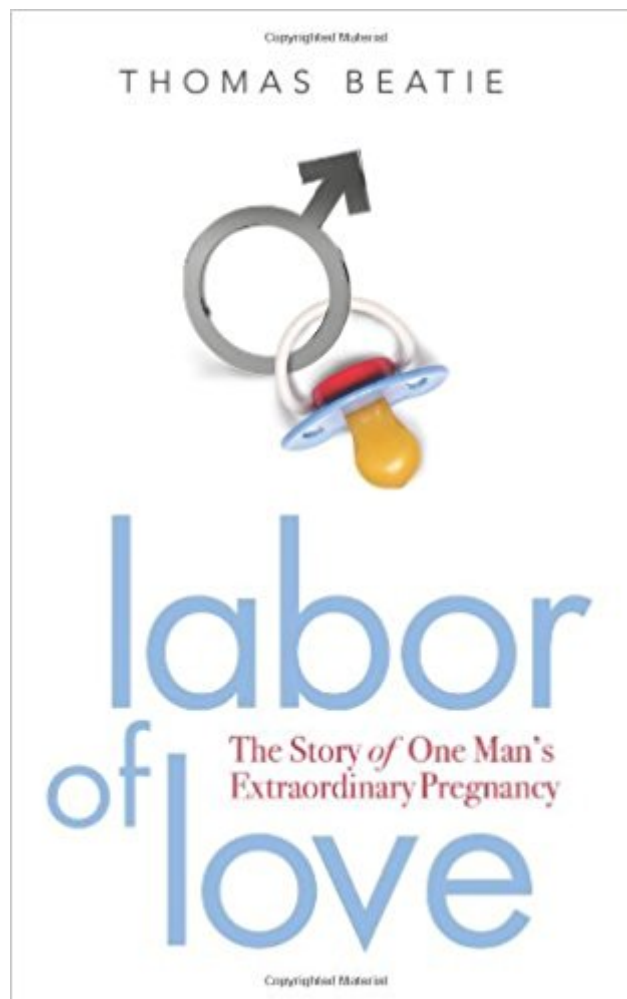




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# Labor Of Love: The Story Of One Man's Extraordinary Pregnancy



## Synopsis

Thomas Beatie electrified the world in April 2008 with his announcement that he was seven months pregnant and due to give birth in July. The news made headlines across the globe, but it's only one chapter in a fascinating saga. *Labor of Love* reveals Beatie's unique life experiences: his less-than-idyllic childhood in Hawaii, his feelings of being a young man trapped in the body of a woman, his fight to conceive a child, and the obstacles surrounding the delivery. This astonishing narrative permits an intimate look at a family that refuses to let other people's definitions of family deter them from creating one on their own terms. *Labor of Love* is much more than the story of a unique pregnancy and birth; it's a beautiful and controversial love story about going against the tide, a powerful statement about the evolution of family and identity in the new millennium.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Best known as the world's first pregnant man, transgendered father and husband Beatie recounts, in touching detail, his difficult path to the 2007-08 pregnancy that briefly captured the world's attention. Born a girl in Hawaii to a violent, unpredictable father and a caring mother (who committed suicide while Beatie was a teen), Beatie learned to understand the nature of his identity against a backdrop dominated by fear and instability. Beatie is a detailed and engaging writer, relating his upbringing, his romance (with wife Nancy) and the process of transitioning from female to male with humility, honesty and plenty of opinion, and little to court sensation or controversy. For better and worse, the memoir reads predictably until Beatie and Nancy, 200 pages in, begin their struggles to

