

Inside the Minds of Serial Killers: Why They Kill

By Katherine Ramsland

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There are many cultural myths about serial killers, often propagated even by mental health professionals. Many assume there is a profile of a serial killer, that serial killers always go for the same victim type or always use the same MO, that they are more clever than ordinary people, and that they are inevitably charming and attractive. The truth is not as simple as that. There are different types of serial killers and while there are many books that discuss the serial killer phenomenon especially in relationship to victim types or context, researchers have not yet been able to come up with a definition, or type, that covers the broad spectrum of serial killers and their complex psychological dynamics. Ramsland looks at serial killer types, illustrating that it is difficult to accurately depict these elusive, intriguing, and dangerous killers.

This book examines a variety of serial killers, from sexual predators to psychotic killers, from murder teams to odd eccentric stalkers, in order to present the distinct psychological dynamics that set serial killers apart from other violent murderers. Among the motives addressed are lust, control, glory, profit, thrill, delusions, rage, the desire for company, the need to please a partner, and even murder as an intellectual exercise. Serial killers live double lives, hiding their violence even from those who live with them, so along with a study of motives are chapters devoted to how close associates have described killers, including parents, siblings, co-workers, lovers, and survivors. There is no profile of a serial killer, and this book establishes that in vivid and frightening detail.

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Editorial Review

Review
"Noting that generalizations often fail and debunking the idea that serial killers have a distinct profile, Ramsland details the wide variety of motives behind serial murder. She notes that the study's purpose is not to categorize them, but explore their motives, such as lust, omnipotence, glory, delusions, rage, profit, or no purpose at all. She also provides a history of the topic in the first chapter." — **Reference & Research Book News**

"*Inside the Minds of Serial Killers* is successful in dispelling some myths about serial killers and outlines the tremendous variations in motives and methods among such criminals….[t]his book is likely to be interesting to the general public." — **PsycCRITIQUES**

"In the area of psychological research on serial killers, Dr. Katherine Ramsland has distinguished herself as a unique thinker with a fascinating approach to case analysis. Anyone who takes this subject seriously should read this book." — **Robert K. Ressler, former FBI Profiler, author of *Whoever Fights Monsters* and *I Have Lived in the Monster***

About the Author

Katherine Ramsland has a masters degree in forensic psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a masters degree in clinical psychology, and a PhD in philosophy. She has published twenty-seven books, including Inside the Minds of Mass Murderers, The Science of Cold Case Files, The Criminal Mind: A Writers Guide to Forensic Psychology, The Forensic Science of CSI, and The CSI Effect. With former FBI profiler Gregg McCrary she coauthored The Unknown Darkness: Profiling the Predators among Us, and with law professor James E. Starrs, A Voice for the Dead. In addition, Ramsland has published over three hundred articles on serial killers, criminology, and criminal investigation and was a research assistant to former FBI profiler John Douglas for The Cases that Haunt Us. She writes forensic articles for Court TVs Crime Library and teaches forensic psychology as an assistant professor at DeSales University in Pennsylvania.

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Lisa Maurer:

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