

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

# A Dark and Bloody Ground

Written by Darcy O'Brien

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# A Dark and Bloody Ground

By Darcy O'Connell

## A Dark And Stormy Night

Of the three books by Darcy O'Connell I have read I must say I like this one the least. Not to say it's not a good book. It gets bogged down in places. The middle part of the book dragged.

We get a little history of the region the crime happened in and a lot of history of the lawyer that got sucked into the case and the girlfriend of one of the men who committed the crime, some considered her the brains of the operation, but in the end she wasn't running things, and some minor details about other crimes they were linked to. The trial is also covered in great detail, the author stops short of word for word transcripts though and that part of the book did not drag. The victims declined to be interviewed, they did not want to relive the crime again but much information was obtained from court records, trial transcripts and such.

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Still a fascinating account of a crime that I believe not many people know of. ...more

## A Dark And Stormy Knight

I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to finish this book. I'm about 1/3 of the way through and I'm bored out of my skull. At first, I thought it was going to be an in-depth expose of the defense attorney who went bad, but it soon switched over to being...an in-depth diary-level biography of the girlfriend of one of the suspects the defense attorney was representing. I kept hoping it would leave this woman behind, as I have no interest in her at all, but at a third of the way through the book, I don't think that's going to happen. I also have serious doubts about how 'true' it is - the day-to-day life events described in excruciating detail are not the kinds of things someone would either remember or relate in an interview, so I suspect they're made up out of whole cloth, as, it appears, is the dialogue, which seems mostly geared to present a stereotypical reinforcement of the character. Where are the details of the crime, followed, as usual in a true crime book, by the hunt for the perpetrators? Where are the law enforcement officers who worked on the crime? Where's the honest & soul-revealing interview with the defense attorney who was tempted by money? If it's coming later, I'm not going to wait. I'm sorely disappointed, as this author came highly recommended to me by people whose opinions I generally trust. ...more

I don't know if I've ever read a 'True Crime' book before. It's written like a novel, it's just real. I found this particular book quite disturbing for a whole host of reasons.

I've mentioned before my love of local history. Stories of mad scientists trying to raise people from the dead, or riots on my mainstreet orchestrated by the secretary of state, of bodies buried inside the walls of my downtown businesses! I love that stuff.

But when I read such an intimate account of local folks on a crime spree, all that quirky history starts to feel like I'm just putting a sweet face on a community that is dysfunctional at best.

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This twenty-something year-old book covers the intertwining stories of Kentucky Lawyer, Lester Burns and the crime-loving couple of Benny Hodge and Sherry Sheets (actually, her last name changes

## A Dark and Bloody Ground

multiple times in the book, but (going with Sheets) who eventually meet in a case that is so rotten, that even their lawyer gets thrown in prison for it.

It was all fascinating to read, in that train-wreck sort of way. Sherry was a prison guard at Brushy Mountain Penitentiary (Brushy Mountain, btw, was a place my former Step-Father spent most of his adult life in, but that's something I covered in detail in my Star Trek blog, if anyone feels like cyber-stalking me, you can probably find it if you look hard enough) when she spied an inmate there that she fell in love with immediately upon seeing. They met in supply closets and men's rooms on the prison grounds until he was given probation and sent to the Anderson County jail where he sorta had a work-release program.

Then they met in motels and wherever they could, eventually, Sherry, who was married, was found out and she and her husband split up. She and Benny struggled to stay on the straight and narrow until Sherry masterminded a foolproof scheme to give them a comfortable income.

In the incredibly corrupt Anderson County police force, the cops were all working for the sheriff, who ran the local drug business like a fiefdom, he made arrests, confiscated drugs and money, then the evidence would disappear and the dealers would get off (no evidence) and then the sheriff would resell the drugs through his network of approved sellers and everyone would profit.

So, Sherry & Benny decided to get a cut. They went after dealers, he would pose as a cop (with a badge he bought at a flea market - one I used to go to every weekend during the summers when I was a kid, we may have been there on the same day) and bust and seize the drugs and cash of the dealers in the area.

