



With One Shot: Family Murder and a Search for Justice

Dorothy Marcic

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"A rapid-fire, real-life thriller."

--*New York Times* bestselling author M. William Phelps

The lovely widow had confessed to the coldblooded murder of her husband. But Dorothy Marcic suspected a more sinister tale at the heart of her beloved uncle's violent death.

The brutal murder of LaVerne Stordock, a respected family man and former police detective, shocked his Wisconsin community. On the surface, the case seemed closed with the confession of Stordock's wife, Suzanne. But the trail of secrets and lies that began with his death did not end with his widow's insanity plea.

Dorothy Marcic, a playwright, theatrical producer, and university professor, couldn't put her doubts to rest. In 2014 she embarked on a two-year mission to uncover the truth. In the bestselling tradition of Ann Rule and M. William Phelps, *With One Shot* weaves a spellbinding tale of unmet justice and the truth behind a shocking family tragedy.

"A riveting, personal story of the American justice system."

--**Kaylie Jones, author of *Lies My Mother Never Told Me***

"A gripping tale, well worth reading."

--**Lawrence M. Miller, author of *The Lean Coach***

"Marcic excavates new depths of perfidy, cruelty and lies."

--**Randy Cohen, former Ethicist for *The New York Times***

"A compelling read about a true family murder mystery marked by intrigue, betrayal and injustice."

--**Leslie J. Mann, assistant prosecutor, Essex County, New Jersey**

With One Shot: Family Murder and a Search for Justice Details

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Marcie

From Reader Review With One Shot: Family Murder and a Search for Justice for online ebook

Sarah says

I had to stop reading. It's not well-written and goes on and on. I got to the point that I didn't care what happened and realized I was wasting my time.

Valerity (Val) says

A well researched and written book, done by the niece of the victim 40 years after the murder. Later generations realize they don't know enough and want to dig to find out what answers remain while there are still people living that know what happened. So Marcic begins piecing together what happened back on that night, and after a couple of years of research and interview, a sickening picture emerges. This turns out to be a very interesting case, with lots of crooked carrying on behind the scenes. It should interest most true crime fans as it stalks info about a murder that happened back in the 60's, and possibly several more.

An advance digital copy was provided by NetGalley and author Dorothy Marcic for my honest review.

Citadel

Publication date: March 27, 2018

Madeleine Black says

Really liked the sound of this book but I had to give up just about half way through. Sorry to do this to a NetGalley book, but really struggled with it. There were too many facts, assumptions and just didn't flow well.

Tasha and Megan Mahoney says

My Review

This is the hardest book to get into that I have read in a long time. In all honesty I didn't really get into it.

The writing style was good but the information blended assumption and fact and wasn't clear on which was which and this annoyed me pretty early on in the book.

I can understand why Dorothy Marcic felt the need to investigate her uncles after his 2nd wife was convicted of shooting him, claimed insanity and only served 11 months. Then to add more insult she claimed him life insurance upon his release.

It was such a mix of imagination, assumption, suspicion and fact and those lines were far too blurred throughout the book.

That the legal proceedings surrounding her aunts incarceration and quick release needed further examination

is of little doubt but Dorothy writes her account with obvious and understandable bitterness and anger. This bias is evident on most pages throughout the book.

If this book had been written and researched by someone without an emotional and familial link to the murder then I think it would have been a better book.

I am afraid I can only give this book. 2.5 stars.

I was given an arc of this book by the Publisher and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Noorilhuda says

The thing is very simple: The district attorney (James C. Boll), the ADA (Victor Mussallem), the prosecutors, handled it all wrong right from the beginning. They let a murderer run free. Suzanne Stordock's lawyers (Kenneth Orchard and Jack Van Metre) had their act together - they did what was best for their client, painting her instantly as a victim of a violent toxic marriage that exploded in seconds of insanity in an otherwise rational person, and added a schizophrenia to boot! Unfortunately, the DA's office did not pursue the case as a murder and they certainly did not consider Suzanne a conniving murderous tramp (as the author and her entire family do). It was the lethargic, incompetent and criminally negligent prosecutorial behavior that allowed her defense team to make a mockery of the justice system. From March 1970- January 1971, the court transcripts on pages 107 to 118 read like a train wreck or a joy ride (depending on your perspective). Complete miscarriage of justice and it is entirely the prosecution's fault. There wasn't even a proper trial. Icing on cake: 'So I don't believe that the State has any chance whatever of prevailing or being able to destroy or overcome the case that could and I am sure would be put on by defense, and I don't really believe that any function would be served by a trial.'

