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You, Me, and the Rise of the American Serial Killer

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Definitions

Serial Killer: a person who commits a series of murders, often with no apparent motive and typically following a characteristic, predictable behavior pattern.

Popular Culture: culture based on the tastes of ordinary people rather than an educated elite.

Pop Culture: modern popular culture transmitted via the mass media and aimed particularly at younger people.

Fear: an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat.

Empathy: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Desire: a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen; strong sexual feeling or appetite.

Biopic: a movie dramatizing the life of a particular person, typically a public or historical figure.

Sensationalized: present information about (something) in a way that provokes public interest and excitement, at the expense of accuracy.¹

Hybristophilia: sexual interest in and attraction to those who commit crimes.²

Abstract

From the late 20th century onward, the serial killer has been as much of an American icon as the rugged cowboys of the wild west. From the highly-sensationalized trials of Ted Bundy to the star-studded Netflix biopics of Jeffrey Dahmer and Bundy alike, studying serial murder on the weekends has essentially replaced baseball as America's favorite pastime. As serial murder became increasingly more frequent in the United States in the mid to late 1900s,

¹ "Oxford Languages and Google - English," Oxford Languages, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>.

² "Apa Dictionary of Psychology," American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association), accessed December 7, 2022, <https://dictionary.apa.org/hybristophilia>.

what began as the violent manifestation of our society's worst fears, quickly turned into the subject of countless books, films, documentaries, and podcasts to come. In order to truly understand the curious rise of the American serial killer as a pop-culture icon from the late 20th century onward into the modern day, it isn't enough to simply analyze the act of murder, or the killers themselves. Rather, I believe it is necessary to understand how the rise of the American serial killer as a pop culture mainstay, actually reflects something about ourselves, or rather, something within ourselves. I believe that whether or not we care to admit it, our fascination with serial murderers and our growing interest in their lives as a form of entertainment, stems from the desire to understand ourselves through them, without becoming them.

Throughout this project, I will focus on the lives of two prolific serial killers, Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer, with the intention of tracing the rise of the American serial killer in pop-culture, as being rooted deeply in our own complex fears, instinctual empathy, and darkest desires. I believe that America's fascination with the serial killer is not simply what some may call morbid curiosity, but rather an attempt at vicariously exploring our most uncomfortable emotions - fear, empathy, and desire, without exposing ourselves to real physical danger along the way. David Schmid argues that the serial killer is now "as quintessentially an American figure as the cowboy"³, and ultimately, I intend to illustrate why.

Personal Note

Growing up as part of a generation of adolescents who were so intertwined with the rise of digital entertainment, that we often felt safer basking in blue light than we did in sunlight, I've personally come to feel more comfortable with the television than my own parental figures, and I

³ Gaelle Abou Nasr, "Serial Killers and Their Representation in Pop Culture," Arcadia (Arcadia, February 5, 2022), <https://www.byarcadia.org/post/serial-killers-and-their-representation-in-pop-culture#:~:text=According%20to%20David%20Schmid%2C%20%E2%80%9Cthe.to%20achieve%20near%2Dmythical%20status.>

trust the advice of Web MD more than that of my general practitioner. Considering this, when I reached my early twenties and began to finally question the effects that a constant stream of pop culture entertainment had on my wellbeing, I became increasingly aware of the kinds of media I was engaging with, and why I chose them in the first place. It was at this time that my interest in the topic of the serial killer in popular culture became more critical, rather than curious, though my general interest in serial killers actually started years ago, pre-pandemic and long before the Netflix commodification of Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy.

In 2019, after graduating highschool and moving to a new city, I developed an increasing anxiety about my safety as a woman living on her own, far away from the people and places I knew before. In my desperate search to identify all potential dangers I might face, I discovered the genre of true-crime media, which was chock full of clues about how to stay safe as a woman in a violent society, and how to identify what kinds of monsters, and men, might threaten that safety. I soon became obsessed with true-crime, listening to podcasts like *Crime Junkie* and *Anatomy of Murder*, as a morbid form of self care. This ritual soon transitioned from just crime, to darker topics, and before I knew it I was spending most days unravelling the who, the why, and the how of serial murder. It was only after two years of this routine, that I became increasingly aware of the implications of this intrigue, and the compounding effects it had on my wellbeing. I moved throughout my day looking over my shoulder as I walked to my car, clutching a pepper spray as I walked through parking lots, and having nightmares about people I loved turning into cold-blooded killers. Ironically, it was this negative shift in my life that simultaneously made me all the more interested in understanding why we as a society are so drawn to the idea of the serial killer, and ultimately, why I chose the rise of the American serial killer in pop culture as the topic for this project.