Their plan was always planned methodically, and Sherry was a stickler for details. They did it for, I think, something like two years without ever getting close to getting caught. Their haul for each job was nice, but they would only pull it off once every few months. So they couldn't get rich doing it, just live a moderate, middle-class life.

It was genius, in a way, they were small enough to slip under the radar of the crooked police force, but enough that they could do it and live off of it.

Nonetheless, Sherry's side scams toying with credit card fraud weren't as lucrative, and got her in some minor trouble. It was when Benny got caught up with some Kentucky boys with the dream of making one big score that things started to get out of hand.

Needless to say, it was when the Kentucky crew got involved that people started dying, and not just drug dealers, not that that would make it okay, but honest, everyday folks, just trying to live. It got sadder as the story went along, and I went from sorta rooting for Sherry & Benny to actively wanting them to get caught.

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It is a perfect lesson on things getting out of hand. Benny came off as an easily swayed powder-keg of violence that could be led to do almost anything. He was usually gentle and kind on his own, but when he was angry, he lost control. Sherry came off as smart, careful, a master at making poor life-choices, and powerless to reign in her ambitious, dim-witted, lover as he got in deeper and deeper with people destined for disaster. She was loyal to a fault to a man who didn't deserve it.

As for the Kentucky Lawyer, well, the lesson from him is that despite being fabulously wealthy, the thought of millions of dollars in cash in the hands of these dummies seemed to be enough to drive him mad too " but at least he's the only person that showed some remorse for his part in the drama.

In all, I was riveted by the book. That it was a local story (for most of it anyway, Kentucky is probably too far away to consider local for me, but still!) made it all the more intriguing. I lived here in Knoxville when Benny & Sherry were right down the road in Oak Ridge. Then I moved to Clinton and was there where all the action in Sherry & Benny's lives took place, even if I was there about 5 years after the fact.

I dunno, it makes the place seem creepier to me in retrospect. Icky.

So, in case you were thinking of getting all murder in your near future, maybe read this book and see how it ended for those involved. Crime doesn't pay, people. And when it does, spending \$300k in a weeklong party of booze, cocaine, women & cars will probably get you caught.

...more

## A Dark And Stormy

I see people who have read this book are not agreeing. Some hated it some loved it. I guess that in the end I am one who loved it.

Yes the main character annoyed me. Yes the first few chapters made me think I bought a dud. but No it was not a dud at all.

So glad I gave it another try (paid good money for it) but that was mainly because I have read other books by Darcy O'Brien and I gave both of them 5 stars.

He is such an excellent writer I wish he had written more. I just googled him and found out I see people who have read this book are not agreeing. Some hated it some loved it. I guess that in the end I am one who loved it.

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He is such an excellent writer I wish he had written more. I just googled him and found out he died in 1998. Another great author lost like the late Jack Olsen.

Okay. This book is written out of the perspective of one of the criminals. She is the girlfriend but I consider her also a criminal as did the court.

Not a nice woman. Apparently men loved her but looking at the photo's in the book she looked to me to be a manly woman and reading the book I find her a very cold and selfish woman.

Anyway I am not going to write that much cause I do not want to spoil.

This is a book with a cast of so many interesting characters that I did not want it to end. And it shows you what money does to people.

Question:

What I do wonder is are prisoners still allowed to marry while jailed before their trials so the women in their life cannot testify against them?

4 stars. I wanted to give 5 but I will settle for 4.5 ...more

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### A Dark and Bloody Ground

I was friends with the victim in high school and college. I knew quite a bit of the real story. This book goes on and on and on about the "3 stooges" who committed the crime. The way the book "played up" the attorney, Lester Burns was ridiculous. The whole story was poorly written and boring with very little details about the crime or trial.

