



Plea of Insanity

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The prosecutor—Julia Vacanti. Young, ambitious, and facing a case that could launch her career. The defendant—David Marquette. A successful Miami surgeon and devoted family man. The victims—Marquette’s own wife and three small children. The plea—Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity. The perfect father and model husband, David Marquette seemingly just snapped one night. Or did he? His experienced defense team claims paranoid delusions caused by schizophrenia drove him to slaughter his entire family.

But the state suspects Marquette’s insanity defense is being fabricated to disguise murders that were cold-blooded and calculated. If convicted, Marquette faces the death penalty. If found insane, he would walk free. To bring a killer to justice, Julia will have to journey into the mind of madness herself, embarking on a terrifying journey back into her own past—something she has struggled with for fifteen years. And this will lead her to confront a future so chilling, she’s not sure she will ever be able to face it...

Plea of Insanity Details

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From Reader Review Plea of Insanity for online ebook

Anne Trinkle says

Very suspenseful but the ending was HORRIBLE. Creepy and awful.

The Badger says

For an example as to why people not licensed in mental health should not write books with mental health as the main topic, please read this train wreck of a book.

First of all, the "Schizophrenic" defendant was being administered an antipsychotic (Thorazine) that is conservatively prescribed as there are newer drugs with less side effects. It's a first generation antipsychotic, and is used cautiously as it can cause permanent side effects such as tardive dyskinesia, which the defendant was already experiencing (tongue rolling).

However, for the defendant to be on such a high dose of meds, he wouldn't be competent to stand trial. Oddly, even his own lawyer didn't notice that the defendant was a vegetable. And yet... He still managed to yell out that he killed his family to save them (at the ideal moment, nonetheless). This wouldn't have been possible considering how drugged he was.

Also odd was the fact that no one considered the fact that the defendant drove three hours to kill his family, giving him enough time to get back to his seminar. That shows intent and premeditation, Schizophrenic or not. He knew what he was going to do was wrong, which is why he planned it so that he'd have an alibi. That throws the insanity plea out the window, and I don't understand why it wasn't a major factor for the prosecution.

Finally, it's a myth that Schizophrenics are highly dangerous. In fact, it's PSYCHOSIS that's the cause of 5% of crime, and you don't have to be Schizophrenic to be psychotic. 10% of Schizophrenics commit suicide, and more Schizophrenics are the victims of violent crimes than the perpetrators. Think about that, because Schizophrenics are portrayed in this book as possessing some sort of "killer" gene.

Julie says

Plea of Insanity by Jilliane Hoffman is a 2014 Thomas & Mercer publication.

This book was originally published back in 2008, and although that isn't all that long ago, this book had a dated feel to it, for some reason.

I have enjoyed several of the thought provoking legal thrillers Ms. Hoffman has written, but this one falls way short of her usual standards.

When a man kills his entire family, he pleads insanity, which stirs up some truly horrific memories for

second chair attorney, Julia Vacanti.

Nearly everyone believes the defendant is faking mental illness, but because of her own personal demons, Julia begins to wonder if maybe, just maybe, the killer is telling the truth, which of course provides her with a moral dilemma.

While this set up could have been very suspenseful, full of courtroom banter, and shed light on mental illness at the same time, it becomes a disorganized mess, instead.

The case is a mixture of notorious cases like Jeffrey MacDonald and Scott Peterson, with a Primal Fear element tossed in for good measure. But, the actual case takes a backseat to Julia's personal issues. Julia is tense, cries all the time, makes lots of professional blunders, and allows her personal feelings to intrude on her career, which of course could have dire consequences.

I have to say, I tried to like her, tried to relate, tried to understand her obsession, but ultimately I failed. I ended up being underwhelmed with the whole story, the characters, and the author's long winded diatribes about mental illness, that cropped up at every turn. The courtroom drama lacked suspense, the dialogue was boring, and the little twist at the end was very anti-climatic.

This author is a capable writer, so maybe this is just a one off, which happens to nearly every author if they write often enough, so I'll just put this one off to the side and forget it ever happened. I'm sure any future releases will measure up the level of quality I have come to expect from this author.

Frau Zentner says

Relativ langweilig und langatmig und teilweise nicht nachvollziehbar für mich. Es fing extrem gut an, lies dann aber stark nach.

Maggie James says

I have mixed feelings about this book. For most of it, it was a great read, but the plot collapsed during the latter stages. What particularly annoyed me was the non-resolution of several key points. I'm reluctant to say which ones, as I don't want to give plot spoilers, but a couple of important issues never got explained. The novel examines schizophrenia, so I'm guessing the author wanted to leave the reader also unsure what was real and what wasn't. As a literary device, though, that doesn't work in my opinion. Especially as Hoffman also stresses that for schizophrenics, they're convinced their world is real, with no doubts. The resolution of Marquette's trial also seemed unlikely. A shame, seeing as for 80% of the book, this was an entertaining read.

