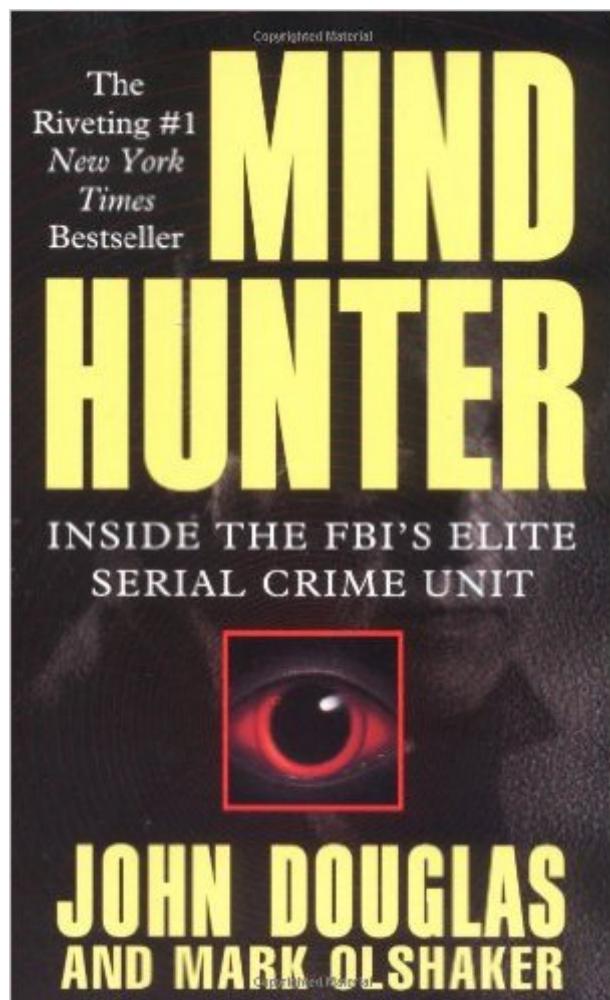


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Mind Hunter: Inside The FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit



Synopsis

In chilling detail, the legendary Mindhunter takes us behind the scenes of some of his most gruesome, fascinating, and challenging cases "and into the darkest recesses of our worst nightmares. During his twenty-five year career with the Investigative Support Unit, Special Agent John Douglas became a legendary figure in law enforcement, pursuing some of the most notorious and sadistic serial killers of our time: the man who hunted prostitutes for sport in the woods of Alaska, the Atlanta child murderer, and Seattle's Green River killer, the case that nearly cost Douglas his life. As the model for Jack Crawford in *The Silence of the Lambs*, Douglas has confronted, interviewed, and studied scores of serial killers and assassins, including Charles Manson, Ted Bundy, and Ed Gein, who dressed himself in his victims' peeled skin. Using his uncanny ability to become both predator and prey, Douglas examines each crime scene, reliving both the killer's and the victim's actions in his mind, creating their profiles, describing their habits, and predicting their next moves.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a great start to those who are interested in behavioral sciences, the subject profiling or life in the FBI. The book is detailed in the techniques John Douglas developed and is very easy to read for a person who is not familiar with psychology. The book starts off with Douglas' early life, entry into the FBI, and the struggles he endured to get profiling on the map. Then, Douglas proceeds in showing the reader how success in famous cases thereafter solidified profiling as a

real, if somewhat imperfect, science. Douglas goes case by case, pointing out what he looks for in determining the type of killer responsible, and the clues needed to single out the offender. If you are interested in profiling, John Douglas will show you how he and others like him have done it for years. Unlike the previous reviewer stated, Douglas DOES show you how a trained professional would profile a criminal, but the reader should not expect to be able to profile someone themselves because it takes years of experience and training. He shows the reader what type of physical and behavioral evidence he looks for when creating a profile. In one chapter, he even decides to take you step by step in detail on how he developed a profile for a killer. Profiling is a behavioral science technique and while Douglas integrates psychological theory, it does not get at all technical or something that the reader will not understand. Douglas and Olshaker made sure this was a book that anyone could read. John Douglas covers a lot of cases in this book and while they may not be detailed to every piece of evidence in the case, the book overall succeeds in showing the reader how the cases were solved, a general idea of FBI life, profiling, and the criminal mind.... And no, as explained in Douglas' books, serial killers or others cannot read this book and come up with a way to get away with murder... an attempt by a killer to use this sort of tactic would just implicate him further by blatant behavioral cues, as explained. If you like this book, I would definitely recommend any of John Douglas and Mark Olshaker's books.

