

# True Crime Media and Romanticization

AP Research 2024

## Introduction

*True crime as a genre has significantly expanded today, especially due to the growing presence of media and other online sources (Spike, 2022; Strutz, 2022; Phegley, 2017). For instance, since January 2022, the series "Inventing Anna" had over 13.3 million searches (Popularity and Impact of True Crime Content, 2023). Due to this increased growth, especially in such a modern world, perspectives regarding the cases, serial killers, victims, and other factors involved in such stories, have varied. An example of a perspective includes the romanticized view of male serial killers (Cheung, 2022; McGinnis, 2021; Strutz, 2022). Romanticization can be described as making something romantic, or dealing with or describing in an idealized fashion, essentially making something more appealing than it actually is. Romanticization may also include the subject of attraction, finding features of a person that evoke feelings of interest and desire. This research study delves into the correlation between true crime media and the growth of romanticization within such a field. The focus of this research is on women and romanticization, as most serial killers depicted in true crime appear to be males. Additionally, as of June 2023, the Pew Research Center found that women are twice as likely as men to regularly listen to true crime podcasts (Naseer, 2023), showing the increased prevalence of the genre amongst females. This study looks into the correlation between true crime media, possibly depicting male serial killers as attractive, influencing the public's opinion regarding the case and other factors involved. Most sources in the field detail how, due to the growing prevalence of true crime media, there appear to be growing cases of women romanticizing male serial killers (McGinnis, 2021; Strutz, 2022). Such a phenomenon has been found to be in various forms of romanticization, including becoming fans, pursuing romantic relationships, writing romantic letters, and more (Alexander, 2021; Cheung, 2022). Multiple sources provide various reasons for the correlation between women and male serial killers; however, this study aims to discover how true crime media as a whole can foster such a phenomenon.*

## Literature Review

Kellyn Smith, from the Justice Studies Department at Eastern Kentucky University, found in her honors thesis, "Theorizing a Continuum of Serial Killer Fandom and Fascination in our Society," that there are six different categories related to the media genre of true crime.

These categories included: consumers, collectors, dark tourists, correspondents, groupies, and hybristophilics (Smith, 2022). Smith conducted an ethnographic content analysis, leveraging literature and other related media, to gather qualitative and statistical data from various social media platforms. This data was used to test their hypotheses concerning the fandoms surrounding serial killers. According to her study, Smith was able to define the different groups, specifically those related to the romanticizing of male serial killers, which include hybristophilics.

Hybristophilics have a sexual interest in and attraction to, those who commit crimes. The group defined as hybristophilics may also create relationships with convicted prisoners, even marrying them, and such a group has become increasingly common over time. Smith's study also stated that hybristophilics are not just becoming a more frequent group, but are also very prevalent across various media platforms (Reddit, Wikipedia, Instagram, and TikTok). Although Smith does not focus on larger, more prominent forms of true crime media such as films, shows, and others, she establishes, through her ethnographic content analysis, that there is a population of the public who romanticize serial killers or criminals, proving that it is evident in other forms of media.

Abby Bentham, a lecturer at the University of Salford, wrote "Fatal Attraction: the Serial Killer in American Popular Culture" which similarly uses data from various forms of media to illustrate how fascination related to serial killers and their crimes has grown. However, compared to Smith, Bentham also incorporates data from the FBI and information from real-life cases to show this as well. Additionally, Bentham focuses more on true crime media itself, as a genre, rather than focusing on the audience that is involved, compared to Smith. From this study, she finds that one of the reasons why true crime media is so popular in culture is because of its dramatic qualities, drawing in viewers and those interested in the topic. Bentham even claims that serial killers can offer high dramatic potential, which can cause a large spectrum of perspectives. Various examples of male serial killers such as Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy are also used to help support her point. In fact, it is detailed how the



retelling of serial stories along with fiction change the way the public views such cases: such as, through increased empathy for the killers. Since elements of fiction do alter the retelling of these stories, the public involved with popular culture is more drawn to them. This creates the “celebrity” serial killers, as explained by Bentham. Such a point would not relate to the hybristophilic group sorted by Smith; however, it may relate to the groups that Smith explained, the consumers and groupies, who become very interested in the serial killer and their case, even going so far as to sit in the same courtroom.

