



The Whip: a novel inspired by the story of Charley Parkhurst

By Karen Kondazian

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2014 Readers Favorite- Gold Medal Prize -Winner Best Western Fiction
2013 International Book Award- first place -Winner Best Western Fiction,
2013 National Indie Excellence Award -first place-Best Western fiction
2013 Global Ebook Awards first place-Winner Best Historical Fiction
2012 USA Best Book Award- first place- Winner Best Western Fiction
First Place Goodreads Contest: "Best Book to be made into a Film"
"Top 12 Best Western Books"--Goodreads Contest

The Whip is inspired by the true story of a woman, Charlotte "Charley" Parkhurst (1812-1879) who lived most of her extraordinary life as a man in the old west. As a young woman in Rhode Island, she fell in love with a runaway slave and had his child. The destruction of her family drove her west to California, dressed as a man, to track the killer.

Charley became a renowned stagecoach driver for Wells Fargo. She killed a famous outlaw, had a secret love affair, and lived with a housekeeper who, unaware of her true sex, fell in love with her. Charley was the first known woman to vote in America in 1868 (as a man). Her grave lies in Watsonville, California.

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Editorial Review

Review

It is this secret, its implications and its complications that Karen Kondazian speculates on in her fictional book "The Whip." In doing so, she humanizes a larger-than-life woman, who concealed her gender, embraced one of the most dangerous professions of the west and became the first woman to vote in the United States. If you like stories about individuals who choose to chart their own destinies this is the book for you. – **California State Library**

Kondazian has written a novel about the old West that feels authentic in almost every sweaty detail.... Her background as an actress helps her to convincingly render Charlotte's transformation....An engaging and authentic depiction of life in the California Gold Rush-era. – **Kirkus Review**

This quick-paced, wily tale is a fascinating blend of both fact and fiction that is sure to engage Western and historical fiction fans and readers. – **Library Journal review by Keddy Ann Outlaw**

"The Whip" is a beautifully written story of the Old West that moves between the exploits of Charley and the heartbreak of his/her secret. Why did she choose to live as a man? It was a hard life as a "whip" as the early drivers were known. They were held in high regard. This is a very entertaining and emotionally moving read." - **By Alan Caruba of Bookviews (National Book Critics Circle)**

(Audiobook Review) Robin Weigert is able to portray Charlotte as both a man and a woman with very slight changes in her voice. She clearly defines the interesting set of characters in Charlotte's life with changes in pitch, tone, and regional accents. In addition to Charlotte's inner struggles and gender switches, the story hints of other women in the Old West who could not be self-reliant, respected, and independent as females. This ambitious plot, well performed, is based on a true story. – **AudioFile Magazine**

Karen Kondazian has allowed her imagination to weave Charley's life into an intriguing pattern and done so in a fast-moving tale that quite possibly could be true. – **Historical Novel Society Review by John Manhold**

A gripping page-turner explores themes of self-identity, forgiveness, and survival, and captivates the reader from multiple perspectives. – **Advocate.com The Whip: Straddling Gender Roles in the Wild West Review by Nick Pachelli**

"The Whip" is a skillful blend of fact and fiction. Kondazian's fascinating portrayal of Charlotte 'Charley' Parkhurst delves into the complex character of a tough woman combating old-school tradition and unhealthy stereotypes. True-to-life description and a meticulous depiction of Parkhurst bring this gritty period to a degree of vividness rarely seen. The cinematic style utilizes all the senses; the world in which she survived unimaginable tragedy can be felt as well as seen in the mind's eye. – **Julia Ann Charpentier, Foreword Reviews, April 23, 2014**

Kondazian leaves the complexities of Charley Parkhurst's life of adventure and secrecy to the reader's imagination. There is an openness about her writing that encourages the reader to expand on these complexities, rather than diminishing them with answers. Kondazian's deft hand and sophisticated touch invites these complexities to live in the imagination.... While the setting of "The Whip" takes place over a

century ago, the questions raised about the choices we make and their consequences on our lives remain pressing and relevant today....Kondazian weaves fiction and fact together seamlessly into a poignant and profound read. – **Story Circle Book Reviews, Review by Dawn Wink**

Charley Parkhurst makes for a compelling main character. The Whip is very well researched (I loved all the historical tid-bits about piano legs, cat-hauling, and the stagecoach business itself), and Kondazian's novel unfolds cinematically; you can almost feel the sun's rays and smell the horse sweat. A truly fascinating novel of one woman's determination and grit in the heart of the Old West. – **Reader's Favorite, Review by Kayti Nika Raet**

A new novel takes one back to the legendary days of the American West based on a true story of Charley Darkey Parkhurst who died in 1880 and was celebrated as a one-eyed, tobacco-spitting, gold-rush era Wells Fargo driver, a famed California stage coach driver and outlaw killer. What wasn't known was that Charley was a woman. Karen Kondazian has transformed his/her story into a novel, *The Whip* (\$15.00, Hanson Publishing Group), a beautifully written story of the Old West that moves between the exploits of Charley and the heartbreak of his/her secret. Why did she choose to live as a man? It was a hard life as a "whip" as the early drivers were known. They were held in high regard. This is an entertaining and emotionally moving read. – **Bookviews**

The desire for vengeance knows no gender. "The Whip" is an old western novel inspired by the story of Charlotte 'Charley' Parkhurst', a woman living as man in the old west. Drawn out of her serene life in Rhode Island by the slaughter of her family, she chose to travel west and track the killer, dressing as a man and living as a man. Karen Kondazian brings forth a narrative flare to the story, making for a fun read that should prove all too difficult to put down, making "The Whip" a choice and much recommended read. — **Midwest Book Review**

You won't know what *The Whip* means until you read this fascinating book. It's a piece of the Old West, a part of America's past, told with amazing authenticity. — **Thomas Fleming, New York Times best-selling author of Conquerors of the Sky**

Like a nugget of gold pulled from the riffles is Karen Kondazian's debut novel *The Whip*. . . . It may be a book for the times. . . . We can all use a little cowboy wisdom about now and Charley Parkhurst may just be the gal to bring it. . . . *The Whip*, a thrilling and soul-searching read, raises questions about revenge and forgiveness as she takes the reader along dusty trails. Above all, this novel captures brilliantly the zeitgeist of the stagecoach era. — **Art Kusnetz, San Francisco Books and Travel Magazine**

One thing I really like about this job is that I get to discover promising new talent far outside of the world of agents, New York publishers, academics, and establishment book reviewers. Karen Kondazian's debut novel, *The Whip*, is in that category. Her well-written work, based on a true story, displays all the confidence of a seasoned novelist. I didn't detect one false note. . . . Try on *The Whip*. . . . I think you will get as caught up in it as I was. This is classic Americana. — **Fred Beauford, New World Review**

About the Author

THE WHIP is **Karen Kondazian's** debut novel. She is an award winning theatre actress and has starred in over fifty television shows and films, including the role of Kate Holliday in the TV movie, *The Shootout at the OK Corral*. Kondazian is also author of *The Actor's Encyclopedia of Casting Directors*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Danny Padilla:

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