get pregnant with daughter Susan. Once Beatie finds his focus in the obstacles he and his wife faced and overcame, his account becomes a compelling, unique narrative. Beatie's straightforward, apolitical style and compelling, elemental story-one man's struggle, against all odds, to create a family-will make it easy for most readers to identify. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Hawaii-born Thomas Beatie and his wife, Nancy, "are just like any other married couple, except that he is the first legally defined male to become pregnant and give birth. Born female, a tomboy Tracy took testosterone to build muscle mass and chose surgical breast removal in his twenties but not the surgical construction of a penis, nor removal of the female reproductive organs needed to bear a biological child, the author's heart's desire. Hawaii requires only two conditions for legal gender change: a medical doctor's letter attesting to a legitimate psychological reason for the gender switch and irrevocable gender-altering surgery. Thus, the onetime lesbian woman could marry Nancy as her husband and carry their child since Nancy had had a hysterectomy. After an abusive childhood with a rageaholic father (who still refuses to acknowledge his granddaughter) and an ill-fated relationship with an alcoholic, Beatie sought, above all, a close, caring family and finds in his new life "the heart that I call home." An unforced, unpretentious, and very readable account, sure to draw attention. --Whitney Scott

On one level, this is the story of a loving couple and their journey through pregnancy. On another level it broaches some really important legal and medical questions about how we see ourselves, our gender, and others who are different from us. Our cultural institutions enforce some fierce dichotomies when it comes to gender and sexuality: male/female, gay/straight, married/single--but what happens to people who don't fit neatly within the lines, either physiologically or psychologically? A strong community supports the pursuit of liberty and happiness in all of its members--not just the ones who can comfortably and honestly check the "correct" boxes. This book leads us to consider the most personal of personal identity questions in a frank and reasoned way--by a humble and gracious author whose strength of spirit is an inspiration.

This book is so self-indulgent. I was hoping that it would provide an insightful look into the struggles that transmen face on the daily, but Beatie really fails to recognize his MANY privileges. He comes off as overly snobbish, and the writing is fairly terrible. It could have been an okay story with a

competent ghost-writer, but this was just painful to read.

Pretty well know this story before I read the book. Lots of television coverage when this all happened.

good condition

I just finished reading this. This is, I think, the third transgender memoir/autobiography I've read, and they were all good, but I think this is my favorite. Only the last few chapters are really about his pregnancy, though of course that's the biggest thing that stands out about this book -- the other authors didn't get pregnant. That's the superficial draw, though. This book stands out because it's really a story about love, all kinds of love, but especially parental love. The title is appropriate. This book is the story of one man's search for love. But Thomas Beatie himself is filled with love, and you can sense it on every page. For those trans folks looking for a book that won't depress them, I cannot guarantee that this is the book. The ending is both happy and sad. There's a thread through the entire book of the sadness of Thomas Beatie's relationship with his family and a cold, unaccepting world. He finds in the end that the family he grew up with is very antagonistic, but he ends by creating his own family, one where he can finally have the love he got so little of growing up. (Spoiler alert.) Though I am not trans, I could really relate to Beatie's description of growing up. He doesn't say it exactly, but I see his father as a sociopath, while he depicts his mother as the polar opposite. She commits suicide, and it's obviously caused by his father who physically and emotionally abuses her as well as Thomas. Which is pretty crazy to think, in itself: your beloved mother kills herself to escape your evil father. Imagine that. And he figures his father hated him for not being a feminine girl, though with his abusiveness, it's hard to imagine his father loving him - or anyone, even the son he strongly favors. And his father commits both his mother and him to a mental hospital merely because they're depressed - which is essentially his fault in the first place. You'd think his father should be committed to an institution - maybe prison! While I didn't have anyone so deeply hateful or intentionally cruel in my family, I can relate to this experience of abuse and severe dysfunction in the family. I find the way Beatie describes it very relatable. Like Beatie, I spent my childhood and adolescent years dreaming of how much better of a parent I would one day be than my parents. When my dad spanked me, I had fantasies of growing up and beating him up. I remember very clearly the time my dad raised his fist to threaten me with a hideous scowl on his face - horrified at how clearly he hated me in that moment. Though not as extreme, my dad also

favoring my brother over me, and my brother would use this to his advantage and cry just to get my dad to punish me. Though my dad was far from being a sociopath, I had such a very similar experience in some ways, which made me feel for the author even more. It was kind of healing for me reading this. And while my own mother was far from being the mother figure that Thomas's was to him, I found mother figures elsewhere in the women I was attracted to. I thought of some of them as angels. I was looking for that love I never got growing up. Discovering that someone I loved also loved me was such a huge moment for me. I see Thomas Beatie on a similar journey - looking to become the father figure he never had; looking for love in all the boys who came to him, including the (ex)boyfriend who raped him; looking for the love he got from his mom and lost when she died. And by the way, he mentions that he's a descendent of a U.S. president, making this a very American story. Like me, he's half-white and half-Asian American. How's that for irony?

