

# ROUGH & MESSY JUSTICE

A TRAIN HEIST, MURDER & MISDEEDS

BY W. KEITH REGULAR

FOREWORD, HON. PETER W. L. MARTIN

*Rough & Messy Justice* vividly portrays the Rocky Mountains' Crowsnest Pass of 1920, a rugged region shaped by its mining economy and diverse culture. Against this dramatic backdrop, an armed CPR train robbery leads to a deadly shootout at the Bellevue Café between police officers and two Russian outlaws, wanted by the law in Montana. The story follows the thrilling manhunt for the escaped bandit and delves into a flawed trial rife with overt racism in the press, law enforcement cover-ups, and a biased judge and jury. Missteps by a lackluster defence counsel and confused witnesses result in the tragic hanging of an innocent man. This gripping true crime account not only recounts the robbery and trial but critically examines social and racial prejudice, systemic corruption, and the failures of Canada's early justice system. By exposing these injustices, *Rough & Messy Justice* challenges traditional assumptions about fairness and equality under the law, offering an edge-of-your-seat exploration of historical crime and consequence.

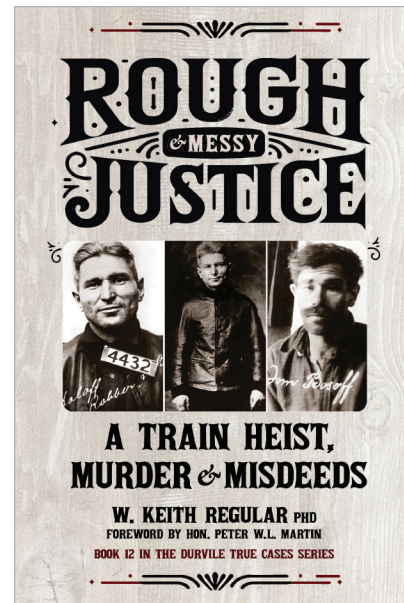
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



PHOTO: MORGAN TURNER

Dr. W. Keith Regular holds a Master of Arts in History from the University of Calgary and a PhD from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Specializing in modern Indigenous and non-Indigenous social and economic relationships, his current research focuses on legal history and the dispensing of justice in the early 20th-century Canadian

West, particularly in the Crowsnest Pass. He is also author of the book *Neighbours and Networks: The Blood Tribe in the Southern Alberta Economy*. Keith lives in Cranbrook, B.C.



“As Akroff reached for his coat, Constable Frewin saw the barrel of a gun protrude from a pocket. He panicked and immediately began shooting. His was the opening salvo, heralding one of the most tragic days in Alberta policing history. Within minutes, Corporal Usher, Constable Bailey, and George Akroff lay dead in the street.”

—Excerpt from the Prologue of  
*Rough & Messy Justice*.

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