

Serial Crime

Serial Crime

A Criminological and Psychological Analysis

SECOND EDITION

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Foreword

I have studied serial killers, rapists, arsonists, stalkers, and robbers over the course of more than 30 years. During this period, I have interviewed offenders, their family members, and their neighbors. I have served as an expert witness, attended trials, consulted with defense and prosecution attorneys as well as the police, and have written about the subject in books and articles. Hopefully, my efforts in this area have not been in vain, and I have managed to shed some light on the characteristics, consequences, and prevention measures associated with a serious social problem.

Not everything connected with my study of serial offenders has been positive, of course. I still get nightmares thinking back to some of the crime scene photos and autopsies I have witnessed. I haven't enjoyed the nasty letters from the so-called groupies who respect and admire certain serial killers and rapists—being convinced that they are innocent victims of injustice—and blame me for characterizing “their man” as guilty as sin. Some have written to let me know how wrong I have been, and they did so in no uncertain terms. Most serial offenders are more tolerant than their fans, basking in the limelight that my descriptions of crime scenes and commentaries about their offenses might have produced. (There have been some exceptions: for example, Charles Manson referred to me as Jack the Jackal.) After giving a talk about serial killers at a college, a student in the audience asked me why I was so fascinated with the subject of multiple murder. I reminded her that the school she attended had asked me to speak about this topic. I am fascinated, but I am also fascinated with a

number of other topics apart from violent crime; yet I get far fewer calls to speak about them.

The curiosity about serial murder as well as other serial crimes is particularly widespread, and I think for good reason. The overall number of victims is small by comparison with offenses such as domestic homicide or workplace violence, but so many lives are lost at the hands of so few serial killers. Serial killers are the cream of the crop, able to stay on the streets for long periods of time until they are finally apprehended. At that point, they have usually amassed a large body count—sometimes a body count that can only be measured in double digits.

Actually, many people are fascinated with the term “serial.” They typically think of a sadistic offender—one who sexually tortures his vulnerable victims in order to maximize pain and suffering; or, in a hospital setting, a medical practitioner who suffocates patients with a pillow or injects a deadly poison into a patient’s IV in order to feel strong and powerful.

Of course, the use of the term serial to identify the repeated crimes of a killer, rapist, stalker, arsonist, or robber is entirely accurate, especially if he or she has the same motive at every crime scene—power, sex, revenge, money, and so on. In addition, it is important to focus attention on perpetrators who repeat their crimes rather than those who are “once in a lifetime” offenders. The repeat offenders can terrorize communities and raise the anxiety level of an entire society. Even if they rape, burn buildings, or rob serially rather than kill, they remain on the minds of community members whose everyday decisions are frequently made in light of the possibility of another attack. Banks may hire more guards, property owners may install improved security systems, convenient stores may go out of business, and women may be frightened enough to take a self-defense course or to remain behind locked doors after dark.

When a serial criminal is on the loose, an entire community can become victimized by collective fear and anxiety. For a three-week period in October 2002, when John Mohammed and Lee Malvo shot to death ten victims, selected at random, the D.C. area was held in the grip of terror. Similarly, Andrew Cunanon’s fugitive status in 1997, being on the loose for months after killing four people, frightened

Americans everywhere. Finally, he shot to death fashion designer Gianni Versace and then committed suicide in Miami Beach. During the summer of 2016, police in Phoenix, Arizona, began their search for a murderer they dubbed the “Serial Street Shooter.” From March to July, the assailant took the lives of seven people and wounded two others, in each case with a semi-automatic handgun. The shooter always attacked at night, and he was seen by multiple witnesses standing in proximity to his car. Responding to widespread public anxiety, the district attorney’s office offered a \$30,000 reward to anyone with information leading to the apprehension of the killer. In 2018, 23-year-old Aaron Saucedo was charged with nine counts of murder in the Phoenix “Serial Street Shooter” case.

It is murder committed serially that most fascinates readers of true crime and viewers of police series on television. On the other hand, by emphasizing only murders that are committed one at a time as elements in some overarching scheme, we might be led falsely to overlook the fact that the term serial applies just as accurately to a range of offenses apart from homicide.

This is a book that I would recommend to both professionals and the public. Kevin Borgeson, Robin Maria Valeri, and Stephanie Vogel have successfully corrected the misperception that only homicide is committed serially or that only murder is worthy of examining as a serial offense. There are chapters on serial murder and certain criminal justice responses to it, but there are also chapters on serial rape, arson, stalking, cyber-predators, and so on. This is a book that looks back to the research conducted in the recent past, and it looks ahead to the types of serial offenses that are likely to grab our attention moving forward.

