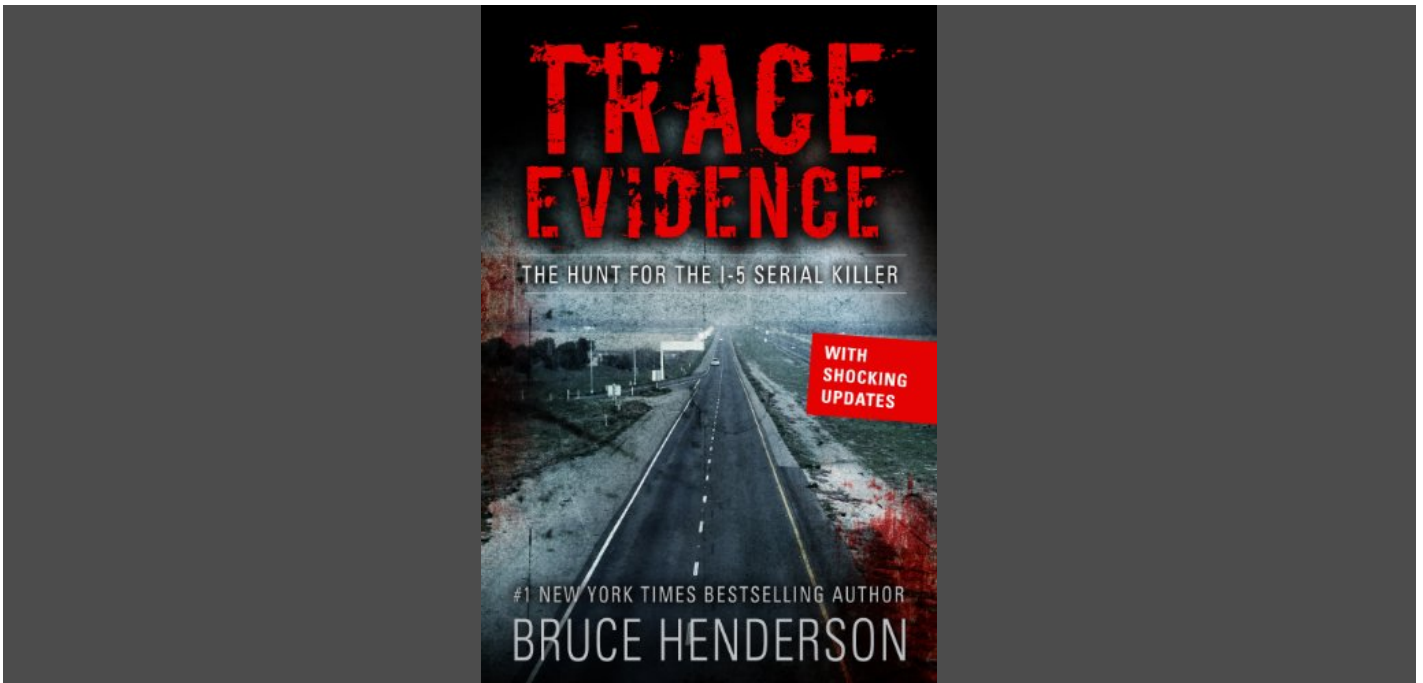


PDF | Trace Evidence: The Hunt for the I-5 Serial Killer

by Bruce Henderson



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In *Trace Evidence*, a gripping true-crime drama that reads like the best suspense novels, Bruce Henderson (#1 New York Times bestseller *And the Sea Will Tell*) unravels the shocking story of the "I-5" sex-strangler murders from behind-the-scenes of the police investigation hunting for the rapist-strangler who cruised the lonely highways and byways of California looking for his next victim.

For years an elusive serial killer sought his prey: young women along lonely highways of the West. By abducting, sexually assaulting, and strangling his victims in one jurisdiction and dumping their bodies in another, he created an investigative nightmare for detectives throughout northern California.

In a gripping true-crime drama that reads like a haunting suspense novel, bestselling author Bruce Henderson (#1 New York Times bestseller *And the Sea Will Tell*), unravels the shocking story of the "Interstate 5" sex-strangler murders drawing on exclusive interviews with key investigators: Vito Bertocchini, the burly ex-street cop who took the killing of one beautiful young woman personally; Kay Maulsby, the rookie homicide detective who helped to unmask the serial killer; Ray Biondi, who fought budget cuts that threatened to derail the investigation; and criminalist Faye Springer, who attempted to tie the suspect to his victims through persuasive microscopic evidence.

The killer was uncannily adept at staying one step ahead of authorities as the body count grew. Even after police finally identified the culprit -- when a would-be victim escaped his grasp -- they lacked the evidence to charge him with murder. Instead, he was convicted of assault and sentenced to a few months in county jail. With the clock ticking toward his release, investigators worked desperately to build a first-degree murder case before the killer was set free.

Drawing on hundreds of hours of interviews -- including the killer's wife, who never spoke to authorities -- Henderson delves into the psychological complexities of his characters with astute sensitivity and eloquence, building a chilling, fascinating portrait of a depraved and unrepentant serial killer whose only brother was a veteran homicide detective in a neighboring county.

Trace Evidence, structured with the razor-sharp precision of a Hitchcock film, is a powerful commentary about our society's priorities. If investigative resources had been based on need and not on politics, lives might have been saved. Knowing that this is a true story and the characters are real people will haunt you for days.

"Trace Evidence is a gripping, fast-paced account of what it takes to capture and make a winnable case against an elusive serial killer. Bruce Henderson has written a fascinating true-crime book that both frightens and enlightens." – Vincent Bugliosi, author of *Helter Skelter*

"Trace Evidence tells the behind-the-scenes story of one of the most exciting and frustrating serial-killer cases of my seventeen years working Homicide. This book captures our desperate, high-stakes effort to identify and make a case against a diabolical killer who would never stop on his own. How many more would have to die?" – Lt. Ray Biondi (Ret.), Homicide Bureau, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department

"Bruce Henderson, coauthor of *And the Sea Will Tell*, has written a compelling account of the capture of that most vicious of criminals: the random serial killer." – Library Journal

"Henderson does a masterful job...Lusciously detailed and immensely readable, this is true-crime writing at close to top form." – Booklist

"A roadside strangler confounds California detectives in this tense and gritty true-crime account from the co-author of *And the Sea Will Tell*. With novelistic urgency, Henderson tells two equally chilling stories in *Trace Evidence*: how a handful of detectives and a trace-evidence expert nabbed the killer and how a police detective's brother and 'somebody's husband' became that killer."

Amazon.com Review

Some books about serial killers are dramatic and emotional. *Trace Evidence*, by contrast, has a steady relentlessness that allows the reader to become fascinated by the characters of the investigators and the facts of how the evidence was assembled. This killer specialized in picking up his victims along Interstate 5, near Sacramento, California, and he had an odd penchant for snipping at their clothes with scissors. As deaths of young women in several different jurisdictions began to form a pattern, a few detectives with contrasting approaches (excitable and given to hunches vs. cool and logical) formed a team. Author Bruce Henderson relates how they followed through on a bewildering number of leads, how they ranked their potential suspects on a point system that proved remarkably effective, and how, finally, a trace evidence expert spent many long hours looking through a microscope to cinch the case with analysis of fibers. *Trace Evidence* is skillfully structured, emphasizing the investigation rather than the trial, and includes crisp photographs of the key evidence. It would have been a better book if the author had included a timeline of the crimes and a map of the area, but that is a small nitpick about an excellent work of journalism. --*Fiona Webster*

Product Description

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