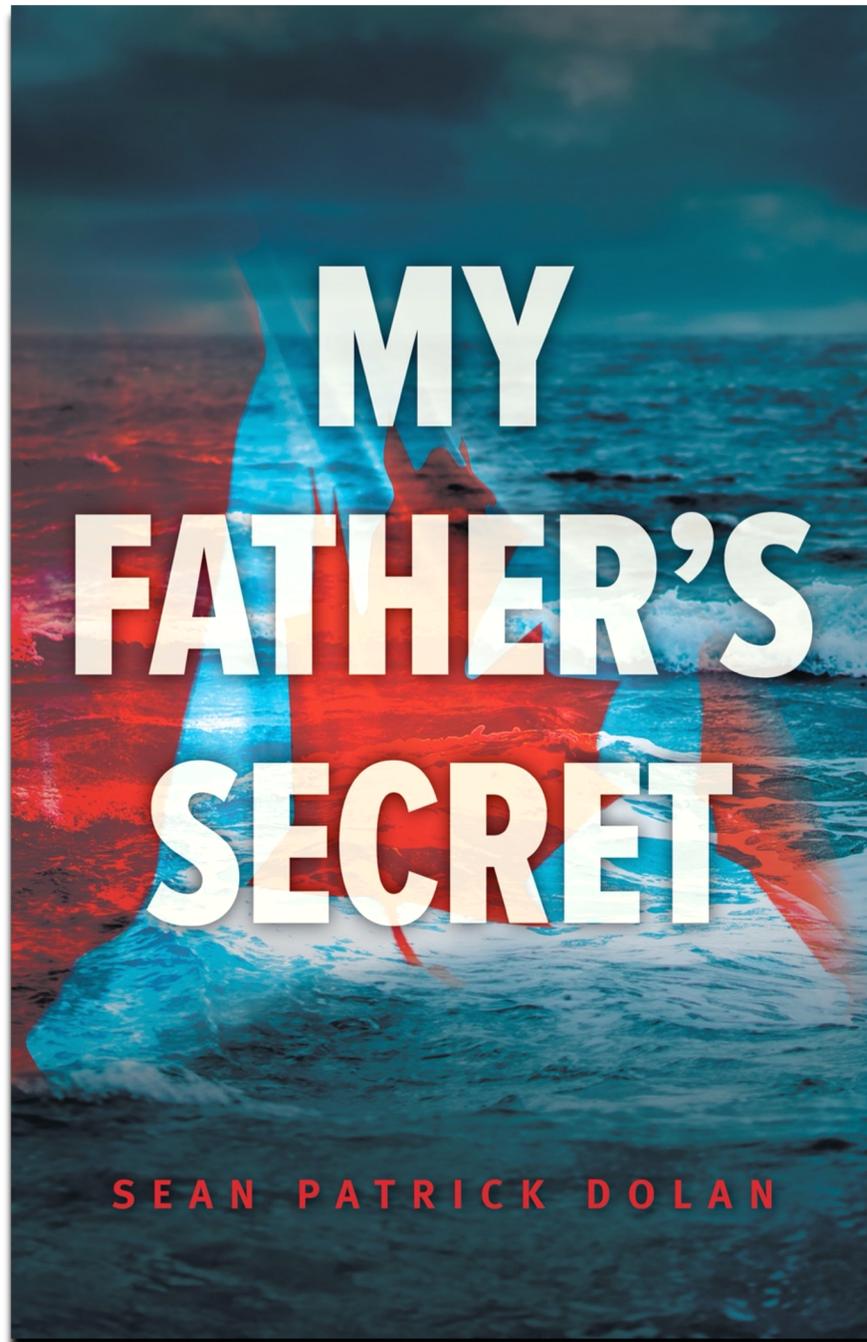


THEY SAID IT WOULD NEVEN HAPPEN IN CANADA. BUT THEN IT DID.

