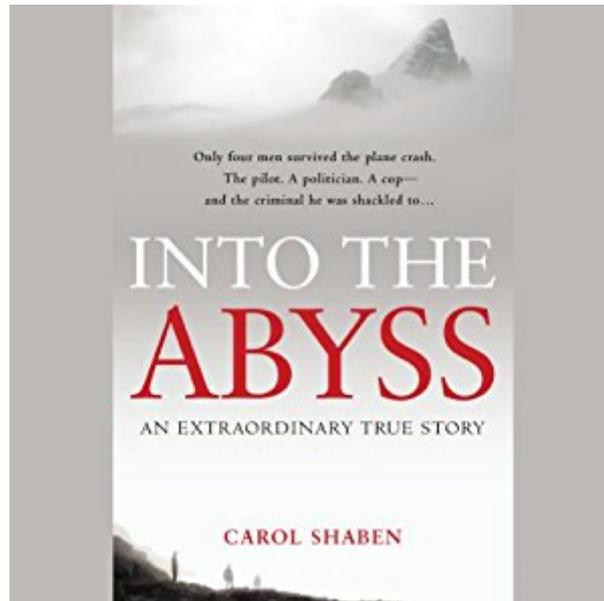


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# Into The Abyss: An Extraordinary True Story



## Synopsis

Only four men survived the plane crash. The pilot. A politician. A cop... and the criminal he was shackled to. On an icy night in October 1984, a commuter plane carrying nine passengers crashed in the remote wilderness of northern Alberta, killing six people. Four survived: the rookie pilot, a prominent politician, a cop, and the criminal he was escorting to face charges. Despite the poor weather, Erik Vogel, the 24-year-old pilot, was under intense pressure to fly. Larry Shaben, the author's father and Canada's first Muslim Cabinet Minister, was commuting home after a busy week at the Alberta Legislature. Constable Scott Deschamps was escorting Paul Archambault, a drifter wanted on an outstanding warrant. Against regulations, Archambault's handcuffs were removed - a decision that would profoundly impact the men's survival. As the men fight through the night to stay alive, the dividing lines of power, wealth, and status are erased, and each man is forced to confront the precious and limited nature of his existence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I love a good survival story and this seemed just my cup of tea. But, the promos don't really describe the book. First of all, the "blurb" on the cover is compelling BUT the cop and the criminal were not shackled together at the time of the crash. The cop had removed the handcuffs when they got on the plane. Plus, I think that shackles are actually leg and arm chains (not handcuffs), but I could be wrong. I was all set to dig into a survival story, but the four men who lived through the plane crash were rescued eleven hours later! Really? I think almost anyone could survive eleven hours...especially when they have clothing, matches so they can have a fire, and things to burn from

the plane. I can't help but compare this story to a real survival story like the one with the soccer team in the Andes where they were marooned for ten WEEKS. This book is really an indictment of the small airline industry where pilots are pressured into taking risky flights and flying when they are exhausted. The pilot of this plane was, in fact, at fault in the crash. He was relatively inexperienced, tired (though it later turns out he had more time off right before the flight than he first claimed), and concerned about the weather. The author is the daughter of one of the crash survivors. She is a skilled writer and delves deeply into the four crash survivors' lives after the crash. I was most interested in the criminal, Paul, who deals with a sudden burst of fame. This isn't a bad book...it's mostly very interesting, but just not at all what a buyer would assume from the cover and book jacket description. Not to be nit-picky, but the word "abyss" means an immeasurably deep chasm and they crashed on a mountain side.

In October 1984, a Piper Navajo Chieftain commuter flight, loaded to the gunwales with nine passengers and too much baggage plus one young and thoroughly in-over-his-head pilot, crashed onto a snowy mountain slope in northern Canada. Six of the passengers died, some slowly and in agony. Three, plus the pilot, survived and spent a bitter-cold night and part of the next day in their street clothes, without shelter, before being saved by a substantial search-and-rescue operation mounted by the RCAF, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and civilian pilots and snowmobilers. All four kept their wits about them despite having injuries ranging from banged up to severe. It was an odd quartet. One was an important Canadian politician. Another was the pilot, who knew he had screwed up badly by trying to make a solo night instrument approach to an airport that was below minimums and had an ADF beacon as its sole navaid. And the other two were a Mountie and a tough young ex-con he'd been escorting to court. The prisoner was the strongest, bravest and most resourceful of them all. Without him, some might have died. The author, Carol Shaben, had unusual access to the four. Her father was the pol, and she has used that happenstance to tell a survival story in a manner and with a style that the deservedly lauded Jon Krakauer would appreciate. As somebody who has both piloted Piper Navajo Chieftains and flown in the Canadian north country, I also find it remarkable that Shaben, a nonpilot, has gotten every aviation detail right. There are aviation experts writing and reporting for major media outlets who couldn't do half as well as Shaben does. The book in fact is about long-term survival far beyond a cold night in the bush.

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