



A Daughter's Deadly Deception: The Jennifer Pan Story

Jeremy Grimaldi

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A sinister plot by a young woman left her mother dead and her father riddled with bullets.

From the outside looking in, Jennifer Pan seemed like a model daughter living a perfect life. The ideal child, the one her immigrant parents saw, was studying to become a pharmacist at the University of Toronto. But there was a dark, deceptive side to the angelic young woman.

In reality, Jennifer spent her days in the arms of her high school sweetheart, Daniel. In an attempt to lead the life she dreamed of, she would do almost anything: lie about her whereabouts, forge school documents, and invent fake jobs and a fictitious apartment. For many years she led this double life. But when her father discovered her web of lies, his ultimatum was severe. And so, too, was her revenge: a plan that culminated in cold-blooded murder. And it almost worked, except for one bad shot.

The story of Jennifer Pan is one of all-consuming love and devious betrayal that led to a cold-hearted plan hatched by a group of youths who thought they could pull off the perfect crime.

A Daughter's Deadly Deception: The Jennifer Pan Story Details

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From Reader Review A Daughter's Deadly Deception: The Jennifer Pan Story for online ebook

SundayAtDusk says

When you look at the cover of this book, it's hard to believe the girl on it arranged for the murder of her parents. (How old was she when that picture was taken? Certainly not 24.) By the time you get to the end of the book, though, it's easier to understand why she did. It's easier because author Jeremy Grimaldi does a really good job of presenting all different types of viewpoints about why someone like Jennifer Pan, the daughter of two hard working Vietnamese immigrants, ended up like she ended up. This is not a story about abusive, uncaring parents, or about a young woman who snapped one night and killed her parents in a rage. It's a story about how many Asian parents raise their children to be successful in life in a way that unknowingly mentally breaks some of those children. This is not to say that Jennifer Pan's parents were to blame for what happened to them, but that, as Toronto psychologist Betty Kershner says at the end of the book, Ms. Pan and her parents were mismatched.

Toronto is where this story takes place, and that makes it a bit more interesting for readers in the United States. Readers learn how the Canadian police operate and how the Canadian court system works. Mr. Grimaldi jumps right into the story by starting off with the home invasion in 2010, the murder of Bich Pan, the severe injury of Hann Pan, the police investigation and the trial. Much of that is extremely interesting reading; although whenever the author wrote about the men involved in the crime, with the exception of Daniel Wong, the story got confusing and badly bogged down. Although not as confusing and bogged down as when the story concentrated on the usage of cell phones, and how the police used cell phone records to crack open the case. It may have been brilliant detective work, but I fear the average reader is not going to be all that interested in all the tedious details. (It sort of makes you wish cell phones were never invented!)

After the trial and sentencing, the author then takes the story back to when the Pans came to Canada, and thoroughly looks at Jennifer Pan's life. Her parents had high expectations for her and always expected her to come out on top of everything she did--school, piano, ice skating. Winning was everything, friendships and team work nothing. Ms. Pan was indeed a very successful young child; but by the time she was a teenager, she had the feeling she would never be good enough no matter how hard she tried. When her grades started slipping, knowing her parents would be mad, if not downright disgraced, she started forging report cards. That led to more and more forging and more and more lies. She would eventually be lying about graduating from high school and college, when she did neither. Her whole life became one big lie, always fueled by the fear of what would happen if her parents found out about all her lies; the shame it would bring on both her and them.

In her analysis of Jennifer Pan's life, Dr. Kershner proposed one reason Ms. Pan came to the conclusion that she must have her parents killed was to prevent them from experiencing that shame and disgrace; from ever totally understanding what a deceitful daughter they had. That was only one possible reason, though, and Jeremy Grimaldi does seem to be trying very hard to be fair to everyone involved in the case. Dr. Kershner, who was not involved in the case at all, was one of many, many individuals quoted in the book who was trying to figure out what went wrong. The author gives her assessment the most space, though, and the final word. Personally, I thought her analysis of Jennifer Pan's life was extremely enlightening, and helped explained many things that seemed so confusing about her. Yet neither the psychologist nor the author gave Jennifer Pan a "Get Out Of Jail Free" card. As Dr. Kershner stated, it is all the choices in one's life that determines how one behaves and how one ends up. Choices and experiences can lead to a personality disorder, but that is "not an excuse for murder".