Descendents of U.S. presidents... committing suicide, being physically abused and raped... actually, not surprising. That's the American legacy. In addition to loving, Thomas comes across as very courageous. Not in the sense that privileged people like to tell the oppressed, "you must be so brave." But I see him as a really strong person - it really takes one to choose to get pregnant as a post-transition trans man with M on his legal documents. That never occurred to me until I read this book. I had heard of his famous story, and I don't remember much except hearing that it was a hoax. There was a sense that maybe this was someone who was just trying to get attention. I think I remember once reading a website claiming the pregnant man was an artist who had created this hoax just for art or something. But it's really not like that at all - this was a brave man standing up to a lot of scrutiny from the world, as well as his cold-hearted family members. It was really the attention that came to him, not the other way around. He had virtually one but his wife to trust through this pregnancy. Even the transgender community had no love for him - they were scared of what the world would think of a pregnant trans man, scared of the negative attention it would be given by the public. And more than standing up to the media storm, Thomas describes a powerful, genuine desire to protect others from the world's cruelty. That's one of the qualities that'll make him a great father. Don't you wish you had a father like that? Funnily enough, this whole story makes me feel a bit protective of the author, and I kind of want to punch his father and put handcuffs on him. Same with the violent boyfriend. I'm currently dating a trans guy, and I've never had a lover who was so mature and intelligent and manly, who understands the cruelty of the world so well. Thomas Beatie reminds me of my boyfriend, too. I think I'm drawn to people like that - who love others so much more because of how harshly the world has treated them. They've sought for love so hard, they value it more than others do. So if you want to read a sobering love story, read this book. If you

want to read something powerfully, achingly honest, read this book. Better yet, BUY this book and support the author and his family. Thank you, Thomas Beatie, for being a trailblazer.

I just finished this book and I loved it. It was very interesting from beginning to end. He writes about his childhood, his family and on up until he has the baby. I can't believe what a bad childhood he had, but at the end, it made him who he was and now he'll be one of the best fathers out there. This book made me cry at times, and I don't usually cry that much. But knowing this is a true story, you can't help but feel for him. I saw Thomas and Nancy on Oprah and People magazine. I always supported them and couldn't understand why people had such a problem with them wanting a baby. I am very happy for them and am very proud that they didn't let society's negativity stop them from fulfilling their dream of starting a family. I highly recommend this book if you like true stories that are different and are about people facing huge obstacles, but somehow finding a way to get through them. Nancy and Thomas are so brave and I wish them nothing but the best.

Two things stand out in this book: the normality of the Beatie family, and "the system's" astonishing resistance to their desire for children. Normal? Sure. Thomas had a difficult childhood, but so do lots of people. Thomas became legally male by choice - slightly less common, but still a choice a lot of people make and succeed at. Thomas and Nancy love each other, built a marriage and a business together, and wanted children. In the second half of the book, we learn what happens when this all-American couple tries to have a child. There's one minor issue... well, it should have been minor. Thomas has female reproductive organs, and Nancy doesn't. So, with typical American make-it-work-ism, they decide that Thomas will carry their baby. This is the shocking part of the story: not the "pregnant man," but the reaction of institutions that should have supported this family, or at least remained neutral. Several doctors sabotaged their attempts to get donor sperm. Other health care professionals broke confidentiality, eventually forcing the Beaties to make their story public before people they cared about heard it from the rumor mill. Gay, lesbian, and transgender organizations withdrew support. Some Americans threatened them with death - though their neighbors were supportive. The story of the Beaties is simply heartwarming: a couple triumphs over a tragic childhood and technical difficulties to have a loving family and a baby. But the story of the reaction to them is uncomfortable reading. This book will make you think. I highly recommend it.

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