

Whoever Fights Monsters Study Guide

Whoever Fights Monsters by Robert Ressler

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Contents

Whoever Fights Monsters Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter 1 The Vampire Killer.....	4
Chapter 2 Whoever Fights Monsters.....	5
Chapter 3 Interviews with Murderers.....	7
Chapter 4 Childhoods of Violence.....	8
Chapter 5 Death of a Newsboy.....	9
Chapter 6 Organized and Disorganized Crimes.....	10
Chapter 7 What Plus Why Equals Who.....	12
Chapter 8 Staging: Pattern of Deceit.....	13
Chapter 9 To Kill Again.....	14
Chapter 10 Tightening the Net.....	15
Chapter 11 Two for the Show.....	16
Chapter 12 Broader Horizons.....	17
Characters.....	18
Objects/Places.....	21
Themes.....	23
Style.....	25
Quotes.....	27
Topics for Discussion.....	29



Plot Summary

Whoever Fights Monsters is a book about the development and application of serial killer profiling techniques in the 1970s and 80s. The story is told by one of its main participants, Robert Ressler, who largely developed the art of serial killer profiling.

The story begins with a description of the "Vampire Killer" Richard Chase, a crazed young man who thought that by killing people and drinking their blood, he could replenish his own blood that he was convinced was being poisoned by Nazis. After killing several people and drinking their blood near Sacramento, he was eventually caught, partly due to Ressler's very accurate profile. Ressler then goes on to tell how he initially became involved in law enforcement and then moved to the FBI and began profiling. Once at the FBI, he began a program to interview serial killers that later turned into the Criminal Personality Research Project and into a full-fledged profiling unit at the FBI. During this time, Ressler traveled around the country interviewing famous killers and collecting their stories into the files that he would later use to develop his profiling method. Sometimes these interviews became dangerous, like when Ressler interviewed Edmund Kemper who, jokingly, threatened to kill him. Overall though, the interviews allowed Ressler to get a better hold on the psychology and motivation of the killer that he was trying to catch.

Over time, Ressler began to develop different ways of distinguishing and identifying serial killers. Almost all serial killers had dysfunctional childhood, for instance, though exactly what was wrong would often be different. Some were physically or sexually abused, others were emotionally abused, but all had strained relationships with their families. Almost none were able to create and maintain normal sexual relationships and many became increasingly isolated by the outside world. Some of these people developed severe mental impairments, including extreme psychotic delusions. Sometimes they thought god, or a demon, or their dead father was telling them to kill people. Other times they felt the need to drink blood or engage in cannibalism. Another group became more extroverted personality-wise as they became more isolated. These people tended to kill out of compulsion and for sexual gratification. Unlike the disorganized types, these organized killers would tend to be more careful and discriminating in their crimes, making them more dangerous and harder to find. Sometimes they would stage a crime scene to throw police off the track or to make it look like someone else had committed the murder.

Over time, Ressler began to perfect his method and to teach it to other FBI agents and other police. Even crime writers, including the author of *Silence of the Lambs* Tom Harris were interested in Ressler's technique and some incorporated it into their work. Even though Ressler eventually retired from the FBI, he never stopped arguing for the need for more information on these dangerous killers so that we can protect ourselves from them. He even went so far as to argue against the death penalty for these killers so that they could be kept alive for us to study them.



Chapter 1 The Vampire Killer

Chapter 1 The Vampire Killer Summary and Analysis

Whoever Fights Monsters begins with the murder of Terry Wallin on January 23, 1978. Terry's husband, a laundry-truck driver, returned home from work around six-o'clock to find his wife dead in the bedroom with her stomach cut open. An FBI agent, Russ Vorpapel, learning of the murder, calls his friend in the Behavioral Science Unit at FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia. That friend is Robert Ressler, head of the BSU (Behavioral Science Unit) and pioneer in the study of serial killers. The BSU was created to study and help apprehend serious, "serial killers" that committed major crimes.

Ressler, after being informed the facts of the case, realized that this was no ordinary murder. The woman was cut open and disemboweled. Some of her organs were taken and animal feces were forced into some of her wounds. Furthermore, there was evidence that the woman's blood had been extracted and drunk by the murderer. Ressler and Vorpapel, realizing that the perpetrator was clearly disorganized and deranged and, hence, posed a threat to murder again, reacted quickly to the crime. Ressler met his friend in California where the murder was committed, hoping to find new clues and help prevent additional crimes.

Using his knowledge from years of serial killer "profiling", Ressler suggested that the murderer was a probably psychotic young white male who probably walked to the scene of the crime. Days later, still in the midst of the investigation of the Wallin murder, several more people, this time a family of three and a baby, were killed nearby in a similar manner. After the murder, the family's station wagon was stolen and found several blocks away. Acting on the belief that the murderer would have walked to the crime scene and, hence, could not have gone far, the police questioned everyone within walking distance of the two crime scenes to see if anyone had seen someone who fit the description of the perpetrator. They got lucky. As it turns out, a young woman had seen and been approached by an old classmate of hers from high school, a disheveled dirty young man named Richard Chase.

The police staked out Chase's home and, realizing that the young man was inside, coaxed him out before apprehending him. They found a .22 pistol, the same gun used to kill the victims, and some bloody rags. Chase had killed the women randomly after finding their doors unlocked. Mentally deranged, he began killing after he was released from a mental hospital. Chase believed that he was being poisoned by a gang of Nazis who were turning his blood to powder. The only way to stop his blood being turned to powder was to inject or drink animal and human blood. Because of this, Chase was called the "Vampire Killer." Chase was eventually imprisoned and later killed himself in prison. Ressler's profile of the criminal was instrumental in getting the young man off the streets.



