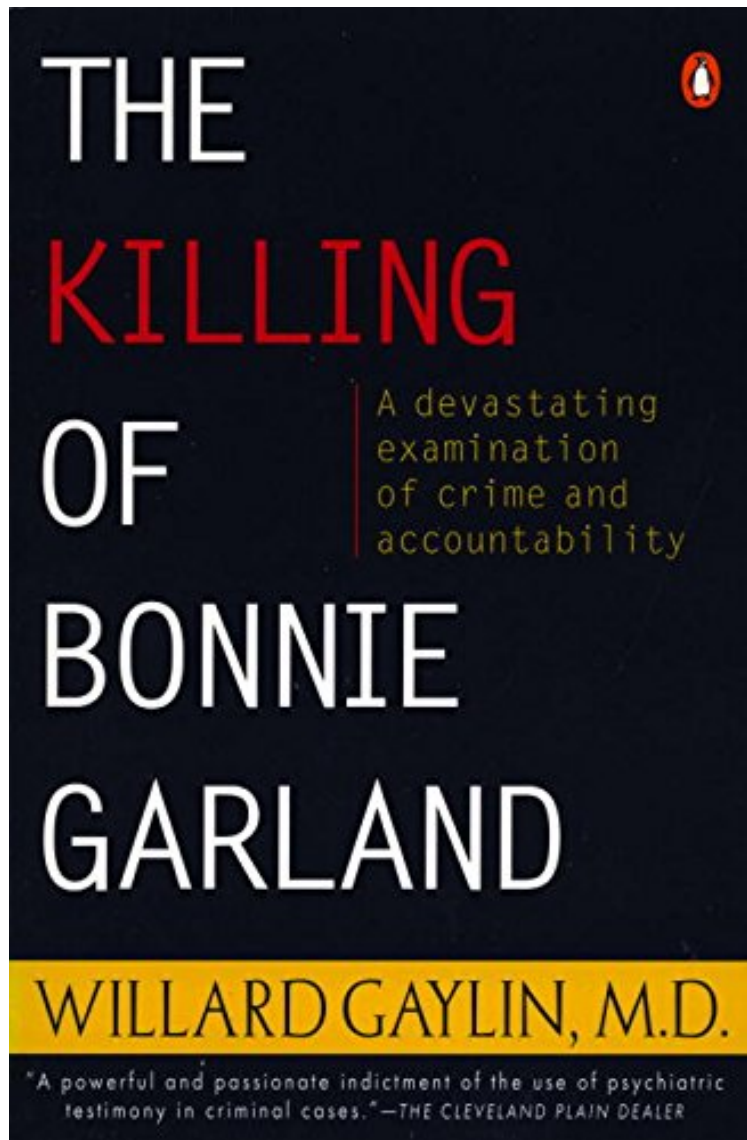


The Killing of Bonnie Garland: A Question of Justice

Willard Gaylin

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Willard Gaylin : The Killing of Bonnie Garland: A Question of Justice before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Killing of Bonnie Garland: A Question of Justice:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Crime and Punishment or Crime and Forgiveness? By MJSThe best true crime books reveal not simply the crime and the criminals but the times in which both existed. While not really a True Crime book per se, it does reveal the crime, the criminal and the times. I reread this book after reading American Taboo by Philip Weiss. Both books are about young, sexually liberated young women in their early twenties who are

murdered in the mid 1970s by men whose claims of "insanity" successfully save them from murder convictions. In both cases people rally around the murderer because "no one can help" the dead victim anymore. In *American Taboo*, it's "us" (read "Americans") against "them" (read the Tongans). In Bonnie Garland's case the us are people who passionately believe that "prison does no good" versus "the establishment." Gaylin delves deeply into the minds of all involved to understand their motivations and goals. He nails Herrin's defenders on their strange inability to differentiate punishment and rehabilitation. He also exposes their contempt for imprisonment in general - most can barely summon up an example of a crime that would warrant a long stint in jail. Gaylin isn't one sided, he depicts both sides with compassion and respect, he is especially good at drawing out the passionate desire for social justice that lead some of Herrin's supporters to see this case in political terms. Would committed Catholic clergy like Sister Ramona Pena and the Christian Brothers have championed the cause of a man who bludgeoned his girlfriend with a claw-hammer in any other time but the early 1970s? Most unsettling is the reaction of the Yale establishment many of who voice a feeling that Bonnie Garland's father needed to just get over it, that his grief and rage were somehow out of proportion. The lack of simple human compassion is staggering - for them the University is more important than the students. This is a powerful book. The first chapter alone should be required reading in every high school civics class for the questions it asks. Does society have a right to demand punishment in the name of justice or is the goal of the justice system to salvage what can be salvaged that will benefit society in the long term? These are questions each of us should ask ourselves as citizens.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The Best Criminology Ever Written By Genuine Realist William Gaylin's book, which combined good journalism, professional psychiatric insight, and superb wisdom and philosophical context, is in my opinion the best criminology ever written. Although his discussion of the crime and the motives therefor is first rate, what gives the book its immense value is the observations he made of the reaction of the Yale community to the offense. (Both murderer and victim were Yale undergraduates.) He combined this acute analysis with an acuity of insight that makes the book both profound and immediate. Anyone interested in criminal law should read and digest this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. good read. By Alyssa Very interesting book, good read.

"A powerful and passionate indictment of the use of psychiatric testimony in criminal cases." *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* A year after Richard Herrin confessed to killing his girlfriend, Bonnie Garland, he was found not guilty of murder. His crime, he pleaded, was committed "under extreme emotional disturbance," excusing him from maximum responsibility. He was convicted on the reduced charge of manslaughter. In this incisive examination of the murder, the trial, and its aftermath, a distinguished psychiatrist addresses the issue of the insanity defense. He shows how psychiatric testimony can distort court proceedings, and brilliantly analyzes the conflict between the individual rights of the accused and society's right to justice.

About the Author A professor of psychiatry at Columbia University, a practicing psychiatrist, and cofounder of the Hastings Center (an institute devoted to ethical issues in the life sciences), Willard Gaylin is the author of eleven books, including *Rediscovering Love*, *On Being and Becoming Human*, *Feelings: Our Vital Signs*, and *The Male Ego*.