MEDIA KIT FOR  
**My Father's Secret**  
*By Sean Patrick Dolan*



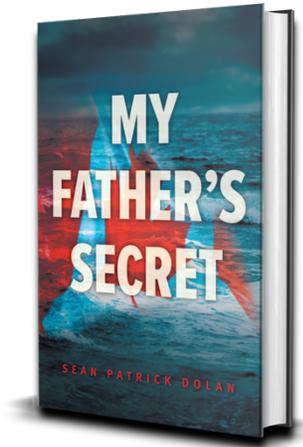
... this is a clear, contextual story ...  
Foreword Clarion Review, Rating 4/5

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## About the novel

When Declan Keenan begins to clean out his family's house after his father's death, he makes an unexpected discovery. His father, a former RCMP Security Service agent, left a videotape message that drops responsibility for resolving an old case into his son's lap. Unable to refuse his father's dying wish, Declan begins his search for answers in an attempt to satisfy justice. In the process, the motive, means, and opportunities that led to the 1973 bombing of BOAC Flight 281 are revealed; but so too are the agendas to have the case buried. Solving this thirty-year-old case with its inherent obstacles and challenges is frustratingly elusive, especially when compounded by present-day tragedy and official cover-ups. Despite threats, destruction of evidence, and murder, Declan perseveres, knowing that he must do his utmost to reveal his father's secret and expose a long hidden truth.



This entertaining thriller resonates with the themes of justice and injustice, reconciliation and alienation, and duty and denial—together representing both the admirable and dishonourable aspects of the Canadian national identity.

## About the author

Sean Patrick Dolan woke up on June 23, 1985, anticipating a great day because it was his twenty-first birthday. Instead, he heard the news of a horrific plane bombing, the deadliest act of aviation terrorism prior to the 9/11 attacks and the largest mass murder in modern Canadian history. In the days following, he was puzzled by Canada's mild response to this homegrown terrorist act and he felt, throughout the investigation, the trial, and the eventual public inquiry, that this incident exemplified a collective Canadian failure to face the unpleasant truths about their society. He has felt compelled to write about this tragedy for years. *My Father's Secret* is his re-imagining of the 1985 Air India Flight 182 bombing.

Mr. Dolan is a retired teacher and guidance counsellor. Since 2000, he has written professionally for the education community. He has worked on textbook teams at the Oxford University Press and has been both writer and editor for CBC News in Review.

Mr. Dolan lives in Thornbury, Ontario, Canada, with his wife, Sharon Goodland, and their dog, Mulligan. They have two adult sons.



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## Questions and answers with the author

### *What inspired you to write My Father's Secret?*

The Air India tragedy has troubled me for years and provides the inspiration for this book of fiction. I have never fully understood why Canadians didn't rally around the South Asian community in their time of grief in 1985 (and the nearly forty years since). I also struggled with the virtually invisible investigation into the mass murder of 329 people. The novel is my way of re-visiting the tragedy and trying to come to terms with the many mistakes that continue to make this a forgotten chapter in Canadian history.

### *You say your novel is an examination of the dark side of Canada's national identity. What do you mean by this?*

I am a proud Canadian. I love the things we stand for as a collective and the things we represent on the world stage. However, we are addicted to a mythology that paints us as the representatives of perennial goodness. We are so addicted to this myth that we fail to see our many failures. The recent discovery of the graves of Indigenous children on the premises of former residential schools is an example of this. For years, Indigenous people have been telling us that there are graves in the schoolyard. We dismissed these proclamations until technology gave us a detailed account of the precise location of the bodies of the children. Denial seems to be a part of Canada's consciousness.

Back to Air India: when the bombing happened, Canada—the great multicultural mecca—immediately identified the event as 'foreign' and portrayed it as an 'Indian' problem. This happened even though the plot was hatched in Canada by Canadians resulting in the murder of mostly Canadians. As a result of this portrayal, and the tacit acceptance of this position by most people, the worst terrorist event in Canadian history has been relegated to an historical footnote—a footnote that people need to be reminded about every June. In my 20 years of teaching both high school and adult students, when I asked the question, 'What is the worst terrorist event in Canadian history?' only a handful of students were able to answer the question.

