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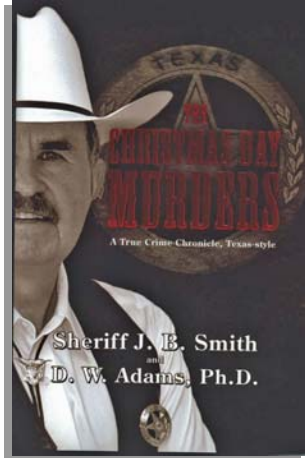
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The Christmas Day Murders

A True Crime Chronicle, Texas-Style

by **Sheriff J.B. Smith and D.W. Adams, PhD**

Brown Books, September 2006.

219 pages, hardcover \$19.95. ISBN 1-033285-65-6.

It was 4:20, Christmas morning 1999 when Chief Dispatcher Carolyn Tanner received the 911 call. A frantic Margaret Toner reported that she had heard gunshots from her granddaughter's mobile home next door. Communication Officer Pam Dunklin immediately dispatched Sergeant Pat Hendrix to investigate. Arriving at the scene, Sergeant Hendrix was met by a grisly sight: the slaughtered bodies of Stephen and Carla Barron.

The Christmas Day Murders gives the reader a truer insight into a homicide investigation than is often found. Going into explicit detail, Sheriff J.B. Smith of Smith County, Texas, leads the reader through the investigation point by point. Great detail is given to the crime scene, the questioning of anyone who can bring light to the murders, and the background relationship between the Barrons and their daughter Stephanie. In the end, the daughter is convicted of the double homicide.

This book has many positive attributes, one of the more outstanding ones being how little the author's ego surfaces. In contrast to the current "me, me, me" age, Sheriff Smith takes very little credit for the investigation. He gives the tribute to those who deserve it: the investigators who pounded the pavement. Smith has held the office of sheriff for about as long as anyone can remember, and it is not hard to understand why he is highly respected by his peers nationwide and by the citizens of Smith County. (No, the county was not named after him.)

Sheriff Smith and his co-author, D.W. Adams, have taken an extremely brutal and hideous crime and written a very readable and enjoyable book that reads like fiction. *The Dispatch* highly recommends this book to all readers.

Review by Robert Nieman

The Christmas Day Murders is available at the **Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum's online gift shop**

Sheriff Smith's website: www.sheriffjbsmith.com