

**CAPTAIN KIDD AS AN ANTI- HERO IN RICHARD  
ZACKS' NOVEL *THE PIRATE HUNTER***

**A THESIS**

**BY**

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## - TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>CHAPTER I :INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	3
1.4 Scope of the Study.....	3
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	4
<b>CHAPTER II : LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Definition of the Anti hero.....	6
2.2 Characteristics of the Anti-Hero.....	7
<b>CHAPTER III :METHOD OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Research Design.....	13
3.2 Data Collection.....	14
3.3 Data Analysis Techniques.....	16
<b>CHAPTER IV :ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1 Characteristics and Actions Aligning Kidd with the Anti-Hero Archetype..	18
4.2 Captain Kidd as an Anti-Hero in The Pirate Hunter.....	25
4.3 Challenging Traditional Depictions of Piracy and Heroism.....	28
<b>CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....</b>	<b>32</b>

5.1 Conclusion.....	32
5.2 Recommendation.....	34
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>APPENDIXES.....</b>	<b>37</b>

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Appendix A:**

#### **Biography of Richard Zacks**

Richard Zacks (born in 1955 in Savannah, Georgia, USA) is an American historian, journalist, and author known for his detailed, vividly written works of narrative nonfiction. He is widely recognized for his ability to reconstruct historical moments with a storyteller's skill while maintaining solid factual grounding. Zacks has dedicated much of his career to uncovering overlooked, misunderstood, or sensational episodes from history, often highlighting figures who have been misrepresented or simplified by mainstream narratives.

Zacks grew up with a strong interest in unusual facts and the hidden sides of history. After completing his early education in the United States, he pursued higher studies in journalism, eventually earning a degree from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, one of the most prestigious journalism schools in the world. His academic background in investigative reporting strongly shaped his later writing style, which combines rigorous archival research with accessible, engaging prose.

Before becoming a full-time author, Zacks worked extensively as a freelance journalist. His articles appeared in several prominent publications, including *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Time*, *The Village Voice*, *The New York Daily News*, *The London Times*, and *Life Magazine*. Through these experiences, he developed a reputation for his curiosity-driven reporting and his interest in the bizarre, humorous, and forgotten aspects of human history.

As an author, Richard Zacks is best known for his books that focus on neglected or misrepresented historical figures. His most notable work, *The Pirate Hunter: The True Story of Captain Kidd* (2002), reexamines the story of Captain William Kidd, a figure long portrayed simply as a notorious pirate. Through meticulous research, Zacks argues that Kidd was in fact a commissioned privateer acting under the authority of England, and that his eventual execution was shaped by political manipulation, shifting colonial interests, and the need for a scapegoat. This book has been widely praised for its depth, accuracy, and engaging narrative structure, and has contributed significantly to modern reinterpretations of Kidd's life.

In addition to *The Pirate Hunter*, Zacks has authored several other influential works, including *History Laid Bare* and *An Underground Education*, both of which explore unusual and lesser-known historical facts. His book *Island of Vice* investigates Theodore Roosevelt's early attempts to reform New York City during the late 19th century, revealing the complex political and social challenges of the era. Zacks's works demonstrate his consistent interest in the moral complexities of historical figures and events, often highlighting contradictions, hidden motives, and forgotten perspectives.

Richard Zacks is known for his distinctive writing methodology. He frequently relies on primary sources, such as court transcripts, letters, newspapers, and official government documents, which he uses to reconstruct events with accuracy and narrative depth. His research style reflects a commitment to historical truth while also embracing the dramatic potential of real events—an approach that makes his works valuable both to academic readers and general audiences.

Throughout his career, Zacks has been praised for blending scholarship with storytelling. Reviewers often highlight his ability to present intricate historical details

in a vivid, entertaining manner. His exploration of Captain Kidd, in particular, has influenced modern perceptions of piracy and maritime law in the late 17th century, making him a significant contemporary voice in popular historical writing.