Rachel Jones, an attorney and legal scholar, uses a different method of study in her research “Romanticizing Murder,” instead utilizing three different case studies to similarly explain how media coverage of male serial killers causes female attraction and to detail why some women may romanticize such serial killers. The author also points out that, while women romanticize the male killer to perhaps grow their own fame, in the meantime, those serial killers are also gaining increasing fame and attention. This point is different compared to that of Smith and Bentham, as it focuses more on the idea that women may romanticize killers for fame, rather than attraction. Jones also claims that women romanticize these serial killers as falling in love with them, either easy, for fame, for desire, or so that they do not get hurt in a relationship. She focuses on the reasons as to why women may romanticize killers, instead of honing in on the correlation to true crime media. Such ideas would be able to relate to Smith’s grouping of hybristophiliacs as well. The social learning theory, which explains human behavior through interactions indirectly through the media, and social reaction theory, which relates to the ideas of the label of being a criminal, are also used in this paper to explain a woman’s attraction to male serial killers (Jones, n.d.).

Altogether, these three studies examined the phenomenon of women romanticizing criminals, specifically male serial killers. However, the relationship between true crime media in the modern world today, compared to women’s romantic feelings or varied views of male serial killers, has yet to be researched in a deeper sense, among the topic of true crime. Since true crime continues to be a growing genre in popular culture, across various forms and platforms, this topic is in need of further examination in order to ensure that the stories of victims and their families are justly shown to the public, in a way where the killer is not humanized (Frost, 2015). This can allow for the addressing of the aforementioned gap in the current discipline of this topic. This gap leads to the research question: “To what extent does true crime media influence a woman’s romantic feelings towards male serial killers?” To look into this question, a qualitative trend analysis will be conducted, collecting data from a survey completed by women between the ages of 20-27 from a university in Tennessee. The results of this study may be able to determine the correlation between true crime media as a genre and the development of romantic feelings towards male serial killers from women, possibly preventing future insensitivity regarding cases. It was hypothesized that true crime media does correlate to the development of romanticization amongst women, due to the way that this media is created and shown to the public, and its increased prominence in today’s society.

## Methodology

### Study Design

This study explores whether (and to what extent) true crime media is related to the development of romantic feelings for male serial killers, or hybristophilia, in females. The goal is to identify if depictions of male serial killers in true crime media affect females’ perception of them. The researcher hypothesizes that depictions of male serial killers in true crime media *do* affect females’ perception of them, influencing their views regarding the killers and the cases involved. By reaffirming this relationship, researchers can show creators (i.e., directors, producers, writers) of true crime the importance of representing and informatively portraying male serial killers correctly.

A qualitative trend analysis research study was conducted. Generally, a trend analysis investigates data to identify patterns or trends from that information. The primary research question already outlines two variables of interest: true crime media and hybristophilia.

Typically, both of these properties are measured using categorical variables rather than numerical variables, resulting in qualitative data. For this reason, an online survey was the instrument of data collection. It is more conducive to correlational research compared to other instruments (e.g., focus groups, and secondary data).

Additionally, correlational research does not evaluate causal relationships. The primary research question aligns with this, seeking to establish, rather than explain, a link between true crime media and romantic feelings among female university students (ages 20-27). The aforementioned primary works (see, e.g., Bentham, 2015; Smith, 2022) focused on more general groups or older groups of women



rather than the focus of this study, which includes female college students. Furthermore, social sciences disciplines, specifically media studies and psychology fields, frequently utilize correlational research. Therefore, it is a standard methodology in this topic of inquiry's field, media psychology.

