



"Gripping True Crime."

Clark Howard, Author of CITY BLOOD

TO DIE FOR

A True Story of Serial Murder and
Occult Phenomena

GARY C. KING

Bestselling Author of BLOOD LUST and DRIVEN TO KILL

The names of some individuals in this book have been changed, though such changes have been kept to a minimum. An asterisk () appears after a fictitious name at the time of its first occurrence.*

Prologue

Saturday, January 17, 1987

Fawn Creswell,* 14, shivered from the January chill the moment she stepped out the front door of her home on Portland's southeast side. Although there was no ice or snow on the ground, the Arctic air from Alaska had pushed the temperature into the low thirties, as it frequently does at that time of the year, and the raindrops that pelted her face early that evening felt more like ice pellets than rain. She could see her breath as she pulled her insulated multicolored nylon jacket, the kind that teenage girls everywhere seem to like to wear, up tightly around her neck for the short walk to the convenience store a few blocks away. Although it had been nearly a month since the winter solstice occurred and each successive day had slowly given way to small increments of more and more daylight, it was still dark at six o'clock throughout the Pacific Northwest on that January evening. But Fawn paid the darkness no mind. It was Saturday night and, like most teenagers, she was bored. There was nothing that she wanted to watch on television, and despite the inclement weather she had decided that she just had to get out of the house for a while. She reasoned that a walk to the store would at least give her something to do. It would kill some time, relieve her boredom even if only for a short while, and there was always the chance that she might run into a friend along the way.

An attractive girl with a well-endowed body for her age, Fawn minded her own business and sang to herself as she walked along the dark, not-so-busy avenue. Having never been a victim of violent crime before, Fawn, like most other people, had no reason to fear for her safety that evening. Bad things, she had always believed, happened to other people, but not to her. As a result of her innocent, still childlike way of thinking, appropriate for her age by most people's standards, she never even noticed the large semi-trailer with an attached sleeping compartment when it passed slowly by her as she walked along the freeway overpass. Similarly, she never noticed the truck's long-haired, bearded driver leering at her on that first pass along the block. But she would notice him soon enough. He was just in time on his second pass,

after circling the block, to see Fawn as she walked into the convenience store, located just beyond the overpass.

This was too good to be true, or so the driver reflected. After all, he had just driven south for 135 miles on Interstate 5, from Tacoma, Washington, to Portland, Oregon, the City of Roses, and he had already found a perfect victim. While it was certainly bad luck for the girl, a concept that he would never have even considered due to his inherent and severe inability to feel compassion for others, it was indeed good luck for him. Rarely was finding a victim so easy. Fate was clearly on his side once again. With his libido now dictating his actions, he turned his truck around and parked at a location where he knew she would soon have to pass. Once he had her under his control, he decided, it would all be worth the trip. He lit up a Camel filter, his favorite brand of cigarette, and drew the harsh smoke deep into his lungs as he waited for the girl to come out of the store.

Five minutes passed. As he waited for her to return, he became more anxious, excited, and his breathing grew heavier, more intense with each second that ticked by. Three minutes later he lit another Camel from the one he was smoking, and flicked the finished one out into the street. He continued to wait, and he took out one of the long-bladed hunting knives that he always carried with him as he began to fantasize about what he would soon be able to do with the girl. He turned the knife over and over in his hands, feeling the sharp, turned-up tip as he gazed with a far-off look in his eyes at the reflection of a streetlight in the knives polished, glinty steel. The things he planned to do to the girl were terrible, unthinkable by most people's values, but not to his. People, to him, were objects to be used for his pleasure alone, to be discarded like refuse when he was finished with them. He didn't care whether she had a family or what kinds of repercussions his actions would have on them or the girl. Thoughts of decency were foreign to him. All he cared about was himself, what he needed, what he wanted. Even more frightening, there was a part of him that understood all of this.

