

# Dear Daddy: I hate you

Letters to my  
mother's killer



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Butch Slaughter

by **Butch Slaughter**

co-author of

*Why our children hate us*

*How Black adults betray Black children*

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**Book excerpt:  
The incident  
The day you killed my mother**

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***“Children will rise against their parents  
and have them put to death...”***

Matthew 10:12

### **Author's Note**

*Thank you for taking this journey with me. Thank you for taking the time to read. When I wrote this book some years ago, I had no intention of creating a work of art. I had no interest in accolades or awards. More than anything, I wanted to be relieved of immense pain. I wanted to regurgitate, vomit undigested memories of confusion and terror. This "writing" process was a tremendous breakthrough for me; one breakthrough that has led to many others. The trauma of my childhood had truly arrested my development. In so many ways, I remained a boy living inside the body of a man. This had been a very lonely journey, a dark and cold season. Few people could comprehend my disappointment, my shame and my anguish. I needed to hate my father. It was a crucial part of my healing. Hate is how I discovered love.*

*While this narrative has a decidedly "Black" perspective, I know many men, women and children from many backgrounds will be able to relate. Please share this work with others. And for the children of domestic trauma, in particular, let them vomit the pain through their words. Let them release the rage through their writing, regurgitate the horror in words. More often than not, words are all they have. Vomit might stink, but it's necessary to let it out.*

*Butch Slaughter*

**“The incident”**  
**The day you killed my mother**

I stare straight ahead some days. I'm pulled into a trance. My body is still as my mind races wildly. I hear familiar sounds. I see familiar faces. Yesterday returns. June 25, 1978 comes back. Within seconds, I go back nearly 30 years. Back to a 12-year-old boy.

Sometimes I resist the images, sometimes I muffle the sounds. Sometimes I just let go and I sink into the past. Sometimes I step into yesterday. I see a place where we used to live: The place where you killed my mother.

I walk around that old apartment. I walk around my mind and remember. I see the square table, the green chairs. I see the kitchen and the front room. I touch the front door and peek inside my old bedroom. I'm alone in that old apartment. There is no one there but me. My mother is already dead. The police have taken you away.

The bathroom light is still on. It casts dull, yellow light where my mother last laid. The maroon rug still holds a large puddle of her blood. Right outside my bedroom door, the puddle is still there. But my mother is dead. You've killed her. She's gone. Won't return. I sit down inside the image. I sit against a wall and stare.

I still can't believe what you've done so I start a chant:

*My father killed my mother. My father killed my mother. My father killed my mother.*

I say it over and over again to myself. This way maybe it will sink in.

*My father killed my mother. My father killed my mother.*

I sit there in yesterday, staring at the blood puddle. But it doesn't sink in. I'm still not ready to believe it. So I think some more about what I heard that day. I think some more about what I saw. I try to convince myself that it was real.

I imagine the last seconds of my mother's life. I imagine her last moments approaching. She is going to die in this apartment. This is where it will end. This is her final destination as defined through your enduring will. Her last breaths as predicted for years by your enduring determination.

"I'll kill you."

You meant it from the very beginning. You meant it every time. And now you will prove it. In short moments you will manifest her destiny through your cowardly will.

I remember you outside my bedroom door. I can hear you. I can see you. You are there in the hallway. My mother is there, too. You stare at one another. You look one another in the eyes. You don't know it, but there is very little time left. You don't know it but this time is the last

time. This is the last argument. These are the last words. Her time is coming fast. Your time is not far behind.

I imagine you outside my bedroom. You are like a robot, a programmed robot. You don't have a mind. You don't have a soul. But you do have a mission. There is something you have to do. There is something you have to do.

I imagine that gun is in your hand. I imagine that Black gun stuck inside your hand. It is shiny, cold. But it won't be cold for long. Your palm is sweaty, but your fingers are firm. Your heart is beating, but your head is clear. There is something you have to do. That is why you bought the gun. That is why you have brought the gun.

This argument like most of your arguments is about pussy. This argument is about who my mother might have fucked. That's all that matters to you. Controlling her pussy. You've never taken her anywhere. Never really cared about her children. But you think she might have fucked another man. Your mind malfunctions. It works the only way it knows how. Your thoughts are incoherent.

Kissed another man.

Licked another man.

Stroked another man.

Whore.

Bitch.

Slut.

Nigga.

She's no longer human now. You've stripped her of any



value. She is nothing, no one important.

Now it will be easy to kill.

Now her life has no value.

Now she stands in front of you. She is staring at you. You stare back. You recognize her. But you don't know her. You've slept with her, but you don't know her. You've kissed her, but you've never embraced her. Killing her will be easy. Pulling the trigger will be easy.

