

# Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

Av Helge Ridderstrøm (førsteamanuensis ved OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet)

Sist oppdatert 11.10.24

Om leksikonet: [https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om\\_leksikonet.pdf](https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf)

## Krimfilm

(\_film, \_sjanger) Film om kriminalitet, enten fiksjon eller dokumentarisk.

I krimfilmer “stands out the use of specific unlawful activity as catalyst for the representation of social concerns” (Luis M. García-Mainar i <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/7650>; lesedato 21.09.24).

“At its most basic level, the crime film map is a narrative structure that articulates the conflicting relationship between the individual and society – the clash between personal initiative and the community – by tracing the lives of criminals, victims and agents of the law. Following Charles Derry, concentration on each of the three protagonists of crime produces, respectively, the gangster film, the suspense thriller and the detective/cop film (55-69).” (Luis M. García-Mainar i <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/7650>; lesedato 21.09.24) Derry ga i 1988 ut boka *The Suspense Thriller: Films in the Shadow of Alfred Hitchcock*.

Spille-/fiksjonsfilmer om krim er en omfattende sjanger: “An extremely wide-ranging group of fiction films that have crime as a central element of their plots. The fictionalized criminal act, however, is only a point of departure in defining this group of films. For example, the horror film is replete with criminal acts but is rarely considered part of the crime film genre; similarly, crime is central to the thriller genre. The specificity of the crime film lies in its antecedents; namely the true crime dime novel, Victorian serialized fiction, and the detective stories of Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle. Early crime films include Biograph and Mutoscope’s five-part series, *A Career in Crime* (US, 1900), which shows a young man turning to crime and ends with his being sentenced to death by electric chair. *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, US, 1903), *The Life of Charles Peace* (William Hagger, UK, 1905), and *Salaviinanpolttajat/The Bootleggers* (Louis Sparre and Teuvo Puro, Finland, 1907) all based their plots on real-life crimes. In France, the *Fantômas* serial (Louis Feuillade, 1913-14) showed the exploits of a dashing master criminal; and numerous adaptations of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories were made in Europe and the US. There was a major cycle of gangster films [...] in the mid 1910s and in the late 1920s to early-mid 1930s. The 1920s and 1930s were also the golden age of detective fiction, with the hardboiled novels of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler in the US, and the detective

stories of Agatha Christie in Britain enjoying commercial and critical success, and with the work of these authors regularly adapted into screenplays from the 1940s. In the postwar period a darker version of the US crime film attracted the label film noir.” (Lucinda M. Hall i <https://researchguides.dartmouth.edu/filmgenres/crimefilms/>; lesedato 03.09.18)

Thomas Leitch i boka *Crime Films* (2002) “indirectly defines the genres of crime – that is, the gangster film, the thriller and the cop film – according to the interaction between the three, arguing that this interplay is an intrinsic ingredient of each genre. Thus, the heroic quality of the protagonist in each of the crime genres is based on his/her capacity to shift to the position of the adjacent ones, from criminal to victim in the gangster film, from victim to avenger or criminal in the thriller, and from cop to victim or criminal in the cop film. In fact, Leitch’s definition of the crime film according to the shifting positions of its heroes between victims, avengers and criminals reveals the dependence of his notion of the crime film on the interaction between the three generic maps.” (Luis M. García-Mainar i <https://www.edicions.ub.edu/revistes/bells17/documentos/571.pdf>; lesedato 01.10.24)

“The category of the crime film itself, a broad concept [...] allows for more flexibility than the discrete classical genres of the gangster film, the suspense thriller, the detective/cop movie, or film noir.” (Luis M. García-Mainar i <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/7650>; lesedato 21.09.24) Krimfilm har blitt kalt en “macrogenre” (Luis M. García-Mainar i <https://www.edicions.ub.edu/revistes/bells17/documentos/571.pdf>; lesedato 01.10.24).

“The increasingly preponderant fascination with crime on the American screen after World War II was understood in its day not as something new or discontinuous with Hollywood’s traditions, but as a rejuvenation of the illicit themes and issues associated with the earlier depression-era gangster cycle.” (Jonathan Munby sitert fra <https://www.albany.edu/scj/jcipc/vol10is1/hilfer.pdf>; lesedato 20.03.19)

“Classical theory on the crime film holds that the pleasure of crime formulas appears in the shape of a possibility of social subversion precluded by the end of the films, which gives way to the socially acceptable pleasure of seeing crime punished. Crime films provide ways for viewers to enjoy fantasies of violence and law-breaking by offering a forbidden pleasure and its chastisement, they offer viewers both transgression and the return to conformity, thus alleviating their anxiety about social norms (Rafter 2000: 153-54).” (Luis M. García-Mainar i <https://www.edicions.ub.edu/revistes/bells17/documentos/571.pdf>; lesedato 01.10.24)

“Alice Bolin discusses in her book *Dead Girls: Essays on Surviving an American Obsession* [2018] the gender inequities that are present in media that depict or use women’s deaths as a plot device (24). Bolin details her concept of the “Dead Girl

Show” and its dependence on the normative nature of discourse on violence (14). Bolin’s book works to document the implicit meaning of cultural texts that depict violence against women. Bolin implements the term “Dead Girl” to refer to the young women that are often killed in popular entertainment narratives (2). The key trait, as Bolin describes it, of a “Dead Girl Show” is, “As, such, the Dead Girl is not a ‘Character’ in the show, but rather, the memory of her is” (14). For Bolin, deceased young women are not the subject matter of these shows, but instead they act as backdrop to the drama of male desire and gaze. The Dead Girl acts as the starting point for a plot that revolves around male characters. The growth of men haunted by, or trying to solve, the dead girl’s murder become more important than the dead girl herself. Bolin cites crime dramas such as *Twin Peaks* and the first season of *True Detective* that privilege the growth of their male characters over justice for the female characters.” (Compton 2019 s. 16-17)

En undersjanger av krimfilm er seriemorderfilm (“serial killer film”), andre undersjangrer er bl.a. krimdrama, “mystery film” (om en mordgåte som løses av en detektiv/etterforsker), gangsterfilm/mafiafilm, og krimdokumentarfilm. “Nicole Rafter karakteriserer thriller som en undersjanger av *crime films* [...] Som Derry, Rubin og Leitch alle er inne på i sine definisjoner av thrilleren, er dette ofte en sjanger som portretterer det kriminelle” (Stapnes 2010 s. 20 og 65). Eksempler på seriemorderfilmer og -serier er *Ted Bundy* (2002; regissert av Matthew Bright), *Dahmer* (2002; regissert av David Jacobson), *Dark Angel* (2016; regissert av Brian Percival), *Rillington Place* (2016; regissert av Craig Viveiros). Krimfilmer og krim-fjersynsserier er svært ofte sjangerblandinger, f.eks. er *Se7en* (1995; regissert av David Fincher) både en thriller og en seriemorderfilm.

