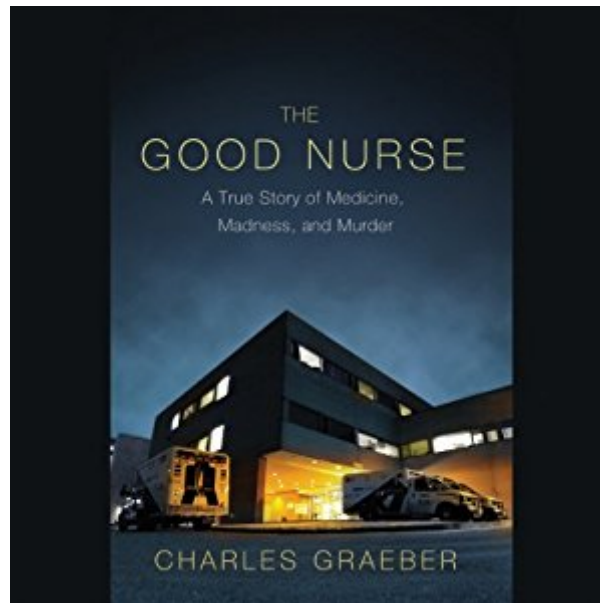The book was found

The Good Nurse: A True Story Of Medicine, Madness, And Murder

Synopsis

After his December 2003 arrest, registered nurse Charlie Cullen was quickly dubbed "The Angel of Death" by the media. But Cullen was no mercy killer, nor was he a simple monster. He was a favorite son, husband, beloved father, best friend, and celebrated caregiver. Implicated in the deaths of as many as 300 patients, he was also perhaps the most prolific serial killer in American history. Cullen's murderous career in the world's most trusted profession spanned 16 years and nine hospitals across New Jersey and Pennsylvania. When, in March of 2006, Charles Cullen was marched from his final sentencing in an Allentown, Pennsylvania, courthouse into a waiting police van, it seemed certain that the chilling secrets of his life, career, and capture would disappear with him. Now, in a riveting piece of investigative journalism nearly 10 years in the making, journalist Charles Graeber presents the whole story for the first time. Based on hundreds of pages of previously unseen police records, interviews, wire-tap recordings and videotapes, as well as exclusive jailhouse conversations with Cullen himself and the confidential informant who helped bring him down, The Good Nurse weaves an urgent, terrifying tale of murder, friendship, and betrayal. Graeber's portrait of Cullen depicts a surprisingly intelligent and complicated young man whose promising career was overwhelmed by his compulsion to kill, and whose shy demeanor masked a twisted interior life hidden even to his family and friends. Were it not for the hardboiled, unrelenting work of two former Newark homicide detectives racing to put together the pieces of Cullen's professional past, and a fellow nurse willing to put everything at risk, including her job and the safety of her children, there's no telling how many more lives could have been lost. In the tradition of In Cold Blood, The Good Nurse does more than chronicle Cullen's deadly career and the breathless efforts to stop him; it paints an incredibly vivid portrait of madness and offers a penetrating look inside America's medical system. Harrowing and irresistibly paced, this book will make you look at medicine, hospitals, and the people who work in them, in an entirely different way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a nurse this story set me on edge as to how something like this can continue for YEARS and no one suspected anything. From a nurse's point of view nurses are so busy doing all the things that need to be done I can see them having no time to investigate discrepancies in drug counts and an increase in codes (we all know there are times - especially during a full moon - that it just gets crazy.) It takes an "objective" person (usually administrative) to investigate such deviations in care and keep a record but it takes input from everyone in all departments. Once administration had information and failed to report is unconscionable. Since Cullen always worked the night shift to avoid all the usual oversight he was more easily able to get away with what he did. Having experience in using a Pyxis system I'm surprised the counts did not raise a red flag when he would cancel so many entries. Also, the fact that Tylenol was located right by Digoxin to be easily accessed is strange but death by Digoxin is not something regular nurses would even suspect. I can not fathom why anyone would want to do harm much less murder under these circumstances but we know there are people everywhere who are very adept at "looking" normal. Like Cullen, most of these criminals have horrible childhood situations that have rendered them almost non-human. Good job by Mr. Graeber for putting this story together so that we can learn the hard way of how this crime went so long undetected and that justice did finally come through - just not as quickly as it should have. This book should especially be a red flag for administrators of health agencies who are tempted to look the other way when evidence is clear that something is amiss.

