



Cruel Deception

Gregg Olsen

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In and out of hospitals since birth, angelic nine-month-old Morgan Reid finally succumbed to what appeared to be Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Morgan's Texas-born mother Tanya, a nurse and devoted wife, pulled up stakes with her grieving husband Jim, and moved on. It was the best way to put the past behind them. Until their son Michael, a boy who by all accounts was terrified of his mother, began showing signs of the same affliction that stole the life of his baby sister...

First, the suspicion: Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy. Then, Tanya was charged and convicted with felony child abuse of her son. She was later tried and ultimately convicted for first degree murder of Morgan. It would become a landmark trial that unfolded in a series of reversals and bizarre twists of fate as it gradually revealed another side of Tanya Reid—of her own troubling childhood and the dark secrets that drove a woman to the cruelest deception of all...

Cruel Deception Details

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Author : Gregg Olsen

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From Reader Review *Cruel Deception* for online ebook

Jennifer says

Probably 2 1/2 stars. If you're interested in the child abuse syndrome Munchausen's by proxy, in which parents create signs of illnesses and inflict injuries on their children to obtain medical attention, you might stumble across this book. For the most part, the gripping story of an investigation of a mother suspected of Munchausen's by proxy in the 1980s rises above the clunky writing. I wasn't sure I would make it past the heavy-handed prologue with its mockingbird metaphor and stereotypes of the Texas panhandle, but I did.

Lianna says

More like 2 and a half stars. Interesting subject but not the best delivery. Many details were repeated multiple times unnecessarily.

Knot (Claire-Edith) Telling says

Meticulously detailed, *Cruel Deception* takes a close look at the Munchausen by Proxy (MBP) prosecution of Tanya Reid. It was published in 1999 and the events it recounts took place in the 1980s, when MBP was not yet known even in the medical world, let alone among law enforcement.

MBP is known today as Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another (US, ICD-9 301.51) or Fabricated or Induced Illness by Carers (UK). It describes a situation in which an adult parent or caregiver intentionally induces physical symptoms in a child and then presents the child for medical care. The symptoms mimic actual illness and so the child is subjected to extensive medical tests and procedures. It is not clear why the adult does this, though it is related to the adult using the child to meet their own needs. It is not classified as a psychiatric disorder.

In *Cruel Deception*, author Greg Olsen looks closely at Tanya Reid's life and relationships in an effort to understand how and why she resorted to harming her own children to the extent that one baby died. Although it is sometimes classified as a "medical thriller", I found it more like a legal one. Olsen is a fly on the wall as the prosecutor, Melodee Hanes, meticulously builds a case from the extensive medical records of two of Reid's children. (For some reason, the third child was not only unharmed, but even testified in her mother's defense at one of the trials.)

The book was updated in 2005 to include information on Tanya Reid's appeals of her conviction for harming her living son and a subsequent trial, conviction, appeal, and retrial for murdering one of her daughters through MBP.

I found *Cruel Deception* interesting and reasonably engaging, in spite of the narrator's very nasal voice and poor imitation of regional accents. If you're looking for a typical true crime book, this will probably not satisfy you. If you are interested in a legal thriller or a peek into the mind of an MBP abuser, you'll probably like it.

Fishface says

This one didn't send me, to say the very least. It got off to such a slow start that I put it down and never picked it up again.

Brooke says

The story of Tanya Reid is one of the most interesting stories I have ever read.

Colleen N says

Gregg Olsen gives a vivid account in Cruel Deception of Tanya Reid and the abuse she inflicts on her young children over a series of years beginning in the 1980's. Tanya is a woman who comes from Texas and appears to come from a good home. The youngest daughter to John & Wanda Thaxton seems to have a childhood where her parents greatly cared about her and her three sisters. While her father was very strict and sometimes controlling there was no doubt that she was loved. By some accounts she was considered shy but also an attention seeker, one who needed to feel as if she was the center of everything.

At a very young age she met Jim Reid, the next door neighbor 7 years her senior and after a courtship they were married. Jim came from an extremely poor upbringing so money, prestige, and status were important to him. Tanya soon found herself in another controlling environment where her husband controlled the purse strings and because of his thirst for success he was gone many hours, days, and weeks.