### *Why did you write from an Irish perspective?*

I felt it best to write the novel from a cultural perspective I understood. As a third generation Canadian (with a very Irish name), I have held an interest in modern Irish history for a long time. I tried to imagine what it would be like if events like those that transpired in 1984 and 1985 had happened to people of my ancestry. The incident that set off the series of events that led to the Air India bombings (it's important not to forget the Narita bomb) was the Indian military attack on the Golden Temple complex—the most sacred site in Sikhism—in 1984. I looked at modern Irish history and thought that Bloody Sunday was received with a similar outrage from the Irish diaspora as the attack on the Golden



Temple was received from Sikhs around the world. Taking the Irish perspective allowed me to sink into my ancestral roots and imagine the motivation behind the Air India attack from a frame of reference that was more personal for me. Of course, I could never completely accomplish this, but I think I have painted a compelling picture of how an event like this could transpire while exercising some artistic license in the interests of storytelling.

***How historically accurate is your novel?***

**My Father's Secret** is a work of fiction. I take some liberties with history to move the storyline forward. For example, there was no *Jim Reilly* who was killed by British paratroopers while he lay injured on the ground in Glenfada Park on Bloody Sunday. However, authorities did look to lay charges against a paratrooper (referred to as Soldier F) who was accused of [murdering](#)—not simply firing toward—James Wray and William McKinney in 1972. Those charges never came to fruition because prosecutors determined that they could not secure a conviction against the soldier. Real events inspired my writing and I converted those events into fiction.

In terms of Air India, the parallels are rather obvious for people familiar with what transpired and how the investigation played out. I drew on the main figures involved in the bombing and imagined the investigation. I went where the story took me and believe I have created a work that is both sensitive to the gravity of what happened and critical of how the case was handled both legally and in the court of public opinion (which reacted with a resounding silence for the most part). While the victim's families, law enforcement officers, lawyers, and more than a few brave journalists challenged Canadians to wake up in the aftermath of the bombing, the response to this national disgrace has been quite dismal.

***Do you think there was a coverup in the Air India tragedy?***

The simple answer is: **NO**. While I am far from an expert on the bombing of Air India Flight 182, everything I have read indicates incompetence and neglect on the part of our national government and our spy agency. Law enforcement and the courts did not receive the kind of support they needed to pursue the case against the conspirators with vigour. The most glaring example of both incompetence and neglect was the accidental erasing of all but 54 of the 286 tapes of phone conversations involving the alleged conspirators.

In **My Father's Secret**, the only way to make the story work was to have an official coverup, complete with the destruction of evidence and murder. If I was faithfully retelling the Air India story, I would have written the story without a coverup. Why? Because there was no need to cover things up because everything happened in plain sight, and the gravity of what was happening was missed. This is what makes the tragedy that much more shocking and devastating.

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## MARKETING PLAN

### **Overall strategy:**

The author envisions a slow rollout of the novel as he builds relationships with readers and critics. He will start locally and expand from there. He has already secured booking for several book clubs to both educate and interact with his readership. He is expanding his online presence both through his website and on social media.

### **Competition:**

There is plenty of competition in the *thriller* category. Chris Hadfield's *Apollo Murders* came out in the fall of 2021 and shot to number one. There is appetite for the thriller genre. What sets *My Father's Secret* apart is its unique take on history (the IRA and Air India) and the efforts to address an all but ignored Canadian tragedy—and what this action (inaction?) says about the attitudes of many people in this nation.

### **Bookstores:**

The author will be approaching bookstores to generate sales of the novel. *My Father's Secret* can be purchased through the author's [website](#) or through the [FriesenPress Bookstore](#). Indigo has been contacted to list and stock the book. The novel is also available through Ingram Wholesale to over 40,000 booksellers worldwide.