Chapter 2 Whoever Fights Monsters...

Chapter 2 Whoever Fights Monsters... Summary and Analysis

Growing up in Chicago in the late 1940s, Ressler was fascinated and appalled by a killer he read about in the newspaper. Several young women had been killed and the killer, in some cases, had written on the wall in lipstick that he couldn't stop himself from murdering, pleading with the police to please catch him before he killed again. Later, a young girl only six years old was abducted and killed and her body parts were dumped all around the Chicago area. The young Ressler, fascinated by the murders, formed a detective agency with some of his friends in the neighborhood to try to stop the killer. Of course, he was only nine and the investigation didn't go anywhere, but it was the beginning of a lifelong career in law enforcement.

Ressler eventually went to college and joined the army as an MP before completing graduate studies in criminology and eventually being recruited to join the FBI. After stints at several FBI field offices, Ressler took up residence at FBI headquarters in Quantico to join the newly created Behavioral Science Unit. The BSU studied people who committed crimes for reasons other than money; that is, they studied people who took great emotional satisfaction in raping, murdering, and molesting people. Ressler began to study the histories and psychologies of these people and later coined the term "serial killers" to describe criminals who kill several people over a period of time with increasing intensity. Serial killers are obsessed with their crimes, often fantasizing about committing acts of violence for days or weeks before actually committing the crimes.

Over time, in addition to his other responsibilities for the FBI, Ressler began to teach other agents the psychology of serial killers, hoping that the more they understood their criminal adversaries, the easier it would be to apprehend them. During this time, Ressler began to interview notorious killers around the country, collecting what he learned. At this time, he interviewed many famous killers, including Robert Kennedy's assassin Sirhan Sirhan and Charles Manson. Eventually, his superiors at the FBI found out what he was doing and shut down his interviews. Later, after the retirement of several of his superiors, Ressler again proposed his idea for a Criminal Personality Research Project to interview and catalog the histories, crimes, and delusions of serial killers and other serious criminals. The new head of the FBI approved the project and the interviews resumed.

One of the first cases the CPRP looked into was the killer who had fascinated Ressler so much as a young boy, William Heirens. Heirens had been in prison for thirty years by the time that Ressler was able to interview him. Ressler found out that the man had suffered from multiple personality syndromes and was killing to satisfy the desires of a man living in his head. At the time he committed the murders, Heirens was a student at the University of Chicago, and after he killed the girls, he returned to his dorm room.

Interviewing Heirens was the beginning of a long a fruitful process that led to a collection of profiles of criminal minds.



Chapter 3 Interviews with Murderers

Chapter 3 Interviews with Murderers Summary and Analysis

Sometimes Ressler's interviews did not go as planned. One interview with Edmund Kemper, a six-foot nine, three hundred pound murderer, started to turn bad once the guards failed to arrive at the end of the interview. Speculating that the guards were in a shift change, Kemper told Ressler that he could easily kill and behead him before the guards could possibly get into the room. This was no idle threat from a man who had killed his grandparents along with several other people and had beheaded several of them as well. Remembering his experience as a hostage negotiator for the FBI, Ressler talked to Kemper until the guards finally arrived. Most interviews didn't get that dangerous, but they took their toll nonetheless. Several agents involved on the interview team developed ulcers, nightmares, and other psychological and physical ailments from talking to the killers.

One of the other key interviews that Ressler conducted at this time, less dramatic but no less interesting than Kemper was the interview of infamous hippie-cult ringleader, Charles Manson. Manson was made famous by his odd and public behavior as well as the extreme nature of his crimes. Although he did not directly participate in the murders, he certainly instigated them and coaxed his underling Tex Watson and several of his girls, women disciples that he kept pliant with drugs and adoration, to commit the murders. Manson is a master manipulator and Ressler got very little valuable information from Manson that other news sources had not already gotten.

Richard Speck was different from Manson according to Ressler; he was a "mass murderer" rather than a serial killer. The difference may seem minor, but it is important. Speck liked to kill for fun, usually in a violent rage. He didn't kill to fulfill any intricate fantasies like a typical serial killer. One of the most deranged, but seemingly normal killers that Ressler interviewed was Ted Bundy. Bundy was, for a serial killer, good looking and personable. He would lure unsuspecting women with his charm and then kill and mutilate them. Bundy, awaiting execution, claimed to have new information about his murders but Ressler, suspecting that Bundy was merely trying to extend his life, refused to talk to him anymore. Another killer that Ressler did happen to get new information out of was David Berkowitz, the "Son of Sam" killer. Berkowitz claimed in his trial that the reason he killed was because a neighbor's dog told him to. Ressler got Berkowitz to admit that the dog had nothing to do with it and that Berkowitz was really killing because of the sexual excitement he got from the act. Of all the interviews of famous killers, then, the Berkowitz interview ended up being the most profitable.



Chapter 4 Childhoods of Violence

Chapter 4 Childhoods of Violence Summary and Analysis

Are serial killers born or are they made, is the question Ressler tangled with. During his research on serial killers, Ressler gathered an unprecedented amount of data that makes it seem as though the answer is that while serial killers must have some genetic predisposition to mental illness, much of the cause must be in their upbringing. What struck Ressler was that serial killers seem to share many similarities in personal history and in their family environments. First, almost all are male. There is only one suspected female serial killer and Ressler is not even sure about her. Second, almost all are white and younger than thirty-five. Most are of average or above average intelligence and most do not come from extremely poor backgrounds. They may not have come from poor families, but almost all serial killers come from dysfunctional families. In some cases, there is physical or sexual abuse in the family, but there is always psychological and emotional abuse, sometimes serious. This early abuse by family members makes it hard for these children to form and sustain healthy, consensual relationships later in life. Almost all had unhealthy relationships with their mothers, who were either cold and distant or abusive. The lack of love and affection from the one person who is supposed to love the child unconditionally may lead to serious mental defects. Around seventy percent of the killers reported some kind of early sexual abuse of one sort or another, often rape by family members.

