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THE MURDER THAT ROCKED THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

“One of the most sordid murder trials ever staged in an American courtroom” unfolded in Columbus, Ohio, during the summer of 1929. The case against Ohio State University professor Dr. James Howard Snook scandalized a nation reveling still in the waning era of speakeasies, bathtub gin, flappers and machine gun-wielding mobsters.

Gold Medal Killer, by Diana Britt Franklin with Nancy Pennell, tells for the first time the true story of this sensational and brutal crime.

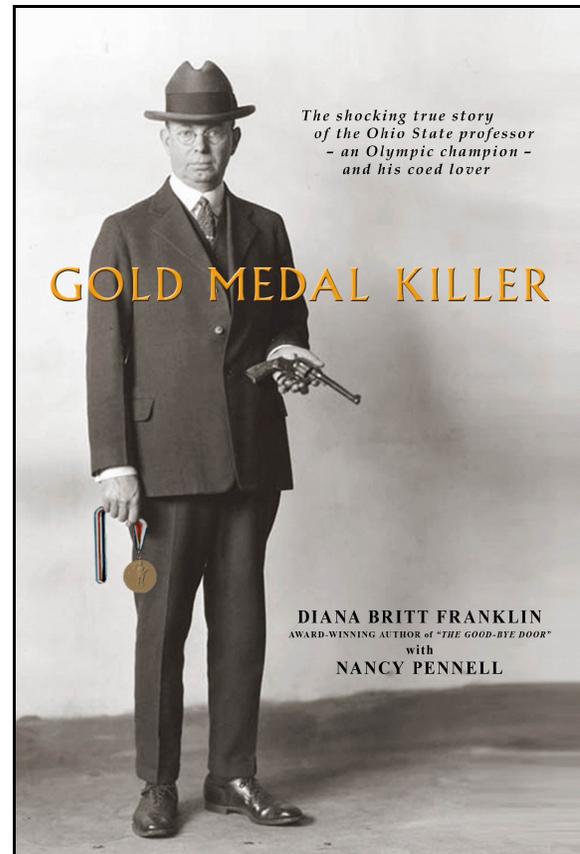
Snook, 49 at the time of the murder, was a full professor of veterinary medicine at the Ohio State University in Columbus. He had a wife, an infant child, and a pair of Olympic gold medals for pistol shooting.

In the spring of 1926, he met Theora Hix, a 21-year-old medical school student at the university. For three years they had a wild, passionate relationship that knew no bounds.

But when she became too demanding and threatened to kill his wife and child, he took her to a secluded shooting range and bludgeoned her to death with a ball-peen hammer. Just to make sure she was dead, he deftly slit her jugular vein with his pocketknife.

Police arrested Snook within two days of the brutal murder, slapped him until they had a confession, and charged him with murder. The defense put Snook on the witness stand before the jury, a gallery of 200 spectators and more than 30 reporters from across the land.

In his cross-examination of the defendant, the dashing, ambitious, “pretty-boy” district attorney explored every sordid detail of the lovers’ sexual proclivities. So shocking was the testimony that not even the New York tabloids would print it.



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For 28 minutes the jury deliberated Snook's fate. Sixteen minutes were devoted to prayer; then it returned a guilty verdict that put Snook on the path to the electric chair. He was executed February 28, 1930, in Columbus, 260 days after Theora's murder.

Snook is the only Olympic champion to die in the electric chair.

INTERVIEWS AND BOOK SIGNINGS

The author is available for interviews and book signings, which can be arranged by e-mailing her at dianabrit@aol.com or calling 614-734-3434.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



DIANA BRITT FRANKLIN is the author or co-author of a dozen books, including *The Good-bye Door*, a multi-award winner in true crime and featured on television's Investigation Discovery channel. Born in England but raised in the United States, she began her career with *The New York Herald Tribune*. Subsequently, she held various editorial posts — from reporter and columnist to section editor and managing editor — at two other daily newspapers, *The San Antonio (Texas) Light* and *The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch*. She also served as press relations director for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; and as director of public relations for Avis Rent A Car Inc. She presently heads Franklin & Son, a corporate pr consulting firm in Columbus. For more than 25 years, Franklin also wrote a syndicated cooking column for Universal Press Syndicate. She resides in Dublin, Ohio.



NANCY SANOR PENNELL attended The Ohio State University, majoring in fine and commercial arts. She was the director of The Heritage Museum, Columbus, for a number of years. Her grandfather, Dr. David S. White, was dean of OSU's College of Veterinary Medicine at the time of the Theora Hix murder. Having heard of the story most of her life, she teamed up with Diana Britt Franklin for the writing of *Gold Medal Killer*. Mrs. Pennell lives in Dublin, Ohio.

Author photos by Mary Circelli

ABOUT THE BOOK

*Gold Medal Killer: The Shocking True Story of the Ohio State Professor
– an Olympic Champion – and His Coed Lover*

By Diana Britt Franklin with Nancy Pennell

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