



The Ghosts of Eden Park: The Bootleg King, the Women Who Pursued Him, and the Murder That Shocked Jazz-Age America

Written by Karen Abbott

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Table of Contents

The Ghosts Of Eden Park	1
The Ghosts Of Beverly Drive	2
The Ghosts Of Eden Park By Karen Abbott	3
The Ghosts Of Versailles	4
The Ghosts Of Mississippi	5
The Ghosts Of Highway 20	6
The Ghosts Of Tupelo Landing	7
The Ghosts Of Saltmarsh	8
The Ghosts Of Christmas Past	9
The Ghosts Of Hill House	10

The Ghosts of Eden Park: The Bootleg King, the Women Who Pursued Him, and the Murder That Shocked Jazz-Age America

leg King, the Women Who Pursued Him, and the Murder

By Karen Abbott

The Ghosts Of Eden Park

The epic true crime story of bootlegger George Remus and the murder that shocked the nation, from the New York Times bestselling author of *Sin in the Second City* and *Liar, Temptress, Soldier, Spy*

The Ghosts Of Beverly Drive

In the early days of Prohibition, long before Al Capone became a household name, a German immigrant named George Remus quits practicing law and starts trafficking whiskey. Within two years he's a multimillionaire. The press calls him "King of the Bootleggers," writing breathless stories about the Gatsby-esque events he and his glamorous second wife, Imogene, host at their Cincinnati mansion, with party favors ranging from diamond jewelry for the men to brand new Pontiacs for the women. By the summer of 1921, Remus owns 35 percent of all the liquor in the United States.

The Ghosts Of Eden Park By Karen Abbott

Pioneering prosecutor Mabel Walker Willebrandt is determined to bring him down. Willebrandt's bosses at the U.S. Attorney's office hired her right out of law school, assuming she'd pose no real threat to the cozy relationship they maintain with Remus. Eager to prove them wrong, she dispatches her best investigator, Franklin Dodge, to look into his empire. It's a decision with deadly consequences: With Remus behind bars, Dodge and Imogene begin an affair and plot to ruin him, sparking a bitter feud that soon reaches the highest levels of government--and that can only end in murder.

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The Ghosts Of Versailles

Combining deep historical research with novelistic flair, THE GHOSTS OF EDEN PARK is the unforgettable, stranger-than-fiction story of a rags-to-riches entrepreneur and a long-forgotten heroine, of the excesses and absurdities of the Jazz Age, and of the infinite human capacity to deceive.

The Ghosts of Eden Park: The Bootleg King, the Women Who Pursued Him, and the Murder That Shocked Jazz-Age America by Karen Abbott is a 2019 Crown Publishing Group publication.

An absorbing and shocking true crime saga!!

George Remus is a name I was only moderately familiar with. I knew he was a famous bootlegger during prohibition, but I didn't know much more than that. I had not familiarized myself with his complex criminal operation or with his personal issues, which included referring to himself as "The Ghosts of Eden Park: The Bootleg King, the Women Who Pursued Him, and the Murder That Shocked Jazz-Age America" by Karen Abbott is a 2019 Crown Publishing Group publication.

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Well, to say George lived a colorful life is an understatement. As an attorney, he found a way to procure alcohol legally for "medicinal purposes." This subterfuge allowed him to take control of a large percentage of distilleries. From there he built a very lucrative bootlegging operation which made him quite wealthy, earning him the moniker, "The King of the Bootleggers."

George and his second wife, Imogene, lived a lavish lifestyle, handing out diamonds and cars to their party guests, but the law was not ignorant of his enterprise. Enter Mabel Walker Willebrandt, a prosecutor with the Attorney General's office, whose job it was to investigate and prosecute violators of the Volstead Act.

Mabel Walker Willebrandt

This is where the story really gets interesting. One of Willebrandt's agents, Frank Dodge, was assigned the task of infiltrating Remus's empire. Frank's involvement led to a shocking turn of events that would have made a gripping crime novel. The head spinning twist and turns in this case just

goes to show that truth really is stranger than fiction!

Imogene Remus

Since Truman Capote spoiled us with his "True Crime Novel", any other approach to this "genre" can be mind numbingly dry. Yet, Karen Abbott has employed a new technique which I thought worked out quite well.