As the children grow up they begin to be increasingly isolated and withdrawn from others. This leads them to become more attached to a personal, fantasy world. Their fantasies often focus on reasserting the control over others that they lack in real life. Most of the subjects killed and tortured animals as children, sometimes including neighborhood or family pets. They seem to lack a respect for life in general and to disregard social rules. Almost all the murders begin as fantasies. These fantasies involve control and domination of other human being and are almost always sexual in nature. The fantasies involve turning persons into objects, using them to achieve certain ends. Eventually, the fantasy becomes more and more real and turns into actual murder. By the time the killers have gone this far, it is incredibly hard, almost impossible to reeducate and reintroduce the killer into society. They can be locked up or medicated, but most cannot be rehabilitated. This is the sad fact that the most serious criminals in our society are in some sense outside of the civilized social realm altogether. Partly the result of their unhappy pasts, once the line has been crossed and they actualize their fantasies by committing their first murder, there is no turning back.



Chapter 5 Death of a Newsboy

Chapter 5 Death of a Newsboy Summary and Analysis

In 1983, while traveling to a seminar he was leading at Michigan State University, Ressler was notified by another agent about a murder of a newspaper delivery boy outside of Omaha, Nebraska. The boy's name was Danny Eberle and he had been apparently abducted during his early morning newspaper route. Ressler remembered to earlier cases of young boys going missing in a similar fashion in Iowa and Florida. Neither case had been solved in time to prevent additional murders. Ressler was eager to prevent a wave of murders in this case. He decided to abandon his plans to attend the seminar at Michigan State and instead headed down to Omaha to join the investigation.

After investigating the scene and the body that the police had eventually found dumped near the abduction site, Ressler speculated that the killer was, most likely, a local and an avid reader of detective stories. The young boy had several patches of skin cut off, which led Ressler believe that the killer had bitten the boy in those spots and he had cut off the skin to prevent the police from using the bite marks to identify the killer. After doing as much crime scene work as possible, Ressler needed to leave to get back to his normal FBI work. Later, while in Alabama, Ressler's worst fears were realized when he received a call indicating that another boy had just been murdered.

Rushing back to Omaha, Ressler updated his profile to include the fact that the killer was most likely involved with children as a coach or Boy Scout leader and also likely a low ranking member of the Air Force living on the nearby base. One woman claimed to have seen see the second boy being abducted and remembered several digits of the license plate. Another woman saw a suspicious man and wrote down his license plate number. The police followed up and tracked down the car that was being used by John Joubert IV. John was a low ranking member of the Air Force and did, indeed, enjoy reading detective stories. The police searched John's room and found detective stories, rope and other material that fit the profile. Eventually John confessed to the crimes. It turned out that he fit all of the characteristics of a serial killer and had only recently been triggered into his crimes by a minor crisis with a friend on base. John took a great deal of sexual pleasure form contemplating his and other people's crimes and even while he was on death row, he tried to convince Ressler to give him crime scene photos to use for stimulation. John was caught because the FBI and local law enforcement were able to coordinate their activity and to effectively share information.



Chapter 6 Organized and Disorganized Crimes

Chapter 6 Organized and Disorganized Crimes Summary and Analysis

After having interviewed and collected information about hundreds of killers and their crimes, Ressler still faced the task of communicating that information to his agents around the country. Ressler, a trained criminal psychologist needed to find non-academic terminology to use to communicate with agents who probably had no schooling in criminal psychology. Ressler settled on the terms "organized" and "disorganized" to distinguish between two major types of criminals. This was the main dividing line between serial killers and rapists. The organized offender premeditates and methodically prepares for their crime. They come to the crime scene prepared with what they need to commit the murder or the rape and then they hide the body once the murder is complete. The disorganized killer does not premeditate their crime but rather acts on impulse, often in a random way. While neither the organized nor the unorganized killer is psychologically stable in the traditional sense, the disorganized killer is often under the influence of hallucinated voices that tell him to do things or suffers from extremely vivid and strange delusions.

Looking at the crime scene, Ressler and his agents would attempt to determine whether or not the killer was organized or disorganized. Organized killers will tend to bring a weapon with them and will tend to target certain persons or groups of people. Disorganized killers will, in many cases, use objects around the victim to kill them, such as a knife from the victim's kitchen. Their victims will be more random as well, sometimes clustered in proximity. The disorganized victim rarely drives because their mental illness makes getting a license and driving difficult; therefore, they tend to walk to and from the crime scene. Almost all of the crimes by these types of killers are sexual in nature, but the organized killer takes time to rape living victims, while the disorganized killer often will rape the dead victims. Disorganized killers also have very different family histories from organized killers. The disorganized killer grows up in a home with a harsh father or mother and mental illness or alcohol abuse. They become isolated and turn inward. The organized killer often has a similar home life, but turns outward becoming more gregarious and extroverted.

