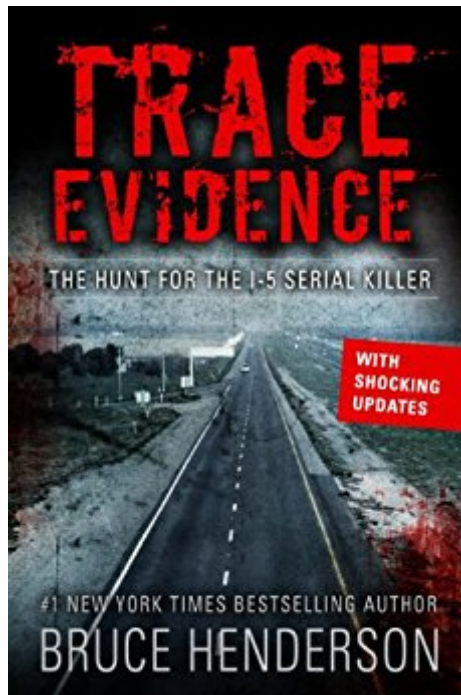


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# Trace Evidence: The Hunt For The I-5 Serial Killer



## Synopsis

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 his husband became that killer.

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## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Fantastic book! Bruce Henderson is a gifted and talented writer; his book "Trace Evidence: The

Hunt For The I-5 Serial Killer" is about the police and forensic investigations into the brutal serial murders of young women in Northern California, committed by Roger Kibbe, beginning around 1977 until his arrest in 1987. Although I'm a California native as well as a huge fan of true crime books, I had never heard of this case before. It was chilling to read about Kibbe's sneaky, wily ways as he hunted girls and young women along the I-5 near Sacramento and San Joaquin County. What made him even scarier was his creepy-quiet, Caspar Milquetoast persona during his day-to-day life - yet he showed his true colors as a cold, roughly violent, and homicidal misogynist when he committed these murders, hell-bent on destroying women's lives - and breaking their parents' hearts - in the worst possible way. Thankfully, he'll never be paroled. Fast-paced, with a fascinating glimpse into the science of forensic trace evidence, this is one of the better true crimes books you will read.

I've never met Bruce Henderson, and I've never read anything from him or about him either, until at least today. But just by tearing through this riveting read, I can surely tell you the following: while he's not against theory per se, he's more of a pragmatic guy. And when push comes to shove, theory will be shoved to the back of the bus if it doesn't play nicely with fact. Throughout the book he discusses real-world issues that confront detectives, not in a "whiny" sort of way but rather in an informative kind of way. And this is a nice change of pace, because even if you enjoy reading true crime as I do, you learn to filter through all of the junk food that most writers include in their sugar-coated books. After all, many true-crime writers were in law enforcement at one point, and most of them want to spin information after-the-fact as much as possible to make themselves look good. Not so here. You'll hear about politics of homicide -- homicide is "sexy" and so therefore it's put out front and center by departments, even though it's really only a small portion of real law enforcement. You'll learn how quickly the "uppers" in law enforcement seem to forget what it's really like to be out in the field -- they require their "underlings" to make "SWAGS," as the author describes them, as to how much time it will take to solve some serial murder case while that case is still being worked. "Who knows?" is the correct answer, and of course, "I'll tell you when we catch the UNSUB," should be added with a smirk by the detective. After all, while most detectives are smart, they aren't usually psychic, are they? I first heard about this case while watching the show "Forensic Files" on the Investigation Discovery (ID) network. That series itself is pretty interesting, and that particular episode was really interesting. I will admit, however, that when I first saw this book and decided to purchase it, I thought that it was background information about the crimes of Randall Woodfield, who was nicknamed the "I-5 Killer." I had read Ann Rule's book with the same name

quite a while ago, which was actually a really good book for her. (I've been very hit-and-miss on her writing. I personally feel that she gets too emotionally involved in the cases with respect to the victims, and I like the works of Jack Olsen much better in general. As he said himself, "Just the facts, ma'am!" and he stuck to that policy in his way-better-than-average books.) But no matter. This work and this case is at least as interesting as the Woodfield case. Roger Kibbe is introduced here, but really only in passing. This book is more about trace evidence and its use by law enforcement, as you would expect by the title, and in some ways this is more interesting than the murders themselves as you learn what really goes on behind the scenes. I've read other books about serial cases from the 80s, and it is pretty interesting that they all faced many of the same issues; no DNA technology was probably one of the worst. It is interesting to think about crime and crime fighting in the future; what will eventually happen? Well, if you've been paying attention, many people are now required to just get fingerprinted to get a driver's license; I believe they are here in California at least. And if the government can tell you what kind of health care you must buy, they can probably take your DNA as well. "Hey!" you may argue, "That's a slippery-slope argument!" and you may have a point. But even if my logic is slightly flawed, it doesn't mean that conclusion is wrong. If and when that day comes, it would be really good to be a homicide detective. But it won't be so great to be a killer though. The trace-of-trace evidence would then be enough to put anyone away. And it would all happen in a lab.

I normally don't read true crime books but having read one of Mr. Henderson's previous books, I decided to give this book a read. I read it in two days. It was that good. The main story is the true story of the I-5 serial killer who did his evil work in the mid 1980's outside of Sacramento, California. I had no remembrance of these killings nor the story. Mr. Henderson brings you into the story. He offers details about the crimes against five women who are murdered in cold blood by a vicious killer. Page after page will keep you wondering who the killer is, why is he killing like this, and will the police stop him. You are brought into the back rooms of the homicide department as they seek to stop this killer before he begins to travel beyond I-5. The killer is also getting better at his crimes. He is learning as he goes. In the end, you'll read this book like you are watching a 48 Hours Mystery. It will stir you, move you to tears, and you'll feel the desire for justice to be served to this killer. I won't give you the ending. Read it for yourself.

Out of print, I believe, but we had to obtain a copy and read it as my wife knows one of the relatives of a victim in the series of murders, and we live in the Sacramento area where the serial murders

occurred. For those of you not familiar with Bruce Henderson, he was a co-author with Vincent Bugliosi of "And The Sea Will Tell", which was also a well-written, captivating, and suspenseful crime/trial narrative. A very informative treatise on the gathering of trace evidence, at the beginnings of the craft and before such techniques began to be used in television crime series. Also describes the trouble and frustration of solving crimes before police and law enforcement agencies cooperated across jurisdictional borders. AND, you learn to hate the perpetrator, when the investigation eventually narrows in on one, and the idiocy of the perpetrator's family members. Quite the read!

It's almost impossible to find a work of nonfiction without at least a few pages of what I consider filler. This is one of the few. I never found myself skimming over pages. The author also must have a way with people because he presented the detectives, warts and all... in their own words. They were even open with what they did wrong, not that there were many instances of that. In fact, the progress of the investigation was due to the diligence of the detectives. I have no idea how they do it. At the end of the book there is a link to an interview. I couldn't watch it. Like I said, I don't know how they do it but they do, and this book brings you along for all of it.

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