



# **The Murder of the Century: The Gilded Age Crime That Scandalized a City & Sparked the Tabloid Wars**

*Paul Collins*

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“No writer better articulates our interest in the confluence of hope, eccentricity, and the timelessness of the bold and strange than Paul Collins.”—DAVE EGGERS

On Long Island, a farmer finds a duck pond turned red with blood. On the Lower East Side, two boys playing at a pier discover a floating human torso wrapped tightly in oilcloth. Blueberry pickers near Harlem stumble upon neatly severed limbs in an overgrown ditch. Clues to a horrifying crime are turning up all over New York, but the police are baffled: There are no witnesses, no motives, no suspects.

The grisly finds that began on the afternoon of June 26, 1897, plunged detectives headlong into the era’s most baffling murder mystery. Seized upon by battling media moguls Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, the case became a publicity circus. Reenactments of the murder were staged in Times Square, armed reporters lurked in the streets of Hell’s Kitchen in pursuit of suspects, and an unlikely trio—a hard-luck cop, a cub reporter, and an eccentric professor—all raced to solve the crime.

What emerged was a sensational love triangle and an even more sensational trial: an unprecedented capital case hinging on circumstantial evidence around a victim whom the police couldn’t identify with certainty, and who the defense claimed wasn’t even dead. *The Murder of the Century* is a rollicking tale—a rich evocation of America during the Gilded Age and a colorful re-creation of the tabloid wars that have dominated media to this day.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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