One organized killer, Gerard Schaefer, exemplifies the type. Schaefer was a policeman who, in his own patrol car, would pick up young women hitchhiking, take them to the woods and hang them and kill them. He would charm them into his car and then kill them. In one case, he took the women to the woods and then needed to return to his police station to muster for roll call. The women escaped and eventually testified against him. Herbert Mullins was initially a football player and generally well regarded young man. As he got older, however, his mental illness began to become more serious. He



believed that his dead father was telling him to sacrifice people to the earth to prevent earthquakes, and Mullins began to kill people he found randomly, disemboweling them and often raping them. He even killed a priest in the confession box, claiming that the priest gave himself up as a sacrifice. Mullins is the classic case of a disorganized killer. Ressler believes that the disorganized killer, while frightening, is not the most serious threat. Rather it is the organized killer who, in our mobile, impersonal society, is growing in numbers and in capability.



Chapter 7 What Plus Why Equals Who

Chapter 7 What Plus Why Equals Who Summary and Analysis

Early in the 1960s, profiling was not considered reputable in most crime fighting units. Some saw it as on par with reading the horoscope to find killers. Several cases, however, changed the minds of many of the skeptics in the early 1970s. The first involved several kidnappings in and around Bozeman, Montana. Ressler was brought in, at that time only beginning his profiling career, to try to make a basic profile of the potential kidnapper. Ressler profiled the kidnapper and presumed killer of the girls and found that one of the current suspects did fit the profile. After questioning the man and even giving him a lie detector test, however, he was able to pass the test and the police let him go. Ressler was not impressed by his ability to pass the lie detector test. Apparently psychopathic individuals are often able to pass lie detector tests because they are able to compartmentalize their minds in a way that makes it easier to fool the test. Eventually, partly by manipulating the man in the right way, Ressler and his colleagues were able to get the man to admit to his crimes.

Profiling is, as Ressler often says, an art more than a science. There is no way to generate a profile of a criminal based purely on the facts given at the crime scene. Rather, years of experience and good judgment are needed to take the facts and sift through what is important and discard what is unimportant. Knowing where to look is as important as knowing what one is looking at. In one case a man driving in a Florida neighborhood found a woman crawling along the street, bleeding and asking for the man to help her. As they drove off, she pointed at a nearby house and told the man to remember that house. The woman had escaped from the house of John Crutchley, an engineer working for a NASA related firm. Crutchley had picked up the woman while his wife was away, restrained her and repeatedly raped her while taking large amounts of her blood to drink. The woman eventually escaped and made it to the police. Although there was no good evidence that Crutchley had actually killed anyone, Ressler believed he was a typical example of an organized serial killer. Crutchley's wife apparently, went along with some of his bizarre acts and even knew of some of the rapes, which she believed were not serious and she didn't believe he was a serial killer. It was Ressler's profile that was instrumental in putting the man behind bars.



Chapter 8 Staging: Pattern of Deceit

Chapter 8 Staging: Pattern of Deceit Summary and Analysis

Sometimes criminals intentionally try to fool the police by "staging" the crime scene. They try to throw the police off the scent by indicating that something other than what actually happened. Most of the time the staging is crude and the police see right through it, but sometimes, it is not that easy to detect the staging and it takes an expert eye like that of Ressler to be able to see through the masquerade. One example of just such an attempt at elaborate staging by a criminal was in Columbus, Georgia in 1978. Several older women had been killed, strangled by their own nylons, and the city was awash in fear. The police were unable to find any meaningful clues about the killer, however, and the public became restless. The police received a letter purporting to be from a white supremacist group that, being fed up with the lack of results from the police, claimed that they would kill a black woman until the police found the killer. The white group claimed to have already kidnapped a black woman named Gail Jackson. Ressler, suspecting that the woman was already dead, also suspected that the note was an attempt at staging by the real killer. He suspected that the actual killer was a black male who was trying to use the murders of the old ladies to cover up his own murder of Gail Jackson. This turned out to be correct and, using information from Ressler, the police eventually found a black man living on the Air Force base nearby who had committed the murder of Gail Jackson and several others.

Another case involved a man in England known as the "Yorkshire Ripper." This man had been killing women in the prostitute district of Yorkshire. When Ressler arrived, the police were busy studying a tape that they were told was from the killer. After listening to the tape once, Ressler informed the police that the tape was not from the killer. Ressler was convinced, from the other facts of the case, that the murderer was a introverted woman hating man who would never send a tape to taunt the police. The police changed their approach and eventually found the man fitting Ressler's profile. It turns out that a retired policeman who was disgruntled and was trying to embarrass the police sent the tape.

Ressler learned of one case from a friend who was an insurance representative. A house had been vandalized and this friend wanted Ressler to take a look at the crime scene photos to determine who might be at fault. Ressler found the photos strange in several ways. First, many of the most expensive items had not been broken or spray painted and much of the graffiti in the house was dissimilar from typical graffiti that teenage boys would use. Ressler suspected that the actual vandalizer was a middle-aged woman in her forties. In fact, the owner of the house was just such a person and the insurance company argued that the vandalism was fraud.