### **Participants**

The sample consisted of female university students ( $N = 18$ , 100% female), all from the same university in Tennessee. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 27. Among them, 18 (100%) were between the ages of 20 and 23, and 0 (0%) were between the ages of 24-27. All of the participants reported that they were female. Each participant also reported their race. 16 (88.2%) were white, not Hispanic or Latino, 1 (5.9%) was Hispanic or Latino, and 1 (5.9%) was black or African American as well as white, not Hispanic or Latino.

### **Procedure**

To conduct data collection, a link to the survey, which was administered via Google Forms, was sent to various university students. Snowball sampling was used, which begins with one or more study participants, continuing on the basis of referrals from those participants (Nikolopoulou, 2023). The original group of university students shared it with other students, all of whom completed the survey voluntarily. They were informed that survey responses would be kept confidential, and individually identifiable data would not be shared with anyone aside from the researcher. Participants agreed to the necessary consent form (see Appendix A) first, acknowledging that the researcher had provided an explanation of the study and agreeing to participate before continuing with the survey. Demographic information (i.e., gender, age, race/ethnicity) was collected upfront. Participants completed a variety of questions scaled from 1-5 first, later completing a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. No inducements were provided for participation. In total, 27 students participated in the study. However, of these students, only the 18 who identified themselves as female students above the age of 19 were included in the final sample.

### **Measures**

**True Crime Exposure.** After answering basic demographic questions, participants had their exposure and relationship to true crime media measured based on a 1-5 scale related to the questions asked. First, participants were asked to report how often they watch true crime media, with 1 = not often and 5 = very often. Then, participants were asked to report how many average hours of true crime media they watched a week, with 1 = 1 hour or less and 5 = 12 hours or more. "True crime media" was clarified to include any watchable form of true crime (e.g., Netflix, TikTok, documentaries, etc.). Participants were also asked, on a scale of 1-5, where they believed they were on a spectrum of true crime fanatics. With this question, 1 = not a big fan, and 5 = huge fanatic.

**True Crime Media Information.** After responding to several questions regarding the participants' exposure to true crime, three more scaled questions were asked regarding information about true crime media. These questions were measured on a scale from 1-5, similar to the questions regarding true crime exposure. Participants were asked to respond to questions about how impactful, informational, and entertaining the true crime media they watch are.

Within the context of the questions, all "1" responses correlated to low, and "5" responses represented extreme. Participants also had to respond to a short answer question asking them why they watched true crime media. Participants had the freedom to write as much or as little as they felt necessary to explain their responses. After answering several scaled questions and one short answer question, participants were asked to respond to two more questions regarding the true crime media they consume. Participants were asked to select the form of true crime media they tended to watch or listen to the most, and were given various options to select from (e.g., documentaries, shows, TikToks, podcasts). Participants were also given the alternative answer of "other" if they did not see the form of true crime media they tend to consume the most as an option. A more specific question was then provided, asking participants to select all of the platforms they use to watch true crime media (e.g., Netflix, TikTok, Hulu, Amazon Prime, Spotify, HBO Max). Once again, participants were given the alternative answer of "other".

**Male Serial Killers.** Once participants responded to questions regarding true crime media, they were asked a series of questions more focused on male serial killers. These include a mix of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. First, participants were asked to respond to several questions, both multiple choice and short answer, regarding male serial killers having fans. Then, participants were asked a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions regarding their own feelings towards male serial killers. These involved attractiveness and

romantic feelings. For most multiple choice questions participants were also given the chance to explain their responses through short answers. Finally, participants were asked one more short answer question about whether they were aware of instances of others expressing hybristophilia. If so, they were asked to explain their response. Similar to the previous short answer questions, participants were free to include as much information as they felt necessary to include.

