**A Critical Analysis of the Effects of True Crime Documentaries on Consumers and Society**

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**Introduction**

The topic of the effects of contemporary true crime storytelling, such as podcasts, documentaries, and dramatized adaptations, on consumers has been studied extensively as the popularity of this genre has exploded over the past decade. From depictions of graphic violence to the romanticizing and humanizing of criminals and murderers, there are many implications to this type of storytelling, both beneficial and detrimental. While many have discussed the various negative outcomes of the true crime genre, which the present case study will also examine, I will also explore the positive outcomes coming out of these documentaries, such as the impact on legal proceedings, drawing attention to possible systemic issues in the justice system, and amplifying the voices of those who have been marginalized. From an ethical perspective, this study will explore whether the benefits that come from making and sharing true crime documentaries outweigh the harm it may cause to consumers, society, and the victims’ families. For the purposes of this research paper, I will explore these ideas within the context of recent Netflix true crime documentaries, including [*Dahmer*](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.netflix.com/title/81287562&ved=2ahUKEwjqy4GbrdCJAxWIN2IAHXaTJDYQFnoECDUQAQ&usg=AOvVaw2P2tyGrhMV46s7pvgaK153)*,* [*Monsters: The Lyle and Eric Menendez Story*](https://www.netflix.com/title/81506509)*,* [*When They See Us*](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.netflix.com/title/80200549&ved=2ahUKEwihx5eAj7OKAxX5OFkFHQY9G9QQFnoECGAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3atdJrA2RUqpzwO7l8GDGk)*,* [*Baby Reindeer*](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.netflix.com/title/81219887&ved=2ahUKEwjLz-39tbKKAxVcv4kEHUbdDyMQFnoECF8QAQ&usg=AOvVaw3wYCqJhNAj2Bk-HesMx7qq)*,* [*Inventing Anna*](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.netflix.com/title/81008305&ved=2ahUKEwjBxIr0tbKKAxVXkokEHaXiIIIQFnoECGUQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1I8Da6mTqS24U8BFp95FjJ)*,* among others. The aim of this case study is to provide an answer to the following question: What are the ethical implications of making true crime documentaries and what are the effects on consumers and society?

*Keywords: True crime, serial killer, victims, systemic issues, marginalized, documentary, romanticization, psychology, ethics, utilitarianism*

**What is the problem with true crime and what is the effect of the "digital" dimension?**

According to Whitney Phillips, a professor of digital platforms and ethics at the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication, true crime is “content about violent, nonfictional events that have specific characteristics that make it popular as entertainment” (Gray, 2023). While the genre of true crime has woven itself into the fabric of today’s entertainment industry, the public’s fascination with true crime stories is certainly not new. In the early 16th century, British authors would produce hundreds of crime pamphlets, which were “short, unbound books of roughly six to 24 pages,” detailing murders, sex crimes, and other gruesome crimes (Burger, 2016). In addition to the stories, these publications also contained illustrations of the violence, such as dismemberment, torture, and witchcraft (Burger, 2016). These pamphlets were produced for the literate members of society and those of the “artisan class and above” as those of the lower class may not have had the ability, means to purchase, or time to read them (Burger, 2016). This fixation on true crime remained prevalent in later centuries, such as the sensationalized stories the tabloids told in the 1880s about Jack the Ripper’s crimes, which were told in grizzly detail (Ring, 2020). *Sensationalism* was a term coined in the nineteenth century to “denounce works of literature or journalism that aimed to arouse strong emotional reactions in the public” (Wiltenburg, 2004), and that is exactly what they did. This growing interest in tales of crime gave birth to an entire genre of entertainment that has become commonplace in the framework of entertainment, including in the form of books, television shows, podcasts, and, as we will discuss at length in this case study, documentaries.

Although the recent obsession with true crime is interesting to note, public interest is not the inherent problem of this case. After all, it is understandable and natural for people to try to make sense of a senseless crime. According to psychologist, Dr. Chivonna Childs, “It’s human nature to be inquisitive. True crime appeals to us because we get a glimpse into the mind of a real person who has committed a heinous act” (Price, 2023). This desire for understanding criminals also explains the special attention many true crime documentaries give to the perpetrators of the crime rather than the victims. However, there are many ethical implications to consider in the making of true crime documentaries, especially those that have been dramatized and shared on streaming platforms. The very fact that the filmmakers and producers are profiting off the depictions of real crimes and trauma raises an ethical issue in and of itself. “The question of who benefits from depictions of real-life crimes is an important one, with large studios and streaming platforms earning millions while victims and their families are often left to bear the consequences of increased public attention” (Ruyters et al., 2022).