Before I begin, I would like to issue a disclaimer. My intentions for this project are not, and were never, to characterize the American serial killer as a figure worth the media attention and societal intrigue they have accumulated over time, nor do I intend on analyzing which psychological, biological, and societal factors lead someone to commit serial murder. Additionally, this project is not intended to romanticize or condemn the widespread interest in these crimes, but rather, my intentions lie in the unraveling of this interest; I want to understand the why of our intrigue, and the deeper factors within us that have allowed the topic of serial murder to shift from the privacy of the courtroom, to the comfort of our living rooms.

Context

Since it was first popularized in 1974 by FBI agent and author Robert Ressler, though its use can be traced as far back as 1947 in Dorothy Hughes' novel *A Lonely Place*, the term "Serial Killer" has graced many a cocktail party and internet blog with its presence.⁴ Though widely familiar today, the topic and widespread fear of serial murder only first began to flood the news channels and corner tabloids as serial murder saw a curious, but serious uptick, across late 20th century America in rural areas and major cities alike. Prolific criminals such as John Wayne Gacey, Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, and Aileen Wuornos, rose to fame as sensationalized trials aired on national television and shocking crimes were published in newspapers across the nation. Not long after, their legacies were cemented forever in countless documentaries and books to come. As decades passed, the concept of serial murder became irrevocably intertwined with the 1970s, and soon, "terrifying serial killers were as synonymous with the 1970s as Watergate, disco, and the oil crisis".⁵ Though the frenzied fear of the eighties eventually faded into memory,

⁴ The Fake History Hunter, "'Serial Killer' Not Coined by FBI in 1970s," Fake History Hunter, April 27, 2020, <https://fakehistoryhunter.net/2019/09/15/serial-killer-not-coined-by-fbi-in-1970s/>.

⁵ "Serial Killers of the '70s: Stories behind a Notorious Decade of Death," Union Square & Co., May 20, 2019, <https://www.unionsquareandco.com/9781454939382/#:~:text=Beyond%20Ted%20Bundy%20and%20David.130%20people%20between%201971%2D1979.>

the identities of its notorious serial killers turned into common household American names, akin to celebrities like Madonna and Michael Jackson. Today, in the twenty-first century world and more than forty years since the drastic increase in serial murder began to spread across the nation, the feelings of terror once caused by the names of criminals such as Charles Manson, David Berkowitz, Kenneth Bianchi, and even the Zodiac Killer, have turned to feelings of curiosity - the who, the why, and the how of serial murder.

Ted Bundy

In 1946 at a home for unwed mothers in Vermont, Ted Bundy, then known as Theodore Cowell, was born to a twenty-two year old Eleanor Louise Cowell. Unwed and in fear of becoming a single mother, Eleanor placed Ted in the care of her father and mother, Sam and Eleanor Cowell in Philadelphia, and lived beside them for many years pretending to be Bundy's older sister. It's unknown when exactly Ted realized the identity of his supposed sister, perhaps as early as 1949 and even as late as 1969, but Bundy suggests that "Maybe I just figured out that there couldn't be 20 years' difference in age between a brother and a sister, and Louise always took care of me."⁶ Regardless of when it occurred, this heavy realization was in no doubt traumatizing for Bundy, and alongside allegations of his grandfather's intense tendency for violence towards humans and animals alike, as well as his grandmother's struggles with severe depression, agoraphobia, and electroshock therapy, Bundy's early childhood was fraught with instability.⁷ To supposedly protect Ted from his grandfather's violence, in 1949, Ted's biological mother Eleanor Louise moved the two of them to Tacoma, Washington, far away from their family and friends. Despite intense resistance from Ted, Eleanor Louise soon remarried to one

⁶ Meghan DeMaria, "The Rumors about Ted Bundy's Mom and Dad Are Very Disturbing," *Cosmopolitan* (*Cosmopolitan*, November 1, 2021),

<https://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/movies/a27356496/ted-bundy-parents-mom-dad/>.