Chapter 9 To Kill Again

Chapter 9 To Kill Again Summary and Analysis

In the early 1980s, Ressler learned about the case of Duane Samples. Samples was a Vietnam vet and a local veteran counselor. In 1975, Samples was at the house of a friend, Fran who lived there with her daughter. Another woman, Diane, was also at the apartment. They spent the night talking, drinking and smoking marijuana. Eventually Fran went to bed with her daughter and Diane asked Duane to leave while she went to sleep on the couch. Diane awoke to find her throat slit and her intestines hanging out of her stomach. She also heard Fran screaming. Not knowing what was going on, Diane held her intestines together and ran to the house next door and told the inhabitants to call an ambulance and the police. Miraculously, she survived but Fran did not. Duane, after he left the house, had apparently gotten a filleting knife and cut Diane before going on to kill Fran. Duane did not see Fran's daughter and, somehow, the daughter survived the murder of her mother. When the police found Duane, they also found a note dated to several days before the murder, claiming that Duane would ask Frank to cut his stomach and, if she refused, he would kill her. A sample was eventually convicted but in 1981, Ressler learned that the governor of Oregon had commuted his sentence. Samples was claiming that his mental disorder that led to the crime was brought on by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder caused by his time in Vietnam. Ressler, recognizing that Samples was a classic case of a serial killer, decided to try to and stop the commutation. Ressler investigated Samples' story about his time in Vietnam and began investigating the claims that he made. Ressler found that Samples had lied about his medals and that the persons he described in the stories did not exist. Ressler and several others concerned with the case spent a lot of time and energy bringing experts and witnesses into Oregon and Ressler eventually was able to give a presentation to the governor where he made his case and convinced the governor to prevent any commutation of the sentence. Ressler and the other experts were convinced that Samples was a typical sexual sadist who would commit more crimes if he were ever released. Fortunately, the governor could not ignore all of the evidence against Samples and he remained in jail. Eventually Samples was released from prison in 1991.



Chapter 10 Tightening the Net

Chapter 10 Tightening the Net Summary and Analysis

In the late 1970s and early 80s, law enforcement was not coordinated like it is today. Agencies could not communicate or share information with one another, and sometimes it was hard to catch killers that operated in different areas. Harvey Glatman was instrumental in changing that. He would put ads in the paper for women to model for him. Once the women arrived he would try to make them feel comfortable and would give them alcohol. He would eventually ask them to undress and would tie them up and rape them. After raping them, he would kill the women. Glatman claimed that the women were asking for him to rape and kill them and confessed as much when he was eventually caught. He was caught by an LAPD policeman who traveled to different parts of the city and around southern California to piece parts of the case together. After Ressler learned about Brooks' efforts, he decided that it was time to put together a national crime database so that killers like Glatman would be easier to catch. With Quantico director, Jim McKenzie, Ressler put together the plan for the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime in 1981. The NCAVC became the umbrella for the BSU so that the project could expand considerably.

Into the 1980s, violent crime in America was changing considerably. Before 1980, most crimes were solved within a year and someone close to the victim committed most violent crimes. After 1980, the number of "stranger crimes", that is, crimes committed by someone that did not know the victim, had increased substantially. These crimes are much harder to solve and require additional police resources. At about the same time as the development of the NCAVC, a professor in Texas and law enforcement personal started to develop a computer network to aid police in catching violent criminals. Eventually Ressler persuaded them to merge their project with the NCAVC and the FBI.

Even though the program started small, they began to see important effects early on. Several killers, including a truck driver who traveled across state lines, were apprehended because of the new system. The trucker claimed to have killed dozens of people all over America, and police departments, not being able to check the trucker's claims, believed the man. Fortunately, the new crimes systems at the FBI were able to show that the man could be responsible for no more than ten or so murders. The new crimes systems took a lot of time and energy to make completely operational and it wasn't until 1995 that the system was fully in place.



Chapter 11 Two for the Show

Chapter 11 Two for the Show Summary and Analysis

While giving a seminar for his new crime-fighting unit, Ressler was able to arrange for John Gacy and Edmund Kemper to appear via satellite link to the seminar. Both men were serious killers and Ressler had learned much from studying their crimes. Ressler first learned about Gacy while traveling in Chicago in the late 1970s. The investigation began when a local young man went missing and Gacy became the subject. Gacy was, by all accounts, an upstanding member of his neighborhood and was well liked and respected by everyone. He was actively involved in the Democratic Party and was even able to meet First Lady Carter at one point. While the police was watching him, he began to become visibly frazzled and started drinking and taking drugs. Eventually, when being questioned by the police, he confessed that he had killed a homosexual man he had picked up in self-defense and had buried him in his garage. The police found access to a crawl space under Gacy's house and found the decomposing bodies of many other young men. Eventually the police tore Gacy's house apart and found many other bodies. All told, the police found thirty-three bodies. Gacy would patrol gay areas of town and pick up young men and take them back to his house where he would handcuff and tie ropes around their necks before killing and raping them. During this time, he was married and his wife seems to not have been particularly suspicious about the activity. Gacy would also know to dress as a clown. Gacy, in discussions with Ressler, tended to evade responsibility, though there was no doubt his murders were the product of an organized killer. Gacy was eventually executed in 1994.

The other killer on the satellite feed was notorious Santa Cruz killer, Edmund Kemper, the same man who had threatened Ressler years before in prison. Kemper was a huge man, almost seven feet tall, and had a very disturbed childhood. His mother constantly attacked him and abused him emotionally. His father divorced his mother early on and later wanted nothing to do with Kemper. He went to live with his grandparents, whom he hated. One day, after being forced by his grandparents to give up his gun because he had killed several small animals, Kemper stabbed his grandmother from behind and shot his grandfather. He then phoned his mother to tell her that her parents were dead. For these murders, Kemper went to jail and was eventually released into the care of his mother. Fed up with his mother and unable to make any other relationships, Kemper eventually started killing young women he found hitchhiking. He finally killed his own mother, and after disfiguring and disgracing her body, he invited his mother's friend over so that he could kill her too. He was caught by the police and tried to commit suicide while awaiting trial. Ressler believes that executing men such as Kemper and Gacy performs no social function and it is better for society that the men be kept alive so that they can be studied so as to prevent and catch other criminals like them.

