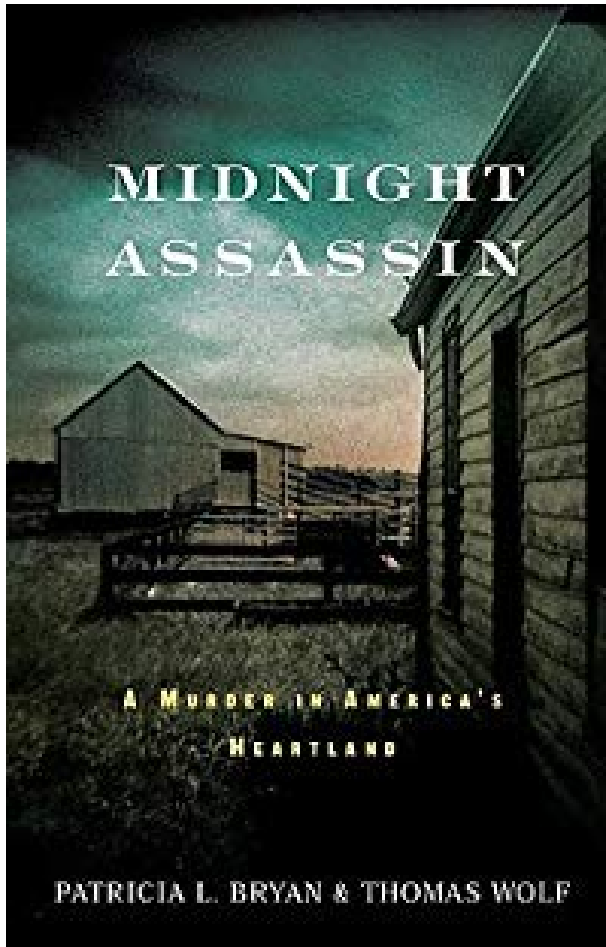


Midnight Assassin: A Murder in America's Heartland



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In 1900, Margaret Hossack, the wife of a prominent Iowa farmer, was arrested for bludgeoning her husband to death with an ax while their children slept upstairs. The community was outraged: How could a woman commit such an act of violence? Firsthand accounts describe the victim, John Hossack, as a cruel and unstable man. Perhaps Margaret Hossack was acting out of fear. Or perhaps the story she told was true—that an intruder broke into the house, killed her husband while she slept soundly beside him, and was still on the loose. Newspapers across the country carried the story, and community sentiment was divided over her guilt. At trial, Margaret was convicted of murder, but later was released on appeal. Ultimately, neither her innocence nor her guilt was ever proved. Patricia Bryan and Thomas Wolf examine the harsh realities of farm life at the turn of the century and look at the plight of women—legally, socially, and politically—during that period. What also emerges is the story of early feminist Susan Glaspell, who covered the Hossack case as a young reporter and later used it as the basis for her acclaimed work *A Jury of Her Peers*. *Midnight Assassin* expertly renders the American character and experience: our obsession with crime, how justice is achieved, and the powerful influence of the media.