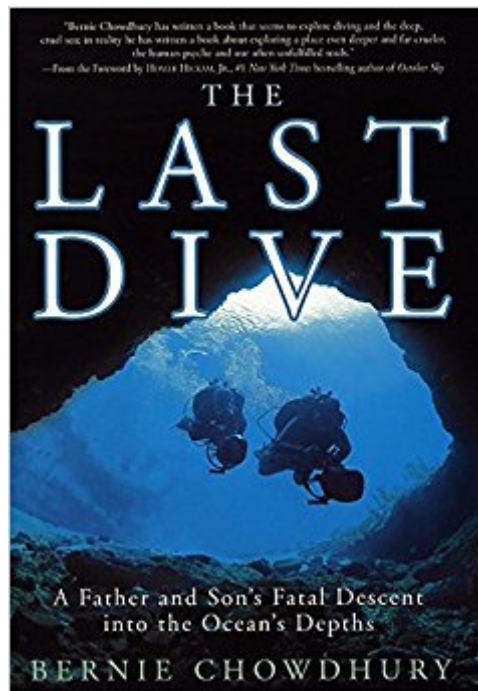




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# The Last Dive: A Father And Son's Fatal Descent Into The Ocean's Depths



## Synopsis

What price would you pay for adventure and knowledge? Chris and Chrissy Rouse, an experienced father-and-son scuba diving team, hoped to achieve widespread recognition for their outstanding but controversial diving skills. Obsessed and ambitious, they sought to solve the secrets of a mysterious, undocumented World War II German U-boat that lay under 230 feet of water, only a half-day's mission from New York Harbor. They paid the ultimate price in their quest for fame. This gripping narrative recounts the Rouses' growing lust for what many consider the world's most dangerous sport -- as well as for the cowboy culture of the deepdiving community. Father and son were only eighteen years apart in age, and their constant battles of will earned them the nickname "the Bicker Brothers." Many friends wondered which would win out if it came down to a life-or-death diving situation: Chris's protective instincts or Chrissy's desire to surpass his father's successes. In the surreal topographies of underwater caves and shipwrecks, divers can encounter the unfathomable. Some get lost until their air expires, some get hopelessly tangled in cables, some are drawn to deep chambers from which they never emerge, and some make simple human errors. The sport's best may eventually find themselves in silt-filled water, dark as night, and pinned by dislodged wreckage. If they panic and use up their air, they put themselves at risk of drowning or of what divers fear the most--decompression sickness, or "the bends." Author Bernie Chowdhury, himself an expert diver and a close friend of the Rouses', explores the thrill-seeking world of deep-sea diving, including its legendary figures, most celebrated triumphs, and gruesome tragedies. By examining the diver's psychology through the complex father-and-son dynamic, Chowdhury illuminates the extreme sport diver's push toward -- and sometimes beyond -- the limits of human endurance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In a captivating account of sport diving, Chowdhury chronicles the tragedy of Chris and Chrissy Rouse, an energetic father-son dive team who met with disaster while attempting to explore a German U-boat 230 feet deep in the waters off New York. Conway reads with a raspy voice and dark intonation, and he revels in bringing alive the book's dramatic moments, such as when Chrissy slithers through cold, murky waters inside the submarine's cramped hull. Though highly competent in perilous underwater cave diving, the Rouses lacked experience on the open sea, leaving them unprepared for a cruel convergence of deadly circumstances. Aside from telling the Rouses' story, Chowdhury does an excellent job of introducing listeners to the history, equipment and dangers of diving at extreme depth. The streamlined audio abridgment omits some of this information, along with a handful of alluring anecdotes, but it also does away with some of the obsessive personal details of the Rouses that occasionally bogged down Chowdhury's narrative. Though this makes for a few clumsy moments (the tape mentions, for instance, how Chrissy had once saved his father's life, yet the story of the machine-shop explosion to which it refers has been edited out), its overall effect is to create a crisp storyline that listeners will appreciate. Simultaneous release with the HarperCollins hardcover (Forecasts, Sept. 25). (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Extreme sports, such as climbing Mount Everest, are becoming increasingly popular in this country. Among these activities is extreme scuba diving deep diving, wreck diving, and cave diving, often using nonair gas mixtures. Chowdury chronicles the world of these divers, using his own story and that of a father-and-son dive team that died following a penetration-wreck dive at 230 feet using air. Excellently written and a real "grabber" to read, the book includes much information about the history, equipment, and people who make up the world of extreme or "technical" diving. This book should be read by any diver thinking of getting involved in wreck, cave, deep, or mixed-gas diving. One hopes it will change their minds, for there's absolutely no margin for error in these risky ventures. There is also much meat here for those interested in the psychology of extreme sports. Strongly recommended for libraries of all types with interests in scuba diving, sports (especially extreme sports), and the psychology of sports and risk-taking. DMargaret Rioux, MBL/WHOI Lib., Woods Hole, MA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A gripping and engaging story. The writing is so detailed that you are transported to the scene of the events. Towards the beginning of the book, I wasn't really digging Chris and Chrissy and their competitiveness. But as I got further and further into the book, I found that I really liked this family, I wished that I could get the chance to meet these colorful individuals, and I really did want them to survive their last dive, although I already knew the outcome. I learned a lot from their mistakes, but even more from their experiences. Bernie Chowdhury did an excellent job telling the tale of these two larger than life individuals.

