



Deadly Little Secrets: The Minister, His Mistress, and a Heartless Texas Murder

Kathryn Casey

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Ann Rule says, "Kathryn Casey is one of the best true crime writers today"—high praise indeed from the author of a host of nonfiction *New York Times* bestsellers including *Green River* and *The Stranger Beside Me*, the story of serial killer Ted Bundy. With *Deadly Little Secrets*, Casey once again explores the dark side of the Lone Star State, offering a riveting true story of a murderous Texas preacher responsible for the cold-blooded slaying of the mother of his children. Meticulously researched and spellbindingly told, *Deadly Little Secrets* pulls back the curtain on the horrific crimes of a supposed man of God who was more devoted to the Devil, and it demonstrates why such true crime luminaries as Edgar® Award winner Carleton Stowers and Gregg Olsen are confirmed Kathryn Casey fans.

And don't miss Kathryn Casey's latest book, *Deliver Us*, a riveting account of the brutal murders of young women in the I-45/Texas Killing Fields.

Deadly Little Secrets: The Minister, His Mistress, and a Heartless Texas Murder Details

Date : Published July 31st 2012 by Harper

ISBN : 9780062018557

Author : Kathryn Casey

Format : Paperback 456 pages

Genre : Crime, True Crime, Nonfiction, Mystery



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From Reader Review Deadly Little Secrets: The Minister, His Mistress, and a Heartless Texas Murder for online ebook

Melanie says

Matt Baker. Husband. Father. Rapist. Murderer. Sinister Minister. Yuck! I hate giving him the title of minister as he is so not worthy. I thought I knew everything there was to know about this narcissistic psycho from all of the news coverage. Turns out I was so wrong. Kathryn Casey delivers another extremely well-researched and written account of the man we thought we knew. What makes someone turn out the way Matt Baker did? Was it innate or learned behavior. Go inside this dark story and see for yourself the truly remarkable audacity of Matt Baker...throughout his entire life. Why didn't anyone stop him when they had the chance? This book contains all the details. I absolutely could not put it down! Kudos, Casey for another book deserving of 5 stars!

♥ Marlene♥ says

OMG. I know this book has raving reviews but after reading a few chapters, I wasn't sure if I wanted to read anymore.

I thought it would be another book where the victim is portrayed as an angel with no faults at all. Ann Rule has a tendency to write like that and it seems more and more true crime authors are copying this annoying habit.

Right now I am at page 138 and if I am honest I can't stand anyone. Not the victim, not the husband, not the people from all those churches who now what is going on but just want to get rid of **their** problem, not thinking one second of the people that will be also victimized because they do nothing. Funny that those people are exactly the ones that call themselves so religious. To me living religiously means doing good and being good to others.

Yes I get annoyed at people who are always so full of them selves, how religious they are and how well they behave, and live the life according to God, Allah, Buddha whatever but in the mean time, watch others suffer and do nothing.

Sorry pet peeve over.

Finished the book.

Well I must say it did get better after about 135 pages.

I feel awful for her the way she died and I know people make mistakes and hers was her husband. So sad for her children and her loved ones.

Okay there was more that confused me.

That there are so many churches and religious communities in America plus that as a young guy begin a minister you can go from one job to the other apparently no need to have any verification on how you were on your last job?

What also confused me all the stuff before the trial and it must not feel safe when there apparently are so many prosecutors who only take a case to trial, if they are sure to win it. To me that does not sound like a great legal system. Or that they only take cases because the publicity will be good for them.

Then I also was annoyed by the police department. O how they hate to be wrong, like the religious people in this book, they preferred to wipe it all under the table and pretend it did not happen.

Please do not think I am some American basher. Yes I know those people exist, they hate everything that has to do with the USA. Well not me, I like the country and would love to go back one day to see more of it.

Okay back to the book. Not sure what to give it. I wish we were able to give half a stars cause then it would be 3.5.

Story was very slow at times and as I mentioned above sometimes very one sided. I did enjoy the book and the writing except for that.

O wait and why why why? Why do so many true crime authors find it necessary to spill all in the first chapter or prologue.

If it is the prologue I at least know that can be the case but in this book chapter 1 told everything what was going to happen in this book.

Boy I was glad I skipped it and instead searched for where it all began ..

3.5 stars

Ronnie Cramer says

This the story of a church-recreation student, later pastor, with a habit of sexually harassing women--and worse. He gets married, graduates, and then moves from job to job, sending up red flags and overstaying his welcome wherever he goes. At one point he's at the hospital visiting his critically ill daughter, and a young woman (the friend of an in-law) stops by to show support for the family. She is warned about his reputation, but assures herself, "He's not going to hit on me in the hospital with his daughter maybe dying. No one would do that." But that's exactly what happens (facepalm). Later, to no one's surprise, he kills his wife to be with a sexy, divorced parishioner. Her death has been made to look like a suicide, and the local cops sweep the case under the rug after their brief, botched "investigation." The rest of the book is about the victim's mother and her heroic efforts to get someone in law enforcement to take a more serious look at the case.

