



The making of a killer breadmaker

“Dave’s Killer Bread” owner Dave Dahl’s trials and triumphs are chronicled in a new book by a woman with her own story to tell

BY LAURA MOULTON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

At first glance, Varinthorn Christopher and Dave Dahl appear to have nothing in common. She is a Thai artist born in Bangkok, and he is a 6-foot-tall ex-con with a rap sheet that could paper a trail to the moon and back. But a closer look at their unlikely partnership reveals what they have in common: a collaborative project in the form of a book containing stories from prison, bread recipes and advice to drug addicts. They also share a belief in the possibility of redemption in life and in the power of second chances.

Varinthorn Christopher was born in Bangkok, Thailand during a coup de’etat, in 1977. Because of a strictly enforced curfew at sundown, no one dared venture out, for fear of being shot or killed by the military. During all this, Varinthorn’s mother went into labor, and her father loaded her in the car and went out into the city. Soon they were pulled over by Thai soldiers, but instead of being shot on sight, the soldiers saw that her mother was in labor and formed a cavalcade of

tanks and cars around her family’s car, escorting them to the hospital. Her father saw this procession as a very auspicious beginning to a life and assumed she would be a boy.

Meanwhile, in the United States that same year, Dave Dahl was an awkward pre-teenager, working in the family bread business, but already beginning to struggle with the depression that would plague him into his 20s and 30s.

When Varinthorn was three years old in Bangkok, Dave was dropping out of high school in Gresham, Oregon. As a 12-year-old in her hometown of Pathum Thani with extended family, one of Varinthorn’s favorite rituals was to gather at sunrise to offer cooked jasmine rice to monks clad in saffron robes. By now, Dave had married and divorced, fathered a daughter, and gotten good and hooked on methamphetamine, a habit he financed by committing armed robberies and break-ins.

When Varinthorn was 20 years old, she moved to the United States to attend college. Dave was

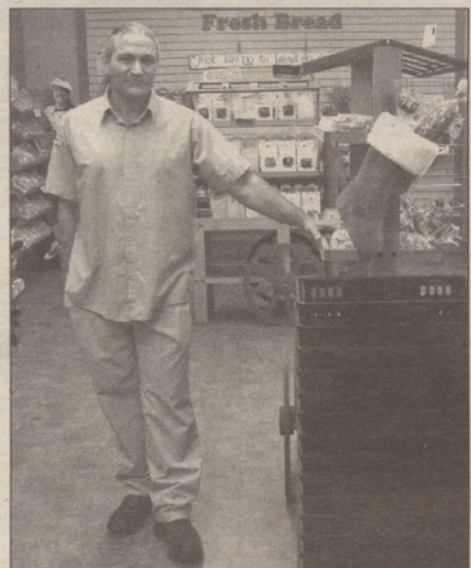


PHOTO BY JENNIFER JANSONS

Top, Dave Dahl, in the foreground, as a child on the cover of his new book, “Good Seed.”. Above, Dahl at his bake shop in Milwaukee.

SEE BREADMAKER, page 4

Inside



That’s what she said

Notable quotes from the year gone by from Storm Large and others who lent their voice to Street Roots

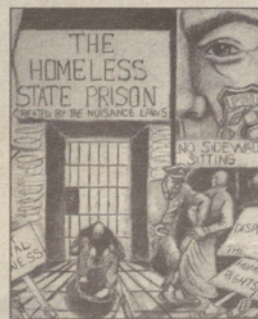
Page 7



The white man’s burden

Christian Lander spins ‘whiteness’ with humor and honesty.

Page 8



The time doesn’t fit the crime

Why criminalizing the homeless is hurting us all

Page 10