



Serial Killers

By William M. Harmening

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Whether it be Jack the Ripper in nineteenth-century England or Ted Bundy in 1970s America, the public has always been fascinated by the criminal offender type known as the serial killer. Professionals continue to speculate and develop new theories about their identity decades after their crimes ended. But what is it that causes such evilness in individuals that causes them to take an innocent life, not once but multiples times, and for no apparent reason beyond their own perverse psychological gratification? This fascinating book explores this question by looking at the psychosocial determinants of criminal behavior, including serial murder. The role of such internal processes as attachment, moral development, and identity formation in the development of a person's predisposition to various forms of deviance, including physical and sexual aggression, is reviewed. This information is then applied to actual serial killers, including David Berkowitz (The Son of Sam), Charles Manson, Eric Rudolph (God's Crusader), Ted Bundy (The Face of Evil), Edmund Kemper (The Co-ed Killer), and the Zodiac Killer, in an effort to construct a psychosocial profile of each and to attempt to pinpoint the various developmental factors that contributed to their eventual criminality. Finally, early intervention strategies are explored that can potentially redirect a child's developmental trajectory away from crime and deviance, and toward a more adaptive and socially acceptable behavioral repertoire. This book will be an insightful resource to all law enforcement professionals, policymakers, police academics, psychologists, psychiatrists, and many others in the helping professions as well.

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