Although he was not yet versed in the legality of what he was about to do, by definition he was going to interfere with a person's personal liberty and commit the crime of kidnapping in the first degree with the sole purpose of causing physical and psychological injury to his chosen victim. He was going to confine her secretly so that he could terrorize her without being disturbed, ultimately for his sexual pleasure and the delight he would enjoy of having her under his power, under his total control. He knew what he was doing, and he knew right from wrong. But he didn't care. He was evil.

Finally, there she was, coming out of the store. She was carrying an open bottle of soda pop in one hand and a small sack of candy and other treats in the other. There was no time to lose. The man moved quickly into action. He climbed out of the cab of his big rig, the half-burned Camel hanging from his lips, and moved toward the truck's sleeping compartment door, pretending that he was attending to some kind of a problem with his rig. Such tactics had worked for him before. There was no reason for him to believe they wouldn't work this time.

When Fawn was alongside the truck, the hairy man, without any warning, pulled on the outside handle of the sleeping compartment door and swung it open, then stepped onto the sidewalk in front of her and effectively blocked her path, all in one swift action. It was imperative that he move quickly. He couldn't risk anyone seeing him kidnap the girl.

Puzzled and somewhat startled at first, Fawn stopped in her tracks and looked up quizzically at the man. Not wanting the girl to scream and cause a

scene before he could get her under his control, the man attempted a halfhearted smile as he leered at her with Charlie Manson eyes. Quick as a snake he reached out and grabbed her by the front of her nylon jacket. Terrified, Fawn stiffened and froze, unable to scream or fight back. The man lifted her off the sidewalk and pushed her forcefully into the truck's sleeping compartment. He leaped inside after her and pulled the door shut behind him, brandishing the hunting knife for the girl to see. He also told her that he had a gun, but Fawn didn't actually see the .357 Ruger he was carrying.

"If you scream or try to get away, I'll kill you," said the man, brimming with a matter-of-fact, arrogant confidence. Fawn, wild-eyed with fear, couldn't take her eyes off the knife. The knife was having the effect that he wanted it to have, and he seemed aroused by her wild display of fear. Although terrified, she kept quiet and involuntarily allowed the man to stuff a gag inside her mouth and to bind her hands and feet. Squirming from discomfort and crying uncontrollably, Fawn's young mind instinctively told her that it would be futile, and possibly very dangerous, to resist. When he was certain that the bindings were tautly in place and was confident that she couldn't get away or cause him any trouble, the man exited the sleeping compartment and

climbed back into the driver's seat. Certain that he had drawn no attention from passersby, he calmly started the engine and pulled unobtrusively away from the curb. He crossed the overpass, and then took the freeway on-ramp that headed him south into rural Clackamas County, his predetermined destination. He wanted his privacy, and he knew that he would get it there.

Fifteen minutes later, he pulled off onto a dark, tree-shrouded unpaved road and parked. No one would bother him there, of that he was certain. With steady hands he reached into a sack on the floorboard and pulled out a lukewarm can of Black Label beer, next to the last can of a six-pack that he had purchased just before leaving Washington State. He lit another Camel, climbed out of the truck, and listened intently. All he could hear was the wind-driven rain pelting the metal of the cab's roof. He was alone with the girl in a silent forest, and though her tears flowed like the rain coming down outside and he could hear her whimpering in the compartment behind him, he made not a sound. He was feeling good, strong, and in control. After several minutes of savoring the moment, he climbed inside the sleeping compartment and sat down next to the frightened, whimpering girl, a mere child who was only now beginning to learn about life's darkest side.

Keeping the knife where she could see it, he carefully removed her restraints. He drew back his hand at one point, as if he was going to slap her hard across the face with the palm of his hand. The display was to show her that he meant business, and that he would have his way with her. But for some reason he didn't strike the girl. Perhaps it was the way she had flinched sharply in anticipation of the pain that the slap would have caused, or perhaps it was because she had promptly nodded in affirmation that she would do just as she was told, everything that he instructed her to do as long as he promised not to kill her. But the only promise he made to her was that if she didn't obey, she would suffer dearly for it. She believed him, and slowly followed his instructions by removing all of her clothing.

