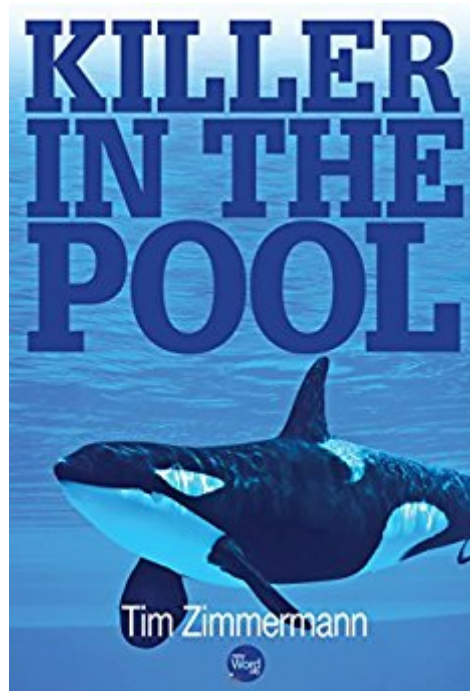




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Killer In The Pool



Synopsis

On February 24, 2010, Tilikum, the largest killer whale at SeaWorld, suddenly dragged Dawn Brancheau, his trainer, into the pool and killed her. Journalist Tim Zimmermann set out to find out why. His riveting account of Tilikum's life and the history of killer whale entertainment at marine parks dives into the world of the ocean's top predator. It chronicles Tilikum's capture and separation from his family and the physical and psychological stress he experienced in marine park pools over some thirty years. It explores Tilikum's involvement in two previous deaths. And it details the inherent risks of using captive killer whales for human entertainment. Ultimately, Zimmermann explains how the life of Tilikum came to mean the death of Dawn Brancheau.

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Customer Reviews

I read the original version of this article in "Outside" magazine. Tim has before totally involved himself in the world of the orca to bring us the truth. I had no idea about the former life that Tillikum had lived in Vancouver. How terrifying and ridiculous how they used to be kept at night. If you read the entire piece, you will have a clear concise idea of why captivity for killer whales is ridiculous,

wrong, and downright dangerous. People will continued to be killed, there is no doubt in my mind. You can't completely control the top predator in the world and not expect some push back from them. Even the captive born orcas must know something isn't right and this isn't the life they were meant to live. I live on San Juan Island where the killer whales roam free. I've been on Ken Balcomb research vessel and have grown to know the different whales out here. They each have their own personalities and their families. I've never seen aggression within the family groups as well. I hope Tim continues to investigate and bring to life the emotions and reasons why killer whales are now truly living up to their names in captivity. I must stress again that no killer whale has ever attacked or killed a human in the wild. Only stir-crazy, unhealthy, unhappy orcas kill people. This is a must read!

This is short but very informative. Once you read it you will realize that Tilikum has had enough! He was captured at the age of 2, ripped away from his mother (male orcas stay with their mothers their entire life - and in many cases die shortly after she does) and rest of his family - put in a small concrete pool, in a WAREHOUSE.....FOR A YEAR.....BY HIMSELF!!! Just picture that in your mind. After spending 2 yrs in the company of your mother, brothers, sisters - blissfully swimming in the ocean, doing what orcas do - then all of a sudden - everything you have known and loved has been taken away and there you float in a small pool, all by yourself...that alone could make you crazy. Its mind boggling that humans can do this to an animal. If your heart goes out to these magnificent animal, may I suggest you first read David Kirby's book...."Death at SeaWorld/the dark side of killer whales in captivity" and watch a sad video about the inhumane treatment of dolphins in marine parks called "Saving Flipper", also watch a video "Lolita-Slave to Entertainment" - it will touch your life and your heart hopefully enough to want to save her.

This a strong piece of journalism; however, it is also available in its entirety online from Outside magazine. If you were curious if it varies significantly from this other online piece, the answer is no. That being said, it's a gripping read, and one that I highly recommend, especially if you're interested in the background to the 2013 documentary "Blackfish."

There are actions that we humans take that cause me great embarrassed and deep shame. We place plants and creatures in climates and continents they have no business being, then are so surprised when the plants and creatures kill off the things that belong, that fail to accomplish the task they were thought they would do. We kill creatures not just for nourishment, but because they are pretty or we admire their strength or we are bored and have horrible hobbies. Or out of fear due to lack of

education. Or perhaps the biggest reason: we are failing to husband the earth and all of the wonders because of greed. This short book provides examples of most of these reasons. In my opinion, until the money and greed factors are removed we will continue to read short (maybe even long) books that offer solutions that no one will act on.

I never knew marinas could do these terrible things to killer whales and get away with it for all these years. It's sickening to know the exploitation and mistreatment are still going on. The part SeaWorld has played in this whole matter and their denial of any culpability in the many attacks and deaths (both of whales and humans) is shocking and disturbing. At the time I heard about the terrible ordeal and death of Dawn Brancheau on the news I began rethinking how I felt about wild animals/exotic animals in captivity. Through reading this, "Death at SeaWorld" by David Kirby (an excellent book) and other sources online I have found out just how appalling conditions really are for captive killer whales--and for their trainers. The horrendous "accidents" and tragic deaths will continue to happen until the public grows in knowledge and marinas stop their self-serving squirming away from the truth. Why are they exempt from true accountability? What will happen next? I fear it will be whatever makes the most money for SeaWorld and those marinas around the world holding killer whales in captivity. Many of those marinas have been provided their "star show" whales by SeaWorld). Right now is the time to get the real facts out to the public. It's time to free the whales. It's past time.

This is a short but detailed essay about Tilikum (a marine park orca involved in three human deaths), and it's well worth the read. It explains the events that lead to the deaths as well as offers details on the circumstances that influenced Tilikum's behavior. It also includes some information on wild orca behavior and their habitats to illustrate the appalling conditions Tilikum's been in for over 20 years. It's a sad but interesting story.

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