There is also the issue of romanticizing or glorifying the criminals in these documentaries. An example of this is in Ryan Murphy’s *Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*. While the series claims to exist to “shine a spotlight on the as-yet untold stories of Dahmer’s victims, the people who tried to stop him, and the systemic failures that enabled him to continue his murderous spree for over a decade,” this intention is somewhat negated by the show’s advertising, which is of Dahmer’s face (as played by Evan Peters) (Leszkiewicz, 2022). According to the article *Abolish True Crime*, the author describes how the image of Jeffrey Dahmer outside of a train station in central London “looms over the street, impossible to look away from, 100 times larger than life-sized. His portrait is coloured with a warm lustre, set between metallic gold panels. Dahmer – who murdered and dismembered 17 men between 1978 and 1991 – has, quite literally, been exalted: raised high over the city in a gilded frame like a god” (Leszkiewicz, 2022). From this perspective, there is certainly a glorification happening of Dahmer. Additionally, from the perspective of the families that are still dealing with their feelings of grief over the loss of their loved one to Dahmer, seeing his image depicted in this way is not only distasteful but it repudiates the positive intent of highlighting the “as-yet untold stories of Dahmer’s victims” (Leszkiewicz, 2022). The road to making many of these true crime documentaries is paved with positive intentions and overarching purpose, such as giving a voice to the victims, raising awareness of social injustices, or highlighting the ways the justice system may have failed. However, the question we must also ask is—do these ends justify the means? To be explicit, the means, in this case, are the exploitation of victims, re-traumatization of the victims’ families, the violation of their right to privacy, influence on public opinion and legal proceedings, mental health effects on viewers, inherent inequity of which stories get told, instances of misinformation perpetuated to a global audience, and commodification of trauma.

To answer that, it’s important to understand the significant role the digital element of true crime documentaries plays in this case. The digital element of these documentaries has enabled these documentaries to live on streaming platforms, such as Netflix, Hulu, and HBO, among others, thus bringing them to a wider global audience and promoting engagement. The digital element also lends itself to social media engagement with the creation of memes of these stories, reposting stories and images, discussions via comments, and so on. However, it could be argued that social media engagement is adding to the trivialization and desensitization to the violence in these stories, such as the countless *Dahmer* memes circulating making jokes of the situations depicted in the series ([see some examples](https://cheezburger.com/18061317/_)).

Additionally, the digital aspect in this case has allowed people to feel part of the story and, in some cases, engage in investigations of their own. For example, internet sleuths, defined as “a person who searches the internet for information on a person or an event, doing a kind of detective work through the internet,” (Pumphrey, 2021) have played a significant role in some true crime stories, such as in the two Netflix true crime docuseries [*Don’t F\*\*k with Cats: Hunting an Internet Killer*](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.netflix.com/title/81031373&ved=2ahUKEwihtNi38rKKAxX2tokEHSXcGswQFnoECDQQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3ELBA-KSVVJEIQUKrqvAhs)and *Baby Reindeer.* The role of the internet sleuths in *Don’t F\*\*k with Cats* was substantial as John Green and Deanna Thompson, two self-proclaimed internet sleuths, discovered the identity of and helped law enforcement capture Luka Magnotta, a man who posted videos of himself killing cats and later moved on to murder (Kirkland, 2019). The role of internet sleuths in *Baby Reindeer*, a “true story” about struggling comic, Donny, being harassed and stalked by a woman named Martha,was similar, albeit less altruistic. In this case, internet sleuths uncovered the identity of the person (Fiona Harvey) whom Martha was based upon, a consequence the writer and actor in the story, Richard Gadd, never intended. As a result, Harvey is suing Netflix for “defamation, negligence, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and violations of her right to privacy,” calling the series “the biggest lie in television history” (Muir, 2024). The digital element in this case lends itself to the potential for misinformation, especially in dramatized or fictionalized stories of true crime.