Fawn slowly unbuttoned her blouse and slipped it off, revealing the swell of her breasts that were pushed up firmly by the brassiere she was wearing. She next unfastened her jeans and, from a sitting position, slipped them down. She paused long enough to remove her shoes, then removed her legs one at a time from her pants. She looked at him for a moment, as if waiting or hoping that he would change his mind.

“Go on, get the rest of those off,” he commanded as he showed her the knife again. “What the fuck are you waitin' for?”

Fawn unfastened her bra in the back, and let the straps fall from each shoulder. Attempting to cover her breasts with one arm, she removed the bra

the rest of the way with the other. She then slipped her panties off and kneeled on the floor, her thighs held tightly together in an attempt to hide her private parts from the man. He pushed her onto her back, but she remained rigid.

He ran his large, rough hands across her young, tender breasts, and took the hunting knife and ran its tip slowly and ever so lightly across her stomach. With careful, deliberate movements he continued dragging the knife in a downward motion, across her abdomen and pelvic area to, finally, between her thighs. Fawn shivered involuntarily and cried as he parted her legs and placed one of his hands on her soft, sparse patch of pubic hair. He felt himself become hard, and it felt good, all-powerful. He wriggled out of his own pants, and Fawn was suddenly aware of his largeness. It was not that he was particularly well endowed; it was just that the sight of an erect penis to the 14-year-old girl was enough to give her the impression of largeness. He spat into the palm of his left hand, the one with the word J-U-N-E tattooed across the knuckles, and excitedly rubbed the saliva all over his penis. He forced himself on top of the helpless child and entered her forcefully, all within a matter of seconds. She grunted with pain and cried out momentarily,

but otherwise tried to remain quiet. She knew better than to do anything to anger this bastard. His breath stank of beer and cigarettes, and he panted repulsively as he pushed and pulled his less than adequate organ in and out of her body. It didn't take long for him to climax, and he ejaculated inside her vagina.

"I could fuck you all night," he lied, trying to bolster his much inflated ego. His manhood was important to him, even if he really wasn't the man he wanted everyone to think that he was. He had to maintain the image. It was all an extension of his fantasy, which he believed he had to keep alive to get along in the world.

Desirous of another erection, he fondled the girl's breasts and buttocks. At one point he forced her mouth onto his organ and demanded that she fellate him.

"You're going to have to give me a blow job now, you little bitch" He laughed disrespectfully.

When she tasted the saltiness of her own vagina, it sickened her and she gagged with revulsion, but she complied as best she could. His body smelled badly, like several days worth of old, built-up sweat, which didn't make it any easier for her to accomplish the deviant act that he was demanding. When he ejaculated and filled her mouth with his semen, she thought that she would vomit. But she didn't want to take any chances of angering him by protesting and so continued the deviant act until he backed away on his own. She didn't know what he might do with the knife.

He would enter her again and again over the next two hours, and would repeat the process of ejaculating both inside and outside her body. At one point, when it appeared that he would not be able to attain another erection, the man grabbed the now empty soda pop bottle that the girl had been carrying when he kidnapped her and placed it angrily between Fawn's legs.

"Bet you know what I'm doing to do with this, don't you?" he laughed. Fawn remained silent, and only stared at him with wild, frightened eyes.

He carefully, but forcefully, worked the bottle's neck into her vagina, the tip of which was lubricated only with the girl's bodily fluids and the man's semen that had dripped from her vagina. He pulled it out and reinserted it until he established a rhythmic motion and the process became easy for him. Though it was painful, Fawn knew that she had no choice but to let him have his way. Abusing her body with the pop bottle amused him at first, but finally became erotic to the point that he was able to get yet another erection. He pulled the bottle out and in its place inserted his penis. Grunting primitively, he raped her once again.

