

Ripple: A Long Strange Search for a Killer

Jim Cosgrove

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In *Ripple*, Jim Cosgrove recounts his investigation into the murder of a family acquaintance, which took him down a dark, supernatural trail.

As a young journalist, Cosgrove returned to Kansas City and visited his childhood church. There he noticed a memorial for Frank McGonigle, a troubled teenager who disappeared a decade earlier. Intrigued, he began investigating Frank's disappearance and subsequent murder. As he spoke to Frank's family, he began to unravel a deeper mystery—one that challenged not only his ideas of fact-based journalism, but of life and death.

Ripple is a gripping true crime tale that's enriched by deep descriptions. Its work begins with a snapshot of the early 1980s community that Frank and Cosgrove grew up in—one in which the large Irish Catholic families knew each other, and neighborhood children played together under the watchful eyes of their community. Such details establish a foundation of familiarity and intimacy, setting up the tragedy yet to come.

Cosgrove's treatments of his main cast are also detailed. Frank is revived as a young man who loves the Grateful Dead and yearns for respect, despite his troubled, youthful fumbles. Mike, Frank's brother who argued with him before he disappeared, is captured as a person haunted, both in emotional and spiritual senses. Each individual is both imperfect and familiar, and their conversations are recreated in natural ways. Some of these recalled exchanges are also expanded for dramatic flair, imparting, for example, the frustration that Frank felt with his brother and mother. And the scene of the crime is recalled in an exchange marked by realistic stops, starts, and self-corrections.

Exquisite details help to make *Ripple* a captivating true crime account of a murder that was committed in secret, but that had a larger community impact.

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