This is the first of Douglas' books I've read. After having read Robert Ressler's 2 books, I found this to be more of the same serial killer profiles, with a different spin on the same cases that Ressler reviews in his books. "Mind Hunter" has more of Douglas' personal & professional journey woven into his case studies. It's somewhat boastful of his accomplishments, and, at times, self congratulatory, but still very interesting. The book achieves a good level of insightfulness into the minds and psychopathology of the serial killers profiled. The disappointment lies, however, in that Douglas casually glosses over exactly how his profiles are derived and constructed from the particular facts of each case. Little to no analytic methodology is presented. (I mean, it's not as if readers are gonna run out and take his job away from him if he reveals too many tricks of his trade). In fact, Douglas presents his ability to profile as if he's a magical psychic, pulling personality theories out of his hat. Low and behold! - once the investigations are complete, he ends up with an accurate profile, and people are amazed by him! Nonetheless, it's an enjoyable and very interesting book. If you're interested in criminal profiling, it's worth a read, but it's not as in-depth as say, Michaud and Hazelwood's "The Evil that Men Do".

What many reviewers of John Douglas and Mark Olshaker's book seemed to have overlooked is the tie-in between the biographical information and the profiling techniques John helped to develop. The story of John's mother inquiring into his sex life leads directly to his 'everybody has a rock' theory. The story of betting on raindrops clearly shows why criminals continue to commit crimes: because they can. John's other biographical stories help illustrate how difficult life inside the FBI can be. The list of victims in a murder isn't limited to the one murdered; they include the family, neighbors, friends, investigators working a case and Federal law enforcement officers and their families. Anyone considering a career in law enforcement or with the Bureau, should take this into consideration before signing on. In the context of writing, there are two ways to tell a story; telling vs showing. Mark and John chose to write this book by showing the reader how profiles are constructed. No, you won't find a step-by-step instruction manual within these pages, but you will find the method fully illustrated. An example is the Trailside Killer profile. Carpenter approached his victims in isolated areas and used a blitz attack from the rear to disable them. John Douglas wondered why and took the reader through the steps; the killer didn't attempt to lure or trick his victims as had Bundy. Instead, the killer felt the need to take the victims by surprise even in isolated areas of Tamalpais Park. This told John the killer felt awkward, possibly had a handicap. A physical impairment or disfigurement would have been noticed by others in the park at the time of the murders. That left a speech impediment. The rest of the reasoning behind the profile is detailed quite clearly. John's methods aren't magic but a result of years of studying human nature, a creative way of thinking about a problem and a background based on intensive interviews with hundreds of convicted killers. Ego plays a large part in the life of any law enforcement officer. Had John Douglas or Robert Ressler, or Roy Hazelwood spoken to police departments in an unsure manner, would any of those agencies have paid attention? That confidence carries over into real life and to the written word. For those seeking an inside look at the FBI, there are other books available.

Mindhunter, however, is the story of the FBI's first profilers (All of them, not just Douglas) and a look at the Behavioral Science Unit. Mindhunter, along with John's other books co-authored with Mark Olshaker, show the impact of murder on those closest to the crimes --the families and loved ones. John Douglas' caring for the surviving victims shines from every page in which he talks about that impact, the friendships formed through tragedy, the advocacy of victim's rights and his push to have VICAP become mandatory. If I could give a higher rating, I would rate Mindhunter a 10.

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