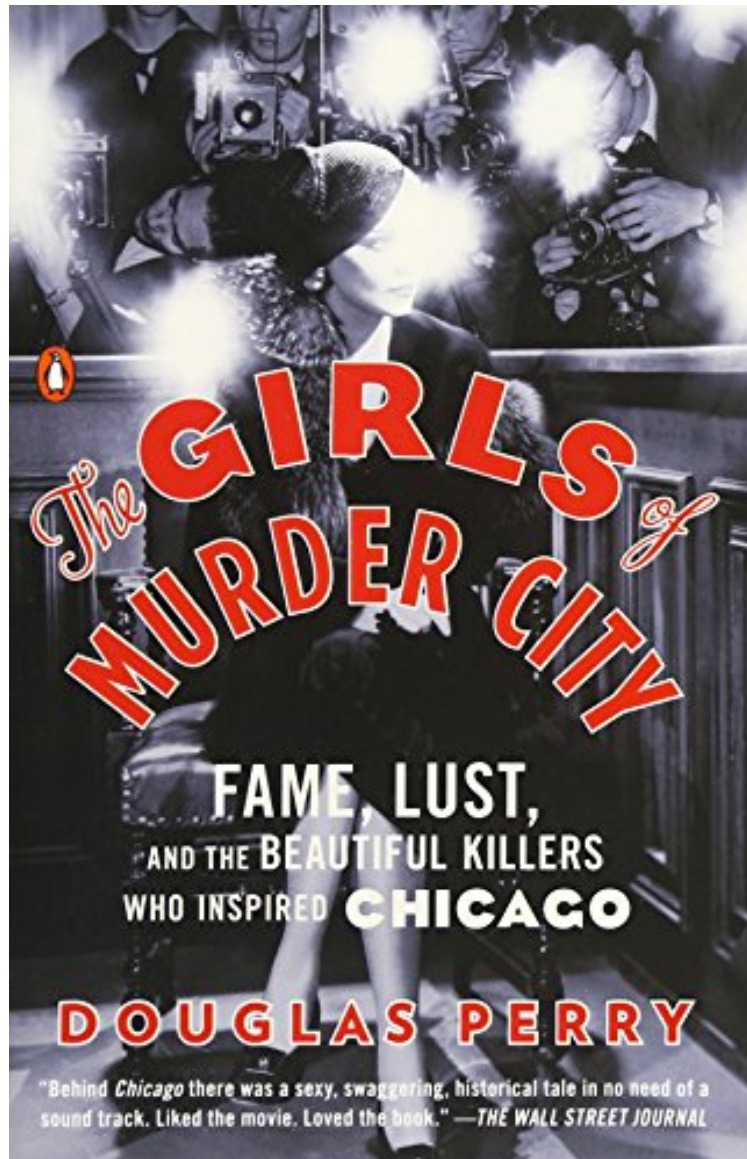


[Download ebook] The Girls of Murder City: Fame, Lust, and the Beautiful Killers Who Inspired Chicago

# The Girls of Murder City: Fame, Lust, and the Beautiful Killers Who Inspired Chicago

*Douglas Perry*

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#382228 in Books Douglas Perry 2011-07-26 2011-07-26 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .70 x 5.50l, .61 #File Name: 0143119222336 pages The Girls of Murder City Fame Lust and the Beautiful Killers Who Inspired Chicago | File size: 67.Mb

