

The Count and the Confession



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Do you believe that the gentlest and most courteous person you know is capable of murder? The count in John Taylor's beguiling true story is Roger de la Burde, a wealthy scientist and art collector, who wore ascots, claimed he was a Polish nobleman, bowed to women—and then routinely propositioned them. In 1992, Burde was found dead on his Virginia estate, with a single bullet wound in his forehead. *The Count and the Confession* explores the layers of mystery surrounding this strange man's death. Did he, as the local deputies at first assumed, commit suicide? Or had he, as a state police investigator later decided, been killed? And if so, by whom? The longtime girlfriend? The pregnant mistress? A cuckolded husband? A disgruntled business associate? At the center of this mystery is Beverly Monroe, who becomes the lead suspect in Burde's death. Monroe is an improbable murderer.

Burde’s companion for twelve years—he called her “Mouse” —she is an unfailingly genteel Southern lady, affluent, highly educated, and a mother of three children—and prior to her indictment, she had never even received a parking ticket. But Monroe did have an apparent motive. She was also the last person to see Burde alive. And in a controversial interview with an ingeniously manipulative state police investigator, she changed her initial story and said that she had been present when Burde killed himself. Critically acclaimed author John Taylor’s reconstruction of this riveting case is narrative nonfiction at its best. Meticulously reported, artfully written, rich in psychological complexity, Gothic detail, and dramatic suspense, *The Count and the Confession* will make you marvel at the peculiarities of human motivation and force you to grapple with an array of irresistible questions, the most dramatic being Did she or didn’t she?

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