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Dead By Friday - How Lust And Greed Led To Murder In The Suburbs



Synopsis

Dead by Friday was shortlisted for Best True Crime in the 2013 Ned Kelly Awards, Australia's premier crime-writing awards and won the 2013 South Australian Press Club Award for Investigative Coverage. A compelling portrait of murder for hire in the Australian suburbs, it begins when a dangerous sexual predator seduces her husband's sleazy boss. Their obsessive affair leads to public sex and disturbing fantasies. Two mothers talk murder outside a primary school and suddenly down-payments are being made on contracts to kill. From the suburbs that spawned the Snowtown bodies-in-the-barrels killers, enter the hitman, a criminal who eats speed for breakfast and murder contracts for lunch - on a sandwich.

Award-winning journalist and true-crime writer Derek Pedley draws on five years of research as he takes readers inside the police investigation - and the killer's mind - to find the answers to one of Australia's most intriguing and horrifying crimes. For the first time, the truth about the lovers who wanted their partners dead, but didn't count on shrewd detectives, a brave husband and a shattered family - all determined to bring three killers to justice.

SYNOPSIS He was once a bronzed lifesaver but is now a balding, overweight tyre-shop manager nearing 40, an ambitious man with desires his marriage cannot satisfy. She is 29, the wife of one of his employees; a serial cheater and manipulator, she can curl her lips into a knowing smile and bat bedroom eyes at any man who cares to take a second look. Kevin Matthews and Michelle Burgess are made for each other. The affair begins with furtive sex in parks and offices, moving on to whiskey-fuelled trysts in motels. Their marriages crumble, his career and finances suffer and the obsession deepens. The pillow talk turns sinister. She issues ultimatums. Drastic action is needed if they are to start a new life together. At the front gate of a suburban primary school, in between mothers' small talk, two murder plots are hatched. Contracts - complete with photographs of Matthews' wife and Burgess' husband - are issued. Enter amateur hitman David Key, who says he'll do both for \$50,000. It is the perfect plan: Kevin and Michelle will escape their marriages, claim the \$100,000 life insurance policy on Matthews' wife, Carolyn, and live happily ever after. But their lust and greed is infectious; Key is instantly infatuated with Michelle, the "high-class sheila" who has hired him, and a second, parallel affair begins. When she tips over the edge into a manic and delusional state, the situation spins out of control, leading to a shocking and brutal crime. It is recounted through the eyes of detectives, witnesses, families, friends, lovers and one of the intended victims, Michelle's husband Darren Burgess. On the surface, it is a random and horrific crime without a motive. Who would kill a much-loved wife, mother and respected lifesaver? *DEAD BY FRIDAY* draws on the meticulous investigation and puts readers at the detectives' sides as they hunt the killers. It seeks the disturbing truth about Michelle Burgess - how did a schoolgirl who told

extravagant lies to get attention grow up to be a serial sex-predator-turned-killer? The truth is revealed in a forensic profile that reaches conclusions that shock even the eminent forensic psychologist who compiled it. Discover how the conspiracy and crime unfolded, leading to an inexplicable third affair, and the seduction of prison officers behind bars. Should authorities fear Michelle Burgess may try to strike again?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This I found to be a good read. The woman at the center of the story was a vile, loathsome person who was without any empathy for others. She was a sexual predator preying on weak men of low self esteem who she manipulated with sexual favors. The behavior of these social misfits, is at times, embarrassing to call oneself Australian. The book takes you down the path of the manipulation to get others to do her deeds through to their apprehension and subsequent trials. The thing that is not lost in this story, is the aftermath of the pain and suffering of the immediate families and the insidious undermining of the children left behind. One feels that there is an underlying story there as these children have become young adults, dealing with their past, which shapes their

future.

Loved this book. It's hard to believe Dead by Friday is based on actual events, such is the strange, deluded behaviour of key characters Kevin Matthews and Michelle Burgess. It's almost as if these two people have fanned the oxygen of their shared, delusional alternative reality with a staggering disregard for everyone and anyone around them. It would almost be humorous if it weren't for the tragic and life-changing consequences - a moment I found hard to read, given it's brutal nature. The story is well written, paced in an easy to read and logical way and provides excellent backgrounds on all aspects of the case - outstanding from the author. I'd recommend this to anyone who enjoys true crime novels, particularly if they're into something a little on the bizarre side.

"Adelaide is no virgin when it comes to bizarre murders." --Dead By Friday
Dead By Friday is a well-crafted and in-depth account of the cruel and brutal slaying of South Australian mother-of-three Carolyn Matthews, a woman whose only crime was to be married to the wrong man. There is nothing simple about this case. Dead By Friday reads like a far-fetched crime novel, but then truth is often stranger than fiction. The more the story unfolded, the sicker I felt and the more I wished it were fiction. My admiration has to go to the detectives who somehow pieced together this complex and warped tale of lust and manipulation. Highly recommended for lovers of true crime.

I was not impressed with the style of writing. Much of the book is spent delving deep into the personalities of the main characters and their associates. I never understood if the families were really suburbanites, as they seemed to associate with low class drug users, especially the wife. Very little on the actual crime. After the crime, much is spent on the police investigation. I felt the book was very long and drawn out. The slang terminology and the titles for the police investigators were that of Australia, so in many cases, not understood. The wife was portrayed as someone who slept around with everyone, including the guards in prison. I think the book would have been helped with additional information of present day - the murderers in jail and if they are rehabilitating, the families, etc.

This book not only had a page-turning effect on me, but it was a little more interesting to learn about Australian court system, the different terms for American words -- "footy"--instead of football is one example, their foods -- they drink orange juice like we drink soft drinks -- and the description of some of the main cities and suburbs of Australia. The crime itself was horrific and it is unexplicable

how a young woman could be so vicious and cold-hearted to kill a loving mom of 3 boys without a bit of remorse. When all is said and done, evil is evil no matter what continent you inhabit.

I loved this book. I am very interested in True Crime novels and docos and I have to say this was the best True Crime book I have ever read. It was well put together - and was very engaging. Some True Crime books tend to get a little dry - however this was captivating from the beginning until the end. The story was almost unbelievable! Had it been a fictitious book I would have deemed it unrealistic. It is frightening what some members of the human race are capable of doing. This is a must read.

Fascinating look at a truly dysfunctional trio of idiots whose actions resulted in murder. While it takes a while to develop the character profiles of all those involved, it is definitely worth it! If it weren't true, this would be the stuff of a freakish black comedy with tragic consequences. Well written, humorous at times, without downplaying the tragic results this has had on the survivors. I thoroughly loved it.

Thoroughly recommend this book. Knowing scant detail of the events, Dead by Friday completes the picture except for a few details - what is it about Burgess? How can a father do that to his children and how stupid can he (and a couple of others) be? I wondered at the time and I still wonder now. The research in this book is considerable and the sensitivity surrounding the victims - both living and no longer with us - was impressive.

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