

Murder, He Wrote: Saga of Murder Cafe takes you backstage for a lively tale

Growing up in Kingston, Frank Marquette was drawn to theater from earliest childhood and was the kid who was always putting on a show. Teen shyness and adult practicalities interfered for a while, but the itch never really subsided, bubbling near the surface as he started a career and a family and moved around the country.



Book Review

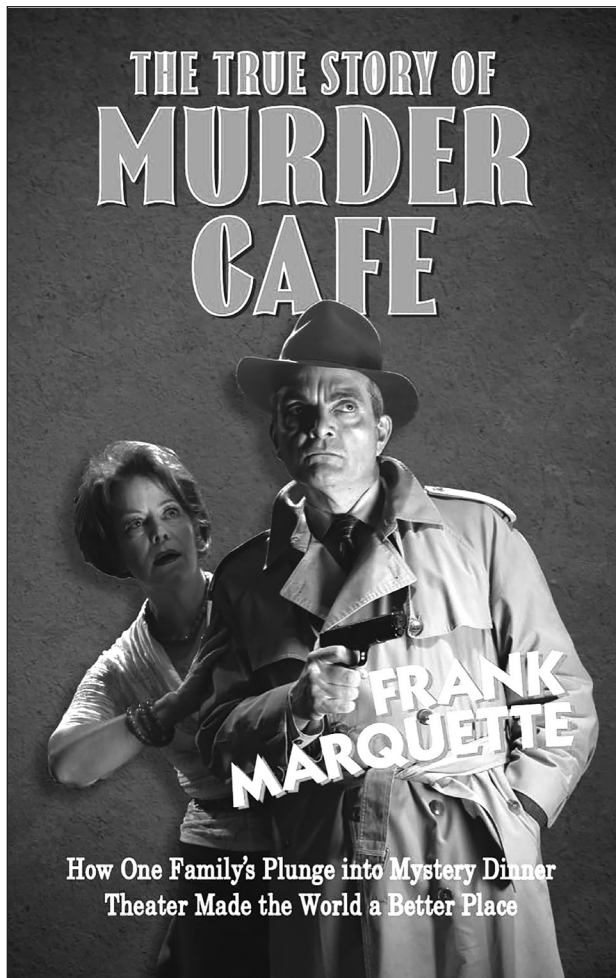
Anne Pyburn Craig

When, in his 40s, he finally scratched it by auditioning for a small local theater company in Albuquerque, it felt like a homecoming. He got the part, nailed it and soon found himself invited to audition with a local murder mystery dinner company, which he thought was ridiculous until he found out it was a paid gig, tried it and fell in love with the format he'd once considered cultural Velveeta.

To get his wife Kirsten to agree to move to Vegas, he promises to get a real job (he's been freelancing in graphic design) and a house with a pool. He keeps his promises, but soon enough the whole family is up to their collective necks in dinner theater doings and loving it, and Marquette is able to leave his day job behind.

When life events come full circle and bring him home to Ulster County, he finds that diners all over the Hudson Valley and Catskills have, or soon develop, a taste for humorous homicide along with their victuals, and these days performs 60 shows a year at a vast variety of venues.

Murder mystery dinner theater is, to quote Mar-



How One Family's Plunge into Mystery Dinner Theater Made the World a Better Place

quette, "a mashup of improvisation, stand-up and legitimate theater." Actors have to be quick with a quip and imperturbable, able to summon their best

in a wide variety of situations, working up close and personal with their audience

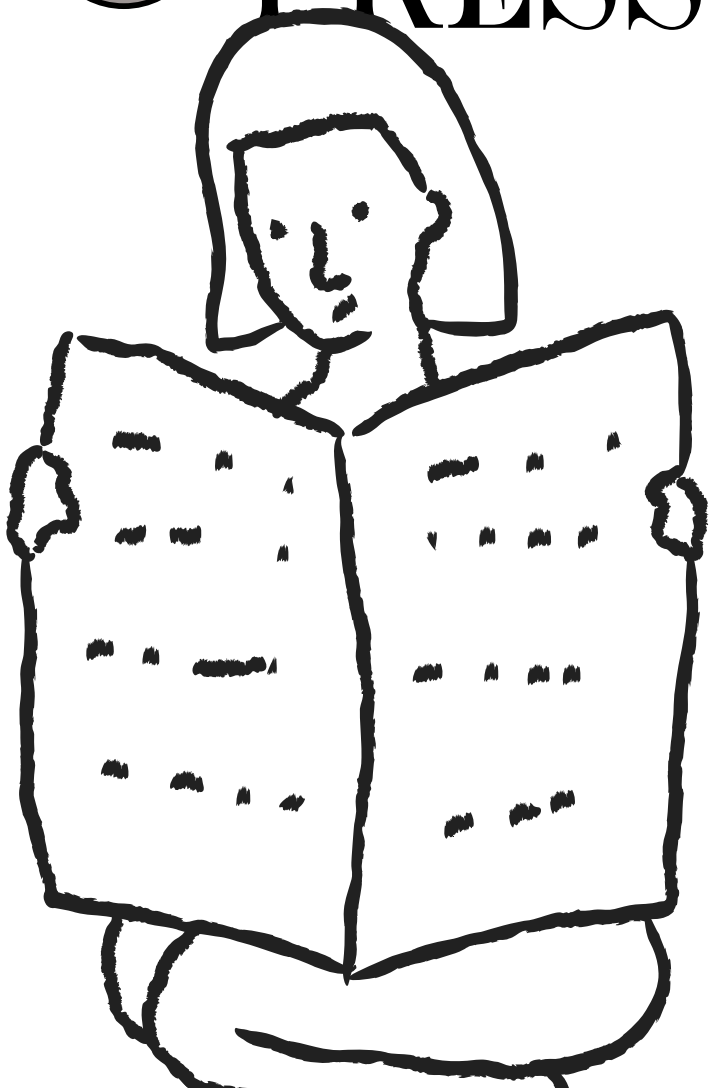
Shows need to be adaptable to all sorts of settings (Murder at the Mansion, Murder at the Mic, Murder at the Speakeasy), and can be reworked to fit specific clients' needs and even to provide an entire weekend of entertainment; in the last several years Murder Cafe has customized productions for Mohonk Mountain House, Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, Bannerman Castle, the Widow Jane Mine, Bethel Woods Center and a long list of historic resort and restaurant properties.

The reviews have been sparkling all along, and Marquette continues to thrive on crafting, casting, producing, directing and occasionally starring in the shows, with Kirsten as an invaluable partner. He's a natural, with a big personality, a strong voice and a gracious way of sharing the limelight with the many memorable characters who've been part of the ensemble, which has come roaring back since the pandemic in fine style; anyone with an interest in theater will enjoy this tale of the Murder Cafe adventure, which also makes a powerful case for following your heart's promptings, honing your talents and making a life you love.

You can order "The True Story of Murder Cafe: How One Family's Plunge into Mystery Dinner Theater Made the World a Better Place" on Amazon, at select local bookstores or direct from the publisher via Murdercafe.net, where you'll also find news of upcoming performances. **ESP**

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