



The Boston Strangler: The History and Mystery of the Notorious Crime Spree

Zed Simpson, Charles River Editors

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- *Includes contemporary newspaper reports about the crimes
- *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading
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“It wasn’t as dark and scary as it sounds. I had a lot of fun....killing people is a funny experience.” – Albert DeSalvo

“I did this not as a sex act...but out of hate for her. I don't mean out of hate for her in particular, really I mean out of hate for a woman.” – Albert DeSalvo

The story reads like something out of a mini-series. The police are called to the home of an elderly woman who has been raped and strangled. She’s a socialite and popular in among the Boston upper-crust. As the grizzled detective stand over her body, wondering who would do something like this, someone mentions that there was a similar case recently, except that time the victim was a lower-middle class immigrant woman. He wonders briefly if there is a pattern and hopes there isn’t, but before long there’s a third victim, and then a fourth. At first, the women are all elderly, and the police psychologist postulates that the culprit has some sort of hatred for his own mother and therefore attacks motherly figures. The police begin to track down mental patients with histories of violence and question them about their whereabouts, but there is no one suspect, even as more bodies pile up in the morgue.

Then, suddenly, there’s a change, and young women start turning up dead, changing the whole approach to the case. As tension in the city builds, the mayor and other civic leaders begin demanding action, even as another young woman dies, followed in short order by an elderly one. Young women start refusing dates and looking under their beds at night, while older ladies refuse to open their doors to anyone. The city is in turmoil and the police are at a loss about what to do next, but just as quickly as they started, the murders stopped after 13 confirmed victims.

Just as that description makes it sound, the case of the Boston Strangler is as confusing and mystifying as it is terrifying. In fact, the mythology and debate lingering over the crime spree only heightened when Albert DeSalvo confessed to the crimes, provided both accurate and inaccurate details about some of them, and had his DNA tied to several of the crime scenes. However, before DeSalvo himself was murdered by an unknown assailant in jail in 1973, he had recanted his confession, and ultimately, he was never tried for the murders in Boston.

50 years after the Boston Strangler stopped killing, investigators and amateurs alike are still debating the very messy and all too real 18 month reign of terror that gripped the city of Boston in the early 1960s and haunts many to this day. Even in the wake of DeSalvo’s confession, and in part because of the various inaccuracies he told authorities, people continue to argue whether he was the Boston Strangler, or even if the Boston Strangler was just one killer given the seemingly different M.O.s used in some of the crimes.

The Boston Strangler: The History and Mystery of the Notorious Crime Spree covers the crimes of one of America's most infamous serial killers. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the Boston Strangler like never before.

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