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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Publication Date: May 16, 2017**

*One of the most anticipated books of the spring*  
*(BuzzFeed, The Huffington Post, AARP, BookRiot, and BookPage)*

**THE FACT OF A BODY:**  
A Murder and a Memoir  
by Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich

“This book is a **marvel**. With unflinching precision and immense compassion, Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich peels apart both a murder case and her own experience to reveal how we try to make sense of the past. **THE FACT OF A BODY** is **equal parts gripping and haunting** and will leave you questioning whether any one story can hold the full truth.”

—**Celeste Ng**, New York Times bestselling author of *Everything I Never Told You*

“The balancing act here performed between autobiography and journalism, documentary and imagination, witnessing and reckoning, the tender and the terrible, is shrewd and graceful... Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich has given us **an exquisite and exquisitely difficult work of art** that makes a fierce claim on our attention, conscience, and heart.”

—**Maggie Nelson**, NBCC award-winning author of *The Argonauts*

“Haunting...impeccably researched...Her writing is **remarkably evocative and taut with suspense**, with a level of nuance that sets this effort apart from other true crime accounts.”

—**Publishers Weekly**, starred review

“**Surprising, suspenseful, and moving**...A book that defies both its genres, turning into something wholly different and memorable.”

—**Booklist**, starred review

“The writing is superb and gripping...a moving must-have.”

—**Library Journal**, starred review

***“It is about a murder, it is about my family, it is about other families whose lives were touched by the murder. But more than that, it is about how we understand our lives, the past, and each other. To do this, we all make stories.”***

So begins Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich’s breathtaking, genre-defying first book, ten years in the making: **THE FACT OF A BODY: A Murder and a Memoir** (Flatiron Books; Hardcover; May 16, 2017).

When she applied to Harvard Law School, Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich wrote her admissions essay about her staunch opposition to the death penalty. The child of two lawyers, her position had always been clear in her mind. So when she finds herself at her first summer internship at a New Orleans law firm that is working on the re-trial of death-row convicted murderer and child molester Ricky Langley, she feels ready to begin her life’s work.

But when she watches the tape of Ricky’s confession, she is overcome by one thought: she wants him to die. Shocked by her reaction, Alexandria digs deeper and deeper into the case and realizes that something about this story, so seemingly distant from her own suburban upbringing in New Jersey, is uncannily familiar. As she pores over the details of the trial and the complicated narrative of Ricky’s childhood, she is forced to face her own story, to unearth long-buried family secrets, and to reckon with how her own past colors her view of Ricky’s crime.

Through Alexandria’s meticulously researched and vividly reconstructed telling of Ricky’s story and her deeply personal investigation into her own past, it becomes clear that she isn’t the only one using her own memories to understand the case. Everyone—from the judge to the jury foreman to the defense attorney to Ricky’s own mother—sees what happened through the lens of their own experience.

In the thrilling tradition of true crime narratives like Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood*, the TV show *Making a Murderer*, and the podcast *Serial*, Alexandria brings us to question how we understand our past, the nature of forgiveness, and whether the singular fact of a dead body can ever truly be contained by anything but a multitude of stories.



**Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich** was awarded numerous fellowships to write this book, including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Rona Jaffe Award, and fellowships to the MacDowell Colony and Yaddo. Her essays and short fiction have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Oxford American*, *Salon*, and the anthology *True Crime*. She has a JD from Harvard, an MFA from Emerson and a BA from Columbia University. Alexandria currently lives in Boston, Massachusetts, where she teaches memoir writing at Grub Street and graduate public policy students at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government.

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For more information on **THE FACT OF A BODY** or to speak with Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich please contact Amelia Possanza at (646-307-5808) or [Amelia.Possanza@flatironbooks.com](mailto:Amelia.Possanza@flatironbooks.com)

**THE FACT OF A BODY**  
By Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich  
Flatiron Books • ISBN: 9781250080547 • On Sale: May 16, 2017

## Additional Praise for THE FACT OF A BODY

“**Haunting**... Marzano-Lesnevich digs into one case that begins to feel oddly familiar, and eventually is forced to confront her understanding of justice, forgiveness, and truth.”

—**BuzzFeed**

“Compelling... **meticulous and gripping.**”

—*Curve*

“THE FACT OF A BODY is a remarkable act of witness, an anatomy of silence and the violence it abets, a book of both public and private accountings. Rejecting the false comfort of certainty, it confronts the inadequacy of all our tools for fathoming not just unforgivable crimes, but the baffling, human grace that can forgive them. **This is a profound and riveting book.**”

—**Garth Greenwell**, author of *What Belongs to You*

“**An accomplished literary debut**...an absorbing narrative about secrets, pain, revenge, and, ultimately, the slippery notion of truth...A powerful evocation of the raw pain of emotional scars.”

