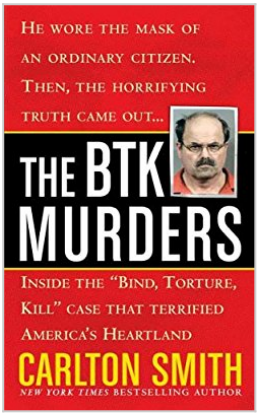

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland

By Carlton Smith

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith

From 1974 to 1991, someone in the midwestern city of Wichita was leaving behind slain tortured bodies and anonymously proclaiming himself to police and reporters as "BTK" for "Bind, Torture, Kill." Then, for the next 14 years, BTK was silent. But when he began sending letters again, investigators would not miss their chance...

Stunningly, police arrested Dennis Rader, the president of his church board and the father of two. As a shocked community watched, evidence began to pile up. Then Rader coldly described how he went about "his projects" as the families of his victims relived the horrific scenes this supposed pillar of the community had unleashed on their loved ones.

From the tricks he used to enter his victims' homes to the puzzles he sent the media and the key role his own daughter may have played in his arrest, this is the definitive story of the BTK killer. He was, as one victim's family member called him, "a black hole inside the shell of a human being"--and the worst American monster since Ted Bundy.

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland

By Carlton Smith

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith

From 1974 to 1991, someone in the midwestern city of Wichita was leaving behind slain tortured bodies and anonymously proclaiming himself to police and reporters as "BTK" for "Bind, Torture, Kill." Then, for the next 14 years, BTK was silent. But when he began sending letters again, investigators would not miss their chance...

Stunningly, police arrested Dennis Rader, the president of his church board and the father of two. As a shocked community watched, evidence began to pile up. Then Rader coldly described how he went about "his projects" as the families of his victims relived the horrific scenes this supposed pillar of the community had unleashed on their loved ones.

From the tricks he used to enter his victims' homes to the puzzles he sent the media and the key role his own daughter may have played in his arrest, this is the definitive story of the BTK killer. He was, as one victim's family member called him, "a black hole inside the shell of a human being"--and the worst American monster since Ted Bundy.

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1066231 in Books
- Published on: 2006-03-07
- Released on: 2006-03-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.62" h x .98" w x 3.93" l, .40 pounds
- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
- 352 pages

Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

HE KILLED PARENTS, CHILDREN,
From 1974 to 1991, someone in the midwestern city of Wichita was leaving behind slain tortured bodies and anonymously proclaiming himself to police and reporters as "BTK" for "Bind, Torture, Kill." Then, for the next 14 years, BTK was silent. But when he began sending letters again, investigators would not miss their chance...

EVEN PEOPLE IN HIS OWN NEIGHBORHOOD...
Stunningly, police arrested Dennis Rader, the president of his church board and the father of two. As a shocked community watched, evidence began to pile up. Then Rader coldly described how he went about "his projects" as the families of his victims relived the horrific scenes this supposed pillar of the community had unleashed on their loved ones.
NOW, THE FULL HORROR OF HIS CRIMES IS EXPOSED...
From the tricks he used to enter his victims' homes to the puzzles he sent the media and the key role his own daughter may have played in his arrest, this is the definitive story of the BTK killer. He was, as one victim's family member called him, "a black hole inside the shell of a human being"--and the worst American monster since Ted Bundy.

About the Author

CARLTON SMITH was an award-winning journalist for *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Seattle Times* in the 1970s and 1980s. A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in investigative reporting in 1988, he now works full-time as a true crime author. He lives in South Pasadena, California.

Chapter One

BTK and Beattie

It was on one of those days that unfolds in every newsroom all across the country. Hurst Laviana, a long-time, experienced police reporter for The Wichita Eagle, was trying to think of a story, something that would engage his editors' attention, and hopefully, the newspaper's readers'.

It wasn't that Wichita, Kansas, didn't have news. A city of 350,000 always had something to write about, and Wichita, once a giant of the plains, then shrunken, now revitalizing around its edges, was certainly no exception. With that many people, and another 150,000 or so in its metropolitan area, somebody was bound to be doing something bad to somebody, somewhere, and that was the nature of Laviana's beast: to tell the good, the bad, and the ugly--but usually just the last two.

On this day in the second week of January 2004, Laviana opened his email, and noticed a query from his one-time reporting partner, Bill Hirschman, who had previously moved on to another newsroom in Florida. Laviana had spent some intense times with Hirschman, and now Hirschman wanted to know: was the Eagle

going to write and publish a thirtieth anniversary story on the horrible murder case that he and Laviana had worked so hard on, for so long?

