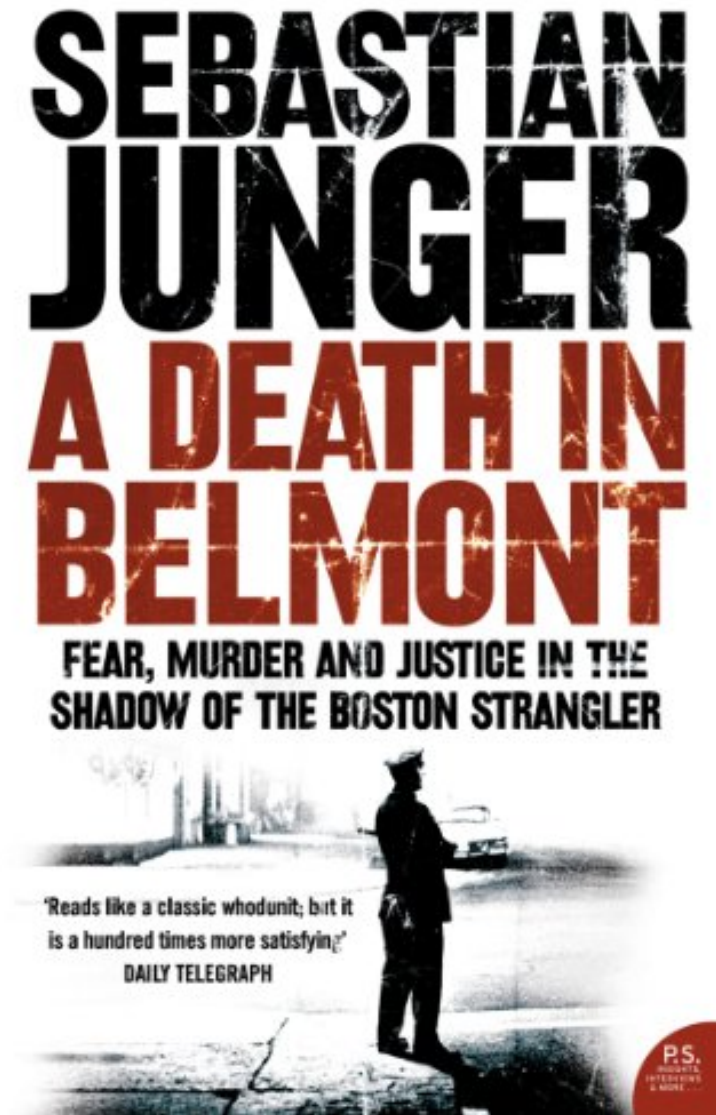


(Read now) A Death in Belmont

## A Death in Belmont

Von Sebastian Junger  
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**Von Sebastian Junger : A Death in Belmont** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Death in Belmont:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Close Encounters with Criminals in BelmontVon Donald MitchellIf you are looking for a sequel to A Perfect Storm, this isn't it. Instead, the book doesn't quite fit into any genre that I can remember.Having lived in Belmont for several years after Mrs. Goldberg's murder, I remember well the subsequent tension and watchfulness towards strangers. People

were still shocked by such a senseless murder of a nice woman. A little of that legitimate paranoia carries over into Sebastian Junger's perspectives and ruminations about criminal synchronicity in *A Death in Belmont*. The frontispiece of the book reveals a photograph of the author (at age one in his mother's lap) while a smiling Albert DeSalvo (the later self-confessed Boston Strangler who eventually recanted his confession) stands behind as though DeSalvo is the center of attention. On the very day that Mrs. Goldberg was killed, Albert DeSalvo was doing casual labor at the Junger home. A few days before, DeSalvo had acted in a threatening way towards Mrs. Junger in the Junger's basement. Earlier the day she was killed, Mrs. Goldberg had unwittingly hired a felon to be her housecleaner who was later convicted of murdering her. So, despite middle class Belmont feeling like a safe place, it's obvious that criminals were able to easily and openly enter peoples' homes there. Today, we know that we should be cautious about strangers . . . and even the Internet can bring criminals into our homes. But in the 1960s, the suburbs seemed like a fortress where nothing bad could happen. So the obvious story for Mr. Junger was to describe in detail how two criminals came to be in dangerous proximity to vulnerable women. And he told that story. But somewhere along the way, Mr. Junger decided that he should play legal investigator. That led Mr. Junger to look into two questions: 1. Was Roy Smith Mrs. Goldberg's murderer? 2. Was Albert DeSalvo the Boston Strangler? Mr. Junger lacks the knowledge and skill to undertake such an investigation. He thrashes around among the clues and investigations a bit and plays "what if" games. But in the course of doing so, he ignores evaluating as much evidence as he discusses. At the end, he leaves it up to you to decide if justice has been done in the Goldberg and Boston Strangler murders. But, I'm sure you'll feel like you don't know enough to say one way or another. That's primarily because the factual layout in the book is pretty weak. What makes the book more interesting to the reader than his "what if" thinking about the murderers' identities are Mr. Junger's descriptions of the backgrounds of Roy Smith and Albert DeSalvo. It becomes easier to understand the two men after their biographies are somewhat developed. Ultimately, the book is a sort of mish-mash of this and that which conjecturally makes the case for Roy Smith being innocent of the murder. The book is an advocate's case rather than an objective evaluation. As I mentioned above, there's not enough of the record displayed here to allow you to make a judgment. As a result, one cannot help wondering on second thought if a desire to stir up controversy was a motive in writing this book . . . as opposed to telling an objective story. If this book was designed to be such a promotional vehicle for Mr. Junger, I feel sorry for the Goldberg family. Recounting the ugly circumstances of their tragedy surely doesn't help bring them peace.

