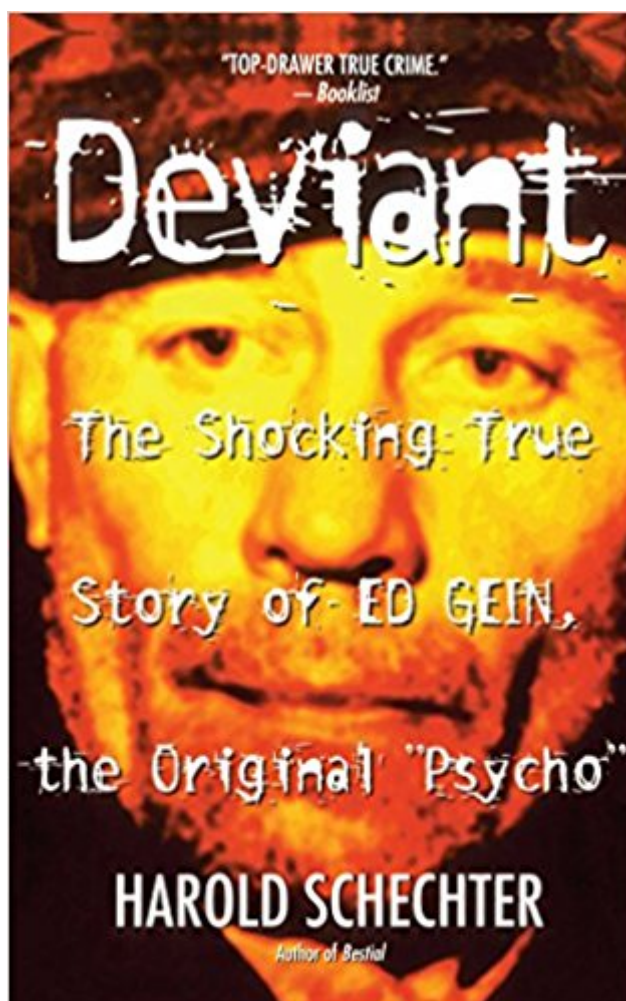


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Deviant: The Shocking True Story Of Ed Gein, The Original Psycho



Synopsis

The truth behind the twisted crimes that inspired the films *Psycho*, *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, and *The Silence of the Lambs*... From *“America’s principal chronicler of its greatest psychopathic killers”* (The 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 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 imagining, 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.

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Customer Reviews

Harold Schechter is a historian: he takes old files and yellowed newspaper clippings, and brings their stories to life. *Deviant* is about everyone’s favorite ghoul, Ed Gein—whose crimes inspired the writers of *Psycho*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, and *The Silence of the Lambs*. Schechter deftly evokes the small-town 1950s Wisconsin setting—not pretty farms and cheese factories, but infertile

soil and a bleak, hardscrabble existence. The details of Gein's "death house" are perhaps well known by now, but the murderer's quietly crazy, almost gentle personality comes forth in this book as never before. As Gary Kadet wrote, in The Boston Book Review, "Schechter is a dogged researcher [who backs up] every bizarre detail and curious twist in this and his other books ... More importantly, he nimbly avoids miring his writing and our reading with minutiae or researched overstatement, which means that although he can occasionally be dry, he is never boring." Also recommended: Schechter's books about Albert Fish (Deranged) and Herman Mudgett a.k.a. Dr. H. H. Holmes (Depraved).

"Top-drawer true crime." -- "Booklist"

Do you like horror stories? Well, look no further, this book is for you! This is the biography of the most infamous ghoul and necrophiliac in American history: Edward Gein. Born to George and Augusta Gein on August 27, 1906, Eddie's sad and pitiful life was doomed from the very beginning. His father was a raging alcoholic who beat him continually, and his mother was an extremely domineering religious fanatic who never showed him any compassion or love whatsoever. Because of his mother's twisted teachings and beliefs about society: ESPECIALLY on the subject of women, Eddie became introverted, withdrawn and didn't understand how to interact with human beings. He was socially unaccepted and teased throughout his dismal and lonely youth. Even if he did manage to find someone willing to be his friend, his mother wouldn't allow it. Men were "filthy, vile creatures who only thought of sex", and women were wicked, soul snatching abominations. In essence, his mother was the only world he ever knew. Now, for the good stuff! (And this was my favorite part of the book because it describes in great detail the events leading up to, and the discoveries made after his arrest.) After she died, Eddie sealed off Augusta's room and made it a shrine. He let the house decay and lived in the most filthiest of conditions. Schechter takes us on a graphic and descriptive stroll through his home where hundreds of mice are running around empty food containers, decaying body parts, and endless amounts of other debris scattered all over the floor. We dine with Eddie and eat pork-and-beans from sawed off skull tops, and afterwards, we enjoy a quiet evening alone reading pulp fiction magazines about cannibals, headhunters and Nazi sadism on a grease soaked mattress. Eddie robbed graves at night. After digging one up, he would carry the carcass home and cut off the pieces he wanted and cremate the rest in his woodstove. He killed Mary Hogan and Bernice Wordon because they resembled his mother. After he killed Bernice Wordon, he was arrested for her murder when the authorities found her decapitated corpse hanging