I don't know why this decision came as a shock to Verne Stordock's mother who was in the court room at the time. Usually, DA's office inform the victim's family in advance of their decision as to the case. The book is a study of Suzanne Stordock's past, present and future after the murder. It would have been more informative if it had focussed on the 10 months it took for the DA's office to change the first degree murder charge to manslaughter to 'hey, we can't prove it ain't temporary insanity' plea. In fact, the first 48 hours after the murder were indicative of the things to come: when Suzanne Stordock is transferred from a rotting jail cell to a cozy university psychiatric hospital!

The murder was done with premeditation (the heavy long gun was either below the waist or someone was kneeling down from the door!) even if it means someone got so angry with a naked guy in the bedroom that his head had to be blown off. And Elmira Irene Brandon / Susanne Stordock / Suzanne Brandon got away with it. Maybe she got her son to do it, but David comes across as a passive, lying, yes-ma'am (complete with a cringe-inducing flirtation with the author as a 50-year old, which the author does not discourage). I believe Suzanne did it in a fit of anger (like 'one of these days I'm going to teach you a real lesson' kind of anger) or maybe she was thinking of all the insurance money and mansion and / or she got her 17-year old son to do it. Unfortunately, there was no trial. So no one knows for sure who pulled the trigger.

LaVerne G. Stordock left a will and it named his second wife Suzanne and adopted son Daniel (who later committed suicide). I don't know why his only child from his first marriage, daughter Shannon, did not

contest the will through a lawyer. Since Suzanne was not convicted of any crime, she could legally inherit everything unless a lawyer for Shannon filed a civil suit or something to get some cash out of her. This was also not done. I also do not know why the Stordock family (his mother, surviving brother and sisters - including the author's mother) did not push the police, DA and media right from the start for the murder to be treated as murder and not a victim-revenge and were not involved in the 10 months it took a non-trial to set the 'accused' free. I also do not know how a woman can claim inheritance without showing actual proof of marriage (or common law wife status, if such existed in Wisconsin in 60s-70s), but the author cannot even state clearly whether there was a second Mrs. Stordock or not.

This book is a long testament to a family's - or in particular Verne Stordock's daughter Shannon, and his niece i.e. the author's - inability to let go the fact that the system (specifically its handlers) failed them. The author is resentful but her ire is directed at the wrong person: to me, it feels like the prosecuting authority (the DA's office) are ultimately responsible for the leniency shown to Suzanne Stordock. Irrespective of all the insinuations about corruption of the entire system that the author makes - the ulterior motives of the sheriff, the officers, the DA, the ADA, the psychiatrists - there is zero evidence to show for it. The fact is: the police made the initial arrest and forensics looked at the scene of the crime but nothing came of it because the prosecution was offensively lackadaisical.

However, the author is obsessed with (at time of her death, in 2017) the 88-year old Suzanne Brandon: searching for her ancestors, relatives, friends, children and relatives of previous husbands! etc. etc. To me, Elmira Irene Brandon / Suzanne Stordock / Suzanne Brandon comes across as a highly attractive woman (to men) as evidenced by her 5 marriages (the last one was to a thrice-married oldie with whom she lived to his dying day). She was a selfish, manipulative, talented, highly educated, high-pitched shrew, who knew what was best for her. She doesn't come across as much of a mother. This book of course is not going to be the best judge of her other (unknown) characteristics. Her life after the murder shows her enterprising 'devil may care' nature. From dirt-poor beginnings to mansions, she came a long way to getting her way. But the author paints her as a 'mata hari', a woman who befuddles other women (what does a man see in her?), a woman who seduces and literally sucks the life out of helpless rich souls who knew no better, a woman who lies and cheats and schemes her way through life, a puppet-master to the legal system, fooling everyone except the family of Verne Stordock. To this pile, the author also adds the tag of 'probable serial killer' who is not averse to killing her own kids. I think the author is giving too much credit to the thin blonde.

The reason why Shannon Stordock grew up without money was her father. The reason why she didn't get any money from her father's will was her father. The reason why she never became a veterinarian is debatable. But for the life of me I could not understand what the author or Shannon wanted from the 'Suzanne Brandon household'. Did they really expect a confession, an apology, a pronounced regret, a miserable end?

This is a book full of misdirected rage borne out of injustice and emptiness. Stordock family has my sympathy.