Lastly, the digital component of this case also enables public discourse that can have effects on legal proceedings, including reopening legal cases. An example of this is in the depictions of the Eric and Lyle Menendez story, two brothers who murdered their parents in 1989. The two Netflix documentaries made about them, including the dramatization of the story, *Monsters: The Lyle and Eric Menendez Story*, shine light on the background of the story and how the sexual abuse from their father and the fear for their lives led to their actions (Dazio et al., 2024). The immense attention this retelling of the story has garnered has led to this 35-year-old case being reexamined by the LA County District Attorney and a resentencing hearing set for early 2025 (Harter, 2024).

**Why not follow the rules? Situational versus Universal Ethics**

Situational ethics is defined as “the position that moral decision making is contextual or dependent on a set of circumstances” (Rosenthal, 2023). Universal ethics is defined as “basic ethics that are valid across places, cultures, religions, secular worldviews and times and that serve as an objective foundation for specific ethics, common law and global moral education” (Winkler, 2022). In the case of making true crime documentaries, both situational and universal ethics should be utilized.

Situational ethics provides more flexibility for certain types of stories, such as the docuseries *When They See Us*, a series about the five Black and Hispanic teenage boys wrongly accused and convicted of assaulting a white woman in Central Park. When making decisions about dramatizing and detailed depictions, the nature of the case and the overall purpose (i.e., social justice, racial inequality, miscarriage of justice, etc.) for the story should be considered. However, universal ethics should be applied regarding gaining consent from victims’ families, portraying the story factually, and portraying all parties fairly. *When They See Us* was made with “the full support of its subjects, rather than at their expense” (Romano, 2022). On the other hand, for the families of the victims depicted in *Dahmer*, “multiple family members have spoken out to make it clear that neither Netflix nor the creators consulted them or asked for their permission to use their stories in the 10-episode series” (Romano, 2022). In the interest of fairness, the *Dahmer* creator, Ryan Murphy, claims he and his team did contact approximately 20 families and friends of the Dahmer victims to get their input and that “not a single person responded” (Verhoeven, 2022). Gaining the consent of the victims and/or their families should be a universal ethic that all documentaries must have to tell their stories. The excuse of lack of responses does not excuse Murphy in this ethics issue as his work has served to retraumatize the families of the victims, such as Rital Isbell, the sister of one of Dahmer’s victims, who had her “heart-breaking victim impact statement dramatised in the series without her knowledge or consent” (Ruyters et al., 2022).

Another universal ethic that must be adhered to is factual storytelling. It is unethical to present a story as a “true” crime when it contains misinformation no matter the nature of the story. “The families of homicide victims are particularly disadvantaged when encountering inaccurate or insulting depictions of their loved ones, given legal protections of reputation, such as claims in defamation, don’t apply if the person defamed is deceased” (Ruyters et al., 2022). When it comes to true crime, it is unethical to present stories in this way when they may contain misinformation, such as in the case of *Baby Reindeer.* The Martha character, based on Fiona Harvey, falsely depicted Harvey as a convicted stalker. Another instance of stretching facts or fictionalizing characters beyond recognition is in *Inventing Anna*. At the start of each episode, there is a disclaimer that reads, “This whole story is completely true. Except for all the parts that are totally made up” (Palmer, 2022). This lack of transparency on the facts poses a large ethical issue in this story, which many forgive due to the circumstances of the crime, which were non-violent, and the types of victims in the case, such as wealthy bankers (Palmer, 2022).

Lastly, portraying the parties in a case fairly is another universal ethic that the true crime genre should apply, especially when there are legal cases involved. The risk of romanticizing or glorifying the subjects could influence legal proceedings. The implication of this is the right to a fair trial free of jury bias. In the case of the Menendez Brothers, the jury may have seen the documentaries and have preconceived notions about the subjects shaped by their depictions in the shows. “It is without a doubt that media attention impacts jury decision-making, even with an oath sworn for impartiality. Even with the intention to be impartial in jury decision-making, public narrative and bias may interpret evidence reading and analysis” (Rad, 2024). Therefore, it is imperative that true crime documentaries present all parties in the stories factually and fairly.