“A Mystery/Suspense film centers on a person of authority, usually a detective, that is trying to solve a mysterious crime. The main protagonist uses clues, investigation, and logical reasoning. The biggest element in these films is a sense of “whodunit” suspense, usually created through visual cues and unusual plot twists.

Examples of Mystery/Suspense Film:

*The Maltese Falcon* – A private investigator works to discover the whereabouts of the Maltese Falcon after his partner is murdered.

*Blue Velvet* – A young man begins a relationship with a psychotic man and his girlfriend.

*Chinatown* – A private investigator takes a case about adultery, but discovers a Los Angeles City Water & Power murder scheme.

Sub-genres of Mystery/Suspense Film:

Closed-Mystery

A Closed-Mystery is a sub-genre of Mystery/Suspense Film that conceals the identity of the main perpetrator until the very end of the film. This kind of storyline adds an extra element of suspense to the plot, as the audience is not sure who has committed the crime. Often, there are a variety of characters that are possible suspects.

Examples: *Clue*, *Murder of the Orient Express*, *Twelve Little Indians*.

### Film-Noir

Film Noir is not simply a sub-genre, but rather a term for a distinct, stylistic type of crime-drama or thriller/mystery that was popular throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Film Noir is characterized through a black-and-white style with stark visual lighting effects. The main character is usually a cynical hero. Film Noir relies on a narrative voice and various flashbacks to explain the intricate plot.

Examples: *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *Sweet Smell of Success*.

### Open-Mystery

The Open-Mystery Film is the opposite of a Closed Mystery. In these movies, the main perpetrator is revealed at the beginning of the story. These films showcase “the perfect crime” scenarios. Suspense in these films come less from the “whodunit” aspect, and more from how the crime was committed.

Examples: *Oceans 11*, *Thomas Crown Affair*, *The Italian Job*.”

(<https://thescriptlab.com/screenplay/genre/993-mysterysuspense/>; lesedato 04.04.19)

Det er lagd en rekke dokumentar- og spillefilmer om drapene begått av den såkalte “Manson family” i 1969. Dette var en gruppe ungdommer som levde som et hippiekollektiv på en gård i California. Lederen var Charles Manson, som framstilte seg selv som en slags gud, og ble sterkt beundret av de unge kvinnene i hans kultgruppe, der det var mye narkotikabruk. Manson hevdet at det snart ville komme en rasekrig i USA, og Beatles-sangen “Helter Skelter” ble tolket som et hemmelig budskap om å være forberedt på dette. Det ville bli nødvendig å drepe for å overleve krigen. I 1969 brøt noen medlemmer i gruppa (men ikke Manson selv) seg inn i et hus i nærheten av Los Angeles, der skuespilleren Sharon Tate bodde. De drepte den høygravide Tate og flere andre med en stor mengde knivstikk. Dagen etter drepte noen fra gruppa, inkludert Manson, ekteparet Rosemary og Leno LaBianca. De ble knivstukket over 40 ganger, likene ble funnet i et hjem i Los Angeles, og på kjøleskapet hadde en av morderne skrevet “Helter Skelter” med blod. Drapene rystet USA og Manson ble innbegrepet av en sinnssyk kultleder og galning. Filmer om eller sterkt inspirert av Manson-gruppas drap er blant andre *I Drink Your Blood* (1970; regissert av David Durston), *Manson* (1973;

regissert av Robert Hendrickson og Laurence Merrick), *Charles Manson Superstar* (1989; regissert av Nikolas Schreck), *The Manson Family* (1997; regissert av Jim Van Bebber), *Live Freaky! Die Freaky!* (2006; regissert av John Roecker), *Leslie, My Name Is Evil* (2009; regissert av Reginald Harkema), *Life After Manson* (2014; regissert av Olivia Klaus), *House of Manson* (2014; regissert av Brandon Slagle), *Manson Family Vacation* (2015; regissert av J. Davis), *Wolves at the Door* (2016; regissert av John R. Leonetti), *Charlie Says* (2018; regissert av Mary Harron) og *The Haunting of Sharon Tate* (2019; regissert av Daniel Farrands). Den mest kjente boka om mordene er Vincent Bugliosi og Curt Gentrys *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders* (1974). Denne boka er grunnlaget for spillefilmen *Helter Skelter* (1976; regissert av Tom Gries).

“[T]he 1976 televised movie adaptation of the book *Helter Skelter* demonizes Manson and is preoccupied with the depravities of the family and their bloody rampages. Directed by Tom Gries, this film solidified Manson’s image as a wild-eyed, raving, grinning, singing, howling, and dangerous lunatic, capable of hypnotizing the jury and inducing his followers to carry out murder at his command. This is Bugliosi’s version of Manson, and the narrative follows the version of events given in the prosecutor’s book in a semidocumentary style, with George DeCenzo portraying Bugliosi as narrator. Performances by Steve Railsback as Manson and Nancy Wolfe as Susan Atkins made the film a television smash hit and helped earn it an Edgar Allan Poe Award for best television feature/miniseries in 1977.” (Murley 2008 s. 95)

