



Beautifully Cruel

M. William Phelps

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“Phelps is the Harlan Coben of real-life thrillers.” —Allison Brennan

Iowa housewife Tracey Pittman Roberts seemed to have it all: natural beauty, three loving children, and a fairy tale second marriage to a wealthy businessman. But beneath the happy façade was a woman who used lies, manipulation, sex, ugly allegations, blackmail—and even murder—to serve her own selfish ends.

On December 13, 2001, police rushed to Tracey’s home after a shooting left her vulnerable young neighbor dead. Tracey claimed it was an act of self-defense. Nine gunshot wounds—and a decades-long trail of extortion, fabrication, fraud, and intimidation—said otherwise. Ten years after the crime, Tracey’s case finally went to trial in an explosive courtroom showdown. In a searing exploration of the criminal mind, bestselling investigative journalist M. William Phelps traces the saga of a psychopath who hid in plain sight—until her wicked ways caught up with her.

“Phelps dares to tread where few others will: into the mind of a killer.” —*TV Rage*

“Phelps is the king of true crime.” --Lynda Hirsch, *Creators Syndicate* columnist

“One of our most engaging crime journalists.” —Dr. Katherine Ramsland

**“Phelps treads dangerous ground like an Amazon jungle guide—fearless, compassionate, insightful.”
—Geoff Fitzpatrick, Executive Producer of *Dark Minds***

“Anything by Phelps is an eye-opening experience.” —*Suspense Magazine*

INCLUDES 16 PAGES OF DRAMATIC PHOTOS

Beautifully Cruel Details

Date : Published November 28th 2017 by Pinnacle

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Author : M. William Phelps

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Genre : Crime, True Crime, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review Beautifully Cruel for online ebook

Heather says

This book jumps around a bit and at times feels like many short stories banded together to make one book. It is not a bad book by any means and I enjoyed reading about this total nutcase/murderer. It always baffles me how crazy the characters are in these true crime books and this one is no different. My only complaint is with the narrator of this book. I have heard him narrate other books and while his dictation is clear, he chops up sentences, adding commas where none should exist. People don't talk that way and it comes across as phony, unnatural and for me, a distraction. Enjoy Phelps as an author and will always seek his books out.

Paula DeBoard says

True crime obsession continues...

This was a fascinating story, perfect for fans of Dateline and the ID Channel and people (like me) who miss all of A&E's true crime stories narrated by Bill Kurtis. Tracy Richter-Roberts was (is--she's serving a life sentence) one twisted killer. The narrative did seem repetitive at points, though, and skipped around a bit -- for that reason, the audio narrative wasn't the easiest to follow.

Jackson says

If you like predictable, boring, and repetitive books, then this is the one for you. I don't want to sound mean, but this was honestly one of the worst books I've ever read. He repeats so much information, and most of that information is obvious facts that I could have figured out as the story went along. It drags on for an eternity and has almost no twists or turns. You know what they say: you can't appreciate the good in life without the bad.

Elle's Book Blog says

Release Date: November 28, 2017

Genre: True Crime

True Crime novels have always held a special place in my heart (and on my bookcase). Unfortunately, I have been neglecting these books for some time because I have been so busy blogging romance that I let these other genres fall to the wayside. Well, not anymore. M. William Phelps has renewed my love for these novels with Beautifully Cruel.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Beautifully Cruel is a **True Crime** novel. If you are unfamiliar with this genre then I can tell you that these types of books detail various real life crime cases. They are not works of fiction that are made up but rather

books that have been carefully written using police interviews, victim interviews, and more. They are so interesting to me- I have my masters in psychology- because I love picking apart peoples mind who do bad things. Anyway, this book talks about the case of Tracey Pittman Robert, a deadly woman who has lived a life of crime and never really gotten caught. Until she murdered someone in cold blood... Someone who she said invaded her home with the intent to kill her and her kids.

This case is not an easy one to read. It features a woman who is so cold blooded and manipulative that it almost seems unreal even though it's not. Phelps does a wonderful job in detailing her crimes and what led up to the murder she committed and I was captivated by every sentence. What's even more interesting about this book is that it's not a cut and dry case. The killing didn't occur and days or weeks later she was arrested. It actually took 10 years to get her for this crime. If you read the book you'll see how this cold case became a hot media spectacle.

MY OVERALL THOUGHTS OF THE BOOK

I truly enjoyed reading this one and once my eyes fell to the page I became a junkie. I needed more and more and more. Unfortunately, it took me a little too long to read it as it is a bit long. However, with all the information NEEDED in order to understand this case it's no wonder the book was well over 400 pages. So essentially, I LIKED IT (a lot), but didn't LOVE it because it was so thick with information. I would recommend it though, and I hope people will give the book a chance because I don't think I have ever read about a woman so monstrous and manipulative in my life.

