



Bill W. and Mr. Wilson: The Legend and Life of A.A.'s Cofounder

Matthew J. Raphael

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William Griffith Wilson, recently cited by Time magazine as one of the hundred most influential individuals of the twentieth century, is better known to many as Bill W., cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous. In *Bill W. and Mr. Wilson*, Matthew J. Raphael, himself a member of A.A. (and writing here under a pseudonym, in accord with AA's tradition of anonymity), presents a revealing new look at both the legendary Bill W. and the private Mr. Wilson, who tried to live apart from his own celebrity.

In quest of a more historically accurate and complete account, Raphael separates fact from fiction in the standard biographies of Wilson and finds reason to doubt the literal truth of some foundational AA stories. He also provides a context for Wilson's (and thus AA's) key ideas in the work of William James, Carl Jung, and other modern thinkers. What emerges is an unvarnished portrait of a charismatic man and social visionary, whose true greatness is all the more apparent in view of his human imperfections.

Readers already familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous will find much to engage them. Others will discover AA and its cofounder from an insider's perspective.

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