When the man realized that he was finished with the girl, he also knew that he had the problem of deciding what to do with her. He had kidnapped, repeatedly raped, and sexually penetrated the body of a juvenile female with a foreign object, among other crimes. If he let her go, he knew that she would likely be able to identify him at some point. He thought and talked of killing her, but she cried and pleaded with him to let her go.

"I promise I won't tell anyone what happened if you'll just let me go," she cried. "Please don't kill me!"

"I could sell you to pimps in California," he said after several minutes of silence, an evil gleam in his eyes. He seemed lost, deep in thought for several more minutes before finally breaking the quietude. After taunting her by telling her the horrible things that he could do to her, he demanded that Fawn promise, again, not to tell anyone about what had happened to her. After threatening to find her if she did, the man, miraculously, agreed to let her go. He allowed her to dress, drove her back to the city, and dropped her off at a location where she could easily find her way home.

When Fawn arrived home, she discovered that her parents were still up, frantic with worry. They had already called the police, but, they had been told, there wasn't much that they could do until more time had passed. She hadn't been missing long enough to qualify as a missing person. Trembling uncontrollably, Fawn tearfully recounted to her parents the horror she had been subjected to over the past few hours. They promptly reported the crimes that had been committed against their daughter to the Portland Police Bureau, and Fawn was taken to a local hospital for examination. A standard rape kit, which includes a comb, swabs, and evidence containers, was used to collect the evidence.

A physician swabbed Fawn's bodily orifices and tested them with acid phosphatase. The swabs turned a pinkish purple from the enzyme, a positive chemical reaction that revealed the presence of semen inside her vagina and mouth. Her underpants, which also contained semen stains, were collected, along with the swabs, as evidence. Her pubic hair was combed in search of stray or foreign hairs, and samples of her own pubic hair were collected for purposes of comparison. In addition, a pubic hair was found on her sweater during the examination.

Following the medical examination, Fawn was interviewed at length by Portland Police Bureau Detective Bill Carter. She described her attacker as a white male, approximately 25-30 years of age, nearly six feet tall, and about 160 pounds. She said that he had a thick mustache and beard, and somewhat crooked teeth. However, despite the investigation that was initiated as case number 87-12-37738 that evening, it would be nearly six months before Fawn would identify her attacker as one Darren Dee O'Neill.

In the meantime, Fawn would begin to despise and distrust nearly all men because of what happened to her on the night of January 17, 1987, and would grow up harboring such feelings despite the therapy sessions she would undergo. And, like so many others who had become victims of violent crime, she would become afraid of the dark.

Chapter 1

Darren Dee O'Neill, 27, arrived virtually unnoticed in the rugged Twin Peaks backwoods of Washington State on November 3, 1986, an unseasonably warm Monday. Known as a drifter to his family, friends, and law enforcement agencies across the country, O'Neill had traveled extensively throughout the United States. As the product of an army household, his travels had begun in his youth and continued until his father, Darrell, finally retired from the military and settled with Darrell's mother, Christa, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. But for reasons, dark, macabre reasons that no one yet fully understood, Darren O'Neill continued to travel in his adult life entirely of his own doing, out of necessity in most cases in order to stay one step ahead of the law, as he was doing now. On the move almost constantly, he never remained in one location for very long. As a result, he did little bonding with others and knew few people whom he could call friends. When he chose to associate with anyone, he did so mostly with street people, animals of the street as O'Neill himself was known to call them. He didn't form such alliances out of a yearning for companionship but out of a need to score illicit drugs or to launch a new scam of some sort. Mostly, however, he made contacts in the streets because he blended in so smoothly with what he termed 'society's rubbish,' which is how he sometimes thinks of himself, and because he knew that such people would be the least likely ever to turn him in to the law. He was gutsy and daring, which should not be construed as bravery or gallantry but instead should be understood in the vein that he would do what he had to do to get what he wanted. In that sense, some would say, he had more nerve than a government mule. But he was a loner for the most part, afraid to face life responsibly and on the right side of the law, and that seemed to suit him just fine.