Fordi boka *Helter Skelter* “runs nearly 800 pages and the story was so convoluted and complex, *Helter Skelter* is a lengthy movie and was shown over two consecutive nights, skillfully managing to convey the intricacies of the family, the crimes, and their detection. The film was the most popular serialized television movie of all time until it was displaced in popularity by the miniseries *Roots* the next year. Railsback brought a terrifying and convincing Manson into living rooms across the country, and the film (and book) have been instrumental in creating the horror movie myth of Manson that has been the main legacy of those crimes. The cultural work of *Helter Skelter* was threefold: first, it turned Charlie Manson into a demonic stereotype, a caricature of himself. Second, the film sensationalized the material and standardized the narrative by keying into and reinvigorating horror and mystery archetypes from an earlier period. And third, the movie emphasized certain elements of Bugliosi’s book that showed the police as bumbling, incompetent, and incapable of solving the crime because of bureaucratic mishandling. Manson – with his shaggy beard, unkempt appearance, animal magnetism, and supernatural power over the young women – is presented as “the Wolfman.” Susan Atkins is a metaphorical and literal vampire who gains power by killing people, encourages other young women to give up their lives by joining the Charlie cult, and relates in a toneless voice how she dipped her fingers into Sharon Tate’s blood and tasted it. The other Manson “girls” are zombies, blindly and

mindlessly following Charlie's orders and methodically "overkilling" their victims with savagely delivered multiple stab wounds." (Murley 2008 s. 95-96)

"Through these depictions, *Helter Skelter* engaged the unconscious emotional undertones of the Manson events by correlating the players with a range of familiar horror and mystery-fiction tropes and aligning these incomprehensible modern killers with an older, almost archaic understanding of their actions. Although Bugliosi had presented the Manson killers with the language of horror and as stereotypical monsters in his book, the visual impact of such depictions and the emphasis on elements that fit the mold of the stock characters made the movie version even more powerful and lasting. *Helter Skelter* also emphasized that the efforts of the police to solve the crimes were hindered by an unwieldy and overly bureaucratic police system, and although everything presented in the film was factually true, police incompetence is highlighted throughout. An early scene that takes place in LAPD headquarters illustrates this: because of jurisdictional boundaries, two different sets of detectives initially worked the Gary Hinman (a pre-Tate murder) and the Tate slayings, one from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, the other LAPD. The Hinman detectives visit LAPD to query the possible connections between the murders, because similar words were left in blood at both crime scenes, but are rebuffed by a detective who says, "The dope angle is the only one that fits here." The Tate killings were at first believed to be drug-related, and this bit of dialogue illustrates the single-minded incompetence of the detectives. After the LaBianca murders, and with the Tate detectives working separately just a few desks away, another cop tries to bring up the rarity of the gun used in Tate as a possible way to crack the case. A detective tells him, "That's not the way you break cases, Hank. You do it by filling out forms ... in triplicate." And yet another scene demonstrates bureaucratic interference (and how mightily it is resented) by prominently showing a sign that hangs on the wall at headquarters that reads, "To err is human. To forgive is against departmental policy." Valuable evidence – the bloody clothes worn by the Tate killers, the gun with a broken handgrip that was thrown down a ravine by the same – is found by, respectively, a television news crew and a nine-year-old boy." (Murley 2008 s. 96)

"The Manson films since 1976 offer a glimpse into how the national psyche has processed and filtered the Manson cultural phenomenon. In 1984, director John Aes-Nihil offered his *Manson Family Movies*, an arty-weird Super-8 film with the premise in the title: that this was a collection of the family's fabled films of their murderous deeds and secret sexual rituals. As a film, it is nearly unwatchable; as an exercise in fetishizing Manson and the "girls," it is exquisite. Nikolas Schreck released *Charles Manson: Superstar* in 1989, a conventional documentary (still photos, voice overs, interviews) that purports to tell the "truth" about Manson after two decades of media hype. The film manages to articulate and examine the myth of Manson, although it is uncomfortably sympathetic to his "ideology" and cause. Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey stepped into the conversation with his *Death Scenes: Manson* (1989), where he posits the interesting theory that the real

killer, Tex Watson, has been ignored, usurped by the media-generated focus on Manson. This is actually true, for Watson – Charlie’s right-hand man and the only male presence at all the murder scenes – quite literally orchestrated the killings but has been curiously absent from media representations of the Manson events.” (Murley 2008 s. 97)

“In 2004, another film version of *Helter Skelter* appeared on television, less powerful than the original because the ground has been covered so thoroughly. Referring to the fact that Linda Kasabian, the prosecution’s star witness against Manson and company, had started her life over after the trial and is now a grandmother, *New York Times* television critic Alessandra Stanley wrote, “How someone so closely involved in those murders could start over and create a placid new life might be more intriguing at this point than reliving the crimes themselves.” [...] the ongoing power of the Manson mystique [...] Jim Van Bebber’s *The Manson Family* (1997), frames the original events within a competing weird storyline that follows a group of punk-junkie oddballs as they enact their own exceptionally bloody murder spree, bashing in the brains of a television producer who was making yet another Manson documentary. A surprisingly good film, this one manages to critique media-inspired Manson worship and senseless violence, while offering a fresh and coherent perspective on the murders – that each murder episode was a schizo-paranoid response to Manson’s failed interactions with the world outside his “family.” ” (Murley 2008 s. 97-98)

“It seems that the sociological phenomenon of Manson is here to stay, for, as he has famously said, “I am whoever you make me ... you want a sadistic fiend because that is what you are. You only reflect on me what you are inside of yourselves.” Manson does have a point: he *is* the monster we have made him, regardless of his actual behavior. Charles Manson the person has come to represent so many things that he has crumbled under the symbolic weight and morphed into his media-projected image. Nearly forty years of Manson films illustrate a trajectory of true-crime meaning: from earnest shock and outrage about an LSD murder cult in our midst through tangled levels of fetishizing the same, to a world-weary postmodern acceptance of the mindless savagery he represents and an accompanying critique of media-created mythology, the meanings of Manson list the various ways American culture has understood psychopathic and irrational violence.” (Murley 2008 s. 98)

Spillefilmen *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986; regissert av John McNaughton) “changed the rules of the game by introducing the viewer as a third and willing participant in the killer-victim relationship, and exposing the latent voyeurism inherent in the film-going experience.” (Murley 2008 s. 104)