Traci Cook says

I knew Matt and Kari the summer they met, when we all worked at the FBC Waco Day Camp. Kari's mom is good friends with my mother-in-law, both residing in Waco, and my heart breaks all over again reading this book and the misery Kari's family has been through. The book is thoroughly researched and presented in an easy-to-read, page-turner fashion. I haven't slept much the past 24 hours as I couldn't put it down! Huge thanks to Kathryn Casey for her honest and straightforward treatment of all involved.

Heather Fineisen says

My husband gets a little worried when I go on my Snapped and ID Channel marathons, and every once in awhile I need a true crime book fix. This one is one of those stories that you know how it ends but the author manages to keep you interested throughout. Casey does presents the facts without too many winks and the victim and family members are relatable. You will read this, and think you just may know these people.

Marianne Stehr says

This is well written. I wish it was fiction it reads just like it! Very well worth the read. I did not know the story so it was very interesting to me

Elizabeth says

A Baptist minister who isn't what he seems kills his wife by making it look like a suicide. He almost got away with it except for her family and friends who never gave up in the search for justice.

Amy Craft says

This story is close to my heart as Kari was a childhood friend of mine. I followed every detail of the story and there were still a few details in the book that I did not know. It made me loathe Matt Baker even more. I am so happy their daughters are with the Dulins now do they can have as normal a life as possible. The book does read like a 48hrs episode, but I like that. There are so many details that can't be left out. This is one of those stories that will make you think about people and relationships.

SAM says

There's books on my to-read list that have been there since day 1. I have a habit of only buying the most recent additions to the list so i broke the cycle and bought Deadly Little Secrets.

This isn't going to be a long review. There are a lot of similarities between Kathryn Casey and Ann Rule, although based on this i do prefer Ann Rule's writing style. Of the books I've read she'll usually write about crimes that have multiple layers, with different stories that spin off from the main crime. Despite the epic title that Deadly Little Secrets has the story is fairly straightforward and perhaps 430 pages is a bit overkill. By no means is this a bad book as it's well researched and well written it just never became more than an average true crime book. I hadn't read about the case beforehand but it was obvious what the conclusion would be. Whether this is down to the writing style or how simple the case was i'm not sure. I just know that something like Everything She Ever Wanted had me guessing until the end.

I've added another Kathryn Casey to my list but it might be on there a while.

Mikey B. says

A true crime of a Baptist chaplain (Matt Baker) who murdered his wife (Kari), but at first successfully made it look like she committed suicide. He would have gotten away with this if not for the persistent investigations of Kari's sisters and parents.

The local police force was definitely Mickey Mouse; they didn't even want to do an autopsy when the suicide/crime scene looked very suspicious. The last one hundred pages had a shocking revelation thanks to an investigator who was doing his job.

The author goes into many details of the families of the murdered spouse and the Baptist minister. It's definitely a gripping read and fortunately conclusive. The Baptist minister or chaplain was definitely a creepy guy with a long-recorded history of predatory sexual behaviour. So I guess Baptists, like other organized religions, overlook transgressions to protect the image of their church. Also, for Chaplain Matt Baker lying and deception was first nature.

My Reaction:(view spoiler)

Jane says

This book can be tedious at times, but all the details are important to understand all the people involved. This story is a true story which happened a few years ago and what the deceased's family had to go through to show that she was murdered by her husband instead of committing suicide. While reading this, you can see red flags all over the place. As a Pastor's wife myself, I understand that you will defend your husband/pastor publicly. Though I would hope that many of us would start seeing a pattern and start questioning events in private and investigate those events. Kari did not see the red flags until just before her death. It was too late for her.

This book delves into so many issues about personalities, possible mental disorders, manipulation, life, love, faith and much more. This is a very sad story and my heart aches for the daughters who have lost so much.

Danielle Woods says

Very good true story! I got the chills when the author mentioned that Matt baker had looked at a church in Longview! Such a sad story about a very twisted man. I know he may not of confessed to killing Kassidy but I know he had something to do with it! He will get what is coming to him! I pray his daughters can find a way to move on and live their lives in a positive way.

Shaun says

My family doesn't quite get my affinity for the true crime genre. "Why do you like reading about murder?" my kids have asked on more than one occasion. Of course, what I explain, but what they don't quite understand, is my interest has nothing to do with the murder itself. I'm fascinated by why people do the things they do. I'm also intrigued by the ability of different parties to create completely different narratives about the same event.

Fooling others is often a conscious act that requires awareness and effort, while fooling ourselves seems virtually effortless.

In the first chapter of *Deadly Little Secrets* we learn a minister kills his wife. The remainder of the book is spent detailing the events leading up to the murder followed up by a description of how the killer almost gets away with his crime if only because no one wants to believe a man of God is capable of such a heinous act.

As a case study, this was a fascinating book on many levels. And unlike some true crime that simply recants the facts (the who, what, when and where), I felt Casey did a good job of exploring the why.

