

DON'T MAKE A FUSS: IT'S ONLY THE CLAREMONT SERIAL KILLER

WENDY DAVIS

ABOUT THE BOOK

In 2020, after the longest and most expensive trial in West Australian history, Bradley Robert Edwards was convicted of two of the Claremont Serial Killings, murders that had haunted the state since the mid-1990s. During the trial, it was revealed that Edwards had, prior to the murders, violently assaulted a social worker while he was working on the telephone system at Hollywood hospital. He kept his job and was convicted of common assault – a minor charge that left him off the police radar for any further investigations, including a subsequent brutal rape in a nearby cemetery.

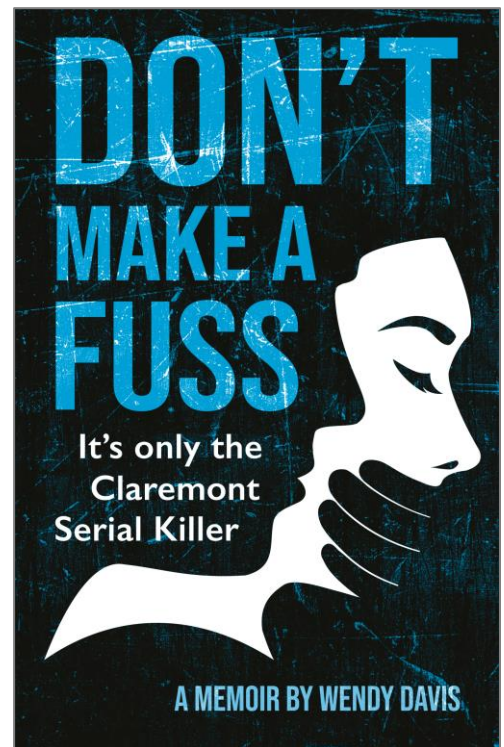
This memoir details the journey of Wendy Davis, the social worker who Edwards attacked. For Wendy, writing her story began as a way of dealing with the resurgence of trauma that engulfed her when Edwards was arrested and she was forced to re-examine what had happened all those years ago, this time in the context of knowing what had become of the other victims. And in the writing, it became a means of finding a kind of healing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wendy Davis was born in England and emigrated with her family to Western Australia when she was eleven. As a young woman, she travelled extensively, eventually returning to WA where she raised three daughters and undertook a career in social work. Wendy now lives peacefully and happily in Hobart, Tasmania with her husband, Tim, and her dog, Maisie.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What layers of meaning lie in this memoir's title?
2. During the 1990s and before, what kinds of messages did women receive that encouraged them not to 'make a fuss'?
3. In what ways did Wendy's own internalisation of this notion of not 'making a fuss' contribute to how she responded after Edwards' violent attack on her in Hollywood Hospital?
4. Was there any element in her own experiences to that point that may have compounded this response?
5. In what ways did the system let her down?
6. Do you think that this situation would unfold in the same way now? What has changed? What hasn't?
7. In relation to the final chapter, how might Wendy's story be seen in light of the #MeToo movement and the stories of Grace Tame, Brittany Higgins and countless other women?
8. Is Wendy's story part of a pattern of women's experience?
9. Why do you think it is that women find it difficult to be angry and difficult to have their rage heard and responded to?
10. Wendy primarily dealt with men (WA police, Telecom, even her husband, the police officer, etc.) after her attack. Do you think that the increasing number of women involved in policing and legal roles – such as prosecuting barrister Carmel Barbagallo and Wendy's supportive police liaison officer Katy – has changed how women's stories are heard and received?
11. Why do you think the author chose to give testimony in person rather than giving evidence remotely?



12. How does hearing the details of this memoir contribute to your understanding of Edwards and his trial?
13. How does it contribute to your sense of the roles that the police and Telecom/Telstra played in the investigation?
14. What missed opportunities present themselves in light of the details of Wendy's story?
15. Why is it important that stories like Wendy's are told?