He had spent varying amounts of time, anywhere from six weeks to six months in each of the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Tennessee, and most recently he had wandered through the Rocky Mountain states where not only his father and mother resided, but where other family members lived, too. But now O'Neill was in the Evergreen State, so named because of its vast, extensive forests, a place of natural beauty and serenity where he was not yet known in law enforcement circles. He was there not by accident but out of design. He had planned it that way, just as he planned almost everything that he did. Driving a butterscotch-colored 1972 Chrysler New Yorker with Montana license plates, he was there to contact an old high school acquaintance, Frank Wilhelm.* O'Neill didn't

want to see Wilhelm because he particularly liked him or wanted to befriend him. He was looking him up because he desperately needed a place to stay, a place where he could lie low for a while, rethink his situation, get back on his feet, all the while staying out of reach of the long arm of the law. Wilhelm, O'Neill had learned from a relative before setting out on this latest trek, had also only recently moved into the state and was running his own business. O'Neill hoped that Wilhelm would be happy to see him again, if only for a while.

O'Neill and Wilhelm had first become acquainted when they were both teenagers in the mid-1970s, and their association, for that is all that it could be called, had grown out of Wilhelm's close friendship with O'Neill's older brother, Kevin. O'Neill's father and Wilhelm's stepfather had both been in the military back then, stationed at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and they had lived

across the street from each other. Even though O'Neill was a couple of grades behind Wilhelm, they nonetheless had become "buddies" of a sort.

Pretending to be insecure, unsure of himself, always wondering aloud about what he wanted to do with his life, O'Neill preyed on whatever sympathy he could muster from Wilhelm and his wife to get into their home. As a ruse, he sought solace and advice from Wilhelm upon his arrival in Washington. Not that he would take or heed any advice even if it was offered to him. He just wanted to appear as down and out as possible in Wilhelm's eyes, and to be able to use him in any way that he could before moving on. Darren O'Neill didn't know how not to take advantage of someone's good nature.

After renewing their friendship and getting to know each other all over again on a more or less superficial basis, superficiality being one of the major distinguishing characteristics of O'Neill's relationships with others, Wilhelm easily convinced O'Neill that life and women were indeed good in the Pacific Northwest. Since O'Neill had little money, no place to stay, and was a virtual stranger to the area, Wilhelm apparently felt sorry for him and agreed to put him up in his home for two weeks. O'Neill's cunning had worked once again, just as he had known it would when he began going over the plan in his mind prior to meeting with Wilhelm.

Within the two weeks that O'Neill stayed with Wilhelm, he discovered, after familiarizing himself with the region, that he really did like it there, especially the vast outdoors. He could implement all of his plans, carry out more of the evil carnage that he lived for, all with less chance of being caught as long as he remained careful. Once again he would soon be able to release the diabolic entity that writhed deep within the further reaches of his tortured soul, from within his very psyche, that evil from inside that ultimately dictated in its cyclic fashion just what O'Neill, and others like him, would have to do. Thinking ahead and making plans that, as yet unknown to him, would ultimately go awry and send him on the lam again, he quickly decided during those two weeks with Wilhelm that he needed an apartment of his own, a safe haven that could serve as his home base after carrying out his acts of profane handiwork, whatever they turned out to be. Like Wilhelm, he would stay in the Pacific Northwest, too, at least for a while. But he would stay for all of the wrong reasons.