Each time I finish something like this I am left feeling unsettled because it occurs to me that all too often there is no such thing as THE TRUTH. The truth is whatever we want it to be. We (actually our brains) create a narrative that allows us to dismiss that which doesn't jive with our view of the world. What resonates as truth depends on our reference point.

Take this quote from the last paragraph of the book. The person speaking is the mother of the murdered woman who spent the better part of two years fighting to see the murderer was brought to justice. And even after her son-in-law is convicted, she must fight for custody of her granddaughters.

This has been the most difficult journey of our lives. Parents aren't supposed to survive their children. A wife isn't supposed to be murdered by her husband. And precious granddaughters aren't supposed to have their childhoods ripped from them. But I have witnessed God's love and grace in the most incredible way during these five years. You see love really does trump evil.

The person speaking is thanking God for his love and grace...but this is the same God who allowed her daughter to be murdered by said daughter's philandering husband. This is the same God who allowed her son-in-law to evade the law for too many years. This is the same God who allowed her grandchildren to be brainwashed by their paternal grandparents. Love really does trump evil...but Kari is dead? She loved her children and her family...actually, she professed to love her husband. How exactly did love trump evil? Because it got the last laugh? By whose litmus?

God didn't bring justice to this family. The family who refused to believe that Kari would kill herself along with those who investigated and prosecuted did. The whole thing is fascinating. Again and again events in this book demonstrated how we interpret what happens in a way that fits our ideas about the world. For example, Matt Baker killed his wife because he was evil...not because he was a sociopath who may not be capable of feeling empathy (possibly through no fault of his own). God's love and grace prevailed because, in the end, Matt Baker was convicted...not God's indifference allowed a mother to be killed and taken from

her children in the first place. Matt Baker couldn't possibly have killed his wife because he was a man of God that had dedicated his life to helping others...not Matt was a sexual predator who just happened to look like a normal guy.

Another point of interest that often comes up in these types of books has to do with the fact that there are always warning signs. The people who do really bad things...they don't start off by murdering their wives. They generally escalate to murder. Matt Baker had a history of sexually assaulting women/sexually inappropriate behavior...yet few were willing to hold him accountable. After all, no one wanted to ruin this handsome young man's budding career as a minister and servant of God. Even Kari's own family excused sexually inappropriate behavior they had witnessed because no one wanted to "hurt" Kari. It's a common theme that plays out over and over again. And Kari turned a blind eye to multiple allegations about her husband's inappropriate behavior because, of course, his explanation--that these women misinterpreted his actions/words--fit her narrative that she had a loving and committed husband, who was also a man of God.

Bottom line: Good stuff for those interested in such things.

Seluca says

Four stars for Casey's level-headed writing and attention to detail but I can't go the whole enchilada of five stars because I need a little bit more conclusion-drawing (for lack of a better way to put it) from Casey instead of the weed-polishing she serves up to keep her sources from balking. The first ~~second~~ time I read this (recovering from surgery in 2013) I was so irritated with the police, coroner, judge and prosecutor that I did not really have a moment to think about all the ways "regular folks" helped Matt Baker slip through the cracks—because make no mistake this snake was doing snake-like things for *years* before anyone deigned to stop him. Hell, even Kari's family decided to "keep the peace" instead of calling him out on his scuzzy and often criminal behavior, and don't get me started on all of the collegiate and church people who didn't want to "ruin a good boy's prospects on hearsay" and allowed Baker to move to another church/job/neighborhood. I mean, I hope Baylor understands that had they taken Laura's charge against Matt (he sexually assaulted her on the job in a locker room) seriously and either had him arrested or expelled him that Kari would probably be alive today (of course, it's Matt Baker so someone else would probably be raped or dead but still). On top of all of the law enforcement idiocy and misconduct, it's just depressing to think of all of the other people who failed Kari Baker, including herself every time she was presented with Matt's immoral and criminal behavior and shoved it off.

Original review from 2014

I'd forgotten that I read this last summer when I had my surgery but I decided to read it again because I loathe Matt Baker and it was interesting to read this back-to-back with Casey's book on David Temple. I am not quite sure which one I find more loathsome, perhaps there is a tie? Beyond the horror of their calculated murders, how do these men (and all of the wife-killers out there) continue to be so damned stupid after their wives' deaths? I mean, even awful cops (ugh the Baker case is so tragic for many reasons but doubly so because if the Dulins had not had money to spend on PIs and lawyers, there never would have been justice for Kari) notice when you're dating the mistress two weeks later.

I read this one on audio and Gillian Vance is amazing. Perfect for the material and I hope that she reads more books soon.

Harry MacLean says

Another weekend spent totally absorbed in one of Kathryn Casey's true crime books, this one "Deadly Little Secrets." Within two or three pages, I was totally absorbed. The pacing is compelling, and relentless. While we know from the beginning who is going to die, we don't know how or why, and Casey expertly leads the reader into the flow of events. The killer is someone we know, his motive is a familiar one, and yet we are shaken by his cold-bloodedness. And just when we think the story is over, Casey takes us around another bend, and then another. Another remarkable work by one of my favorite writers.