Recommended Read

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Amazon Kindle: <http://amzn.to/2CVAp3B>

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Becky says

I saw this case on Dateline then discovered Phelp's book. He's the master in writing the tale of a true crime(s). He leaves no stone unturned. Details can get tedious but he tempers them with a more personal touch, delving deeply into why!

Lisa Millett says

True Crime Thriller

Mr. Phelps is a masterful author in the true crime genre. I have read and enjoyed almost all of his books. He has such detail and background information which allows the reader to truly be involved in the story. In this

latest book he documents the true murder committed by Tracy Richter Pittman Roberts and the many other aliases of Tracy. During a supposed home invasion Tracy shot and killed a young man with a learning disability. She shot him in the back of the head 9 times several of which were while he was on the floor. Unfortunately she was such a good actress that she got away with it for many years before a dedicated police detective and a new D.A. Decided to investigate this cold case. The story will enthrall you and sicken you at the same time and make you continue to read to see if justice was done. An exceptional true crime book that I highly recommend to any and all true crime aficionados.

Ronnie Cramer says

The story of murderess Tracey Richter just seemed to get weirder with every page.

Valerity (Val) says

This is another great read by Phelps about a psychopathic female killer with lots of great investigation. Tracey Richter Pittman Roberts just seemed to have a desire for vengeance, always trying to get even with someone for something, and it seemed like she didn't care who she used to do it with. She got away with a lot of things in her life, but by the time of the book, it was really starting to catch up with her. The crime revolves around a home invasion happening on December 12, 2001 when she said 2 (later became 3 briefly) men came into her home where she was alone with her 3 children and attacked her. She fought back to protect them, and ended up breaking away, opening a gun safe, and shooting one of them dead with 2 weapons. She said the other man escaped out of the house.

The story would evolve as she retold it, as she tried to pin blame on first her ex-husband, then her current husband, who was out of town at the time. A very bizarre case and story that took years to come to a conclusion. A fascinating read with plenty of twists, backstories, sidestories, and unbelievable stuff that comes out along the way. Awesome true crime. Thanks for reading.

Kimberly Jackson says

Another great book by Phelps. I am glad this cruel animal got what she deserved. Tracey was a evil crazy maniac of a woman who used good people to get what she wanted. Dustin was a sweet innocent child that took to kindly to Tracey. It's a must read book five stars all the way.

Heather Bremer says

Having lived an hour from the town in which the crime happened in I was excited to read this book. I thought the book was going to read like a story but it rather is a he said she said style of writing. Much of the information is talked over multiple times making the book much longer than it needed to be.

Lee Husemann says

What a book! Tracey Richter Pittman Roberts can't seem to tell the truth and/or keep her lies straight about the "home invasion" murder of Dustin Wehde. After 10 years, the cold case is brought back to life by a new prosecutor and a detective who was taking another look at the case. There are lots of twists and turns in this very interesting book and Author Phelps' thorough research of this case makes it a page turner.

Valerie says

This is the fascinating true story of a woman who is both a sociopath and a pathological liar. The most ironic fact I found regarding this story is the fact that her father was a retired Chicago police detective. The author, however, was not able to obtain any information about this woman's childhood and past due to the hostility and noncooperation of her mother and her 21 year old son. Tracey Pittman Roberts seemed to have a lot going for her; she had been married twice to two successful and caring men, and she had three children. Her oldest child, Bert, was the product of her first marriage to a dentist, Dr. Pittman. The other two younger children were the products of her marriage to Mike Roberts, a successful businessman she met on a trip to Australia. On the face of it, this young woman should have been very happy with her life. But she was never happy. When her first husband took a job with a dental practice in New Mexico, she decided she hated the country and moved back to Chicago, taking her son with her. She received child support payments for this child, but she resented having to give her son visitation rights with his father, and she and Dr. Pittman went through a long and stressful custody battle over Bert which lasted several years. In the meantime, she married Mike Roberts and they settled into a nice Victorian home in a very small Iowa town. Mike had his own business and was very good at what he did. Tracey never once was forced to work outside the home, as many women are obligated to do, whether they prefer a professional career or not. Tracey had acquaintances rather than friends; none of her female 'friendships' lasted very long due to Tracey being one who loved to gossip and stir up trouble, even if she had to tell outrageous lies to get what she wanted. With men, she used her feminine wiles, including sex, to get what she wanted from them, although she never had a lengthy relationship with any of them, including her two husbands. I found it extremely difficult to read about the way her mother is in denial about Tracey's crimes and personality traits, so much so that she even e-mailed the author of the book to try to sway him from writing the book the way he wanted to tell the story. Probably no one will ever know just how many crimes Tracey has committed, or the nature of all of them. This particular story focused on a December 2001 shooting in Tracey's home of a 21 year old young man who Mike had befriended and tried to help. The two families knew each other, and the young man, the only boy in the family, was considered a "special education" child in school, although I privately thought he appeared to perhaps be autistic, perhaps with Asperger's Syndrome. Dustin Wehde loved to go with Mike and Bert Roberts to play paintball, and he was often over at the Roberts home. (Tracey told the police that he had always given her "the creeps".) On this particular evening, Tracey claimed that two men staged a home invasion and that she was in fear for her and her kids' lives (Mike was away on business). She shut Bert and the two little girls in a bedroom and allegedly fought with the 'invaders.' She claimed that one of them tried to strangle her with a pair of pantyhose, and that they were calling her profane names and threatening to kill her family. Tracey allegedly ran into her bedroom and somehow managed to get the gun safe open (the way it was described as placed; I doubt that anyone could have even made it close to the safe) and she pulled out two guns, and started shooting over her shoulder, Annie Oakley style. Since she killed one of the men (there was never any evidence that there was more than one), she was 'shocked' to learn the man she killed was

