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Uncovering Cold-Blooded Crimes of the 1970s American South

# Blood in the Soil

## A True Tale of Racism, Sex, and Murder in the South

By Carole Townsend

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*Blood in the Soil: A True Tale of Racism, Sex, and Murder in the South* (Skyhorse Publishing, April 2016) is the first book ever to detail the investigation into the shooting of *Hustler* magazine publisher Larry Flynt and his country attorney in Gwinnett County, Georgia, in 1978. However, this book is not *just* about Larry Flynt, or even his shooter, serial killer Joseph Paul Franklin.

This true account weaves the perspective of Detective J. Michael Cowart with the story of Franklin's life from childhood all the way up to his execution. The monster that was Joseph Paul Franklin was born of a perfect storm of circumstances: poverty, abuse, racism, integration, and the hate groups that operated and recruited openly. Detective Cowart tells the story of his first introduction to Franklin and the cat-and-mouse game that ensued. A self-proclaimed truth-seeker, the detective had to appear to befriend Franklin to get him to provide enough information to prosecute him in the Flynt shooting. In the course of developing this rapport, Cowart gains astonishing insight into many of Franklin's other cold-blooded killings and crimes, and his twisted justification for them.

*Blood in the Soil* tells of a very real struggle between right and wrong. It details with stark honesty the terrible truths that characterized the South during the volatility of the sixties and seventies, and of the ugly reality that lied just beneath the veneer of a beautiful region known for its warm hospitality. Along the way, it examines some hard lessons about life, trust, and compromise.

**About the Author**

**Carole Townsend** is a reporter and columnist for the *Gwinnett Citizen* newspaper in Georgia and has been published in *Ladies' Home Journal* and other national publications. She has appeared on CNN and FOX, ABC and CBS news, and talk shows. Townsend is the author of *Magnolias, Sweet Tea, and Exhaust, Red Lipstick and Clean Underwear*, and several other Southern humor books and stories. As a journalist and strong advocate for the health and well-being of women and children, she also tours throughout the Southeast and speaks to various groups on the topics of becoming an author, making career changes, and living in the South.

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***A True Tale of Racism, Sex, and Murder in the South***

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