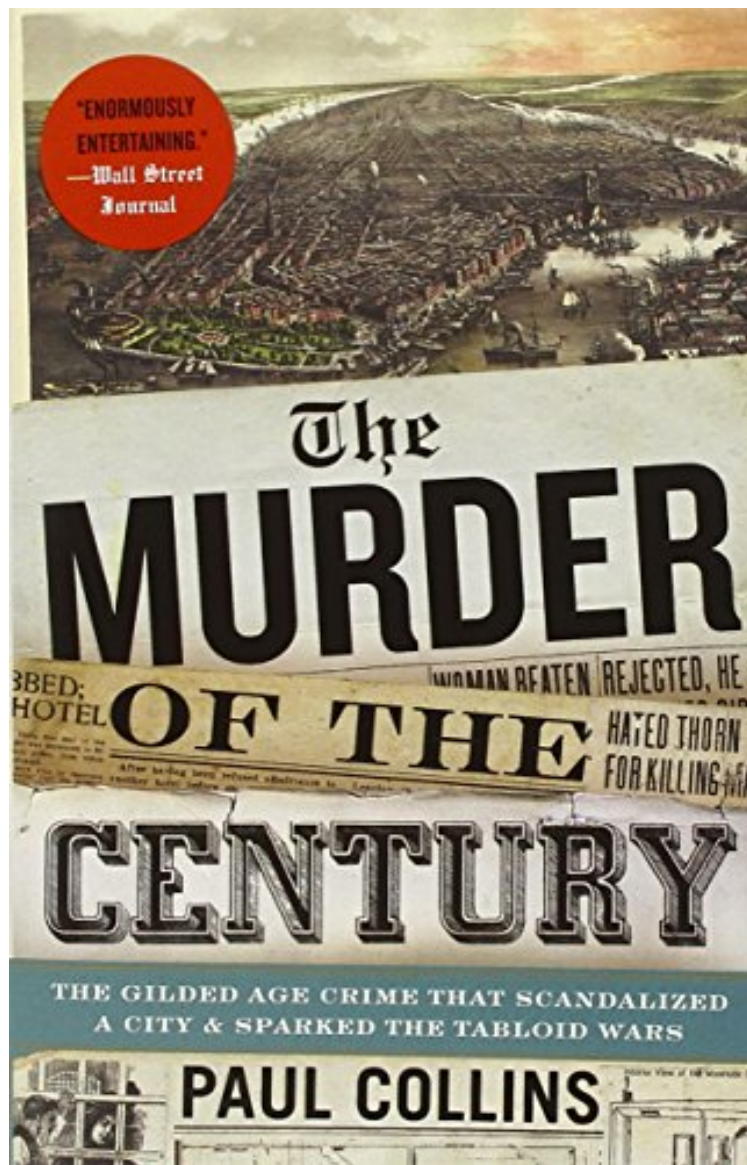


[Mobile library] The Murder of the Century: The Gilded Age Crime That Scandalized a City Sparked the Tabloid Wars

The Murder of the Century: The Gilded Age Crime That Scandalized a City Sparked the Tabloid Wars

Paul Collins

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Paul Collins : The Murder of the Century: The Gilded Age Crime That Scandalized a City Sparked the Tabloid Wars before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Murder of the Century: The Gilded Age Crime That Scandalized a City Sparked the Tabloid Wars:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. It's good, but not great. By A Customer When I was reading this on my Kindle, my sense of pacing was thrown completely off, as a large percentage of the book is sources and references. So when the trial was over and we were wrapping up loose ends of prominent players, there was still a good 25% of the book left, and so I was waiting for... something. Only to turn the page and find that it was, in fact, over. I'm a huge fan of Erik Larsen, and so I was looking forward to getting into this book. I love to read historical non-fiction, and if it's about an event or person I've never even heard of, all the better. Mr. Collins did an alright job of interspersing some small historical tidbits of interest, but it's not as interesting as Erik Larsen, where with the latter, almost every page you're like "Oh wow, I didn't know that!" or "That's where that expression comes from!" etc. In "Murder of the Century", the little bits of color that are added are pretty localized to the area and time, and they're not that interesting or mentioned in such a way, with enough context, to make them interesting. In any case though, it's an interesting read. As I mentioned above, because of the large chunk of references at the end of the book, I thought there was a lot more to the story than there was. In addition, the murder, the trial.. it's just really not that suspenseful. I expected a big twist or shocking moment. There was just nothing. I feel like I learned more about NYC in this time frame by my own wandering around wikipedia while I was reading this book. It's a good book, but only 'good.'

