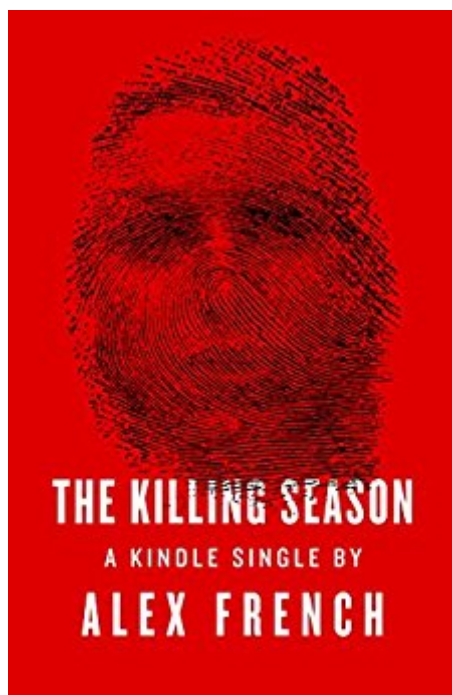


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The Killing Season (Kindle Single)



Synopsis

For fans of “True Detective” and Making A Murderer, THE KILLING SEASON is a page-turning true crime saga, the story of a double murder that went unsolved for more than 35 years, and a chilling portrait of a small town upended by unimaginable violence. In the summer of 1975, the sprawling, valley town of Grand Junction, Colorado, is stunned by the grisly double murders of 24-year-old Linda Benson and her baby daughter Kelley. For Jim Fromm and Doug Rushing, the two young detectives assigned to the case, the investigation is a chance to earn their stripes and prove their mettle. At first, Fromm and Rushing peg the woman’s mercurial husband, a pipe-fitter who works outside of town, as the primary suspect. But as their case against Steve Benson unravels, the detectives find themselves short on leads and running out of time. With the city on edge and anxious for answers, a notorious serial killer goes on the lam, and yet another young woman and her children turn up dead. In The Killing Season, acclaimed journalist Alex French traces the story of the Benson murders from the night Linda and Kelley’s bodies are found strewn across their second floor apartment, to an improbable discovery, made more than 30 years later, that enabled a new breed of detectives to crack the case and bring closure to those who’d watched justice slip away. Writing in taut, atmospheric prose, French has crafted a heart-pounding tale of tragedy, resilience, and redemption set against the burning-red vistas of the American Southwest. Alex French is a freelance journalist. His reportage and oral histories have appeared in the New York Times Magazine, BuzzReads, GQ, New York Magazine, Grantland, This American Life and a variety of other venues. He lives in Monmouth County, New Jersey, with his wife and two children. Cover design by Adil Dara.

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Customer Reviews

I began reading this police story late in the day, and finished it in one sitting! A long sitting to be sure, however after reading of the murders and the clues and the suspects, one could hardly leave this young woman and her three year old unattended while detectives rigorously combed the clues for the perpetrator of this heinous crime. I stayed in attendance until 35 years later, when the culprit was found. Although the clues seemed plentiful in today's police procedurals, DNA was not yet part and parcel of investigations as they now are. Thus the 35 years. The writing in this work was taut and organized. There was a lot of information to sort and identify and it took a very organized person to get that part right while preserving the interest of the reader as well. The author clearly did that, and the story was presented as well written, concise, and entertaining, and we, the readers, prospered from that.

Recognizing that truth is almost always stranger than fiction, I'm a fan of true crime. And there is no shortage of true crime out there, and in turn, true crime stories. But they're not always sufficient for a novel-length piece of work. The Killing Season does everything a great true crime story should do, but accomplishes it in "novella" length. I'm a slowish reader, but I devoured this in 24 hours. In great true crime, the setting should almost be a character in itself. And, you should get a sense of how the events affected the entire lives of the key characters. French delivers on both of these counts. I wish there were a hundred books like this. Just one question, by the way: What ever happened with the Botham/Miracle murders? Doesn't seem to me that that was ever cleared up.

There was a time in the mid 1970s when the city of Grand Junction, Colorado seemed like the murder capital of the US, at least on a per capita basis. Serial killer Ted Bundy spent some time there (and escaped twice from Colorado jails). A cult that would become the center of the Heaven's Gate mass suicide was there for a while. But "The Killing Season" focuses on the 1975 murders of Linda Benson and her young daughter Kelley, Grand Junction residents. There were several likely suspects, but after a long investigation, the case went cold, only to be reopened more than a third of

a century later when DNA analysis had become a powerful forensic tool. It's an engrossing true life whodunit. And it was very inspiring to read about police investigators who never completely gave up even when all their leads turned into dead ends.

Generally, "real crime" is not my genre. French overcame that initial obstacle. Clearly a highly researched work, it is compelling in its recollection of artifacts of the 1970's. The real impact, though, lies in expression of the concentric circles of pain and anguish caused by the crime that ripple over three decades in the lives of those touched.

Outstanding. As usual, real life is stranger than fiction and Mr French tells a gripping, heart-wrenching tale. I couldn't put it down.

Very well told crime story. Difficult to put down, real, heartfelt, painful. The impact of crime on lives simply goes on and on. The cold-case detectives were excellent and relentless, and their efforts removed this killer forever. And thanks for that.

Loved this portrait of a small town upended amidst the rich context and water colors of '70s Colorado. Eerie and compelling.

Descriptive account of a grisly murder and the investigation that ensued over the decades that followed. Enjoyed the development of the characters and the suspense of the story.

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