“One of the most compelling and influential documentary films of the late twentieth century is a true-crime masterpiece: Errol Morris’s *The Thin Blue Line* (1988). Although *The Thin Blue Line* (TBL) did not invent the reenactment as a

way of narrating criminal events, Morris's use of the technique brought into true crime a register of timelessness and inexorability, amping up the graphic sense of murder as "always already happening." With its strong noir-inflected mood, dark lightning, hypnotic and repetitive musical score, presentation of quirky characters, and the seedy, often invisible lives of the American underclass, and mixing elements of fact and fiction, the film echoes *In Cold Blood* (both book [av Truman Capote] and film versions) and advances the true-crime trope of a fatalistic, voyeuristic sense that murder is inevitable. *TBL* has been called a "non-fiction film noir," a "nightmarish meditation on the difference between truth and fiction," [...] *TBL* presents multiple perspectives on the murder event through the statements of different interviewees, calling into question the boundary between the "factual" and the "true," which true-crime texts had been blurring for years. However, the film makes very clear that its chief subject, Randall Adams, has been framed and wrongly imprisoned by a corrupt criminal justice system, insisting on the truth of Adams' innocence. *TBL* also blurred the boundaries between reality and representation by actually changing a criminal justice outcome: partly because of the serious questions Morris raised in the movie about his guilt, Randall Adams, the convicted cop-killer whose story is told, was set free on appeal." (Murley 2008 s. 98-99)

"The cultural work of *The Thin Blue Line* is multifaceted, as it has impacted murder narration, filmmaking, and public trust in the efficacy and soundness of our criminal justice system. The film introduced a strong critical and investigative impulse into true-crime filmmaking and altered the stylistic and thematic direction of the genre. Morris used heavily stylized reenactments to demonstrate ambiguity rather than to arrive at a single visual truth about past events, a technique that is widely seen now in the contemporary *CSI* television series. Because of its focus on trying to right a wrong, the film is not an exploration of the "how" and "why" of a crime, but rather the "how" and "why" of the aftermath: What went wrong and who was to blame for the miscarriage of justice? With a kind of split focus, Morris investigates the tangled knot of "crimes" that follow the murder of Dallas police officer Robert Wood and led to the victimization and false imprisonment of Randall Adams: the lies of David Harris, the sociopath who implicated Adams in the murder; the corruption of the Dallas prosecutor who withheld evidence and "bought" witnesses; and the malfeasance of the judge who presided over the faulty trial that convicted Adams. Indeed, the movie functions as the trial that Adams should have had, with its interviewees "speaking into the void" (Morris's characterization of his interview technique) and the viewer positioned as interrogator, the presentation of evidence in the form of documents, drawings, and reenactments, and the final "confession" of David Harris that is bestowed on the audience through the distancing mechanism of a tape recorder (a fortunate accident of filmmaking; Morris's camera broke on that day and he used his tape recorder instead)." (Murley 2008 s. 99)



“Morris rectifies a gross injustice with his film, but still leaves the viewer with questions and doesn’t offer a tidy conclusion. Instead, the unraveling of one mystery – the death of policeman Robert Wood and how Randall Adams came to be blamed for it – leads to many others, as we wonder, along with Morris, “To what extent were the people involved in this case aware of what they were doing?” and “If you could make a pie graph of lying, which part would be self-deception, which part greed, which part self-aggrandizement, and so on?” These are the deeper questions that lie at the center of this case, and they are never answered by the film. The mystery of human misbehavior remains, even as the mystery of murder is “solved.” *TBL* bestows on its audience an “awareness of the final inaccessibility of a moment of crime, violence, trauma, irretrievably located in the past.” No matter how many times the crime is reenacted, Morris demonstrates that truth – even a truth that seems etched in stone and therefore discoverable, as in “David Harris pulled the trigger” – is evasive, elusive, and impossible to attain. Randall Adams may have been exonerated by the system that imprisoned him for twelve years, but the “truth” of the situation remains officially unknown, because David Harris was never charged with the crime. Morris’s film is unique in that it presents a murder narrative that moves the audience further away from certainty and knowingness and deeper into the unexplored and frighteningly postmodern territory of contingency and the malleability of memory and truth.” (Murley 2008 s. 99-100)

“*The Thin Blue Line* helped shape public awareness about the terrifying ease with which an innocent person can be framed, convicted, and sometimes even executed. In the 1970s and 1980s, widespread and increasing public fears about violent crime and random victimization led to draconian sentencing laws and an enormous number of incarcerated people, and Morris’s film introduced the possibility that in more cases than previously suspected, the system had failed. In that pre-DNA era, “scientific” certainty was arrived at through forensic methods now recognized as deeply subjective and flawed: polygraph tests, hair analysis, coerced confessions, and eyewitness testimony have each been discredited as reliable and accurate ways of finding the truth of a crime event, but they continue to be used in murder cases. As “the first movie that has solved a major murder mystery and led to a reversal of a decision at trial,” *TBL* opened new possibilities for true-crime filmmakers to engage in more investigative techniques and to develop a critical, rather than just exploratory or explanatory, sensibility. *TBL* has had a major impact on television murder narratives in particular, and has led to the kind of investigative journalism seen in such programs as *20/20*, *48 Hours*, and *Dateline: NBC*. The growth of such television fare exploded during the late 1980s with the television shows *Cops* and *Unsolved Mysteries*, and *TBL* catalyzed the creation of a true-crime subgenre: that of “justice-gone-wrong.” ” (Murley 2008 s. 100)

Selv om *The Thin Blue Line* “remains the only major documentary film in the genre to have led directly to the exoneration of an innocent man in a murder case, other filmmakers have challenged convictions and advocated for their misapprehended subjects. One such case is explored in two HBO-produced documentary films,

*Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (1996) and *Paradise Lost 2: Revelations* (2000), both directed by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky. The films together present a study in how cultural bias, police incompetence, ignorance, and fear can result in the wrongful conviction of innocent people by investigating the mutilation murder of three eight-year-old boys in West Memphis, Arkansas, in May 1993. Through a combination of police inexperience with unusual violent crime and the influence of the “satanic panic” of the late 1980s and early 1990s (the widespread irrational and hysterical belief that many ordinary individuals were engaged in secret satanic cult rituals and responsible for the murder and sexual abuse of children, among other crimes), three unconventional and hapless teenagers were convicted of these terrible murders, based largely on the coerced and false confession of a subject with an IQ of 72. Both films are straight documentaries rather than “docudramas,” eschewing such technical elements of fiction as reenactment, voice over, or narrator intrusion. Instead, the story is told through interviews of the primary subjects (victims’ parents, the accused killers and their families, police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and the judge involved in the case), actuality filming of the trial, the clever use of network news footage of the case, and disturbing scenes that show the stepfather of one of the dead children acting out his grief and anger, and exorcising his own possible guilt. The result is a forceful and terrifying portrait of ignorance, fear, and the inexorable forward momentum of an unwieldy legal system that, once set onto the wrong track, is nearly impossible to set right. Unlike Randall Adams in *TBL*, the wrongly convicted killers have not been exonerated and are still working on their appeals, but the films (especially the first one) have publicized the case and helped gather support for the “West Memphis Three.” (Murley 2008 s. 100-101)

“*The Paradise Lost* films feel unfinished and leave the viewer with uncomfortable ambiguity, as the gruesome and tragic murders are never solved; in *TBL*, the real killer is known to the viewer and is satisfyingly incarcerated. In fact, a turning point occurs two-thirds of the way into *TBL*, when David Harris, dressed in a bright orange jumpsuit and talking into the camera, suddenly brings his hands up to scratch the back of his head. For the first time, we see that his hands are manacled, an image that powerfully relates the danger and violence that lurks beneath his chatty and amiable exterior. *Paradise Lost* offers no such reassuring images; instead, we are drawn to the (perhaps erroneous) conclusion that the ultrareligious, gun-wielding, vindictive, and mentally unstable stepfather of one victim is the killer of all three boys, but he is never regarded as such by the police. Sinofsky and Berlinger also show the dead bodies of the three children in crime scene video footage and in autopsy photos, whereas Morris implies mortal violence through the reenactments, distancing the viewer from the full-on graphic horror of death and mutilation. Images of the stiffened, nude, mud-and-blood-streaked children’s bodies stay with the viewer and are mute testimonials that inspire disgust and outrage, emotions that Morris elicits much more subtly.” (Murley 2008 s. 101-102)

“Since *The Thin Blue Line* was made, crime documentarians and fiction filmmakers alike have made murder narratives with more varied and critical postmodern themes and narrative styles. Like true-crime book, true-crime films are generally conservative, as the narrative tropes and conventions engage strong emotions of outrage, anger, and pity and posit a law-and-order ideology and an after-the-fact retelling of events, which allows little room for differing interpretations of or response to the crime event. But some films – and books – offer a different understanding of the specific nature of some crimes and criminal behavior. The “justice-gone-wrong” subgenre is one such response; other films in this category include *Brother’s Keeper* (Berlinger and Sinofsky, 1992), *Murder on a Sunday Morning* (Jean-Xavier de Lestrade, 2002), *Unreasonable Doubt: The Joe Amrine Case* (John McHale, 2002), *After Innocence* (Jessica Sanders, 2004), *Picture This: A Fight to Save Joe* (John McHale, 2005, a follow-up to *Unreasonable Doubt*), and *The Trials of Darryl Hunt* (Ricki Stern and Anne Sundiaerg, 2006). These documentaries explore murder narratives that engage larger issues of community and race-based standards of justice and injustice, plead specific cases (the subjects of both *Unreasonable Doubt* and *The Trials of Darryl Hunt* have since been exonerated), and examine the difficult circumstances that face exonerees. Another nexus of understanding murder has, since the mid-1990s, grown out of the work of legal-affairs organizations that use DNA analysis to revisit contested or questionable violent crime convictions. The work of attorneys and Innocence Project founders Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld appears in some of the recent documentaries, as they advocate for the wrongly accused and assist with high-tech and often prohibitively expensive DNA testing of evidence that has sometimes been mishandled or not tested at all. A different murder narrative emerges from these exonerations, one that focuses not on the originating crime but on its devastating consequences for the wrongfully accused and on the fascinating and troubling belief, held by most jurors and lawyers, in the sanctity of eyewitness testimony and confessions.” (Murley 2008 s. 102)

Dokumentarfilmen *Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer* (1992; regisserat av Nick Broomfield) “narrates the way that Wuornos – a confessed killer of seven men – was betrayed, sold out, and manipulated by both her lover and the mercenary policemen and attorneys who surrounded her as the media storm erupted around “America’s first female serial killer.” The film has an unfinished feeling and it leaves many questions unanswered, partly because it documents a liminal moment during the Wuornos events: the time between her confession and her execution by the state of Florida. Much of the film shows Broomfield on his visits to Wuornos’s representative, a born-again Christian woman who “adopted” thirty-five-year-old Wuornos, and the pot-smoking, self-aggrandizing and narcissistic attorney who encourages Wuornos to plead guilty to the murders. In cinema verité style, the camera follows Broomfield in his thwarted attempts to interview Wuornos where she is being held in a maximum-security Florida prison, and the much-anticipated interview appears at the very end of the film. Broomfield’s flat, drawn-out British-accented voice adds layers of pathos and irony to the sordid events and desperate

characters who make up the narrative; consistent with the subjects of the justice-gone-wrong subgenre, Aileen Wuornos appears more authentic, honest, and likeable than any of the other characters, even though her status as murderer is never in doubt.” (Murley 2008 s. 102-103)