**Douglas Perry : The Girls of Murder City: Fame, Lust, and the Beautiful Killers Who Inspired Chicago** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Girls of Murder City: Fame, Lust, and the Beautiful Killers Who Inspired Chicago:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A must read for fans of true crime, Chicago history and the early years of the 20th century  
By Andy Glass  
As a native of Chicago, I simply ate this book up. I've always been interested in Chicago history, but this book offered a different wrinkle. It's based on the story that led to the writing of the play Chicago - yes, that Chicago, which was turned into an Oscar winning musical. Perry tells the story of the actual Girls of Murder City - the murderesses who were sensationalized in the late teens in Chicago, and the "girl reporter," Maurine Watkins who covered their stories (and wrote the original play) for the Chicago Tribune. Overlapping the last chapters was the infamous Leopold and Loeb murder, which helps put the whole story in a familiar time and place. And also very interesting were the late chapters of the book detailing Ms. Watkins' story following the production of the play and her stint in Hollywood. A must read for fans of true crime, Chicago history and the early years of the 20th century.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. reads like fiction  
By Grrrrr  
The setting: Chicago, 1920's, Jazz Age, prohibition, flappers and all the fun that entails. Newspapers fighting for the top spot, the best stories. And a wave of girl murderers. Women were shooting, stabbing, poisoning their lovers, their husbands. And the all-male juries kept letting them go free. The Girls of Murder City focuses mostly on the trials of Belva Gaertner and Beulah Annan. Belva, a rich divorcee was accused of killing one of her lovers in a car outside her apartment. Beulah, is a married woman, accused of killing her lover after he threatens to leave her. These two women loved the spotlight and could not stop talking to the press about what they had done. And the public loved them! Maurine Watkins is a small-town girl who moves to Chicago to cover the crime beat for the Chicago Tribune and eventually writes the play Chicago, that the musical is based on. I don't read a lot of non-fiction but this is the kind I like when I do. It reads like fiction and was very entertaining. Besides covering the trials of these two women, it discussed other famous women on Murderess Row, the reporters who cover these stories and sit outside their cells writing every word they say. The book also discusses the competition between newspapers, journalism and the public's fascination with these women killers. One woman, kills her husband or lover, I can't remember which, flees Chicago then eventually commits suicide. Thousands of people mobbed her funeral, overwhelming her family and the police. This was very enjoyable. I am one of the few people who has not seen the musical Chicago, not even the movie version, but I loved this account of the women who inspired it. The book was fast-paced entertainment, a great read. my rating 4.5/5  
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Colorful Account of Celebrity Murderesses  
By D\_shrink  
Let me say I liked the book. It is primarily the story of a novice Chicago Tribune crime reporter by the name of Maurine Watkins, who began her career covering female killers in the Windy City of 1924. Most of the book is taken up with her coverage of two major murder trials of the day in which one extremely beautiful woman named Beulah Annan killed her lover and then claimed he was trying to rape her while she was pregnant. She wasn't pregnant and she gave him the money to buy the cheap wine they drank as they made out on her sofa while her husband was at work. The other femme fatale was Belva 'Belle' Gaertner, a twice divorced socialite with important connections throughout the area due to her ex-husband, who seemed to relish the role being known as Chicago's biggest cuckold. Belva whacked her younger boyfriend in her car down the block from her house when he wanted to break it off and then claimed she couldn't remember anything about that night. Beulah and Belva both faced all male juries, who would never convict beauty regardless of the evidence, especially when they each had high powered legal help. Those of lesser beauty and/or sophistication did not always fare as well at the time. Before you think that couldn't happen today, perhaps consider the goings on with Paris, Lindsay, and Britney. The hook to the story is that Maurine quit her crime reporting shortly after these two trials and went back to grad school at Yale, wanting to be a playwright with a Broadway hit. She fashioned her play on all the girls murder trials she covered in Chicago, even using direct trial dialog calling the play 'The Brave Little Woman', but on advice from her mentor changed the name to CHICAGO CHICAGO The Original 1927 Film Restored and as we know that was done several times on Broadway and internationally plus had several versions with the 2002 version winning the Best Picture award Chicago (Widescreen Edition). Maurine covered several other murder stories and the book details them also and her rivalry with the other female crime reporters from other more feminist papers and derisively referred to as the 'SOB SISTERS', but the book basically focuses on these two 'girl gunners' as they are so often called in the book. She even covers part of the Bobby Franks murder by Nathan Leopold and Dicky Loew, but was disgusted by their motivation for the crime even more so than the reasons that Beulah and Belva gave for theirs. The story is pretty much told in a Damon Runyonesque voice moderated by Joe Friday's close clipped accounts. It was a nice friendly read at only 304pp and it may not want to make you become a crime reporter or attend law school, but it should provide some satisfaction on how the story finally ends for both these and other women discussed in the book. It's a great book to curl up by the fire with.

With a thrilling, fast-paced narrative, award-winning journalist Douglas Perry vividly captures the sensationalized circus atmosphere that gave rise to the concept of the celebrity criminal- and gave Chicago its most famous story. The Girls of Murder City recounts two scandalous, sex-fueled murder cases and how an intrepid "girl reporter" named Maurine Watkins turned the beautiful, media-savvy suspects-"Stylish Belva" and "Beautiful Beulah"-into the talk of the town. Fueled by rich period detail and a cast of characters who seemed destined for the stage, The Girls of Murder City is a crackling tale that simultaneously presents the freewheeling spirit of the Jazz Age and its sober repercussions.

