



The Zodiac Revisited, Volume 1: The Facts of the Case

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The Zodiac Revisited is a complete, unbiased, and riveting true crime book that chronicles the story of the Zodiac Killer.

Michael F. Cole's true crime compendium *The Zodiac Revisited* takes a comprehensive look at the details of California's biggest murder mystery: that of the Zodiac Killer.

In the late 1960s, the California Bay Area saw a series of shocking unsolved murders. Many of the victims were young couples; one was a taxi driver; others appeared to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The weapon and method was similar in most of the murders, and the killer even contacted the police by phone, and newspapers by mail, to admit to some of the crimes, providing information only the killer would know. Still, he evaded capture. He taunted the police and newspapers with his letters, often demanding that his notes be mentioned on the front page, or he'll kill again. The letters were written in code, with some ciphers solved by civilians; others remain unsolved. The Zodiac Killer often wrote about how he liked to watch the police looking for him; at the end of most letters, he kept a tally of his murders, claiming to have taken thirty-seven lives by his final communication in 1974.

The Zodiac Revisited, the first in a planned three-volume set about the killer, deals with the facts of the case; later volumes are slated to handle analysis and theories. This no-nonsense book tells the story of the Zodiac Killer's murders in chronological order, complete with photographs of the victims; scans of the letters, postcards, and handmade greeting cards that the killer sent to local newspapers; and transcripts of a handful of his other communications. It also covers later investigations into murders throughout the 1960s and 1970s in Southern California that could be tied to the Zodiac Killer. The information is presented in the order in which the public learned it, meaning that the timelines jump around, but that works to the book's advantage. There are no new revelations in the book, however.

The narrative includes abundant cultural contextualization—about the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the movie *The Exorcist*—revealing the time period in which the serial killer was active well. This helps to make it more than just a rehashing of hard facts: Cole reveals a tangible moment in history. His writing is smart and objective; its only assumptions and analyses come from law enforcement officers and detectives. Sans sensationalism and speculation, this is an academic, accessible text.

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ASHLEY HOLSTROM (August 4, 2021)

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