I *Aileen: Life and Death of a Serial Killer* (2003; regissert av Nick Broomfield og Joan Churchill) “our sympathy for Wuornos grows as Broomfield documents her paranoid delusions that have only increased and gained prominence in her psyche during twelve years on death row. This film covers the last few months of her life and the preparation for her execution, and it delves into Wuornos’ childhood and past. Most interesting are the interviews with Wuornos that show her seesawing between protestations of innocence and guilt; she had always maintained that her “serial” killings were all in self-defense, although at the very end she admitted to a robbery motive, which may have been a tactic calculated to avoid any further delays and appeals. *Aileen: Life and Death* is more finished, more mature, and less pedantic than the first film, although Broomfield slightly overstates his major point: that the death penalty is barbarous and inspired solely by the desire for vengeance. Broomfield’s numerous on-camera appearances, although they somewhat needlessly showcase his own wry humor and witty repartee with the players in this drama, lend a palpable “you are there” feel to the footage and guide the viewer into an understanding that Wuornos is mentally ill and also caught in a deeply irrational system of punishment and retribution. As murder narratives, these two documentaries introduce badly needed rationality and balance into a deeply wrenching, reactionary, and emotionally fraught area of human experience. The *Aileen* films prove that the murder narrative doesn’t have to play only in the registers of pathos and pity.” (Murley 2008 s. 103)

I David Fincher spillefilm *Se7en* (1995) “serial killer John Doe imagines himself to be a “Christ-like antichrist” whose project is to “punish ritually and gruesomely a given practitioner of one of the seven deadly Christian sins” (Simpson 134). However, Doe’s reliance on heavy-handed religious symbolism renders him most vulnerable to aesthetic hyperbole (surrendering at the precinct, he spreads his bloodied palms outward in a gesture of Christ-like supplication; the garish neon cross which hangs above his bed might have been purchased from Baz Luhrmann’s garage sale). [...] ‘The crime’ is always synonymous with what is seen, since both the spectator and detectives Somerset and Mills (as spectatorial surrogates) may only experience John Doe’s crimes as a matter of aesthetics (the arrangement of the bodies, their lyrical implications, the clues Doe embeds into his elaborately constructed *mise-en-scene*, and so on). Despite Philip L. Simpson’s deification of *Se7en* as a film which “definitively restores a prophetic, revelatory, and reformist voice to the 1990s cinema of serial murder” (140), the narrative is involved less with restoration or reform and more with its own exploitation of post-mortem aesthetics. The bruised ankles of the obese man chained to his chair, the enormous portrait hung strategically over the vain woman’s bed, the tracking shot which follows a SWAT team as they navigate a symbolic ‘forest’ of tree-shaped air-

fresheners. Even Doe's Biblical killings equate to mere soundbytes or 'sloganeering' when compared to valid spiritual apocalypticism. The film's foundation lies in John Doe's imaginative arrangement of each tableau; *Se7en* thereby exploits Doe's virtue not only as a delusional Angel of Death (he believes that he is socially and spiritually progressive), but his moral excellence as an artist who delights in cheap irony. [...] John Doe is disillusioned with society's moral decay and "willing to be the vanguard of the fundamentalist backlash" (Simpson 135)" (Christine Evans i <http://cinephile.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/evans-serialkillers.pdf>; lesedato 28.08.19).

"John Doe of *Se7en* (1995) is a particularly ironic killer who preys upon the sinful imperfections of seven victims as a matter of spiritual polemics (he forces an obese man to eat until he explodes, compels a vain woman to decide between the mutilation of her face or suicide, and so on). Needless to say, his affinity for metaphor and torture critically mark him as a sadist. Conversely, serial killers who unconsciously eschew metaphor, opting rather for impulsively gruesome pyrotechnics – such as *Kalifornia*'s (1993) Early Grayce or *Natural Born Killers*' (1994) Mickey Knox – are sadists despite their moral imbecility." (Christine Evans i <http://cinephile.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/evans-serialkillers.pdf>; lesedato 28.08.19)

Nicole Rafter's bok *Shots in the Mirror: Crime Films and Society* (2000, ny utgave 2006) har kapitler med titler som "The History of Crime Films", "Why They Went Bad: Criminology in Crime Films", "Slasher, Serial Killer and Psycho Movies", "Cop and Detective Films", "Criminal Law Films", "Prison and Execution Films", og "The Heroes of Crime Films". Boka tematiserer "movies as a source of cultural information, some of which feeds into our ideologies and other mental constructs [...] crime films may hint at a criminological theory, exposing viewers to debates about the causes of crime [...] Rafter claims that early movies 'usually assumed a social consensus about right and wrong, guilt and punishment; and so do today's crime films ... that stick to the tradition' [...] Rafter embraces Marxian psychoanalytical approaches to popular culture, presenting crime films as a 'voyeuristic' move into other people's intimate sphere, an 'escapism' from difficult social realities." (Rodanthi Tzanelli i [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303548111\\_Shots\\_in\\_the\\_Mirror\\_Crime\\_Films\\_and\\_Society\\_2nd\\_edn](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303548111_Shots_in_the_Mirror_Crime_Films_and_Society_2nd_edn); lesedato 06.04.19)

"If we define criminology as efforts to understand crime and criminals, it becomes clear that even a small, narrowly focused sample of films [...] can yield fertile criminological material. The themes of crime films overlap with those of academic criminology [...] crime films also deal with matters beyond the range of academic criminology. Philosophically, they raise questions concerning the nature of good and evil. Psychologically, they encourage viewers to identify with victims and offenders – even serial killers – whose sexualities, vulnerabilities and moralities may be totally unfamiliar. Ethically, they take passionate moral positions that

would be out of place in academic analyses. Crime films constitute a type of discourse different from academic criminology, one with its own types of truth and its own constraints. This discourse needs a name. I suggest calling it *popular criminology* and defining it as a category composed of discourses about crime found not only in film but also on the Internet, on television and in newspapers, novels and rap music and myth. Popular criminology differs from academic criminology in that it does not pretend to empirical accuracy or theoretical validity.” (Nicole Rafter i <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1362480607079584>; lesedato 22.06.24)