**Who wins and who loses in this case? Benefits, detriments, and the power dimension**

The stakeholders in this case include the filmmakers and producers, the streaming platforms, the victims and their families, the consumers (audience), criminal justice institutions, and the criminal subjects. There are no winners or losers in this case, as every stakeholder has the potential for both benefit and detriment here.

The filmmakers, producers, and streaming platforms are making millions of dollars and gaining millions of hours watched. In the case of *Dahmer*, showrunner Ryan Murphy signed a $300 million deal with Netflix to create content for them, and Netflix reached $1 billion hours viewed in the first two months (Lora, 2023). However, Ryan Murphy has received a lot of backlash from the families of the Dahmer victims, and Netflix is being sued on numerous fronts for millions of dollars.

The victims and their families can benefit from their stories being told, especially when their consent is gained. These documentaries provide a platform for families to express their loss and process their grief, share the story of the victim, amplify marginalized voices, and hold criminals accountable. However, there is a very real detriment when these stories are told without their consent, and they are not compensated for their stories being told either. Regarding *Dahmer*, Rital Isabell, the sister of one of the victims, said of Netflix, “It’s sad that they’re just making money off of this tragedy” (Ruyters et al., 2022).

The consumers benefiting from the making of true crime content are the fans of true crime documentaries, especially those who identify as “murderinos,” or someone who is “interested in, especially obsessed with, murders, including serial murderers, spree killers and rage/thrill killers” (Price, 2023). However, consumers are also experiencing a detrimental effect of this content. According to Dr. Chivonna Childs, “People who watch too much of these shows can suffer from hypervigilance, in which they see danger lurking around every corner, or fear of socializing, in which they don’t want to leave the house” (Dickerson & Brady, 2024). Additionally, the desensitization to violence is another detrimental aspect to the consumers, especially to younger audiences. According to a study titled “Emotional Desensitization to Violence Contributes to Adolescents’ Violent Behavior,” the authors concluded that “violence experienced at high levels or across multiple contexts contributes to more violent behavior over time through lower levels of internalizing problems, or emotional desensitization” (Mrug et al., 2017). To further break down the consumer, let us draw attention to the role of gender in this case. According to a 2022 Pew Research Center study, among true crime podcast listeners in the United States, women were nearly two times more likely to listen to them than men (Naseer & St. Aubin, 2023). There are theories as to why women are more fascinated with true crime stories and one of them is identification with the victims as the victims of true crime stories are often comprised of women (Bonn, 2023). “Female fans identify with and can easily imagine themselves in the role of the victim in frightening true crime tales” (Bonn, 2023). The benefits that female consumers in this case gain are a sense of security that they may be able to protect themselves from being attacked by understanding more about the perpetrators and being able to “sociopathic ‘red flags’ in the personalities and demeanor of single men they encounter” (Bonn, 2023).

The benefit for the criminal justice system is the opportunity to overturn sentences where the case or trial was mishandled. Another benefit is that drawing public interest in these stories can sometimes help solve cold cases (Irwin & Stroud, 2024), such as in the case of *Don’t F\*\*k with Cats*. However, the detriment to the criminal justice system is the building of societal mistrust when these documentaries expose the injustices perpetrated and underlying systemic issues, such as racism, prejudice, sexism, and classism, such as in the case of *When They See Us* and how the police coerced confessions from the teenagers without their guardians’ present (Scott, 2019).

The benefit to the perpetrators of the crime is it gives their case attention, and amplifies their narratives, such as with the Menendez brothers and their ability to reopen their case. In the cases of wrongful conviction or harsher sentencing, especially when those convicted come from a marginalized background, these stories might be the only way they get their stories heard. An example of this is in the true crime podcast [*Serial*](https://apnews.com/article/baltimore-adnan-syed-hae-min-lee-024f739b28b33cf50e76c50d640c0882), which told the story of Adnan Syed, a man convicted of killing his high school girlfriend. The podcast helped shine a light on the lack of evidence in the case tying him to the crime and leading to his release from prison in 2022 (Witte, 2022). The detriment to some preparators of the crimes is the negative perception that can be shaped around them, and the possibility of it shaping their cases, such as in the case of the Menendez Brothers, who “want to regulate the use of their identity as high-profile criminals since the media attention is likely to impact the outcome of their upcoming resentencing trials” (Rad, 2024).

