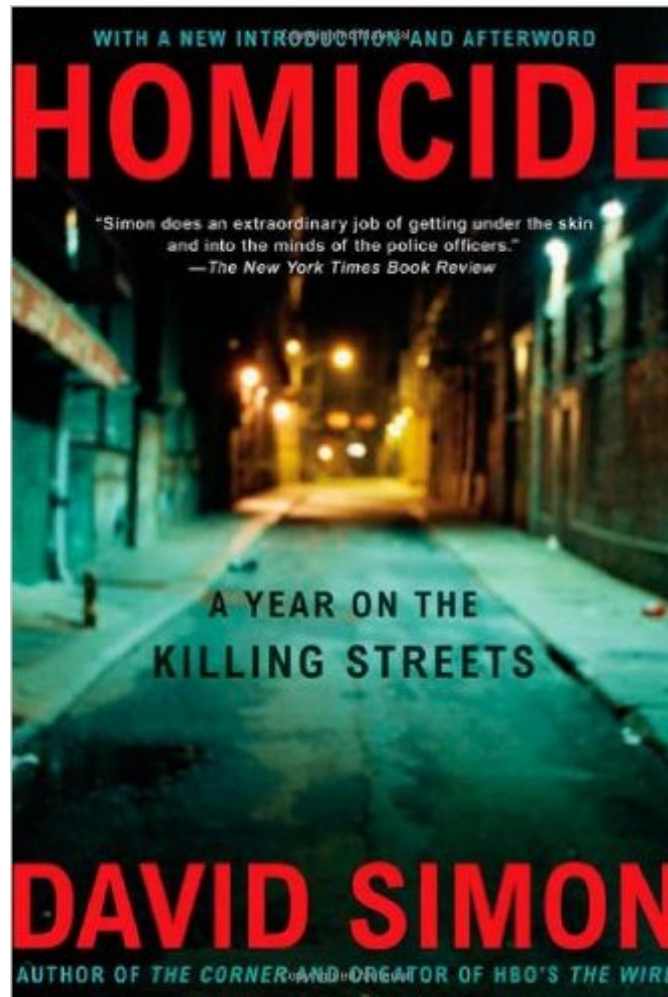


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# Homicide: A Year On The Killing Streets



## Synopsis

From the creator of HBO's *The Wire*, the classic book about homicide investigation that became the basis for the hit television show *The Wire*. The scene is Baltimore. Twice every three days another citizen is shot, stabbed, or bludgeoned to death. At the center of this hurricane of crime is the city's homicide unit, a small brotherhood of hard men who fight for whatever justice is possible in a deadly world. David Simon was the first reporter ever to gain unlimited access to a homicide unit, and this electrifying book tells the true story of a year on the violent streets of an American city. The narrative follows Donald Worden, a veteran investigator; Harry Edgerton, a black detective in a mostly white unit; and Tom Pellegrini, an earnest rookie who takes on the year's most difficult case, the brutal rape and murder of an eleven-year-old girl. Originally published fifteen years ago, *Homicide* became the basis for the acclaimed television show of the same name. This new edition, which includes a new introduction, an afterword, and photographs, revives this classic, riveting tale about the men who work on the dark side of the American experience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Appropriately enough, one of the best cop shows in the history of television was based on one of the best true crime books ever written. Journalist David Simon spent a year observing Baltimore Homicide detectives and it is their poignantly true stories -- almost all as funny, heartbreaking, and memorable as any fiction -- that make up this book. While fans of the TV show will immediately recognize the initial templates for such beloved characters as Frank Pembleton, Bayliss, Munch,

and others, this amazing book is much more than just a basis for a classic television show. It is, quite simply, one of the most insightful books about modern law and order ever written. All of the detectives live brilliantly on the page and Simon's prose reminds us what great writing actually is. Though this is a word I've probably overused in this review, there is no other way to describe Simon's achievement: amazing.

I will keep this short: I have been a city cop for almost eighteen years and I defy anyone to find a better book about policework than this one. This is the closest you can come to knowing what being a cop is all about short of actually wearing a badge.

I've always felt that the main problem with the TV show version of "Homicide" is that, good as it is, it just can't match the gritty realism of the book it is based on. Journalist David Simon spent a year as a fly on the wall observing the Baltimore Police Homicide Unit, and dutifully recording everything he saw by and large without editorial comment. The result is absolutely indispensable for anyone with an interest in law enforcement. Being a homicide detective is a tough job both emotionally and professionally with many hours of tedium that can often result in the frustration of an unsolved case. Particularly poignant is the story of a unsolved child murder case that haunts one of the detectives to the point of endangering his mental well being. The value of this book to the nation's hard working law enforcement professionals simply cannot be understated.

Simon's Homicide reads not as a murder mystery, not as a documentary, and not as a dramatic novel, but as a life lived in the Baltimore homicide unit. The reader does not feel passive, as though he were watching the goings-on through a filter like a television or even a bystander. The reader is there, with the detectives, sharing their experiences, sharing their very thoughts. This book is a masterpiece, a book that completely entralls you to the point where during the time you are reading, nothing means more to you than the resolution of each case, each obstacle, each crisis. Please, do yourself a favor and read this remarkable book.

I was very familiar with this book as I am a former member of the Baltimore homicide unit. I did not have a chance in the past to read it, but now that I am retired I read it and thoroughly enjoyed it. I know most of the homicide members that are mentioned in the unit and some of them worked in my squad when I was there. It certainly depicts what goes on daily in the Baltimore homicide unit.

I picked up this book without realizing that it was the genesis of the television program by the same name, and I was immediately dragged in to the stories. Written as a yearlong narrative of the events and personalities of the Baltimore Police Homicide Division, it really gives the reader a feeling of being along for the investigation. The dialogue and descriptions are so realistic and insightful that I found myself wondering how the Detectives felt to read this objective reflection of themselves. The pacing of the book contributes to the overall effectiveness of the narrative by educating the reader slowly as to the characters, the lingo and the mentality of a Baltimore homicide detective. By the end (and I was sorry to have it end) I felt like I knew the detectives and the criminals and the victims and their families. If you like true crime, this is the book for you!

The television show was excellent, but HOMICIDE the book is much better. It is perhaps one of the finest pieces of narrative non-fiction of the past 50 years. David Simon's background as a journalist for the Sun makes him uniquely qualified to examine the inner workings of a homicide unit, and to lay bare the shortcomings and serious flaws of Baltimore's city government (the action in the book takes place during the worst of the crack wars in the late 80s, but it's remarkable how little things have changed). What's more, Simon writes with great deadpan humor and is able to find both humanity and wit in this true-life story of the "murder police." He is truly one of the most accomplished narrative writers of our time. I also highly recommend THE CORNER, another look into Baltimore's gritty urban landscape.

The print edition of 'Homicide' has a 8-page set of black and white photos in the middle: 1) 6 portraits of detectives that appear in the book. 2) below them 6 pictures of the characters they inspired in the TV series. 3) and three more: 2 detectives at a crime scene, David Simon at the pub with the guys, The Board. These pictures are gone from the Kindle edition. Whereas this is a rather minor loss, you are not missing anything essential from the reading experience, something has been subtracted from one edition nevertheless. So you've been warned.

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