**Kurzbeschreibung** A compelling portrait of 1960s America that takes as its starting point the brutal events of 11 March 1963, the day on which the lives of three complete strangers—a black handyman, an Italian-American carpenter and a second-generation Jewish housewife—collided in the leafy Boston suburb of Belmont. These three people did not know one another, but, by the end of the day, the housewife had been raped and strangled, the handyman had been arrested on suspicion of being the notorious Boston Strangler, and the real Boston Strangler carpenter Al DeSalvo had returned home to his wife and children. It was not until two years later that DeSalvo admitted to the gruesomely violent murders of thirteen women. Also unwittingly drawn into the drama were one-year-old Sebastian Junger's own family, who posed for a photograph with DeSalvo the day after the Belmont strangling, at the completion of his work on their studio. Taking the chilling family snap as his inspiration, Junger explores the worlds of the three protagonists and, in so doing, creates a portrait of America in the 1960s that touches on the historic themes of the era: the assassination of JFK, the rise of the immigrants and the troubling race relations that prefigured the death of Martin Luther King. This new work by Sebastian Junger, the acclaimed author of *Perfect Storm* and *Fire*, is as enlightening as it is haunting. Taking as its foundation the events that shocked a quiet community in 1963, *A Death in Belmont* expands to encompass an entire nation at a time of extraordinary social turmoil. deImagine how strange and frightening it would be to see a picture of yourself, not quite a year old, with your mother and two men, one of whom is a confessed serial killer. This is what happened to Sebastian Junger, and only a small part of what he recounts in *A Death in Belmont*. The quiet suburb of Belmont, Massachusetts, is in the grip of fear. The Boston Strangler murders have taken place nearby, and now there is another shocking sex crime, right in Belmont. The victim is Bessie Goldberg, a middle-aged woman who had hired a cleaning man to help out around the house on that fall day in 1963. He is a black man named Roy Smith. He did the appointed chores, collected his money and left a receipt on the kitchen table. Neighbors will say that he looked furtive when he walked down the street, that he was in a hurry, that he stopped to buy cigarettes, that he looked over his shoulder. They didn't see a black man in Belmont very often, so, of course, they noticed him. So the story went, and on these slender threads, and his own checkered history, Roy Smith is convicted of the Belmont murder and sent to prison. On the day of the murder, Albert DeSalvo, an Italian-American handyman, is also in Belmont, working as a carpenter in the Junger home, where the picture is taken. Two years after his work for the Jungers, he confesses in vivid detail to the crimes of which the Boston Strangler is accused, and sent to prison, where he is stabbed to death by an inmate. But he never confesses to the Bessie Goldberg murder. Could he have left the Junger home, committed the murder a few blocks away and calmly returned to finish his day's work? Could Roy Smith

really have been the guilty party, even though his sentence was commuted after De Salvo confessed? In the grand tradition of his bestselling *The Perfect Storm*, Junger tells a terrific story, lining up all the elements, asking all the pertinent questions, digging into the backgrounds of both men, retelling his mother's very strange encounter with Albert when she is home alone with Sebastian. He then asks the larger questions: Was Roy Smith convicted summarily because he was black? Was Albert De Salvo really the Boston Strangler? Junger cannot answer all the questions, as no one can. Without DNA, there is no way to be certain of which of the two men might have committed the rape and murder of Bessie Goldberg, or if neither of them is guilty. While it is frustrating not to know for sure, the story is fascinating, reads like a tautly plotted mystery thriller, and Junger's close connection is downright creepy. -- Valerie Ryan.com

Imagine how strange and frightening it would be to see a picture of yourself, not quite a year old, with your mother and two men, one of whom is a confessed serial killer. This is what happened to Sebastian Junger, and only a small part of what he recounts in *A Death in Belmont*. The quiet suburb of Belmont, Massachusetts, is in the grip of fear. The Boston Strangler murders have taken place nearby, and now there is another shocking sex crime, right in Belmont. The victim is Bessie Goldberg, a middle-aged woman who had hired a cleaning man to help out around the house on that fall day in 1963. He is a black man named Roy Smith. He did the appointed chores, collected his money and left a receipt on the kitchen table. Neighbors will say that he looked furtive when he walked down the street, that he was in a hurry, that he stopped to buy cigarettes, that he looked over his shoulder. They didn't see a black man in Belmont very often, so, of course, they noticed him. So the story went, and on these slender threads, and his own checkered history, Roy Smith is convicted of the Belmont murder and sent to prison. On the day of the murder, Albert DeSalvo, an Italian-American handyman, is also in Belmont, working as a carpenter in the Junger home, where the picture is taken. Two years after his work for the Jungers, he confesses in vivid detail to the crimes of which the Boston Strangler is accused, and sent to prison, where he is stabbed to death by an inmate. But he never confesses to the Bessie Goldberg murder. Could he have left the Junger home, committed the murder a few blocks away and calmly returned to finish his day's work? Could Roy Smith really have been the guilty party, even though his sentence was commuted after De Salvo confessed? In the grand tradition of his bestselling *The Perfect Storm*, Junger tells a terrific story, lining up all the elements, asking all the pertinent questions, digging into the backgrounds of both men, retelling his mother's very strange encounter with Albert when she is home alone with Sebastian. He then asks the larger questions: Was Roy Smith convicted summarily because he was black? Was Albert De Salvo really the Boston Strangler? Junger cannot answer all the questions, as no one can. Without DNA, there is no way to be certain of which of the two men might have committed the rape and murder of Bessie Goldberg, or if neither of them is guilty. While it is frustrating not to know for sure, the story is fascinating, reads like a tautly plotted mystery thriller, and Junger's close connection is downright creepy. --Valerie Ryan