You told her you love her. You've said it many, many times. But now you know you don't mean it. Now as she stands there in the hallway, as she stands there seconds from going away, you know how much you hate her. You have her trapped. Your imagination runs wild. You think about all the other niggas she probably fucked. All the times she turned you away. All the times she made you leave. Now she is at your mercy. There in the hallway, seconds from death, she is at your mercy.

"I leaving," she said. "I'm going to my brother's house."

"You're not leaving," you told her. "If you try to leave, I'll kill you."

I imagine you in the hallway. You are standing near the front door, blocking the front door. If she is going to leave, she will have to walk past you and your gun. If she is going to leave it will not be on her feet. This time someone will have to carry her out.

"Kill me!" she yells impatiently. "Kill me!"

You oblige.

The chamber revolves, the hammer bangs and a bullet swiftly seeks my mother's face. The first bullet quickly touches her skin, tearing through her flesh, settling inside her head. My mother staggers as the second bullet approaches and soon knocks her to the floor. The sharp hot metal sears her brain tissue and her life is released into the open air.

It is quick. It is final.

Your mission is done. This day was sixteen years in the making. Sixteen years of hard work. An eternity. Now it is done. For long seconds you stand over her, examining your work. She wasn't human. She was ugly. Nothing. A whore. She was everything you despised, everything you feared. There she is now: dead.

Bitch.

Whore.

Dead.

She doesn't move and you realize you must do something. Now everyone will know what you've been doing. Now there will be no denying the obvious. The puffy eyelids, the swollen lips, the scratches, the stitches. The beatings were just the beginning. This is your final injury. Your ultimate assault.

It will do no good for her to die if you cannot get away. That will defeat the purpose. That will negate your effort. If killing her is to be worthwhile, you will have to get away, be free. Move on. Let the past be the past. So you de-

side that you are sorry. You decide to cry. You wet your face with tears and sweat. You call her name, but she doesn't answer. You call her again. She doesn't move.

You kneel at her body. Get closer. Shake her. Nothing. She is gone.

"No," you cry. "No."

But this is what you always said you would do. You've made good on your promise. Finally.

"No," you cry again. "No!"

But you know it's real. You know it's over. You know she's gone.

The room is spinning. The walls are coming closer to you.

The air is dry and cold.

You've got to do something. My mother is still not moving.

She still won't answer. You go to call the police. You

admit you shot her. I remember. I heard you tell them that you shot her. But soon your story will change. Soon you

concoct another reality. Soon you will talk about a

struggle for the gun. A struggle you won. A struggle she

lost. Like self-defense. You won't talk about the other

times. You won't talk about the other times you beat her.

The other times you stabbed her. The past is the past.

You'll leave that shit alone. That way you can get away.

I hear you come in my room. I close my eyes. My body freezes.  
You pull the cover from my head.

"Get up, Butch," you cry. " Butch, get up."

Slowly I rise and face you. The act is all over your face.  
The tears. The sweat. You want to get away.

"Butch, look," you cry directing my eyes toward my  
mother. "Butch, I'm sorry. I had to. She was going to leave  
us. I had to."

My mother is lying there. My mother is dying there. I get  
from my bed and move toward my mother. There is a large  
hole in her head. Blood pours from her brain, across her  
forehead, through her hair and onto the carpet. I stare at  
her head trying to see where the bullets stopped, trying to  
see how deep the bullets were lodged. Maybe I can get  
them out. Maybe I can wake her.

"Momma!" I cry. "Momma!"

"I'm sorry, Butch," you repeat. "I had to."

That's what you said. Remember? You said you had to do  
it.

I knew she wasn't going to wake up. I knew she was going  
away. I knew that would be her last day.

Now someone is knocking at our door. Quickly you swing it open. It's that nigga from down the hall. The one you think she's been fucking.

He looks inside. He sees my mother and he covers his mouth. My mother is still lying there. She's not moving. She won't move again.

"See what you made me do?" you say to him. "See what you did?"

I hear sirens and soon police walk in. They see my mother dying on the floor.

"There she is," you tell them. And then you call her name. You call her once. You call her twice. She doesn't move. She has two bullets in her head. Blood pours from her head and soaks her hair and the rug. Her eyes are closed. She's not getting up.

I imagine you with handcuffs. I hear them click around your wrists.

Paramedics arrive. They lift her onto a stretcher. They have to know she won't live. Another nigga murder, they probably think. Another dead nigga. But still they go through the motions. They're just doing their jobs.

"Butch," you call to me. "Butch, don't ever stop loving me. Please don't ever stop loving me."

I promised to always love you, though I already knew loving you will be impossible. You'd just killed my mother. I wouldn't be able to love you.

The police lead you away. Your legs buckle with each step. You're trying to remember what happened. Trying to believe what happened. You think: "I did it. I did it but I didn't mean to do it. That's what I'll tell them. That's what I'll tell everybody. I didn't mean to do it. We were struggling with the gun. It was an accident."