Jennifer Pan plotted with a group of men to kill her parents. She was paying them to do so. The night of the home invasion, she said goodnight to her mother downstairs and unlocked the front door, so those men could easily enter the house. She then went upstairs and signaled the men outside by turning a light on and off. After the men entered the house, she quietly conversed with one of them while her father was being taken downstairs, where her terrified mother was waiting. Jennifer Pan then sat upstairs waiting and listening, as the men terrorized and shot her parents. After the men left, she soon heard her horribly wounded father howling in agony, as he dragged himself out the front door. Realizing he wasn't dead like he was suppose to be, she called out to him: "Dad? I'm calling 911 . . . I'm okay." I'm okay. Another lie by Jennifer Pan. On the night of the planned murder, she was not okay. In fact, she was as far from being okay as a human being could possibly be, for there was something horribly wrong with her mind, heart and soul.

(Note: I received a free e-copy of this book from NetGalley and the publisher or author.)

Lynn Mccarthy says

DNF at 34%

Thank you Netgalley the publisher and Author sorry I just could not finish it...

Veronica says

"A Daughter's Deadly Deception: The Jennifer Pan Story" by Jeremy Grimaldi is an amazing read. I usually stick to Ann Rule because many true crime stories rely on gory descriptions but this book relates more of the emotional background to the story and especially depicts a sense of compassion for the victims. The book was well researched and very well written. I will definitely be reading more of Jeremy Grimaldi's books.

Sifra (brilliant bookshelf) says

Read this review at Brilliant Bookshelf

Netgalley provided me with a free copy in exchange for an honest review. A Daughter's Deadly Deception is a great read if you want to gain more insight into the Jennifer Pan case, which is both horrifying and intriguing.

This book is brilliant in the sense that it gives you a lot of information, in a way that is understandable, without boring the reader. It describes the night the (attempted) murders went down and takes the reader through the crime investigation and the trial.

Its absolute strength however lies in the additional information provided on top of that. It really makes you appreciate the amount of research done. For example, the author gives background information on interrogation techniques and references case-law about voluntary confessions. The focus doesn't stay on the crime aspect though, as the workings of Asian immigrant families are explored, information is given on tiger moms and dads and even a psychological evaluation of Jennifer's mental state is given. All the different

aspects are given attention, often backed up by statements from professionals or literature.

Moreover, the different perspectives of the people involved are also explored. Naturally, a lot of attention is spent on Jennifer's side of the story and what made her plan the murder of her parents. In addition, the perspectives of her family (most prominently her father and brother) and her boyfriend are highlighted, which allows you to decide for yourself how you think and feel about everything. It perhaps gives you a more nuanced view.

The only thing that I did not like about the book was its structure. It felt unnatural to me that the trial was discussed before it was revealed what really went down during planning and execution of the murder that night.

However, this is only a small downside to an otherwise very good book. It is extremely informative and an interesting read. I'd recommend it to anyone who is interested in criminal law, crime or psychology.

♥ Marlene♥ says

If you are interested in psychology you will enjoy this book. Half of the book is about how she did it and then why. That being said I did find it interesting. Like the differences between raising a child in the western manner (which in my opinion has changed from parents being parents to parents walking on tiptoes around their children. Not learning them that no is no, constantly trying to protect them for everything so when they then become adults, they are not able to cope with the real world where they will have to adjust but lacking the tools to do so.) Okay rant over, the difference between the western way and the Asian way. The Asian way it is all about respect and obeying the parents but also about setting very high goals for their children. Many Asian are very well educated. That sounds nice but a lot of parents also do not compliment their kids thinking that once they do the kids will stop working so hard and as someone who as a child was also criticized a lot and hardly received compliments I know from experience it makes you insecure and you become a pleaser. That was what happened with Jennifer but she was also a psychopath lacking empathy.