⁷ Katie Serena, "The Moment in Ted Bundy's Childhood That Suggested He'd Become a Killer - and That Went Ignored," *All That's Interesting* (*All That's Interesting*, August 12, 2021),

<https://allthatsinteresting.com/ted-bundy-childhood>.

Johnny Bundy, “a doting, loving man who welcomed the young unwed mother and her son into his life”.⁸ Ted’s troubled childhood soon led into chaotic teenage years, and soon he attempted a career in politics, which ultimately failed, and then pursued a degree in law, though he dropped out before receiving it. Bundy’s struggles to find security and identity in life would surely contribute to his crimes as an adult, and from 1974 or 1973 to 1978, “Bundy is believed to have raped, tortured, and killed 30 women, crimes to which he eventually openly confessed, and for which he was sentenced to death.”⁹

Jeffrey Dahmer

Born in the year 1960, to Lionel and Joyce Dahmer of Milwaukee, Jeffrey Dahmer seemed to be a healthy and energetic baby boy. It is said that after a surgery to correct a double hernia when Dahmer was only four years old, his family noticed a drastic change in his personality, as “he became increasingly withdrawn following the birth of his younger brother and the family's frequent moves,” and by “his early teens, he was disengaged, tense and largely friendless.”¹⁰ Early on, Dahmer was said to exhibit strange behavior, as he would allegedly “find roadkill and take it back to his house surrounded by the woods and dissect and clean the bones”.¹¹ Throughout his teens, Dahmer struggled heavily to find stability. Though they claim that their son lived a normal childhood, as Dahmer’s parents worked through a divorce in his teenage years, his mother Joyce suffered from severe depression and even once attempted suicide, and his father was increasingly absent from the home, leaving Dahmer to care for his younger brother, and for

⁸ Katie Serena, “The Moment in Ted Bundy's Childhood That Suggested He'd Become a Killer - and That Went Ignored,” All That's Interesting (All That's Interesting, August 12, 2021), <https://allthatsinteresting.com/ted-bundy-childhood>.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ “Jeffrey Dahmer,” Biography.com (A&E Networks Television, September 26, 2022), <https://www.biography.com/crime-figure/jeffrey-dahmer>.

¹¹ Stacey Grant, “Jeffrey Dahmer Was Unlike Most Serial Killers in One Crucial Way,” Seventeen (Seventeen, October 24, 2022), <https://www.seventeen.com/celebrity/a41464937/jeffrey-dahmer-dog-monster/>.

himself. Additionally, Dahmer became the subject of intense bullying at school, and before graduation, he would develop alcoholism which would plague him into adulthood.¹² In 1978, after just one quarter at Ohio State University, Dahmer dropped out and enlisted in the army, though he would be discharged shortly after in 1981 due to his persisting alcoholism. It's unclear when his crimes began, but one of his earliest murders occurred just after his highschool graduation, and by the time of his arrest, he had murdered at least 17 men and boys, between 1978 and 1991. It is believed that "Dahmer sought out men, mostly African American, at gay bars, malls and bus stops, lured them home with promises of money or sex, and gave them alcohol laced with drugs before strangling them to death."¹³

The Serial Killer in Pop Culture

As the number of American serial killers rose through the 1970s onward into the eighties and nineties, public intrigue and depictions of the macabre rose with them. In response to the mass attention criminals such as Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer were drawing for their shocking and violent crimes, American media outlets realized the growing potential for profit. In 1979, the criminal trials of Ted Bundy were the first to be nationally televised, as Bundy was tried and convicted of "bludgeoning, mutilating and strangling four sorority sisters in Tallahassee, Florida."¹⁴ Due to Bundy's popularity, charismatic personality, and conventionally good looks, he drew a massive crowd of young women turned "courtroom groupies"¹⁵ who either felt he was too

¹² <https://www.sportskeeda.com/pop-culture/jeffrey-dahmer-family-who-serial-killer-s-parents>

¹³ "Jeffrey Dahmer," Biography.com (A&E Networks Television, September 26, 2022), <https://www.biography.com/crime-figure/jeffrey-dahmer>.