Donna says

In this book from 2009, Assistant State Attorney Julia Vacanti is chosen as 2nd chair in a highly public

murder trial. A medical doctor viciously murdered his wife and 3 young children and deliberately wounded himself to throw off suspicion. That didn't work for one second. Defended by a high priced attorney, the doctor pleads insanity. Unknown to her boss and co-workers, Julia has a past that will come back to haunt her.

If you are looking to read a book about schizophrenia, this one would be good. Mental illness is front and center in this story. Julia had her moments but overall, I didn't feel she was a strong character. I liked parts of the book but the ending paled for me. Suggestions were there concerning the twin brother, someone else doing the killing, or the doctor faking it, but none of these theories went anywhere. I wanted the twist to come. But I liked the writing style and would definitely read another book by this author.

Bev Taylor says

some fear madness. some choose it

julia is a young prosecutor who has been chosen to be second chair at a murder trial. h/e this is no ordinary murder trial - if there is such a thing. david marquette a renowned doctor is accused of butchering his own wife and 3 children after being wounded himself

he makes his plea - not guilty by reason of insanity and then it transpires he has dual nationality and it turns into an international media circus as france was not advised within 24 hours as decreed

add into this rick, who is leading julia, apart from being her lover and also looking to climb up the political and judicial ladder

finally, julia has a dark secret of her own that she truly does not know or understand but has always been buried and the present circumstances r now forcing it to the surface

will the truth of the case come out - whatever it is - and at what cost to both the defendant and julia

a well researched and told novel with good characters if a bit slow to start and also a lot of narrative of the workings of a florida court but i found quite a few holes in it

what r the odds of someone with julia's past being involved in such a case? guess this was necessary for the story but at times was confusing, like 2 novels in one

the police were blinkered from the beginning, not looking for anyone else; david would not have got a licence to practice with his past; her dog seemed forgotten at the end; how did her relationship with her aunt and uncle finish? finally u were left to decide whether david was guilty or not and what he was hiding

left me rather dissatisfied at the end

bev

Vicki Jaeger says

Hmmm. How to describe this one? The lead cast of characters:

Assistant District Attorney: Was a victim of violence as a child, has a schizophrenic brother that was connected to the violence. Is sleeping with...

District Attorney: Who assigns her to a high-profile case, though she's never done one before.

Defendant: A man accused of murder. He is either a schizophrenic or a psychopath with very rich parents.

Detective: Investigating the murder, is interested in the ADA.

The whole book is a giant mindgame about who is believable, and who will win. I wasn't happy with the ending, as I feel that the ADA was left more wounded than she was at the beginning. My preference would have been to have her go through hell as a cathartic experience and have her come out stronger at the end. Would be interested to see if others felt the same way.

Mathilda Grace says

Darf man einen offenbar schizophreniekranken Arzt, der des 4-fachen Mordes an seiner eigenen Familie angeklagt ist, zum Tode verurteilen?

Der Frage muss sich Anwältin Julia in "Vater Unser" stellen, und das ist nicht das Einzige, dem sie sich im Laufe der Geschichte stellen muss, denn sowohl der Angeklagte als auch sie selbst haben Geheimnisse, die ihrer beider Leben bald so richtig durcheinander wirbeln werden. Und als wäre das nicht schon genug Chaos in Julias Leben, das im Grunde nur zwischen Arbeit, Gerichtsprozessen und der kleinen Fickaffäre mit dem Oberstaatsanwält besteht, drängelt sich dann auch noch der ermittelnde Detective in dem Mordfall langsam, aber stetig in ihre Gedanken.

Und mehr sage ich jetzt nicht, denn das Buch ist viel zu dick, um den ganzen Inhalt in kurzen Worten wiederzugeben. Vor allem, da mit jedem weiteren Kapitel neue Ent- und weitere Verwicklungen auftauchen, die Julias ohnehin schon kompliziertes Leben noch verworrenen machen.

Ein sehr gutes Buch, das sich mit einer Krankheit befasst, die immer noch viel zu sehr in Schubladen gesteckt wird, weil man sie nur schwer versteht und noch weniger verständlich erklären kann. Wie soll man auch Mitgefühl mit jemandem empfinden, der seine eigene Frau und seine drei Kinder abschlachtet, weil sie angeblich vom Teufel besessen sind? Anderererseits, wie kann man diesen Mann mit gutem Gewissen in die Todeszelle schicken, wo doch ziemlich offensichtlich zu sein scheint, dass er nicht alle Latten am Zaun hat, um es mal so salopp zu bezeichnen.

Doch ist David Marquette wirklich unschuldig bzw. unzurechnungsfähig? Oder simuliert er das Ganze nur, um der Todesstrafe zu entgehen?

Ich gestehe, ich weiß es selbst jetzt nicht. Man kann den Leuten nicht in den Kopf gucken und das Buch ist so geschrieben, dass diese Frage nicht wirklich abschließend geklärt wird. Wie so oft bei Fällen von Schizophrenie.

