

The Murder of Richard Jennings: The True Story of New York's First Murder for Hire

Michael J. Worden



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The brutal murder of Richard Jennings in December of 1818 would gain notoriety as the first murder for hire in New York. It would also be remembered as an imperfect crime. Four men - James Teed, David Dunning, David Conkling and Jack Hodges - and one woman, Hannah Teed, had conspired to murder Jennings after losing a protracted court battle over a parcel of land. Poorly made plans and rumors in the close knit community of Sugar Loaf led to a quick unraveling of the conspiracy and arrest of the perpetrators. Future President Martin Van Buren assisted in prosecuting the case which ended up with two men in prison and two men to face the hangman before a crowd of almost 20,000 people. One of the men spared the noose would later end up a renowned Christian with a memorial in his honor. Author and police detective Michael J. Worden explores the complexity of this incident in an entertaining yet historically accurate manner. Worden examines the case from the origins of the dispute, to the plot, murder, and aftermath. Worden has redefined what a true crime book should be.

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