Maggies Daisy says

Closer is a glorious feeling when you're left with a hole where a devastating event has torn your world apart when someone you love was violently murdered, and justice is unserved. When a family is left with few answers and the murderer gets off on a flimsy insanity plea the author seeks to find the facts that lead to her Uncle's death when she was a young teenager. Can she piece the clues back together after so long? In her quest to unravel and locate witnesses and all the official reports taking several years she finally knows most

of the truth surrounding her veteran police officer Uncle's brutal death and the cover-up by a first-class psychopath. A gripping tale of insanity, coercion, and death on a one-woman roller coaster ride through murder. Thank you for sending an ARC copy for reading pleasure in exchange for my honest review.

Nicole says

3.75 stars!

This was an engrossing page turner for me. I attended a book signing/author reading event at the Oregon Firefly Cafe, the town where *it* happened. I arrived late and Dorothy Marcic was already reading what I assumed was an excerpt from this book. However, now I know better that she was reading from something else she must have written, regarding the terrible, domestic abuse in her childhood family. In this book, she alludes to that abuse on a few occasions. One thing that did impress me, with this book, is the strong women involved.

Strong women. Dorothy Marcic witnessed terrible, domestic abuse, during her youth, yet still rose above, and made a successful life for herself. That's not easy. All of the women involved, even the confessed murderer, are incredibly strong women, coming from homes with familial dysfunction and alcoholism.

I appreciate that Marcic strives to remain open to the family that killed her Uncle, and I can't even imagine how hard that was. There's a lot of family entanglement with cousins and step cousins and it must have been very hard to sort that all out. (view spoiler) In establishing a relationship with David, in order to obtain answers, it's quite apparent that David is either falling for Marcic, or, sees her as a way out of his current situation. And, again, this shows how Marcic is incredibly forgiving, although, it is hard not to feel sorry for these children who were incredibly emotionally neglected, growing up, with their monster mom. I'm not certain, however, if Marcic is being somewhat wooed, in the process?

Around that time he got really enthused as we talked about living in Wisconsin. "Let's go back and buy that house in Oregon," he said, "we can get married, and I can run my business out of the basement. Wouldn't that be great?" I just laughed, hoping I could turn his serious comment into something we both saw as a humorous remark. 102 Hmmmmmmm.....

Marcic proves herself a top notch sleuth, and finally brings some closure to herself and her family. The fact that the sheriff's office admits to Marcic that the case was obviously flawed from the get go and that they would reopen it if (view spoiler) vindicates Marcic and all of her hard work. Some may argue the book's aim is vindictive and, well, maybe there are a few moments where the author could have reigned in her personal commentary. Overall, though, she has enough evidence and witnesses of the behavior of the perpetrator, Suzanne, to establish the type of person Suzanne was, a psychopath.

The repetitious mention of (view spoiler), would have bothered me, in the past. After reading some Ursula LeGuin, though, I'm okay with it. It's a repetitive, unifying theme for the author, and creates a pattern in the text. Sort of brought to mind the Godfather film, for me, with the repetitive, violent scenes, somehow set to a musical score, in my mind.

There are a few one sentence paragraphs which were not necessary. The sentence could easily have been tied into the previous or later paragraphs. For example: *My uncle, LaVerne Gerald Stordock, had worked his whole life in law enforcement - twenty years as a police officer, then as a sergeant and later captain in Beloit, Wisconsin, where he retired as Captain in 1962.* 4 I think that could easily have been tacked onto the next paragraph which continued to describe Mr. Stordock. One chapter is titled, *Organizational Chart #1*. Basically, 3 pages of text explaining a chart. There are other chapters with organizational charts, but they are not titled as such. Maybe it would have been better to have an appendix for the charts? For some reason,

towards the end of the book, there are a few moments where Marcic suddenly becomes extremely descriptive of the environment and what characters are wearing. This was noticeable because it's not consistent, throughout. It feels a little out of place and unnecessary.

The receptionist for the sheriff's office was behind some bulletproof glass and had poofy hair and long lime-green nails. She shoved a pressed-woodchip clipboard with some paperwork through the opening... Coming to greet me was Detective Blanke, who had a football player's physique, at five feet ten inches, with brown hair and a well-trimmed goatee. He wore a dress shirt and tie and had the warm kind of smile that could melt a Wisconsin snowdrift in the middle of January. 323

I did enjoy reading this one! Somewhat of a guilty pleasure, but, oh well.

Rebecca Hill says

More twists and turns than a wadded up roll of duct tape.... which in this case, could have been extremely useful!

Warning.... there are spoilers..

