnya on a hazardous journey that started as a magazine assignment and ended as a personal mission. The result is a galvanizing adventure story, a chilling picture of "the new world order," and a tour de force of literary journalism.

.com Fred Cuny, a fearless and hugely ambitious Texan, was nicknamed "Master of Disaster" for his handling of relief projects worldwide. He stood out in a bureaucratic world with his unorthodox methods and obvious success. In 1995, during a visit to a mountain border town in Chechnya that was under heavy Russian bombardment, Fred Cuny disappeared. Renowned war correspondent Scott Anderson became so involved in uncovering Cuny's fate that he risked his life several times in Chechnya. He describes a larger-than-life character who could have come straight from a Le Carr novel--a flawed hero who habitually lied about his past but to whom hundreds of thousands of disaster victims owed their lives. All wars are cruel, but Anderson succeeds in convincing us that the random savagery shown by the combatants in Chechnya made its terror unique. Against the background of a ruined country, he interviews Chechen rebels and traitors, Russian generals and pathetically young conscripts, and shadowy operatives who steered Cuny toward danger. Lies and changing stories make the mystery of what happened to Cuny ever more impenetrable, yet Anderson continues his stubborn detective work. With writing that has the fluidity and psychological insight shown by the author of the novel *Triage*, Anderson brings to this book a passion not usually found in journalism and makes it literature. --John Stevenson  
From Publishers Weekly  
Not even Anderson's intrepid reporting and formidable storytelling skills can bring clarity to the case of Fred Cuny, the legendary relief worker who disappeared in Chechnya in 1995. This is the fault of circumstances rather than of the author, a veteran reporter and novelist (*Triage*). Known as the Master of Disaster, Cuny was a charismatic Texan who made a career out of bringing relief to civilians displaced by war, winning a reputation for cutting through the bureaucratic tangles of larger relief organizations and governments. Anderson seeks to shed light on two enigmas: the character of Fred Cuny, and the mystery of his disappearance. On the first score, Anderson succumbs to some facile psychologizing; on the second, he does much better, portraying the "snake pit" that was Chechnya, a place where arms smuggling, drug trafficking and graft obscured the lines of battle so completely that it was frequently impossible to determine who was fighting whom at any given moment. Cuny, who had seen his share of battle zones, called it "the scariest place I have ever been." The skill with which Anderson leads readers through a maze of lies and half truths advanced by Russian intelligence, Chechen rebels and others makes readers believe that Chechnya is impenetrable. So, by the book's end, when Anderson advances his own theory about Cuny's disappearance (that he was killed on orders of Chechen president Dzhokar Dudayev, who feared Cuny knew too much about whether or not Dudayev had leftover Soviet nuclear weapons), readers will be hard-pressed to judge whether it's more plausible than any of the conspiracy theories that

precede it. And yet, confronted with a Gordian knot of facts and a succession of unreliable sources, Anderson does an admirable job of searching for the truth in a land that truth forgot. Major ad/promo; first serial to Men's Journal; film rights to Monkey Productions (a Disney Company); author tour. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal At the time of his 1995 disappearance in Chechnya's killing fields, Fred Cuny had attained an extraordinary reputation for providing disaster relief. His efforts had saved literally thousands of refugees in Central America, Kurdistan, and Bosnia, among other places. Where Cuny's advice was ignored (Somalia), the result was greater tragedy. Freelance journalist Anderson, author of the novel Triage (LJ 9/1/98), pieces together the testimony of the many who knew Cuny from the time of his Texas boyhood through his last chaotic days with a mobile trauma unit in Chechnya. Depicting the shifting venues of Cuny's work as a private consultant and sometime employee of the State Department and the Soros Foundation, Anderson helps us distinguish Cuny's "myth" from his remarkable life. In his personal quest to penetrate the "fog of intrigue" surrounding his subject, Anderson delivers a plausible explanation of Cuny's death and reveals the unique terrorism of Russia's Chechnyan war. As a biography, this book begs questions, but as a nonfiction mystery it is gripping. Recommended for public and most academic libraries. AZachary T. Irwin, Pennsylvania State Univ., Erie Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.