



AT THE TIME,
VIRTUE WAS
NOT ONE OF
MY VIRTUES



I JUST LIKE
TO KILL

DAMNATION
SEIZE MY SOUL
IF I GIVE YOU
QUARTERS



I WILL SEND
YOU ANOTHER
BIT OF INNERDS

I WAS
SICK OR
EVIL,
OR
BOTH



YOU CAN'T
CONVICT A
MILLION DOLLARS



IT'S FOR THE
LOVE OF A MAN
THAT I'M GONNA
HAVE TO DIE



THE CRIME BOOK



I WAS ON A
TRAIN OF LIES. I
COULDN'T JUMP OFF

YOU'LL NEVER
BELIEVE IT –
THEY'VE
STOLEN THE
TRAIN



WHEN WE DO
RIGHT, NOBODY
REMEMBERS. WHEN
WE DO WRONG,
NOBODY FORGETS



THE BLOOD
OF MAIDENS
WILL KEEP HER
YOUNG



I ALWAYS FELT
LIKE A POOR
CHICKEN IN A
HEN HOUSE

FOREWORD BY PETER JAMES



THE
CRIME
BOOK



THE
CRIME
BOOK

FOREWORD BY
PETER JAMES





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First published in Great Britain in 2017 by
Dorling Kindersley Limited, 80 Strand,
London, WC2R 0RL

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Dorling Kindersley Limited
A Penguin Random House Company

Foreword © 2016 Peter James/
Really Scary Books Ltd

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1
001 - 305378 - Apr/2017

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-0-2412-9896-1

Printed and bound in Hong Kong

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FOREWORD

I owe my career as a writer to crime – in more ways than one. In 1982 soon after my first novel, a spy thriller, had been published, our Brighton home was burgled. A young detective, Mike Harris, came to take fingerprints, saw the book and told me if I ever needed any research help from Sussex Police to give him a call.

Mike was married to a detective, Renate, and over the next few years my former wife and I became firm friends with them. Almost all of their circle of friends were also in the police force, in all fields, like Response, Homicide, Traffic, Child Protection, Antiques and Fraud. The more I talked to all of them, the more I realised that no one sees more of human life in a 30-year career than a cop. They encounter every single facet of the human condition.

All investigated crime involves an inseparable trinity of perpetrator, victim and police. Even offences that disgust us, such as rape, domestic abuse, theft from charities, preying on the elderly or child abuse, hold us as much in thrall as other seemingly more “glamorous” ones. And there are some crimes which captivate us with their sheer verve, where the personality of the villains transcends the ruin, despair or even death inflicted on their victims. I’ve long held a sneaking admiration for brilliant con-man Victor Lustig who sold the Eiffel Tower to scrap dealers, and the brazen, skilfully planned, but almost Ealing Comedy nature of the Hatton Garden Jewellery Heist.

Much in the same way, the 1963 Great Train Robbery captured the nation’s attention – it was at the time the most audacious, and largest robbery ever committed in England.

I had lunch with the gang’s getaway driver, Roy John James, after his release from prison some years later. He was looking for finance to resume his motor racing career. A charismatic man, he ruefully told me if they had not made the mistake of coshing the train-driver, causing him permanent injury, they would all

still be considered heroes today. But that of course is the problem with true crime – someone does get hurt. The glamour and vitality of the Bonnie and Clyde story grinds to a brutal and sobering halt in a relentless torrent of bullets.

But that doesn’t stop our endless fascination with monsters, whether real or fictional, from Jack The Ripper, through to fiercely intelligent and charming Ted Bundy, estimated to have raped and killed over 100 young female college students. Nor with crime in general. Why are we so fascinated by crime, from both the pages of fictional detective novels, crime dramas and movies, to the utterly addictive murders in our tabloids, broadsheets and on our television news?

I don’t believe there is a one-size fits all answer, but many. Top of my list is that we are programmed by our genes to try to survive. We can learn a great deal about survival through studying the fates of victims and the make-up of their perpetrators.

And there is one aspect of human nature that will never change. I was chatting with former serial bank robber, Steve Tulley. As a teenager, in prison for his first robbery, Tulley met Reggie Kray, and persuaded him to let him be his pupil and teach him everything he knew. At 58, broke, Tulley is living in a bedsit in Brighton. I asked him what was the largest sum he had ever got away with. He told me it was £50k in a bank job. So what did he do with the money? He replied, excitedly that he had rented a suite in Brighton’s Metropole Hotel and, in his words, “Larged it for six months until it was all gone.”

