



Fakebook: A True Story. Based on Actual Lies

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On October 5th, 2009, Dave posted a note on Facebook announcing that he was quitting his job, dropping everything, and walking west. But what no one knew (save a few collaborators) was that Dave was lying and that his westward travels were all an elaborate hoax.

And so Dave's existence split in two--earning his followers' trust with postings about everyday activities before escalating the story with tales of teepeeing an Amish horse and buggy and thus being forced to work off his debt on the farm. Meanwhile, the real Dave went into hiding, sequestering himself in his parents' empty house and growing more and more lonely.

This humorous, thought-provoking memoir will spark discussions of our social media culture and its impact on our relationships and interactions.

Fakebook: A True Story. Based on Actual Lies Details

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From Reader Review Fakebook: A True Story. Based on Actual Lies for online ebook

Carolyn says

Fakebook sucked me in on the first page and held me all the way to the last. No, even before the first page, the cover sucked me in. And that intriguing subtitle: A True Story. Based on Actual Lies.

I picked it up first thing this morning and just finished it at 5:30 p.m. It's not that I didn't have anything else to do today. I'm babysitting three grandchildren this summer. I cooked breakfast, washed dishes, straightened the house, took the kids to the library, went to the beauty shop for a haircut, took the kids to Pizza Hut for lunch, and oh yes, checked my email and Facebook page several times.

Through it all, my Kindle was close at hand, the adventures and misadventures of real Dave Cicirelli and fake Dave Cicirelli claiming every spare moment. I literally could not put it down. I even read every word of the acknowledgements and lingered over "about the author". Why? Because now I feel like I really know this guy and I want to know him better. What does that mean? It means he is a damn fine writer with a good story to tell.

Fakebook is about a six month period of time when Cicirelli, as a prank, told outrageous lies about his life on Facebook. He didn't make a new account with a false name. He used his own real account account, his real name, and told one whopper of a story after another to his own circle of family and lifelong friends. He started it out of a sense of mischief, telling himself he wanted to see how much he could get people to swallow. But it quickly turned into much more than he expected.

He posted that he was doing something many of us sometimes dream of doing. He said he was quitting his job, chucking his whole life and just walking away. On foot, with only what he could carry in a knapsack on his back. With the help of Google Maps, images found online, and the expert use of Photoshop, he posted updates of his cross country trek with pictures to back him up.

While his Facebook friends followed his journey and envied him for having the guts to actually do it, he continued going into his safe desk job every day. At night he scrambled to write more "story line" and altered photos for Fake Dave.

He had to let his boss and those he worked with in on the joke and his immediate family and closest friend had to know because they were part of his real day-to-day life. Everyone agreed to keep his secret and some joined in by posting their worries and advice for Fake Dave on his wall. The whole thing snowballs, and soon Dave realizes he has a tiger by the tail. He wants to let it go, see the whole thing come to an end, but it isn't an easy thing to do.

Fakebook is more than just a fun and humorous tale of Dave's adventures. In the process of creating Fake Dave, he reveals some truths about himself, his friends, and about the nature of the social media driven world we live in today.

Bottom line: a **MUST READ** for anyone who has ever logged in to Facebook (or any other social media site).

I read an advance galley provided to me by the publisher. Publishing date is September 3, 2013.

Kristen says

Disclaimer: I was lucky enough to win an advanced copy of this book from the publisher through a Goodreads giveaway! Thank you!

Soooo I accidentally left this book at my boyfriend's family's house, and only just got it back. But reviewing this late is better than never, right?

It took me some time to become invested in this book. Dave is a hilarious writer who makes you feel like you know him, but it took me some time to get wrapped up in the plot.

I liked the premise of this book. I enjoy reading social experiment memoirs and this was no exception.

Dave's fictional 'adventure' on Facebook raises many important questions about privacy, and how we are following old friends and colleagues through social media without actually knowing them or what they're up to.

I liked the parallels between Dave's fictional life and his real life - his misadventures in dating, and in his career path.

Dave is an entertaining writer, I'd like to read more from him.