Overall, this was a good book but I had to periodically stop. It was mostly well-written but with a few concerns. When Chris and Chrissy surfaced, heart wrenching to imagine what was going on, there was dialogue about Chatterton intubating (high level of respiratory support) one of the victims. Not to take anything away from the seriousness of the situation, there is verbiage that Chatterton was an anesthesiologist. He was not. He was a combat medic in Vietnam. Legally, he did not have the licensure to intubate. There was a Registered Nurse on the ship during this fateful episode and with specific training, she may have been certified to intubate, but not Chatterton. It doesn't change the end result but it's not accurate. Another interesting point was it appeared that the Rouse's prided themselves on preparing for a dive. Page after page, the reader knows how well they prepare for a dive - redundancy of gear, diving plan, etc. - they went into a dive prepared for problems. However, I don't understand why the boat wasn't prepared to handle someone who gets severely bent. To call for an emergency evacuation and wait? I've done sport diving and have no desire to place myself in a situation where there are no contingency plans. There are portable decompression chambers that can be placed on boats - should have been one in this situation. All boats who serve as a dive platform for deep dives should have one. I could not operate a boat who served as a dive platform for deep dives, in good conscious, without one. My heart breaks to think what these guys were thinking when they surfaced. They knew.

An Excellent Read!!! Chowdhury brought this true story to life as though I were there watching it unfold!!! The excitement, adventure, triumphs and tragedy grabbed my heart and invited me into the inner circle of those who lived it!!! If you want to get inside the mind of Cave Divers or Divers as a community for why we do what we do, and the valuable and potentially life saving lessons it teaches through the experiences of others, I would highly recommend this Book!!! Sincerely James Q.

Benners Certified OW Diver, Solo Diver, Rescue Diver

Good background information into the many complications arising from descending deeper into ocean. Certainly made it easier for me to understand the risks involved with learning new gas mixtures. I also came away with how the desire to get one more thing, becomes, which leads to foolish decisions and how this is a death trap, and also the desire to put one's own life on the line, at the risk of losing your own life.

The Last Dive: A Father and Son's Fatal Descent into the Ocean's Depths Although the outcome of the story is a very sad one, Bernie Chowdhury does an excellent job at bringing you into the lives of his friends and making you feel like you knew them. he explains things pretty clearly and even helps non-divers understand more technical aspects. his descriptiveness makes you feel like you're right there with them. this is an excellent book and it was hard to put it down. Chris and Chrissy are two of my newest heroes and this story helped spur me back into Diving action. i highly recommend this book for anyone, diver or not.

Fantastically written, great accounts of diver errors, what led to them, and what can happen (including real life and death experiences). If we allow ourselves to commit errors before, during, and after our dives, we may not be able to manage the outcome - we are putting ourselves, and others at risk unnecessarily. A lesson to be learned, is that others, will be affected by the actions of divers that make poor decisions.

As an avid reader and an avid diver, I had decided not to expect much from books about diving. Whether a novel, a textbook, or a reference work, most leave a lot to be desired. Not so, this one. Anyone who reads dive magazines knows Chowdhury is an acknowledged pioneer of technical diving. I'm sure it is easily proven that he knew most of the principles in this story. And it seems he has interviewed their survivors, threading together the sequence of events, and fleshing out interpersonal relationships. But who knew the guy could write? An engaging magazine article or two is one thing, but to tackle a book, to research, to organize it is quite another. Chowdhury succinctly explains the physiological effects of diving, expertly explains the need to explore, and conveys the drive of the explorer. I have burrowed into many a tome that only a diver could love. This one could be enjoyed by just about anyone.

This book supposedly tracks the Rouse families last fatal dive. And it does that. But it really is a

history of the evolution of Tech Diving: diving to great depths and use of special mixes of breathing gas. It also gives a different view of some of the events covered in Shadow Divers. Some people featured rather harshly in that book get a more tolerant treatment in this book. Another book which covers the evolution of tech diving in greater detail is Sheck Exley's Caverns Measureless in Mist. The Rouse father and son were trained by Exley before his death. The author of the last dive comes close to death himself and describes his ordeal in this book. All in all a good read for anyone interested in diving techniques.

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