

A Soul on Trial



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Marine Lieutenant James N. Sutton died on the grounds of the Naval Academy on October 13, 1907, and the Marine Corps would never be the same. This is the true story of an Oregon motherOs crusade to save her sonOs soul from the stigma of suicide and to confront venerated military institutions in her search for answers about her sonOs death. From the corridors of power to common city streets, Americans were fascinated by accusations of drinking, gunplay, romantic rivalry, cover-ups, wounded honor, and ultimately murder in Annapolis. Splashed across the front pages of newspapers nation-wide, the Sutton case commanded the attention of members of Congress, high-ranking military officials, renowned attorneys, the Cardinal of the American Catholic Church, and America's foremost psychical researcher. Touching on lives great and small, A Soul on Trial is a rich portrait of Progressive Era America. Part murder mystery, part ghost story, and part courtroom drama—the book follows the stories of Rosa Sutton, her daughter Rose, and three Marine Corps lieutenants whose futures were at stake as the Naval investigation unfolded. It is a riveting tale of the power of the press, the secrecy of the military in times of crisis, and the lives of young officers whose private battles were often as difficult as their professional ones.

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