Tanya tried to fill the void by making friends, but many recounted her as overzealous and the friendships didn't last. After the death of one child Morgan, and the bizarre health of a second child Michael, authorities became suspicious and began an investigation. The investigation is headed by an up and coming female prosecutor Melodee Hanes and other members of the "Trauma Team" who are sure that Tanya is intentionally suffocating her son. Melodee and company believe that Tanya may be a case of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy and set out to prove it. They refuse to rest until they put all the pieces together and can put her away. As the investigation moves forward they are shocked to discover all sorts of things and the relentless support from her family who refuse to see what's in front of them.

Tanya continually professes her innocence and swears that her children suffer from a rare disorder. There are conflicting accounts by those involved from doctors, family, hospitals, and nurses.

Is Tanya truly innocent? Is Melodee on a witch hunt to make her career? Or is this mother a terrible person capable of hurting innocent children for her own needs? Where the story takes you and the last minute courtroom bombshell will answer all the questions leaving you shocked and angry.

SouthWestZippy says

WOW, could not put book down. Well written book about the horrors of child abuse.

♥ Marlene♥ says

on Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Finished reading this book on December 10th.

Very good book.

I really like the way Gregg Olsen writes

One of my favorite reads of 2007

Jennifer says

4 - A MUST READ for all true crime fans!!

As a fan of true crime I thought this was one of the best books I have read. This is the second book I've read by Gregg Olsen and he is an excellent author. Some true crime novels are terrible because the author writes from the perspective of a journalist and not a story teller. Gregg Olsen, like Ann Rule, does both. The story he has weaved is sinister and heartbreaking.

Cruel Deception is the story of Tanya Thaxton Reid. A mother from Texas who "suffers" from Munchausen by proxy syndrome (MBPS). I say "suffers" because it is actually her children who do all of the suffering. Tanya is able to fool doctors in both Texas and Naperville, IL (Edward Hospital) into believing that her infant daughter and later infant son both suffer from a rare genetic seizure disorder that makes them stop breathing repeatedly. Luckily Tanya is a nurse and able to revive her children with CPR over and over. Unfortunately, there does come a day when little Morgan, her second born, is unable to be revived and passes away. Nobody suspects this loving mother . . . until the same pattern begins with her next child. A son born 15 months after the death of his sister.

The family makes a mistake in leaving Texas for Des Moines, Iowa. Child abuse laws in Iowa were much stricter in the 1980's than most other states and the city of Des Moines is home to one of the countries premier children's hospitals. After seeing Tanya's son time and again the younger doctors, who were educated in MBPS, contacted authorities and an investigation began into the abuse of the son and the death of the daughter.

Gregg Olsen does an excellent job of building the background story of Tanya Thaxton Reid and explaining to the reader how she is a classic case of MBPS. When I started reading I thought how horrible it would be if her children were truly ill. It became obvious early in the book that these innocent children were the victims of a very sick mother.

Crumb says

Interesting and thorough account of Munchausen's by Proxy; however, very slow moving. I understand it was a true crime novel , but it was very slow during some parts. It did pick up speed toward the end, though.

Chris P says

Chilling! Another great non-fiction book by one of the masters of the genre. Highly recommended!

Renea says

ok first off he jumped around to much... secondly it was like as soon as the book started getting good and he had me sucked into pages he ruined the moment and I quickly lost interest... it caused the book to drag on and it took way to long for me to read it cause he just kept dropping the ball...and i continued to lose interest

Jessica says

I started reading the back cover of this book as I was removing the Powell's sticker(s) this morning and got sucked into the book itself. Part of a true crime series, which genre, if we can call it that, began with *In Cold Blood* -- which may be the only other true crime book I've ever read -- this book is about a stay-at-home mother who at first got away with killing her baby daughter and then, away from family and unable to make friends in a new town where her quiet and possibly selfish husband now worked nights, began smothering her son just enough to get him to stop breathing so that she could resuscitate him, call the paramedics, and get attention from the folks at the hospital, since apparently she could not get it anywhere else. I need to read the rest of the book before I make any final judgments, but it really strikes me that if we were more supportive of mothers -- as mothers ourselves and as a society as a whole -- sad stuff like this would be much less likely to happen.

Book Junkie says

Fascinating true story of one of the first murder convictions due to Munchhausen Syndrome.

Eva Leger says

This is one of the craziest stores I've ever come across. How this woman was left to do this for so long is beyond me. What must have been going on in her head is also beyond me. The epitome of true crime.
