

**THE TRUE STORY OF A MOTHER'S LOVE,
A HUSBAND'S BETRAYAL,
AND A COLD-BLOODED TEXAS MURDER**

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SHATTERED

KATHRYN CASEY

author of A Descent Into Hell

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SHATTERED

藏书章

KATHRYN CASEY

HARPER

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Shattered is a journalistic account of the actual murder investigation of David Temple for the 1999 murder of Belinda Temple in Katy, Texas. The events recounted in this book are true, although some names have been changed and identifying characteristics altered to safeguard the privacy of these individuals. The personalities, events, actions, and conversations portrayed in this book have been constructed using court documents, including trial transcripts, extensive interviews, letters, personal papers, research, and press accounts. Quoted testimony has been taken verbatim from trial and pre-trial transcripts and other sworn statements.

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**"Somebody's broken into my house
and my wife has been shot."**

Outside the Temple house, Mike Ruggiero struggled to hold Shaka at bay, to keep the dog from bursting through the gate, while inside the house, David waited while the operator patched the call through, assuming the caller needed medical personnel and an ambulance.

In her office in Katy, Shannon Tuttoilmondo-Buell, an EMT who also worked as a dispatcher, came on the line, asking, "Fire and ambulance. What is your emergency?"

"I've just walked in on my wife. I believe she's been shot. It's got blood everywhere."

Praise for KATHRYN CASEY

**"[One] of today's smartest true crime writers ...
an author with sharp instincts and
expert journalistic skills."**

M. William Phelps,
author of *Perfect Poison*

**"She explores incredible crimes ...
with a deft and experienced hand."**

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By Kathryn Casey

Non Fiction

SHATTERED
EVIL BESIDE HER
A DESCENT INTO HELL
DIE, MY LOVE
SHE WANTED IT ALL
A WARRANT TO KILL

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For my husband, with love

These things are an abomination unto God: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.

Proverbs 6:16-17

Some names and identifying characteristics have been changed in this book. They include: Hillary Brooks, Jimi Barlow, Jeremy Rakes, Corey Reed, Howard Robert Gullet, Ed, John, and Billy Kramer.

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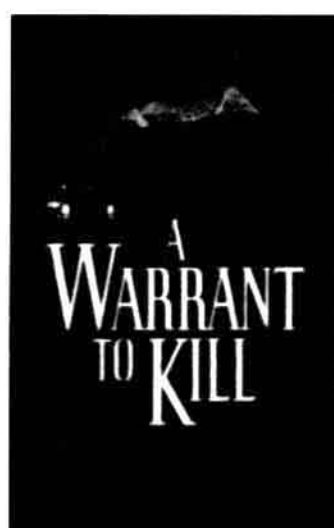
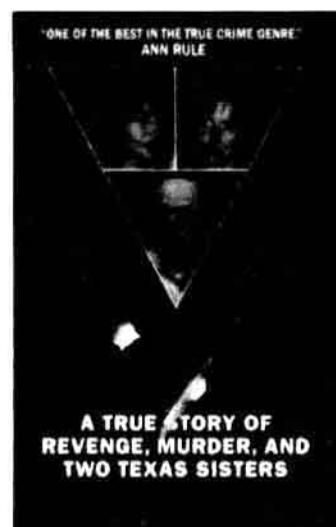
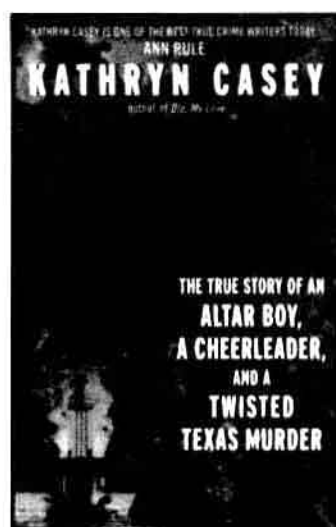
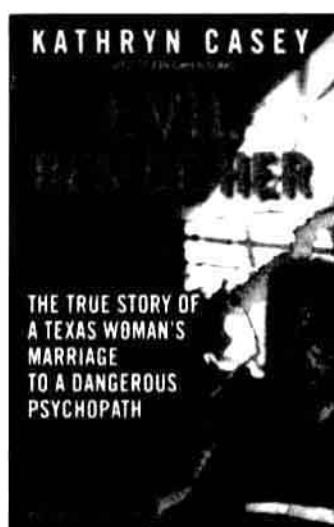
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KATHRYN CASEY

is a Houston-based journalist who has written for *Rolling Stone*, *TV Guide*, *Reader's Digest*, *Texas Monthly*, and many other publications. She is the author of five previous true crime books. Visit her website at www.kathryncasey.com.

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UPC



1

It couldn't be true. At any moment the nightmare would end, and Belinda Lucas Temple would be alive.

As on any other day, Belinda's parents would answer their telephone and hear her say, "Mops and Pops, it's Number Five." Or Belinda and her twin sister, Brenda, would gab, just happy to hear each other's voice. They bantered regularly about their jobs and their lives. But mostly Brenda was content to listen as Belinda rattled happily on about her children. Evan was three, a burly, shy little boy, and the center of his mother's life. Although she wasn't scheduled to enter the world for another month, baby Erin, too, had already claimed a Texas-size chunk of her mother's heart. A pretty, energetic woman with lush golden-brown hair, Belinda often ran her hands over her round belly, undoubtedly anticipating the joy of the first time she'd hold her infant daughter in her arms. Was there anything more breathtaking than the softness and smell of a newborn? Any sound more heart melting than a cooing infant?

