

RECKLESS DISREGARD**

CORPORATE GREED, GOVERNMENT INDIFFERENCE, AND THE KENTUCKY SCHOOL BUS CRASH

JAMES S. KUNEN

Author of THE STRAWBERRY STATEMENT

Janey Fair kept going to the front door to look for the headlights that would signal Shannon's return... The headlights would poke a white tunnel through the darkness down which would come the warm, familiar sound of the motor, then the clunk of the car door, a faint "Night, thanks," and the aluminum storm door would rattle open and Shannon would sweep in and tell her all about the day.

Silence.

Shannon Fair was one of twenty-four children and three adults who died in history's worst drunk driving accident, the infamous Kentucky school bus crash. On May 14, 1988, Larry Mahoney drove his pickup down the wrong side of interstate 71, head-on into a school bus loaded with children returning from a church outing. The bus burst into flame, trapping the screaming, terrified passengers inside. Shannon Fair was one of twenty-four children and three adults who died in history's worst drunk driving accident, the infamous Kentucky school bus crash. On May 14, 1988, Larry Mahoney drove his pickup down the wrong side of interstate 71, head-on into a school bus loaded with children returning from a church outing. The bus burst into fame, trapping the screaming, terrified passengers inside.

Propelled by an urgent need to know exactly why Shannon died, her parents began a search for reasons. To their horror, the Fairs found evidence—and vowed to prove in court—that design of the school bus, whose chassis was built by the Ford Motor Company, was as responsible for the deaths as the drunk driver.

Readers will be shocked to learn that most school buses have polyurethane seat cushions, which burn like gasoline and emit lethal fumes; that school buses with just one emergency exit are still on the road; that thousands of school buses have fuel tanks that are vulnerable in a crash.

James S. Kunen tells the inside story of the David-versus-Goliath battle this courageous American family waged against one of the world's mightiest corporations. Part muckraking expose, part courtroom drama, *Reckless Disregard* is above all keenly observed and gracefully written account of how ordinary people, battered by the worst loss family can suffer, make their peace with God and find a way not just to carry on but to prevail.

James S. Kunen, at the age of nineteen, wrote *The Strawberry Statement*, the best-selling account of Columbia University's 1968 student strike against the Vietnam War. His reporting from Vietnam for *TRUE* magazine led to his second book, *Standard Operating Procedure*. He later became a defense attorney in the criminal courts of Washington, D.C., and recounted his experiences in "*How Can You Defend Those People?*" Kunen's articles have appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *People*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Harper's*, *Newsday*, and many other newspapers and magazines. He lives with his wife and two children in Brooklyn, New York. at the age of nineteen, wrote *The Strawberry Statement*, the best-selling account of Columbia University's 1968 student strike against the Vietnam War. His reporting from Vietnam for *TRUE* magazine led to his second book, *Standard Operating Procedure*. He later became a defense attorney in the criminal courts of Washington, D.C., and recounted his experiences in "*How Can You Defend Those People?*" Kunen's articles have appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *People*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Harper's*, *Newsday*, and many other newspapers and magazines. He lives with his wife and two children in Brooklyn, New York.

** Recommended Reading. Available in most libraries, or at www.amazon.com.