

Experts reveal why people are obsessed with true crime

Issued by [Showmax](#)

27 Jun 2018

It's an incredibly addictive genre for millions of people worldwide, but why are we so captivated by true crime shows, and what does that say about us?



According to psychiatrist [Dr Sharon Packer](#), schadenfreude plays a big part in people's obsession with crime shows.

“It’s basically a fancy German word that was used by Freud and the psychoanalysts back when they spoke German, about people getting pleasure in other people’s problems and other people’s suffering. And really, it’s vicarious. It’s not necessarily sadistic, but if bad faith had to fall on someone, at least it fell on someone else.”

“There’s something else that’s a little bit darker, that a lot of people don’t want to accept, but there’s this sense of relief that it wasn’t you who did it,” [explains Dr Packer](#) in an interview with *Decider.com*.

You’ll also notice that most true crime shows deal with murder, and if it’s a serial killer that’s responsible, even better.

Criminologist [Scott Bonn](#) speaking to *Psychology Today* said, “My research has determined that the public’s fascination with serial killers on television is multifaceted and complex. Serial killers tantalise people much like traffic accidents, train wrecks or natural disasters. The public’s fascination with them can be seen as a specific manifestation of its more general fixation on violence and calamity. In other words, the actions of a serial killer may be horrible to behold but much of the public simply cannot look away due to the spectacle.”

Many crime shows are also based on real events, which captivates viewers even further knowing that the unbelievable story unfolding on screen is true.

Sensational and unbelievable crimes are committed all over the world - as well as in South Africa. With this in mind, these seven intriguing true crime documentaries, available to stream on internet TV service Showmax, cover everything from cannibalism to counter-terrorism.

[1. Stealing Sunflowers](#)



On April 20 2017, two white men allegedly caught 16-year-old Matlhomola Moshoeu stealing sunflowers on a farm. They claimed he jumped off the back of their bakkie and broke his neck on the way to the police station, but an eye witness says Matlhomola was pushed. On that day, everything in the small town of Coligny, South Africa changed. This is that story.

[Watch it now »](#)

[2. Angels of Death](#)



Crowds cheered just outside the small South African town of Ngcobco as the bodies of seven men were loaded into a mortuary van at the Mancoba Seven Angels Ministry. The ministry held over 100 girls captive and used them as sex slaves.

Find out what really happened in the horrifying story of the Angels of Death. [Watch it now »](#)

[3. Jinx: The Life & Deaths Of Robert Durst](#)

Robert Durst had it all, wealth, power and success. He was a true mogul worth over US\$100 million, but his past hides a dark secret. In 2015 Durst was arrested for the murder of a close friend in 2000. He was also arrested, but acquitted, for the 2001 murder of his neighbour. On top of that, it turns out his wife disappeared in 1982. What is the story behind these strange unsolved crimes? Is Durst guilty? This HBO documentary explores the story with new interviews and evidence.

[Watch it now »](#)

[4. Thought Crimes: The Case Of The Cannibal Cop](#)



This documentary will make you question your own code of ethics. Former NYPD officer Gilberto Valle was convicted of conspiring to kidnap and eat women. He never committed the crimes he was charged with “conspiring to commit”, and never acted on his fantasies, which were recorded on a dark fetish website, but the jury still found him guilty. Featuring the first-ever interviews with Valle’s close family and friends, as well as sharp insight from criminal experts, lawyers and psychologists. [Watch it now »](#)

[5. Captivated: The Trials Of Pamela Smart](#)

It was the first televised court case ever. See how a small-town murder in New England became one of the biggest cases in history pulsating with sex, drugs, betrayal and murder. This documentary offers an insightful look at what really happened in the high-profile and fully televised Pamela Smart murder trial in the 1990s. [Watch it now »](#)

[6. We Steal Secrets: The Story Of WikiLeaks](#)

This is a controversial documentary about the Australian hacker Julian Assange, who founded the whistleblowing site Wikileaks in 2006. It started off as a noble, idealistic cause, but, as you'll see in this illuminating and thrilling documentary, the phenomenon that is WikiLeaks has led to some devastating consequences for whistleblowers, including former US soldier Chelsea Manning, as well as the authorities whose secrets are now in the public domain. [Watch it now »](#)

[7. Crimes Uncovered SA](#)



This documentary captures the most shocking crimes that plague South African communities. It is intensely emotional and gives you firsthand insight into how crime can traumatise people. Thankfully, the crimes in this show have resulted in the successful capture and prosecution of the perpetrators. [Watch it now »](#)

Love documentaries? Browse the full non-fiction Showmax catalogue at showmax.com.

DStv Premium subscribers have access to [Showmax at zero cost](#), DStv Compact and Compact subscribers get Showmax for R49. There's also 14-day free trial for new subscribers.

- **Showmax named Marketing Team of the Year at the 2022 Promax Africa Awards** 14 Nov 2022
- **Showmax Pro launches promotional offer from R199 a month** 19 Oct 2022
- **"Every South African needs to watch this." Critics rave about *Steinheist* doccie** 27 Sep 2022
- **Best reactions from first-time SAFTA nominees** 19 Jul 2022
- **Trailer alert: first look at Tarryn Wyngaard and Thapelo Mokoena in the Showmax Original survival horror *Pulse*** 24 May 2022

[Showmax](#)



Showmax is internet TV that lets you stream or download the best series, movies, kids' shows and documentaries. Watch Showmax now on your phone, tablet, laptop or TV.

[Profile](#) | [News](#) | [Contact](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [RSS Feed](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>