upside down from the rafters in his kitchen shed. It had been gutted and dressed out like a deer (You can see the actual crime scene photos of it on the internet.) Among the most interesting items collected as evidence were the following: A cane chair with the seat woven from strips of human skin Lampshades and bracelets made from human skin A tom-tom with the head fashioned from human flesh A hunting knife with the sheath made from human skin A belt fashioned out of female nipples A shade pull made with a pair of woman's lips Several masks, faces peeled from their skulls, hanging on his bedroom wall A shoebox filled with female genitalia Mary Hogan's head wrapped in a paper bag and tossed in a corner And the most shocking of all: a "mammary vest"

I read "Deranged" not too long ago. Although I believe that I've seen Harold Schechter quite a few times on various true-crime television shows -- most likely on the Investigation Discovery (ID) network -- that was my first read from him. I thought that it was a very good effort about the life and crimes of one Albert Fish, and so I decided to give this one a try. Naturally, from my rating, I wasn't disappointed with this one either. I like how Mr. Schechter tends to choose one word titles for his books: "Deranged," "Deviant," "Fiend," etc. etc. While it doesn't necessarily give you a clue about who the book is about, it tends to describe each of these serial killers in a nutshell. But more than that, I really appreciate the effort that the author obviously puts into research. It seems that he must travel to the area where each of the killers lived, and then spend a lot of time searching microfiche for at least old newspaper information. After all, most of his books are about really old cases, and most of the newspapers from the era of his books still aren't available online. (Periodically, I did a Google search here and there for newspaper articles that he mentions in the book, and even Google couldn't find them.) At any rate, while it appears that Mr. Schechter is a professor of American literature and pop culture, he comes off to me more as an historian. Maybe that was his minor? Maybe it's more of a hobby? Either way, he seems to be fairly knowledgeable about history as well. I'm nearly finished with "Deviant," and about the only thing that I didn't necessarily like about it was how the author called Ed Gein a "little man." Over and over. Personally, I just thought that it was an unnecessary ad hominem. Taking a peek around the web, I guess that Mr. Gein was around 5 foot 7, so I guess that he was a "little man," but I'm not convinced that it added to the story. Perhaps the motivation for this was to remind the reader that even someone diminutive in stature can be bigger than life as a killer? It is interesting how this story unfolds, and while reading, I'm not exactly convinced that Mr. Gein was your standard "evil" guy. He seems to me to be more of an enigma, at least from a serial killer perspective. It really isn't clear if he himself even understood the nature of his crimes; to him, it was as if there was no difference between field dressing a deer and

field dressing a human. (I'm quite convinced that many people throughout history have attempted to argue this position, and while I believe that it's a good argument to have from an academic perspective, it might be a tricky one to win. If I were to argue against it, I would start by saying that most species do not condone the killing of their own kind, but it surely doesn't always hold. I believe that many monkey species kill their own, as an example. At any rate, I would like to read a valid and sound argument against it, as these types of arguments usually devolve into "appeals to emotion" -- or perhaps more likely "circular reasoning", or something like, "it's bad because it's bad," which I've heard one too many times in my life -- which are obviously invalid immediately.) While my favorite true-crime author is probably Jack Olsen, he hasn't been with us for over a decade now, and unfortunately, most of his books are not available on Kindle. And I hate buying "real" books anymore; I far prefer e-books. Luckily for us, it appears that most of Mr. Schechter's books are available on Kindle, and I have quite a few left to go. It should keep me busy for a while, and I'd recommend that you'd consider reading them as well.

1 of the best Gein books i ever read. Couldn't put it down. Great observation & almost the feeling that you were there, & knew the man. He did a great amount studying & interviews. It shows he went out of his way 2 get you even info on other people in the past who did almost the same types of crimes & there reasons or doctor's understanding of this. Easy 2 understand & fun 2 read. Thank you Schechter.

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