Den amerikanske TV-krimserien *Columbo* ble produsert fra slutten av 1960-tallet. Etterforskeren er en småvokst mann som alltid går i en slitt frakk. Hver episode begynner med at publikum får se et drap og omstendighetene rundt det, slik at seerne fra begynnelsen av vet hvem morderen er. Episoden er altså en “omvendt” krimhistorie (“inverted mystery”, også kalt “howcathem”) der vi blir imponert over hvordan Columbo klarer å nøste opp det som har skjedd og arrestere morderen. Han har spesielle egenskaper og strategier: “Columbo f.eks. er ikke annet enn en moderne Sokrates i aksjon; full av påtatt uvitenhet, distraksjon, unnselig i den gamle frakken sin. Han klarer ikke å feste blikket. Men hele tida lokker han offeret til å tilstå.” (Trond Berg Eriksen i *Dagbladet* 10. april 1993)

“Columbo, denne uortodokse politimannen [...] Morderen avsløres med det samme. Spenningen bygges opp rundt etterforskningen. Hvordan skal Columbo klare å avsløre vedkommende – og skaffe bevis som holder i retten? Til dette arbeidet bruker Columbo seg selv som sitt viktigste arbeidsredskap. Han spiller troskyldig og naiv. Trond Berg Eriksen kalte en gang Columbo for “Sokrates i aksjon”. Han spør og spør. På utstudert vis lar han morderen forstå at han er under mistanke, mens han selv holder en nærmest naiv fasade. Dette understrekes ved at han går kledd og oppfører seg som en boms. Han blir ikke tatt alvorlig – før det er for seint. [...] Serieskaperne var inspirert av ingen ringere enn Fjodor Dostojevskij. Forbildet for Columbo var politimannen Porfirij Petrovitsj, forhørsdommeren som framkaller kaldsvette hos morderen Raskolnikov i romanen “Forbrytelse og straff”. Særlig første gang de to møtes, i kapittel fem i del tre av boka, oppfører Porfirij seg omtrent som Columbo. Med uskyldige, men langt fra tilfeldige spørsmål stilles Raskolnikov mot veggen. Inntil Porfirij skifter toneleie, forsøker å lokke drapsmannen i en felle og begynner hardkjøret. Porfirij spiller roller. Samtidig som han fra første sekund skremmer Raskolnikov: “Han vet det! for det gjennom ham som et lyn.” [...] Columbos antimaterialistiske holdning og forakt for rike, arrogante mennesker bidro til hans appell hos den unge generasjonen. Han [skuespilleren Peter Falk] snakket om politimannens medlidenhet: - Han er alltid lei seg, sa Falk. - Når han er nødt til å arrestere en eller annen person som etter hans mening burde ha vært for intelligent til å begå den forbrytelsen vedkommende hektes for ...” (Fredrik Wandrup i *Dagbladet* 31. oktober 2005 s. 2).

Den amerikanske journalisten Jeff Greenfields avisartikkel “Columbo Knows the Butler Didn’t Do It” (1973) hevdet at denne TV-serien rommer mye kritikk av overklassen. “Columbo’s villains are not simply rich; they are privileged” (her sitert fra Esquenazi 2017 s. 111). Columbo etterforsker aldri et ran av en butikk eller narkotikasalg i en fattig bydel. De kriminelle han etterforsker lever i store villaer og har tjenere. Disse rikfolkene oppfører seg vantro og nedlatende overfor Columbo, fordi han tilhører en annen sosial klasse og “våger” å snuse i deres private forhold. Han blir foraktet, og kun helt til slutt beundret for sitt skarpsinn. Rikfolkene trekker feilslutninger fra hans gamle frakk til å tro at han er uintelligent, men oppdager at de har tatt grundig feil. Columbo på sin side vet at overklassen er mer hyklersk, skruppelløs og umoralsk enn folk flest. Den er “more amoral and devious”.

Greenfield forklarer i “Columbo Knows the Butler Didn’t Do It” hva som “gives “Columbo” a special appeal – something almost never seen on commercial television. That something is strong, healthy dose of class antagonism. The one constant in “Columbo” is that, with every episode, a workingclass hero brings to justice a member of America’s social and economic elite. The homicide files in Columbo’s office must contain the highest per-capita income group of any criminals outside of antitrust law. We never see a robber shooting a grocery store owner out of panic or ‘savagery; there are no barroom quarrels settled with a Saturday Night Special; no murderous shootouts between drug dealers or numbers runners. The killers in Columbo’s world are art collectors, surgeons, high-priced lawyers, sports executives, a symphony conductor of Bernsteinian charisma – even a world chess champion. They are rich and white [...] “Columbo’s” villains are not simply rich; they are privileged. They live the lives that are for most of us hopeless daydreams: houses on top of mountains, with pools, servants, and sliding doors; parties with women in slinky dresses, and endless food and drink; plush, enclosed box seats at professional sports events; the envy and admiration of the Crowd. [...] His aristocratic adversaries tolerate Columbo at first because they misjudge him. They are amused by him, scornful of his manners, certain that while he possesses the legal authority to demand their cooperation, he has neither the grace nor wit to discover their misdeeds. Only at the end, in a last look of consternation before the final fadeout, do they comprehend that intelligence may indeed find a home in [en folkelig og tilsynelatende vimsete skikkelse som Columbo]. [...] All of them are done in, in some measure, by their contempt for Columbo’s background, breeding, and income. [...] Further, Columbo knows about these people what the rest of us suspect: that they are on top not because they are smarter or work harder than we do, but because they are more amoral and devious. [...] This is, perhaps, the most thoroughgoing satisfaction “Columbo” offers us: the assurance that those who dwell in marble and satin, those whose clothes, food, cars, and mates are the very best, do not deserve it. They are, instead, driven by fear and compulsion to murder. And they are done in by a man of street wit, who is afraid to fly, who can’t stand the sight of blood, and who never uses force to take his prey.” (sitert fra <https://>

www.nytimes.com/1973/04/01/archives/columbo-knows-the-butler-didn-t-do-it.html; lesedato 11.12.18)

