

The Measure of Madness: Inside the Disturbed and Disturbing Criminal Mind

Cheryl Paradis , Katherine Ramsland (Foreword)

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The defendant told the jury that he did not kill girlfriend. He "did," however, admit to dismembering her, boiling her bones, and hiding them in the Port Authority locker." At the heart of countless crimes lies the mystery of the human mind. In this eye-opening book, Dr. Cheryl Paradis draws back the curtain on the fascinating world of forensic psychology and revisits the most notorious and puzzling cases she has handled in her multifaceted career.

"Out it all came, a slew of bizarre comments about the electronic chips implanted in his brain."

Her riveting, sometimes shocking stories reveal the crucial and often surprising role forensic psychology plays in the pursuit of justice. Sometimes the accused believe their own bizarre lies, creating a world that pushes them into frightening, violent crimes.

"My client is charged with murder and tells me he is a descendent of kings. He says he is of royal blood. Can you evaluate him for an insanity defense?"

Join Dr. Paradis in a stark concrete cell, with the accused handcuffed to a chair opposite her, as she takes on the daunting task of mapping the suspect's madness--or exposing it as fakery. Have a front-row seat in a tense, packed courtroom, where her testimony can determine an individual's fate. The criminal mind has never been so intimately revealed--or so darkly compelling.

"A forensic psychologist reveals the dark and troubling human mind. Fascinating."

--Robert K. Tanenbaum

The Experts Praise

The Measure of Madness

"Fascinating . . . A forensic psychologist reveals the dark and powerful motives that challenge our justice system and opens up the troubling workings of the human mind."

--Robert K. Tanenbaum, author of "Capture"

"Compelling . . . Dr. Cheryl Paradis offers a window into the world of a clinical psychologist who has made many assessments for the courts."

--Katherine Ramsland, author of "The Criminal Mind"

"Eloquent . . . Anyone concerned with the relationship between deviance and mental illness will find this excellent book to be of great value."

--Simon Baatz, author of "For the Thrill of It: Leopold, Loeb and the Murder that Shocked Chicago"

"Clearly written and comprehensive . . . Dr. Paradis skillfully leads the reader through the labyrinth of the psychotic criminal mind and the maze of the judicial system."

--Barbara Kirwin, author of "The Mad, the Bad, and the Innocent"

"Insightful, remarkable . . . not to be missed if you want to understand the real-world dramas that underlie criminal justice."

--Barbara Oakley, author of "Evil Genes"

"Informative, discussion-provoking . . . a much needed, intriguing collection of personal reflections as well as fascinating cases."

--Thomas M. O'Rourke, Director of Forensic Psychiatry, Kings County Hospital Center

"Riveting . . . Cheryl Paradis shows us a world rarely seen and one full of mystery."

--John Coston, author of "To Kill and Kill Again" and "Sleep My Child Forever"

"Lucid, intelligent, provocative . . . Cheryl Paradis is an articulate expert guide to the bizarre and routinely baffling world of irrational and aberrant crime."

--Stephen G. Michaud, author of "The Only Living Witness" and "Whisper of Fear"

"A marvelous book . . . a masterpiece that not only beautifully describes the people she examines but, just as importantly, fills in the dialogues between herself and others and includes her own thoughts and feelings. This book stands out."

--Daniel W. Schwartz, M.D., Director (Ret.) of Forensic Psychiatry Service, Kings County Hospital

"Written with clarity, objectivity, and expertise . . . Cheryl Paradis draws you into the fascinating world of the forensic psychologist and into the minds and often disturbing motives of the defendants she has examined."

--Robert H. Berger, M.D., Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, New York University School of Medicine

"Chilling . . . "The Measure of Madness" is an insider's view of a world few of us really know. Dr. Paradis makes clear that the reality of criminal forensic psychology is far different -- and far more fascinating -- than that portrayed in TV and movies. Fans of 'CSI' and 'Law and Order' as well as criminal law practitioners will find this book hard to resist."

--Robert Reuland, criminal defense attorney and author of "Hollowpoint" and "Semiautomatic"

"A down-to-earth, tell-all case book . . . an unvarnished insider's view into the fascinating world of forensic psychology and the minds of mentally ill criminal offenders. This book will be of interest not only to forensic specialists, but to all those who have ever thought of entering this vexing but richly rewarding profession or wondered what it might be like to take an intimate look at the criminally insane."

--Sanford L. Drob, Ph.D., former Director of Psychological Assessment at Bellevue Hospital, New York

"Engaging, vivid, invaluable . . . a fascinating look at real-life case materials from the author's own practice as a forensic psychologist. The accounts of criminal defendants whose minds are on trial and the issues that Paradis must determine in making her evaluations make this book a must-read for anyone interested in the intersection of psychology and criminal law."

--Patricia E. Erickson, J.D., Ph.D., co-author of "Crime, Punishment, and Mental Illness: Law and the Behavioral Sciences in Conflict"

"The criminal justice system fascinates most of us but too often the violence seems incomprehensible. Cheryl Paradis' intriguing account of a number of her cases from the viewpoint of a forensic psychologist is informative and provides an inside look at crime and mental illness, something we all need to know a lot more about."

--Leslie Crocker Snyder, former New York state Supreme Court Judge, author of "25 to Life"

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From Reader Review The Measure of Madness: Inside the Disturbed and Disturbing Criminal Mind for online ebook

Kirsten says

This could have been very interesting, but unfortunately Cheryl Paradis can not only not write, she also writes as though her readers are as thick as she is. I get the impression from reading this book that she has been trained very well as a forensic psychologist, but in herself is not all that bright. This book has piqued my interest for reading further analytical case studies, but just not by her.