## A Dark And Bloody Ground

Darcy O'Brien's true-crime accounts are always a "cut above the company" in the genre, and this book which tackles the inner workings of a group of Appalachian sociopaths who destroy the lives of a small Kentucky community is no exception.

This is another true crime story written by Darcy O'Brien. This particular story takes place primarily in three states: Tennessee, Kentucky and Florida. The eastern part of Kentucky (area where sisters Crystal Gayle and Loretta Lynn were born and raised) has always been an area of day to day poverty for most people. The young men who are the principals in this story also hail from this area. Like so many residents, these men turned to a life of crime rather than trying to go to college (many did not have the grades to do so) and abhorred the idea of working in coal mines, which I personally cannot blame them or anyone else for being reluctant to risk one's health and life every day so that someone else can become wealthy. (This is still going on today; how many times have you seen TV ads for lawyers advertising geared to people who have black lung disease?) These particular crimes took place in the mid to late 80s; besides these cases, an awful lot of lawyers, sheriffs and other law enforcement personnel were actually guilty of criminal acts themselves. Many of them were brought up on charges, jailed and lost everything they had. However, these three young men (and their wives or significant others) committed crimes so over reaching, that their notoriety spread throughout the US. In the course of robbing at least two homes, the victims (except for one who survived) were murdered in unusually brutal ways. All three of the guilty parties had already been in prison for other crimes and two of them even managed to escape at least once. All of this brutality and violence just for greed, basically. The women were interesting also, because they suffered domestic violence yet still couldn't seem to get away from these guys even though they had ample chance. The men didn't help their brains anyway by drinking heavily daily and snorting cocaine the same way; perhaps they would have never gotten caught if they had not been substance abusers; however, none of them can be said to have been the sharpest individual(s) from any area of the country. The author states that at this time, the only other area with a crime rate as high as eastern Kentucky was "Little Egypt" in Illinois. The area is named that due to towns like Cairo (although pronounced K-r-o). I had read Mr. O'Brien's "Murder in Little Egypt" a few years ago, and it, too, was an especially interesting story; horrible, but interesting. This book, also, is an interesting study in sociology and the author doesn't dwell on the gruesome parts. It is just appalling to me that anyone would covet someone else's money so badly that they would go to these extremes to get it. A very terrible, but also sad story..... ...more

## A Dark And Stormy Knight 5e

I enjoy Darcy O'Brien's true crime books. This is the second one I have read. I don't mind at all that he did not interview the perps. That does not detract from the story for me. I was intrigued throughout and had a difficult time putting it down. I have a lot of curiosity about the criminal mind. I'd love to know what causes a person to split off from their own kind and wreak pain and havoc on them. I don't suppose I'll ever find satisfactory answers but the curiosity keeps me reading such books. I enjoy Darcy O'Brien's true crime books. This is the second one I have read. I don't mind at all that he did not interview the perps. That does not detract from the story for me. I was intrigued throughout and had a difficult time putting it down. I have a lot of curiosity about the criminal mind. I'd love to know what causes a person to split off from their own kind and wreak pain and havoc on them. I don't suppose I'll ever find satisfactory answers but the curiosity keeps me reading such books. ...more

slow starter

## A Dark And Stormy Knight Kerrigan Byrne

A highly rated true crime that I'm not rating very high.

In 1985, the home of an elderly physician in Kentucky was broken into. The doctor was seriously injured and his twenty-something year old daughter was savagely stabbed to death. What makes this robbery/murder stand out is the amount of cash taken from the house, over \$2 million.

Eventually six people were arrested in connection with this crime. Three men were charged with murder, two of their wives/girlfriends were charged with a lesser crime. A highly rated true crime that I'm not rating very high.

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Eventually six people were arrested in connection with this crime. Three men were charged with murder, two of their wives/girlfriends were charged with a lesser crime, and a lawyer for the defense was charged with knowingly accepting \$400,000 that he knew was money from the robbery.

