



Whoever Fights Monsters: My Twenty Years Tracking Serial Killers for the FBI

Robert K. Ressler , Tom Shachtman

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Face-to-face with some of America's most terrifying killers, FBI veteran and ex-Army CID colonel Robert Ressler learned from then how to identify the unknown monsters who walk among us--and put them behind bars. Now the man who coined the phrase "serial killer" and advised Thomas Harris on *The Silence of the Lambs* shows how he is able to track down some of today's most brutal murderers.

Just as it happened in *The Silence of the Lambs*, Ressler used the evidence at a crime scene to put together a psychological profile of the killers. From the victims they choose, to the way they kill, to the often grotesque souvenirs they take with them--Ressler unlocks the identities of these vicious killers of the police to capture.

And with his discovery that serial killers share certain violent behaviors, Ressler's gone behind prison walls to hear the bizarre first-hand stories countless convicted murderers. Getting inside the mind of a killer to understand how and why he kills, is one of the FBI's most effective ways of helping police bring in killers who are still at large.

Join Ressler as he takes you on the hunt for today's most dangerous psychopaths. It is a terrifying journey you will not forget.

Whoever Fights Monsters: My Twenty Years Tracking Serial Killers for the FBI Details

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From Reader Review Whoever Fights Monsters: My Twenty Years Tracking Serial Killers for the FBI for online ebook

Estcavi says

libro absolutamente brutal. Nos adentramos en la mentalidad de asesinos en serie, y disecciona sus antecedentes familiares, sus sexualidad, los abusos que ha podido sufrir durante su infancia, trazando las causas que pueden llevar a cometer esos crímenes atroces.

al final llegas a la conclusión de que se siguen una serie de patrones.

me ha parecido muy interesante y no podía dejar de leer.

BAM The Bibliomaniac says

Audio # 26

Beginning in the 70s with the infamous Ted Bundy and ending in the 90s with Jeffrey Dahmer, this is the tale of the burgeoning BSU and the man who made friends with some of the most notorious killers the USA has known. Certain cases are studied and details are provided on how criminal profiles were developed. This book is a bit dated. At the end one realizes Gacy and Dahmer were still alive; Harris had just released *Silence of the Lambs*. But it still packs a powerful punch. If you choose audio the narration is excellent.

Lisa says

I don't know how I'd never heard of this book before. First hearing about it on *My Favourite Murder*, I'd already read and loved *Mindhunter*, by Robert K Ressler's sometime partner John Douglas. Having loved that, I was pleasantly surprised to find that *Whoever Fights Monsters* was even better.

Robert K Ressler was the FBI agent who pretty much started the whole profiling ball rolling, when he took it upon himself to start interviewing some of the worst serial murderers the American justice system has ever caught and incarcerated. If you've heard of them, he's interviewed them – including Charles Manson, Ed Kemper, John Wayne Gacy, Ted Bundy and many, many more – and recounts much of their interviews within (including a truly terrifying anecdote about interviewing Ed Kemper). Far more than detailing his career and the cases he's worked on, as in *Mindhunter*, *Whoever Fights Monsters* is far more interested in the art of profiling itself, which made it infinitely more interesting to me.

Whether it be talking about how to interview a subject, the different backgrounds and stressors that can apply to different kinds of murderers, how one goes about assessing a crime scene, how the art of profiling has evolved or the prospects of rehabilitation, every single page was packed with fascinating material. I spent all of my lunch breaks for the past week feeling like I was taking the best class of my life, and I would give anything to have been able to have sit in on any of Ressler's real-life lectures on the subject. I'm more disappointed than ever that my younger self didn't pursue the education I'd have needed to have gone into this field, and will have to be happy with armchair detecting instead.

If you're at all interested in profiling, stop what you're doing and buy this book immediately. You won't

regret it.

****Also posted at Cannonball read 9****

Lynda Kelly says

A great book from a guy who's always been dead close to the "action" if you like, and knows all the ins and outs of a lot of serial murders.

Rebecca McNutt says

Whoever Fights Monsters was disturbing as heck but incredibly detailed and well-written, definitely worth reading if you're a fan of true crime, behavioral analysis, police procedural or psychology.

