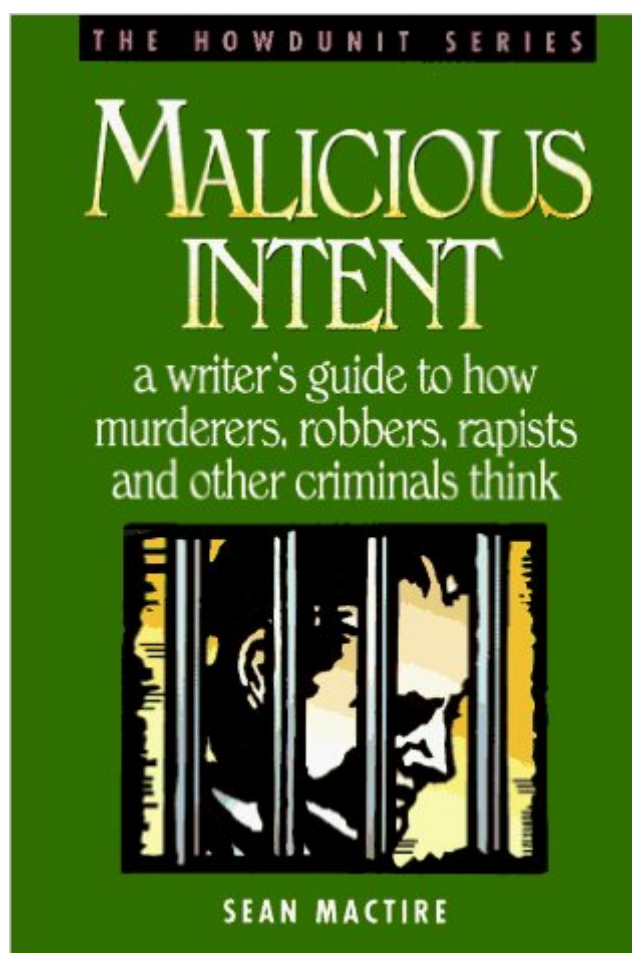


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Malicious Intent : A Writer's Guide To How Murderers, Robbers, Rapists And Other Criminals Think (The Howdunit)



Synopsis

Never before has such specialized information been so thoroughly compiled and easily accessible to writers! Each book is written by a professional in their respective field, providing the inside details that writers need to weave a credible -- and salable -- story.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book was just disappointing and irritating on many levels. I don't consider myself to be an expert on crime, but I do consider myself to be well-read. The author takes the most common ideas about criminals and lays them out as fact. He doesn't support almost any of it with any kind of statistic or study, and also doesn't offer that there could be other factors or differing opinions of why these crimes occur. Supporting evidence is sorely lacking. His psychological explanations really grated on my nerves. Anyone who had studied psychology knows there are a wide range of divisions of psychology. He takes one position in psychology and preaches it as the only interpretation. Admittedly, most individuals in psychology take one position and exclude the others, but it doesn't give you a completely accurate view of the events you're analyzing if you refuse to allow for other view. It was grating to read, and I had a hard time making my way through the book. Some of the examples are poorly supported and explained OR are still under debate as to real criminals who committed the crime. As someone who has read about a some of the crimes listed, I found that this author has omitted theories, has omitted facts and just ran with the most popular

theory, regardless of facts. The only thing I did appreciate was the opening of the history of these types of criminals. However, even then I was disappointed with the lack of background info and the brevity of the history of these types of crimes. I'm hesitant to recommend this book for beginners simply because it is such a narrow view of the possibilities, of the facts and is just lacking in anything helpful. Almost everything listed in the book I already had read about or studied. Spend your money and time elsewhere. You'll be better served if you do.

This guy claims expertise he does not have. It is clear that this he thinks combining a mish-mash of disorganized facts and questionable opinions in an endless series of lists and bullet-points makes for writing a book. An example is his useless list of potential crime victims, including laughable characterizations like "Business people -- vulnerable anytime, anywhere," and "Police officers -- easily isolated and overwhelmed." Another bizarre, casually-made and unexplained statement: "The availability of weapons has nothing to do with the incidence of domestic homicides." Or "Drive-by shooting victims are generally children." Huh? And the worst of it is these are not rare hiccups -- these disparate and doubtful claims are all from the same randomly-selected page. This book is a compendium of nonsense like this. One could learn more about how criminals think by watching an old episode of "Knight Rider."

This book reads like the author copied his facts from an encyclopaedia. There is no real, up to date info on the topic. This is what I, as a buyer, was looking for. I returned this book very disappointed. Writer's Digest should insist on having authors who really work in the field they are writing in, so as to lend authenticity. Some books in the Howdunit series that are far superior are *Modus Operandi & Murder One*, which were written by real-life detectives Paglino & Corvasce.

The author reaches several conclusions without ever explaining how he got there. He also contradicts himself on a fairly regular basis as if he cannot remember what he wrote 10 pages earlier. And while we all agree that murder is a horrible, hateful crime the author constantly interjects his own poorly chosen adjectives to highlight his personal take on the crimes: "this evil deed". The perfect example of poorly written this book would be is when he offers a modern "profile" of Jack the Ripper at the end of Chapter 2. This "profile" ends up being nothing more than a rehash of facts and theories. Not only does it offer nothing new on Jack, but it isn't even a profile of the killer it is more of a description of the crimes.

I've enjoyed many of the Howdunit Series books. Although Mr. Mactire seemed to have little expertise in criminal psychology except related to domestic crime, I thought Mr. Mactire might be a self-made expert on criminal thinking. Unfortunately, although he has done the research, Mr. Mactire uses the book primarily as a launching pad for his personal opinions on social ills and historical events. In virtually every chapter, there is a categorical conclusion with no attempt at justification. Examples include: [One reason the U.S. is "the only Western industrialized nation with such a dominant organized crime problem":] "Others had Hitler, Stalin, and other tyrants in power, but we were stuck with J. Edgar Hoover." (p. 163) [Another reason:] "No one other industrialized nation has such disgusting, destructive and oppressive slums as America." (p. 163) [Historical crimes]: "During the sixteenth century...thousands of political and nonpolitical crimes were committed in the name of the Christian faith. The worst of these was the 'witchcraft craze.' [What about the Crusades!]...[T]he whole concept of Satan and Devil worship was a lie the Church invented to help consolidate its power." (pages 14-15) [On Battered Wife Syndrome]: "Unfortunately, Battered Wife Syndrome is only admissable unconditionally in seven states and conditionally in five states. The rest don't care or have poor excuses to disallow the evidence." (p. 211) Mr. Mactire denounces many "myths" regarding criminal thinking which are really just other perspectives on some controversial topics. For example, Mr. Mactire is of the opinion that drug addicts and other criminals suffering from "impulse disorders" can never be rehabilitated, even when they plea for help: "The offender does want help - help to continue his or her criminal behavior." (p. 219) Never does Mr. Mactire admit to any legitimate disagreement or controversy within the field. Mr. Mactire never qualifies his opinions as such. To his credit, the chapters on domestic and child violence, though sprinkled with his frustrating biases, are well organized and thoroughly discussed. Historical and literary anecdotes are used effectively. To conclude, "Malicious Intent," is a disappointing installment in the Howdunit Series that failed in its purpose as a writer's guide to the complexities of criminal psychology. But if you want Mr. Mactire's overly-simplistic opinions on difficult social issues and historical events, this is the book for you.

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