Vernie Stordock was a family man, respected police officer and all around great guy - until the night he was murdered. It was not just murder... it was the slow systematic wiping out of any life he might have had before he met Suzanne. His niece, Dorothy and his daughter Shannon have had theories and questions for years. Dorothy finally decides to see if she can get to the bottom of the story, and begins to unravel the mysterious surrounding involving Suzanne, her children, and of course - how in the world a professed murderer gets only 11 months in a mental hospital to be "cured" and released.

Now the juicy parts of the story. You are going to hate Suzanne. You have to. The entire story reeks of narcissistic/pathological issues that you can see building through the fabrics of the relationships she had before she met Vernie. It was Suzanne or the highway.. her way or no way. Somehow, she always got exactly what she wanted. She used her body, she used threats, and when it came down to it - violence (for real, exactly how MANY bodies have to accumulate around someone before it gets questioned). But I digress, we are discussing the Vernie situation here..

Suzanne admitted her role in the murder, explained how she did it, and then somehow manipulated the system to barely spend any time in prison, walk out smelling like roses, and managed to claim the entire estate of Vernie, and then some. She was not happy to walk away with the life insurance, she had to hurt his first family by taking half of everything they had, just because she could.

This book... this book is a hard one for me to rate and review. I liked it, I hated it, I questioned the author and her true motives. I wanted more. I wanted to see more answers from the departments involved, the DA, the ADA (who was disbarred), the Sheriff, and most of all, the doctors who allowed this woman to outsmart them. She played each and every person like a fiddle and they sang the exact tune that she wanted. Beethoven would have been proud at the master theater production she managed to concoct and have everyone swaying to her own personal waltz.

I had to admit, I got a little irritated with all the "we had an instant connection" "they were wearing a...." moments. I don't care what someone is wearing. This book is not about clothing and fashion, or the sound of

someone's voice. It was a fact, theory expounding, nail the murderer of her uncle book. I honestly could not tell if the author was satisfied with the findings of the case by the time the book closed. It felt to open to me. Why was David never fully questioned? How in the world could they not go back and amend the charges? There is no statute of limitations on murder, and the fact that the person they suspected was now dead had nothing to do with it. Suzanne was a liar, and that was enough to throw everything out the window and start again. Sadly, the records from the case have mostly been destroyed and many of the people who knew anything are also passing away. This case is a huge miscarriage of justice, and the family of Vernie Stordock never got full closure. As I worked through the case putting the evidence together, it never fully fit to me that Suzanne was the person who pulled the trigger. She was a master manipulator, and would get anyone else to do their work for them (i.e. she even used her own step-daughters research for her thesis/dissertation). Suzanne was not mentally ill, she did not have a lapse in judgement, and I very highly doubt that her husband was ever violent towards her, unless he was protecting himself from her. She manipulated each and every situation she was in. Full blown narcissistic behavior, and more probable, a high functioning sociopath. This woman was the very epitome of evil, who used her children to get what she wanted, and ignored them the remainder of the time. For them to have stuck with her as long as they did, I was surprised, but then again - manipulation goes a long way and when you have been conditioned since childhood with it, there is not much you can do to get away from it.

Like I said above, I had a hard time rating this book. I felt it was really rambling in a lot of ways (kind of like my review), but I think she started off on the right track. If she had stuck to the case, and not let emotion sweep through (hard because it was family), it would have made a more cohesive read. I wonder now about the family of this master manipulator, and how much they truly knew about the "unfortunate situation".

Susan Angela Wallace says

with one shot by Dorothy Marcic.

a very good read.

the brutal murder of Laverne Stordock, his wife Suzanne confesses to his murder. but how did she do it?

Dorothy Marcic embarks on a two year Mission to find out the truth. but will she find the truth?

although the picture and diagrams were a bit confusing for me. I did enjoy the story. so only 4*.

Stephanie says

With One Shot, by Dorothy Marcic, is a well-written look at injustice in a small Wisconsin town. The crime seems straightforward: a man is murdered and his wife confesses. So, what is the book about?

The victim, LaVerne Stordock, was a former police detective who disrupted his whole life to marry Suzanne. Their relationship was volatile, and Suzanne's insanity plea resulted in less than a year of confinement. LaVerne was the author's uncle, and she totally loved him (partly because he represented calm in the tumult of her life growing up).

The author, a successful professor, playwright and theatrical producer, puts her life on hold to investigate the case years after it seemed closed. TBH, the whole family creeped me out but I found the story believable. The problem is that the author's clear bias prevents this from being an objective look at a family tragedy.