### Qualitative Results

#### Surveys

The surveys (see Appendix B for questions) were conducted online through Google Forms, with the link being administered to various university students at a university in Tennessee. The survey responses were then transferred into a Google Sheet and then coded in an open-coding format for each emerging theme/category (see Appendices D-H). Qualitative coding of survey responses was conducted using Miles and Huberman's (1994) iterative coding process (Chapter 4 analyzing qualitative data, n.d.). After 2 iterations of open coding, 11 final themes emerged (Appendix D) with the following 4 most prevalent: 1) interest in true crime media; 2) feelings of disgust; 3) inability to support male serial killers; 4) unattractiveness.

#### Interest in True Crime Media

When asked baseline questions on a scale of 1-5 (based on an adjusted model of the Likert scale) regarding true crime media consumption, most participants responded with answer choices above the number 1. Every participant responded with choices that showed some form of interest in true crime media (see Appendices D-H, all participant responses). This relates to the following questions: "On a scale of 1-5, one being the lowest and five being the highest, how often do you watch true crime media?", "On a scale of 1-5, one being the lowest and five being the highest, how many average hours of true crime media do you watch a week? This can include any watchable form (Netflix, TikTok, documentaries, etc)," and "On a scale of 1-5, one being the lowest and five being the highest, where do you think you fall on the spectrum of true crime fanatics?" Each question had an average above 2, signaling that there is a degree of interest in true crime media.

This media was expressed by all but one participant as impactful on one's views regarding criminal cases. The average for this question resulted in 3.44, with Participant 15 being the only one to answer with a number 1, which states that there is no impact.

Additionally, participants were asked a short answer question about why they watched true crime media. Responses were grouped into three main categories: interest, awareness, and entertainment. Keywords for responses in the interest category include variations of the words 'interesting' and 'fascinating.' Participant 10 simply responded, "It's interesting." Many responses grouped into the awareness category detailed ideas of using true crime media to keep informed and aware of cases for safety, such as Participant 16 showing this, responding with "...it helps me know what is going on in the world so that I can avoid certain things." Similarly, Participant 18 wrote that it "...helps me be more cautious!" The final category, entertainment, was simply based on the word itself in several responses. 3 participants answered, explaining similarly to Participant 13 how "I think it is interesting to learn about actual cases while also being entertained." The table below shows the number of responses that fell into each category. **Table 1**

#### Response Categories for Why Participants Watch True Crime Media

Groupings of "Why do you watch true crime media?"	# of responses
Interest	12
Awareness	5
Entertainment	3

#### Feelings of Disgust



When asked questions regarding male serial killers having fans, all responses involved negative terms and ideas. However, the most prominent belief appeared to be that such a phenomenon is “disgusting.” When asked “What are your thoughts on male serial killers having fans?” 8 responses involved ideas of disgust or grossness. Participant 16 brought in possible ideas of understanding, responding “Personally, yes someone may be attractive,” yet they added “but if they are a serial killer I think it is disgusting for girls to crush on them.” 6 participants did not elaborate and instead only responded with forms of responses similar to “It’s disgusting” or “Gross.” Further, when asked why/why not someone considered themselves a fan (to which only 1 out of 18 participants stated they were a fan), the second most prominent form of response involved disgust. The most prominent category of responses involved the questioning of how one could even support such a person, with 5 responses, while 3 responses explained that to be a fan would be disgusting. Participant 7 highlighted this idea, stating that “it’s just disgusting being a fan of someone who caused harm to others.”

### ***Inability to Support Male Serial Killers***

As mentioned briefly in the previous section, a number of survey responses to several questions involved the questioning of how one could support a male serial killer. When participants were asked why/why not they considered themselves a fan of male serial killers, 5 responses fell under the theme of having the inability to support killers. Participant 3 truly questioned the ability to be a fan, with their only response stating “How could I be a fan of a murderer?” Several other responses explained how the participant cannot support the actions of a male serial killer, therefore causing them to feel as though they cannot be fans of one either. Participant 16 expressed “I am not personally a fan of them because at the end of the day they did murder somebody and that is disgusting,” showing how some participants felt as though the actions of male serial killers are disgusting, as related to the theme prior and how it causes uncomfortableness in being a fan.

