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I: The Creation Of A Serial Killer



Synopsis

Prize-winning journalist Jack Olsen, armed with unprecedented access to one of the most infamous serial killers in American history, provides a fascinating glimpse into the mind of a murderer in the killer's own words . . . In February 1990, Oregon State Police arrested John Sosnovke and Laverne Pavlinac for the vicious rape and murder of Taunja Bennet, a troubled 23-year-old barfly who had suffered mild retardation since birth. Pavlinac had come forth and confessed, implicating her boyfriend and producing physical evidence that linked them to the crime. Authorities closed the case. There was just one problem. They had the wrong people. And the real killer wasn't about to let anyone take credit for his kill. Keith Hunter Jespersen was a long haul truck driver and the murderer of eight women, including Taunja Bennet. As the case wound through police precincts and courts--ending in life sentences for both Sosnovke and Pavlinac--Jespersen began a twisted one man campaign to win their release. To the editors of newspapers and on the walls of highway rest stops, Jespersen scribbled out a series of taunting confessions: I killed Tanya Bennett . . . I beat her to death, raped her and loved it. Yes I'm sick, but I enjoy myself too. People took the blame and I'm free . . . Look over your shoulder. I may be closer than you think. At the end of each confession, Jespersen drew a happy face, earning for himself the grisly sobriquet "The Happy Face Killer." Based on access to interviews, diaries, court records, and the criminal himself, *I: The Creation of a Serial Killer* is Jespersen's chilling story. It chronicles his evolution from angry child to sociopathic murderer, from tormentor of animals to torturer of women. It is also the story of the fate that befell him after two innocent citizens were imprisoned four years for one of his killings. Edgar Award winner Jack Olsen lets the killer to tell his story in his own words, offering unprecedented insight into the twisted thought process of a serial murderer. Olsen takes his readers along on Jespersen's vicious cross-country killing spree, letting him describe how he played his "death game" with eight innocent victims and how he finally came to grips with the fate he deserved. *I: The Creation of a Serial Killer* is one of the most revealing and insightful pieces of crime reporting ever published.

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Customer Reviews

Keith Hunter Jespersen is an American serial killer who raped and murdered eight women while he worked as a long-distance trucker in the early 1990's. He is also notoriously media-hungry, known for having set up personal web pages with his delusional rants against the government during his early imprisonment, as well as starting a serial murderer pen pal club. Author Jack Olsen recounts Jespersen's story in two parallel story lines. One is told in the first person, from Jespersen's point of view, starting with his first murder of a mentally incapacitated barfly through his multi-state crime spree and incarceration. The other story is an objective, journalistic look at Jespersen's childhood and life in the media. This book is different from any other true crime story because Olsen allows Jespersen to speak uncensored (occasionally accompanied by footnotes with direct contradictions of Jespersen's version of events). Jespersen blames external factors--his father, women who are "bitches," society, bullies--for his desire to torture and kill both animals and women. Jespersen's narrative is an exercise in contradictions--he goes back and forth between loving and loathing his father, especially in their correspondence during his imprisonment. In one notable example, when Jespersen is suicidal and ready to turn himself over to authorities, he reflects on his experience with a woman with an infant he met outside a liquor store in Shasta, California. By his own account, Jespersen forced oral sex from the woman and roughhoused her against her will, then gave her a ride home when he was unable to kill her with ease. She filed charges against him.

Jack Olsen once said that a true crime book that doesn't seek to answer the question of "what created this monster?" is "pure pornography." It's fitting, then, that his final book was *I, The Creation*

of Serial Killer. There isn't a Jack Olsen book that isn't worth the time of any serious true crime fan. He was a true great and if anyone else had written this book I doubt I'd have read it. You see, I'm basically a wimp and the gore that is inherent in any serial killer story is more than I can take. While the gore factor on this book is low for a serial killer story, this is still one of the most profoundly disturbing books I've ever read. It is the first book that I have deleted from my Kindle - I literally didn't want it around. Olsen gets into the mind of serial killer Keith Jesperson, literally channeling his voice. This was enlightening. Who knew that the mind of a serial killer was so boring? Vile, horrific, loathsome thoughts and fantasies - these I expected and got. The boring factor was a revelation. Step inside the mind of a serial killer and you're in for the endless self-justifications of a whiny loser. Everybody done him wrong. Whether Jesperson is more self-aware than the average serial killer or, in other words, is less of a whiny loser than most serial killers is a bit like asking if the concentration camp guard was nice. It's all relative, yes, but consider the scale. There are moments of twisted is-this-guy-for-real black humor, like when Jesperson refers to "special moments shared with my victims" that elicit a combination gasp-laugh-choke. The Serial Killers Pen Pal Club that Jesperson starts, on the other hand, may just be proof that sometimes illiteracy isn't such a bad thing.

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