Stacy Green says

I was really impressed with this book. It's written for the layperson, and I not only learned a lot about the role of a forensic psychologist in general, but also more about how the system works. She did a really good job of explaining different symptoms by delving into various cases she's worked throughout her career. I'd recommend this to anyone trying to get a better understanding of the field.

Kim says

I thought that it was an incredibly interesting book and that it did a good job of explaining the business of forensic psychology and provided great examples of cases. My only problem with the book was that it seemed like she slowly switched from a formal voice to an informal dialogue as she continued the book, and near the end we saw a lot more reflection and attempts to maybe "stretch" the book. Despite that, it was still a good book.

Clint says

I can't believe I read two non-fiction books in a row, what the hell is wrong with me, am I getting old?

This was a pretty interesting collection of case studies this forensic psychologist has been involved with involving some really crazy people. The creepiest one was about a subway pusher. Apparently in 100 percent of the subway murders in New York, the victim was a stranger. Whoa.

The weird thing about this book is its structure, it just seems to abruptly start three different times, and it sounds like the introductory chapters to the different parts are like, advertisements for the book or something, like, "In part three of The Measure of Madness, we will look at..." It was kind of weird, and ended abruptly as well. But, instead of three, I'm giving it four stars because the cases were so interesting.

It also shows you how messed up the legal system is, and that winning a case is more important to everyone than being on what they think is the right side.

Bren says

Very interesting book and very approachable. However, the author repeats the same definitions many times throughout the book like the reader can't remember that long and defines words that probably don't need to be defined. I enjoyed it despite these things though.

Maria says

It's scary to me to think that each of us has the potential to madness. And worse yet, to cause harm to another human being without a sign of remorse. Do each of us have that in us?

Alicia says

I felt as though this book was mediocre at best. It was very repetitive and it seemed as though most of this information was skin deep. When I bought this book from Barnes&Noble I assumed it would be about serial killers and their motivations. (I partly blame myself for my disappointment because I should have looked into it more.) There seemed to be a lot of legal issues and the author mainly focused on a criminal's ability to stand trial. I give it three stars because some of the stories did spark my interest, enough to even pass the book off to a friend and have her read a passage or two. All in all, I have certainly read better books on psychology.

Tara says

I felt that this book had very relevant information, but lacked the follow-through that "non-forensic psychologists" would desire. I like the deeper look into the process of the "not guilty by insanity" plea, but wished there could have been some sort of "Where are they now?" portion. I also struggled a bit with the author's voice in the book. While clearly knowledgeable and well-written, I felt that there were several unnecessary back door toots of her own horn that would turn me off. Overall I am happy that I read it.

Natalie says

I thought this was an interesting book, especially because it gave me some insight into a profession that is fascinating to me, that I previously knew nothing about (forensic psychology). However, I thought the stories would be slightly more psychotic than they were. This was sort of disappointing to me. I really wanted to delve into the crazy minds of people. Still, the book was interesting and I learned some things.

Justyna says

This book is written by a forensic psychologist called in on various cases to assess psychological competence and mental health. Several cases of this nature are highlighted in this book and Paradis discusses the client, their case, and the outcome. Overall, this book is okay and touches upon a subject that I am interested in. The downfall of this book, however, is in Paradis's treatment of her reader--at times--as juveniles who don't understand anything. She always explains the jargon she uses and the diagnoses given to the clients, which I'm okay with, but she tends to repeat herself which can get irritating.

Meaghan says

A very interesting look at mentally ill criminals through the eyes of a forensic psychiatrist. Dr. Paradis details many cases she was involved in and describes the methods she uses to determine whether these individuals are competent to stand trial, and whether they were insane or suffering from an "extreme emotional disturbance" at the time of the crime. Contrary to popular belief, most of these cases are not murders; one man Dr. Paradis evaluated was only in for misdemeanor assault.

The only fault I find with this book is that it's quite repetitive -- the same psychological tests, for instance the house/tree/woman one, are described over and over again in each chapter. I think people interested in psychology and criminology will find this book very useful and illuminating.

Steven says

When I heard about this book a few months ago, I immediately added it to my wish list thinking that it was going to be about serial killers and other psychopaths. Instead, I was treated to a series of case studies about mentally ill people who had committed crimes. Despite the fact that this book didn't initially meet my expectations, I couldn't put it down because it was just too interesting. It was refreshing to see the human side of mentally criminals (for lack of a better word).

My only gripes are that some of the author's explanations were a little simplistic, or based seemingly on her own assumptions. I would have liked to have seen a little more depth with some of the case studies. Also, she tends to repeat herself a lot when talking about different cases with similar scenarios. It's not a dealbreaker, though.

If you have any interest in mental illness and its effect on the legal process, you should check this book out.

Jeff McIntosh says

As a veteran of working in-patient psych units, and with an interest in forensic psychology, I was more than interested in read Dr. Paradis' book, "The Measure of Madness - Inside the Disturbed and Disturbing Criminal Mind".

As a clinician, Dr. Paradis details several cases from her long career as a forensic evaluator, and also discuss

some of the legal issues that can arise before, during, and after a forensic evaluation.

Certainly required reading for serious students of forensic psychology, and crime buffs.

Jeff McIntosh

Kathryn says

grrrrreat

Nikki says

I had hoped this would be more about the psychology of criminal minds rather than different case studies of trials she's been apart of for those who plead NRI.