Chapter 12 Broader Horizons

Chapter 12 Broader Horizons Summary and Analysis

During this period, and especially in the later days at Quantico, Ressler began to try to find a wider audience for his information. He hoped to educate psychiatrists and public health professionals as well as law enforcement so that they could deal with people like the killers discussed here properly. One example of the importance of such education is the case of Monte Rissell. Rissell was a serial rapist and was put in a psychiatric institution after several of his crimes and delusions came to light. He was eventually released when the psychiatrist believed that he was able to return to society. After leaving the mental hospital, Rissell committed many further rapes. While giving a seminar on Rissell, a psychiatrist came in, obviously distraught, claiming that he was the one who cleared Rissell. Ressler helped the man and even brought him on to his project. Throughout much of the 1980s, when not helping other agencies solve crimes, he brought famous criminals and researchers to Quantico to educate his men. He also helped several artists with material for their books, including *Silence of the Lambs*.

Ressler also served as an expert witness during this period. One example involved a man accused of killing eleven prostitutes. In his trial, the man argued that he was innocent because of insanity and used a defense based on his supposed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, brought on from his time in the military. Just like in the Samples case, Ressler investigated the man's claims and served as an expert witness for the prosecution to debunk his claims. The man was put in jail for life.

Another case involved Jeffery Dahmer. Dahmer's crimes were gruesome and were similar to both Kemper and Bundy. Ressler argued that Dahmer was a "mixed" case, exhibiting traits of both the organized and unorganized killer. Though Ressler agreed that Dahmer was guilty, he argued against the death penalty for the man. Ressler believes that the death penalty doesn't deter criminals like Dahmer and they serve society while they are alive and being studied so as to prevent more crimes.



Characters

Robert Ressler

Robert Ressler is the main character of this book and the author. As a young man, he did some time in college before joining the military and becoming an MP, that is, military police. He was very successful in the military and eventually became the head of several MP departments in Europe and America. Eventually the military allowed him to take graduate courses in criminology at Michigan State to keep him in the service. The lure of the FBI proved too strong and he ended up joining the FBI. After working for several FBI field services, Ressler joined the headquarters of the FBI at Quantico to teach agents. After tiring of teaching the same courses over and over again, Ressler became interested in a project being led by some of his friends that ultimately turned into modern profiling. Ressler eventually took over the project and turned it into the Behavioral Science Unit at the FBI. He also began to interview serial killers around America, collecting the information in what would become the Criminal Personality Research Project. Over time he began to understand more and more what made these killers tick and he began to teach his agents how to identify and apprehend serial killers. Ressler spent the later part of his life training agents and going to help field agents or other police who needed to apprehend a serial killer. Later he helped the author of *Silence of the Lambs* craft his master profiler characters. He never stopped studying killers, though.

Richard Chase

Richard is the prototypical disorganized killer. He came from a home where his mother and father continually fought and where his mother accused his father of trying to poison her. In school, he did well for a while but eventually began to act out and experiment with drugs. He became convinced that a gang of Nazis was poisoning him through his soap and that the only way to stay alive was to inject himself with blood. At first he used the blood of animals, later the blood of human victims. After one attempt to inject himself with rabbit blood, he was committed to a mental hospital. He was eventually let out and began to live on his own. He was convinced that Nazis and UFOs were following him, and after he was let out of the mental hospital, he went out and bought a .22 rifle. He randomly shot a man as he was driving down the street and then later decided that he needed to kill more. He wandered through Terry Wallin's neighborhood trying to open doors until he found an open one. Once he did, he entered and killed the woman, removed her blood and drank some. He walked down the street, opened the door to another house found a family inside, killed them all and took their blood before returning home. Ressler helped find and arrest Chase and argued that Chase should go to a mental facility. The jury was not receptive to insanity defenses though and he was sentenced to jail. He later committed suicide by overdosing on the medication he was taking to reduce his hallucinations.



William Heirens

Heirens was a young man who would later be called the "lipstick killer" for the messages he would write in lipstick on the walls of some of his victims. While enrolled at the University of Chicago he killed several women and wrote messages to the police on the wall in lipstick.

Charles Manson

Charles Manson was the leader of the "Manson family", a cult of hippies that he assembled in the desert of California. He gave them drugs and sex and then organized and inspired several murders. He is currently in jail.

Sirhan Sirhan

Sirhan Sirhan was the assassin of Robert Kennedy. Not a serial killer, he seems to have had delusions that shooting Kennedy would somehow improve the plight of his fellow Palestinians.

David Berkowitz

Berkowitz was the notorious "Son of Sam" killer who stalked women in cars and shot them from behind in New York City. He claimed that a neighbor's dog was making him kill, but later admitted to Ressler that the killings had nothing to do with the dog.

Ted Bundy

Bundy was probably the worst serial killer in American history. Some people believe he killed as many as one hundred women, though only twenty-two bodies were found. Ressler tried to get Bundy to tell police where the other bodies were buried but he refused and was finally executed.

Richard Speck

Speck was less of a typical serial killer and more a of a violent, anti social character. He didn't kill because of deranged fantasies like many of the killers, but rather because he got a kick out of it. He most often killed prostitutes after a bar fight.



Tex Watson

Watson was a lieutenant of Charles Manson's in the Manson Family. He was actually involved in the Tate/La Bianca murders and it appears that Manson was jealous of his rising power and influence in the family.

