



The Road Out of Hell: Sanford Clark and the True Story of the Wineville Murders

By Anthony Flacco, Jerry Clark

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"And you wonder: How the hell did this guy go on to be a loving father and grandfather? How did he bury all that crap? That's a story in itself." ?Clint Eastwood, director of THE CHANGELING

The film story of young Sanford Clark and his forced participation in the Wineville Murders was covered in Clint Eastwood's movie, THE CHANGELING, but for answers to the questions Eastwood posed after completing the project, turn to the true story of the Wineville murders: Anthony Flacco's THE ROAD OUT OF HELL. The hell part isn't what makes the story important; it's the road out that does.

From 1926 to 1928, Gordon Stewart Northcott committed at least 20 murders on a chicken ranch outside of Los Angeles. His nephew, Sanford Clark, was held captive there from the age of 13 to 15, and was the sole surviving victim of the killing spree. Here, acclaimed crime writer Anthony Flacco?using never-before-heard information from Sanford's son, Jerry Clark?tells the real story behind the case that riveted the nation.

Forced by Northcott to take part in the murders, Sanford carried tremendous guilt all his life. Yet despite his youth and the trauma, he helped gain some justice for the dead and their families by testifying at Northcott's trial?which led to his conviction and execution. It was a shocking story, but perhaps the most shocking part of all is the extraordinarily ordinary life Clark went on to live as a decorated WWII vet, a devoted husband of 55 years, a loving father, and a productive citizen.

In dramatizing one of the darkest cases in American crime, Flacco constructs a riveting psychological drama about how Sanford was able to detoxify himself from the evil he'd encountered, offering the ultimately redemptive story of one man's remarkable ability to survive a nightmare and emerge intact.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Crime novelist and true-crime writer Flacco (*A Checklist for Murder*) gives the reader a front-row seat in the harrowing Wineville, Calif., murders where, between 1926 and 1928, Gordon Stewart Northcott, with the aid of his nephew Sanford Clark, killed at least 20 people at a remote chicken ranch outside of Los Angeles. The unwilling accomplice Sanford was 13 when he was sent by his parents to stay with his uncle, who continually brutalized and sodomized him while killing a series of helpless boys. Flacco reconstructs the details of the grisly murders, with Northcott's dotty mother, Louise, sometimes joining the bloody mayhem. Eventually, the cops caught up with Northcott and his ritual killings, and he was hung after a sensational trial in which Sanford was the star witness. With a heartfelt epilogue by Jerry Clark, Sanford's son, this well-told tale of senseless killing, guilt and redemption of a young innocent is a page-turner. 16 pages of b&w photos. (Nov.)

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Review

"(Flacco's writing) is visceral and haunting.....a chilling look at a dark chapter in America's history." --
Associated Press, 11/09

"Gripping....."--Library Journal, 8/15/09

"....This well-told tale of senseless killing, guilt and redemption of a young innocent is a page-turner." --
Publishers Weekly, 8/31/09

Praise for
The Road Out of Hell

“Haunting, compassionate, and terrifyingly true, Flacco delivers an unqualified masterpiece befitting of one of the greatest cases in the annals of crime.”—**Gregg Olsen, New York Times Bestselling author of *Starvation Heights***

“And you wonder: How the hell did this guy go on to be a loving father and grandfather? How did he bury all that crap? That’s a whole story in itself.”—**Clint Eastwood, director of *Changeling*, regarding Sanford Clark**

“Anthony Flacco serves this one straight from the heart. Sanford Clark is an innocent victim of deliberate evil who is nearly vanquished out of existence, but once rescued, dedicates his life of quiet courage and loving decency for family.”—**Dave Pelzer, author of *A Child Called It* and 2005 National Jefferson Award Recipient**

“In a terrifying tour de force, Anthony Flacco drops the reader into California in the 1920’s and takes us on a gut-wrenching ride through a killing rampage so hellish it makes the BTK serial killer’s spree look tame. In the midst of the carnage, an innocent is forced to kill to survive and then must fight to redeem himself. Once you pick this book up, you will not be able put it down.”—**Jane Velez-Mitchell, Host of CNN’s “Issues**

with Jane Velez-Mitchell,” and author of *Secrets Can Be Murder: What America’s Most Sensational Crimes Tell Us About Ourselves*

“Th[is] story is one of the most horrific I know of—and I know a lot of stories. ...Northcott’s crimes, which include the corruption of his nephew Sanford Clark, are certainly among the worst. Amazingly, the book not only shows us a picture of almost unimaginable evil, but also a picture of one man—Sanford Clark—who was able, beyond all expectation, to transcend the evil into which he was forced by his uncle [and] become, in the process, uncommonly good.”—**Dr. Michael Stone, Host of Discovery Investigation’s “Most Evil,” Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, and Attending Psychiatrist in Forensics at MidHudson Forensic Psychiatric Hospital**

About the Author

Anthony Flacco was born in Oklahoma and grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado, one of four brothers. Their father was an Air Force pilot and mother was a talented artist and painter.

His background as a trained stage actor with over 2,000 performances under his Actors Equity membership provides the primary basis for his critically acclaimed ability to empathize with a wide cross-section of personalities. He moved into screenwriting when he was selected for the prestigious American Film Institute fellowship in Screenwriting. He received his MFA in screenwriting after winning AFI's Paramount Studios Fellowship Award and was then selected out of 2,000 entrants for the Walt Disney Studios Screenwriting Fellowship, where he spent a year writing for the Touchstone Pictures division. His screenwriting experience drives narrative stories that are visually compelling, whether for a movie theater or the screen of a reader's imagination.

He previous works include *A Checklist for Murder*, which was adapted into an NBC movie of the week, *The Last Nightengale*, *The Hidden Man*, and *The Road Out Of Hell: The True Story of Sanford Clark and the Wineville Murders*. *Tiny Dancer*, originally published in 2005, received international acclaim, being names "one of the 100 Most Noteworthy Books of 2005." It is being released for the first time in eBook format in January 2013.

He is an experienced public speaker and frequently gives seminars on crime writing, and is a featured speaker on writing for writers' conferences and clubs and serves as Editorial Consultant to Martin Literary Management in Seattle, WA.

For more information, see www.AnthonyFlacco.com.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Holt:

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giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Susan Arnold:

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