



Sleep In Heavenly Peace

M. William Phelps

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Sleep In Heavenly Peace M. William Phelps Cold Storage

In May 2003, an Arizona man who'd bought dozens of sealed boxes at a self-storage facility's auction of unclaimed property made a horrifying discovery: the bodies of three plastic-wrapped infants, one of which had become mummified over the years. Police traced them to Dianne Odell, 50, a mother of eight children, who admitted the babies were hers but claimed that they'd died of natural causes. She'd kept the bodies for over twenty years before abandoning them.

Justice Deferred

In 1989, police had found the remains of a long-dead infant in a suitcase in the trunk of a car Odell had abandoned. The statute of limitations on manslaughter had saved her then from prosecution. She maintained that the fetus was the product of a rape by her father and, after he beat her, was stillborn.

Baby-Killer's Fate

Odell said her own domineering mother had forced her into teen prostitution and murdered what she viewed as "bastard children." Both parents were dead and unable to contradict her. Would Odell's stories sway the jury and buy her the mercy her babies were never granted? Or would she be forced to face the consequences of bringing innocent lives into the world--only to end them in cold blood. . .

16 Pages Of Shocking Photos

Sleep In Heavenly Peace Details

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Author : M. William Phelps

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From Reader Review Sleep In Heavenly Peace for online ebook

Jeannie says

I give up...I've been trying to get interested in this book for weeks and it's just too painful. Not due to the subject matter, which IS painful enough, but this book just isn't going anywhere, it's so repetitive. She denies, they accuse, she denies, she lies, they accuse, she tells more lies, they accuse, it's back and forth and not only boring but confusing. I started to wonder exactly how many babies did die. I hated the way this book was written. It's like this...lay the facts out and let them speak for themselves, if the author had done that, this book would have been about 100 pages long at the most. Enough to tell the truth.

Mikki says

I love these types of books; the whole true crime thing. It fascinates me to see what in the world went through their minds to make them commit these horrible crimes. This book was in and of itself interesting as the person who committed the crimes can't seem to keep her own story straight! In one story, she was abused by her mother, yet in another, her mom was just distant. Dianne Odell, 50 years old, had 8 children that lived and 4 that "just died", yet they had no burial, were put into boxes or suitcases and hauled around like household goods until she placed them in a storage shed and left them there to be found by a man who won the shed in an auction. Her living children and current husband had no idea about this until the police came to get her. A must read if you like true crime.

Joe says

A great book on a heartbreak story, I say this because helpless innocent newborn babies were involved, and in the end...they got justice. Diane Odell had to have been a totally careless, irresponsible, out of control woman when she was young. She didn't even have the decency to give them proper burials, and that makes her below inhuman. Even though she claimed she was physically and sexually abused and pimped out as a prostitute, it's no excuse to kill her newborn children. The story is well-researched and written.

Andrea Timm says

Well written true story

I really enjoyed this read. It was well written and intriguing. I expected the ending to be different, but I would still recommend it.

Diane Dachota says

Dull, poorly organized and lots of repetition. Glad I only spent 99 cents on this book.

Louise says

From back cover:

"In May 2003, an Arizona man who'd bought dozens of sealed boxes at a self-storage facility's auction of unclaimed property made a horrifying discovery: the bodies of three plastic-wrapped infants, one of which had become mummified over the years. Police traced them to Dianne Odell, 50, a mother of eight children, who admitted the babies were hers but claimed that they'd died of natural causes. She'd kept the bodies for over twenty years before abandoning them.

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Odell said her own domineering mother had forced her into teen prostitution and murdered what she viewed as "bastard children". Both parents were dead and unable to contradict her. Would Odell's stories sway the jury and buy her the mercy her babies were never granted? Or would she be forced to face the consequences of bringing innocent lives into the world - only to end them in cold blood..."

Tessa Ingram says

This story got pretty boring, but that's not Mr. Phelps' fault. The subject is gruesome, but there's no depth to it. A selfish woman has 3 unwanted pregnancies. Rather than have abortions or give the babies up for adoption, she has the babies in her bathroom and either kills them or allows them to die. Disturbing enough on its own, but adding to the mystery is the fact that this same woman had had healthy deliveries in hospitals with other men and chose to keep the bodies of the dead ones in boxes for 20 years as she moved from state to state. No rhyme or reason ever given besides the perpetrator's own, which is flat out ridiculous. This same story was on TV as an episode of Deadly Women so I didn't feel as though the book gave any new information besides the "mother's" point of view. It would have been nice to have had an analyst or psychiatrist offer some insight to her way of thinking, but as it stands, there's nothing to make her interesting or fascinating. Phelps is able to make the story bearable and I admire him for being able to put up with her nonsense long enough to glean the information he needed.

Jenna says

Nothing against the book; I just don't think "true crime" is quite my thing (although every once in a while I do read one).

Susan says

I just could not stand the way the author laid out the chapters. Mini-chapters within a chapter go back and forth between modern days and the past, or one person then another. It makes for very disjointed reading, as well as much repetition when the author has to repeat things that would not have been necessary had the story been more straightforward. And his sentence structure was maddening. I mean, I use a lot of commas, but Phelps' use is very confusing. I found myself continually re-reading sentences to figure out what he actually meant. This book is my least favorite of those I have read by this same author.