Today, Richard Zacks continues to write and research, contributing to the field of narrative history with works that challenge traditional interpretations and encourage readers to question widely accepted historical narratives. His dedication to uncovering the human complexity behind historical myths has earned him recognition as one of the leading writers in the genre of investigative historical nonfiction.

## **Appendix B**

### **Summary of the novel *The Pirate Hunter***

*The Pirate Hunter* by Richard Zacks is a historical narrative that reexamines the life of William Kidd, a man who has long been remembered as one of the most infamous pirates in history. Zacks challenges this reputation by presenting Kidd as a far more complicated figure whose life was shaped by political interests, legal ambiguities, and shifting power structures during the late seventeenth century. Instead of reinforcing the popular image of Kidd as a ruthless criminal, Zacks reconstructs his story through extensive research and archival evidence, revealing a man who was often misunderstood and unjustly treated.

The narrative opens with Kidd's early career as a respected privateer. He was not a rogue outlaw who operated independently of the law. Instead, he sailed with formal backing from high ranking English officials. He carried a legitimate letter of marque, which authorized him to attack and seize ships that legally qualified as pirate

vessels. This official commission is central to Zacks's argument that Kidd was acting within the boundaries of English law, at least according to his understanding at the time.

Throughout the book, Zacks highlights the growing pressure and internal conflicts aboard Kidd's ship. Many crew members joined the expedition with the expectation of capturing valuable prizes that would make them rich. Kidd, however, attempted to adhere to legal standards and avoid capturing vessels that did not meet the qualifications of piracy. This clash of expectations created tension between Kidd's desire to remain lawful and his crew's need for financial reward. These strained relationships affected key decisions that later contributed to Kidd's downfall.

A pivotal moment in the narrative is the capture of the ship *Quedagh Merchant*. Kidd believed that the ship's papers justified its seizure, and he acted accordingly based on his letter of marque. However, the ship's ownership proved to be politically sensitive. As Zacks explains, wealthy and influential investors in England viewed Kidd's capture of the vessel as a threat to their political reputation and economic interests. In a climate where piracy had become a major political issue, Kidd became an ideal figure to blame. His actions, although arguably legal, were reinterpreted to fit a narrative that painted him as a criminal.

The book then turns to Kidd's return to England, where he expected to defend himself and present evidence of his innocence. Instead, he found that his supporters had abandoned him. Zacks describes how the political factions of the time, especially those involved in conflicts between the Whigs and the Tories, used Kidd's case to protect themselves and discredit their opponents. As a result, Kidd's trial became less about justice and more about political convenience.

Zacks provides a detailed account of the trial, explaining that Kidd was denied access to essential documents that could have proven his lawful intentions. He also lacked proper legal counsel and faced judges whose priorities aligned more with political preservation than fairness. Kidd was ultimately convicted of piracy and executed. Zacks argues that this outcome was predetermined long before the trial began, making Kidd not a villain but a victim of political manipulation.

*The Pirate Hunter* portrays Captain William Kidd as a tragic figure. His story, as reconstructed by Zacks, demonstrates how law, politics, and public perception can combine to destroy a person's reputation. Zacks presents Kidd as an antihero, someone whose virtues and flaws were overshadowed by circumstances beyond his control. The book invites readers to reconsider long held assumptions about piracy and to recognize the complexity behind historical narratives that are often simplified over time.

## **Appendix C**

### **Characters in the Novel**

#### **1. Captain William Kidd**

Captain William Kidd stands at the center of Richard Zacks's narrative as a deeply complex and multifaceted historical figure. Zacks presents Kidd not as a conventional villain but as a man navigating the unstable and morally ambiguous world of seventeenth century maritime politics. Kidd is portrayed as disciplined, principled, and committed to legal privateering rather than piracy. He insists on adhering to the boundaries of the law, often refusing to attack ships whose papers did

not qualify them as legitimate pirate targets.