Rose says

This book contains graphic descriptions of horrific crimes, photos of dead bodies at crime scenes, plus a lot of information that would be quite useful to killers wanting to fool those hunting them.

That being said, I find it slightly disturbing that my copy of this book, which has been so well-read that it is falling to pieces, has come through inter-library loan from my local prison. My county doesn't have any other copies of this book.

Some helpful notations have been added by a previous reader. In particular, every time he (or she) considers that the police have had a lucky break in a case, "LUCK" is noted in the margin. Thank you, mystery reader, that significantly clarifies matters. I'm not sure what the distinction is between the double-lines-down-the-side and the crosses-in-the-margin, and maybe I don't want to know. Many pages appear to have been attacked by pasta sauce, but I feel that this does not reflect any kind of scholarly annotation.

Now, would I get reading experiences of this kind if I bought all my books pristine, or downloaded them onto my hygienic Kindle? I think not.

PS. This book's interesting antecedence fails to beat the book I once bought second-hand, called "How Brains Work". This contained, like pressed flowers between its pages, about 20 sheets of tinfoil that had apparently been used to smoke drugs off - blackened underneath, with residues of presumably heroin on the top.

Estcavi says

Yo que soy una enamorada del thriller es evidente que me ha encantado, en este caso robert k. resler nos habla de los asuntos en los que ha llevado a cabo un estudio de perfiles de los asesinos, su infancia, y los

estresores que les llevaron a cometer asesinatos en serie.

Katherine Addison says

This is exactly what it says on the tin: Ressler's memoir of being an FBI profiler. He talks about a great many murderers, and has a wonderfully practical, commonsense style, both in writing and in his approach to analyzing homicidal psychotics and psychopaths. In his hands, the "organized/disorganized" schema makes sense and is a useful analytical tool. (He bemoans the fact that all his students want a checklist, a black box they can put their data into and get an accurate profile out of, and I totally see how that desire has shaped a lot of "profiling" since Ressler's retirement.)

He has the same problem that bedevils all the books in this genre; "I did this and this and **this** was awesome and **this** got me a commendation and **this** changed the way we understand sociopaths . . ." I know Ressler isn't bragging--he and Bill Bass are the only two of these guys I've found thus far who will tell stories on themselves--but there's no way he can explain **why** he's writing this memoir **without** sounding like he's bragging: because it's a memoir about what he's **done**, not who he **is**. Much of who he is shows through in what he does, but the emphasis is most definitely on actions and accomplishments--and how can we possibly know why what he's done is important unless he tells us?

Ressler comes across better than anyone except Bill Bass. I appreciate deeply pragmatic people. And he writes very lucidly about some very murky subjects.

AC says

In addition to many interesting and morbid details, this book contains (in ch. 4) a profound and insightful 'deep-dive' into the inner workings of serial mind. It will be of interest to anyway trying to understand the nature of psychopaths of whatever sort. Ressler also explains the meaning of the term 'serial killer', which he coined — not simply a numerical series, but an evolutive series in which fantasy and act develop into an ever expanding loop

Sara says

I've read a few of these FBI non fiction murder books now, most noticeably Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit, which I found more interesting than this. Unfortunately I found Robert Ressler not as charismatic as Douglas in his examination and explanation of various cases - although his knowledge is undeniable. He's just a bit more sedate and academically inclined compared to Douglas' more sensationalist approach. I will say his personality is slightly less irritating than Douglas though, as he tends not to self congratulate as much (it does happen though). I would have preferred more talk about the various cases rather than Ressler's personal background too, but understand that it might have been necessary to include it to gain an insight into Ressler's way of thinking etc.

The book is also obviously dated, with no new chapters referencing anything past the early 1990s. I really need to find more modern texts, but so far nothing is quite as superior as these for definitive facts and information relating to violent crimes etc.

Overall, this was good but historical, and covers a fair few crimes I hadn't heard of and examined them in a clean analytical way. Any recommendations for something more recent would be appreciated!

Jackie says

An interesting enough book, but I found myself frequently distracted by the desire to make an armchair diagnosis of the author himself, who spent a good 10% of the book either patting himself on the back via cheesy quotes from letter of commendation, or digressing into the settling of petty scores over past slights. (For example, he spends a good page-and-a-half explaining why he was late for his orientation as a new FBI agent, why it wasn't his fault, and why the superior who called him on it was out of line.) Overall, this is a nice introduction to the subject of serial killers and the history of profiling in the FBI.