Because I do enjoy talking about psychology I did enjoy this book although with out there would not have been much substance because the main characters of this book did not want to cooperate with the author.
3.5*

Lee says

This was a very dark read and I was totally captivated by it. It is fascinating to see how the human mind would drive a young woman to seek such revenge on parents who tried to give her the world. Her parents were very tough on her, expecting a lot educationally, in regards to family obligations and cultural activities and it is this that drove Jennifer away from them looking for an escape. Jennifer is a compulsive liar, manipulative, has low self esteem and self worth and would go to remarkable efforts to hide her real life and thoughts from everyone around her. She wanted to please her parents by being the best at everything, but once smitten by the love of a boy this all began to slip away. Jennifer's answer to this was to continue to lie, forge documents to say she was excelling at university and in her musical studies and basically live a double life. Eventually it all becomes too much and cracks appear that will then lead to her downfall and sadly the lives of her parents and brother. Well written and highly recommended.

Louise Wilson says

A young woman left her mother for dead and her father riddled with bullets.

Jennifer Pan seems like a model daughter. An ideal child who was studying to become a pharmacist. But Jennifer had a darker side. She spent her days in the arms of her sweetheart Daniel. She would lie about her whereabouts. She forged school documents, invent fake jobs and even a fictitious apartment. Then her father discovers her double life. His ultimatum is severe and so was her revenge.

I like true crime stories and this one did not disappoint.

I would like to thank NetGalley, Dundurn and the author Jeremy Grimaldi for my ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Rachel (TheShadesofOrange) says

3.5 Stars

The story behind this book was incredibly compelling. This book begs the question: what would drive a young woman to plan the murder of her own parents? I found the first chapters very engaging, but some of the later section dragged due unnecessary details. This is quite a dark and depressing book, but it will appeal to fans of the true crime genre.

TC says

Originally attracted to this case because of Karen Ho's amazing telling in *Toronto Life* magazine in 2015, I was excited to find an entire book about it that I hoped would give even more details on the girl at the center of it all, Jennifer Pan.

There are details here, to be sure. I know a lot more about her, and her co-conspirators, including her boyfriend. I also learned a bit more about her family. But unfortunately, those interesting facts were buried in this tomb of clunky prose that was just ham-fisted together. For example, early on there's a chapter that just comes from nowhere, telling us the life story of a hardened criminal named Eric Carty. It is not tied together at all with what came before, even though by chapter's end we eventually understand that this person will become important in this story.

Had that story been told like a story, unfolding chronologically, it would have been easier to read. Its impact would have been greater. The details would make more sense in their context. And we could have been spared much of the gorp in the last section which is full of psycho-babble and armchair sociology. As fate would have, this section is also the one with the most interesting details, as it does actually focus mostly on Jennifer and her life of lies. The author really makes you work.

The rest of the book is really about the trial, including a lot of mechanical details on it. But even that is not

told in a way that makes for compelling courtroom drama, even though it supposedly was a dramatic trial.

The author will probably blame this book's problems on the fact he could not get access to primary sources. All the main characters in this saga turned him down for interviews (which he whines about quite a bit at the end). In their absence, he fills the pages with quotes from friend-of-friends and unattributed monologues from some of the key people (including Jennifer) that I assume were from police interrogations—I don't know for sure, since there isn't a single end note or citation for anything said here. When he ran out of that stuff, he quoted random message board users and a shrink he found willing to provide a psychological assessment of Jennifer based just on his notes.

Granted, that assessment is still interesting, and it confirms what I always suspected: Jennifer's story is less about the downside of tiger parenting, as many opined on this tale, and more about a garden-variety sociopath who was expert at manipulating. By the end of this frustratingly assembled book, I had no doubt that she was not just some sad girl who drowned in a sea of lies she created to try to live up to expectations, and was instead just someone who became expert at acting whatever part was necessary to get her way.

So admittedly, I'm now a little less interested in this story, because I'm not sure that Jen Pan was ever anything other than evil, and just-plain-evil isn't really that interesting. But I would probably still appreciate reading a better book about her that is written by someone more skilled at both obtaining interviews, and in editing it all together into a cohesive narrative. Hopefully there will be one someday.