There's nothing so hoary and so detested by newspaper reporters as the "anniversary story," usually a grab-bag of factoids left over from something that was never really resolved, almost always couched in terms of jogging the readers' memory: "Mr. So-and-so still remembers the day, twenty years ago, when . . ." In the absence of anything harder in the way of news, the "anniversary story" was nothing more than a space filler--handled right, it could be a nice reader, but the chances were, before four or five paragraphs had elapsed, the reader's eyes had flipped on to some other subject, or worse, he'd have put down the newspaper altogether.

Laviana had no trouble knowing exactly which murder case Hirschman was referring to. For any newspaper reporter, murder cases come and go, a regular staple; and in a place like Wichita, there were probably twenty or thirty a year to choose from. But Laviana knew there were none like the one Hirschman meant: the so-called "BTK" murder case.

Which, in early 2004, in Wichita, Kansas, was really ancient history.

Somehow, over the last two decades, people had forgotten about "BTK"--the horrific initials claimed as a signature by an unknown killer who had once bound, tortured and killed his victims: "B" for the binding, "T" for the torture, "K" for the killing.

The murders had first come to light in early 1974, when four family members were found strangled in their house in a lower-middle-class section of east Wichita. The dead included Joseph Otero, his wife, Julie, and their children, Joey and Josie. For some reason, all had been tied up and strangled or suffocated. The children's deaths were especially shocking, and Josie Otero's death was particularly gruesome. Over the next three years, there had been--at least according to police officials--three other possible victims: Shirley Vian, a mother of three small children; a popular single woman, 25-year-old Nancy Fox; and one other victim whom the killer had anonymously boasted of but refused to reveal. Altogether there were seven dead. Maybe. That was part of the problem: no one except the killer, whoever he was, knew the precise number of victims, or how many times he'd broken into someone's house to kill, so many years before.

But the most bizarre aspect of the case was that the killer--or at least someone who claimed to be the killer--had had a penchant for writing letters to the public asserting responsibility for the crimes, almost as if he was taunting Wichita for the city's failure to identify him, signing them "BTK." And then, for some reason, in the late 1970s the letters stopped coming. Some police remained convinced that all of the letters were a hoax, someone's idea of a very sick joke, and that there was in fact no such person as "BTK." Still others were convinced that the killer was all too real, that he knew too much about the crimes to be some sort of diseased prankster. And when the communications stopped abruptly, the debate could not be resolved.

The silence had persisted for more than twenty years. And bit by bit, people put the murderer out of their minds and resumed their normal lives. By 2004, a good portion of the city's population had never heard of BTK or his supposed letters--they were simply too young to remember.

Which made the case ideal for one of those "anniversary" stories.

Well, why not? Laviana thought. He approached Tim Rogers, the Eagle's assistant managing editor. What did Rogers think of a story reprising the old murder case?

Not much, Rogers told Laviana. Was there anything new to report? At just about that moment, Eagle reporter

Roy Wenzl happened to walk by. Overhearing the discussion, he reminded Laviana of the Wichita law professor who claimed to be writing a book about the BTK case. Oh yeah, Laviana recalled: Bob Beattie, the former telephone pal of Charlie Manson.

In early 2004, Bob Beattie was 47 years old, and only occasionally practicing law. In fact, at least in an occupational sense, it would be fair to say that Beattie was semi-retired. Over the years, his interests had widened almost as much as his girth. The one-time fireman's hard body had spread into a Humpty-Dumptyesque arrangement, even as his intellect had sharpened.

In addition to taking on an occasional legal matter, Beattie taught two law courses at two different Wichita universities as an adjunct professor. One was "Psychology and the Law," and the other was on the American jury system.

Beattie had grown up in Wichita. He was, by almost anyone's account, an extremely bright person with many talents. After testing out at the top end of the intelligence scale as a child, Beattie had been encouraged to join Mensa, the society of people who have high IQ scores. At 17, he wrote a novel, and thought he'd become a writer. But after high school, Beattie enrolled in college, majoring in physics. When he realized that physics bored him, Beattie decided to become a doctor instead. An advisor suggested that before he embarked on a lifetime in medicine, he might want to see what it was all about--why didn't he take a summer job as a hospital orderly?

"I loved it," Beattie recalled later. He especially liked the ambulance. He remembered that some famous writers had worked with ambulances--Walt Whitman, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway. So Beattie got a job driving the ambulance. Next he joined the Sedgwick County Fire Department, and after that became a paramedic. He married and then divorced. He later worked for Boeing as a fireman, on the flightline emergency team at McConnell Air Force Base, was trained in nuclear weapon safety procedures for B-1 bombers, and held a security clearance. He also consulted with NASA on emergency resuscitation procedures for shuttle astronauts.

