

True Crime

True Crime is nonfiction narratives that describe all manner of crimes, criminals, and law enforcement techniques. They may focus on violent crimes such as homicide, rape, kidnapping, and arson (among others), as well as a variety of crimes which are more fraudulent (cons, financial scams, theft) than violent. Since they are often based on horrific and abhorrent crimes, they can be quite graphic and disturbing in nature, as well as quite suspenseful.

Books

Call Numbers:

345s – Criminal law

345.766 – Criminal law – Specific jurisdictions and areas

364s – Criminology

364.152 – Criminology – Criminal offenses – Homicide

BIO – Biography

Green River, Running Red: The Real Story of the Green River Killer, America's Deadliest Serial Murderer by Ann Rule

364.152 RUL

- Veteran crime writer Ann Rule is uniquely qualified to chronicle the grisly career of Gary Ridgeway, the man convicted of being the "Green River Killer," the most prolific serial killer in American history. Not only is she one of the more successful true-crime authors, but for nearly 20 years, Rule was exceptionally close to the case, reporting on it for a Seattle newspaper, preparing a long-delayed book on the subject, and living within a few blocks of the strip of highway where most of Ridgeway's victims were abducted.

The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town by John Grisham

345.766 GRI

- In 1982 former major league baseball player Ron Williamson was convicted and sent to death row for the rape and murder of a 21-year-old waitress named Debra Sue Carter. Eventually a new trial and DNA evidence would show that Williamson (who also struggled with drug addiction and mental illness) and Dennis Fritz, another man convicted of the crime, were innocent and had been wrongfully convicted.

Thunderstruck by Erik Larson

364.152 LAR

- Larson combines a true crime narrative of Dr. Hawley Crippen's 1910 murder of his wife with the history of the invention of wireless communication (and its controversial inventor Guglielmo Marconi).

Where the Money Was by Willie Sutton

364.1 SUT

- Unarguably America's most famous bank robber, Willie never injured a soul, but took on almost a hundred banks and departed three of America's most escape-proof penitentiaries. This is the stuff of myth - rascally and cautionary by turns - yet true in every searing, diverting, and brilliantly recalled detail.

You Got Nothing Coming: Notes from a Prison Fish by Jimmy A. Lerner

BIO LER

- Convicted of manslaughter in Las Vegas, Jimmy A. Lerner was sent to serve his time in a Nevada state prison; he tells the story of his years there in this graphic and honest memoir. Lerner's reporting on his fellow inmates and re-creation of their dialogue makes this a quick read, and although some critics found the idea of reading a convicted felon's prison narrative distasteful, readers may find themselves drawn in by his writing skills and charisma, as well as by his narrative prowess in relating the details of the crime for which he was convicted.

Library Databases

Reader's Advisor

- In this database you can find more recommendations for crime books. Once you've opened the database, go to "Advanced Search" >> Under the "Genres, Subgenres, and Appeals" section, Click on the "True Crime (Non-Fiction)" until it looks blue >> Then click "search."

Movies

Aileen: life and death of a serial killer

DVD 364.1523 AIL

~ Nick Broomfield explores the life of Aileen Wuornos, the prostitute executed in Florida for killing six men. Includes examinations of her childhood, testimony at her trial by Broomfield, and a chilling speech by Wuornos herself.

The Murder of Emmett Till

DVD 364.1523 MUR

~ Accounts the murder of fourteen-year-old, Emmett Till, in Mississippi, in 1955.

Murder at Harvard

DVD 364.1523 MUR

In November 1849, Dr. George Parkman, one of Boston's richest citizens, suddenly disappeared. ~ The Medical School's janitor, Ephraim Littlefield, who had a suspicion where Parkman might be found, spent two grueling nights

tunneling beneath a basement laboratory looking for clues. What he discovered horrified Boston and led to one of the most sensational trials in American history.

The world history of organized crime

DVD 364.106 WOR

~ A comprehensive look at the operations of the most infamous outlaw syndicates on earth. Featuring interviews with highly-placed officials and convicted gangsters from Russia, Colombia, Sicily, China and India.

Music

Many songs are reported to be about serial killers, murder, robberies, and other true crimes. The validity of these is up for debate, but they are still fun to listen to.

The Green Book of Songs by Subject

REF 016.7824 GRE

~ This book catalogs songs by category. To find songs about crime, look under the subject headings "Crime" or "Kill." More category suggestions are available at the beginning of each of these sections.

Available at Central, STC, BVL, PC

Some suggestions to start:

Song: "Nebraska" by Bruce Springsteen

The essential Bruce Springsteen

CD POP/ROCK SPR

"Murder By Numbers" by The Police

Message in a box: the complete recordings

CD POP/ROCK POL

Websites:

Court TV's Crime Library

<http://www.crimelibrary.com/>

~ Contains hundreds of "stories on major crimes, criminals, trials, forensics and criminal profiling." Content "focus[es] mostly on recent crimes, but an expanding collection also delves into historically notorious characters, dating back to the 1400s and spanning the globe."

GangRule.com: The History of Organized Crime

<http://www.gangrule.com/>

~ "A historical look at the emergence of organized crime since 1890. The site has a database of known gang members [in three organizations], historic events and family histories, along with photographs, newspaper cuttings and official documents."

LooksTooGoodToBeTrue.com

<http://www.lookstoogoodtobetrue.com>

~ This website contains background information and alerts about Internet scams and fraud, covering topics such as identity theft, hacking, phishing, spam, spyware, job scams, Ponzi and pyramid schemes, online auctions, sweepstakes and lotteries, and counterfeit payments. Includes a FAQ, victims' stories, a fraud risk test, and links to places to file a complaint about online fraud.

Unabomber

<http://www.unabombertrial.com/>

~ The Sacramento Bee's coverage of the trial of Theodore Kaczynski. This site includes a story archive, details of the investigation, information on the key participants, a timeline, the "Unabomber Manifesto," public record court documents, photos, and videos.