### **Book launch:**

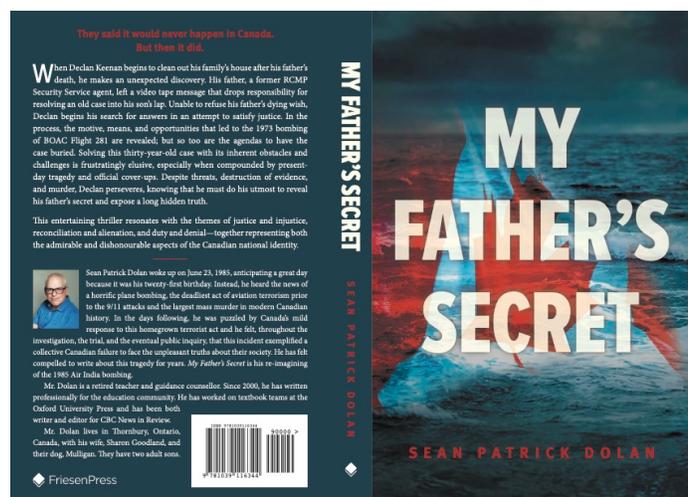
A small book launch was scheduled to be held in December 2021, but a paper shortage and supply chain delays forced the event to be postponed until January 2022. A book launch will be held at that time provided health restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic can be strictly adhered to.

### **Media kit:**

This media kit will be made available to radio, TV, and printed media outlets as well as on the author's website.

### **Online presence:**

Website ([www.seanpatrickdolan.com](http://www.seanpatrickdolan.com)), Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Goodreads, and others.



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## My Father's Secret

Foreword Clarion Review, Clarion Rating 4/5

(<https://www.forewordreviews.com/reviews/my-fathers-secret/>)

**Based in truth, the thrilling novel *My Father's Secret* involves history and the complicated aftermath of a terrorist attack.**

In Sean Patrick Dolan's thriller *My Father's Secret*, a distant father leaves behind a video tape revealing his biggest regret to his son, who is left to piece together a nationwide conspiracy.

When Flight 281 went down in the 1970s after a terrorist bombing, Canadians were in shock. Though the bomb builder, who was linked to Irish extremists, was incarcerated, many people felt that justice was never truly served. Most of the suspects walked free. A journalist, Jack, penned a book on the subject; Patrick, a RCMP agent who was working during the incident, remained troubled by the events.

When Patrick dies in the early aughts, his son Declan is left to solve the mystery that his father never could: what happened after Flight 281? Though he's hesitant to fulfill his father's last wish, he links up with Jack and others from his father's past to go down an investigative rabbit hole, learning about the Irish diaspora and government cover-ups. In the process, he also confronts his childhood memories.

It is revealed that Patrick was a cold, emotionally unavailable parent; Declan expresses resentment toward his father, and is constructed as a conflicted lead. Still, he is drawn to the mystery by his moral code. He receives encouragement from his wife, Karuna, too. Declan relies on her as a partner in research, and their conversations lead to emotional revelations and new information. Initially, Jack is a cautious participant, but the story makes his paranoia seem justified: he was party to violence because of his past research, and in reviving it, he's being followed, subject to danger once more.

Moving between viewpoints—Declan's; those of Patrick's RCMP team; and those of the terrorists—this is a clear, contextual story. The political, religious, and cultural factors between Irish and British citizens are explored with empathy, even to the point where extreme ideas of revenge are confronted. But the terrorists are not the only characters with skewed moral codes: the RCMP also utilize questionable methods, including intimidation tactics used on LGBTQ+ people, with slurs involved. And after the bombing, manipulative language and clandestine actions convey how far both sides are willing to go to preserve their senses of self and nationalism.

The outcome of the terrorists' and RCMP's actions are known from the outset, though, dampening some of the book's suspense. Information repeats as the RCMP and the terrorists become aware of each other's activities. Still, as Declan connects the dots between individual, governmental, and legal rationalizations, surprises arise, forcing a confrontation between his past and his future.

Concerned with the aftermath of a terrorist event, the thrilling novel *My Father's Secret* delves into history to explore a government conspiracy in the wake of a terrorist act.

Reviewed by [Delia Stanley](#)

November 22, 2021

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

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**Ordering information**

**eBook Edition**

978-1-03-911636-8

- EPUB format
- PDF format

**Paperback Edition**

978-1-03-911634-4

- Black & White
- 318 pages
- 5.5 x 8.5 inches

**Hardcover Edition**

978-1-03-911635-1

- Black & White
- 318 pages
- 5.5 x 8.5 inches

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- Fiction, Thrillers, Terrorism
- Fiction, Thrillers, Suspense
- Fiction, Thrillers, Crime

**Keywords:**

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