

My Ghost Has a Name: Memoir of a Murder

Rosalyn Rossignol

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My Ghost Has a Name is a true-crime work that digs deeper, exploring the human psyche with appealing, resonant results.

Haunted by the tragic and horrific 1999 murder of her one-time school friend, Nell, Rosalyn Rossignol sets out to determine if Nell's teenage daughter was really one of the culprits. The result is a well-researched and highly personal nonfiction work, *My Ghost Has a Name: Memoir of a Murder*.

Rossignol first met Nell Davis when they were in junior high school in Georgia; Nell was later Rossignol's maid of honor. They hadn't seen each other for more than sixteen years, though, when Rossignol learned that Nell had been murdered and her sixteen-year-old daughter, Sarah, was one of three teenagers accused of the brutal crime. On the fifth anniversary of Nell's death, Rossignol decided to write a book exploring the events to learn for herself what happened.

Her investigative process unfolds with interviews with police detectives, witnesses, lawyers, Sarah's reluctant family members, and even behind bars with the three who were eventually convicted for the crime—Sarah, John Ridgway, and Kevin Bergin. Her ultimate conversations with the two young men are chilling.

Rossignol's earnest and diligent research uncovers the fact that all three teens were deeply troubled and alienated, each having several brushes with drug abuse and the law well before the death of Nell Davis. Her descriptions of locations are almost historic, and picturesque in their detail.

The author maneuvers through the South Carolina prison system, corresponding with, meeting, and visiting Sarah. Interspersed between trial transcripts are italicized memories, adding a personal layer to the anguish. Rossignol is open about the parallels between her own rebellious teen years and difficult relationship with her mother, and similarities between Sarah and Nell.

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ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (November/December 2017)

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