

*Commonly Held Beliefs About Serial Murder: Fact or Fiction?*

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Serial murder is a phenomenon that has gripped the American psyche since the 1970s. A proliferation of true crime books, true crime tv shows, and the news media have led to the creation of several widely and strongly held beliefs about the phenomenon. This study found that while some commonly held beliefs are based in fact, most of them are actually false. Using a large database created at Radford University, the accuracy of these beliefs was examined. The sample from the database was drawn from those killers who operated in the United States, post World War II, and who committed three or more murders. For example, commonly held beliefs about the race of serial killers, their IQ, their motivation, number of victims, and whether or not they acted alone were found to be inaccurate.