Sara says

I have only read a small bit of this book, but I already find the author irritating. He strikes me as one of those mischievous imps who think they are very clever and feel they must impress that upon everyone else. He reports his story with such a sniggering disdain for those who believed his lies that I wonder if their friendships survived the publication of this book.

I realize his was a social experiment of sorts, but I got the impression it was really just a story about him, his cleverness and how he managed to fool a lot of people. I'm not a fan of this sort of expose - it's right up (down) there with pranks and practical jokes in my opinion. Cicirelli seems like a jerk and his lies weren't even all that interesting. TP-ing an Amish house for instance?

Wouldn't it be a funny and refreshing twist if it was revealed that Cicirelli's friends only pretended to believe his lies so that he would stay gone and they wouldn't have to deal with him in person?

Michelleandderek Nakagawa says

I picked this book up because, like most people, I am addicted to Facebook and still completely in awe that I am in touch with people I haven't seen since grade school and some I don't believe I actually spoke a word to in real life.

This book delivered all it promised. A guy makes up a story about leaving his job and beginning a walk across the country and people believe him. I mean, of course they would, why would anyone lie on Facebook? And so begins a wild adventure of lies told and comments posted, some by people who are in on the prank.

I am not ashamed to say I enjoyed every page of this story. It was fun and made me laugh out loud. The thing that really got me though is that the author seemed to actually learn something about himself through this experience he created and that is all I could ever hope for in my own personal quest for adventure.

One question lingers however. Is this indeed a true story based on actual lies or just a story and not real at

all?

Maya Rock says

Dave is a friend, so I feel like I can't star this, but I will happily report that I actually read the whole book and truly enjoyed it. It was funny and thoughtful (without being a drag).

Gina says

DNF - I wasn't so much interested in Cicirelli's fake trip on facebook as I was in the reactions of other people to his "trip". He seemed both surprised and happy that people would believe him (and to be honest it does seem far fetched that anyone would) and then also annoyed that anyone would be upset or think him ridiculous. This book is more a synopsis of his year faking life on facebook than any commentary about that year - except for the occasional whining when it got hard to do or when he would tell someone and they would get angry. I made it more than halfway through before it just got tedious. I read the kindle version so not sure if just that version didn't have any of the photos or not, but some of the faked photos would have been useful as part of the story. But then again so would an editor and a little research, so photos may be asking for too much.

Katie says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The description had piqued my interest and I was delighted to receive it through Goodreads giveaway. It surpassed my expectations. I am in my 70's and thought perhaps too much of it would go over my head. Instead I was up late reading and enjoying.

The author is an excellent writer. He is thoughtful and aware of society and his place in it. I found many of his comments in the prose sections to be thought provoking and illustrative of a mature, considered approach to the Facebook phenomena.

The author also appears to be very creative in both his personal and professional life.

Holly says

DNF

I hate leaving books unfinished but I can't make myself read any more of this. self centred jerk lies and manipulates his facebook friends for laughs, with the help of some terrible Photoshop work. then he complains about how his big lie means he can't go party, while his close friends cop flack for their reactions on his wall - part of the joke.

all of this could maybe be excused if it was written in any sort of interesting manner, but every page is a drag to read and the cut and paste sections of his facebook feed make me cringe.

Julie H. says

I vaguely recall having heard something on NPR about a guy who faked a scenario in which he said he'd "quit my job in NYC, started walking, visited Amish country, ran off with a farmer's daughter who is now pregnant with our love child, kept heading West, got lured into a cult, escaped via Mexico, had to sneak back into the country, and documented it all for my friends and family on Facebook. Oh, and the whole thing was a sham." Soon thereafter, I saw the book so had to snap it up. I must admit to wanting to really dislike this guy. Who the heck does he think he is?! And then I read the book.

Cicirelli's account is fast-paced, juxtaposes his after-the-fact retelling with select "Fakebook" (as he dubbed his master prank) status updates and friends' responses, and is brutally honest with himself. He did it as a lark, his immediate family (including his parents who really should be nominated for sainthood, in my estimation) and a select group of friends who were given carte blanche to absolutely bust his chops were in on it--not that they all approved, mind you.

