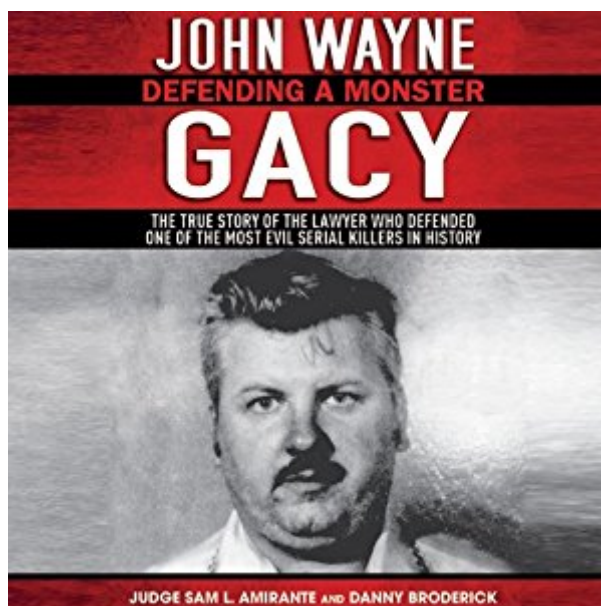


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John Wayne Gacy: Defending A Monster



Synopsis

For the first time Gacy's lawyer and confidant tells his chilling tale of how he defended an American serial killer. "Sam, could you do me a favor?" Thus begins a story that has now become part of America's true-crime hall of fame. It is a gory, grotesque tale befitting a Stephen King novel. It is also a David and Goliath saga - the story of a young lawyer fresh from the public defender's office whose first client in private practice turns out to be the worst serial killer in our nation's history. This is a gripping true crime narrative that reenacts the gruesome killings and the famous trial that shocked a nation.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 14 hours and 17 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: February 7, 2013

Language: English

ASIN: B00BCWKBA4

Best Sellers Rank: #25 in Books > Law > Legal History #29 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Law #36 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Lawyers & Judges

Customer Reviews

This is the first book I've read on JWG, so I have nothing to compare it with. John Wayne Gacy: Defending a Monster My initial hope was that the man who defended Gacy would have insights into the case that I hadn't read about or seen before. What we get, in large measure, is a thorough defense of our judiciary system (even the worst of us is entitled to a defense in court) to recollections of a young lawyer's first case throwing him into the national spotlight. His first case was to defend one of the most savage and remorseless killers of our generation. We learn about the fraternity of lawyers and the back-slapping and glad-handing that makes up the landscape of our legal system. The best part of this book is the closing arguments which, to their credit, Mr. Amirante and Mr. Broderick, give us practically in toto. The basic questions of JWG's guilt or innocence rests on whether he really knew what he was doing. Both the defense and prosecution give us closing statements addressing those very issues in a thorough and detailed way. Curiously, most of the

pictures in the book are of the crime scene, with a very blurry picture added at the end of the book of the victims. Putting these pics of the victims at the end almost has a last-minute feel to it. This is really less a profile of Gacy, although some of the documents provided in the book are interesting, and less an overview of the case, than it is about defending the indefensible. If that's your interest, you'll probably enjoy this perspective. Mr. Amirante does not seem to have provided us with any of his inner musings about the case, the kinds of things that would probably keep me up at night. Maybe that's the nature of the defense. And in suggesting that JWG be put away for "study" so that it might help in some vague, nebulous way in the future, is his weakest argument. What have we learned from Charles Manson over the decades? That's he's crazy like a fox? What did we learn from keeping Rudolph Hess in prison at Spandau? Little, if anything. I recommend this book for the closing arguments, if nothing else. And I do agree that our system is only as strong as what it does to protect the rights of the most horrible among us. Mr. Amirante, though, in repeating only that JWG was insane, asking "what's wrong with this guy?", or re-iterating for the reader that JWG is nuts, only seems to have side-stepped some of the deeper questions about one of the most brutal and savage killers of our time.

In so much that this book is a tale of John Wayne Gacy, one of the most notorious serial killers of our time, it is also the story of a young lawyer's quest to uphold and defend the principles of the Constitution of the United States. How fortunate are we to live in a country that even "monsters" such as Gacy are entitled to a dedicated defense as provided by this "young gun"? You gotta love that...and be proud. Did Sam Amirante think Gacy was innocent? Of course not! But he did believe he was entitled to the best defense he could provide so that even his "rights" could be protected. Amirante and his co-counsel Bob Motta put their lives on hold for almost a year and a half to immerse themselves in this feat. This is Sam's story. The author Danny Broderick does an excellent job in giving the reader an insight into how Sam Amirante maneuvered this minefield that was the Gacy case. The book takes you on a journey from that first phone call to Sam to the final sentencing of Gacy. A fascinating read. Danny Broderick has you riding "shotgun" on Amirante's incredible ride. Great Job!

This book--I wish I hadn't read it. Having said that, it's not because it's not good--it's quite wonderful, really. But the subject material--ugh. Gacy was a full plate of cray-cray. Amirante comes off as being a sympathetic character--or as sympathetic as a defense attorney can ever be--and a fine writer to boot. TIP: at the end it gets into the courtroom BS, and Amirante takes great pains to document

every detail of his closing speech--skip that part. But don't skip the prosecutor's. No way. I've written my fair share of scripts in my time (some of them successful, thank you for wondering), and if I were writing the script for this book, I would keep every word of the prosecutor's closing statement. I'm getting goosebumps just thinking about it. Warning: you will not sleep well for many nights after you read this. The Robert Piest story alone--which Amirante opens with--will make you want to lock your children up in a room until they were 21, and then only let them go after they have GPS trackers. Heartbreaking. Utterly heartbreaking.

I write crime fiction but I love reading True Crime. Amirante and Broderick's John Wayne Gacy: Defending a Monster is right up there with Anne Rule's books--in my opinion. Amirante was Gacy's lawyer and tried valiantly but unsuccessfully to mount an insanity defence for his client. While most of us know the story of Gacy's horrendous murdering spree, this book provides more than enough behind-the-scenes information to hold a reader's interest. While remaining very respectful of both his client and Gacy's victims, Amirante and Broderick masterfully spice the drama with low-key humour--aimed mostly at the lawyer's novice self at the time, and the bizarre circumstances surrounding the case and the trial. The writing is powerful, clean, and well-paced. It avoids the technical and detailed explanations that often bog down a true crime story and gets right to the interesting part--the people behind the story. Amirante/Broderick do not avoid casting the villain into the limelight--readers with an avid interest in the criminal mind will come away satisfied that they now know much more about the mind and soul of John Wayne Gacy and the people whose lives he so dramatically touched.

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