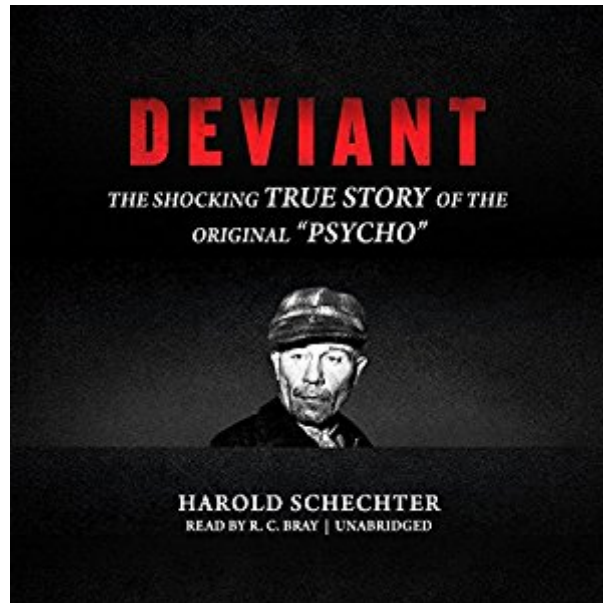


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Deviant: The Shocking True Story Of Ed Gein, The Original "Psycho"



Synopsis

From "America's principal chronicler of its greatest psychopathic killers" (Boston Book Review) comes the definitive account of Ed Gein, a mild-mannered Wisconsin farmhand who stunned an unsuspecting nation - and redefined the meaning of the word psycho. The year was 1957. The place was an ordinary farmhouse in America's heartland, filled with extraordinary evidence of unthinkable depravity. The man behind the massacre was a slight, unassuming Midwesterner with a strange smile - and an even stranger attachment to his domineering mother. After her death and a failed attempt to dig up his mother's body from the local cemetery, Gein turned to other grave robberies and, ultimately, multiple murders. Driven to commit gruesome and bizarre acts beyond all imagination, Ed Gein remains one of the most deranged minds in the annals of American homicide. This is his story, recounted in fascinating and chilling detail by Harold Schechter, one of the most acclaimed true-crime storytellers of our time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a well-researched book about Ed Gein, the mild mannered, Midwestern psychopath from Plainfield, Wisconsin who, in the nineteen fifties, would shock the nation with his gruesome crimes. Ed Gein would become the basis for the best selling book by Robert Bloch, "Psycho", as well as for the Hitchcock film of the same name. Accounts of Ed Gein's heinous crimes would also enter the consciousness of a young Tobe Hooper who, as an adult, would write and direct the classic cult film, "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre". The author writes a cogent, factual account of the life of Ed Gein

and the grisly crimes that shocked the nation at the time of their discovery. It details the hold that Ed's domineering mother had on him, a hold that would manifest itself in unimaginable ways. It is almost hard to believe that this small, inoffensive man could be such a madman, but who but a madman would do what he did? Ed Gein, it was discovered, had turned his small farmhouse into a gruesome charnel house, replete with furnishings adorned with human flesh and bones. Aficionados of true crime will find this book fascinating, as it is a well-written account of one of the most horrifying and bizarre series of crimes ever to be committed. Eight pages of photographs are included in the book and serve to provide the reader with a brief, visual glimpse into the life of Ed Gein, a man with a secret hobby so depraved that it would shock the entire nation when it came to light. Lovers of true crime accounts will be fascinated by this well researched foray into the life of a seemingly innocuous man from America's heartland who ended up being so deviant from the norm.

Edward Gein, pronounced Geen, is often credited as the a forefather of America's fascination with serial killers. Because Gein is credited as being the inspiration for such films as Psycho and Texas Chainsaw Massacre, many misconceptions exist about him. Harold Schechter sets the record straight in Deviant. Schechter begins the story in Gein's bizarre childhood which is noteworthy because of his lazy and abusive father and dominating mother. It is his dominating mother that had the greatest influence on him. She taught him that women were evil. His mother's death left a void in his life that left him longing for her and the saintly image he placed on her. This led Gein to punish women less worthy than his mother to live by killing them. Gein only admitted to killing two people. The body parts that were scattered over his property would indicate more victims. Additionally, Gein believes he has the power to will his mother back to life. While he is unable to bring his mother back from the grave, he does remove many with similarities to his mother from their graves. When Gein's crimes were discovered, little known Plainfield, Wisconsin was forever changed into a tourist attraction for gapers. Although Gein died largely anonymously in a mental health facility, the stories of his house of horrors prospered. While his story is often obscured in films and other books, Schechter sets the record straight. This is a thoroughly researched, commendable book. It is the best book available on Edward Gein

I found this book to be extremely well-written and informative. The details of Gein's family history and of his crimes are fairly well covered in the true-crime books that make reference to him, but the aftermath is usually not examined very closely - and this book fills in the blanks, describing not only what led up to Gein's arrest, but also the whole media madness that ensued afterwards. The way

Eddie was catapulted to "stardom" literally overnight was astonishing - an estimated 4,000 cars filed past Gein's farm on a single weekend after the news of his deeds had spread throughout the nation, and his story was on the front pages of "Life" and "Time" magazines, as well as just about every major newspaper. The details of Eddie's confessions and the quotes from psychiatric reports are very interesting as well. While it may be impossible to fully understand mental illness, this book makes an attempt to explore the workings of a demented mind. (Note: this book has none of the usual gory photos; for these, see judge Gollmar's book.)

In "Deviant," Harold Schechter presents an interesting, informative, and meticulously-researched treatment of one of the most notorious figures in the annals of American crime. Without resorting to sensationalism, Schechter creates a factual, in-depth portrait of Ed Gein, who has both horrified and fascinated Americans for over four decades. Schechter's work is well-organized and highly readable, and gives the reader an unsettling glimpse into the twisted mind of a maniac, without the luridness which is so often encountered in other works of this genre. A wealth of background information provides great insight into the making of a modern-day monster. Highly recommended!

I've heard of Ed Gein off and on for many years. I've heard his crimes were of an unspeakable, stomach-churning, monstrous nature. Yet again, I wanted to satisfy my somewhat morbid curiosity and see just how morbid his crimes were. I was repelled. Psycho, The Silence of the Lambs, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre...all of these films came to, thanks to Eddie and his crimes. A cannibal, necro-sadist grave robber. Not even in fiction have I seen a person crazier than Gein. Harold Schechter does a job that is, in a word, brilliant. As awkward as it may seem, I sympathize with Gein. If his early life hadn't been as it had, he most probably wouldn't have gone so over the edge as he had done in his later life. It is true to say his crimes are inexcusable, but Schechter looks at it in such an angle that I actually (believe it or not) saw a reason for Gein acting in the way he did...as depraved, as sickly demented as it was. It is highly informative, and written very well. There is not a single boring moment in it. It is impeccably researched. And, believe it or not, it's a true story. This actually happened.

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