

Advance Title Information

Hands Through Stone

How Clarence Ray Allen Masterminded
Murder from Behind Folsom's Prison Walls

by James A. Ardaiz

Publication Date: December 2012

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True Crime/California History

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Even hardened detectives were shaken by what they found at Fran's Market in rural Fresno that night in 1980. Three young people lay in their own blood on the market's concrete floor, executed by a merciless killer, while a fourth victim barely held on to life. Then a grim investigation became even grimmer when the evidence led to the man who ordered the killings — a convicted murderer already behind the walls of Folsom Prison.

Hands Through Stone reveals the true story behind the Fran's Market murders and their psychopathic mastermind, Clarence Ray Allen, the last man executed in California. Written by James Ardaiz, one of the first investigators on the scene and the prosecutor who built the case against Allen, *Hands Through Stone* gives the reader an insider's view of the tortuous, multi-year investigation that brought Allen to justice.

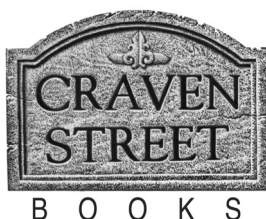
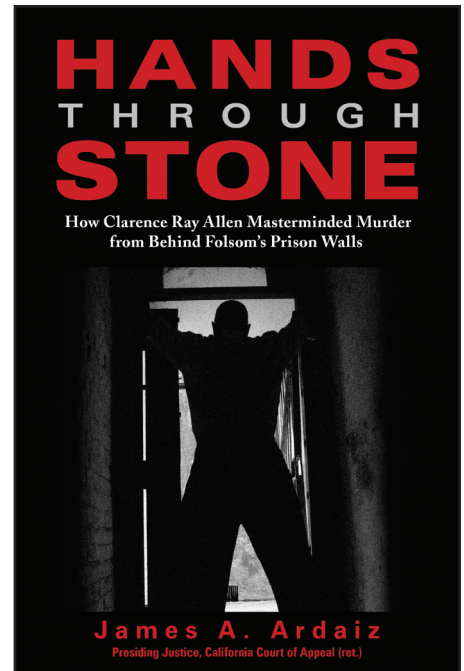
Charismatic, controlling and terrifying — a mystery even to those who knew him well — Allen posed as a respectable businessman while running his private security company as a front for his burglary gang. Convicted in 1978 of the murder of accomplice Mary Sue Kitts, Allen orchestrated a bloody revenge while serving a life sentence, even ordering the murder of his own son.

Ardaiz takes the reader step-by-step through every gritty, down-and-dirty piece of police work that painstakingly built the case against Allen, giving readers an unparalleled feel for what it's really like to work a professional murder investigation.

A true crime story that reads like an intricate mystery novel, *Hands Through Stone* dramatizes chilling scenes of murder, dogged investigation, and a gallery of quirky real-life characters no novelist could invent: cops, witnesses, victims, villains, and, above all, the enigmatic evil that was Clarence Ray Allen.

Audience: True crime readers, California history readers, and mystery and literary readers.

About the Author: James A. Ardaiz is a former presiding justice of California's Fifth District Court of Appeal. From 1974 to 1980, Ardaiz was a deputy district attorney prosecuting homicide cases in Fresno County. He served as a California State judge from 1980 until his retirement in 2011.



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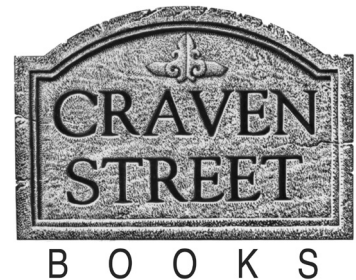
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New true crime history, *Hands Through Stone*, tells the tough, gritty story of investigating California's most horrific murder case

“James Ardaiz has captured Fresno’s shock that this bloodshed could be phoned in from a jail cell.” —Ray Appleton, KMJ Radio

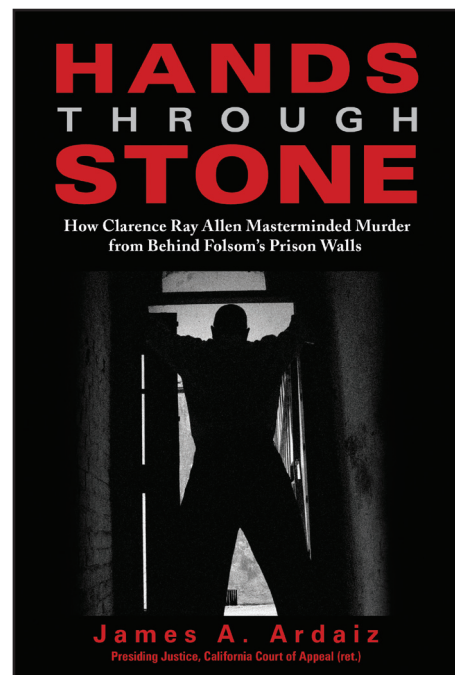
Even hardened detectives were shaken by what they found at Fran’s Market in rural Fresno that night in 1980. Three young people lay in their own blood on the market’s concrete floor, executed by a merciless killer, while a fourth victim barely held on to life. Then a grim investigation became even grimmer when the evidence led to the man who ordered the killings — a convicted murderer already behind the walls of Folsom Prison.

