

'Murder at the Brown Palace' has ties to Mansion

Special presentation draws sold-out crowd in Highlands Ranch

BY ALEX DEWIND
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Dick Kreck is a storyteller. The former Denver Post columnist-turned-author has written six books about the history of Colorado. His topics range from the infamous Smaldones, a mob family based in north Denver, to the communities that popped up along the Union Pacific railroad track that runs through Nebraska and Wyoming. "I started writing about history before I left the Post," Kreck said. "I love doing research."

On a recent night at the Highlands Ranch Mansion, nearly 200 guests from south metro Denver sat before Kreck as he spoke of his book, titled "Murder at the Brown Palace: A True Story of Seduction and Betrayal." One of the book's main characters is Isabel Springer, who once lived in the historic building in which guests were seated.



Dick Kreck signs copies of his book "Murder at the Brown Palace: A True Story of Seduction and Betrayal" at an April 17 event hosted at the Highlands Ranch Mansion, 9950 E. Gateway Drive, by the Highlands Ranch Historical Society. Kreck moved to Denver from Los Angeles in 1968 and was a columnist at the Denver Post for 38 years.

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The story tells the short-lived tale of Isabel and her husband, John Springer, who in 1987 bought the property now known as the Mansion. Springer, a prominent businessman and politician

in the Denver area, was 20 years older than Isabel when they married. He traveled for work, leaving her at their suite at the Brown Palace Hotel, which still stands on a corner of South Broadway in

downtown Denver.

The hotel is the site of a murder that emerged from a love-triangle involving Isabel, a former love affair of hers and John Springer's business partner.

The summary of Kreck's book left more than one guest of the evening saying: "What a scandal."

One of those guests was Val Davis of Littleton. She attended the event with a friend who is a member of the Highlands Ranch Historical Society, the organization that hosted the evening.

"I think the Brown Palace Hotel is beautiful — fascinating," Davis said, standing upstairs in the Mansion, in front of the suite that was once Isabel's. Guests were able to explore the bedrooms after the presentation. "And everyone likes a scandal."

The April 17 event was part of the Highlands Ranch Historical Society Now and Then series, a program started three years ago to preserve the history of the Mansion through oral presentations. The presentations are videotaped and used as training guides for Mansion volunteers who lead public tours. The videotapes are also given to the Douglas County History Research Center.

"We are all really pleased," said board member Nancy Linsenbiger. "There is wonderful history here."

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