### ***Unattractiveness***

Furthermore, a fourth final theme did emerge regarding attractiveness and unattractiveness in male serial killers. First, a majority of participants have not found a male serial killer on a true crime platform to be attractive. This was, however, by a slim margin of 11.12%, with almost half thinking one was attractive while the other half feeling the opposite.

This is shown in Table 2. Participants 3, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, and 21 have all thought of a male serial killer character on a true crime platform to be attractive. On the other hand, participants 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 23, 24, 25, and 16 have not.

**Table 2**

### ***Male Serial Killer Attractiveness***

Have you ever thought of a male serial killer character on a true crime platform to be attractive?	# of responses
Yes	8 (44.44%)
No	10 (55.56%)

Male serial killer attractiveness was further separated into response categories. This includes ideas regarding actions making the killers unattractive, physical attractiveness, and childhood crushes. Table 3 depicts the number of responses with parts that fell under each sub-category.

**Table 3**

### ***Reasoning Behind Attractiveness/Unattractiveness***





Why have/haven't you found a male serial killer on a true crime platform to be attractive?	# of responses
Their actions are not attractive	13
Physical attractiveness	8
Childhood crushes	2

A majority of participants expressed the feeling that, despite a male serial killer being physically attractive, their actions are not. Many showed how the actions of killers make them unattractive, such as Participant 12 who stated that they have never found a male serial killer on a true crime platform to be attractive and that this is because "There are things that make people unattractive and murder is one of those things." Participants 11 and 14 additionally wrote about similar ideas, with Participant 11 writing "People can be attractive physically and still do terrible things" and Participant 14 expressing "objectively speaking, some of them can be physically attractive. However, their actions overrule my thoughts of their physical appearance." Participant 11, however, has previously found a male serial killer on a true crime platform to be attractive, while Participant 14 has not.

Of the 8 participants who have found a killer to be attractive, all but 2 participants mentioned physical attractiveness as a factor. The 2 participants who did not mention this wrote about the third sub-category, childhood crushes instead. This includes Participants 13 and 17.

Participant 13 mentioned how "They cast people like Zach Efron and Ross Lynch who were many young adults' childhood crushes." Participant 17 more specifically stated that "Evan Peters who played Dahmer on the Netflix series had been one of my childhood crushes but I was disturbed but his actions in the show." Both name actors who were a part of their childhoods.

This has helped create a sense of attraction to male serial killer characters on true crime platforms for several.

Additionally, although a majority of participants expressed that they have not thought of a male serial killer romantically, 3 participants still did. This is shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**

*Romantic Feelings Towards Male Serial Killers*

Have you ever thought of a male serial killer in a romantic way, whether this be a character or real-life one?	# of responses
Yes	3 (16.67%) Real-life: 1 (33.33%) Fictional (66.67%)
No	15 (83.33%)

Further, this includes Participant 3 who has thought of a real-life killer, Ted Bundy, in the form of romance. Participants 19 and 20 have both thought of a fictional male serial killer romantically. Participant 19 listed out the following characters she has thought of romantically: "Joe from You, American Psycho, Zac Efron in Ted Bundy." Participant 20 similarly expressed romantic feelings towards Zac Efron, also expressed that "Dahmer being portrayed by Evan Peters definitely made me think they were attractive and almost a romantic way." However, Participant 20 also explicitly explained how "I did not think of these serial killers in a romantic way in real life, but I did think of the characters as attractive during the TV show/movie."

## Content Analyses

Content analyses were made on the survey responses to discover how participants felt about true crime media and male serial killers. This analysis was primarily a qualitative measure.