¹⁴ Sarah Carr, "A Bizarre Media Circus: 8 Trials That Captured the Nation's Attention," Portsmouth Herald (Portsmouth Herald, March 4, 2021), <https://www.seacoastonline.com/story/news/2021/03/04/pamela-smart-oj-simpson-casey-anthony-ted-bundy-famous-televised-trials/6870359002/>.

¹⁵ "Seriously Though, Why Were so Many Women Obsessed with Ted Bundy?," Yahoo! (Yahoo!), accessed December 7, 2022, https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/seriously-though-why-were-many-225800207.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xILmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAMKkqliq8coalMZYmZyB8uM1UVpna8raixnaBmtu6aq-gR6qJt6hwhak1QOyjMzvp5byi3CqckdAYt6lixTZwi8TIOMWCIT-hXA-DY9yxaKRI X8l0hpLPnyTvs9S7EoMT6Hb6a2BbWYCJgeHp_rjPINvEfEtwN4zVmKh32WjGXhAq.

handsome to kill, or simply didn't care if he did. In the decades to come, the media and other institutions would continue profiting off of the American public's growing obsession with serial killers, as countless documentaries, podcasts, books, and even halloween costumes, would be modeled after the killers, and subsequently sold for profit. In the last ten years, both Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer have gained increasing popularity as major streaming services release and promote movies and docu-series such as *Extremely Shocking*, *Wickedly Evil*, and *Vile*, *Conversations with a Killer: The Ted Bundy Tapes*, *My Friend Dahmer*, and *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*. Though sinister, the rise in the commodification of the American serial killer in pop culture has not been without cause, and arguably, the popularity of recent shows such as *The Jeffrey Dahmer Story* highlights a more complex societal condition. I would argue that the rise of the American serial killer, though largely taken advantage of for the sake of subscriptions and merchandise sales, didn't start with the sensationalization of Bundy's trials, nor did it begin with the Netflix commodification of Jeffrey Dahmer. Rather, I believe its origins can be found within each of us; wrapped up inside of our most complex fears, our instinctual empathy, and our darkest desires.

The Why - Fear

Fear, "an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain".¹⁶ As humans, we universally feel fear, whether it be relative to physical or emotional factors. We fear failure, rejection, heights, and of course, we all fear serial murder; albeit some more than others. It is the human condition to feel fear, and also to face it - to know it front and back and side to side so that when it follows you home and hides in the back seat of your car, you'll be the exception to the rule, final girl style. I would argue that among the

¹⁶ "Oxford Languages and Google - English," Oxford Languages, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>.

complex set of factors that have contributed to the rise of the American serial killer in pop culture, fear is at the top of the list. It is the human instinct to prepare for the threat of physical violence, and in a world where seemingly nothing is predictable, and especially not our safety, it is becoming increasingly clear that many of us are desperately grasping for control of our physical circumstances, trying to brace ourselves for what's to come by predicting it before it arrives. Studies have shown that near 65% of women in America consume true-crime media,¹⁷ and additionally, the FBI has stated that “women accounted for 70 percent of the 1,398 known victims of serial killers during the 1985 to 2010 time frame”.¹⁸ Though these statistics are telling, not all victims of serial murder are women, and some serial killers such as Dennis Rader and John Wayne Gacy killed not only men, but sometimes even children. Additionally, David Schmid cites the influence of media like *Criminal Minds* and *Silence of the Lambs* on the development of this kind of fear, suggesting that if there was any apprehension about this kind of fearful fascination of serial murder in the general public, it was soothed when the mass media reassured that it was “acceptable because in the process of consuming serial killer pop culture they learned about psychology and law enforcement procedure while also participating vicariously in the apprehension and conviction of these criminals.”¹⁹ In contrast with our fears of becoming victims of serial murder, I would argue that as a society we fear the possibility of relating to these killers - or worse - loving them. Seventy-seven year old Elizabeth Kloepfer, Liz,

¹⁷ Allia Luzong and About Allia Luzong I'm a 20-something writer who likes fantasy worldbuilding projects a little too much. As someone with experience in the intersections of psychology and the law, “Murder Is Girl Talk: Why Women Love True Crime,” *A Little Bit Human*, July 16, 2022, <https://www.alittlebithuman.com/why-women-love-true-crime/>.

