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The Freach and Keen Murders: The True Story of the Crime That Shocked and Changed a Community Forever

By Kathleen P. Munley, Paul R., Mazzoni



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In November 1973, William J. Wright, a former patient and trustee of the Farview State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, brutally murdered two teenage boys, Edmund Keen and Paul Freach, in Lackawanna County, a region that took great pride in not only its history, but its reputation as a friendly, family-oriented, safe place to live. It was a place where families could leave their doors unlocked, and be confident about allowing their children to play and explore outdoors. Yet all that would change in an instant. The brutal murders of these two boys forever altered the way people thought of this region and the safe neighborhoods they had come to take for granted.

Kathleen P. Munley and Paul R. Mazzoni tell a story of unbelief, anger, and fear, but also courage and fortitude. They delve deep into the *Commonwealth v. William J. Wright* trial, looking inside the investigation, the trial, and how the public was impacted by this unthinkable crime.

In captivating detail, the authors weave together the events of this devastating crime and remind us that, even in the pleasant light of day, evil can and does exist, and one must always be on guard.



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Editorial Review

Review

When two teenage boys, Edmund Keen and Paul Freach, didn't make it home after leaving school on November 1, 1973, the town of Scranton, Pa., was forever changed, assert local historian Munley and attorney Mazzoni. Though William Wright was eventually caught and successfully convicted of murdering Freach and Keen due to Mazzoni's efforts as chief prosecutor. . . the ensuing fear has remained. Here, the authors recount the early days of the investigation—the countless interviews with friends and relatives, the FBI bulletins, and the grim search for remains, as well as the tremendous stroke of luck that led authorities to Wright. . . The authors delve into the minutiae of the investigation, culminating in an epic recounting of Wright's trial. (*Publishers Weekly*)

A terrifying trip inside an American nightmare. (Michael Benson, author of *The Devil at Genesee Junction*)

Drawing upon their historical and legal expertise, the authors have presented, in plain language and granular detail, the tragic tale of a horrible crime that deserves wider notice and attention. (Michael Flamm, Professor of History, Ohio Wesleyan University)

A spellbinding must read for true crime enthusiasts! It is a strong warning to the evil monsters that exist in our society today, and how a teen killer can slip through the cracks and prey on the innocents of our society. This is a tragic example of the great importance bestowed upon us to teach safety and awareness to families and children, which has been my mission for thirty plus years. I recommend this book to law enforcement, parents, and anyone who comes into contact with troubled youth. A MUST READ! (Phil Chalmers, author of *Inside the Mind of a Teen Killer*; featured on the LMN Network show *Killer Kids*)

About the Author

Kathleen P. Munley, PhD, is a local historian and longtime professor of history at Marywood University, Scranton, Pennsylvania, where she teaches a variety of courses on American history and served on many elected and appointed academic committees. She developed and directed a legal studies program at the university that included an American Bar Association–approved legal assistant major. A lifelong resident of the region, Munley has been associated with many local community organizations and volunteer activities.

Paul R. Mazzoni, JD, has been a practicing attorney in Lackawanna County for over fifty-two years and served the county as its district attorney for two terms, from 1970 to 1978. As district attorney, Mazzoni was the chief prosecutor in the *Commonwealth v. William J. Wright*. Mazzoni continues to practice law with the firm Mazzoni, Karam, Petorak, and Valvano in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Mazzoni is a longstanding member and former president of the Lackawanna Bar Association and a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. Active in community life in the region, Mazzoni was appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to serve as director of the Census for the Tenth Congressional District.

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