



The Best American Crime Reporting 2009

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Edited by Jeffrey Toobin, CNN's senior legal analyst and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Nine*, *The Best American Crime Reporting 2009* is a must-have for the true crime reader, complete with the most gripping, suspenseful, and brilliant stories of the year by the masters of crime reporting. Featuring stories of fraud, murder, theft, and madness, the Best American Crime Reporting series has been hailed as "arresting reading" (*People*) and the best mix of "the political, the macabre, and the downright brilliant" (*Entertainment Weekly*).

The Best American Crime Reporting 2009 Details

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From Reader Review The Best American Crime Reporting 2009 for online ebook

Kirsti says

Did you know that Target has its own crime lab? It's not in some closet in the back of a Target store, of course. It's a high-security private lab at the corporate headquarters. Target knows that police need to catch murderers and rapists and arsonists more than they need to catch shoplifters. So the company has its own fingerprint experts and investigators who gather the evidence and turn it over to police. If the shoplifters are stealing thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise, operating as part of a gang, or working over a wide area, then cops are interested.

Also, did you know that *taser* comes from "Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle," a children's book published in the early 1900s? NASA researcher John Cover, who patented the taser in 1974, enjoyed the Tom Swift series.

Vicky says

Sort of interesting collection of lesser-known crime stories. Lesser-known probably because they weren't all that interesting.

David says

This year's collection ranges from so-so to pretty good. Most interesting are the essays on two crime-prevention industries: Alec Wilkinson's "Non-Lethal Force" (about the development of weapons designed to incapacitate criminals without killing them) and John Colapinto's "Stop, Thief!" (about methods of stopping not only individual shoplifters but also shoplifting gangs). Best true-crime story is David Grann's "True Crime" (about a cold case that turns hot when a Polish police detective becomes convinced that a murder suspect has published a veiled confession in a postmodern novel).

Dave says

As usual a great collection of non-fiction essays revolving around crime. Some are criminal profiles, such as a piece about a teenage mass murderer who was the victim of parental fallout so traumatic he was diagnosed with suffering the equivalent of war trauma. Another standout is a story about a Polish writer who penned a post-modern novel based on a crime he committed. Some of the more interesting pieces step back and take a look at policing, such as the use of non-lethal force and the work of store detectives (who these days have their own in-house forensic labs).

Jane Morris says

Excellent anthology of crime related stories that have been previously published in magazines. This anthology has been published annually since 2002 with the last edition published in 2010. Sad that it is no longer published. As the stories are well written and cover many types of crime.

DANIEL says

Excellent - love this series.

Robert P. Hoffman says

This may be the best in the series (and I am still unclear why they stopped this series). The stories are of great interest and well done.

The Color of Blood. A great story by Calvin Trillen about an African American father who shoots and kills a white kid who was coming after the father's son because at a party a girl had made a false accusation of rape against the son.

Body Snatchers. A great article about how a funeral home was illegally selling body parts and failing to give the right bodies back to family members.

Everyone Will Remember Me as Some Sort of Monster. A depressing story about a boy who grew up with an abusive mother (and abusive boyfriends), who engaged in violent behavior, who tried to find friends, and ended up shooting people at a mall.

The Fabulous Fraudulent Life A story about a woman who spent large sums of money, stole from friends, took advantage of people, and claimed to be something she wasn't. She became involved with a young man who had recently graduated from college and who was drawn into her life of deceit and fraud.

Non-Lethal Force. An article about a business person who is working to develop new technology that will allow people to be subdued without the use of lethal force. It is well done but suffers from a defect that other New Yorker articles suffer from: it is too long.

Dead Man's Float. A great article about a wealthy hedge fund manager who was found dead in his pool with his wife being a suspect. A wonderful cast of characters.

Stop Thief. A well done article about someone who works for a department store; his job is to reduce thefts.

The Day Kennedy Died. A great article about the attending physician at Parkland Hospital on the day Kennedy died. He asserts that given the wounds Kennedy suffered that it is not possible for him to have been shot from behind. Even putting that aside it is a great account of the doctor's actions and reactions to that day.

Breaking the Bank. A great story about how a gang kidnapped a bank executive and made him give them

codes to the bank and made away with much money. The person police felt was behind the attack was a former mixed martial fighter and has not been charged and has left England.

True Crime. A long article (because it is from the New Yorker) about an artist who wrote books that featured gruesome murders. The artist was convicted of murders that were similar to the ones he had written about.

The Zankou Chicken Murders. An article about someone who immigrated to the U.S. from the Middle East (to escape the political violence) and ended up opening up an incredibly successful restaurant serving chicken. He then opened other restaurants. Dying of cancer he went to his mother's house and killed her and his aunt. It is a story about the events leading up to this and what happened after the killings.

American Murder Mystery. From the Atlantic Monthly. A discussion that I have not seen since. The author talks about how while crime was going down in big cities, in medium cities (Memphis, Kansas City) crime went up. The argument is that this happened because the projects were torn down and the people in the projects were scattered throughout the city but without any support and jobs individuals engaged in criminal behavior. This article is worth reading again.