Dustin Wehde. Odd that his car was parked out in the open in the yard; home invaders are not usually this visible. Also odd was the fact that Dustin had been shot nine times, with at least three bullets in his head. Tracey told Bert to call 911, and the medical and police personnel arrived to question Tracey, her eleven year old son Bert, and also the neighbors. Dustin no doubt was deceased before he even hit the floor. Another odd fact: a female friend of Tracey's stopped by before the shooting to spend the night as they had agreed, and she never knew Dustin was there, and Tracey told her that there was a mixup of dates, so the lady, Marie Higgins, went home. At this time in this small Iowa County, there were a lot of political changes going on, and the police and district attorney both did not pay much attention to this case, figuring it for a justifiable homicide. However, the case remained one of two cold cases which a couple of the officers would work on when they had the chance. As luck would have it, a new district attorney had just been hired and he was intrigued by the case and the background of this family. The year was 2011; Ben Smith had taken the district attorney job, although he had done civil law previously and had never tried a case. Between Smith and Trent Vileta, a special agent with the Iowa Dept. of Criminal Investigation, they combed through all the files and every bit of evidence that they could get their hands on. I am very sure that Tracey Roberts must have been totally shocked when she was finally arrested for Dustin Wehde's murder; first degree murder at that. She had been trying to either pin the shooting on her first or even second husband, so she would obtain spousal support and child support from Mike, and perhaps Dr. Pittman would have no visitation rights. Tracey had Dustin write a narrative in a pink notebook, found on the seat of his car, which went into some detail about the Roberts' personal lives, etc. There was no way Dustin would have known any of this information on his own. In the intervening 10 years, Tracey had obtained false passports and IDs, making it appear that if anyone became suspicious, she would leave the country. She never got that chance. She kept up her habitual lying regarding just about everything and anything, and I found it very hard to believe that it took 10 years to untangle the web of this crime, and that was due to the new district attorney and a dedicated officer. Tracey Roberts destroyed many lives; not just that of the boy she killed, but his family also (his dad committed suicide) and the lives of her previous husbands, and those of her children. She had coached Bert on what to tell the police over and over and over again, and yet he was still loyal to his mother. I found the story fascinating, especially because if one knew the circumstances behind the 'justifiable homicide', I believe there was no way that the case would have been called that.

Suspense Magazine says

If you want to meet one woman you would most definitely not want to have living next door, then you must read this book. Keep in mind that the author has a career of being a hard-hitting investigative journalist, and has the ability to tell a story of a psychopath that will make your blood run cold.

We are in Iowa, of all places. This tale is not about the violent, gritty neighborhoods of say, Chicago or Detroit. Here, a housewife lives by the name of Tracey Pittman Roberts. She is on her second marriage and, from the looks of it, is having a great time. Her dream life includes three amazing children, as well as owning a face and body that is all-natural and stunningly beautiful. What Tracey seems to be missing, however, is a soul.

It was on December 13, 2001, that police were called to Tracey's home. There, they found a young neighbor of Tracey's dead as a doornail. This housewife claimed to have been protecting her children. She feared for her life after a supposed break-in by this twenty-year-old man, now dead, and another man led to her being strangled with a pair of pantyhose. Her story was self-defense, case-closed. The one thing that worked against her was the fact that nine bullet wounds were found on the victim, which made the police more than wary when it came to believing her cut-and-dried story.

It also didn't help that Tracey already had on her record a plea of no-contest in regards to the discharging of a firearm years before, when she lived in Virginia with her first husband, a plastic surgeon.

From the telling of the crime to the final showdown in the courtroom, this author has vividly described Tracey's case and allows readers to look deeply into a criminal mind they will not soon forget.

Jen Cahill says

Had more info I didn't know.

First, I loved every book by Mr. Phelps and this one was my favorite. His investigation into psychopath Tracey Richter was top notch. The whole scheme was so intricate and outrageous that it must have been extremely challenging for the author to put into a coherent novel. I've seen her case on TV shows but the whole story can't be told in one hour. She is truly evil. I am looking forward to Mr. Phelps' next book.

Marsmannix says

wow. this is a page-turner.
