

### **Deadly Sacrifices - Synopsis**

Miriam Carpenter, a soccer mom and choir member, is bludgeoned to death in her suburban Boston church. In her first case, Assistant District Attorney Marguerite “Monty” Montez fights to prove that she is ready to handle capital crimes in Charles County’s homicide unit after years of handling petty crimes in district court. To crack the case, Monty fends off menacing death threats, gun-toting federal agents, exploding triple-decker buildings and her smart-alecky ex-husband, Ted Kiley, the prime suspect’s defense attorney. News of a Machado-Joseph’s diagnosis, a Portuguese form of Parkinson’s Disease, and bouts of sleeplessness and sleep-walking further hamper Monty’s efforts. Unexpected tips about the murder of her childhood friend, Ginny, also force Monty to reflect on how her dogged pursuit of justice may be masking her underlying anger over this unsolved case.

The victim’s husband, Patrick, leads Monty and the Charles County police, including handsome visiting Canadian detective, Gerard Saint Cyr, on a wild chase through Boston’s streets. The police think Patrick killed his wife to collect her life insurance, desperate to pay off crushing debts from a failing demolition business and his son Joey’s medical bills. The popular pastor and cardinal hopeful, Father MacNamara, casts further suspicion on Patrick as the killer of his childhood sweetheart, Miriam. Yet Miriam’s twin sister, the wealthy Rachel Childs, doubts Patrick’s guilt and claims she already bailed the family out of its financial woes.

Adding to the confusion, Miriam’s purse and stolen church items are discovered in a tent of a local homeless man called the Professor. He spouts random Shakespearean verse while the police and prosecutor’s seek to quickly to wrap up their case against him. But Monty endangers her life and career proving that county police and her office nabbed the wrong man.

While singing *fados* music at a community event, an unknown person, using the alias *El Gallo* from a Portuguese legend, leaves a hand-written note for Monty about her friend's murder. *El Gallo* claims that Ginny's murder is linked to another girl's murder decades ago. This mysterious persona begins to post clues about Ginny's cold case on Monty's website and later lures her to abandoned Portuguese festival grounds where she is nearly killed.

Monty clashes with ATF agents sniffing around Carpenter's demolition business. She suspects that Patrick sold explosives illegally to domestic terrorists. The Messengers, a clandestine network of domestic extremists, have bombed several targets and threatened other institutions, including the Charles County Courthouse. However, Nan Pinkowski, a women's clinic director, confronts Monty with evidence that Miriam assumed her twin's identity and served as a clinic volunteer, receiving death threats from the Messengers. After Monty enlists Detective Saint Cyr's help to check out the group, he shows a growing interest in her. She balks at his advances because of fears about making more mistakes in her love life.

District Attorney Frank Quinn threatens to fire Monty when her probe into the Messengers implicates powerful conservative leader and senatorial candidate, Edgar Thompson. Monty pretends to back off, but continues to investigate the group with Saint Cyr. Forensic evidence ties Terry Randolph, a videotape junkie for the Messengers, to the murder. They track Randolph down, but he dies in an explosion that seriously injures and hospitalizes Saint Cyr.

Shaken up, Monty's investigation is further rocked by Miriam's young daughter, Bridget, who squashes Monty's terrorist theories revealing that her parents fought over recent medical tests proving that Patrick is not Joey's biological father. Monty now believes that someone really killed Miriam to conceal a paternity scandal. Growing evidence points to Father MacNamara as the killer, but he ends up not being Joey's biological parent. By examining college photos and

federal wiretap transcripts, Monty discovers that senatorial candidate Thompson is one of the secret leaders of the Messengers and Joey's real father. She also finds out that Miriam worked covertly for the Messengers, helping her husband to plan their bombings through his demolition business.

To save himself from political disgrace, Monty deduces that Thompson persuaded Randolph to kill Miriam by falsely claiming that Miriam planned to betray the group to federal agents. Wired for sound, Monty confronts Thompson in a luxury box at a sports fundraiser with a purported videotape from Randolph of Thompson coaxing him to murder Miriam. Forcing Monty to the roof deck, Thompson tries to steal the tape and push her off the building. She battles Thompson and the police finally arrive to arrest him. Thompson then jumps to his death rather than face his personal and political ruin. Ultimately, Monty reunites with Saint Cyr recuperating from his injuries and decides she might just give romance another try. Yet the shadow of *El Gallo* and Ginny's unsolved murder still hang over her.