



Almost the Perfect Murder: The Killing of Elaine O'Hara, the Extraordinary Garda Investigation and the Trial That Stunned the Nation: The Only Complete Inside Account

Paul Williams

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'A great book ... really comprehensive' Miriam O'Callaghan, RTÉ

'Fascinating' Pat Kenny, Newstalk

'It is very rare for murder to involve the degree of calculation revealed in this case' *Irish Times*

For over a year everyone assumed missing Dublin woman Elaine O'Hara had ended her own life. But after her remains were found gardaí discovered that Elaine was in thrall to a man who had spent years grooming her to let him kill her. That man was Graham Dwyer, a married father of three and partner in a Dublin architecture practice.

Almost the Perfect Murder details the exhaustive investigation - one of the most complex and chilling in Irish criminal justice history - that allowed gardaí to build a case against Dwyer. And it outlines the twists and turns - both in the courtroom and behind the scenes - during the dramatic trial that followed.

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From Reader Review Almost the Perfect Murder: The Killing of Elaine O'Hara, the Extraordinary Garda Investigation and the Trial That Stunned the Nation: The Only Complete Inside Account for online ebook

Sharon says

Anyone living in Ireland in 2013 remembers this story as it broke in the news. The remains of Elaine O'Hara had been found over a year after her disappearance (assumed to be suicide) was reported by her distraught father. This is the story of how coincidence, the weather, luck, and a LOT of police work culminated in the sadistic pervert Graham Dwyer serving a life sentence after the most harrowing murder trial the state has ever seen.

When I first heard about this book, I didn't want to read it. Mainly because of the author - I'm not a fan of his particular breed of journalism. So, when the opportunity arose to borrow it from a friend, I said I'd read it - only because I had heard that as a police procedural, it was worth a read.

Credit where it's due, the book is put together well. The insight into the Garda work is fascinating, and the sheer amount of evidence and information compiled by all officers involved is overwhelming.

"The Gardaí had pursued 619 individual lines of enquiry, interviewed 488 people and taken 788 statements. They had retrieved and examined 2,612 text messages and 5,300 hours - over seven months - of CCTV footage. A total of 408 witnesses, including members of the public and Gardaí, had been subpoenaed by the State while the book of evidence ran into seven volumes, containing 540 individual statements. In addition to the CCTV footage, there were five terabytes of data in computer evidence and 925 exhibits. In order to prove their case, the State intended to throw everything they had at it."

This is a very, very disturbing and graphic read. Even without the specific details, it's scary due to the way Graham Dwyer was leading a life that he was able to keep secret from his closest family. You'd have to wonder how many more like him are out there. I'd recommend it if you have an interest in crimes or cases, but it's a sad read and it's hard to shake off the feelings of great discomfort and sorrow for what Elaine and her family went through. Dwyer used her desire to be loved and wanted against her in the most inhumane way - be wary that this isn't a story you'll forget, so proceed with caution.

Paula says

Graphic Read

This book really delved into the depths of depravity. It's a well told story that can at times get a bit bogged down with details, but you do get a real sense of who these people were.

Stacey Mckeogh says

Disturbing and heart breaking. Well written, interesting, disgusting and shocking.

Áine says

If you followed the trial, like pretty much everybody in the country, there isn't a huge amount of new material. A more colourful telling of the court proceedings is all you'll probably get as the media are limited as to what can be published during a trial. It was a good in depth rehash of the whole macabre tale of how a poor fragile woman fell for the whims of a successful and wealthy possessive and controlling man, and his ultimate downfall.

Liz says

I normally don't read these kinds of books because like they say, fact is stranger than fiction and facts tend to stay in my head longer than fiction, especially gory and morbid ones. I also had never heard about this case at all, and maybe it's because I'm in the US, so I came into it based on just a recommendation on my Kindle. But after reading the book description I had to know what happened to Elaine O'Hara. I read it in one sitting - 5 hours straight.

This book is written in a compelling manner, based on evidence gleaned from dogged perseverance by the Gardai and the field of computer forensics. Guess I can't hide my whereabouts if I'm attached to the hip to my iPhone or anywhere there's CCTV. But because of this and more, Elaine's killer was found, Graham Dwyer, a man you would never suspect to be so twisted and manipulative, taking advantage of a vulnerable woman, and grooming her to die in his hands. I was completely riveted by the steps taken to collect and disseminate evidence though some parts of the courtroom drama between judge and defense I did have to skim through because by the fourth hour, I suspect my eyes glazed over, but that was probably the only part. I feel for the people affected by this crime, from Elaine's family to Dwyer's unsuspecting wife, and most of all, Elaine herself, whose most private intimate moments were laid out for all in that courtroom and beyond to see.