—*Kirkus*

“**Unusual and riveting**...Marzano-Lesnevich’s triumph is in the way she simultaneously tells her story and Langley’s, showing how in both cases the past haunts the present, and how facts, memories, guilt, responsibility and forgiveness can be impossibly hard to pinpoint or fully understand.”

—**BookPage**

“It is not easy to write true crime that is **respectful, compassionate, and curious**. It’s not easy to bring your own story into someone else’s story. And yet this book manages to do both of those things. It also manages to break your heart every few pages.”

—**BookRiot**

“Compulsive, eloquent and profoundly troubling. **One of those rare books which embrace the genuine complexity of real life.**”

—**Mark Haddon**, bestselling author of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

“THE FACT OF A BODY is excellent. So gripping and fascinating.”

—**Sophie Hannah**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Monogram Murders*

“A fascinating hybrid of true crime and memoir, THE FACT OF A BODY is intricately constructed, emotionally raw, and unflinching. **Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich has written a gripping meditation on memory, justice, and the limits of empathy.**”

—**Tom Perrotta**, author of *Little Children*

“THE FACT OF A BODY is unlike any murder story I've ever read, **a masterpiece of both reportage and memoir**, a book that could only be written by an author with Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich's staggering gifts: a relentless reporter with a law degree from Harvard, a poet's understanding of the cadence of a line, and a novelist's gift for empathy.

—**Justin St. Germain**, author of *Son of a Gun*



**Events for THE FACT OF A BODY**

**TUESDAY, MAY 16**

7:00pm

**CAMBRIDGE, MA**

**Harvard Bookstore**

1256 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 17**

7:30pm

*Yaddo Presents*

**Saratoga Springs, NY**

**Northshire Bookstore**

424 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

**THURSDAY, MAY 18**

7:00pm

*In conversation with Robin Wasserman*

**NEW YORK, NY**

**McNally Jackson**

52 Prince St, New York, NY 10012

**FRIDAY, MAY 19**

6:30pm

*In conversation with Allison Wright*

**WASHINGTON, DC**

**East City Bookshop**

645 Pennsylvania Ave SE #100  
Washington, DC 20003

**SATURDAY, MAY 20**

7:00pm

**DURHAM, NC**

**The Regulator Bookshop**

720 9th St, Durham, NC 27705

**SUNDAY, MAY 21**

4:00pm

**ATHENS, GA**

**Avid Bookshop at Five Points**

1662 S. Lumpkin St. Athens, GA 30606

**TUESDAY, MAY 23**

6:00pm

**NEW ORLEANS, LA**

**Garden District Books**

2727 Prytania St, New Orleans, LA 70130

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 24**

5:00pm

**OXFORD, MS**

**Square Books**

129 Courthouse Square, Oxford, MS 38655

**THURSDAY, MAY 25**

6:30pm

**HOUSTON, TX**

**Murder by the Book**

2342 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX 77005

**FRIDAY, MAY 26**

7:00pm

**AUSTIN, TX**

**BookPeople**

603 N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78703

**THURSDAY, JUNE 1**

7:00pm

*In conversation with Kristen Radtke*

**BROOKLINE, MA**

**Brookline Booksmith**

Pride Event

279 Harvard St, Brookline, MA 02446

**MONDAY, JUNE 5**

7:00pm

Grubs Street's *Writing Queer Lives* panel

*In conversation with Christopher Castellani, Kelly J. Ford, Catherine Guthrie, Brontez Purnell, and Garrard Conley.*

**BOSTON, MA**

**Trident Booksellers**

338 Newbury St, Boston, MA 02115

**TUESDAY, JUNE 6**

7:00pm

**NEWTONVILLE, MA**

**Newtonville Books**

10 Langley Rd, Newton, MA 02459

**THURSDAY, JUNE 8**

11:00am

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Toadstool Bookshop**

12 Depot St, Peterborough, NH 03458

7:00pm

*In conversation with Tim Horvath*

**Water Street Bookstore**

125 Water St, Exeter, NH 03833

**SATURDAY, JULY 8**

7:00pm

*In conversation with Courtney Maum*

**HUDSON, NY**

**Spotty Dog Bookstore and Cafe**

Volume Reading Series

440 Warren St, Hudson, NY 12534

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30**

7:00pm

*In conversation with Melissa Febos*

**JAMAICA PLAIN, MA**

**Papercuts J.P. @ La Rana Rossa**

154 Green Street, Boston, MA 02130

\*\*Ticketed event. Please visit [papercutsjp.com](http://papercutsjp.com) for more details.