Jack Levin
Northeastern University

About the Contributors

Dr. Lorna L. Alvarez-Rivera is a Professor of Criminal Justice at Valdosta State University. Her research interests expand over a number of criminological and criminal justice-related areas, but her primary focus is the cross-cultural study of criminological theories, immigration and crime and corrections. Some of her recent publications have appeared in the *Journal of Professional and Public Sociology*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Drug Issues*, *American Journal of Criminal Justice* and the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*.

Detective Kristyn Bernier is a retired 20-year veteran of the Portsmouth, New Hampshire Police Department. She specialized in undercover internet crime investigation, child exploitation, sexually based crimes, domestic violence, sex offender management and undercover narcotics work. She is also a former member of the New Hampshire Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, where she was responsible for investigating offenders who possess, manufacture, and distribute child sexual assault images. Det. Bernier is the co-author of *Cyber Crime Fighters: Tales from the Trenches* and prior to her retirement gave Internet safety presentations throughout New Hampshire.

Dr. Kevin Borgeson is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and former Research Fellow for the Center for Holocaust and Genocidal Studies, Salem State University. Dr. Borgeson has published various articles and op-eds on Skinheads, Cyberhate, profiling, serial murder, and right-wing domestic terrorism. Dr. Borgeson is also co-editor

with Kristen Kuehnle on the book *Serial Offenders: Theory and Practice*. Dr. Borgeson has appeared on various media outlets as an expert on hate, hate groups, domestic terrorism, serial offenders, and child abductions.

Adam Taylor Campbell is currently a Master's student of Social Work from Rhode Island College residing in Pawtucket, RI. Adam's career in social work includes his work with at-risk populations such as victims of sexual and domestic abuse, and working with individuals experiencing homelessness. Adam is a co-creator and collaborator with Dr. Kevin Borgeson on his website UnderstandingDeviance.com.

Dr. Stephanie Cappadona is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts. She received her M. S. in Criminal Justice and Ph.D. in Sociology with a concentration in Violence and Conflict from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Her teaching and research are grounded in social justice and human rights. She teaches courses in Social Theory, Sociology of Violence, Criminology, Justice and Human Rights Advocacy, Hate Crimes and Hate Groups, and Youth, Crime & Justice.

Dr. Gina A. Curcio Centeno is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Salem State University. Her prior professional experience includes working as a correctional officer and as a domestic violence advocate. She primarily teaches courses in corrections, criminal investigations, criminal law, gender and the criminal justice system and gangs. Her primary research interests include offender reentry and rehabilitation, gangs and gender and race and the criminal justice system. She has published articles in various peer-reviewed criminal justice journals, including most recently in *Feminist Criminology*, *Women and Criminal Justice*, the *Journal of Gang Research* and the *Journal of Philosophical & Theoretical Criminology*. Since 2014, she has been the research partner on a grant that provides funding for gang prevention, intervention, and suppression for two communities in the Northeast.

Dr. Leila B. Dutton is a professor in the Criminal Justice Department at the University of New Haven. She received her doctoral

degree in psychology at the University of Rhode Island in 2004. She spent two years as an NIMH postdoctoral research fellow at the University of New Hampshire's Family Research Laboratory, working with Murray Straus on the International Dating Violence Study. Her research interests include intimate partner violence, stalking, and sexual aggression. She teaches classes focusing on family violence and crime victimization. She has published her research in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Violence and Victims*, and the *International Review of Victimology*. She has written two book chapters on stalking and is currently on the editorial board of the journal *Partner Abuse*.

Dr. Amanda Howerton-Orcutt is a Professor of Criminal Justice at Salem State University. Her primary areas of teaching and research include offender mental health and coping, substance use, and offender rehabilitation. Recent publications include articles in *Journal of Philosophical & Theoretical Criminology*, *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *Journal of Substance Use and Misuse*, and *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*.

Dr. Rebecca C. Kendall is an associate professor in the Criminal Justice & Sociology Department at Curry College in Massachusetts. Dr. Kendall earned her doctoral degree in criminology and justice policy from Northeastern University and her master's degree in forensic and counseling psychology from William James College. Her policy and research interests are in the area of violence and victimization, with a specific focus on sexual offending, intimate partner violence, human trafficking, and the relationship between victimization and delinquency. Dr. Kendall has clinical experience doing mental health treatment and assessment with incarcerated male offenders.