Two coding iterations were completed via Miles and Huberman's (1994) iterative coding process (Chapter 4 analyzing qualitative data, n.d.). Appendix D depicts Iteration One: data reduction and organization of survey responses regarding personal baseline information about true crime media. On the survey, these questions were asked on an adjusted model of the Likert scale, scaling responses from 1-5. For example, all participants expressed some degree of interest and relation to true crime media. Additionally, Table 1 depicts Iteration One, categorizing reasons participants gave for watching true crime media into interest, awareness, and entertainment. This iteration created a base that established the relevance of true crime media, allowing for the next iteration.

Iteration Two analyzed each participant's responses in accordance to questions related to true crime fans, personal feelings, and outside knowledge. First, true crime relevance to participants, personally, was separated via Iteration One. Then, each short answer question was analyzed on ideas about true crime fans and personal feelings. This iteration uncovered correlations between women and feelings regarding male serial killers. It uncovered that a majority were not fans of male serial killers and thought that being one was unappealing. For example, Participant 21 explained, "I mean I don't know how else to explain it but I can't idolize someone who is a serial killer." Furthermore, the research revealed that while a significant number of women were not attracted to or did not harbor romantic feelings for male serial killers, there was still a large number that did. This trend is evident in several of the previous tables presented earlier. Based on these findings, the frequencies of various possible themes were identified. Based on the prevailing themes, the results and corresponding frequencies were tabulated.

## Discussion

The study was designed to examine the extent to which true crime media influences a woman's romantic feelings toward male serial killers.

## Findings

After examining the results through a qualitative trend analysis, it can be concluded that there is some extent of influence of true crime media on a woman's romantic feelings towards male serial killers. However, it can also be concluded that the influence of true crime media does not commonly correlate to the development of romantic feelings for male serial killers. Most participants who did express feelings in relation to male serial killers expressed feelings of attraction, or more specifically, physical attraction, rather than romantic attraction. This has been found as a result of physical appearance, unattractiveness of crimes, and the use of childhood crushes as actors. It can be concluded that true crime media, in the case of women at a university in Tennessee, does not highly correlate to romantic feelings towards male serial killers. Rather, there is a higher correlation between true crime media and physical attraction amongst females.

## Fulfillment of Gaps in the Research

This study addresses several gaps in pre-existing research. First, the targeted participants: female university students between the ages of 20 and 27 were not the participants in any of the aforementioned studies. In pre-existing studies, most did not use a specific group of women but instead studied the phenomenon of hybrisophilia rather than women's specific feelings regarding the topic (Smith, 2022; Query, 2022). The participants were generally women, not specifically 20-27-year-old female university students. However, Ella Johnson, a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, wrote a student thesis that did specifically include female university students (see Johnson, 2020), but her age parameter was 18 years old and up. She additionally had a separate parameter, which was that participants must be enrolled in a PSY 100 course at the university, unlike this study. Second, the setting of this study: most prior studies did not mention if the participants were gathered from specific universities. In general, most prior studies referred to women in general globally or used very particular instances regarding the topic (Fathallah, 2022). In this study, participants were only gathered from a specific university in the state of Tennessee. Contrastingly, the studies mentioned in the literature review did not specify if participants are from any distinct group or institution. Third, and the most prominent gap filled was the extent to which true crime media influences a woman's romantic feelings towards male serial killers. Pre-existing literature reiterated the link between male serial killers and women who were fans or were attracted (Bentham, 2015; Jones, n.d.; Smith, 2022; Strutz, 2022), but not one study mentioned, from the female point of



view, how true crime media specifically influenced a woman's romantic feelings towards male serial killers. This gap served as the foundation for this study.