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Scattered Dutchman Case Remembered By Rose Keefe The murder of William Guldensuppe hasn't received the same level of recognition as other gruesome killings that took place during the closing years of the nineteenth century. But throughout the latter half of 1897, the people of New York talked about little else. On June 26th, 1897, some boys out to escape the summer heat found a strange object floating in the East River and retrieved it. It turned out to be a headless and limbless male torso wrapped in oilcloth. The repulsive discovery was initially passed off as a medical student prank, but the conclusion changed to murder after doctors said that the dismemberment lacked the skill of a medical professional. The announcement sparked public interest, but when the missing limbs were found in Harlem soon afterward, intrigue morphed into hysteria. Who was the victim? Where was his head? And who had killed him? Newspaper barons William Randolph Hearst and the aging Joseph Pulitzer turned the mysterious affair into a media circus, driving up the circulation of their respective papers as they competed to solve the case first. This was the era of the detective journalist, so reporters from both camps schemed, tricked, and stole in order to get names and locate evidence. They were so tenacious that the press arguably deserves the credit for identifying the victim as bathhouse masseur William Guldensuppe and his suspected killers as barber Martin Thorn and midwife Augusta Nack. "Murder of the Century" reads more like a detective novel than a work of history, but the author is constantly faithful to the facts and has the endnotes to prove it. As the author of three historical True Crime books, I can tell you that his task wasn't an easy one: the 'Case of the Scattered Dutchman' was not widely written about after the trial concluded, so the hunt for non-newspaper sources must have been taxing. His persistence uncovered a surprising amount of forgotten details, which he uses to present his own version of how William Guldensuppe was killed, and by whom. Paul Collins, who moonlights as the literary detective on the NPR show "Weekend Edition", recreates the investigation, trial, and aftermath in a way that keeps the pages turning. This is not just the story of a love triangle that ended in bloodshed: Collins has evoked Gilded Age America and its merciless tabloid wars, the echoes of which can still be felt today.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. New York City and the yellow journalism of competing newspapers By Linda Linguvic This true story, set in New York City at the turn in 1898 captured my interest from the very beginning. I live here and have faint memories of the stories my parents and grandparents told me about how it was in those olden days. Life was challenging then but it sure was vibrant, with thousands of immigrants jockeying for a place in the American dream and mega moguls jockeying for position to get rich by selling newspapers. When pieces of a man's body wrapped in oilcloth were discovered in the river, the populace was intrigued and the flames of interest were fanned by the newspapers competing for the story. The head of the body was never found but the victim was eventually identified. He was supposedly murdered by his female lover and her boyfriend and the trial of the century caoytred the public interest, fanning the flames of curiosity at the circus-like atmosphere that surrounded the case. All the lurid details were there - the grotesque descriptions of the pieces of the body, the supposed love affair that caused the victim to be cut into pieces and the conflicting testimonies of the accused. This book is a fast read and the fact that it is based on a true trial made it all the more interesting. I loved it but do stop short of giving it my highest rating because after a while I found some of the details a bit tedious.

"No writer better articulates our interest in the confluence of hope, eccentricity, and the timelessness of the bold and strange than Paul Collins."--DAVE EGGERS On Long Island, a farmer finds a duck pond turned red with blood. On the Lower East Side, two boys playing at a pier discover a floating human torso wrapped tightly in oilcloth. Blueberry pickers near Harlem stumble upon neatly severed limbs in an overgrown ditch. Clues to a horrifying crime are turning up all over New York, but the police are baffled: There are no witnesses, no motives, no suspects. The grisly finds that began on the afternoon of June 26, 1897, plunged detectives headlong into the era's most baffling murder mystery. Seized upon by battling media moguls Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, the case became a publicity circus. Reenactments of the murder were staged in Times Square, armed reporters lurked in the streets of Hell's

Kitchen in pursuit of suspects, and an unlikely trio--a hard-luck cop, a cub reporter, and an eccentric professor--all raced to solve the crime. What emerged was a sensational love triangle and an even more sensational trial: an unprecedented capital case hinging on circumstantial evidence around a victim whom the police couldn't identify with certainty, and who the defense claimed wasn't even dead. *The Murder of the Century* is a rollicking tale--a rich evocation of America during the Gilded Age and a colorful re-creation of the tabloid wars that have dominated media to this day. From the Hardcover edition.

"[Collins'] exploration of the newspaper world, at the very moment when tabloid values were being born, is revealing but also enormously entertaining....Collins has a clear eye, a good sense of telling detail, and a fine narrative ability." —Wall Street Journal
"Riveting....Collins has mined enough newspaper clippings and other archives to artfully recreate the era, the crime and the newspaper wars it touched off." —New York Times
"[A] richly detailed book that reads like a novel and yet maintains a strict fidelity to facts. *THE MURDER OF THE CENTURY* isn't a case of history with a moral. It's simply a fantastic, factual yarn, and a reminder that abhorrent violence is nothing new under the sun." —Oregonian
"A wonderful reminder that we have often been just as we are: fools for spectacle, short of memory, cheered by the invigorating shock of the immoral." —Willamette Week
"Paul Collins' account of the headless torso murder that led to an all-out newspaper war and then a dramatic trial has all the timeless elements of a great yarn--a baffling mystery, intriguing suspects, and flawed detectives. It's compelling history that's also great page-turning entertainment." —Howard Blum, author of *The Floor of Heaven* and *American Lightning*
"Wonderfully rich in period detail, salacious facts about the case and infectious wonder at the chutzpah and inventiveness displayed by Pulitzer's and Hearst's minions. Both a gripping true-crime narrative and an astonishing portrait of fin de siecle yellow journalism." —Kirkus
"A dismembered corpse and rival newspapers squabbling for headlines fuel Collins's intriguing look at the birth of "yellow journalism" in late-19th-century New York. an in-depth account of the exponential growth of lurid news and the public's (continuing) insatiable appetite for it." —Publishers Weekly
About the Author
PAUL COLLINS is the author of seven books, which have been translated into ten languages. His work has appeared in *Slate*, *New Scientist*, and the *New York Times*, and he is regularly featured on NPR's *Weekend Edition* as their "literary detective." He lives in Portland, Oregon.