Charles Wesley Kim, Jr. is the Program Manager, FA Public-Private Partnership & Exercise Program, San Diego Law Enforcement Coordination Center, a DHS-recognized Fusion Center, responsible for information-sharing, training and exercises on terrorism, cyber threats, and all-hazards for owner/operators of critical infrastructure in the for San Diego and Imperial Counties in California. He received his J.D. (1982) from Columbia and his B.A. *cum laude* (1979) from Yale. He is also a LTC in the California State Guard, currently

serving as Staff Judge Advocate, Maritime Command (MARCOM). He Prior to retiring from private practice, he was a civil trial lawyer for 40 years, focusing on domestic violence and stalking cases. He is a former Adjunct Professor of Law at California Western, Thomas Jefferson, and University of San Diego Schools of Law, and was active in state and local bar leadership. His past law enforcement experience includes service with InfraGard San Diego and National, San Diego Regional Community Policing Institute, San Diego Citizen's Review Board on Police Practices, San Diego Citizens Advisory Board on Police Community Relations, San Diego Police Department Use of Force and Juvenile Realignment Task Forces, San Diego Stalking Strike Force/Stalking Case Assessment Team, Association of Threat Assessment Professionals, and NYPD as an Auxiliary Police Officer.

Senior Superintendent Gerard Labuschagne, PhD, is the commander of the South African Police Service's Investigative Psychology Unit, which is responsible for assisting with all serial murder investigations throughout South Africa. He is a licensed clinical psychologist and criminologist and testifies regularly in the High Court and magistrates courts of South Africa, often about case linkage issues. He is on the editorial board for the *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, a consultant to the National Institute of Justice of the Department of Justice in the USA, a research fellow at the University of the Free State's (SA) Centre for Psychology and the Law, and a fellow of the International Association of Investigative Psychology. He is a member of the British Psychological Society and the International Homicide Investigators Association. He is an adjunct faculty member of the California School of Forensic Studies at Alliant International University in the USA, and a Professor Extraordinarius at the Department of Criminology at UNISA (University of South Africa).

Tom Monahan is a retired 30-year veteran of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, where he spent the majority of his career investigating sex crimes, homicides and terrorism. During that time, he led the investigation of approximately 600 murders cases, and several thousand rape and child molestation cases. Tom served on the FBI's ViCAP National Advisory Council, the Department of Justice's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) National

Advisory Board, and was a participant in the 2005 FBI Serial Murder Symposium. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Boston University, and a Master's degree from the United States Naval Postgraduate School.

Richard Parenteau graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Master's Program at Salem State University in 2009. Currently, he works for the West Newbury Police Department in West Newbury, Massachusetts and is enrolled in the Northeast Regional Police Institute for law enforcement training. In addition, he conducts research on both juvenile and serial arson offenses.

Dr. Amy Poland is the associate dean and director of online learning and professor of criminal justice at St. Joseph's University—New York. She has authored or co-authored articles on online teaching, gender and perceptions of justice in Afghanistan, book chapters on the role of women in the war on drugs and serial rape and a report on mental health services for juvenile offenders.

Dr. Brian H. Spitzberg is Senate Distinguished Professor Emeritus in the School of Communication at San Diego State University. He received his BA at University of Texas—Arlington (1978), his MA (1980) and PhD (1981) at University of Southern California, and his Certified Threat Management (CTM™) status in 2017. He is a Core Researcher in the Center for Communication, Health, & the Public Good, and a Co-founder & Advisory Board member in the Center for Human Dynamics in the Mobile Age, SDSU. He received the 2009 Western States Communication Association career Scholar Award, the 2011 National Communication Association Larry Kibler Memorial Award, the 2017 Mark Knapp NCA Award for career contribution to the study of Interpersonal Communication, and the 2020 National Communication Association career Distinguished Scholar Award. His coauthored book *The Dark Side of Relationship Pursuit* won both the biennial International Association for Relationship Research Book Award (1st ed.: 2008) and the NCA Gerald Miller book award (2nd ed., 2015). He is author or coauthor of over 175 scholarly articles and book chapters, cited over 16,000 times (h = 67, i10 = 136). He has coauthored and co-edited several scholarly books on communication competence and the dark side of communication. His primary areas of research involve social media and meme and

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Dr. Stephanie Vogel is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at St. Bonaventure University. Her training is in adult clinical psychology with a focus on human sexuality and personality. Her research interests include narcissism and academic entitlement as well as erotophilia/erotophobia and other areas of sexuality.