From Publishers Weekly This jaunty retrospective of two Jazz Age trials introduces us to the real-life originals of the killer ladies of the musical Chicago and to the society that adored them. Journalist Perry (*The Sixteenth Minute: Life in the Aftermath of Fame*) revisits the 1924 cases of Belva Gaertner, a swanky divorcee, and Beulah Annan, a beautiful married woman, both accused of shooting their lovers to death. They were the most photogenic on Cook County Jail's Murderess' Row of defendants in a spate of woman-on-man killings that inflamed the press and captivated a public grown bored with gangland murders. (Perry's third heroine is skeptical female reporter Maurine Watkins, who bemoaned the inability of all-male Chicago juries to convict killers with pretty faces.) The author gives an entertaining, wised-up rundown of the cases and the surrounding media hoopla, which the defendants and their lawyers cannily manipulated. (Annan hired a fashion consultant for court appearances and falsely declared herself pregnant to win sympathy.) Beneath the sensationalism, Perry finds anxieties about changing sex roles as feisty flappers and aggressive career women barged into public consciousness; his savvy, flamboyant social history illuminates a dawning age of celebrity culture. Photos. (Aug. 9) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist \*Starred \* Maurine Watkins, a girl reporter with the Chicago Tribune in the 1920s, was the first to cover the sensational story of two Jazz Age women who killed their men with the insouciance they gave to filing their nails or rolling their stockings. Decades later, Bob Fosse made the pair of stylish killers internationally famous through his hit musical Chicago. In this account, journalist Perry illuminates both the murderesses who held court at Cook County Jail and the newspapers writers who showcased them. This is as much a book about journalism and social history as it is about crime. Perry re-creates the world of Front Page with vivid details from the era, including the workings of the Linotype machine, which allowed papers to expand from only a few pages in the late nineteenth century to several multipage editions a day. In Chicago, six papers engaged in vicious competition. At the center of the fray were the headlining-grabbing stories, often concerning crime and especially women committing murder, a phenomenon that increased 400 percent in 40 years. We follow shy Maurine Watkins, who left graduate school in classics at Radcliffe, as she is hired by the Tribune on a fluke and then goes on to get in-depth interviews and complete trial coverage of Beautiful Beulah Annan and Stylish Belva Gaertner, the models for Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly. This is a well-researched, fast-paced story behind the story. --Connie Fletcher "The recounting of the murders is gripping stuff, but where Perry shows a particularly gifted touch is in the sights and smells of a 1920s newsroom." -The Portland Oregonian "The Girls of Murder City spans several categories-true-crime, comedy, social history. It turns out that behind "Chicago" there was a sexy, swaggering, historical tale in no need of a soundtrack. Liked the movie. Loved the book." -The Wall Street Journal "Fans of true crime and popular history will enjoy the book's oversized female characters and its hardboiled background of crime and no punishment." -The Boston Globe "For true crime buffs, history fans or anyone interested in the roaring 1920s, this one's a sure-fire hit." -Minneapolis Star Tribune "Perry takes a sturdy foundation of murder, sex and Chicago's scandal-happy newspapers and builds a nonfiction marvel. His bouncy, exuberant prose perfectly complements the theatricality of the proceedings, and he deftly maneuvers away from the main story without ever losing momentum...The Girls of Murder City not only illustrates the origins of a new media monster, but reminds us that we've never been that innocent." -BookPage "A jazzy reprise of a time when the criminal justice system in Chicago let good-looking killers off the hook and newspapers exploited every lurid detail of dalliances turned fatal for their front pages." -Shelf Awareness "As entertaining as Chicago (on stage or screen), and far more informative, The Girls of Murder City recaptures a moment in which the Victorian feminine ideal was (and wasn't) giving way to the "churning change" of the flapper lifestyle - and ebulliently elucidates the emergence of the criminal as celebrity. It's this summer's "not guilty" pleasure." -NPR, Books We Like "Consistently entertaining...A chronicle of the wild spring and summer of 1924, when Chicago was afflicted with a seeming epidemic of female murderers." -Kirkus s "[A] well-researched, fast-paced story behind the story." -Booklist