Edmund Kemper

Kemper was an example of a mixed type of serial killer. A large, six foot nine man he started by killing his grandparents and then went on to kill several other women around Santa Cruz. He eventually killed his mother and then used her head as a dartboard and also killed his mother's best friend.

John Gacy

Gacy was a seemingly upstanding member of his community in Chicago. He was a member of the Democratic Party and even met Mrs. Carter when she was in town. Despite appearances, Gacy was a seriously deranged killer. He would lure young boys back to his house where he would rape and kill them. He would then bury them in his house. Police found thirty-three bodies in his house. He was later executed.

John Joubert

Joubert was an enlisted man in the Air Force responsible for the kidnapping and death of several newsboys out side of Omaha, Nebraska. Ressler helped the police catch him by developing a profile that ended up being surprisingly correct.



Objects/Places

Quantico Virginia

Quantico is the location of the FBI Academy founded in 1972.

BSU

The Behavioral Sciences Unit was the beginning of what became the profiling unit of the FBI.

FBI

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was founded in 1908 but didn't become active on a national scene until J. Edgar Hoover took over in the 1930s. The FBI enforces federal crimes as well as helping on crimes that are especially serious or that cross state lines.

Serial Killer

A serial killer is a killer, almost always a man, who kills more than three person as the result of some kind of compulsive fantasy, not because of more traditional motives. Serial killers tend to kill strangers.

Green Beret

Green Berets, named after their iconic headgear, is the nickname for the United States Special Forces. Many ex-Green Berets went on to join SWAT teams.

SWAT

SWAT is an acronym that stands for Special Weapons and Tactics. SWAT teams are paramilitary part of a police force called in to deal with especially serious situations like hostage situations

Organized Killers

Organized killers are a category of killers created by Ressler. They tend to plan out their murders and to kill in a systematic fashion to satisfy some kind of compulsion.



Disorganized Killers

Disorganized killers tend not to plan but rather to kill as the result of a delusion. Their killings appear more random than organized killers.

301.20

The DSM, psychiatric manual code, for Schizoid personality, often related to serial killers.

Staging

Staging is the act of intentionally arranging the crime scene to throw investigators off the trail. Experienced investigators can often see through amateurish staging.



Themes

Organized versus Disorganized

After years of research, Ressler began to divide his killers between organized and disorganized killers. Of course, as with anything in profiling, these categories are somewhat fluid and people don't always fit into one category neatly. Dahmer for instance, or Kemper, looked to be "mixed" in that they had characteristics of both the organized and disorganized type. The organized killer things through his murders or rapes. He brings a murder weapon with him, he often drives to the scene of the crime and he picks his victims based on some sort of criteria. The disorganized killer is almost completely mentally deranged and has trouble driving. He usually finds his victims randomly, often because a voice told him to kill them, and he tends to walk to the crime scenes. There is less sign of premeditation in the disorganized killer. The organized killer tends to be more effective at killing without being caught because he tries to cover his tracks and avoid detection. The disorganized killer will often leave clues because he is not trying to cover up his crime. Disorganized killers tend not to hide the bodies of their victims, for instance. In the public imagination it is often the disorganized killer that strikes fear because of the random nature of his acts, but, in fact, the organized killer is more dangerous. The organized killer could be your next-door neighbor or an upstanding member of the community like John Gacy. They are harder to stop and harder to identify. Ressler believes that, because of changes in our society, there are more organized killers than there once were.

Understanding the Criminal Mind

Robert Ressler spent his entire adult life studying the mind of the serious, violent criminal. The purpose of this investigation was to aid in the prevention and the apprehension of serious, violent crimes and their perpetrators. The serial killer mind is different from the normal person's and it is necessary to adopt the way that the serial killer thinks in order to catch the killer. Serial killers are alienated from society and normal social rules. They do not give and seek affection in the same way as the average person and their sexual lives have become dangerously corrupted. It was one of the insights of Ressler's research that almost all serial killers had a serious sexual component to their crime. They were often not able to complete the sexual act with consensual sexual partners and feel the need to commit violent sexual crimes. Understanding the sexual component of serial killers allowed Ressler to have a deeper understanding of these killers and to see the patterns in their crimes. It was also by understanding the childhood backgrounds of the killers and their family histories that Ressler was able to add considerable detail to his profiles, which allowed him to pick out subjects more carefully. Getting into the mind of the killer allows Ressler and other profilers to not only know what to look for but also what to ignore, such as when killer stage a crime scene. Eventually Ressler institutionalized this knowledge at his profiling division at Quantico, Virginia FBI headquarters.



Punishment

The role and purpose of punishment is a tricky question in our society. Some people think that the proper approach to punishment is "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." That is, we repay evil with evil because offenders deserve a certain punishment. This theory of punishment is known as retributivism. The idea behind this theory is that criminals deserve a harm done to them because they committed their crime; for instance, John Gacy should be executed just because his crime was so heinous. Another theory, the utilitarian theory, and holds that punishment's purpose is to deter future crime and keep dangerous people away from society. Ressler falls more in the second camp as his arguments against the death penalty suggest. For serial killers, the question between these two approaches is even more serious. According to Ressler, serial killers cannot be rehabilitated and hence cannot return to society. Retributive justice may make some of the victims feel better, but given the expense and delay of executing people in our litigious society, Ressler argues that it is better to keep serial killers in prison indefinitely so as to study them. Given that serial killers cannot be rehabilitated, they become more like wild animals loose in our society than fellow members of society. According to Ressler, all we can do with these people is to lock them up and study them to see how we can prevent other people from becoming serial killers. To many this is not a very satisfying prospect, but, according to Ressler, it is the only way to deal with these people.