Andre Dumas says

I literally could not put this book down..AND at the same time wanted to read it slowly so that it would never end. For a lot of people this will seem weird as the book is very gruesome and terrifying but I just found it pretty damn interesting.

Whoever Fights Monsters details Robert Ressler's career with the FBI in his revolutionary quest to fine tune the process of profiling serial killers. If you're not familiar with Ressler then just know this--he actually coined the term 'serial killer' He was also the main point of reference for Thomas Harris when he was writing Red Dragon and Silence of the Lambs. He also started that little interviewing project where FBI agents interviewed serial killers around the country to find out more about them in hopes of identifying future serial killers.

The book takes you through actual cases where Ressler's profiles helped the FBI nab the killers, Ressler's actual interviews with serial killers like Charles Manson, Ed Kemper and John Wayne Gacy as well as just some cold hard facts like recognizing the difference between disorganized and organized killers, how and why some serial killers use staging to their advantage among other topics that Ressler's usually covered in his classes.

The book also includes 2 series of photos showing serial killers, crime scenes and in some cases gruesome photos of some victims (although these are tame compared to a regular internet search).

I would give this 5 stars but Ressler occasionally seemed a little braggish about all his awards and accolades.....hmm actually whatever I'm giving it 5 because he deserves it.

Serial killers have always fascinated me mostly on the psychological side of things and this book truly was right up my alley. I found it exciting, terrifying and extremely interesting. A must read for lovers of Thomas Harris or anyone curious to know about inner workings of the FBI and criminal profiling.

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Serial killers

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Tess Taylor says

3- Robert Ressler was an FBI agent who spent the majority of his career profiling murderers. His claim to fame is that he coined the term "serial killer." During his time at the bureau, he worked on many of the top crime cases and interviewed many of the most notorious humans of the 20th century. His career is fascinating, but I found his autobiography to be lackluster.

I wanted (and expected) to like *Whoever Fights Monsters*, but I had a hard time with Ressler's writing style and the book's formatting. He covers a lot of ground in regards to his career and the cases he created profiles for, but instead of being insightful, it felt disorganized, egocentric, and ungraceful. I understand that he helped catch many violent criminals, but Ressler pats himself on the back *a lot* for his profiling work throughout the book. He even opens the book *with one of his own quotes*. Oh brother.

Ressler's autobiography contains many engrossing sections, but for me it just didn't add up to a complete or compelling FBI-based true crime novel. If that's what you are interested in, might I suggest Gary Noesner's *Stalling for Time* instead?

ElphaReads says

So I guess I'm on a true crime kick at the moment. Thanks, MY FAVORITE MURDER podcast! It's like I'm sixteen again. This time I read *WHOEVER FIGHTS MONSTERS* by Robert Ressler, an FBI agent and profiler that has spoken and worked with numerous notorious serial killers over the years. I think that the character of Jack Crawford from *THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* is based off of him as well, but don't quote me on that. I got this book on ILL through the library, and settled in for a morbid and fascinating read.

Robert Ressler was an FBI agent and profiler whose work focused on the minds and psychology of violent criminals. He gave input on numerous cases and did a lot to bring attention and education to the pathology of murders, and this is his story and his insights of his time working with the likes of Bundy, Gacy, Kemper, and others.

Ressler really knows what he's talking about when it comes to violent offenders. He had a certain way with them that he could build a rapport with a few of them and get information from the as to what motivated them (when they were willing to cooperate, that is). I liked his insights not only into their minds, but his thoughts on the criminal justice system as a whole. I was put off by his unrepentant crowing about being an undercover plant in anti-war groups during the Vietnam War, but was heartened to hear his thoughts on why the Death Penalty doesn't actually do anything constructive. And yeah, I was super fascinated by his personal stories of interactions with people like Gacy, Dahmer, and Kemper. He did a good job of not glamorizing them, while also reminding the reader that the darkness in these men came from somewhere, and that it's a disservice to merely write them off as monsters.

It didn't really tell me anything new, but it was still a pretty good read for a true crime fan.
