



A Tale of Two Murders: Passion and Power in Seventeenth-Century France

By Farr, James R.

Duke. 1 Paperback(s), 2005. soft. Book Condition: New. As scandalous as any modern-day celebrity murder trial, the "Giroux affair" was a maelstrom of intrigue. In 1638 Philippe Giroux, a judge in the highest royal court of Burgundy, allegedly murdered his equally powerful cousin Pierre Baillet and the valet Philibert Neugot. The murders were all the more shocking because they were surrounded by accusations (particularly that Giroux had been carrying on a passionate affair with Baillet's wife), conspiracy theories (including allegations that Giroux tried to poison his mother-in-law), and unexplained deaths (Giroux's wife and her physician died under suspicious circumstances). The trial lasted from 1639 until 1643, and came to involve many of the most distinguished and influential men in France, among them the prince of Condé, Henri II Bourbon; the prime minister, Cardinal Richelieu; and King Louis XIII. History professor James Farr reveals the Giroux affair not only as a riveting murder mystery but also as an illuminating point of entry into the dynamics of power, justice, and law in 17th-century France. "The best micro-histories manage to convey the texture of a vanished culture and to define and amplify the basic issues, concerns, and imperatives that infused the society in...

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