He returned to college at night and obtained degrees in natural science and mathematics. He worked for a year on two Wichita in-patient psychology wards, where the violently disturbed people were kept under lock and key. He married a pediatrician he'd met while taking his training as a paramedic. He took a degree in human resource management. He decided to go to medical school after all, but his wife, the doctor, talked him out of it, suggesting he try law school instead.

After getting his law degree, Beattie worked as an associate at a Wichita law firm, but lasted for less than a year as an employee before opening his own law office. Within a few months of that he was arguing a major anti-trust case before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit. He won.

Later, Beattie ran for the state legislature as a Democrat, sharing a campaign manager with Nola Foulston, who would later become Wichita's district attorney after changing her party affiliation. He lost. He tended to be slightly left of center as a political candidate, which was probably to be expected from someone who had a legal caseload consisting primarily of people's immigration problems, employment discrimination, or fair housing cases. "At one point," he recalled, "all of my clients were black women."

But as the years went by, Beattie, the peripatetic paramedic/fireman/lawyer, found himself increasingly drawn back to academia, the place where his wide-ranging intelligence and curiosity found its most natural expression. He most enjoyed teaching his two classes at the two Wichita universities, Friends and Newman.

It helped that the two schools happened to be almost across the street from one another.

In late 1998, Beattie had decided to use the 1969 Sharon Tate murders in Los Angeles--attributed to the Charlie Manson gang--as the basis for his forthcoming fall 1999 class on the American jury system at Newman University. He wrote to Manson, the convicted Svengali who'd led the gang, and asked if the cult leader was willing to give a statement in his own defense for the jury class. The idea was to stage a mock trial for the famous criminal as a class exercise. The next thing Beattie knew, Manson was calling him--collect, of course. California prisons don't issue telephone credit cards.

Between late January of 1999 and early March, Beattie conducted three telephone conversations with the imprisoned Manson, and received several letters from him. The word soon leaked out that Beattie was talking to Manson, and almost before he understood what was happening, he was deluged with requests for interviews from the national news media, including a number of tabloid television shows, who played up the "new trial" angle for all it was worth, even though it was just an exercise to demonstrate how the jury system worked. Soon Beattie was getting hate mail from crackpots, some of whom seemed to think that Beattie was in fact defending Manson.

In the wake of all this notoriety, Beattie gave a guest lecture that touched in part on the Manson murders to a social psychology class at Friends University. He began with an opener he thought everyone in the class would immediately pick up on.

"The murder of Sharon Tate and the others by the Manson family panicked Los Angeles in the same way the murder of the Otero family by BTK panicked Wichita," Beattie told his class. He knew at once that his analogy had utterly flopped. The students all had blank expressions on their faces.

"You guys know what I'm talking about, don't you?" Beattie persisted. "Otero, BTK, serial killer here in Wichita?"

Beattie realized that the students didn't have the foggiest idea of what he was referring to. They were just too young.

"So I tell them the story," Beattie recalled, "and one student later told me, 'I thought you made up that story as some kind of test for us. Because it was too unbelievable. Then I went home and talked to my parents. And they said, "We didn't realize that you didn't know about this." ' "

So that was when Beattie first made up his mind--someone had to get the BTK story down on paper before it was lost to history forever.

And also because Beattie knew that his student had been right about one thing--it was too unbelievable. Even if it was all true.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joe Bell:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for

us to be aware of everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. They are reading whatever they have because their hobby is actually reading a book. Consider the person who don't like looking at a book? Sometime, individual feel need book whenever they found difficult problem or maybe exercise. Well, probably you will want this The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland.

Harriette Corwin:

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your own personal free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book could be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the publication untitled The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland can be excellent book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Debra Weeks:

Do you like reading a e-book? Confuse to looking for your favorite book? Or your book has been rare? Why so many issue for the book? But just about any people feel that they enjoy for reading. Some people likes reading through, not only science book but additionally novel and The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland or maybe others sources were given understanding for you. After you know how the truly amazing a book, you feel desire to read more and more. Science e-book was created for teacher or even students especially. Those guides are helping them to put their knowledge. In various other case, beside science guide, any other book likes The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland to make your spare time a lot more colorful. Many types of book like this one.

Viola Ball:

What is your hobby? Have you heard that question when you got students? We believe that that question was given by teacher for their students. Many kinds of hobby, Every person has different hobby. And you also know that little person similar to reading or as examining become their hobby. You must know that reading is very important as well as book as to be the factor. Book is important thing to provide you knowledge, except your teacher or lecturer. You will find good news or update concerning something by book. Different categories of books that can you go onto be your object. One of them are these claims The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland.

Read The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith for online ebook

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith books to read online.

Online The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith ebook PDF download

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith Doc

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith Mobipocket

The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith EPub

DXNKZ26GWEM: The BTK Murders: Inside the "Bind Torture Kill" Case that Terrified America's Heartland By Carlton Smith