I asked Steve if he had the chance to live his life over again would he have done it differently? “No,” he replied with a gleam in his eyes. “I’d do it all again. It’s the adrenaline, you see!”

Peter James

Best-selling author of the Roy Grace novels

INTRODU

CTION



Crimes – the illegal actions that can be prosecuted and are punishable by law – are all around us, from comparatively petty misdemeanours to truly heinous acts of unspeakable evil.

The perpetrators of these varied transgressions have long fascinated academics and the wider public, who have sought answers to questions about whether some people are more likely to commit crimes than others, and whether there are certain characteristics unique to criminals.

Indeed, the Ancient Greeks were fascinated by the “science” of physiognomy – the study of how certain facial features can reveal something about a person’s character or nature. While such a thought now sounds somewhat ridiculous, physiognomy was widely accepted by the Ancient Greeks and underwent periodic revivals over the centuries, the most notable spearheaded by Swiss writer Johann Kaspar Lavater in the 1770s.

What unites the crimes covered in this book is their status as “notorious” in one way or another. Whether it is because of their breathtaking ingenuity, brazen opportunism, machiavellian scheming, or abominable

malevolence, these crimes stand out over the centuries. While many of the perpetrators are viewed with distaste and disgust, some have been highly romanticized over the years for their rebelliousness and contempt for obeying the rules. This is often in spite of the extremely serious nature of their crimes, such as with Bonnie and Clyde, the Great Train Robbers, and Phoolan Devi.

Some cases have broken new ground, and in some instances have led to the swift passage of new laws to protect the public and deter others from committing similar crimes. Public outrage during the investigation into the highly publicized Lindbergh Baby

kidnapping in 1932 prompted the US Congress to enact the Federal Kidnapping Act just one month later. Also known as the Lindbergh Law, the Act made kidnapping a federal crime punishable by death.

Other cases have involved pioneering legal defence strategies, such as with the 1843 case of Daniel M’Naghten, the first of its kind in UK legal history. M’Naghten was acquitted of a high-profile murder based on a criminal-insanity defence, and remanded to a State Criminal Lunatic Asylum for the remainder of his life.

Crime through the years

Throughout history, pivotal moments have brought new crimes to the fore. In the late 19th century, for example, lawlessness increased with the growth of towns and cities, in part because of a lack of official police forces to rein in outlaws and bring them to justice. One of those was the Wild West’s Jesse James and his infamous James–Younger Gang, who became the first gang in the US to rob trains and banks during daylight hours.

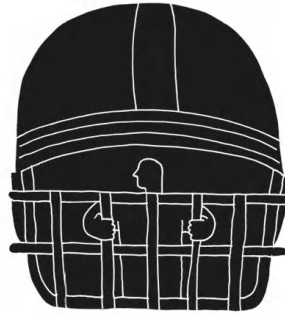
During the Prohibition period in the US, from 1920 to 1933, organized crime proliferated when outfits such as Chicago’s



Laws are like cobwebs,
which may catch small flies,
but let wasps and hornets
break through.

Jonathan Swift





Sheldon Gang vied to become the major illegal alcohol suppliers in the city's southwest Irish belt.

The number of offences in the US increased so much during that time span that the International Association of Chiefs of Police began to compile crime statistics. This culminated in the release of the Uniform Crime Reports – the first published in January 1930 – which were pulled together via a voluntary cooperative effort from local, county, and state law enforcement agencies. This became a vital tool to monitor the number and types of offences committed across the US. It caught on and inspired law enforcement agencies in other countries around the world to follow suit.

The ultimate transgression

When it comes to murder, it is invariably savage and disturbing. Whether an organized hit-for-hire, a crime of passion, or a wanton act of violence against a stranger, the act is final and tragic.

History's first homicide is believed to have taken place some 430,000 years ago. However, it was only discovered in 2015, when archaeologists working in Atapuerca, Spain, pieced together the skull of a Neanderthal and

found evidence that he or she had been bludgeoned to death and thrown down a cave shaft.