Style

Perspective

Whoever Fights Monsters is written from the perspective of Robert Ressler, the chief subject of the book. Because one of the main subjects is also the author, the book has the feel of a professional autobiography or memoir. Of course, most of Ressler's life is not discussed. The reader learns almost nothing about his wife and children or anything else personal about the man. What one does learn about is his chief passion and work, studying and interviewing serial killers. Because Ressler has a lot of experience and opinions on these men, it is clear that readers are getting his account of the story. In at least one case, that of Duane Samples, the killer and several other people actively disagreed with Ressler's account. Needless to say, Ressler takes the point of view that he is correct and Samples is wrong. It is worth taking this personalized perspective into account when reading Whoever Fights Monsters. It is not that one cannot trust Ressler, but one needs to recognize that he has a distinct point of view that may, at least sometimes, be coloring his accounts. Still, given what one has learned from Ressler in other parts of the book, the reader is inclined to trust him. Most of the facts of the cases are a matter of public record and Ressler has no reason to lie. He also goes to great pains throughout the book to highlight the importance of profiling while downplaying the role of the actual profilers, specifically himself.

Tone

The tone of the book tends towards conversational. The book is written for a popular audience and though academic jargon is used, it is clearly explained. Ressler wants to communicate his message about understanding the criminal mind to a large audience and he walks the reader through each part of the story clearly and with enough detail to make sense of the main points of the story without overwhelming. Ressler sets himself up early on in the book as a "no nonsense" kind of guy. He serves in the military and then goes to school before the FBI recruits him. Once in the FBI, he rebels against the bureaucratic structure of the agency. His views will tend to mirror those of his readers on this point and will build a certain amount of trust. Much of the book involves describing heinous crimes. Ressler describes them without leaving out the gory details, but he also doesn't wallow in the details or moralize them. He makes it clear that he morally opposes the serial killers, but also that society has much to learn from them and that the best way to learn is to approach these men with a sober, open mind. That attitude is reflected throughout the book. Often times, it is characteristic of writers of memoirs or autobiographies to settle old scores in their past or to morally condemn certain people that have offended them. Ressler avoids both of these pitfalls and tends to stick to the facts whenever possible.

Structure

Whoever Fights Monsters consists of twelve chapters, each one dealing with a theme in the work and detailing the murders of several killers. Sometimes a chapter will revolve around a specific killer as the first chapter revolves around the "vampire killer" Richard Chase. Other chapters will deal more with the internal workings or history of one aspect of the FBI. The final chapter deals almost exclusively, save for a section on Dahmer at the end on Ressler's attempts to popularize his work at the FBI and profiling in general. The chapter before that focuses on a seminar that Ressler gave with interviews by Gacy and Kemper. Ressler uses this chapter as an occasion to give the complete back-stories on Kemper and Gacy. The structure of the book is pretty fluid then, it doesn't follow anything like a typical, straightforward, linear narrative. The narrative jumps around in time and each chapter have more of a thematic focus than an actual continuation of the previous narrative. Some of the chapters deal primarily with different aspects of the crime, for instance, the chapter on staging. Another chapter such as the chapter on organized versus disorganized criminals investigates one of Ressler's distinctions in detail by giving different cases to illustrate points. Overall, the book reads well despite not having any typically linear structure. Each chapter builds on the other even though there is not direct narrative that each chapter follows. Each chapter has a structure internal to itself, but they do not necessarily follow one another.



Quotes

"No pupils, just black spots. These were evil eyes that stayed after me long after the interview."

Chap. 1, p. 19

"Murderers, rapists, and child molesters aren't seeking monetary profit from their crimes; in a perverse though sometimes understandable way, they are seeking emotional satisfaction."

Chap. 2, p. 32

"He admitted that his real reason for shooting women was out of resentment toward his own mother, and because of his inability to establish good relationships with women."

Chap. 3, p. 77

"Serial killers are mostly male, white, and in their twenties or thirties at the time of their murders."

Chap. 4, p. 93

"What begins as a fantasy ends as part of a homicidal ritual."

Chap. 4, p. 99

"Every ounce of information we can extract from a killer about his minds and methods gives us more information to track the next one."

Chap. 5, p. 125

"The organized versus the disorganized distinction became the great divide, a fundamental way of separating two quite different types of personalities who commit multiple murders."

Chap. 6, p. 129

"Herbert William Mullin was one of those who give mental illness a bad name."

Chap. 6, p. 144

"It is my sincere belief, however, that the number and percentage of organized killers are growing."

Chap. 6, p. 151

"By the time the body count was complete [Gacy], there were thirty-three victims (twenty-nine in and under the house, four in the river), more than had died at the hands of any other single individual in the history of American crime."

Chap. 11, p. 239

"The head was still in the trunk of the car when he went to visit one of the psychiatrists appointed by the court. That, too, gave Kemper a kick."

Chap. 11, p. 254



"I asked Kemper whether he had committed any sexual acts with his mother's body after he killed her, and he glared back at me and said that he had 'humiliated her corpse.'"

Chap. 11. p. 260

Topics for Discussion

Was John Gacy an organized or an unorganized killer? Explain why or why not.

Should convicted serial killers be executed?

Explain why Richard Chase Killed Terry Wallin.

Did a demon living inside of a dog tell David Berkowitz to kill?

Are most serial killers above or below average intelligence?

Which group of killers is more dangerous, the organized or disorganized type? Why or why not?

What is a "profile" of a serial killer?