



Innocent Confessions of a Welfare Mother

by B. Morrison

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A Look Behind the Welfare Stereotype

In her memoir, **Innocent: Confessions of a Welfare Mother**,
B. Morrison explains why we all should care about poor people.

With almost *half of all Americans* now falling below the poverty line or considered low income based on recent Census Bureau figures*, formerly middle-class families are beginning to experience the reality of poverty. According to B. Morrison the truth is quite different from the stereotype of the "welfare queen". In her memoir, **Innocent: Confessions of a Welfare Mother** (bmorrison.com), she describes her experience when a failed marriage sent her plummeting from a prosperous middle-class life onto welfare.

When Morrison's marriage dissolved, she found herself with one young child and another on the way, no job, no health insurance, and no child support. Despite a college degree and prior work experience, the pregnant 24-year-old could not land a job to cover the cost of childcare, let alone food, rent, clothing, and transportation. Disowned by her family and abandoned by her husband, she realized that welfare was the only way for her family to survive.

Poor people make an easy target for politicians who play on the natural fears of middle-class workers, Morrison says. She understands and sympathizes, but maintains that in spite of the rare case of

Praise for **Innocent: Confessions of a Welfare Mother**

Ms. Morrison eloquently refutes the notion that there is a 'typical' welfare recipient. With compassion and moxie, she pulls back the curtain and shows us a more complex picture.

~ Mark Vidor, Assistant Director
for Family Services, Department
of Human Resources,
Baltimore County Department
of Social Services

...If there is any message to take away from **Innocent: Confessions of a Welfare Mother**, it is that no one chooses to be on public assistance. While the system is a necessary safety net for families that have fallen on hard times, it is hardly the life of ease that those who would abolish it make it out to be, and hardly the life that women dealing with poverty find ideal. Morrison's determination to gain an education and work her way off welfare is an inspiration, both to those of us who know little of the system and to those who, every day, strive to follow her.

Sherry Audette Morrow
Editor, Scribble
(cribblemagazine.us)

Even more depressing is that Morrison was relatively fortunate, caught by an albeit fragile social safety net while many others were left in free fall. Her matter-of-fact tone should convince even the most unsympathetic that life really is what happens when you're making other plans.

~ Library Journal

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welfare fraud repeated ad nauseum in the news, most welfare mothers work tirelessly to get off of public assistance. Like all parents, they only want to work to feed and clothe their children, give them an education, and provide for them a life with at least a few moments of joy.

Morrison uses her experiences as a welfare recipient to illuminate a system that demonizes poor people and to explore what actually works to help families escape from poverty. *Innocent* offers a powerful personal narrative on important social issues. Part coming-of-age story and part immersion in a foreign culture, this book puts a human face on poverty. It is a must-read for anyone interested in social justice, women's issues, or the truth behind the headlines.

About the Author



A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Morrison graduated from Roland Park Country School before attending Western Maryland College (now McDaniel College) in Westminster, Maryland, and Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. A few years after graduating with a BA in English and while still living in Worcester, her marriage collapsed and she found herself forced to go on welfare. It is this experience of

a world very different from the one in which she grew up that she describes in her memoir, ***Innocent: Confessions of a Welfare Mother***.

After four years on welfare, Morrison returned to Baltimore to help her elderly parents and complete her teaching certification. She taught English in the Baltimore City public schools and adult education for Bell Atlantic (now Verizon). For the last 25 years, she has been working as a systems engineer, specializing in communications networks and information security. Her grown sons are also successful professionals.

Morrison is currently working on a novel about her years on welfare. She is also the author of a poetry collection, *Here at Least*, with a second volume, *Terrarium*, scheduled for 2012. She has won multiple awards and has been published in magazines such as *The Sun*, *Sin Fronteras*, *Scribble*, and *Tiny Lights*. She conducts writing workshops and helps lead the Baltimore Poetry Discussion Group. Visit her website and blog at www.bmorrison.com.

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* http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb11-157.html

Praise for ***Innocent***

I could not put down this well-written and very readable memoir of a young woman who unexpectedly finds herself with no choice but to go on welfare. In addition to personal stories, the author presents vivid descriptions of fellow welfare mothers and what they had to go through in order to support their children. It is a very balanced and objective portrait of the welfare system and the necessity of providing a helping hand and a way to escape the welfare life and become productive, self-supporting citizens. I highly recommend it.

~ Jane Clegg, posted on amazon.com

Barbara Morrison writes with insight and compassion about her plummet into poverty and her climb back up. The memoir is a story for now.

~ Carol Brennan, author of *Headhunt*, *In the Dark*, and *Full Commission*

While the tale, especially as she rises up and succeeds, has a modern fairy tale quality about it, it is full strength reality.

A. Feiring, posted on amazon.com

(This) book is a wonderful and moving testimony to the strength and power of women as individuals and as sisters, to change themselves and their worlds.

~ Marita Golden, author of *After, Migrations of the Heart: An Autobiography* and *Saving Our Sons: Raising Black Children in a Turbulent World*

...a resounding salvo for welfare recipients whose struggles in and out of welfare dependency are overshadowed by the weight of stereotypes.

~ Girija Sankar, bookreviews.com

To request a review copy of ***Innocent: Confessions of a Welfare Mother***, to arrange an interview with B.

Morrison, to receive cover art, or for any additional information, please contact

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