There is an undeniable public fascination with serial killers – especially those where the culprit has never been caught. The cases of Jack the Ripper in London and the Zodiac killer in California are both enduring sources of contemporary analysis and speculation. Some crimes are so horrifying that the name of the perpetrator becomes indelibly linked with indescribable evil. Ted Bundy, who committed the gruesome murders of dozens of young women in the 1970s in the Pacific Northwest, is a case in point. The fact that Bundy seemed a charming, respectable man

heightened the shock factor: he did not conform to a stereotypical vision of a monstrous serial killer.

Villains and technology

The 1962 escape from Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary caused an international sensation. Investigators concluded that the fugitives died trying to make their way across San Francisco Bay – but evidence unearthed in 2015 calls this into question. If such an escape were to happen today, a massive manhunt would be streamed live across the internet, making it more difficult for the criminals to get away.

The technological improvements in the detection and solving of crimes, such as DNA fingerprinting, is accompanied by an increasing sophistication in the techniques criminals use to commit them and to evade capture. In 2011, Russian hacker Aleksandr Panin accessed confidential information from over 50 million computers. In February 2016, hackers stole \$81 million (£64 million) from the central Bank of Bangladesh without even setting foot in the country. While criminal methods may have evolved over time, though, our fascination with crime and its perpetrators remains as strong as it ever has been. ■



He who commits injustice is ever made more wretched than he who suffers it.

Plato



**BANDITS,
ROBBERS,
ARSONIS**



**, AND
TS**



Irishman Thomas Blood attempts to steal the English **Crown Jewels** from the Tower of London.

↑
1671

Pirate Edward “Blackbeard” Teach **plunders ships** in the Caribbean and along the East Coast of America.

↑
1716–18

Jesse James leads the James–Younger Gang in **train and bank robberies** across the American Midwest.

↑
1866–82

1676



In England, **highwayman** John Nevison rides 320 km (200 miles) in a single day in order to construct an alibi.

1827–28



Scottish graverobbers William Burke and William Hare turn to murder to make money **selling corpses** for dissection.

1930–34



Bonnie and Clyde go on a **crime spree** across several US states, kidnapping and murdering when cornered.

The general public has long romanticized bandits, admiring their courage, audacity, and unwillingness to live by the rules of others. Many have been regarded as daredevils rather than simply common criminals. Such was the public’s perception of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, outlaws operating in 1930s America, who travelled in a Buick sedan and hid out in boarding houses and empty barns between robberies and murders. Bonnie and Clyde’s crimes were heinous, but they captured the public imagination and attracted throngs of supporters who relished reading reports of their latest exploits.

It was no different for the Great Train Robbers, a 15-member gang who targeted the Glasgow to London mail train in 1963. Wearing

helmets, ski masks, and gloves, they stole 120 mailbags containing more than £2.6 million (about £49 million today) in cash and seriously injured train driver Jack Mills. Yet sections of the British public glorified the Great Train Robbers, pleased that some of them evaded justice, and ignored their violent and illegal exploits.

Like other famous robberies and criminal partnerships, the stories of the Great Train Robbery and Bonnie and Clyde have been made into movies that appealed to the public’s age-old love of villains.

The notion of the lovable rogue is not entirely fanciful. John Nevison, a British highwayman of the 1670s was renowned for his gentlemanly manner. Holding up stagecoaches on horseback, he apologized to his victims before

taking their money. Bizarrely, it almost became an honour to be robbed by Nevison. His legendary status was cemented through his impulsive 320-km (200-mile) journey from the county of Kent to York to establish an alibi for a robbery that he committed earlier in the day—a feat that earned him the nickname “Swift Nick”.

Ingenious crimes

Sometimes we cannot help but admire the breathtaking audacity of certain crimes. One of the boldest robberies in modern times occurred in midair over the northwestern US in November 1971. The hijacker of a Boeing 727, who became known as D.B. Cooper, fled from the scene by parachute, taking with him a ransom of \$200,000 (£158,000) in \$20 bills.

The **Great Train Robbers** steal more than £2.6 million (about £49 million today) from the Glasgow to London mail train.

↑
1963

In Uttar Pradesh, India, Phoolan Devi, known as the **Bandit Queen**, carries out dozens of highway robberies.

↑
1979–83

In Belgium, thieves break into the vault of the Antwerp Diamond Center, **stealing diamonds** worth £60 million.

↑
2003

1971



In Washington state, a man going by the name of D.B. Cooper **hijacks a plane**, extracts a £158,000 ransom, and escapes by parachute.