Lastly, there is certainly a power dimension here as the filmmakers, producers, and streaming platforms are shaping public opinion based on their portrayal of the events and subjects in the stories. The people they choose to highlight will inevitably get more public attention on their stories. However, the question of equity comes up as the majority of the true crime documentaries on streaming services, according to this [*People* must-watch list](https://people.com/movies/best-true-crime-documentaries-to-stream/) (Weiss & Mercadante, 2024), focus on white perpetrators and victims, while Black people made up half of the state prison population in 2000 (Wertheimer, 2023). The streaming platform also holds extra power due to its algorithms, which amplify or suppress these stories. As seen in the case of the Facebook Papers and its algorithm that incited “misinformation, hate speech, and even ethnic violence” (Hao, 2021), streaming platforms focus on delivering content from which “you can’t look away” and the violent true crime genre is “algorithm-friendly” for that reason (Leszkiewicz, 2022).

**Where does this case take place and what cultural values are at stake?**

True crime documentaries, especially those on streaming platforms like Netflix, have a global audience and reach. While the stories may take place in certain communities, the reach of these platforms has turned this content into a topic for global discourse. Therefore, the cultural values at stake here are more widespread, including justice and fairness, empathy, and morality.

In the making of true crime documentaries, each of these cultural values is at stake. Without ethical practices, such as portraying the story factually and fairly, justice and fairness in these cases are at stake. In dramatized versions of these true crime stories, fairness and factuality are sometimes sacrificed for the sake of portraying a certain narrative. In the Menendez brothers’ documentaries, the dramatization led the audience to the conclusion that these men were “guilty but sympathetic, and thus not deserving of their harsh sentences” (Loller, 2024).

Empathy is also at stake here with the fine line between raising awareness of the issues in a case, such as the intended discussion of race and homophobia in *Dahmer* (King-Carroll, 2022), and the sensationalizing of the retelling and imagery. For example, the official Netflix Twitter posted a clip from the show as part of a promotion of *Dahmer* with the caption, “Can’t stop thinking about this disturbing scene from Dahmer where one of Jeffrey Dahmer’s victims finally manages to escape… and the police actually bring him back inside the apartment” (Leszkiewicz, 2022). We can see how this value is very much at stake in the United States today with the positive response of many individuals on social media to the recent assassination of United Health CEO Brian Thompson. “UnitedHealthcare’s own bereavement message online was [cruelly mocked](https://www.foxbusiness.com/business-leaders/social-media-users-mock-unitedhealthcare-ceos-murder) by 77,000 laughing response posts…and the etchings on the cold-blooded murderer’s bullet casings of “deny, defend, depose” have become rallying cries for many, all while the investigation of the cold-blooded murder has been [impeded](https://www.wsj.com/us-news/manhunt-for-unitedhealthcare-ceo-killer-meets-unexpected-obstacle-sympathy-for-the-gunman-31276307) by those sympathetic to the murderer’s outrage” (Sonnenfeld & Tian, 2024).

Morality is at stake in the case of making true crime documentaries as we question whether it is morally acceptable to derive pleasure and seek entertainment at the expense of another’s trauma. As in the story of *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* by Ursula K LeGuin, is the relationship between the audience of true crime and the victims in the stories like that of the citizens of Omela going to visit the dirty, neglected child in the cellar? Do the viewers simply look at these horrific stories with the sense of helplessness that the people of Omela felt for the child? The other question that must be asked regarding morality is what is the viewers’ responsibility in these cases? When hearing stories of wrongful convictions, is activism the only correct action that makes consumption of other’s traumas morally acceptable? Regardless of one’s answers to these questions, morality is certainly at stake not only for Western audiences but all global consumers of True Crime. As the author of the article “Abolish True Crime” put it rather severely, “It is pathetically self-serving to pretend that any of these media platforms care about the victims they exploit for content, or that we are displaying righteous outrage and virtuous empathy when we tune in. We are indulging a ghoulish impulse that retraumatises those still affected by these crimes. We’d do better by them if we resisted, switched off, and dared to look away” (Leskiewicz, 2022).

