



Little Shoes: The Sensational Depression-Era Murders That Became My Family's Secret

Pamela Everett

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In the summer of 1937, with the Depression deep and World War II looming, a California triple murder stunned an already grim nation. After a frantic week-long manhunt for the killer, a suspect emerged, and his sensational trial captivated audiences from coast to coast. Justice was swift, and the condemned man was buried away with the horrifying story.

But decades later, Pamela Everett, a lawyer and former journalist, starts digging, following up a cryptic comment her father once made about a tragedy in their past. Her journey is uniquely personal as she uncovers her family's secret history, but the investigation quickly takes unexpected turns into her professional wheelhouse.

Everett unearths a truly historic legal case that included one of the earliest criminal profiles in the United States, the genesis of modern sex offender laws, and the last man sentenced to hang in California. Digging deeper and drawing on her experience with wrongful convictions, Everett then raises detailed and haunting questions about whether the authorities got the right man. Having revived the case to its rightful place in history, she leaves us with enduring concerns about the death penalty then and now.

A journey chronicled through the mind of a lawyer and from the heart of a daughter, *Little Shoes* is both a captivating true crime story and a profoundly personal account of one family's struggle to cope with tragedy through the generations.

Little Shoes: The Sensational Depression-Era Murders That Became My Family's Secret Details

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J says

Enjoyed is the wrong word to use in describing my reaction to this book. It does, after all, describe a sensational murder.

I did find the book very interesting. As a lawyer--though not one who practices criminal law--and an amateur genealogist, I found the search to find out how a sensational murder affected the family of two victims to be a compelling read.

Karen & Gerard says

This book is hard to read because of what it describes, but it is gripping too which makes it hard to put down! The pacing of this book is well done. The writing really made me feel like I was right there. I always enjoy reading about true events that I am not up to speed on, but I can't say I enjoyed this. However, it is very good and am glad I read it! (Gerard's review)

This is a very sad and disturbing book! The author wrote this to memorialize the three girls who were murdered, two of which her family never spoke of much. I really didn't enjoy this one because not only was the murder of the three little girls horrible, but then it seemed to me that justice was not even served. I felt the guy who was convicted was really innocent! This book points out pitfalls in our criminal justice system when it comes to wrongful convictions. I found the research extremely interesting about eyewitnesses. The emotions I felt while reading this were sadness and anger. Much of the book moved very slowly for me, but things picked up once the trial got underway. Overall, this book is very unsettling. (Karen's review)

LibrarianJennifer says

I don't know how I feel about this book, and that bothers me. It is incredibly well researched and well written, but left me unsettled due to the nature of the subject.

Would recommend for true crime fans, but super huge TW: child murder and rape.

Synopsis: A woman researches the childhood murder of two of her aunts, previously kept secret by her father's family.

Spoiler: I assume all readers can agree that the convicted murder was a simple scapegoat. I don't fault the author for this at all, but I really wanted there to be more investigation into the other, very plausible, suspects.

Jill says

Beautiful!!

Thank you for sharing your families story even though it was was painful at times for this to be written. As a reader of the book, at times i wanted to cry and be angry. Thank you for great attention to details even with the most "painful" moments of the book there was still great attention to detail. Thank you again for sharing your story eventhough at times I'm sure you may have thought "can i finish this" I hope you have an immense sense of peace writing this.

Suzanne says

Wrongful Conviction???

An early case of a possible wrongful conviction. Long before testing and DNA was available. Did Dwyer really kill those little girls or was his confession coerced like so many since that time

Kate says

Very sad story about the murder of three little girls in 1937. Even sadder is the miscarriage of justice that led to a man with the IQ of a 9 year old being executed for their murders when he obviously was not the killer. I think the author is correct in her assessment of who the real killer was.

Ann says

To read this book about a family secret explored shortly after reading "Mindhunter" proved to be intriguing. The author, the niece of two of the little girls killed, uncovers the back story of this tragedy, including the likely news that the one convicted was not the killer. Rather the real killer could have been the guy who got away and committed more crimes across the country.

Pamela Everett describes the way that the police invited a psychiatrist to put together a profile of the killer. What that doctor described in 1937 fits with the profiles described in "Mindhunter."

The likely miscarriage of justice and the profound sadness at the loss of the three young lives makes for a painful story to read.