(Post-script edit: After reading through the other reviews, which I never do until I write my own, I would like to point out that unlike apparently the majority of the readers here, my copy was *not* supplied for free by anyone—I bought it with real money from Amazon, brand new; so the author got his pay from me. Not sure which is worse for an author—getting praise from people who you earned nothing from, or getting paid by someone who slagged on you. But anyway, there's **my** FTC disclaimer.)

Jeanette says

The first third of the book is linear in time from the event of the crime- a truly horrific November night. Just almost exactly 15 minutes of terror for the Pan parents and yet horrendous in both the results and the applications to why it occurred. Staged as if it were a robbery? Jennifer Pan being in the house the entire time of the break-in, but on the top floor tied to a banister. Just.

The thorough series of Jennifer Pan interrogations by the Toronto area police were absolutely 5 star.

It's rather the rest of the book, the other Parts (divided that way with the big P) that flawed this for me. Not that they lead you into an error of factual progressions, but because of the way it was written. Style jumps and at times with the suspects and within all the telephone applications, it is so wandering that after reading a page or 3 twice? Not clear to me, even after a reread. It didn't help that the conversations were in such severe dialect that they needed to be interpreted. And at times, the cop who was the interpreter, just didn't. Jennifer had two mobile phones and there were multitude "burner" phones. It would have been SO more instructive to list the contents of order of calls in real time for each, IMHO. Instead of the way it was done. But beyond that there were lines of material that didn't intersect with the body of the suspect connections already presented.

This is one of those cases (like the Casey Anthony) in which the cause and the outcome conspire to a level of

real hatred, vitriol for the perp. And in this one, because she did not pull the trigger, and because of how premeditated the situation truly was, it was probably at a top rung level, the hate lash.

Because of Jennifer's appearance and style of speaking- the dichotomy seemed even worse? But regardless of all this public audience reality, the "voice" of this book was the one aspect that made me downgrade it 1 whole star. There seemed to me to be judgmental and hard levels of affect in the writer's voice and in word usage and application. Not just reporting the facts and fall outs for the crime, but also using words that slant the entire outlook about it. Almost exactly as the USA media does to the news for the "other" side's politico. Not in an English such as- "This man stated this etc. etc." But in the form of- "This man claimed etc. etc. and of course, we rolled our eyes as the audience smirked." That's a subtle but truly different exposure that I rarely see in this genre. And I read many non-fiction for this category.

The Canadian differences in interrogation permissions, ability to keep a suspect in jail surrounds and close proximity, and especially the complete listings from all those different phone records (some of which were from people totally unconnected to the committing of this crime except by happenstance of business or relative/blood connection)! This is so different that most of the countries I read for non-fiction crime! Although in many nations it is guilty until proven innocent, the long telephone conversation disclosures would not have taken place. And many have a very limited time to hold a suspect. Yet many do not. But the only clearly stated, IMHO, as a variance procedure was in regards to permissions to use the Reid Technique of authority prevarication and other evidence exposures as "real" facts during inquiry. That is not only in opposition to the USA law, but also to many other locals on different continents. It would be a form of bullying that is against the rights of the citizens accused.

But what truly gave me the direction of the 3 star instead of the 4 star was the numbers of pages and professional analysis in numbers for the "tiger parents". Some of it was worth the read but at least half was not. And the "facts" of the stats were bias, as well. Because in real numbers it is HARDER for Asian students to be accepted in prestige establishments than it is for other races. The quotas are in identity politics and their competition is extreme against other Asians.

In this story the perps were all different Asian races and most were split family origins in two or three places. Not only for their lives, but most of their parents' lives. Jennifer's father was a perfect example. At the fall of Saigon he was 22.

Jennifer did not "fit". Not into her family structure, nor into her larger environment. Language forms and context, style of approach, self-identity coupled with that tech, make believe thinking- all of it was a terrible fit to the actual place, time she lived within. To use her race and parental style alone as such a criteria for the psychobabble and other authors' interpretation? Well, I thought it a stereotypical cheap shot approach. And like describing the Titanic disaster by a fine portraiture of the iceberg that appeared above the water line.