The book is written in the standard chronological format- thank goodness, as I've never seen nonfiction work out when someone gets creative with the timeline. The research is also noteworthy as the author had access to thousands of pages of transcripts. Naturally, this requires exceptional organizational skill, and Ms. Abbot did a phenomenal job with so much material.

George Remus

There are many people involved in this tale, and unlike fiction, where the author has control over the number of characters involved in the plot, the author didn't have that same luxury when it came to writing nonfiction. Still, I thought Abbott handled it nicely, including all the key players in this saga without allowing it to slow down the momentum. In fact, the book is very fast paced, and held my interest all throughout.

Frank Dodge

As one will gather from the title, bootlegging is not the only crime at play. A murder is eminent which is where Abbot applies one truly unique and clever trick-

Unless one already knows how this story plays out, the victim and the murderer remain a secret until the killing transpires in real time. Abbott keeps us on the edge of our seat, building the suspense and keeping one guessing like this was a fictional murder mystery.

Then there is that stunning trial! The prosecutor was Charles Phelps Taft II, son of William Howard Taft. But you will have to read this book to believe how it concluded. It's one of the most insane trials I've ever read about from this era. Talk about putting on a show!

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I admit, by the time I turned the final page, I was shaking my head in disbelief. This is one bizarre story and will take readers on a wild roller coaster ride through prohibition and the politics of the day. But mostly this is one of the most entertaining true crime books I've read.

5 stars ...more

The Ghosts Of Mississippi

I have read all of Abbott's books, even though I am primarily a fiction reader. I love them because they read like novels. This one reads like a literary legal thriller.

It has some INSANE twists. I love that things actually happened that would break my suspension of disbelief in fiction. The truth really is stranger. Well drawn characters, gorgeous writing, and a murder mystery? Yes, please. Highly recommended.

The Ghosts of Eden Park Karen Abbott

Karen Abbott brilliantly pieces together this page-turner through meticulous resource and without any fictional dialogue. With so much chronicled information, I suspected this might be a dry journaling of events but no, far from it! It is a rich narrative, a captivating story about a volatile time in American history that involved widespread corruption amongst a who's who of politicians, judges, law enforcement and civilians.

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So many wanted a piece of the bootlegging action. Each major character either good or bad was masterfully depicted by Abbott and fascinating to follow. Day to day business included maneuvering, extortion, bribery, backstabbing, and an incomprehensible volume of money - mind-boggling!

It was difficult choosing my favorite character as I was as fascinated by the good guys as well as the bad. Mabel Walker Willenbrandt, the "First Lady of Law" was an inspiration. George Remus, pharmacist, lawyer and bootlegger was one heck of a visionary. A genius with unpredictable anger, insane jealousy and misplaced trust, I was gobsmacked by his story. One of the best non-fiction books I have read! ...more

The Ghosts Of Highway 20

Competently executed yet disappointingly dull.

I have greatly enjoyed Abbott's other work and expected this to be a slam dunk. Unfortunately, I found myself bored of the narrative and apathetic about the subject matter.

Generally speaking, bootlegging and Prohibition are not topics that lend themselves particularly well to narrative nonfiction. They certainly **seem** like they should (largely because fiction has done such a good job with this topic), but the sad fact is that money and (temporary) *Competently executed yet disappointingly dull.*

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Such is the case with the subjects of this particular narrative. Remus is certainly a savvy businessman, but he's also mentally unstable and not much of an intellectual, even if you concede he had some decent street smarts. Even that feels worthless though, since by the end of his tale he's barely comprehensible. Imogene seems like a nasty opportunist rather than the clever con woman who finally snaps that the book seems to want her to be.

Abbott's writing and research are both good, but the choice of subject matter feels ill-advised. While the story has some interesting moments, it simply isn't compelling enough to warrant an entire book. This could have been a great long form article, but as a book it feels indulgent and excessive.

**I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.* ...more*

HAPPY PUB DAY!!!!

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The Ghosts Of Tupelo Landing

This is a must read in Cincinnati, where I've lived for the past 27 years. Great city btw. I combined ebook and audio, which I like to do occasionally, depending on the book. This audio was great so I switched over half way through.