I haven't read a book this quickly in a long time. My first reaction was, "This reads just like fiction, like a really well done murder mystery, but ... it isn't fiction. It's real."This should be required reading for all hospital managers, at all levels. While I was reading it, I kept looking for something ... unusual, something surprising, other than the murders themselves. It all hung together, and it all made sense. Too much sense. I could imagine this happening, and couldn't see any way to stop it that didn't involve some person or circumstance that is extraordinary, that does something unexpected. That is what is most terrifying about this. That it is so incredibly REASONABLE and

awful at the same time. I know, since then, there have been changes in the laws to balance the dynamic of the rights of the patients and the rights of the hospitals. Things like this still happen. There are still coverups, still this awful balance between who you are protecting. Something milder but similar happened here last year. Not murder, but child pornography. Not 16 years but 6 months. Still.Aside from the credibility of the story itself, it is well told and well crafted. The detail is amazing. The consistent and orderly progression of the story, the murders, the movements, the investigation ... what will tip the balance? I can imagine the author surrounding himself with piles of papers and notes and outlines and recordings, trying to assemble all the myriad interviews and pieces of evidence into a coherent timeline, and then doing a second sort by the point of view, balancing and weighing the importance to the overall story.One other reviewer remarked that he wished there had been more about the actual confession. My interpretation is that those details were integrated throughout the rest of the story, comingled with the author's own interviews with Charles and the police and the informant. I loved the extremely clever pun in the title, how who is the good nurse changes throughout the telling of the tale, the layers of meaning in "good nurse," layers which are unfolded throughout the telling of the tale.It isn't a perfect book, but it is a Very Good Book and an Important Book. Don't read this book and think for one second that it couldn't happen again, or hasn't happened before. This is not a unique tale. This is perhaps the richest and most comprehensive telling of this type of series of events, and a call for change. Not just legal change, but a more widespread cultural change. Or, is there any change that could prevent things like this from happening? We can make it harder, more difficult, more challenging, but is it really possible to prevent it?

This is a scary damn book. That should be the extent of my review, but I will expand my thought. I have been in the medical profession for 45 years primarily in critical care (the exact scenario this book is written) and even I don't understand how this guy got away with murdering (murdering more patients than what is known or written about) patients in multiple hospitals. I am very familiar with the Pyxis drug dispensary system that he used and know how difficult it is to be able to obtain a drug, use it, document it on the chart and the drug being able to be traced. Maybe in the early Pyxis systems the ability for a nurse to remove drugs and not trace them to a patient was possible, but in the later systems Pyxis is hard to fool. Not only are there cameras that document your movement, your fingerprint is needed to open the doors to the drugs and all drugs were accounted for after every shift, including the drugs he used to kill his patients: Potassium and Insulin, actually insulin can be used to decrease potassium levels, but only in certain situations.Aside from the above

information, this poor-excuse for a nurse is a certifiable nut. Which brings me to another problem with medical care personnel, and that is mental stability. Mental stability is a problem in any profession not exclusively to medicine. There are often "nut jobs" in medicine that often are not counseled while causing workplace problems with other employee's and patients. There is no protection in any workplace from the actions of the undiagnosed mental problematic worker. While reading this book, and the summation by the author is the same as mine, how did this guy continue his behavior over ten years at multiple hospitals without being found out earlier? Was it a breakdown of management of the hospitals or was it that the hospitals were so hard up for employee's that they just purposely overlooked his work related problems and possessed behavior. Who knows for sure.

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