The ending section with the present day outcomes was done rather well. Most of those would not be interviewed and it is highly understandable why. Also it is SO ironic that Jennifer clearly resides in the easiest prison, the most genial life for her personality and by far the least aggressive or distressing living arrangements. She THRIVED on being completely supported without any onus for being hard at work or schooling. She did it for 7 or 8 years straight by lying about her daily placements. That's part of the core of why she couldn't leave family existing as they were (support and "home") or couldn't stay either (too much limitation on her movements and nasty verbal feedback for her behaviors). Jennifer didn't want to continue the lie pyramid for a decade of years. Those constructions were collapsing into a kind of internment besides. Although despite this, she did NOT want to be self-sustaining and do what it took to be self-sustaining,

either. Yes, very ironic her present outcome in such an easy living sentencing.

Lastly, it seems that this 3 plus 1- as a group? The stupidity of how it occurred and the lack of any intelligence toward not being discovered? Incredulous that they could have thought that the drug business or any other gang or past loyalty would have sufficed to cover their tracks. Why would they not understand that it was far better to commit when Jennifer was not home. The door opening was barely a cipher? Most criminals have far more considerable savvy.

Well, with no DNA or physical evidence- and without the Reid Technique use in great depth of lying- I doubt they would have gotten the sentences that they did get. Most will be out before they are 50. I don't agree with parole for one after 6-9 years. These are dangerous individuals. All of them.

Jaidee says

4.5 "upsetting, riveting, excellent" stars !!!

2017 Honorable Mention Read

Mr. Grimaldi has written a remarkable book. This is one of the best true crime books I have read and I have read a few hundred since my early teens.

Look at the homely plain Asian girl on the cover. Could she have arranged, organized a murder scheme that left her mother dead and her father desolate and in chronic pain. The facts of this case are terribly upsetting and frightening. I followed this case over the years and the way the news outlets portrayed Ms. Pan was largely erroneous although the facts were detailed and to the point.

In fact a therapist who looked at this case from afar surmises that Ms. Pan is a psychopath. This is also how the media portrayed her as well. This is very misleading. Was Ms. Pan a longtime compulsive liar? Oh yes she was. We need to look at the motivations of the lies however. Ms. Pan was a highly sensitive girl that was excellent in many areas and superb in others. She was pushed from morning until night to achieve more and nothing was ever good enough for her papa. Her mother although softer vacillated between keeping the peace and standing by her husband. Jennifer Pan had little affection and much criticism. Very little nurturing and she failed to develop a secure sense of self. She crashed under the pressure and began to lie and cheat and manipulate all for the love of a misguided boy who had his own identity issues. Ms. Pan after twenty two years of parental rejection, and disappointment cracked and no longer turned her anger on herself through cutting, anxiety and dysphoria but turned her rage onto her parental figures who did not allow her an individual identity. The story unfolds from there....

I was hooked from the get go as the author very skillfully describes the crime and then the ensuing trial vividly and with good and interesting detail. Many true crime writers get this part right. However, Mr. Grimaldi goes much further and with a lot of depth describes Ms. Pan's developmental history, adolescent experiences and the progression of her lies to try and be an everyday teen, to manipulations to keep her boyfriend to the outright villainy of planning her parents' murder. Mr. Grimaldi consulted with parenting experts, asian-informed mental health workers, cultural theorists and a whole host of individuals that were directly involved in some way with Ms. Pan.

There is an excellent afterward by a psychologist who describes Ms. Pan through an attachment theory and

psychodynamic lens that very skillfully describes how Ms. Pan developed a wretched and distressing personality disorder. Although not named, I suspect that Ms. Pan suffers from very severe Dependent and Borderline personality disorders. Ms. Pan is not a psychopath that hurts others for the pleasure of it. She killed as she was psychologically annihilated and now she will pay the price for the rest of her life as will her father and brother. I am going to naively suggest that if this family had received family therapy intervention of an intensive sort when Ms. Pan was young and her parents had some parenting supports (they both likely had their own traumas as they came to Canada from Vietnam) this dark tragic unfolding of events could have been prevented.

I am glad this book is done despite its excellence as it is both horrifying and likely did not have to occur if people around this family had paid closer attention to the bomb that lay within Ms Jennifer Pan.

Highly recommended and I look forward to Mr. Grimaldi's next case !!

