

# Captured by true crime: Why women are drawn to tales of rape, murder and serial killers

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Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC (January 12, 2010) Women are more drawn to true crime books than are men, according to research in the inaugural issue of *Social Psychological and Personality Science* (published by SAGE).

The true [crime](#) genre of nonfiction books is based on gruesome topics such as rape and murder. Many people might assume that men, being the more aggressive sex, would be most likely to find such gory topics interesting.

The researchers found that what makes these books appealing to women are relevant in terms of preventing or surviving a crime. For example, by understanding why an individual decides to kill, a woman can learn the warning signs to watch for in a jealous lover or [stranger](#). By learning escape tips women learn survival strategies they can use if actually kidnapped or held captive.

It is possible that reading these books may actually increase the very fear that drives women toward them in the first place. In other words, a vicious cycle may be occurring: A woman fears becoming the victim of a crime so she turns to true crime books in a possible effort to learn strategies and techniques to prevent becoming murdered. However, with each true crime book she reads, this woman learns about another [murderer](#) and his victims, thereby increasing her awareness and fear of

crime.

"It is not possible to state with certainty from these studies whether or not this vicious cycle occurs," write authors Amanda M. Vicary and R. Chris Fraley. "But we do know that women, compared to men, have a heightened fear of crime despite the fact that they are less likely to become a victim."

**More information:** The article "Captured by True Crime: Why Are Women Drawn to Tales of Rape, Murder, and Serial Killers?" in the inaugural issue of Social Psychological and Personality Science is available free for a limited time at [spp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/1/1/81](http://spp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/1/1/81) .

Provided by SAGE Publications

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