It's interesting, and true crime fans will totally dig in to the book and enjoy the story of Ms. Marcic's dogged pursuit of truth. Three and a half (round up to 4 for good writing) stars.

Jordan says

Thank you NetGalley and Kensington Books for an advanced copy of this book. My honest review follows.

I gave this book one star because of the way it was written rather than for the story that was told. Perhaps I received the second draft of this story but the writing was angry, biased, and hard to follow at times. This could have used a few more editing sessions.

The author's uncle was killed, murdered, decades ago. It is possible the person who was punished for his murder, his wife, was not the person who killed him. The wife, the author's former aunt, is a manipulative, devious character.

The bones of an interesting true crime story are here. The execution just simply failed. Reader, beware. Wait for the revised edition of this book to come out before reading it.

Donna says

I just can't. I had to put this book down after reading less than half of it. It was that awful. I'm so sorry to have to do this with a NetGalley book, but I couldn't finish it. I've read dozens of true crime books in my life, and this one looked and sounded interesting - good cover, intriguing story, and the author is the niece of the murdered man, so I was hopeful that it would be compelling. I'm afraid not.

The story itself, if written in a different manner, has the makings for a fascinating read. The author attempts to tell the story of her uncle, a law enforcement official, who was shot in his home one night. Ms. Marcic, has many questions about that night and whether it was actually the wife or the stepson who fired the single shot. After much research, she puts down her thoughts as to what may have happened.

Unfortunately, the writing is very amateurish and not cohesive. Many times, the author writes as if she's just talking to the reader. Nothing essentially wrong with this; however, it's confusing at times as she bounces around from person to person in the story. And there are a LOT of persons in the story. It was hard for me to keep track of who was whom. If she had actually been telling the story to me verbally, I would have had to stop her multiple times and ask, "Now wait. Who are you talking about now? And where did this happen?" Also, rather than staying consistent with the facts, she interjects her own feelings or biases with remarks such as these, "his face...appeared intelligent and kind...with a rectangular shape, strong jaws, and dark straight hair, as you'd expect of a stalwart hero" or "he looked like someone who was smart in school but perhaps socially awkward." She also compares several people to movie actors. These things taken in small doses are fine, but it's consistent throughout the book (or at least as far as I read). The final straw for me came when she wrote, "Roberts later lost his medical license for having sex with a patient, which says he is not only corruptible, but especially vulnerable to women who employ what they used to call 'feminine wiles.'" Uh-oh.

I don't want to slam the author. She has written several other books in a different genre than this one, and maybe they are well-written. I can also appreciate the fact that she took on a difficult topic that was close to

her and wanted to find out the truth. Unfortunately, her style turned me off completely.

I do thank NetGalley and Kensington Books/Citadel for the opportunity to read and review with my honest opinion.

Lydia Wallace says

This book is spellbinding. I did not want to put it down. The intrigue and mystery keeps you reading. I was wanted justice for all the bad things Suzanne did. I was wandering if she killed Vernie or if her son David killed him. It looks like she talked her son into killing him and then she gets the insanity plea which I think she only received because she had connections. I was so sad Vernie never got to repair his relationship with his daughter Shannon and go back to his first wife and live a happy life. I think Suzanne could not handle a man leaving her and her not leaving him. I think she really did make her kids sick when they were growing up so she could take them to the hospital and get attention. Suzanne had so many different names she went by to try and cover up her past. She was an evil women. I feel sorry for all the families she effected especially her own children, and Shannon's family life. She treated her daughter so bad by making her wait on her hand and foot. She knew how to get what she wanted and wanted to control everyone and every situation. Very good read. Will recommend to friends and family. I could go on and on.

Denise says

If you want a good dose of family drama to lose yourself in (somebody else's family, that is), boy, do I have the book for you! This is like Jerry Springer on steroids, but better. This book has it all: murder, multiple marriages, divorces, suspicious deaths, backwoods creepy houses in the hollers of Tennessee, affairs, psychiatric hospitals, illegitimate children, secret adoptions, lies, narcissists, and more. This story is almost too crazy to be true - but you couldn't make this up. This was a fascinating glimpse at not just a murder, but all of the drama and dynamics surrounding it.

Kaitlyn says

(1.5 stars)

When I started this book I was totally intrigued, but as the book continued I found myself annoyed.

I thought that the look into family dynamics in this book was interesting. However, the fact that the author was so deeply involved with the actual case and clearly let her own feelings affect her research and claims was upsetting and discredited most of the work for me.
