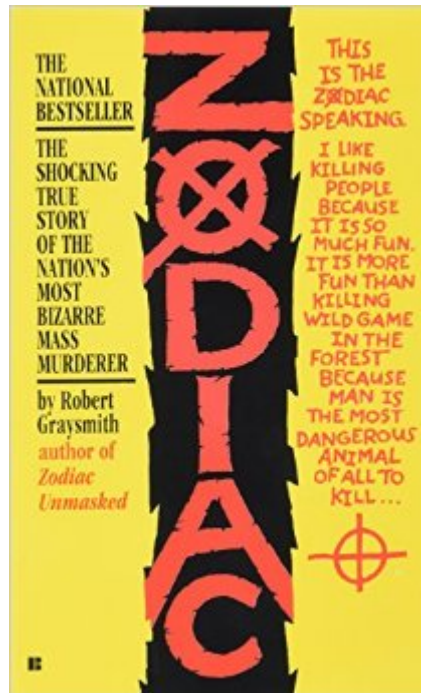


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Zodiac: The Shocking True Story Of The Hunt For The Nation's Most Elusive Serial Killer



Synopsis

Robert Graysmith was on staff at the San Francisco Chronicle in 1969 when Zodiac first struck, triggering in the resolute reporter an unrelenting obsession with seeing the hooded killer brought to justice. In this gripping account of Zodiac's eleven-month reign of terror, Graysmith reveals hundreds of facts previously unreleased, including the complete text of the killer's letters.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Robert Graysmith is no Vincent Bugliosi, but he does know more about the Zodiac killings than anybody else on the planet. The detail about each of the five known killings is incredible, and Graysmith unearths another killing that occurred in Riverside prior to the Zodiac killings that may have been committed by the same person. And he does come up with a likely suspect. Prior to reading ZODIAC, I rented the David Fincher movie. I was expecting the movie to follow the book pretty closely, but there are some composite characters in the movie. Graysmith tells us about three main suspects; whereas, there were only two in the movie. Graysmith also speculates (pretty much believes) that Zodiac went right on killing after the murder of cab driver Paul Lee Stine. He lists 41 possible Zodiac murders, the last one occurring in 1981. Graysmith also had access to the Zodiac letters in which the murderer claimed credit for many more murders than those generally attributed to him. Graysmith has some annoying habits. For one thing, he describes every stitch of clothing one of the early murder victims is wearing. He's also awfully skittish about using real names. So many people are given pseudonyms this might as well be fiction. Later on he goes into elaborate detail about the phases of the moon, and how the Zodiac could have been planning his murderers to

correspond with them. Then there's the sycophantic description of Filcher's movie as an addendum to the book. Here's Graysmith's description of Filcher's attention to detail: "His eye is calculating, more precise than any mechanical optics." Something else that I find puzzling was the police's inability to keep track of two of the victims who lived through Zodiac attacks, Mike Mageau and Kathleen Johns.

After watching the movie twice & reading the first couple of chapters of the book, I offer the following observations. First, there is a lot of detail. One gets the sense that Graysmith put in every scrap of information he had (whether or not it was truly relevant). As an example, I offer below the list of characters introduced in Chapter Two alone. Second, his writing style is neither here nor there. It doesn't read like a fictional account of the same subject yet it is more than a summary of known facts in the case. If it were not a real case, I would not continue reading as the storyline is overcrowded with seemingly unimportant data. However, it's this same jumble of information that gives the reader a sense of what it must have been like for the detectives working the case.¹

Darlene Ferrin: shooting victim². Bobbie Ramos: Darlene's co-worker at Terry's Restaurant³. Dean Ferrin: Darlene's current (second) husband⁴. Dena Ferrin: Darlene & Dean's baby daughter⁵. Bill & Carmela Leigh: Ferrin's landlords; Dean's bosses at Caesar's Palace Italian Restaurant⁶. Karen: Darlene's 17 year old babysitter⁷. Pam Suennen: Darlene's younger sister⁸. Jim "Phillips" (assumed last name): Darlene's ex-husband⁹. Bobbie Oxnam: previous co-worker of Darlene at San Francisco phone company¹⁰. Leo Suennen: Darlene's younger brother¹¹. Mike Mageau: shooting victim; close friend of Darlene's¹². David Mageau: Mike's twin brother; also a close friend of Darlene's¹³. Jay Eisen, Ron Allen, Rick Crabtree & Sydne: friends who attended Darlene's painting party¹⁴. Richard Hoffman, Steve Baldino & Howard "Buzz" Gordon: police officers who attended Darlene's painting party¹⁵.

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