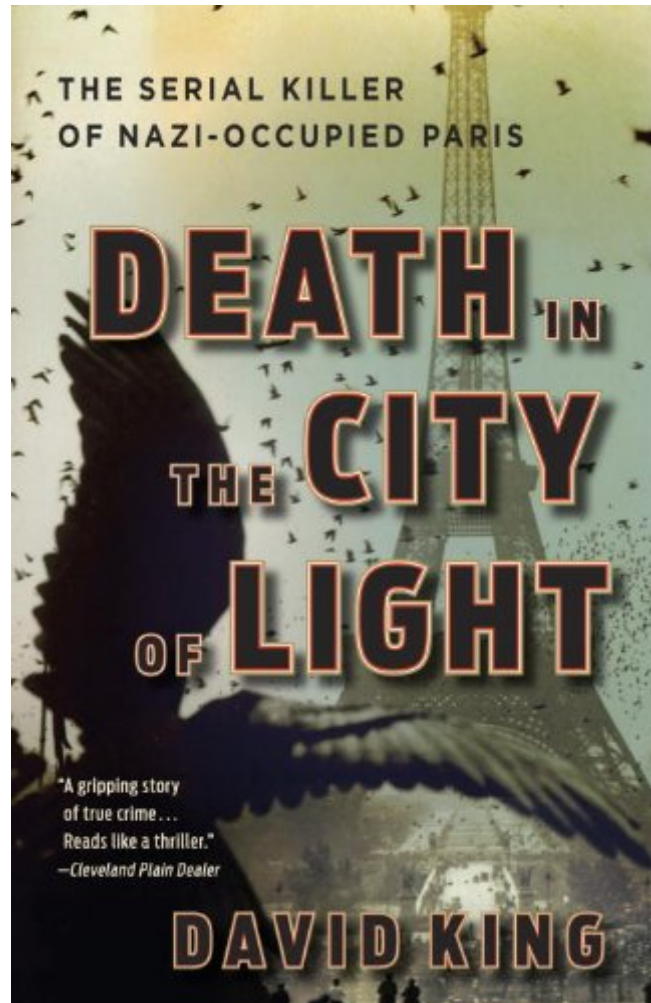


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# Death In The City Of Light: The Serial Killer Of Nazi-Occupied Paris



## Synopsis

Death in the City of Light is the gripping, true story of a brutal serial killer who unleashed his own reign of terror in Nazi-Occupied Paris. As decapitated heads and dismembered body parts surfaced in the Seine, Commissaire Georges-Victor Massu, head of the Brigade Criminelle, was tasked with tracking down the elusive murderer in a twilight world of Gestapo, gangsters, resistance fighters, pimps, prostitutes, spies, and other shadowy figures of the Parisian underworld. The main suspect was Dr. Marcel Petiot, a handsome, charming physician with remarkable charisma. He was the "People's Doctor," known for his many acts of kindness and generosity, not least in providing free medical care for the poor. Petiot, however, would soon be charged with twenty-seven murders, though authorities suspected the total was considerably higher, perhaps even as many as 150. Who was being slaughtered, and why? Was Petiot a sexual sadist, as the press suggested, killing for thrills? Was he allied with the Gestapo, or, on the contrary, the French Resistance? Or did he work for no one other than himself? Trying to solve the many mysteries of the case, Massu would unravel a plot of unspeakable deviousness. When Petiot was finally arrested, the French police hoped for answers. But the trial soon became a circus. Attempting to try all twenty-seven cases at once, the prosecution stumbled in its marathon cross-examinations, and Petiot, enjoying the spotlight, responded with astonishing ease. His attorney, René Floriot, a rising star in the world of criminal defense, also effectively, if aggressively, countered the charges. Soon, despite a team of prosecuting attorneys, dozens of witnesses, and over one ton of evidence, Petiot's brilliance and wit threatened to win the day. Drawing extensively on many new sources, including the massive, classified French police file on Dr. Petiot, *Death in the City of Light* is a brilliant evocation of Nazi-Occupied Paris and a harrowing exploration of murder, betrayal, and evil of staggering proportions. From the Hardcover edition.

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## Customer Reviews

An unpleasant smell accompanying a thick black smoke is permeating the apartments and houses in a section of Paris during the German occupation in March of 1944. Police are called to investigate and discover the source is emanating from an unoccupied house. Entering the house police find bits and pieces of bodies strewn about a basement floor where a coal stove has a roaring fire containing the burnt remains of more body parts. The basement reeks of putrefying flesh. Thus begins a horror story, not fiction, but a true story, of a heinous crime committed by a serial killer as told by historian David King in his new book "Death in the City of Light: The Serial Killer of Nazi-Occupied Paris". The main suspect is Doctor Petiot who the investigating police believe may have been taking advantage of Jews and others looking to escape Nazi persecution. By offering them a way, for a substantial amount of money, to leave the occupied France and obtain passage to Argentina, Petiot was able to lure his victims into positions where he could dispose of them and confiscate all of their worldly possessions. King chronicles the lives of some of the victims and those who knew Petiot. King traces the investigation from its sordid beginning to its dubious conclusion. Was Doctor Petiot really guilty? Read David King's book "Death in the City of Light" to find out and draw your own conclusions. King's book would have benefited the reader greatly if he would have included photos of the major people involved (King mentions how photographers were taking pictures in the court room) and areas around Paris where the crime was committed.

\*2.5 stars\* During the years of Nazi occupation of Paris, Marcel Petiot, a seemingly respectable doctor, murdered an unknown number of people. Was he a German sympathizer, using his own form of a "final solution" on innocent Jews who merely wanted to escape the city? Was he a member of the French resistance, acting as judge and executioner towards those he saw as friendly towards the Nazi occupiers? Or was he merely a cunning sociopath who took advantage of the

chaos of the times to inflict as much horror and sadistic torture on those victims he managed to convince to walk through his door? What follows is a complicated, often convoluted trek through the oppressed streets and shadowy corners of Paris as the author attempts to answer those questions. While the book does lay out, quite vividly, the incompetence of the French police force and the near-absolute ineffectiveness of the court system during those crazy, confused times, what the book doesn't do is create a compelling, coherent story. It's obvious the author did an exhaustive amount of research; what's not obvious is some sort of thread binding the story together. King attempts to illustrate the desperate gaiety exhibited by the glitterati who stayed in Paris despite the tramping of Nazi boots down her vaunted (some would say hallowed) streets by interspersing chapters detailing the plays put on by Sartre and Picasso in intimate salons for the edification and entertainment of a select few of Paris society; he also inserts chapters illustrating the desperate last stand of the French government and its leaders as they tried to keep German forces away. However, instead of creating a well-rounded view of this particular era in history, these chapters seem...awkward and jarring.

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