Heather says

This book became a bit of a non entity for me. The beginning was interesting but it then became laboured and overly detailed with very few facts being turned into many pages. To be honest it should have been a short story, based on the information and the trial outcome.

Talk about a flat ending..... in fact I was going to give it three stars, having written this I have decided on two. Sad to say it feels like it was a sad human story sensationalised to make a longer true crime book.

Carol Ann says

This is a truly terrible story about a woman who kills her newborns when there is no father on the scene. She totes these remains around in boxes and suitcases until she tires of it and leaves the remains in a storage unit.

M. William Phelps has the story down pat, but he is the most repetitive writer I have read in years. I thought I would go mad reading and rereading the same facts. I ended up scanning pages that I had already read in an earlier chapter just to remain sane.

Eva Leger says

Another true crime story that just breaks my heart. I don't even know what to say about things like this that happen. Definitely a "good" true crime book if you want to see just how sick and evil some people are.

I just reread the back of the book and remember more than I did before

This is about a woman, Dianne Odell, that stored the bodies of three of her infants in a self-storage unit until a man found them in sealed boxes for over twenty years. This happened in 2003 and before that, in 1989 a long-dead infant was found in a suitcase in a car that Odell owned. She wasn't prosecuted because of the statute of limitations.

She maintained that all four infants had died of natural causes. Eventually Odell blamed her overbearing mother for causing her to murder her babies.

I don't remember what happened with the court case but this was a "great" true crime book in that it really makes you wonder how the hell a person can be so evil. This woman is undeniably evil and hearing the story, if you can handle it, will haunt you.

Alison Scheppel says

Shocking

A very difficult book to read. The author tries to present the story as best as possible, but you get the idea that the one person who knew the whole truth won't or can't share it.

J.H. Moncrieff says

2.5 stars

This book was twice as long as it needed to be. Somewhere, there must be a contingent of true crime lovers who hanker for repetition and learning about the childhoods and professional backgrounds of every lawyer and cop involved in each case, given how many of these books include this info. As for me, I really couldn't care less about the prosecutor's military background, let alone read about it twice, especially since it had no bearing on the events in this book.

And in the end, even with all the repetition and excruciatingly detailed biographies and resumes of everyone remotely involved, there are no clear answers. Did Odell murder her children? If so, why? And why did she put herself in a situation where their remains would be found? Why did she implicate herself to the police, and not bother to get an attorney until it was too late?

Not all crimes have answers, but the author bent over backwards to explain the things that didn't need explaining. Why leave the important stuff blank?

Jlsimon says

This book tells the story of Diane O'Dell. Honestly I think Phelps does a great job at providing primary sources for this book. Much of it is based on the trial and interviews with O'dell herself. I cannot say I connected with anyone in this book which always makes a tougher read for me, but you can't have everything. I cannot relate to anyone in this book.

Was O'dell abused by her parents? Phelps thinks so. Was she as profoundly sexually abused, turned out by her mother to turn tricks? I don't know. Seems a lot like O'dell was trying to justify her behaviors. Was she deathly afraid of her mother even after she was an adult and could have walked away from the toxic relationship? I find that very very hard to believe. Who in their right mind or even a wrong mind continues an abusive relationship with a parent after they enter their 30s? You might even say to yourself, "Well women stay in abusive relationships with husbands, why not with mothers?" The answer in this case for me is simple, she might not have taken a stand to protect herself, but who can stand by and watch their mother kill their babies? No one. There is no other documented case like this that I have ever encountered. I think she's a liar, and I think Phelps did his utmost to fairly represent her side even when the truth is that O'dell had a choice, and she chose not to protect the life of her children. Phelps's position is that she belongs in a hospital, not prison. I haven't met her, but having learned of her through his eyes, I still cannot agree. I think she is as much a monster as any other murderer. I see no remorse, only justification coming from her.

So what emotion does this book inspire? Anger. I felt angry and frustrated, not with O'dell, for her I feel contempt and repulsion. I am actually a little angry with Phelps for not feeling like this woman is getting exactly what she deserves. I know, not rational. Feelings should not be judged, feelings are feelings. But somehow I can't help mine either. I am annoyed. Perhaps angry is to strong of a word....

What scene of this book is most striking? When the babies were found.

Who would I recommend this book to? I have no idea. True crime readers is obvious. Perhaps psychology majors, but I don't think you can get much value from a psychological aspect unless you buy into the PTSD aspect of O'dell's story. Since I don't believe her I don't know if there is much value there. Perhaps there is one other valuable aspect for the psychology student, that being the extent human beings will go to to justify their actions. O'dell blames her two dead parents, people who cannot defend themselves. That's pretty brave of her.

This story is repulsive, but a worth while read all the same because as I enjoy the study of both true crime and psychology I gained from this book. My primary gain was when Phelps educates his audience on the difference between homicide and murder. He explains that homicide does not necessarily mean murder. It can mean a number of things. Homicide can be accidental, manslaughter, justifiable, murder, and so on. Murder is always homicide, but homicide is not always murder. I liked that. As a result I can still say Phelps never disappoints.