¹⁸ “Serial Killer Myth No. 5: All Victims Are Female,” *Psychology Today* (Sussex Publishers), accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/wicked-deeds/201411/serial-killer-myth-no-5-all-victims-are-female>.

¹⁹ David Schmid, “Why Americans Are so Fascinated by Serial Killers,” *History.com* (A&E Television Networks, June 23, 2017), <https://www.history.com/news/why-americans-are-so-fascinated-by-serial-killers>.

spent the years between 1969-1974 in a committed relationship with Ted Bundy. To this day, she still has photos of Bundy holding her daughter while she rode her bike, and photos of them playing in the yard; photos taken in the same period of time that, unknown to Liz, Bundy was committing gruesome and horrific crimes against women in the night. In a recent interview with Elizabeth Kloepfer, she stated “I still have a sense of disbelief that this man that I loved and that seemed to be a great guy could go out and do such horrific things...” “...it took me so long to really fully accept that he did those things. Even after he told me that, I still was spending endless hours trying to figure out how this could be, how this man that I thought I knew could do these things.”²⁰ Ultimately, I believe that whether or not we characterize ourselves as ‘horror fans’ or ‘crime junkies’, our growing interest in the American serial killer has much less to do with how entertaining it is to learn about horrific, violent crime, and much more to do with how understanding these criminals from behind a screen, will help us evade them in the real world; to prepare for the physical and emotional dangers *before* they follow us home.

The Why - Empathy

Empathy, “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.”²¹ As humans, we empathize with houseless folks who are cold and hungry, we empathize with our friends who experience heartbreak for the first time, we even empathize with animals who are neglected or abused. Empathy, though a gut wrenching feeling at times, often draws us closer to one another - makes us wish that we could do anything to make it better. Our ability to empathize doesn’t start and end with our neighbors, or friends, but I would argue, extends outward into even the darkest corners of society, and sometimes, even further, into the screens in our living rooms. I believe

²⁰ “Serial Killer Ted Bundy’s Former Girlfriend, Her Daughter Wonder Why He Spared Them,” ABC News (ABC News Network), accessed December 7, 2022, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/serial-killer-ted-bundys-girlfriend-daughter-spared/story?id=68591141#:~:text=Elizabeth%20Kendall%20said%20she%20and%20with%20was%20a%20serial%20killer.>

²¹ “Oxford Languages and Google - English,” Oxford Languages, accessed December 7, 2022, [https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/.](https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/)

that alongside fear, it is our human ability to empathize that draws us even further into the orbit of the lives of serial killers, as we feel their struggles almost as if they were our own. When we consume media that depicts the early lives of serial murderers before their crimes, it isn't often that their childhoods and teenage years are full of happy memories and stable families. What we often see before we see them commit horrific acts of violence, is their own abuse, neglect, and pain, all of which beg us to know *more* about these people; about people like Ted Bundy, and Jeffrey Dahmer. We tell ourselves that these poor children were traumatized beyond belief, that they never had a chance, that their abusers and bullies pushed them so far that all they knew was how to mimic their own abuse. And then we see them do just that. By saying this, my intention is not to rationalize how ethical this pattern or thought process is, but rather, to probe it, and to suggest that the rise of the American serial killer in pop culture is many things, but it is also a reflection of our empathetic nature, our desire to nurture and understand those whom we with empathize with, detached from their actions. Regardless of the societal implications of this, I believe it to be relevant, and worth tucking away to consider when we feel inexplicably drawn to criminals and killers alike.

