



Guilt by Association (Rachel Knight Book 1)

By Marcia Clark

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Los Angeles D.A. Rachel Knight is a tenacious, wise-cracking, and fiercely intelligent prosecutor in the city's most elite division. When her colleague, Jake, is found dead at a grisly crime scene, Rachel is shaken to the core. She must take over his toughest case: the assault of a young woman from a prominent family.

But she can't stop herself from digging deeper into Jake's death, a decision that exposes a world of power and violence and will have her risking her reputation--and her life--to find the truth.

With her tremendous expertise in the nuances of L.A. courts and crime, and with a vibrant ensemble cast of characters, Marcia Clark combines intimate detail, riotous humor, and visceral action in a debut thriller that marks the launch of a major new figure on the crime-writing scene.

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Guilt by Association (Rachel Knight Book 1) By Marcia Clark Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #21302 in eBooks
- Published on: 2011-04-20
- Released on: 2011-04-20
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Los Angeles D.A. Rachel Knight is a tenacious, wise-cracking, and fiercely intelligent prosecutor in the city's most elite division. When her colleague, Jake, is found dead at a grisly crime scene, Rachel is shaken to the core. She must take over his toughest case: the assault of a young woman from a prominent family.

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Amazon Exclusive: Alafair Burke Reviews *Guilt by Association*

Alafair Burke is the bestselling author of six novels, including *212*, *Angel's Tip*, and *Dead Connection* in the Ellie Hatcher series. A former prosecutor, she now teaches criminal Law and lives in Manhattan. *Long Gone*, her first stand-alone thriller, will be published by Harper in June 2011.



Not too many years ago, an influential friend in the literary world told me, “Legal thrillers are out.” Having just published my first two novels, both featuring Portland Deputy District Attorney Samantha Kincaid, I desperately needed this death announcement to be premature. The problem, I argued, was an overabundance of *bad* legal thrillers that had scarred the subgenre’s once-good name. Perhaps trying to replicate the success of groundbreaking novels like Scott Turow’s *Presumed Innocent* and John Grisham’s *A Time to Kill*, publishers had overpurchased and overpromoted courtroom-centric novels by lawyers who managed to turn the term “legal thriller” into an oxymoron. Evidentiary objections, jury selection, and cross-examinations might be real goose bump inducers compared to the average lawyer’s workday, but as ingredients for a page-turner? No, thank you.

Well, I’m delighted to report that, despite my friend’s death knell, law-based crime fiction is alive and well thanks to authors who focus not on blue-in-the-face litigators hollering “Objection!” at one another, but on good old fashioned storytelling about characters who just happen to be lawyers. When the industry had all but written off the so-called “legal thriller” in favor of high concept novels in the spirit of *The Da Vinci*

Code, Linda Fairstein and Lisa Scottoline continued to dominate bestsellers' lists because they wrote damn good books. Today, Michael Connelly has put to rest any lingering questions about the viability of the subgenre by bringing Mickey Haller to every medium -- #1 in hardback and digital, and \$46 million and counting at the box office. What makes these books irresistible aren't the bells and whistles of the technical ins and outs of the legal system, but memorable characters and solid plotting in the hands of masterful storytellers.

With *Guilt By Association*, Marcia Clark joins the ranks of Scottoline, Fairstein, and Connelly. Her debut novel introduces us to Los Angeles prosecutor Rachel Knight, a member of the office's elite Special Trials Unit. In the opening pages, Knight's friend and colleague Jake Pahlmeyer is found dead at a seedy motel under even seedier circumstances. She inherits a high-profile rape case from his desk. While the victim's father exerts political pressure for an arrest, the investigation takes Rachel into LA's gang world and makes her a target. As if that weren't enough to keep a gal busy, she can't help poking around into Jake's death, despite strict orders to mind her own bees' wax.

Like the finest books in the legal thriller subgenre, very few pages of *Guilt By Association* take place in the courtroom. Instead, we see Rachel's interactions with cops, contacts, and witnesses. We see the action as it unfolds, not as it is summarized later in the artificially sterile courtroom setting. We see Rachel at home with her friends. We get to know--and like--her.

Much attention will certainly be paid to Clark's former career as a prosecutor in Los Angeles, most notably as the head prosecutor in OJ Simpson's criminal trial. That platform will also undoubtedly bring extraordinary attention to a debut novel. But an unfortunate consequence of any emphasis upon her significant legal career might be an inaccurate perception of the book itself. Clark's expertise about the criminal justice system leaps from the pages of *Guilt By Association*, but not because she shows off her knowledge of the law, rules of evidence, or courtroom procedure. Rather, her experience allows her to write with confidence rarely seen in a first novel--about Los Angeles, about Rachel Knight, about the secondary characters who occupy Knight's world and become a part of ours. *Guilt By Association* succeeds because of Clark's gifts as a writer, not as a lawyer. With those gifts, she has created a true legal thriller--emphasis on the *thrill*.

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Clark, the lead prosecutor in the O.J. Simpson trial, makes a triumphant fiction debut that catapults her to the same level as Linda Fairstein, her fellow assistant DA turned legal thriller novelist. Clark's alter ego, L.A. deputy DA Rachel Knight, suffers a shocking loss when a close colleague is suspected of committing a murder-suicide. Unable to reconcile her view of the accused with the official investigation, Knight persists in digging on her own, even though her office has been recused from the case. The workaholic also has her hands full with a case she inherited from the dead prosecutor—the rape of a 15-year-old girl, Susan Densmore, whose doctor father, a prominent financial backer of Knight's boss, is convinced that he knows who the assailant is. Clark (Without a Doubt with Teresa Carpenter) deftly handles the multiple plot lines. Readers will want to see a lot more of Knight, who combines strength of character and compassion with all-too-human foibles. (Apr.)

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Don't be dissuaded by the celebrity-author factor: Clark, lead prosecutor in the O. J. Simpson trial, pairs her knowledge of the L.A. judicial scene with a surprising flair for fiction in a remarkably accomplished debut novel. L.A. prosecutor Rachel Knight is stunned when her office soul-mate,

Jake Pahlmeyer, is found shot to death in a sleazy motel along with a 17-year-old boy, raising ugly suspicions that she doesn't want to acknowledge. Given Jake's top case to work--the rape of the teenage daughter of one of the DA's prominent contributors--Rachel is warned by her boss to leave her colleague's death alone. But with her big heart and hard head, she uses her network of sources and risks career and safety to pursue both cases, teaming up with Detective Bailey Keller and following leads to Hispanic gangs and porno rings in the seamiest parts of the city. Clark offers a real page-turner here, with smart, fast-moving prose; a skillfully constructed plot; and a protagonist well worth knowing. Rachel, whose past is only hinted at, is a well-rounded character who's as tough with suspects as she is sensitive with young victims. A top-notch legal thriller that will leave readers wanting more.

HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Here's that rare example of a celebrity thriller author justifying a major promotion campaign by delivering a genuinely high-quality novel. --Michele Leber

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Norris Patterson:

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Connie Medina:

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