

The Murder of Allison Baden-Clay

By David Murray
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Book Review by Denise Cullen

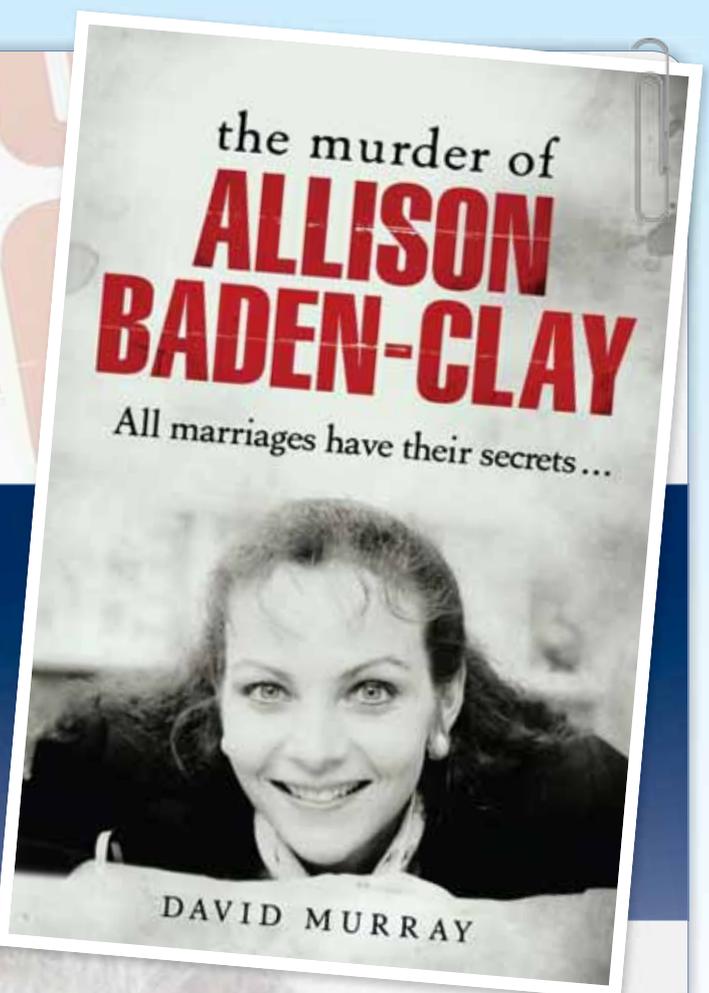
Given *60 Minutes'* tell-all interviews, lengthy features in magazines like *Australian Women's Weekly*, and front page daily coverage in most major newspapers, finding something new to say about the case of murdered Brookfield mother Allison Baden-Clay was always going to be a challenge.

However, *The Courier-Mail's* David Murray has managed to nail it.

The Murder of Allison Baden-Clay not only casts familiar facts in a fresh light, but provides the intriguing backstory leading up to Allison's mysterious middle-of-the-night disappearance in April 2012 and the subsequent conviction, in July 2014, of her husband Gerard for her murder. (He has since lodged an appeal.)

Thorough research combined with a deft handling of detail reveals hitherto unseen facets of the case, including when Ipswich councillor Paul Tully spelled out his suspicions in a blog post using a secret code, why Allison fatefully came to turn her back on her first love in favour of Gerard, and how the latter's multiple affairs messily and publicly unspooled.

The Murder of Allison Baden-Clay also details the painstaking police investigation which led to Gerard's arrest, trial and conviction. It began from the moment two young constables responded to what they thought



would be a routine missing persons report, only to discover a self-confessed adulterer with angry red scratches on his face, through to the jury's delivery of a guilty verdict more than two long years later.

Strongly grounded in time and place, the book considers domestic violence only as an aside, with little exploration of why this case, in particular, so captured the public imagination. For the murder of Allison Baden-Clay was far from aberrant – according to National Homicide Monitoring Program figures from 2013, 185 of all homicides in Australia between 2008 and 2010 were domestic-related. Of those, two-thirds, or 122, were committed by an intimate partner.

Murray nevertheless does note that intimate partner homicide is not necessarily preceded by incidents of physical violence, a frightening truth that's important to bear in mind: "If nothing else, Allison's murder showed others that emotionally abusive relationships could escalate to fatal violence without warning."

DENISE CULLEN is a Brisbane-based freelance writer and editor who lived down the road from the Baden-Clays. She contributes to a range of local and international publications including *The Age*, *The Australian*, *The Courier-Mail* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.