Alternating male and female narrators added to the appeal of listening and sparking the content. Facts and entertaining drama entwined for great historical content we must "keep alive."

Must read for true crime fans.

Sexy, smart, compulsively readable -- and expertly researched.

The Ghosts Of Saltmarsh

Harold Schechter at the WSJ found it a "hugely entertaining work of popular history":

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-ghos...> (as always, I'm happy to email a copy to non-subscribers)

Excerpts:

George Remus, a pharmacist & lawyer, found a loophole in the Volstead act "that permitted licensed pharmacists, such as himself, to legally acquire liquor for â€œmedicinal purposes.â€• Within a year, he owned â€œ35 percent of all the liquor in the United States.â€• The tabloids would crown him â€œKing of the Boot

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The author "describes a New Yearâ€™s Eve bash hosted by the Remuses at whichâ€œcigars were lit with \$100 bills, and party favors consisted of gold watches and diamond stick pins for the men and, for each lady in attendance, a brand-new Pontiac."

Remus's nemesis was Mabel Walker Willebrandt, an assistant Attorney General in charge of enforcing Prohibition. "Willebrandtâ€™who began each day with an ice-cold bath and kept a framed quote by Cotton Mather on her office wall for inspirationâ€™set about pursuing the nationâ€™s leading bootleggers, with George Remus at the top of her list."

OK, I'm in. Let's see what others here have to say.more

Americans have long been fascinated with Prohibition and bootleggers, so it's no surprise that a story about one of the biggest bootleggers would bring such attention. Throw in a domestic murder as well and you have the makings of what should have been a spell-binding read. Unfortunately, this book doesn't really get there. Abbott's research is extensive and meticulous, but I think that might actually have hampered the storytelling. So much secondary and tertiary information gets included that t

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The Ghosts Of Christmas Past

I received an advance ebook via NetGalley.

I never cease to be amazed by the innovations and machinations perpetuated by bootleggers during Prohibition, and wow does this book bring an incredible drama to light. George Remus was a corporate powerhouse out of Cincinnati. Once a lawyer known for courtroom histrionics, he switched his focus to dominating the illicit liquor trade throughout the Midwest. He accumulated incredible wealth and prestige, masterminding some third of bootleg operations with I received an advance ebook via NetGalley.

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Also, I absolutely loved reading about Mabel Walker Willebrandt, U.S. Assistant Attorney General throughout the 1920s. She was the very definition of a woman surviving by grit and wit within a man's world. I need to read more about her.

This book is astonishing. It reads with the ease and intensity of a thriller, in part because the author's fantastic research included full dialogue from all of the major players. People speak in their own words, including Remus, who had a tendency to speak of himself in the third person. As a research geek myself, I can only respect in and be delighted by another author going through such intense labor, and it works to great success.

I think my only complaint is that the book ended up far shorter than I anticipated. The ebook's content actually ended at 64%, with the rest of the pages consisting of footnotes and bibliography.

I highly recommend this read for anyone interested in the period of Prohibition. ...more

A well-researched if sometimes laborious account of a 1920s murder. The book includes plenty of interesting historical information but the events never seem to get tied together adequately.

The Ghosts Of Hill House

There are times when you hear of people who had such an enormous impact on the course of history that you wonder how you never heard of them before. George Remus, and his pursuer, Mabel Willebrandt, are two such people. George Remus, at one time known as the "King of the Bootleggers", owned as much as 35% of all liquor in the United States during Prohibition. Given to excess and outpourings of emotion, coupled with an erratic, but nonetheless successful, business acumen, he built an extensive ne

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The story follows Remus's meteoric rise as a conman pharmacist, then lawyer, and finally bootlegger, who threw parties of such extravagance that would make Trimalchio blush. Women were gifted with brand new Pontiacs and men with diamond watches as "party favors". A mansion was purchased and he encouraged his wife, Imogene, to furnish it with the top-of-the-line decor. It also follows his tumultuous relationship with Imogene, who comes out fairly poorly in the story; she is portrayed as a calculating, unfaithful gold-digger only interested in the finer things in life.

Remus is eventually prosecuted by Willebrandt for his bootlegging operations, and the story follows his time in prison and Willebrandt's top agent, Frank L. Dodge, Jr., beginning an affair with Imogene. The events unravel slowly but surely toward their inevitable end, culminating in a court case that captured the public's eye. A slew of familiar names crop up: Clarence Darrow, J. Edgar Hoover, and George Remus's spiritual successor, Al Capone.