Auf jeden Fall verzeuge ich volle Punktzahl und eine dicke Leseempfehlung für das Buch.

Alejandra says

After reading Jilliane Hoffman all I can say is John Grisham who? Damn this woman can write a wicked good legal thriller! Fast paced, on your toes action and always making you guess what the heck is gonna happen next.

Dr. David Marquette is a successful surgeon living the life in Miami. Married with three kids, he has a picture perfect life. That is, until he decides to slaughter his wife and children. Cue in Julia Valenciano, your ordinary "fight the trenches" lawyer. She is pleasantly surprised when she gets recruited for the prosecution as second chair, as this could be the launch her career needs. The defence is claiming Dr. Marquette is innocent by pleading insanity arguing that he is schizophrenic. From here, the action spins and swirls from gruesome crime scenes to flashbacks to Julia's childhood; where a terrible secret has been waiting to resurface. Will David Marquette be sentenced to death if found guilty or confined to a mental facility if found innocent? The ending will make your skin crawl, I guarantee it.

Eric_W says

There is a trend in genre fiction of the flawed hero, a protagonist with a drinking problem, two dead children, three ex-wives, four drug convictions, five ex-girlfriends, etc., the idea being, I guess, that the personal struggles of the detective/main character add something to the book besides bulk.

Personally, I often find these flaws distracting and unnecessary, adding nothing to the plot, but I suffer along because the vividness of the setting or intricacy of the story are appealing. But I always question the relevance of the backstory and often long for the elegance of Simenon, Leon, Christie, etc.

Julia Vacanti is a young ADA in Miami who is assigned the case of David Marquette, a physician who went nuts (term used advisedly) one night and stabbed his family to death. The case then revolves around Vacanti's own troubled past (she should never, ever, in a million years, been permitted to work this case given what happened with her brother and family) and her concern with the possible inheritability of schizophrenia.

Vacanti's romance with a lead detective was a bit forced, but the trial scenes were good.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

Don't start this book if you have to sleep, work or do anything. It's so hard to put it down!

Jojo says

Vielleicht bin ich einfach kein Fan von juristischen Krimis und Thrillern (wobei mir "Die Firma" von Grisham sehr gut gefallen hat). Mir hat dieses Buch auf jeden Fall nicht wirklich zugesagt.

Ich muss sagen, dass mir hier der Fokus zu sehr auf Julia und ihr Leiden gelegt war. Ich habe kein Problem damit, wenn Charaktere in solchen Büchern irgendwie ein Problem haben, Alkohol, Rauchen, beziehungsunfähig. Selbst ein schrecklicher Tod in der Familie, alles gut und schön. Aber hier war mir das alles zu sehr konstruiert. Julia hat ihre Familie auf schreckliche Weise verloren und das ist auch noch ähnlich abgelaufen, wie es jetzt bei der Familie Marquette der Fall war. Und natürlich wird sie von dem Staatsanwalt gefragt, ob sie als zweite Anwältin beim Prozess dabei sein möchte und natürlich kommen dann alle Erinnerungen wieder hervor und Julia bekommt das nicht wirklich auf die Reihe.

Außerdem waren ein paar Dinge dabei, wo ich mir gewünscht hätte, dass sie nicht nur am Rande erwähnt werden, sondern noch weitergeführt werden. In einem kurzen Kapitel wird nämlich erzählt, wie jemand eine Familie beschattet und eigentlich nur darauf wartet, sie umzubringen. Danach wird diese Sache aber überhaupt nicht mehr darauf eingegangen. Und eine weitere Sache in der Art wird noch eingebaut. Aber auch hier: Es passiert nichts weiter. Man hat fast als Leser das Gefühl, dass die Autorin noch irgendetwas einbauen musste, damit das ganze Buch eben nicht nur eine Wiedergabe des Prozesses gegen Marquette und eine Darstellung von Julias Privatleben ist.

Zusammengefasst: Eine gute Idee, die man durchaus besser ausschöpfen können. (Ich hatte zwischendurch eine Vermutung zur Handlung, was allerdings dann nicht eingetreten ist. Wenn ich mir es jetzt so überlege, wäre es toll gewesen, wenn sie so eingetreten wäre ...) Mir war auch hier der Fokus zu sehr auf Julias privaten Problemen und gerade das Ende hat mir überhaupt nicht gefallen. Damit ich aber nicht spoiler, schreibe ich dazu mal besser nichts weiter ...

Leider kann ich dem Buch nicht mehr als 2 von 5 Sternen geben und möchte es auch niemandem empfehlen ...

Pamela says

This was a really boring book. It had a great premise but nothing of interest happened with it. Every time I thought it would pick up it didn't. I felt robbed with the ending as there really wasn't one. To read through the slow boring book you would at least hope for some conclusion. How she ended it was a joke. And her heroine, annoying, naive and stupid comes to mind.

Renita D'Silva says

Thrilling and unputdownable. A fast paced, fab read.