Bill reilly says

Thank your lucky charms, as we head to a world of leprechauns, pots of gold, and unicorns. A lassie named Elaine O'Hara goes missing and her "da" calls the garda (police) to report her disappearance. She was picked on at school and suffered from chronic depression. The poor girl was in and out of nut houses and took antidepressants after cutting her wrists at sixteen. Irish eyes were certainly not smiling upon her. She described dreams of being abducted and informed her family of a bizarre relationship with a married man involving bondage. Elaine's computer revealed a penchant for fetish websites. Two men were interviewed and admitted to sexual encounters with the missing woman. The police suspected suicide due to several previous attempts. They were proven wrong when a dog named Millie started a murder investigation by finding bones which led to a human body. Dental records concluded that it was Elaine. The police found handcuffs, knives and a cell phone in a lake near where the body was located. Elaine's computer hard drive contained text messages between a slave (Elaine) and her master (Goroon). She favored being bound in chains and handcuffs and also asked to be cut. What the hell is wrong with people? A dogged police investigation linked a name in Elaine's diary to a Graham Dwyer from the area. The suspect was an architect

with a wife in the same profession. They lived in an affluent neighborhood with two children. Cell phone towers and toll booth records established a link to Dwyer. The police were astonished at the vast community of doctors, lawyers, and other professionals in the fetish culture of S&M and B & D (bondage and domination). The book contains text messages between the “slave” and “master” leading up to the murder. Two wack jobs were in the wrong place at the wrong time. The messages are nauseating and I need a break. At this point, I am close to believing in the end times. Repent. Dwyer was questioned by the police and turned into a real life Raskolnikov from Crime and Punishment, as he repeatedly denied killing that woman. Graham is one sick cracker. Dwyer’s computer hard drives contained a wealth of sadistic material in both video form and writings by the accused. The trial was long and tedious. The writer failed to make it compelling. It is basically just a rehash of earlier parts of the book. Williams goes on and on with redundant details regarding the admissibility of certain evidence; boring. He is beating a dead horse. A seven week trial came to a conclusion and a verdict which I will not reveal. Almost the Perfect Murder is not on my list of best true crime books and after finishing this journey into the darkness, I came to the conclusion that I may be one of the last sane people left on planet earth.

Mary says

This book has a very very long title. It's a good insight into the entire case though, I didn't really follow it while it was in the news.

Lainy says

Time taken to read - 1 day

Pages - 283

Publisher - Penguin

Blurb from Goodreads

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My Review

I had never heard of this case before, Elaine O'Hara went missing from Dublin in 2012, presumed to have committed suicide. Elaine had a long history of mental health issues and previous suicide attempts, a year later Elaine's body is found. The police discover evidence that points to murder and start a thorough investigation that uncovers the gruesome details and exploitation of a vulnerable woman.

Apparently if you followed the case when it was in the news there isn't much in this book that would be new. The police recover text messages sent between Elaine and her killer, very graphic and quite disturbing. Violence, blood letting, sexual torture, BDSM, exploitation and sexual deviancy. The book covers the run up to the trial, actual copies of text messages sent and received, personal items from the killer, sexual fantasies that many readers may find disturbing.

I have read a lot of true crime books, this is one of the more unsettling ones, I think because of the brutality of the relationship and how graphic the evidence is. The writing is relatively clear although I felt some of the timeline between events jumped a bit without clear distinction of how much time had lapsed. Otherwise, if you like true crime and don't mind stomach turning details of brutality then this book will be a winner for you, 3/5 for me.

Kim freeman says

A good book but I did skip a few sections. It was at times hard to believe this was all fact and not fiction. I felt terribly for the family of Elaine and the poor unsuspecting wife and children. It was fascinating but could have been better written with more empathy.

Denise Power says

Good book. Not terribly well written but it had all the facts and presented them in a clear and logical way. The trial wasn't really covered in England so I missed the day to day reporting at the time. Glad I read this!

Elaine Mullane says

Looking back now, I have no idea why I decided to read this book. Sometimes I have a morbid curiosity about certain stories in the media. This story had such significant coverage and was so shocking, that it hooked me from the start. I wish now I wasn't so fascinated with it. This account was so detailed, it was disturbing. It left me with an intense sense of pity for the victim and such strong feelings of fear that people like her killer exist in this world. I was so sad and upset after reading this; it stayed with me for days afterwards and actually affected my sleep. Still, a valuable lesson was learned: Stick to the news accounts relating to stories like this and never delve any deeper.

Ronnie Cramer says

An emotionally troubled woman disappears and is assumed to be a suicide, but a year later evidence turns up pointing to murder. A fascinating case that took place in Ireland a few years ago; it is also harrowing and often hard to read. Particularly ugly is the way the perpetrator manipulated the pitiable victim.

Fiona MacDonald says

Setting aside the gruesome and heartbreaking subject matter, this was an exceedingly well written, thoughtfully researched and addictive read. Elaine O'Hara fell under the spell of murderous pervert Graham Dwyer due to her interest in BDSM after she mentioned feeling suicidal. Dwyer used this against her telling her he would help to murder her so she wouldn't have to worry about letting her family down and was soon in court charged with her terrifying murder - the lead up to it described in detail in his hundreds of texts and computer documents.

A dispicable human being who is now serving life in jail. Paul Williams did a wonderful job of bringing the story to life, from the beginning of the text/BDSM relationship to the final court case that sent him down. It's a must read book for anyone interested in true crime.

Ann says

This would not be my first choice but did not want to buy another book on the trip. This was a sensational true crime in Ireland. It is well written with details on how cyber forensics played a huge role in providing evidence of the setup to the murder. Very sad story of the victim.

Sherry says

I purchased this book while on vacation in Ireland last year. The bookshop employee told me it had been

quite the murder trial in Ireland and recommended the book.

Much of the evidence is often beyond belief; I had no idea so many people have such sexually sadistic tendencies. Probably the best part of the book for me was the diligence of the Garda (Irish police). They painstakingly pieced together evidence and helped the prosecution team bring charges against the accused.

The book was also sad because the victim was so desperate for acceptance that she submitted to things I don't think she truly wanted, in order to please someone she trusted and cared for.

If you enjoy books about true crime and trials you will find this book fascinating.