1984–91



Professional fire investigator and secret arsonist John Leonard Orr **sets a series of deadly fires** in southern California.

2015



Veteran thieves loot the Hatton Garden Safe Deposit Company in central London, in the **largest burglary in UK history**.

In the French town of Nice a few years later, thieves committed what was then the biggest heist in history when they drilled their way into the Société Générale bank from the city's sewer system. In 2003, a gang of thieves showed similar ambition when they broke into a seemingly impregnable underground vault two floors beneath the Antwerp Diamond Centre, to commit what they dubbed the "perfect crime". The gang made off with a haul worth around £60 million. The ringleader made one fatal mistake, however, leaving traces of his DNA close to the crime scene.

Art heists also tend to capture the public's imagination, because they often demonstrate brazen opportunism with little thought for the consequences. Take, for

example, the 2003 case of amateur art thief Robert Mang, who climbed up the scaffolding outside a museum and squeezed through a broken window to steal a multi-million dollar work by the Italian artist Benvenuto Cellini. However, there was no market for the miniature masterpiece and he was forced to bury it in the woods.

Darker acts

Not all bandits and robbers inspire a grudging respect for the remarkable nerve of the offender. The case of bodysnatchers William Burke and William Hare – who, in early 19th-century Edinburgh, turned to murder to supply cadavers for Dr Robert Knox's anatomy classes at the city's university – is a grisly tale. The spate of arson attacks committed

by fire investigator John Leonard Orr in California were especially dark and disturbing. This case was fiendishly difficult to crack, because much of the evidence was destroyed by the fire. A partial fingerprint left on an unburned part of his incendiary device led to his arrest.

Unlike Bonnie and Clyde and the Great Train Robbers, who became legendary figures courtesy of the media, Orr created his own legend, and earned a reputation for being the first investigator at the scene of the crimes he secretly committed. But Orr's fearlessness and skill as a master manipulator are what he shares with the bandits and robbers featured in this chapter. They have all entered criminal history on account of their notoriety, which in some cases extends to mythic status. ■



FATHER OF ALL TREASONS

THOMAS BLOOD, 1671

IN CONTEXT

LOCATION

Tower of London, UK

THEME

Jewel theft

BEFORE

1303 Richard of Pudlicott, an impoverished English wool merchant, steals much of Edward I's priceless treasury of gems, gold, and coins at Westminster Abbey.

AFTER

11 September 1792

Thieves break into the Royal Storehouse, the Hôtel du Garde-Meuble de la Couronne, in Paris, and steal most of the French Crown Jewels; many, but not all, are later recovered.

11 August 1994

Three men make off with jewellery and precious stones worth £48 million at an exhibition at the Carlton Hotel in Cannes, France.

Irish-born Thomas Blood (1618–80) fought for the Parliamentarians against Charles I's Royalists in the English Civil War (1642–51), and the victorious Oliver Cromwell rewarded him with estates in his home country. These lands were confiscated during the Restoration of the Monarchy under Charles II, which Blood deemed a wrong that needed to be put right. He hatched a plan to steal the Crown Jewels, not only for financial gain but also to symbolically decapitate the king, echoing the fate of King Charles I, in 1649.

Early in 1671, disguised as the fictitious clergyman Reverend "Ayloffe", and with a female accomplice posing as his wife, Blood paid the Master of the Jewel Office, the elderly Talbot Edwards, for a tour. "Mrs Ayloffe" feigned illness during the tour, and Edwards and his wife came to her aid. A grateful Reverend Ayloffe made further visits, gaining the Edwards's trust. On 5 May, Ayloffe persuaded Edwards to bring out

the jewels, and immediately let in his waiting friends. Overpowering and beating Edwards, the gang flattened the crown and sawed the sceptre in half to make it easier to carry. They attempted to escape on horseback but were quickly caught.

The king confounded his subjects by offering Blood a royal pardon. Some suggested that the king had been amused by Blood's boldness; others that the king had recruited him as spy. Either way, Blood subsequently became a favourite around the royal court. ■

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It was a gallant attempt, however unsuccessful! It was for a crown!

Thomas Blood

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See also: The Société Générale Bank Heist 44 ■ The Antwerp Diamond Heist 54–55 ■ The Affair of the Diamond Necklace 64–65