**When will this case matter most?**

This case will matter most at times of public interest in justice, such as during high-profile court cases like the Menendez Brothers’ case and in the recent murder of the United Health CEO Brian Thompson, because of how influential this type of storytelling is in shaping public opinion. As such, this case will matter most in the present and the near future as this genre continues to develop and leans further into more morbid retellings of these stories. Taking the Socratic method to this case, I would ask the following questions:

*Why do we, as consumers, watch these shows–for understanding or entertainment?*

Consumer: “I watch true crime documentaries both for understanding, but it is also a fascinating topic to explore and learn about. For one, these series allow us as viewers to learn how to be safer and reduce the risk of becoming a victim ourselves. It is often really good storytelling filled with serious and negative content that we can view in a safer environment” (Price, 2023).

*What is our role as consumers and what is our ethical responsibility after consuming this content?*

Consumer: “It is our job to view this content and learn about these people’s stories. That is why they are made so that lessons can be learned from the content. I’ve learned not to always accept guilty verdicts or even the documentaries themselves at face value and to do my own research to draw my conclusions. I believe that it is my responsibility to engage with this content outside of just consumption. In stories about injustice and wrongful convictions, it’s important to get involved with organizations like the Innocence Project, either through donating or volunteering. Additionally, it is important to hold our justice system accountable by making phone calls and signing petitions to give convicts another chance.”

**How will your decision look to the public/s you most care about?**

Part of the reason I chose this topic to discuss for this case study was my reaction to both *Dahmer* and *Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story*. I could not finish either of them. In the case of *Dahmer,* I could not get past the first scene in the first episode. I used to enjoy the genre of true crime in the form of podcasts and books, especially in cases of social justice issues, such as the Central Park Five, *Serial*’s story about Adnan, and books about death row inmates like *The Sun Does Shine*. The telling of these stories allows us to know about these issues and lend support and amplify the voices of a marginalized part of society.However, that is not the case with documentaries that focus on serial killers likeJeffrey Dahmer, Ted Bundy, BTK, and many others. There is a sense of glamorizing and romanticizing murder in true crime documentaries that is disturbing to me. Many of these stories are absent of fair portrayals (unbiased and equitable), factual content (or a clear delineation of what is fact and what is fiction), and consent of victims and their families. It is unethical, in my opinion, to create and share these narratives without the consent of those it is about or directly affects. It is also dishonest to viewers as many people viewing this content on their streaming platform may be unaware that they are complicit in the commodification of another’s trauma and unknowingly infringing on their right to privacy.

My recommended course of action in this case is for there to be strict universal ethics around making true crime content, including documentaries, podcasts, dramatized retellings, and the like. Filmmakers and producers must portray these stories factually and transparently, gain the consent of victims or the victims' families, limit the romanticization and glorification of the criminals, and present better warnings on the possible mental health effects that watching this kind of violence can do to one’s psyche. In the situational cases of social justice and systemic issues within the criminal justice system, these ethics should still be adhered to. However, I think it is more acceptable for stories with a social purpose to infuse emotions into the story to draw the audience in and cause them to be more invested in the subjects.

The public I care most about in this case are the victims, the victims’ families, and those who have been wrongfully convicted, which I also consider to be victims. I think these parties will have a mostly positive perception of my recommendations, especially the ones regarding gaining consent and preserving their right to privacy, factual and transparent storytelling, limiting the romanticization and glorification of the perpetrators in the cases, and presenting better warnings about the effects of watching gratuitous violence on the psyche. The only part that this audience might take issue with is the fair portrayal of the stories as it may cause empathy for the perpetrator in the case, which may be unsavory for the families of the victims of the crime. This is understandable, but I still think it is necessary to tell these stories in a balanced way because of the way they shape public perception. We must trust that the public can draw their conclusions rather than the filmmakers and producers guiding us to their conclusions. I also care about the consumers or the audience of true crime, and they may also have mixed views on my recommendations. Some viewers may feel the stories are not as exciting or compelling, or that it is infringing on the freedom of expression of true crime documentaries. I think it is a perfectly acceptable outcome for the true crime genre to be less entertaining. As I quote in the section on morality, in cases like *Dahmer*, *Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story*, and other exploitative depictions of gory, gruesome violence, perhaps the right thing to do is to resist, switch off, and dare to look away.

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