I didn't like this book very much, maybe because I found all six totally reprehensible. The book was mostly written from the p.o.v. of Sherry, the wife of the leader. Supposedly she was the most intelligent of the group. (The author mentions this several times), yet her grammar was atrocious. Really, REALLY bad. Moreover, she was the stereotypical woman who stands by her man no matter what. He can beat her, threaten to kill her, have sex with other women, even commit murder, and she will still love him and stick by him. I really got sick of reading about this woman.

I saw no redeeming value in any of the other defendants either, including the lawyer. Even the doctor wasn't a completely sympathetic victim. Not to say he deserved what happened to him. He did not. But it appears he kept that much money in his home because he was hiding it from the IRS. Only the doctor's daughter was a completely innocent victim.

I've read a lot of true crime, and given high ratings to books that were about reprehensible people doing reprehensible things. Maybe I just wasn't in the mood to read about these dregs of society for page after page. I'm giving this book 2.5 stars rounding up to 3.0 because I think Darcy O'Brien is a talented writer. ...more

The first time I read this book it was loaned to me by a friend who grew up in Clinton, Tennessee. It was out of print at the time.

## A Dark and Bloody Ground

This was a fascinating book for me because I lived in Clinton, Tennessee while Dennis Trotter was the Sheriff of Anderson County. I know some of the people mentioned in this book and taught karate to some of their family members. Mullins Carpet and Upholstery, started by Moon Mullins, was right across the street from where my parents lived. I stayed once in the same    The first time I read this book it was loaned to me by a friend who grew up in Clinton, Tennessee. It was out of print at the time.

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There is a story I was told while still living in Clinton, that a film crew came to Clinton to scout locations to film a movie based on this book. But, they left suddenly when they received a serious warning to "get out of town ... because this movie will never be made." Not sure of the veracity of that story, but it sure adds to the mystique! ...more

## A Dark And Stormy Drink

Well written

Entertaining book. I do not like his portrayal of Sherry Sheets as if she was some superhero though. At best she was a negligent mother who chose a man who beat her and cheated on her over her own child and at worst she's a unrepentant accomplice to multiple murders. Her being slightly smarter than her doped up accomplices isn't saying much. She was right when she said that she was just a "hillbilly".

OK book

I moved to northern Kentucky (just south of Cincinnati) 20 years ago so decided to read this book. Well written story about stupid criminals. Book starts out with a scathing description of hillbilly country, a totally different place than the rest of the world. Unfortunately people often think the whole state of Kentucky hillbilly, it is not

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## A Dark And Stormy Knight Pdf

Fascinating book!

This book not only gives details surrounding the murders of several people, but also delves into the motivations and minds of the killers and their accomplices. I highly recommend it to other true crime readers.

Well written and captivating

I found this book after watching the TV series Justified which was set in Harlan County, KY. I believe that this true story is every bit as action filled as the television fiction. It was hard to put down and kept me up way too late on many nights.

## A Dark And Stormy Night Song

Kentucky never more deserved its Indian appellation "A Dark and Bloody Ground" than when a small-town physician, seventy-seven-year-old Roscoe Acker, called in an emergency on a sweltering evening in August 1985. Acker's own life hung in the balance, but it was already too late for his college-age daughter, Tammy, savagely stabbed eleven times and pinned by a kitchen knife to her bedroom floor in Fleming-Neon. Three men had somehow managed to breach Dr. Acker's alarm and security systems and made off with a substantial amount of the cash he had stashed away in a safe over his lifetime.

Very interesting to read about Kentucky and it's occupants. Vivid descriptions of characters and how the story unfolds. ...more

I did not really enjoy this book.it made me feel uncomfortable it is ashamed because it a rea

Story and all seemed a bit of a mess.how can a man get everything so wrong.it's all about money so saf

A Dark and Bloody Ground

## A Dark And Hungry God Arises

Great True Crime

This is an awesome story with characters that come to life in the pages .A story of love gone wrong ,greed and cursed blood money.

I read this for a book club, in a small town close to where much of this happened, and with people who know some of the people mentioned. Interesting.