

## BOOK REVIEW

*Franklin Drucker,<sup>1</sup> M.D.*

### A Review of *The Murderer and His Victim*

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**REFERENCE:** Macdonald, J. M., *The Murderer and His Victim*, second ed., with a chapter by Stuart Boyd, Ph.D., Charles C Thomas, 2600 S. First St., Springfield, IL 62717, 320 pp.

According to the dust jacket, this book is intended "for everyone professionally involved with these criminal offenders," and indeed it is. The dust jacket also indicates the book "answers just about any question that may arise concerning murderers and their victims:" It doesn't tell whodunit! It does, however, include a somewhat rambling section by Dr. Boyd, "Homicide in Fiction." Dr. Macdonald trained in New Zealand and Great Britain. He has practiced psychiatry in Colorado for more than 35 years. He has interviewed more than 400 murderers, and he offers may vignettes about the murderers he interviewed and others.

This volume is more a good bedside "read" or narrative than a reference text. It contains dozens of tales of murders, of murderers, of their victims, of psychodynamics and behaviors, and so forth. Some tales are brief, and I wished the author had provided more details. On the other hand, I found much of the book a hodgepodge of many topics varyingly addressed, ranging from the time of homicide, the types of murderers and victims, the methods of murder, the victims of murder, sex murders, insanity pleas, criminal investigation, and even methods of execution. There are good lists of references at the end of each chapter, and the volume has a reasonably good index.

In general, this book surveys existing knowledge rather than presenting new research data. It appears to achieve the author's intent to present a great deal entertainingly in a reasonably sized volume. It reads more like a novel or collection of short stories than a scientific treatise.

I enjoyed this book more than I had anticipated, yet came away hungry, wanting more. I recommend this volume for relaxed reading such as when getting ready for bed (unless such literature might disturb the reader) or, as I recently did, on a transcontinental flight. That is, I found the volume more recreational than scientific but quite interesting and valuable. I am pleased to recommend it to practitioners in the fields of mental health, law enforcement, and corrections.

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