Mexico's Red Days. An article that promises more than it delivers. It is an attempt to argue that the author will be able to explain the source of all the drug related killing in Mexico. The stories are powerful and the discussion is of great interest. But at the end I didn't find that the author had come up with a clear explanation, or an explanation different than the ones others have offered.

Hate and Death. A sad tale of someone whose family escaped the killing fields of Cambodia only to have their son killed in a random killing by a white supremacist.

Tribal Wars. A sobering discussion of the Somali community in the Twin Cities and the violence has followed people from Somali.

Kenton Yee says

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What makes a crime story worth reading? Sure, it must have a crime, interesting characters, contexts and motives, and juicy idiosyncratic details. But these ingredients aren't enough. For me, it must explore the gap (or lack thereof) between normal behavior and deep criminality. What drives a normal person to traverse the gap? Is it rational choice? Mere chance (as in Camus' *The Stranger*)? Or something mysterious and elusive?

In this best-of nonfiction collection, two stories stand out in this regard: "The Zankou Chicken Murders" and "True Crime." In Zankou Chicken, Mark Arax recounts how Mardiros Iskenderian built a small empire of fast-food chicken restaurants in Southern California. "How did they make the chicken so tender and juicy?" Arax asks. A rub of salt and not trusting the rotisserie but adjusting the heat and shifting each bird as it cooked. What made the garlic paste so fluffy and delicious? That was a well-kept secret of Iskenderian's immigrant "from Turkey to Beirut to Hollywood to Glendale" extended family. Why, then, did a terminally ill Iskenderian take a gun one afternoon and shoot his mother and sister before turning it on himself? This is the mystery that drives this story.

David Grann's "True Crime" begins in 2000 with the discovery of a bound-and-gagged body in a Polish

river. For years, there are no arrests or suspects. Then, in 2003, Krystian Bala, an obscure Polish philosopher-turned-writer, publishes his debut novel, *Amok*. *Amok* contains undisclosed details of a homicide that resemble the unsolved 2000 crime. During police questioning, Bala denies responsibility for the murder but admits that he drew some details of the novel from real life. “Sure, I’m guilty of that. Show me an author who doesn’t do that.” Driving this incredible (but true) tale is the overlap between crime and art—and how and why a one-time philosophy student crossed the gap to murder, get away with it, and then foolishly pen a novel detailing his crime that would identify him to police and provide circumstantial evidence leading to his conviction for murder.

?? #crime #journalism #writing #ZankouChicken #Amok

Lisette says

Some of the stories were REALLY good and REALLY disturbing! It was interesting to read more about ones I already knew of or had seen on the news. Some of them were so hard to follow and seemed a little pointless. Overall, a pretty easy read b/c it's made up of all short stories.

Leslie says

OMG. This collection of essays on true crime contains many and varied forms of depravity. With a couple of the essays be prepared to turn on all the lights in the house and triple lock the doors. Then the only thing you need to deal with is your nightmares.

Joe Noir says

All the volumes in this series are good. Non-fiction crime from a variety of sources, and covering a multitude of sins. That being said, there is one long, pointless article reprinted in this volume, "The Zankou Chicken Murders" by Mark Arax, that just about ruined the book for me. It's like one of those really aggressive speed bumps that some people put in that are treacherous even driving over it slow, but if you hit it at speed would rip out your vehicle's undercarriage. Plus, it's depressing.

Andres says

Another really fascinating collection of writing centered around crime. The articles and essays vary in topic and each is interesting for its own reasons. I do think this collection is a bit stronger than the 2008 edition but, really, they're both great. Out of 15 pieces, here are my favorites:

***The Color of Blood* by Calvin Trillin**

What do you do if you defend your family with lethal force, only to have everyone tell you there was no threat?

***Body Snatchers* by Dan P. Lee**

Horrifying and gruesome story of a funeral home that butchered the dead to make money selling parts to tissue banks across the country.

***Everyone Will Remember Me as Some Sort of Monster* by Mark Boal**

The short and sad life of a 19 year old mass murderer.

***True Crime* by David Grann**

Bizarre story out of Poland of a man who is mysteriously murdered and the police officer who finds the murderer by reading the murderer's novel, depicting a similar crime.

***Non-Lethal Force* by Alec Wilkinson**

Learn about the lucrative industry for weapons that don't kill.

***American Murder Mystery* by Hanna Rosin**

Stamping out poverty isn't as easy as razing and relocating poverty-filled neighborhoods.

***Stop, Thief!* by John Colapinto**

Interesting look at how shoplifting affects businesses and what they do to prevent it.

***Tribal Wars* by Matt McAllester**

Getting rid of long-standing hatred isn't as easy as relocating to a new country.

Carrie says

Great writing and reporting. Especially interested in the Atlantic piece on crime in Memphis. Thanks Grant for the gift.

Alexicon says

The shoplifting story was a five, but most of the others I could take or leave tbh.

Elizabeth says

Diverse selection of crime reporting. Most of the stories are really interesting.