“[T]he phenomenon of the German police inspector has been the most enduring, and the largest, triumph of the German television industry: *Derrick*, which drew an audience of nine million in Germany and half a billion internationally, broadcast its last episode in fall 1998 after more than 23 years, with its star 74 years old [...] The significance of *Derrick* (1974-98), and its predecessor, *Der Kommissar* (1969-76), for postwar German audiences can hardly be overestimated: with their late-middle-aged, lower middle-class (but oddly comfortable), authoritative but benevolent paternal heroes, these series projected a “therapeutic” image of Germans who were disciplined, dutiful, and nonviolent [...] In many ways, the dispassionate, categorically nonviolent inspector of German television – the investigator who restores and guarantees the established social order through knowledge, discipline, and proper procedure – offers the German equivalent to the conservative British detective story tradition.” (Teraoka 1999)

“While the Hollywood crime film has always provided views of self-assertion, contemporary crime films increasingly show impotent human beings, overwhelmed by problems which, despite having a social origin, they are asked to face and solve individually. This has made the suspense thriller and melodrama very relevant genres because they construct characters as victims; and *Silver City* [2004; regissert av John Sayles], *The Constant Gardener* [2005; regissert av Fernando Meirelles] and *The Departed* [2006; regissert av Martin Scorsese] show their impact by producing helpless creatures engulfed by criminal conspiracies. However, while in the suspense thriller the individual vindicates himself/herself through heroic action, in New Individualism films this action, although still potentially heroic, triggers ethical dilemmas instead. As melodrama steps in, the films reveal the anxiety of individuals who feel action as an ethical obligation while at the same time have to face their own impotence under the pressure of social or global problems.” (Luis M. García-Mainar i <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/7650>; lesedato 21.09.24)

“Assertion of the self cannot be achieved without the presence of others and ethical intervention in relation to them, which makes escape from society not the liberating move it was in traditional crime films. In these new texts [filmene *Silver City*, *The Constant Gardener* og *The Departed*], individuals lack any space that they can escape to, they act but cannot avoid the forces that oppress them, try to run away but find themselves back where they were. This representation points to the appearance of a new cultural discourse originated by changes in a social space immersed in a process of dissolution as the structures of belonging to groups or communities gradually disappear. Instead, there is only the self against the forces of national and global economies, and against the cultural fights that begin to replace traditional social struggles. These films introduce the need to escape only to then show that there is nowhere to escape to because there is no longer any difference between the space of the social and the space of adventure: the qualities



that had always been attributed to adventure have come to define the void opened by the dissolution of the social fabric, which has been replaced by incoherence, risk, and lack of trust or commitment. The allure of adventure vanishes too, as in this new discourse it turns out to be ruthless and grim rather than glamorous or liberating. [...] precisely what these new films constantly provide: fast movement from one action to another and crosscutting elevated to the category of narrative principle. It is thus no surprise that the last third of *The Departed*, in which one by one killers turn into victims of somebody above themselves in the game of deception, shows an increasingly fast pace that is probably most in tune with the feel of contemporary life, where ambivalence, uncertainty and vulnerability prevail.” (Luis M. García-Mainar i <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/7650>; lesedato 21.09.24)

Den britiske krim-TV-serien *Happy Valley* (2014 og senere; skapt av Sally Wainwright m.fl.) tenderer til å være sosialrealistisk ved å skildre på en realistisk måte miljøer preget av store sosiale problemer og økonomisk fattigdom. Det er svært mange ulykkelige mennesker i serien, og personer utsettes for mobbing, pengeutpressing, organisert kriminalitet, utroskap, voldtekt og mord. Arbeidsledighet, fengselstilværelse, alkoholisme og prostitusjon blir tematisert en rekke ganger.

Den amerikanske TV-serien *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000 og senere; skapt av Anthony E. Zuiker m.fl.) var i en periode verdens mest sette TV-serie (Maurice 2009 s. 70). En annen TV-serie, *Criminal Minds* (2005; skapt av Jeff Davis m.fl.) består av episoder der en gruppe “profilers” (eksperter på “forensic psychology and profiling”) i FBI løser saker over hele USA. Nesten alle sakene gjennom 15 sesonger gjelder seriemordere (eller angrep på gruppa). “Criminal Minds revolves around an elite team of FBI profilers who analyze the country’s most twisted criminal minds. The Behavioral Analysis Unit’s most experienced agent is David Rossi, a founding member of the BAU who returns to help the team solve new cases. The team is lead by Special Agent Aaron Hotchner, a strong profiler who is able to gain people’s trust and unlock their secrets. Other members include Agent Dr. Spencer Reid, a classically misunderstood genius whose social IQ is as low as his intellectual IQ is high; Jennifer “J.J.” Jareau, a confident young agent, and Penelope Garcia, a computer wizard who helps research the cases. Each member brings his or her own area of expertise to the table as they pinpoint predators’ motivations and identify their emotional triggers in the attempt to stop them.” (<https://www.ctv.ca/Criminal-Minds>; lesedato 25.04.19)

*Criminal Minds* undersøker “[t]he true moral and human nature of people [...] The disturbing and, at times, graphic images and ideas evoked by the show allows viewers to see the hidden world of the psychopath and serial killer along with the occasional off the book investigation. [...] So what did a show about a workaholic father, an awkward twenty year old genius, and a hot-tempered former football star have, that separate it from other cop shows? What keeps three million viewers

coming back? [...] Using various components of social occurrences and psychological illnesses, the writers of the show shape a new view of our world. Many of the shows are influenced by different factors of certain mental illnesses and social problems. As in the case of “The Performer”, the storyline is based on the actual presence of a vampire subculture in Los Angeles and the psychopathology called Renfield Syndrome. This intertwining of genuine parts of society and life shows – to some degree – what the combination of the two can come to in the most drastic cases. Another example of this appears in “Rite of Passage.” This episode is based on the problems associated with not only illegal immigrants, but the presence of the Mexican Cartel members in the border town of Terlingua, Texas. Many controversial topics are brought up and expressed through the characters.” (<http://writermind.weebly.com/criminal-minds-analysis.html>; lesedato 25.04.19)

Filmer om død som er ment å underholde, har blitt kalt “thanatotainment” (Stephan Moebius og Tina Weber i Schroer 2008 s. 274).

Litteraturliste (for hele leksikonet): <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/litteraturliste.pdf>

Alle artiklene i leksikonet er tilgjengelig på <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no>