

BOOK REVIEW

By Kathleen Szmith

The Billy Best Story, Beating Cancer with Alternative Medicine By Billy Best, as told to Linda Conti

(ISBN 0-98549-700-9; Sandcastle Memoirs, South Yarmouth, 2012; softcover, 198 pages, \$14.95)

One of my favorite sayings is that everyone has a story. Billy Best certainly does, and it's riveting.

If that name rings a bell, there's a reason. Astute newspaper readers and national news viewers might recall a young man from Norwell who made headlines around the World in 1994, when he ran away from home to escape the harsh effects of the chemotherapy he was undergoing for Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

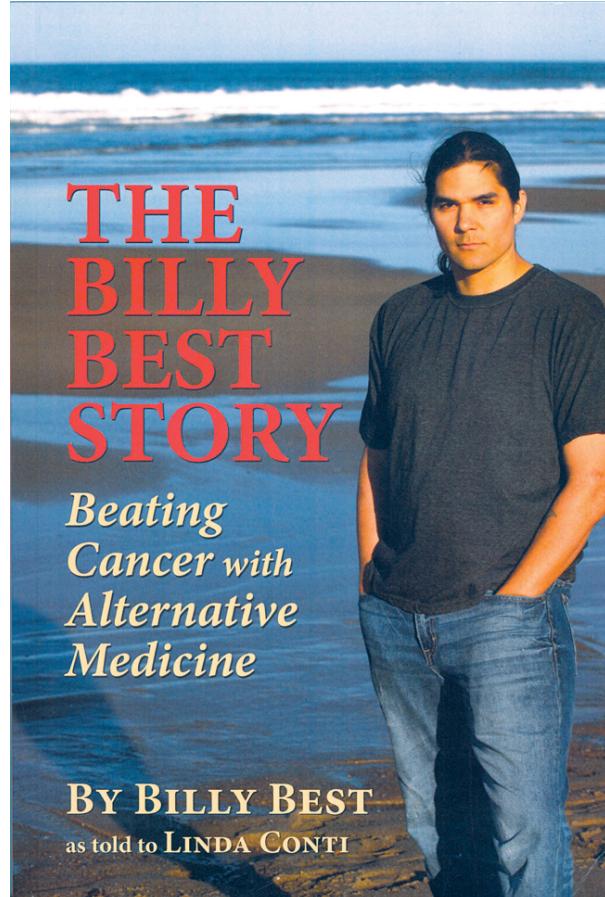
Best's tale unfolds simply, yet dramatically in his debut book, *The Billy Best Story, Beating Cancer with Alternative Medicine*.

For his inaugural telling of his amazing tale, Best connected with Linda Conti of Sandcastle Memoirs in South Yarmouth, and the two have woven a powerful read that's both engaging and eye-opening.

Best was just 16 when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a type of cancer that attacks a person's lymph system. Best and his parents, Bill and Susan, were told that the only option for treatment was chemotherapy.

Upon hearing the seemingly endless list of side effects, Best told his parents emphatically that he didn't want chemotherapy; but because of his age, he wasn't able to make the decision.

Best's book delves into the harsh realities of chemo and its devastating effects on the body, experienced by Best firsthand. It was the vomiting, hair loss, a burning metallic taste in his mouth, and an extreme fatigue previously unknown to the passionate skateboarder and soccer player that motivated Best to flee his home in 1994.



Thanks to Conti's adept partnership with Best, the reader accompanies him when he travels by bus to Texas, where he hides out for several weeks as a media storm grows to mythic proportions.

Best also tells of his return to Massachusetts and the continued media frenzy, along with his controversial but ultimately lifesaving decision to seek an alternative treatment illegal in the U.S. but available in Canada called 714X.

While the majority of Best's story is intensely engaging, to the point where it was difficult to put the book aside, the pieces conveying his foray into alternative medicine will inspire and outrage most readers.

Best's determination to find the most appropriate treatment for himself is what proves inspiring, especially when one considers that he was only 16 and yet imbued with wisdom more often seen in older people.

Photos of Best's journey add extra intrigue, allowing the reader to not only put a face with the narrative but also to create a visual timeline of Best's captivating adventure. Although Best's book details his success at beating cancer with alternative treatment, his actual story is much more faceted and will have widespread appeal.

I admit that when I came to the final page, I suffered a moment of disappointment. Having learned so much about this courageous young man, now the father of a joyous two-year-old son, I yearned to keep reading. Fortunately for his soon-to-be scores of fans, another book is in the works.

For more about Billy Best and his continuing story, visit TheBillyBestStory.com.