The Why - Desire (slides)

Desire, "a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen; strong sexual feeling or appetite".²² Every one of us feels desire, whether it be a longing feeling, a feeling of passion, or a feeling that feels forbidden. Alongside fear and empathy, I believe that desire occupies the most uncomfortable pocket of our obsession with serial murder, and my reasons why are two fold. Firstly, and arguably even more sinister than the general commodification of serial murder on entertainment platforms such as Netflix and Hulu, the same

²². "Oxford Languages and Google - English," Oxford Languages, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>.

platforms that house movies such as *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*, and *Curious George: A Very Monkey Christmas*, is the use of conventionally attractive, and well-loved actors to portray these violent criminals. Among the famous actors who have starred as convicted killers Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy on streaming services like Netflix and Hulu, are teenage heartthrobs Zac Efron, Ross Lynch, and Evan Peters. Though casting directors are largely to blame for choosing actors from *High School Musical* and other Disney Channel favorites to portray violent criminals - actors who occupied the niche of 'first childhood crush' to countless nineties and two-thousands kids - I would argue that we as a society have a difficult time separating actors, from their real-life counterparts, and to some degree, it is our responsibility to refrain from making connections with, and assumptions about, certain kinds of individuals, based on the initial subconscious associations we make when we see our favorite handsome actors behind the screen. In spite of this, though, sometimes the real life counterparts, the actual killers, are just as conventionally attractive as their hollywood actors. David Schmid suggests that "The disconnect between appearance and reality came to be seen as a defining trait of serial killers and is one of the main reasons Americans find them so fascinating."²³ Secondly, and certainly more controversially, we exist in a society where no matter what supposedly forbidden desires you may have in the depths of your mind, there is likely a Subreddit full of individuals who can relate to you and validate those desires, just at the end of a quick google search. The term, *Hybristophilia*, refers to the "sexual interest in and attraction to those who commit crimes", and it isn't necessarily uncommon. Many psychologists suggest that "Hybristophilia is thought to have been behind Ted Bundy's courtroom groupies," and "It's also been used to explain the frequent love letters written to killers like Jeffrey Dahmer, Charles Manson, and Richard

²³ David Schmid, "Why Americans Are so Fascinated by Serial Killers," History.com (A&E Television Networks, June 23, 2017), <https://www.history.com/news/why-americans-are-so-fascinated-by-serial-killers>.

Ramirez (who even ended up marrying one of his admirers).”²⁴ Though it may be incredibly uncomfortable to admit, many individuals who find themselves attracted to a specific serial killer, or serial killers in general, oftentimes believe that they could be the one who changes them, or be the one they spare. Maybe in some way, many of us wonder what it would feel like to be Elizabeth Kloepfer, to be the one who was just special enough to be out of the reach of Bundy’s violence.

Conclusion and Societal Implications

David Schmid suggests that by the late 1990s, the serial killer had become “a figure that inspired not only fear and disgust, but also a mixture of fascination and even a twisted kind of identification.” He cites the rise of industries such as murderabilia, or, the “online sale of artwork, letters, and a range of other items from incarcerated serial killers”, where you can buy items such as a brick from Jeffrey Dahmer’s apartment building.²⁵ Though the argument that unraveling the rise of the American serial killer in pop culture as a product of our innermost fears, empathy, and desires, may not affect the likelihood that we will consume shows such as *Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, any more or any less, I would argue that the commodification of our deepest unconscious emotions by companies such as Netflix, Hulu, or even Spirit Halloween, is a topic worth considering as we scroll through our options on movie night, and choose our costumes next Halloween. Further, I believe that regardless of the outcome, it is still important to consider the ways in which we engage our subconscious minds with the media we choose to consume, and the ways in which our societal factors are intertwined

²⁴ Kristin Canning, “Seriously Though, Why Were so Many Women Obsessed with Ted Bundy?,” *Women's Health* (Women's Health, November 2, 2021), <https://www.womenshealthmag.com/health/a27397635/ted-bundy-hybristophilia-definition/>.

²⁵ David Schmid, “Why Americans Are so Fascinated by Serial Killers,” *History.com* (A&E Television Networks, June 23, 2017), <https://www.history.com/news/why-americans-are-so-fascinated-by-serial-killers>.

with our smart TV homepages; after all, we all affect, and are affected by, pop culture - you, me,
and the rise of the American serial killer.

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Luzong, Allia, and About Allia Luzong I'm a 20-something writer who likes fantasy worldbuilding projects a little too much. As someone with experience in the intersections of psychology and the law. "Murder Is Girl Talk: Why Women Love True Crime." A Little Bit Human, July 16, 2022.

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