



Cincinnati's Savage Seamstress: The Shocking Edythe Klumpp Murder Scandal

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On a cold, drizzly fall afternoon in 1958, a trio of duck hunters stumbled on the charred remains of Cincinnati resident Louise Bergen. When investigators learned that her estranged husband was living with an older divorcee, Edythe Klumpp, they wasted no time in questioning her. When she failed a lie detector test, Edythe spilled out a confession. Although it did not fit the physical evidence, she was found guilty and sentenced to death in the electric chair. Governor Michael V. DiSalle put his political career on the line to save Edythe from the death penalty, personally interviewing the prisoner while she was under the influence of truth serum." But was it the truth? Richard O Jones separates the facts from the fiction in this comprehensive book about the Klumpp murder."

Cincinnati's Savage Seamstress: The Shocking Edythe Klumpp Murder Scandal Details

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Author : Richard O. Jones

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From Reader Review Cincinnati's Savage Seamstress: The Shocking Edythe Klumpp Murder Scandal for online ebook

Bill Kerwin says

The dour face of Edythe Klumpp haunted my childhood. If you lived in Cincinnati in the '50's, Klumpp's story was one you could not escape. It starred Sex, Death and Money—the three most popular screen personalities of that (or any other) era—but it also benefited by cameo appearances from an anti-death penalty Democratic governor seeking re-election and sodium-pentothal, each in a small but crucial role.

Edith Klumpp was definitely a lady who pushed the Queen City's buttons. On one hand, she was an industrious single mother trying to maintain a hard-scrabble existence by teaching night-school sewing classes. On the other hand, she was a fast-living waitress working at a municipal airport restaurant, a woman who liked to drink with the local fly-boys after her shift. When her common-law husband's legal wife's body was found bludgeoned, shot, stabbed, and half-consumed in the remains of a bonfire an hour northeast of the city, it wasn't long before the police arrested Mrs. Klumpp and charged her with murder. Edith soon confessed, taking complete responsibility for the act, but doubts lingered. She was a small woman, after all, and a good deal of heavy lifting must have been involved in transporting and burning the corpse. It seemed logical to assume that someone else—her common-law husband perhaps?—might also be responsible.

The book follows Edythe through her trial and conviction, her second confession--under sodium pentothal and witnessed by Governor Mike DiSalle--and her subsequent career in and out of prison. The question of guilt is never completely resolved, but we do get glimpses into the Cincinnati judicial system and the larger world of Ohio gubernatorial politics.

The Savage Seamstress is not a work of great style, but it tells its story adequately, and I found it informative and enjoyable.

Bob Hostetler says

This was a joy to read.

Coleen says

Good read. Local true crime story. Wished there would have been photos of Bill Bergen and Louise Bergen.

Belinda says

A short, but well written piece of true crime. I came across this title at my local library and as I have not come across a lot of locally written true crime, I picked it up. The book covers the case of Edythe Klumpp, a Cincinnati woman convicted of the murder of her married boyfriend's estranged wife. The book was

intelligent and an in-depth study (despite being a very short read). The case itself I found to be quite frustrating. The title and lead into the book are quite a bit more sensational than the book truly is (which is fine--most true crime books are extremely over the top). The case itself contains a lot of what is most frustrating and incorrect in our justice system. I would recommend this book to people who find true crime interesting but lean more towards *In Cold Blood* as opposed to the true crime written by folks who work for serial killer websites.

Patti says

I was a toddler during this event so I don't recall anything first hand. Interesting story. I think I would like to read the defense attorney's memoir. I honestly don't know if she acted alone or not.

Barbara D says

Just skimmed the book

Didn't grab my interest so I just jumped ahead to the end. Wasn't what I thought it would be. Few photos and personal interest.

H. P. Reed says

Written in a conversational tone, this account of Louise Bergen's murder, the arrest of her estranged husband's lover Edythe Klumpp, and the drama of the trial was fairly interesting. It surely was a different time in 1958 through 1961, and not a good different either. Edythe was not your average housewife, although she was a faithful churchgoer at times and taught sewing to young women. Not for her the boring nights at home alone after a shift at one of her three jobs. She enjoyed the company of men. And she saw them as tickets out of poverty. She wasn't particularly good looking; she had a hardness in her face that wasn't attractive but she appealed to certain men despite that and despite her thin lips and sullen demeanor. When she met Bill Bergen it was lust at first sight, at least on his side. Bill couldn't make up his mind between Edythe and his wife Louise, however. One night Louise turns up dead and partially cremated. One Louise's identity is established, it isn't long before Edythe is arraigned. The trial, her conviction with no recommendation of mercy (tantamount to automatic death penalty at the time) and the last minute commutation of her sentence keep the reader's attention. The book raises considerable doubt about her guilt but reminds us that mid-20th century Cincinnati was convinced of her qualifications for Old Sparky. There was so much hatred of this woman who was a liar, manipulator and at least an accessory to murder that death threats arrived on Ohio Governor Disalle's desk after he gave her the commutation.

Georgette says

Interesting local history. Would like to read more by this author in the future.

Tonja says

I won an autographed copy of this book in a Goodreads Giveaway. I enjoyed the book. Thank you for picking me to pre-read your latest book. The author did an enormous amount of research. I like the subject of this book and from the printout he sent along with this book, he seems to truly enjoy writing about shocking crimes. I think the author has a definite gift for "true crime" writing and capturing minute details to make this a very interesting and thought provoking book. I think he did an excellent job with his characters and storyline. For me, some true crime books are hard to read due to details being presented in textbook fashion and that makes it easy for me to put them down. This book is not hard to read and definitely not textbook...I read it straight through. The details alone are amazing and he included actual pictures. Without historians like Mr Jones, we are apt to forget our history and the important details.

Stephanie says**Cincinnati Savage**

I liked the book but it was a bit slower than some of the other books I've read. I would have like to read about the trial of the husband of the nudes victim.

Ronnie Cramer says

Solid account of a late 1950s murder. The author is a former reporter so it's no surprise that much of the material comes from old newspaper stories (plus a hearty dollop from the memoirs of the accused's lawyer). The resolution gets a bit murky because of some local politics, but it's a decent read.