The inside story of the Fran’s Market murders and their psychopathic mastermind, Clarence Ray Allen, the last man executed in California, is stunningly told in the new book *Hands Through Stone: How Clarence Ray Allen Masterminded Murder from Behind Folsom’s Prison Walls* (Craven Street Books, December 2012).

Written by James A. Ardaiz, one of the first investigators on the scene and the prosecutor who built the case against Allen, *Hands Through Stone* gives an insider’s view of the tortuous, multi-year investigation that brought Allen to justice.

A true crime story that reads like an intricate mystery novel, *Hands Through Stone* dramatizes chilling scenes of murder and tedious days of dogged police work, while introducing a gallery of quirky real-life characters no novelist could invent — cops, witnesses, victims, villains and, above all, the enigmatic evil that was Clarence Ray Allen.

Charismatic, controlling and terrifying — a mystery even to those who knew him well — Allen had a
—more—



particular skill for attracting weak-willed accomplices that he ruled with threats of violence. Even though Allen was a career criminal and a cold-blooded killer, he was able to hide in plain sight in a small town, posing as a respectable businessman while running his private security company as a front for his burglary gang.

Allen's cover of respectability unraveled three years before the Fran's Market murders when a minor arrest led to an imprisoned mother bent on revenge. Tugging patiently at each strand of the evidence, police detectives uncovered a story of a robbery, a girl who talked too much, a body that vanished in an irrigation canal, a guilt-ridden patsy, and, at the center, a dead-eyed, remorseless manipulator capable of any evil.

In *Hands Through Stone*, Ardaiz takes the reader step-by-step through the months of investigation, multiple interrogations and the spectacular trial that culminated in Allen's 1977 conviction for the murder of Mary Sue Kitts.

Having successfully prosecuted Allen, Ardaiz thought the case was over, until that night at Fran's Market three years later. While in Folsom, Allen plotted revenge with fellow inmate Billy Ray Hamilton, whom Allen called his "good dog." When Hamilton was released on parole, Allen sent him out in the world with a list of witnesses to kill, starting with the Fran's Market victims and ending with Allen's own son.

Hands Through Stone follows every twist and turn of the ensuing investigation and trial, until the horrific 30-year saga finally ends with Allen's execution in 2006, long after the families of his victims and many of the investigators who hunted him were already dead.

Written with unparalleled realism and expert knowledge, *Hands Through Stone* shows readers what a professional murder investigation is really like, detailing every step of the down-and-dirty police work that painstakingly built the case against Allen.

Combining all the elements of the true crime, police procedural and mystery genres, *Hands Through Stone* is both a page-turning thriller and a chilling portrait of the life of a mass murderer.

Book Details:

Title: Hands Through Stone: How Clarence Ray Allen Masterminded Murder from Behind Folsom's Prison Walls

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About James A. Ardaiz

Author of *Hands Through Stone*



James A. Ardaiz is a former prosecutor, judge, and Presiding Justice of the California Fifth District Court of Appeal. Ardaiz graduated from the University of California Hastings College of Law in 1974 and was admitted to the California State Bar the same year.

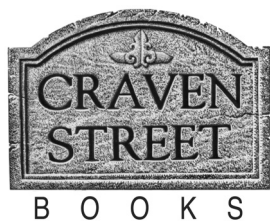
From 1974 to 1980, Ardaiz was a prosecutor for the Fresno County District Attorney's office, during which the events depicted in *Hands Through Stone* took place. In 1977, Ardaiz became Fresno County's Chief Deputy District Attorney in charge of homicide cases.

In 1980 Ardaiz was elected to the Fresno Municipal Court, where he served as assistant presiding judge and presiding judge. Ardaiz was appointed to the California Fifth District Court of Appeal in 1988 and was named the court's Presiding Justice in 1994. Ardaiz also served on the California Judicial Council and was chair of several Judicial Council committees and task forces.

Ardaiz retired from the bench in 2011 and remains active in the legal profession.

Ardaiz has been the recipient of many civic honors, including the Distinguished American Award presented to him in 2008 by the Japanese American Citizens League for his service to the Japanese American community; the Blaine Pettitt Mentor Award, given by the Fresno County Young Lawyers to an attorney or judge who has served as a role model to the legal community; four Ralph M. Kleps Awards for judicial management; and California Jurist of the Year Award for 1999.

Ardaiz is the co-author of *California Evidence*, a computer database of civil and criminal evidence case law, and he has written numerous articles on legal and judicial topics.



For more information on *Hands Through Stone* (Craven Street Books, December 2012) or to arrange an interview with author **James A. Ardaiz**, please contact Jaguar Bennett at Craven Street Books, (800) 345-4447, Publicity@QuillDriverBooks.com.