Despite carrying a lawful letter of marque, Kidd constantly struggles against external pressure. His crew demands bold actions and quick profit, while political patrons in England expect successful hunts without acknowledging the difficult realities of the Indian Ocean. Kidd's inner conflict between moral restraint and the expectations placed upon him shapes him as an antiheroic figure. His downfall, as Zacks emphasizes, arises not from inherent criminality but from betrayal, political manipulation, and unfortunate circumstances. Kidd's character embodies tragedy, honor, and vulnerability in a world where loyalty and justice are easily corrupted.

## **2. Robert Culliford**

Robert Culliford appears as the narrative foil to William Kidd. While Kidd tries to uphold legality and morality, Culliford represents the true essence of lawless piracy. He is cunning, opportunistic, and unrestrained by ethical considerations. Zacks portrays Culliford as a man who thrives on chaos, betrayal, and violence.

Culliford's long history of mutiny and treachery positions him as a corrupting force in the maritime world. His actions stand in stark contrast to Kidd's intentions. The rivalry between Kidd and Culliford highlights the differences between a privateer attempting to maintain honor and a pirate who willingly embraces criminality. Where Kidd hesitates to break the law, Culliford openly defies it. Where Kidd values discipline, Culliford exploits disorder. Culliford's character, therefore, serves as a narrative mirror that reveals how far Kidd stands from the pirate stereotype that history unfairly associates with him.

### **3. Lord Bellomont (Richard Coote)**

Lord Bellomont is portrayed as one of the most influential political figures in Kidd's story, initially acting as his patron and protector. As one of the key investors in Kidd's privateering expedition, Bellomont's support gives Kidd legitimacy and authority. However, Bellomont's political ambitions and shifting priorities eventually reshape him into a figure of cold calculation. In Zacks's narrative, Bellomont is neither heroic nor villainous in the traditional sense. Instead, he is opportunistic, strategic, and primarily motivated by self preservation. When the political climate in England turns hostile and Kidd's actions come under scrutiny, Bellomont quickly distances himself from the captain he once empowered. He uses Kidd as a political shield to protect his own reputation and avoid accusations of supporting piracy. This transformation illustrates how personal ambition and public pressure could distort justice in the seventeenth century. Bellomont's character contributes significantly to Kidd's tragic downfall, showing how political elites could manipulate narratives for their benefit.

### **4. Joseph Bradish**

Joseph Bradish represents the type of sailor who willingly crosses the line into criminality. Zacks presents Bradish as reckless, ambitious, and untrustworthy. His mutinous tendencies and eagerness to seize opportunities for personal gain distinguish him sharply from William Kidd's character. Bradish's actions demonstrate how quickly discipline aboard a ship could collapse when loyalty faltered. His behavior emphasizes the environment of temptation that surrounded many sailors during this era, when the promise of sudden wealth was more

appealing than lawful obedience. Through Bradish, Zacks illustrates the instability of maritime crews and the constant threat of revolt that captains like Kidd had to manage. Bradish is not merely a secondary figure; he symbolizes the destructive forces that push Kidd into increasingly dangerous dilemmas, highlighting the fragility of authority on the high seas.

### **5. William Moore**

William Moore is one of the most significant members of Kidd's crew, primarily because of the major conflict that arises between him and Kidd. Moore is characterized as outspoken, confrontational, and insistent on pursuing aggressive tactics to achieve greater profit. His personality reflects the desires of many sailors who believed that hesitation and restraint would lead to failure and poverty. The conflict between Kidd and Moore culminates in a violent confrontation that becomes one of the key turning points in the narrative. Zacks uses this incident to illustrate the clash between Kidd's moral caution and Moore's impatience. Moore's character demonstrates how internal tensions within a ship can escalate into crisis, especially when a crew disagrees with the captain's ethical principles. After Moore's death, the event is later exploited in Kidd's trial to portray him as violent and cruel, even though the circumstances were more complex than the accusations suggested. Moore thus becomes both a catalyst and a symbol of the tragic misunderstanding that shaped Kidd's fate.