Amanda Jane says

A Daughter's Deadly Deception by Jeremy Grimaldi is as bone chilling as it is captivating. A true crime story of how a young woman does what would have to be considered the ultimate betrayal to her parents. They say that fact is stranger than fiction, well in this case that is certainly true.

On a Monday night at approximately 10:13 pm, in a quiet suburb on a quiet street, a home invasion takes place, a mother dead, a father shot in the face and a daughter tied upstairs listening to the desperate cries and pleas of her parents. She hears the shots that have killed her mother and watched her father bloody, staggering his way to the front door and collapsing outside. His daughter shouts out to her father asking if he is okay. Fortunately, the daughter has her mobile phone nearby and calls 911.

A tragic situation by any stretch of the imagination but what the police discover makes this one of the most harrowing cases that these seasoned, hardened Canadian detectives have ever come across.

The daughter, Jennifer Pan who was in the home invasion, was every parent's dream, whether it was school, Piano recitals or ice skating she was excellent almost to the point of being perfect. She was studying to be a pharmacist and had a part time job. From the outside looking in Jennifer, her brother Felix and her parents had what appeared to be more than a good life but a great life. The night of the home invasion shattered all of this forever.

I mentioned that Jennifer was almost perfect, but everything she portrayed was all fake. The only thing that she did perfect was lie and manipulate. She was not a good Asian girl, she lied to her parents constantly for years, she had a boyfriend her parents didn't know about.

The boyfriend's name was Daniel and the Pan family particularly her father Hann does not like him. Jennifer did not care what her parents thought, she would see Daniel any chance she got, they became pretty much addicted to one another. What Jennifer does to keep Daniel over the years almost beggars belief. When she wants something, she will find a way to have it by any means possible.

When Jennifer's father finds out about her web of lies and about seeing Daniel, he gives her an Ultimatum..an Ultimatum that changes the course of many people's lives forever.

I highly recommend this novel, to say the author Grimaldi has written a fascinating book would be an understatement. The author worked as a crime journalist on this case for 10 months, he knows what he is talking about! I myself have read many true crime books, and this is up there with the best. We are taken through the whole crime, interrogations, court testimonies, people that knew Jennifer, her childhood, to psychological evaluations. What I loved about the book, Grimaldi doesn't drag us through any of the boring testimonies or police interviews, we are given the incredible facts of one of the more disturbing cases in Canada's history.

An easy 5 ??????????

Thank you to Netgalley, Jeremy Grimaldi and the publisher Dundurn for a copy of this book in exchange for an honest and unbiased review.

Debbie says

This was definitely an in depth story of a girl who paid people to kill her parents. It took into account the culture of her race, the way she was being raised, how she was being treated by her parents, how she had been lying to her parents since 9th grade, etc.

It also talked about her psyche, how a person could turn out this way, what could have made her do this and what kind of state she was in at the time she did this.

There was a lot of detail. You can tell that the author spent a lot of time in writing this book.

It is amazing to me that this girl could have done that. It's also amazing how many texts she sent out and the messages that she wrote to her "boyfriend". This girl was definitely cray cray.

It was a good read, I did find my eyes glazing over several times when the author was talking about the culture and tiger woman. However, that's just me. The eerie part was at the very end with her cousin in 2016. That was creepy.

Thanks to Dundurn for approving my request and to Net Galley for providing me with a free e-galley in exchange for an honest review.

♥ says

This is a really thoroughly researched book, full of details about this strange case of an even stranger girl who hired a group of young men to kill her parents, though I did find the writing to be a little dry in certain places.

What I liked about it most was how insightful it was into who Jennifer Pan was. There's a lot of detail about her personal life and how she got to the point of planning the murder of her parents, but there's also a good amount of information and background on her family as well as the dynamics *within* the family. With so much info on all involved in the case, I also found the tone to be nicely unbiased. The author was equally as

sympathetic toward Jennifer's upbringing/troubles as he was critical of her actions and excuses, while at the same time never victim-blaming the parents but still shining a light on the psychological repercussions their harsh parental style/traditions may have had in playing a role in causing their daughter to make the choices she did.

Margaret Bryant says

What a fascinating -- and terrifying -- story!