With barely \$200 in his wallet when he arrived, O'Neill worked at odd jobs, ran scams with street people, and occasionally robbed a three-time loser who was too drunk to know what was happening to him, all so that he could accumulate enough money to put down on a place of his own. He soon found

such a place, a reasonably priced duplex apartment that he saw while studying the classified ads in the local newspaper. It was located at 10224 13th Court East in the Edgewood section of Puyallup, near Tacoma. When he drove over to see it, he would have been the first to admit that it didn't look like much. From all outward appearances, the apartments could easily have qualified as low-income Section 8 housing had the owner wanted to participate in the government program. But O'Neill didn't care. He wasn't, after all, particularly choosy about where he lived, and he had certainly lived in places far worse than this. After giving it a cursory once-over and deciding that it would adequately serve his needs, he told the manager that he would take it. He reasoned, correctly, that the manager wouldn't hassle him about references. He paid part of the deposit at that time and promised to pay the rest later, and also paid two weeks' rent for the one-bedroom unit that would become his home for the next five months. In need of a steady income, he immediately began searching for a full-time job. He realized that he needed something substantially better than what scamming people and rolling drunks could provide.

Having worked as a casual laborer, cook, bartender, dishwasher, warehouseman, salesperson, and a wood laminator, O'Neill wasn't too worried about finding a job. As soon as he left Wilhelm's home and moved into his own apartment, he knew that he would take the first firm offer that came along regardless of the pay. That first offer turned out to be a job as a laminator at Interior Form Tops, a countertop manufacturing firm located at 1420 Meridian East, also in Puyallup and only a short drive from O'Neill's apartment. O'Neill obtained the job after Frank Wilhelm, himself a businessman in the community, put in a good word for him with the shop's owner.

Interior Form Tops was set back away from the street, just across the road from a place called Baldy's Tavern, a beer and wine haunt that sometimes featured live music. The close proximity of the tavern to O'Neill's place of employment naturally pleased him, since he liked to guzzle beer and associate with the tavern crowd. He soon found that he could take some of his lunches there, and would sometimes sneak out in the afternoon for a fast beer break whenever he knew that the boss was away. And after work Baldy's would become a favorite hangout of O'Neill's. Unfortunately, the tavern would ultimately figure significantly as the starting point in what would be remembered as one of Washington state's most intensive missing-person-turned-murder investigations.

Sylvan in its natural beauty, the state of Washington was named in honor of the nation's first president. Ideally located in the extreme northwestern corner of the continental United States, Washington is conveniently situated geographically to the Canadian province of British Columbia to the north, and the states of Idaho and Oregon form its eastern and southern borders, respectively. A large body of water known as Puget Sound lies to the west and leads directly into the Pacific Ocean via the Strait of Juan de Fuca and other scenic waterways. The Olympic Peninsula, which lies to the north near British Columbia's Vancouver Island, boasts its own national park, the interior of which is accessible only to foot traffic. Within the park's boundaries lies a dense rain forest, rimmed by the snowcapped and hauntingly beautiful Olympic Mountains. It is only a short ferry ride from the Washington peninsula to Victoria, a city popular with tourists from around the world.

East and southeast of Puget Sound lies a coastal plain, the Puget Sound lowland. Farther due east, however, the lowland soon gives way to the Cascade Range, the highest peak of which is Mount Rainier, which majestically looms over the region at 14,410 feet and can easily be seen from Seattle and Tacoma on clear days. It is an area that has been both sullied and

beautifully molded by eons of movement of the prehistoric glaciers and ice sheets and which is now dominated by dormant volcanoes. There is, of course, the one non-dormant exception known as Mount St. Helens, which awakened after 123 years of sleep and erupted in 1980, causing extensive damage to the surrounding areas, mostly from volcanic ash, and left frequently recurring low-level seismic activity in its wake.

Under the influence of the prevailing westerly winds, western Washington is a moist, temperate zone that receives up to 150 inches of precipitation annually. Temperature in the Cascades and the surrounding national forests fluctuates between 45 and 50 degrees nine months out of the year. In the summer it is considerably warmer and drier, of course, than in the other seasons. It is just such extremes in the fluctuation of atmospheric conditions that provides for the rapid decomposition of human remains left in the outdoors, which is one of the reasons why, perhaps, that the Pacific Northwest has played host to a number of notorious serial killers in recent years and has provided them with such a favorable dumping ground. And now it was

providing the perfect backdrop for the likes of Darren O'Neall to carry out his frenzied fits of blind rage.