### Implications

The results of this study can spur producers or entertainment companies of true crime media to be more consciously aware of depictions of male serial killers in media. The focus can be shifted to the victims and their stories, rather than the possible attractiveness of the killers (Crenshaw and Stroud, 2019; Vu, 2022; Waters, 2022). Those who were not previously aware of the correlation between true crime media and a woman's perception of male serial killers can now intentionally avoid factors that may spur romantic or attractive feelings. As Participant 19 responded when asked about her thoughts on male serial killers having fans, "it's awful but it is usually because they are attractive and we normalize this." Responses such as these show the need to intentionally avoid factors that can cause the development of unsuitable feelings. In addition, the results of this study can inform true crime audiences to continue to be aware that some male serial killers are based on real-life people, ensuring that they do not sympathize with them (Jarvis, 2007; Milde, 2021; Waters, 2022). The pre-existing research signifies that the prevalence of hybrisophilia is increasing (Crenshaw and Stroud, 2019). Therefore, this study can inform audiences of true crime media—and to a broader extent those creating true crime media—to be cognizant of the possible influences of certain depictions to help deter the creation of hybrisophilia.

### Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that require acknowledgment. For one, the sample size ( $N=18$ ) was relatively small. As a result, an increased number of responses, which may have contributed to increased insight regarding the questions provided, could not be further researched. Also, the 1 participant who had chosen both options under the consent question, "I hereby give my consent to participate in this research study..." and "No, I do not give my consent" was left out of the sample, despite being in the correct age and gender categories. This may have left out possibly influential responses that could have swayed the conclusions.

Another limitation is that conclusions *cannot* be drawn regarding causation due to the study's correlational and trend-based nature. True crime exposure and personal beliefs regarding the topic were measured. However, the nature of the true crime media itself was not assessed; therefore, the direction of causality is unclear. It can be hypothesized that certain male serial killer actors affect the development of romantic feelings among women. This being said, it is also possible for women to develop romantic feelings for male serial killers due to the humanization of the killers in true crime media. Only future longitudinal and causal studies could clarify the relationship.

### Areas for Future Research

This study's delimitations are catalysts for new areas of research. The participant pool can be expanded to include women who do not attend university or even those who produce true crime media. Future research can also expand beyond Tennessee to include other geographic regions in the United States and globally. Teenagers or different age groups that consume true crime media can also be researched. One could look into the prevalence of the aforementioned views amongst women in other universities in Tennessee and elsewhere. Longitudinal and causal studies could also be used to clarify the relationship between the nature of the true crime media itself and why women are influenced by it to develop certain feelings. Looking into the effect of true crime media on women's feelings and not just the extent of influence could further clarify information surrounding the topic. Additionally, interviews of the women themselves could prove to be increasingly beneficial in yielding more conclusive and specific evidence of the phenomenon concluded. More detailed responses may result from interviews, allowing for better data development to help further the topic into a deeper understanding.

### References

- [1] Alexander, N. (2021, May 15). Do women romanticize real-life serial killers?. TUC. <https://www.tucmag.net/tuc-talk/the-romanticizing-of-real-life-serial-killers/>
- [2] Bentham, A. (2015). Fatal attraction: the serial killer in American popular culture. *Violence in American popular culture*, 1, 203-222.
- [3] Chapter 4 analyzing qualitative data. Part II: Chapter 4: Analyzing Quantitative Data. (n.d.). [https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/chap\\_4.htm](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/chap_4.htm)





- 
- [4] Cheung, M. (2022, December 2). Media romanticization of serial killers. The Oracle. <https://gunnoracle.com/23529/uncategorized/media-romanticization-of-serial-killers/?print=true>
- [5] Crenshaw, I., & Stroud, S. (2019). Netflix and kill: The problem with romanticizing serial killers. utexas moody. <https://mediaengagement.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/41-romanticizing-serial-killers-case-study.pdf>
- [6] Fathallah, J. (2022). Reading Serial Killer Fanfiction: What's Fannish about It? Humanities, 11(3), 65. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h11030065> Frost, Rebecca, "IDENTITY AND RITUAL: THE AMERICAN CONSUMPTION OF TRUE CRIME", Open Access Dissertation, Michigan Technological University, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.37099/mtu.dc.etdr/17>
- [7] Jarvis, B. (2007). Monsters Inc.: Serial killers and consumer culture. Crime, Media, Culture, 3(3), 326–344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741659007082469>