All told, Cicirelli's non-misadventure was an enjoyable bit of fluff. Don't try to make it into some grand social science experiment. It was a six-month prank that ended, appropriately enough, on April Fool's Day. In retrospect, of course, it proved something of a learning experience for its perpetrator:

Six months ago, when my finger first lingered over the Enter key, and just before I gave the first words of Fakebook life and allowed them to broadcast to the news feeds of an unsuspecting audience, I had no notion of the consequences of what I was about to do. I didn't think about the people I'd have to avoid or the feelings I'd hurt. I didn't consider the places I couldn't go and the events I couldn't take part in. I didn't consider the many hours a week I would be devoting to my second life, or how I'd have to be ever vigilant of exposure (p. 292).

What I most enjoyed about the book had a lot less to do with the whole Fakebook hoax than it did with Cicirelli's observations about himself, about people in general, about social institutions and, above all, about how people use both material and immaterial things to position themselves and manipulate perceptions. As just one quick example, his observation that Rutgers and Princeton are only physically separated by 16 miles provided a quick segue into a quite compelling series of observations about the strategies employed to maintain barriers between those populations. *Fakebook* included any number of these incidents (e.g., "winning" the high school reunion) and they succeeded precisely for their brevity. He didn't need to overexplain them because we'd all witnessed these or similar things in our own experiences. I suppose this is how he successfully bridged the gap between prankster asshole and something a good bit less annoying. Oh, and the fact that he showed himself being conned by the folks at LiveWired while simultaneously duping a growing network of friends and strangers with the Fakebook project was delicious--as was the line he used when he finally quit that job.

Goodreads, if you'd allow half-stars, I'd be happy to go to 3 1/2 here.

Elizabeth says

Fluff. The concept was silly; the writing, lacking.

Kelly Hager says

I go back and forth with how I feel about Dave's social experiment. Basically, he started to view Facebook almost as performance art and he began to have very real problems dealing with the fact that you only know what other people share. So, he thought, what if he were to just start making things up?

He decides to make this a six month project and come clean---as naturally you would---on April Fool's Day.

His story begins fairly plausibly ("I quit my job") but immediately takes a turn for the much harder to believe.

While I have some pretty big ethical concerns connected to lying to one's friends, it was such an entertaining story. (Side note: as part of the promotional tour for this book, Dave is doing fun with Photoshop! I was so tempted to get a picture of me and my two best friends, Tina Fey and Amy Poehler but quickly realized that way lies madness. And also, when we really do become best friends, that will be so awkward to explain.)

This story came off as a new version of Catch Me If You Can. Only Dave never (really) stole from anyone. Fake Dave? Well, that's a whole other story...

Recommended.

Kathleen says

Although there are some interesting insights as well as some laugh-out-loud moments in this memoir about a twentysomething who created an outlandishly false Facebook persona, there were so many irritating aspects that it took me a while to finish it. I kept putting it down in annoyance, even though it is entertaining enough.

There are guilty pleasures in some of the bad jokes in this book, of course, and the whole thing is basically a massive joke. At the same time, there are some serious aspects.

Dave Cicirelli ultimately comes to the point where he recognizes that some of the things that had led to distance from his friends is the fact that by the time people are in the second half of their 20s things have changed in their friendships. I know: No kidding. But, the insightful aspect is his realization that the reasons distances form is that youthful choices are beginning to have real-life consequences. That is, being an art major puts you on a different life track and gives you different options than being a doctor or an Ivy League M.B.A. Yes, that should be obvious as well -- but I think many people don't figure that out until it is "too late," so to speak.

Simon Howard says

Fakebook is an autobiographical story by Dave Cicirelli, a young man who decided to divorce his Facebook updates from reality. He falsely announced via a Facebook status update that he was quitting his job and going travelling. Most of his Facebook friends believed him, and a few close friends were co-opted into posting supportive comments and messages to increase the believability of his tale. The cover calls this an "elaborate hoax", but I find that description difficult: there's nothing particularly elaborate about writing fake Facebook status updates, or posting (badly) Photoshopped photographs.