At the very mention of her children, Belinda's face, her entire demeanor, visibly glowed with the deepest of loves.

Monday, January 11, 1999, however, wouldn't be just another day in Creekstone, a quiet Houston suburb, and

Belinda's family and friends would never recover from the heartbreak of that warm winter day that started like any other only to end in unfathomable tragedy.

Late that afternoon, Belinda's high-wattage smile vanished, forever. No one would ever again hear the soft lilt of her East Texas accent or see the sparkle in her expressive green eyes. The nursery on the second floor of the Temples' house, the one Belinda painted a color she dubbed "Big Bird" yellow, would never be used. The crib with its blue-and-white-plaid linens would remain empty, and baby Erin would never draw a first breath.

Murdered? Executed. But what kind of monster would kill an expectant mother and her unborn child?

Yet, it was true. And the reality was horrifying beyond description.

At sunset the usually sedate, middle-class neighborhood roiled with tension, as patrol cars lined the streets and officers strung crime-scene tape across the front yard of 22502 Round Valley Drive, Belinda and David Temple's meticulously kept redbrick two-story home. TV news stations rushed reporters and cameramen to the scene, as helicopters hovered overhead in the early evening winter darkness.

No one could have imagined the misery that waited inside that house.

So full of energy and kindness that her fellow high-school teachers called her the "Sunshine Girl," Belinda's cold, motionless, heavily pregnant body lay sprawled on a carpeted closet floor. A contact wound from a shotgun at the back of her head had shattered her skull, and what remained of her face was frozen in a grotesque death mask that recalled Edvard Munch's disturbing expressionist masterpiece, *The Scream*.

Like that of the strange, distorted figure in the painting, Belinda Temple appeared destined to forever silently cry out in utter agony.

Outside on the street, Belinda's husband stood next to a squad car, surrounded by his parents. His mother wept. His

father appeared shaken and crestfallen. But David, a thick-necked, massive man who'd been a high-school and college football star, stood stoic, not shedding a tear. His wife and baby daughter had been brutally murdered, but to many on the scene, the young father didn't even look upset.

Perhaps it wasn't surprising that before long, the investigators eyed David Temple with suspicion. Still, could a husband and father do something so vile?

On his frantic call to 911, David said he'd returned from an outing with Evan and found the back door open and his wife's bloody, lifeless body. Shards of glass from the door's window littered the den floor, and drawers gaped ajar in the dining room. The crime scene unit photographed a television off its stand and lying on its side. Could the detectives' instincts be misleading them about David Temple? A popular high-school football coach, the man was a local legend, a small-town hero. How could he be a suspect? Wasn't it more likely that a would-be thief discovered he wasn't alone in the house and panicked?

That awful night on Round Valley Drive dissolved, leaving behind a long list of unanswered questions. Then the first week after the murders faded into memory, trailed by the first month, and the first year. One after another the years that followed extinguished without an arrest, while Belinda's and baby Erin's bodies lay in a sealed coffin, buried six feet under a rose granite headstone that read: *We feel the touch of angel wings.*

Yet, although time passed, they were never forgotten.

Detectives grew to expect to hear Belinda's dad, Tom Lucas, on the telephone, prodding for news. "What's happening?" he asked, his gruff voice thick with the unimaginable pain of a parent of a murdered child. "What can you tell me about what you're doing to solve this case?"

They didn't fault Lucas for calling, but the detectives could offer little reassurance. The Temple murder case was stalled, and some feared it would remain that way. If pressed, those who'd worked the scene would have admitted the distinct

possibility that those who loved Belinda might go to their own graves without closure.

Meanwhile, in his cubicle in a run-down county building on Houston's east side, one detective in particular, an avuncular man with a brown flattop named Mark Schmidt, couldn't let go of the Temple case. It haunted his waking hours and invaded his thoughts each night as he closed his eyes hoping for sleep. Over and over again, Schmidt relived the night Belinda and Erin died, wondering what should have been done, what could have been done to solve the murders. Every time he read about a new forensic breakthrough, Schmidt resubmitted the Temple evidence. But no matter what he tried, the murder books on the case, the loose-leaf binders that held everything from the shocking autopsy photos to witness statements, sat on his desk collecting dust.

As the world went on about its business, Belinda Temple and her baby waited for justice. Would it ever come?

2

Parents loom large in their children's lives. They take on mythical proportions, even as their offspring age. A father's hands may always be remembered as strong, even after they've withered from arthritis. A mother's words have the power to endure even after death, in the memories of her children. Their laughs and their smiles may haunt as much as warm their children into middle age and beyond. If in the end Tom and Carol Lucas devoted themselves to the memories of Belinda and their unborn granddaughter, theirs wasn't a family of Norman Rockwell images and Currier and Ives Christmases.

"I don't know why we're not closer," Carol would say. "The kids just don't come around."

"Our door is always open," Tom pondered glumly. "But we don't see them much."

Although it was where their story would take them, the family's beginnings weren't in Texas. Thomas Eaton Lucas was born in Dunbar, West Virginia, and his hoarse, crusty voice, even in the waning years of middle age, would still betray those influences. He met Carol Maxine Morrison, a plainspoken Midwesterner, in her hometown of Port Huron, Michigan, when Tom was an assistant manager at a dime store, two doors from the dress shop where she worked as