With the same accomplished sleight of hand as a magician, Abbott most clearly demonstrates the effortless dexterity of a writer in the information she reveals. Her earlier accounts, through Remus's cronies and associates, of Remus's behavior leads to a clear portrait of a man that is quickly upset when the trial begins. (view spoiler)[At a crucial moment, Abbott lowers new information: Remus once defended a case of a man who killed his wife, and was let off by virtue of temporary insanity. The criteria which he used to establish that insanity align perfectly with Remus's own behavior, casting a pall of doubt over the entire case. (hide spoiler)]

For all the tales of extravagance and theatrics, however, George Remus took second stage for me in comparison to the estimable Mabel Willebrandt. A shrewd lawyer with a calculating instinct, Willebrandt

The Ghosts of Eden Park: The Bootleg King, the Women Who Pursued Him, and the Murder That Shocked Jazz-Age America

proved crucial in America's history with Prohibition, even successfully campaigning to rule that bootleggers must report their ill-gotten and illegal profits on their taxes, which would ultimately nab the infamous Al Capone.

Abbott's writing is effortless, spinning a well-researched, thoughtful story that showcases what a talented writer of historical non-fiction must do: the characters are presented as fully as can be done with historical records, and Abbott holds her cards close to her chest. Some doubt is thrown on Willebrandt's true relationship with Dodge, for instance, but speculation is kept to a minimum. Even Remus is treated with the same objectivity, and the writer must decide for him or herself, just as the public did, what the true story was. Every time the reader may have leaned one way, Abbott reveals another source that forces doubt.

As much a story about the time period, one of conspicuous consumption, corruption and graft, and modernity and femininity, as the people in it, *The Ghosts of Eden Park* is a fascinating look at some mostly forgotten characters of a bygone era.

ETA: There is one error that should be noted - on page 47, it says that \$1000 bills were hidden under the plates of dinner guests at the unveiling of the Imogene Pool, but on page 169, it says \$100 bills. One hopes this error is noted or corrected in the final release.

NB: This advanced reader copy was furnished by the publisher for free in exchange for an honest review. Yay! ...more

A Tale of Bootlegging, Betrayal, and Murder Diluted in the Telling

The Ghosts of Eden Park is set in the Jazz Age in the United States. It was a time of great change—women received the right to vote; fashion, music, and social norms were being transformed; and alcohol became illegal. Into this setting, insert George Remus, a lawyer turned bootlegger who quickly amassed a vast fortune by finding loopholes in the new Prohibition laws. Opposing Remus was Mabel Walker Willebrandt, appointed as US Ass A Tale of Bootlegging, Betrayal, and Murder Diluted in the Telling

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With all this grist for a spellbinding tale, I expected one; unfortunately, it never quite materializes. The text and dialog pulled from court records and other documents reflect the style of the time, e.g., somewhat wooden compared to today's standards. But that same stilted feel continues into the rest of the book. Perhaps that was intentional, but it reduces the pace to the point of plodding. The story is not presented succinctly. As an example, during Remus's murder trial, several witnesses were called to testify about the night Remus discovered that his mansion had been stripped of its valuables. Each witness, however, gives a different date. And after several pages of this same story, the author reveals that the lawyers were trying to prove Remus was staging his "discovery" of the theft over and over, so he could fly into a rage at his wife's betrayal for each new audience. One well-written paragraph could have replaced several pages of repetition. The basic sequence of events is also confusing, when segments from court transcripts representing a different time are inserted between chapters. And digressions into the personal and professional lives of characters only loosely related to the story feel like filler.

I did enjoy the insight the book provided on several tangential topics—the excesses of Remus's Gatsby-esque lifestyle, the treatment of the rich in the penal system, the concept of insanity in the legal system, among others. And I came to greatly admire the stamina and vision of a past US Assistant Attorney General. To accomplish what Willibrandt did during the Prohibition Era was truly amazing. But as for a riveting story of betrayal and murder in the matter of George Remus? That was difficult to find.

I was given a free copy of this book. I elected to write this candid review. ...more