

I: The Creation of a Serial Killer

By Jack Olsen

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In The Killer's Own Words...

"I killed Tanya Bennett...I beat her to death, raped her and loved it. Yes I'm sick, but I enjoy myself too. People took the blame and I'm free.... . Look over your shoulder. I may be closer than you think."-Keith Hunter Jesperson, the Happy Face Killer

In February 1990, Oregon State Police arrested John Sosnovke and Laverne Pavlinac for the vicious rape and murder of 23-year-old Taunja Bennet. Pavlinac had come forth and confessed, implicating her boyfriend and producing physical evidence that linked them to the crime. Authorities closed the case. There was just one problem. They had the wrong people...

Keith Hunter Jesperson was a long haul truck driver and the murderer of eight women, including Taunja Bennet. He began a twisted one-man campaign to win the release of Sosnovke and Pavlinac. To the editors of newspapers and on the walls of highway rest stops, Jesperson scribbled out a series of taunting confessions. At the end of each confession, Jesperson drew a happy face, earning for himself the grisly sobriquet "The Happy Face Killer."

Based on access to interviews, diaries, court records, and the criminal himself, I: The Creation of a Serial Killer is Jesperson's chilling story. Edgar Award winner Jack Olsen lets the killer tell his story in his own words, offering unprecedented insight into the twisted thought process of a serial murderer.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Veteran true-crime writer Olsen (Salt of the Earth, etc.) takes the profiling of a psychopath a step farther than usual; drawing on interviews and his subject's own diaries to intimately reveal the life and inner workings of Keith Hunter Jesperson, currently serving life in prison for the murders of eight women in the 1990s. Jesperson was called the "Happy Face Killer" for his token symbol on taunting letters sent to authorities. Cutting between Jesperson's rough rural childhood in the Pacific Northwest (with a hard-drinking, belt-swinging father who put him to work and charged room and board), and his mad glee in hunting down, raping and strangling women, the book plays more like a carefully detailed autobiography than a neutral investigation. While the gruesome details are nailed down with morbid precision, some readers may be disturbed by Olsen's abandonment of the objective narrator's voice in chapters where the first-person account puts the reader right inside the madman's mind it's a distinctly unpleasant place, where women are "lot lizards" and "bitches" paraded toward rape and death. Even chapters in the third person clearly represent Jesperson's viewpoint. Olsen's writing is clear and concise, but the voyeurism of the murder scenes will disturb some readers, and the attempt to create understanding of a serial murderer might be interpreted by others as an attempt to create sympathy. Eight pages b&w photos not seen by PW.
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From Library Journal
During the 1990s, the Pacific Northwest was besieged by a serial killer, Keith Hunter Jesperson, who taunted the police for incarcerating the wrong people for one of his eight victims; he signed his letter to the police with a happy face and hence became known as the Happy Face Killer. Renowned true-crime author Olsen (Hastened to the Grave) uses diaries, court records, and interviews with the killer himself to present Jesperson's version of why he became a serial killer and how he killed his victims. As a truck driver, he was able to travel cross-country and kill young women who, he thought, were going to present a problem for him. With each of his victims, he played a "death game" in which he choked them, then revived them a few times before killing them. The book's flaw is that it is one-sided. The reader is not told how law enforcement officers caught on to Jesperson or about the trial. Nor does it provide details as to what happened to the wrongly convicted. Nevertheless, Olsen's popularity in the genre will make this a popular choice for public libraries. Michael Sawyer, Northwestern Regional Lib., Elkin, NC
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From Booklist
Starred Review Most true crime centers on the investigation of the criminal, both the physical investigation of the crimes themselves and the psychological examination of the criminal mind. Here true-crime master Olsen ups the ante by telling the story from the criminal's point of view and mostly in his own words. Taking advantage of unprecedented access to Keith Hunter Jesperson, Oregon's notorious "Happy Face Killer," Olsen draws heavily on the convicted murderer's diaries, interspersing trial testimony and more traditional interviews with the subject. The story opens with Jesperson's simple declaration, "It was the kind of day that always got me down--windy, gray, boring"; later that same boring day, Jesperson commits the first of his alleged 166 murders. For seven chapters, we experience the shape of his days, the mundane, the normal, and the unbelievably gruesome, all described in chillingly matter-of-fact prose. As we follow Jesperson on his path to madness, aided by Olsen's commentary, it is easy to detect signs of a psychopath in the making; from his treatment of pets and women to his relationship with his father, Jesperson reveals himself with every seemingly ordinary word. And, yet, nothing is finally explainable, or typical, about either the man or his grotesque deeds. A truly horrifying account of a serial killer, told with shocking candor. *Mary*

Frances Wilkens
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jena Alvarez:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or read a book called I: The Creation of a Serial Killer? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have additional opinion?

Michael Durkin:

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Michael Herndon:

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Roderick Olin:

With this era which is the greater individual or who has ability to do something more are more precious than other. Do you want to become among it? It is just simple approach to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time not much but quite enough to experience a look at some books. One of the books in the top checklist in your reading list is I: The Creation of a Serial Killer. This book that is qualified as The Hungry Mountains can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking upwards and review this book you can get many advantages.

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