



Defending Gary: Unraveling the Mind of the Green River Killer

By Mark Prothero



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At first, Mark Prothero, Defense Attorney for Gary Ridgway, thought: "This can't be the Green River Killer! He's too ordinary! He's too small. He's too calm. He's too polite! He can't possibly have murdered forty-nine women. They can't be serious! They must have screwed up! I didn't realize then, but I was right. Gary Ridgway hadn't killed forty-nine women. He'd killed even more than that."

Soon, Mark Prothero faced the question: "How could you possibly defend the most prolific serial killer in United States history, the infamous Green River Killer? If anyone deserved to be executed for his crimes, didn't he?"

Mark Prothero, co-lead defense attorney who helped save Gary Ridgway from the death sentence, has heard that question many times. Now he's written a book that reveals the true, inside story of exactly how an idealistic public defender, high school swim coach, husband, and dad could bring himself to spend many months of close confinement with a man who brutally murdered at least 75 young women, often in the act of sex. *Defending Gary* shows how Prothero could reconcile these monstrous acts knowing the reality of this unassuming fellow Gary Ridgway, a mild-mannered, church-going, devoted husband, father, and former Navy man, with an IQ of around 82 and a longtime job as a truck painter from Auburn, Washington, near Seattle.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

After a two-decade investigation, Gary Ridgway, America's "most prolific serial killer," was arrested in November 2001. Prothero became one of his attorneys. A Seattle-area DNA expert who emerges as an affable and humble family man, Prothero argued successfully against the death penalty for Ridgway. Aided by veteran journalist Smith (*The Search for the Green River Killer*), Prothero probes the psyche of a monster who appeared to be a devoted husband, son and brother. Did Ridgway's mother corrupt him as a teenager when she washed his genitals after he wet the bed, or did years of inhaling paint fumes on the job impair his judgment? Prothero, who confronted the banality of evil when his miserly client explained that he killed some of his prostitute victims just to get his \$20 back, concludes that Ridgway killed between 48 and 71 prostitutes to gain power and control over women and authority figures. The bird's-eye view into the legal wrangling is sometimes obscured by repetitious and unwieldy text, and it's clear that Prothero and Smith aren't in the same league as Norman Mailer, Mikal Gilmore and Ann Rule, who famously humanized Gary Gilmore and Ted Bundy. And unlike in Rule's *Green River, Running Red*, the victims here are ciphers.

(June)

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Review

"...both sober and titillating." (*The Seattle Times*, June 2, 2006)

Defense attorney Prothero joins Smith (*The Search for the Green River Killer*) to give us a detailed account of the trial and conviction of Gary Ridgway in the Green River killings around Seattle, which occurred over approximately 30 years, ending in the 1990s. In late 2001 police arrested Ridgway, a longtime suspect in the case. Prothero became his lead defense attorney shortly afterward. Originally he was skeptical about Ridgway's guilt, but physical evidence, including DNA analysis, proved that Ridgway had killed at least 48 women, mainly prostitutes, and may have murdered as many as 71 between 1982 and 1989. Prothero's tactic changed from proving Ridgway's innocence to sparing him from the death penalty. The authors present the story in a well-paced, straightforward manner and provide sturdy insight into this complex case. Particularly interesting are details about the infighting among members of the Ridgway defense team. Also good is the discussion on how Seattle and Washington state politics shaped the trial. In November 2003, Ridgway was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. Recommended for public and academic libraries.

—Stephen L. Hupp, West Virginia Univ. Lib., Parkersbur (*Library Journal*, March 15, 2006)

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(June) (*Publishers Weekly*, January 16, 2006)

"...Prothero had something unique—almost daily contact with Ridgway, which gives his book its power and relevancy over the others." (*King County Journal*, 2006)

"Prothero offers his perspective on what remains a troubling case. He knows as much as anyone about the 'nasty, tricky little man...' (*Associated Press*, 2006)

Review

"*Defending Gary* belongs on every bookshelf of every person interested in serial murder and death penalty cases from the defense perspective."

—Ann Burgess, R.N., D.N.Sc., professor of psychiatric mental health nursing, Boston College, Connell School of Nursing and coauthor, *Sexual Homicides: Patterns and Motives*

"An extraordinary account of the most infamous serial killer in American history, 'The Green River Killer.' This is definitely not your average true crime book. The book is a first-person account, well written, and with authors who provide interesting details of defending Gary Ridgway. The interrogation of Ridgway should be fascinating to law enforcement and anyone interested in serial killers. It certainly was to me. I highly recommend it."

—Steve Egger, author, *Killers Among Us: An Examination of Serial Murder and Its Investigation*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Willie Burroughs:

Now a day people who Living in the era everywhere everything reachable by connect with the internet and the resources inside it can be true or not need people to be aware of each info they get. How people have to be smart in having any information nowadays? Of course the answer then is reading a book. Reading a book can help people out of this uncertainty Information mainly this *Defending Gary: Unraveling the Mind of the Green River Killer* book as this book offers you rich info and knowledge. Of course the knowledge in this book hundred per-cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you know.

Paul Delatorre:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your own personal free time/ holiday? May be reading a book can be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the publication untitled *Defending Gary: Unraveling the Mind of the Green River Killer* can be excellent book to read. May be it could be best activity to you.

Jennifer Tomasini:

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Kim Romero:

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