From this exercise, Cicirelli attempts to make observations about the nature of friendship, life in the digital world, and so on. Unfortunately, his observations are such self-evident truths that they needn't be demonstrated through this sort of means. Is it necessary to write a book about fooling your friends for six months to realise that friendships change, develop and sometimes disintegrate as lives take different courses?

For me, the whole book just fell flat. For some people, no doubt, the fictional adventures of "Fake Dave" are rip-roaringly hilarious. I'm sure that there's a segment of the market somewhere that finds the idea of pretending to unravel toilet paper around a horse and cart on an Amish farm hilarious. I suspect Mr Cicirelli himself is in this market segment. I'm afraid I'm not, and so I found the ever-growing succession of such fictional idiocy a drag. I struggled to get through this book.

Other reviewers have expressed concerns about the ethics of the deception involved in this project. I'm not overly concerned by that. Nobody is under any obligation to share the truth on Facebook, and I suspect that most events reported on Facebook are fictionalised to some extent to show their author in a better light. This is nothing more than an extension of that idea.

About a third of the way into the book, there is a delicious moment, however. Mr Cicirelli goes on a date with a girl four years his junior. He explains his online exploits to her, and she gives him short shrift, essentially dismissing the project as deceptive and pointless. In response, Mr Cicirelli calls her immature. He might have done rather better to listen to her.

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

Oh, Facebook. You are both wonderful and horrible in often equal doses. Facebook is great for staying connected to people. It may be horrible to admit but there's some people that I may have not stayed in contact with if it weren't for Facebook. On the other hand, it also helps to take down some walls and social graces that we'd be better off with. Facebook is a good way to get that information out in a heartbeat but should Facebook take the place of old fashioned face to face communication? In my humble (and potentially old-fashioned) opinion, no. In Fakebook, Mr. Cicirelli has some fun at the expense of his Facebook friends and creates a huge lie about what he's doing.

He lies about quitting his job and going on a cross-country journey that gets wilder and wilder with every stop he gets. He keeps it going for almost six months. Almost instantly, his friends are absolutely riveted to his every move. It's an interesting social experiment that we probably see played out on our newsfeeds every day (albeit to a much less degree than FakeDave's Fakebook experiment). Think about it: you probably have your uber- melodramatic friend who puts everything out for anyone to see (in Facebook, there are no barriers). I have a couple of those. You have other people who put really important news on Facebook before they tell the important people in their lives about their news (I've now had two really good friends announce their engagements on Facebook before letting good friends know, which is incredibly hurtful but this is Facebook, where instant gratification is both encouraged and rewarded). Dave uses this book to show how slanted Facebook can make our reality. How much do you really know about these people that you have "friended?"

Yes, this social experiment is easy but if you really thought about Facebook before, you've probably noticed a lot of the things discussed in the book so this book really doesn't cover a lot of new ground but is entertaining nonetheless.

Fiana says

I liked the concept, not as much the execution. I thought it would be a lot about interesting ways people reacted to his "experiment", but most of the reactions were people in the know or sarcasm and such. I couldn't connect that well with his personality or life or why he made the story go the way he did exactly, and it didn't really seem like something he needed to publish for the world to see. His deeper interpretation of the whys and parallels to struggles in his real life were mostly things he tried to find later... So again, interesting idea but not many actual insights.

Some quotes I liked:

".. Facebook isn't just a website. It's an experience, and a deeply strange, deeply personal one. It involves almost everyone you know and everyone you once knew....The relationships may not have evolved in years, but with Facebook, they haven't disappeared either. It's the cold storage unit of friendships, keeping them on hold, just one compelling post away from revival." -p.40

"...a million different things are happening all at once, and it's only after the fact that we pick and choose the details that are important. We find evidence for an event once it's already occurred and convince ourselves it was obvious all along." -p.70

"Because what he was really after was a happy ending. Don't I feel that way? Doesn't everyone? But in real life, there are no endings. Life simply goes on." -p. 278

".. And your news feed is a reminder that other people's stories don't end just because we stopped sharing a stage." -p.298

Clearly I liked these parts where he started waxing philosophical about the Facebook experience and its role in our modern lives.
