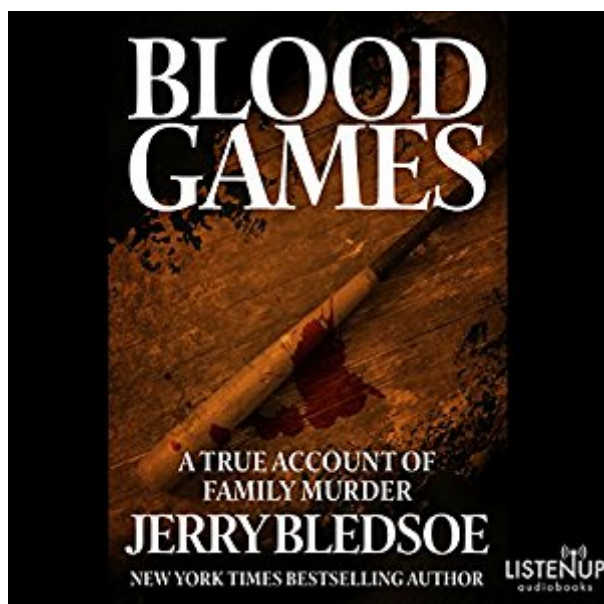


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# Blood Games: A True Account Of Family Murder



## Synopsis

A true story detailing the events surrounding the murder of wealthy North Carolinian Lieth von Stein. The case seemed cold until police followed a trail leading to von Stein's stepson, a smart young man who was obsessed with Dungeons and Dragons and wrapped up in drugs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After reading Cruel Doubt by McGinnis I wasn't really too excited when I picked up this book. Wow, was I ever wrong. While McGinnis spends all his time talking about Bonnie Von Stein and her son, Christopher Pritchard (He wrote the book with her help), Bledsoe spends more time getting to know the other parties allegedly involved, Neal Henderson, and James Upchurch. Bledsoe is objective about all the participants, including the victims. McGinnis tries to portray the son as a victim of drug abuse and wants you to feel sympathetic towards him. So many things do not add up, yet McGinnis tries to pigeon hole it all away with statements like "...that's just the way she is" or "...the drugs clouded his vision he didn't know what he was saying or doing during that time frame" (paraphrased from Cruel Doubt). While reading this book I noticed a number of things that lead me to believe that the entire truth was not brought out at trial. In some instances there were major discrepancies in the testimonies of Neal Henderson and Chris Pritchard. Things just did not add up. I wonder about the overzealousness of the police to capture someone because they happened to have a previous infraction. I wonder about the jury who convicted based solely on the two statements with major inconsistencies made by confessed killers. This is a very interesting book, that gives you things to

think about. Jerry Bledsoe is spellbindingly brilliant once again. A must have for your true crime library.

Having read "Cruel Doubt" and being an avid fan of Jerry's books, I ordered this book from America as it is unavailable in Australia. It took six weeks to arrive, and when I read it, I was disappointed, as the boring, repetitive narrative is extremely irritating, and unlike his other stories, in this book, Jerry's writing style is poor and he fails (for the first time in his true crime writing career) to draw the reader into the story. I am still a loyal fan of Jerry's, but I would recommend to anyone who wants to read about the Von Stein case to skip this book and instead purchase "Cruel Doubt" by Joe McGinniss, which is far superior in its portrayal of the facts.

Bledsoe should take a bow for this chilling description of the murder of Lieth Von Stein and near murder of Bonnie Von Stein, with her 19-year-old son, Chris Pritchard, the one who planned it all to inherit millions. That's not giving away the book, as he's mentioned as the killer on the back cover! I was ecstatic that this book was out after I read Cruel Doubt by Joe McGinniss, another awesome depiction of this bloody crime. Joe apparently couldn't get the defendants' families to cooperate, and Bledsoe did. It was great to see into the minds of the killers and to learn about what their family lives were like growing up that might have affected their choices as young men. Through the literary trick of imagery, Bledsoe makes the reader see the crime occur and understand the feelings of the defendants and their family members. Bledsoe gets to the very heart of the American family and how even the best and most doting parents can have children who become criminals. Of course, no parent is perfect, as Neal's and Bart's were not, but these young men had the background that many people have who later become doctors, lawyers and successful businessmen. If only these men hadn't chosen drugs, they could be among the successful. They had so much promise. Bledsoe brings home, through interviews with these teens and their parents, the reality of evil, as it can strike anyone, and how one rash decision has such dire, final consequences. Also worth mention was the care and concern of the teacher who discovered Neal's genius and Bart's exceptional talents. Even to the end, he was defending them, making it clear he didn't agree with and couldn't condone their actions. A truly caring person this teacher must be! As a true crime author myself, I can only say I hope I can someday climb into the caliber of Mr. Bledsoe, and I thank him for a terrific edition to America's true crime genre!

Bledsoe is wonderful at detailing true crimes in NC. As with his other books, he gives in depth

background on everyone involved and what is known about the case. It never comes across as opinionated or biased - simply told from every aspect. Information is given by law enforcement officers, family members, friends and lawyers. It almost reads more like a work of fiction rather than a the story of a true crime. I would highly recommend his other books as well.

This was a typical Jerry Bledsoe book -- I could not put it down. I searched for months for this book after having read his other three true-crime novels. I finally had to buy one used. This book tells the story of three young men whose lives came together in horror and tragedy. Chris Pritchard arranged to have his friend, Bart Upchurch, murder Chris's stepfather and mother (and possibly his sister) in order to collect a \$2 million inheritance. Bart had Neal Henderson drive him to the house and then help him dispose of the evidence after the murder. The stepfather died in a brutal attack with a baseball bat and knife. The mother miraculously lived. Neal spilled first, but not until almost a year after the crimes. He pled guilty and got 40 years. He was paroled after a little over 10 years on 12/11/00. Chris decided, within days of his trial, to plead guilty. His mother and sister learned of his plan to have them murdered, but surprisingly stuck by him. He was sentenced to life plus 20 years and would have to serve 19 years before being eligible for parole. Bart was sentenced to death, but his death sentence was vacated in October 1992 and he was resentenced to life. He apparently maintains his innocence, and despite looking like an all-American college boy during his trial, he has been transformed into a typical prisoner. He has a web site, [...] which has a recent picture -- matted hair, nasty facial hair, and absolutely no trace of the good-looking boy he was at the time of the crime and trial. This book will make parents afraid to send their kids off to college, it will open your eyes to the availability and dangers of alcohol and drugs to teenagers, and it will make you beg Mr. Bledsoe to write another true-crime book! If you can get ahold of a copy, new or used, it will be well worth your effort and money.

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