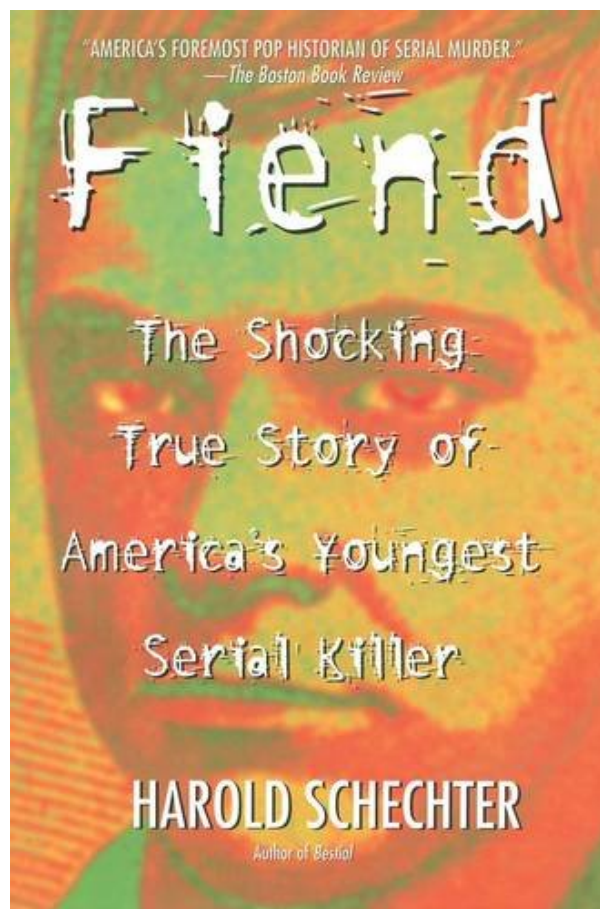
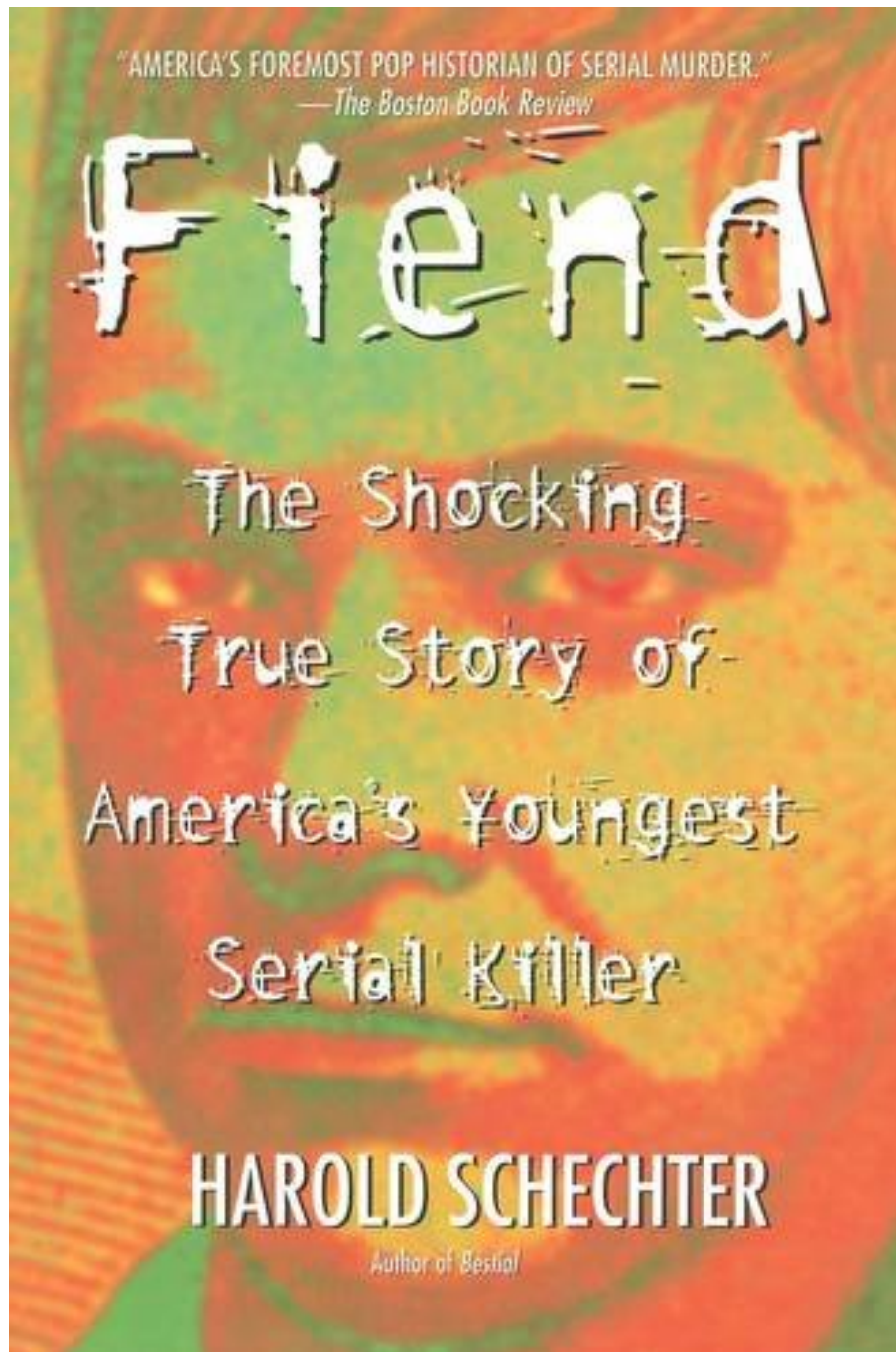


