



The Best American Crime Writing 2005

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The 2005 edition of **The Best American Crime Writing** offers the year's most shocking, compelling, and gripping writing about real-life crime, including Peter Landesman's article about female sex slaves (the most requested and widely read *New York Times* story of 2004), a piece from *The New Yorker* by Stephen J. Dubner (the coauthor of **Freakonomics**) about a high-society silver thief, and an extraordinarily memorable "ode to bar fights" written by Jonathan Miles for *Men's Journal* after he punched an editor at a staff party. But this year's edition includes a bonus -- an original essay by James Ellroy detailing his fascination with Joseph Wambaugh and how it fed his obsession with crime -- even to the point of selling his own blood to buy Wambaugh's books. Smart, entertaining, and controversial, **The Best American Crime Writing** is an essential edition to any crime enthusiast's bookshelf.

The Best American Crime Writing 2005 Details

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Author : James Ellroy , Otto Penzler

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maijs says

Of the four books I've read from this series this was by far the most disappointing collection. I strongly recommend reading other installments from the series, but can't recommend this year specifically.

Rae says

I enjoyed the first half of this book and then it went downhill. The articles just didn't hold my interest.

Martha says

Who knew? These are fascinating stories from major magazines and newspapers. I have been reading them as I can get them on ILL. In the one I'm about to finish there is a story about David Berkowitz, the Son of Sam serial killer who has become a sort of cult figure, having "found Christ" and quoting favorite verses from the Bible. He hasn't read the whole book, just selected parts. He has a website and fans, proving once again that anything is possible.

Joe Noir says

All the volumes in this series are good. Non-fiction crime from a variety of sources, and covering a multitude of sins.

Kemper says

A very solid set of true-crime stories. There's a wide range here from murderer to white collar scammers to professional thieves to an essay by James Ellroy explaining how Joseph Wambaugh influenced his life and crime writing. Good reading for true crime fans.

Guy says

Any one of these annual series is well worth the read. A compilation of the top crime stories from such venerable publications as the New Yorker, Vanity Fair, Esquire, Rolling Stone, and the like. Don't assume it's all about murder. These stories are about anything to do with breaking the law, from murder to burglary to terrorism to embezzlement to impersonation. All fascinating.

Robert Noll says

Very interesting vignettes.

Harvey says

- from the jacket: "The 2005 edition of The Best American Crime Writing offers the years most shocking, compelling, and gripping writing about real-life crime, including Peter Landesman's article about female sex-slaves (the most-requested and widely-read New York Times story of 2004), a piece from The New Yorker by Stephen J. Dubner (the co-author of Freakonomics) about a high-society silver thief, and an extraordinarily memorable 'Ode To Bar Fights' written by Jonathan Miles for Men's Journal after he punched an editor at a staff party..."

Ellen says

The writing in here is amazing, and, since truth is stranger than fiction, there are some pretty compelling stories. My favorite so far is the death of the one of the foremost experts on Arthur Conan Doyle.

Kirsti says

My favorite piece was "The Family Man" by the amazing Skip Hollandsworth, about a straight-arrow suburban husband and father who is actually a highly skilled burglar and who feels compelled to hire ne'er-do-well friends and relatives on his jobs. "The Silver Thief" by Stephen J. Dubner and "The Self-Destruction of an M.D." by Neil Swidey were also excellent.

Robert P. Hoffman says

This is the best of the series (and it is too bad that this series was discontinued). The writing is outstanding, the range of subjects is wide, almost every story is of great interest, and the writers are excellent storytellers.

The Girls Next Door. I hesitate to criticize this essay because what the writer exposes is something that needs to be addressed. I have two problems. First, whenever someone writes on such a topic there is a danger of people being attracted to it because of the subject matter. There is a bit of that. Second, as noted in the afterward, there has been criticisms of this article with suggestions that the level of sex trafficking may not be at the level the author claims.

The Ones That Got Away. An excellent account of the aftermath of the attack on USS Cole. The author displays a somewhat irritating desire to become a central part of the story.

The Family Man. The best article in this volume. Skip Hollandsworth is an amazing author and his tale of a suburban father who was a successful thief is a great story. It is filled with wonderful details and the author does not judge the person but presents what happened in his life.

Mysterious Circumstances. Another first rate story about someone obsessed with the author of Sherlock Holmes and how that person fought the heirs of Doyle for control over Doyle's work. The ending is one that is sad as we realize how obsessions can lead people to do some inexplicable things.

The Virus Underground. A fascinating account of people who write viruses. I was surprised to learn that because of the penalties people face that many people design a virus and post it on-line but they do not infect systems with the virus. Others will then see that virus and decide to let it loose.

Punch Drunk Love. Since I feel compelled to read all the articles in the volume I forced myself to complete this article. It is the worst in the book with the author coming across as a jerk who wants to demonstrate to the reader that while he is still quite a man he realizes that his antics of previous years are not something to be proud of.

The Terror Web. This article, published before his masterpiece *The Looming Tower*, is a terrifying account of the role of radical Islamic terrorists in Europe after 9/11. The author does an excellent job of presenting the lives and beliefs of the terrorists and the different organizations that make up Al Qaeda. His discussion of Spain's background and the effects of The Crusades is outstanding. He also does a great job of discussing how after the attack on Spain there was some signals that perhaps Al Qaeda might be developing into an organization that used terror to advance political ends (e.g., getting Spain to withdraw from the Iraqi war) or whether terror was the reason for the existence of the organization--terror used to eliminate Westerners and Jews.

Anatomy of a Foiled Plot. This story shows how pathetic some of the people are who are involved in terror plans. It also demonstrates that the government engages in actions that appear designed to trap people and get them to do things they otherwise might not do.

To Catch an Oligarch. The author tries to do too much and as a result there is a superficial quality to this story.

A Long Way Down. An excellent article about how someone became involved in defrauding investors. The author presents his protagonist in a sympathetic light and shows how people can easily engage in criminal behavior.

JBP says

Like a lot of these anthologies, some essays better than others. A few I'd already read in the *New Yorker*, but if you like short bursts of true-life crime in your reading diet, these are fun and easy.

Mark says

Stories range from the famous NYT Magazine piece about human trafficking to New England's master silver thief. Good stuff.