You lied. You intended to kill my mother. You talked about it all the time. I knew she was going to die that day. You shot her in her head. You shot her right in her temple.

Before they closed my mother's coffin, I kissed her on her forehead. "I'm sorry," I told her. "I knew this was going to happen." She didn't answer. She just lied there very still. She was probably very tired by then and just wanted to go away. Soon my cousins picked her up and took her to the hearse. Someone drove her to a cemetery and she was lowered into the ground. Her mother took deep breaths as dirt was thrown on top of her daughter. Her brother and sister cried for days and days. Her aunts and uncles

drank and smoked for weeks. You killed one of their babies. I always blamed myself. I knew one day you were going to kill my mother. I blamed myself for allowing you to do it. I blamed myself. I felt like I helped you do it.

Did I ever tell you what she said to me just hours before you killed her? Did I tell you how she stared at me through tears, how she touched my hand for the last time? Remember June 25, 1978? Remember when my mother walked outside to get away from you? Remember when you sent me and my brother outside to find her? "Go ask your mother to come back in," you instructed us. "She's outside. Ask her to come back in." So we did. Me and my little brother went and found my mother. She was sitting just down the street crying.

We did what you told us to do. We asked her to come in. We asked to come back to the house where you were waiting. We asked her to come back to the place where you kept your gun. We helped you get her back in the house. We were your little accomplices.

"Don't ever go back to a place where you feel you aren't wanted," she said to me. "Don't ever go back."

Within hours she came back into that apartment. Within hours she came back to a place where she was not wanted. Within hours she was dead.

I wish I would have told her to run. I wish I would have run with her.

I knew you would kill her one day. I just didn't know which one.

I remember sitting on the witness stand. I remember testifying in court. I remember all the people in that courtroom. All those people looking at me. All those people crying.

I was 12 years old. I was a boy telling them what I heard. Telling them what I saw. I remember your lawyers screaming at me, laughing at me. They tried to confuse me. They tried to mislead me. And you just sat there. You let them say anything they wanted to say about me, about my mother. You let them say anything. You didn't try to stop them because you wanted to be free. You wanted to walk away, get away.

You already had another woman. You already had some more pussy sitting in the courtroom, visiting you in jail, waiting for you to come out.

Already the past was the past and you wanted to move on, find god and get some pussy. So you let your lawyers say anything they wanted. They laughed and you were silent. They lied and you were silent. Within four years you would be free, free to get some more pussy. Free to go looking for god. Free to forget me.



I had to lie a lot when I was a little boy. When other children found out my mother was dead, they would always ask what happened. Sometimes I would say she had cancer. Other times I would say she died in a car accident. One time I told the truth and these boys just stared at me. Their stares hurt. I could feel the stares on my face. I could feel the stares in my chest. Sometimes I stayed inside because I didn't want to play. I didn't want those boys staring at me. I didn't want them looking at me, so I just stayed inside away from everybody. People who knew what you had done would simply stare at me. Stare like they could see my tears forming, like they could see me cracking from the inside out.

After you killed my mother, everybody wanted to talk to me. The doors of my life were unlocked and people started walking in. Lawyers, priests, therapists. Everybody wanted to talk to me. They wanted to know how I felt. They wanted to know what I was thinking, if I was thinking. Some of them thought I might try to hurt myself. Some thought I would hurt other people. For the three or four years after you killed my mother, people were watching me. Writing things that I said. Reading whatever I wrote, looking for signs that I was going mad. I tried to hide. But people always found me. They were always watching me. Treating me like I had done something wrong.

## About the author

**Ulysses “Butch” Slaughter** is a native of Chicago, Ill and co-author of the book ***“Why our children hate us: How Black adults betray Black children.”*** He is a graduate of Chicago’s Quigley Seminary South, a veteran of the United States Navy and a graduate of Lincoln University’s Masters of Human Service Program.

***Butch Slaughter is available for lectures and workshops on a variety of topics including domestic violence, youth development and education.***

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*“Disturbing...yet liberating”*

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“Obligated to hate”

excerpted from

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“This is a narrative regarding alienation. These are notes concerning separation, distance and confusion. My personal experience might represent an extreme; not all Black fathers pull triggers. Still, too many fail to defend their children. Too many are the conduits through which the devil does his work. Too many Black fathers wildly praise an invisible God while enthusiastically crushing their very visible seeds. Too many join the enemy, instead of trying to beat the enemy.

Today our family members kill one another. This is the fruition of the Middle Passage. The evolution of chattel slavery. Brothers killing sisters. Fathers killing mothers.

This is difficult to write. That does not mean it should not be written. It is a struggle to travel the backward path of my memory into a place where so much pain festers unattended. That does not mean I should not go.

There is no salvation in pretense. There is no way to outlive lies.

I hate my father. He killed my mother.”

