



A Black Night for the Bluegrass Belle

Ian Punnett

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On November 6, 1936, 40-year-old Verna Garr Taylor of LaGrange, KY, was found dead in a soggy ditch just over the Henry County line. Her companion that night, 60-year-old Henry H. Denhardt, the sitting adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard and recent lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, insisted that Verna had spontaneously committed suicide with his gun on the same night she tried to return his engagement ring. Because of a series of macabre, bizarre, and sometimes laughable events, "the Iron General" would never be held legally responsible for the murder of this beautiful, honorable widow and businesswoman. But that does not mean that Denhardt was innocent.

Just in the time for the 80th anniversary of this tragedy, Ian Punnett who resigned as host of the most listened to overnight show in North America to pursue a PhD in journalism and mass communication has uncovered the final missing, convincing details that bring *A Black Night for the Bluegrass Belle* to life. As part of the Commonwealth of Kentucky book series by Acclaim Press, Punnett also reveals the unknown truth behind Denhardt's ignoble demise, a death that is considered the last "code of honor" slaying in Kentucky history.

Through storytelling skills honed as a veteran radio personality on the nationally syndicated *Coast to Coast AM*, a PhD candidate at Arizona State University, and an instructor of Multimedia Journalism at Ohio Northern University, Punnett crafts every chapter of this murder-to-trial-to-murder-to-trial nonfiction narrative with evocative historical detail and the passion that is only possible from a family member. Punnett's maternal grandmother was Verna Garr Taylor's first cousin and confidante. As a result, Punnett has access to family insight no other author can claim.



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