Marianne Hetzer Hawn says

Disturbing times two. 1) Every parent's nightmare comes true; three young girls lured from a crowded

playground in broad daylight and savagely murdered. 2) Was the wrong man targeted, badgered into confessing, tried, convicted and executed? Three families irreparably damaged. Have we made progress, since 1937, in keeping our children safe and guaranteeing due process for accused criminals?

Stephen Selbst says

A fascinating look at a sensational murder trial in Los Angeles in the 1930s, written by a relative of two of the victims. Pamela Everett tells the story of the crime and the trial skillfully and makes a strong argument that the wrong man may have been convicted and hanged. A great and sad story.

Myrna says

Memories of little shoes

A sweet memorial of the authors family members who were murdered in their innocence of childhood. The unfortunate killings of three little girls further compounded by hanging an innocent man in all likelihood.

Meghan says

I think there were a few issues with this book but it was a moving personal story from the author. It also brought back to life, however briefly, three little girls who were killed way before their time and had some insights into the grief of their families. Ultimately it was a bit unsatisfying but that was not the author's fault, but rather the investigators, prosecutors, and judges who seemed to take the easy way out. It was a worthwhile study of a very sad case.

Fishface says

An Enlightening Read About A Horrifying Story

This is a short read, but satisfying -- as satisfying as a horrific story like this probably can be. If you thought not much could be worse than a triple child murder, wait until you see what the author does with what I thought all this time was a clear, simple set of facts. Don't miss this book if you have any interest in family secrets, the legal system, true crime or learning the truth behind a legend.

Marialyce says

I found this book hard to place a star value upon.

Reading about this horrific crime was heart wrenching. The wanton murder of three little innocent girls, Madeline and Melba Everett and Jeanette Stephens was a crime that heralded in the age of the sex crime unit

and provided the country in 1937 the news of these young girls murders. They were only seven eight and nine and their young lives were tragically and mercilessly cut short by their killer.

Many years later, the author of this book, a niece to these girls, stumbled upon the fact that her dad was a brother to the Everett girls. She often wondered, although he never spoke of it, why he was so overprotective. Pamela Everett, being both a lawyer and a former journalist sought out information regarding her aunts she never knew of and the man who eventually was hanged for their murders, Albert Dyer.

Investigating the trial, Ms Everett discovers vast inconsistencies in the trial as well as the investigation into Albert Dyer. Dyer was a functional illiterate, a man with the IQ of about a ten year old who was a crossing guard and was accused and later convicted by a unanimous decision of the jury. He had confessed to the crime numerous times but then recanted and presented in each of his various confessions a different scenario. Was he capable of this crime, or was he so easily led that he would do anything people suggested to him?

Did Albert commit this crime or was he just the person whom it was most convenient to convict? This story is also in its own way a cautionary tale about the death penalty with the what if always being asked of whether a convicted person is truly the guilty person. It was for this reader a thought provoking book.

Thank you to Pamela Everett, Skyhorse Publishing, and Edelweiss for an advanced copy of this book.

You can also see my reviews on my blog <https://yayareadslotsofbooks.wordpress...>

Publishing May 29, 2018

Marilyn Shea says

This is a true crime book told by a person related to two of the child murder victims. As she had only sketchy newspaper articles and court documents to work from, I wondered how she was able to write the courtroom scenes complete with "he looked down at his shoes," and similar touches. So it has elements that were probably invented to help the flow of the story. And it was one of those awful, doomed stories of an accused man so cognitively impaired that he would smile when he thought he was "helping," happy to be the center of attention and little understanding that he was incriminating himself. It seems obvious, from the conflicting evidence and omissions, that he was not the person who committed the murders, and the man who probably did commit them was absent from all but the very first inquiries. These murders and the trial took place in the 1930s but I don't think we as a society have progressed much from that time in terms of assuming a suspect innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. It still is too common for someone who is a convenient target, often poor, uneducated and unsophisticated, to be railroaded into a guilty verdict. It is a terrifying prospect, to prove one's innocence, when the public and the media have found one guilty.

Jane Thompson says

True Crime Story

This is an interesting book. The author tells the long forgotten story of the murders of her aunts when they were children. The murders are horrifying, and so is the treatment of the defendant. Sure does a good job of

telling the story of their lives and deaths, and explaining why she thinks the wrong man as convicted and executed.