FIEND: THE SHOCKING TRUE STORY OF AMERICA'S YOUNGEST SERIAL KILLER BY HAROLD SCHECHTER



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Amazon.com Review

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From Publishers Weekly

From serial killer expert Schechter comes a grisly, hopped-up, but surprisingly well-executed narrative of the vicious crimes and long imprisonment of Jesse Pomeroy, the notorious 19th-century "Boston Boy Fiend." Schechter argues that "killer kids have always been with us," but even in the context of a history of horrifying examples of youth violence, the case of Pomeroy is appalling. An abused, deformed, impoverished child, he graduated at age 12 from animal cruelty to the ritualized torture and mutilation of younger boys. In 1872 he was caught and sentenced to six years in a reformatory. He presented a rehabilitated facade and, following his shrewish but loyal mother's campaigning, was released after 16 months. Six weeks later he killed a neighborhood girl; an indifferent constabulary failed to discover her body until after Pomeroy was apprehended for a second vicious child-murder. This confluence caused unprecedented outrage; ultimately, Pomeroy received a life sentence in solitary confinement. While Schechter has displayed a career enthusiasm for what Hannibal Lecter termed "louche" subject matter (Schechter's books on serial murderers have been titled *Bestial*, *Depraved*, *Deranged*, etc.), he is a deft writer

and does well at re-creating from documentation the thoughts and perspectives of long-dead figures; even Pomeroy is rendered subtly, with creepy verisimilitude. Schechter ably portrays the "living death" of Pomeroy's captivity (he served 53 years, making repeated escape attempts, and had become a media curiosity by the 1920s), and captures the poignancy of the infirm Pomeroy's release, in 1929, to a prison farm, where he remained until his death in 1932. This is a memorably gothic tale of sadistic psychosis and social vengeance. True-crime lovers will not want to miss it.

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About the Author

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A MONSTER PREYED UPON THE CHILDREN OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOSTON. HIS CRIMES WERE APPALLING -- AND YET HE WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A CHILD HIMSELF.

When fourteen-year-old Jesse Pomeroy was arrested in 1874, a nightmarish reign of terror over an unsuspecting city came to an end. "The Boston Boy Fiend" was imprisoned at last. But the complex questions sparked by his ghastly crime spree -- the hows and whys of vicious juvenile crime -- were as relevant in the so-called Age of Innocence as they are today.

Jesse Pomeroy was outwardly repellent in appearance, with a gruesome "dead" eye; inside, he was deformed beyond imagining. A sexual sadist of disturbing precocity, he satisfied his atrocious appetites by abducting and torturing his child victims. But soon, the teenager's bloodlust gave way to another obsession: murder.

Harold Schechter, whose true-crime masterpieces are "well-documented nightmares for anyone who dares to look" (Peoria Journal Star), brings his acclaimed mix of page-turning storytelling, brilliant insight, and fascinating historical documentation to *Fiend* -- an unforgettable account from the annals of American crime.

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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

An Insightful Read

By Scholar Kent

Harold Schechter has done the research and presented it in a biography that answers most questions the average reader would have about one of America's most notorious child killers and torturers. What he says is always based on the facts he has uncovered. For example, letters written by the boy killer in jail, though not found for many years, show that he was fascinated by corporeal punishment and torture. The mind of a boy psychopath is revealed in this book. Yet Schechter never indulges in morbid speculation or exaggeration beyond what his research suggests.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

"The good old days" weren't so good

By D. R. Meredith

In another of Harold Schechter's scholarly but so very readable books about serial killers, he points out that the good old days were not particularly beautiful, clean and pure, and free of violent serial killers, Jack the Ripper being an exception. With sewage and industrial waste dumped in rivers, lakes, and the ocean; the incredible amount of manure produced by horse-driven transport; the deplorable conditions found in 'the little red schoolhouse,' where the student-teacher ratio in large city school systems would cause current teachers to seek a different profession even if it was flipping burgers; no sane person not blinded by nostalgia would consider 'the good old days' particularly good. Whatever problems plague us today--drugs, gangs, massacres of the innocent by the deranged, sensationalism in the media, corruption in our government--

existed in the past. And that includes the serial killer, especially "Killer Kids." Murderous juveniles didn't suddenly appear with Columbine; like the poor, they have always been with us.

Schechter recounts the life of one such "killer kid:" Jesse Pomeroy, called by the Boston press in 1872 the "Boy Torturer" among other names. He had tortured over a half-dozen children and butchered two more by the time he was fourteen. By the time he was captured Jesse Pomeroy was to become known as the "Boston Boy Fiend." And fiend he was as Schechter aptly proves in this tale of Jesse's reign of terror in 1870s Boston. As with all of Schechter's books about true crime, I recommend this one for it's fine writing, detailed psychological insights, and the strong sense of place that the author always evokes.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Compelling Read

By Renetta Ruedemann

I did not know anything about this compelling crime story, but reading this book has enlightened me to a past world full of struggling with how to deal with such a person as Jesse Polmeroy. The author does a good job of telling this story in such a way to keep it fascinating. He shows how although times have changed, human nature has not.

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