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The Anatomy of Motive

By John E. Douglas, Mark Olshaker



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From legendary FBI profiler John Douglas and Mark Olshaker -- authors of the nonfiction international bestsellers *Mindhunter*, *Journey into Darkness*, and *Obsession* -- comes an unprecedented, insightful look at the root of all crime. Every crime is a mystery story with a motive at its heart. With the brilliant insight he brought to his renowned work inside the FBI's elite serial-crime unit, John Douglas pieces together motives behind violent sociopathic behavior. He not only takes us into the darkest recesses of the minds of arsonists, hijackers, bombers, poisoners, assassins, serial killers, and mass murderers, but also the seemingly ordinary people who suddenly kill their families or go on a rampage in the workplace.

Douglas identifies the antisocial personality, showing surprising similarities and differences among various types of deadly offenders. He also tracks the progressive escalation of those criminals' sociopathic behavior. His analysis of such diverse killers as Lee Harvey Oswald, Theodore Kaczynski, and Timothy McVeigh is gripping, but more importantly, helps us learn how to anticipate potential violent behavior before it's too late.



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The Anatomy of Motive By John E. Douglas, Mark Olshaker Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #38258 in Books
- Brand: Pocket Books
- Published on: 2000-07-01
- Released on: 2000-07-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.75" h x 1.20" w x 4.19" l,
- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
- 432 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

What makes people kill? Specifically, what are the motivations behind serial, mass, and spree killings? Drawing from cases such as the mass murder in Dunblane, Scotland, in which a lone gunman mowed down 16 children and their teacher, the still-unsolved Tylenol poisonings, and the Unabomber, former FBI profiler John Douglas and coauthor Mark Olshaker try to explain the unthinkable. What sets *The Anatomy of Motive* apart from so many of the theories about these horrific acts of violence is that Douglas and Olshaker have no obvious political agenda. They don't look for easy answers and they don't provide easy solutions. They do, however, offer some insight into the twisted kind of thinking that can lead a person to believe that the solution to his problems lies in bloodshed. They also provide some danger signs that may help to identify the potentially violent criminal before he has a chance to act out his morbid fantasies. While *The Anatomy of Motive* is undeniably horrifying, it is also illuminating, and Douglas and Olshaker approach their topic with grace and insight. --Lisa Higgins

From Publishers Weekly

A volume of case studies by Douglas, the former chief profiler at the FBI's legendary behavioral sciences unit, and Olshaker has become an annual event, from 1995's *Mind Hunter* to last year's *Obsession*. Here, the duo exhume the victims of Andrew Cunanan, Charles Whitman, Theodore Kaczynski and many others for insight into the killers' minds. Douglas's formula is deceptively simple: "WHY? + HOW? = WHO." But since serial killers are rarely caught through profiling, the formula is better expressed as "WHO + HOW = WHY." Douglas is tops in the field. He was among the first to suggest that the Atlanta child murderer was African-American, and he delivered a dead-on profile of Scottish mass-murderer Thomas Watt Hamilton on live TV based on preliminary news accounts. Still, most of what's here will be familiar to readers of other profiling books: the lonely white male with an obsessive sense of his own failure who tortured animals, wet his bed and played with matches as a child. Though Douglas promises to explain the differences among bombers, arsonists, shooters, cutters and stranglers, his profiles too often cleave to predictable, reductive formulations. Both Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby are characterized as "paranoid losers"; Timothy McVeigh is "a scrawny, pissed-off young hick." As always, Douglas and Olshaker deliver an entertaining read, but fewer case studies presented with more depth would better inform and educate the amateur profiler. (June)

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From Library Journal

The team that brought you *Mindhunter* and other best sellers on tracking criminals is back with more. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Warren Damron:

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