

Staff Picks



How It Went Down - Crime Nonfiction for Teens

Gangsters, kidnapers, and stone-cold killers. We've always been fascinated by crime and those who commit the foul deeds (and those who catch them). These true crime titles explore criminals and cases famous and obscure, and just action-packed enough for teen readers.

Compiled by: Chris Hosler



Befriend and Betray: Infiltrating the Hells Angels, Bandidos and Other Criminal Brotherhoods

Alex Caine 921 Caine Cai

Alex Caine started life as a working-class boy who always thought he'd end up in a blue-collar job. But after a tour in Vietnam and a stretch in prison on marijuana-possession charges, he fell into the cloak-and-dagger world of a contracted agent or "kite": infiltrating criminal groups that cops across North America and around the globe were unable to penetrate themselves.



Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story

Timothy B. Tyson 975.6535 Ty

In May 1970, Henry Marrow, a 23-year-old black veteran, walked into a crossroads store owned by Robert Teel, a man with ties to the Ku Klux Klan, and came out running. Teel and two of his sons chased Marrow, beat him unmercifully, and killed him in public as he pleaded for his life. 30 years after the murder, the author returns to his hometown to make sense of what happened.



Bootleg: Murder, Moonshine, and the Lawless Years of Prohibition

Karen Blumenthal 363.4109 Blu

Gangsters, guns, and political battles?this book has them all. From Capone to Raymond Parks, the moonshining founder of NASCAR, this book examines the Prohibition era of American history.



Catch Me If You Can: The Amazing True Story of the Most Extraordinary Liar in the History of Fun and Profit

Frank W. Abagnale 921 Abagnale Aba

A former confidence man and master impostor recounts his crimes, capture, imprisonment, and current career as a highly paid crime consultant, in a new edition of his best-selling, firsthand account of his international exploits.



Columbine

David Cullen 371.782 Cul

On April 20, 1999, two boys left an indelible stamp on the American psyche. Their goal was simple: to blow up their school, Oklahoma-City style, and to leave "a lasting impression on the world." Their bombs failed, but the ensuing shooting defined a new era of school violence.



Devil's knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three

Mara Leveritt 364.1523 Lev

In 1993, after the murders of three eight-year-old boys, police in West Memphis, Arkansas

charged three teens?alleged members of a satanic cult?with the killings. Despite the witch-hunt atmosphere of the trials, and a case which included investigative blunders, a confession riddled with errors, and an absence of physical evidence linking any of the accused to the crime, the teens were convicted.



Lincoln's Last Days: The Shocking Assassination that Changed America Forever

Bill O'Reilly 973.7 Ore

In the spring of 1865, President Lincoln travels through Washington, D.C., after finally winning America's bloody Civil War. In the midst of celebrations, he is assassinated at Ford's Theatre by a famous actor named John Wilkes Booth. What follows is a thrilling chase, ending with a fiery shoot-out and swift justice for the perpetrators.



My Friend Dahmer

Derf Backderf Graphic Novels Backder

In *My Friend Dahmer*, a haunting and original graphic novel, writer-artist Backderf creates a surprisingly sympathetic portrait of a disturbed young man struggling against the morbid urges emanating from the deep recesses of his psyche?a shy kid, a teenage alcoholic, and a goofball who never quite fit in with his classmates.



No Choirboy: Murder, Violence, and Teenagers on Death Row

Susan Kuklin 364.66 Kuk

In-depth interviews with teenage prisoners who have been sentenced to death and are awaiting execution on death row provides a powerful look at life behind bars, the effects their decisions have had on themselves and others, and their personal views on the death penalty itself.



Simeon's Story: An Eyewitness Account of the Kidnapping of Emmett Till

Simeon Wright 305.8009 Wri

At age 12, Simeon Wright saw and heard his cousin Emmett Till whistle at a white woman at a grocery store; he was sleeping in the same bed with him when Emmett was taken; and he was at the sensational trial. This is his gripping coming-of-age memoir and the story of a grotesque crime that became the catalyst for the civil rights movement.



The Lizard King: The True Crimes and Passions of the World's Greatest Reptile

Smugglers

Bryan Christy 364.18 Chr

In the course of his research into reptile smuggling, Bryan Christy was bitten between the eyes by a blood python, chased by a mother alligator, and sprayed by a bird-eating tarantula, and came face to face with Michael J. Van Nostrand, suspected of being The Lizard King, a cold-blooded reptile smuggler. How this cat-and-mouse game ended is engrossing and surprising.



The Terrible Axe-Man of New Orleans

Rick Geary 364.1523 Gea

New Orleans right after WWI. Grocers are being murdered in the dead of night by someone grabbing their axe and hacking them right in their own cushy beds! The pattern is the same: a piece of the door is removed for entry, and the assailant aims straight for the head! Why? How could he fit through that piece in the door? The man is never found for sure but speculations abound!



The Zodiac Killer: Terror and Mystery

Brenda Haugen 364.1523 Hau

In the late 1960s, the Zodiac Killer terrorized the area near San Francisco, California, killing at

least five people. The killer mailed letters to newspapers written in code, daring police to discover his identity. He taunted the police and spread fear around San Francisco and beyond. Would the police and the public, working together, find this terrifying monster?

Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty

Greg Neri Graphic Novels 305.896 Ner

This graphic novel tells the real-life story of an 11-year-old gang member from Chicago who shot a little girl, and then was hunted by both the police and members of his own gang. Gritty black and white art by Randy DuBurke illustrate the darkness and despair of life on the run in mid-90s Chicago.
