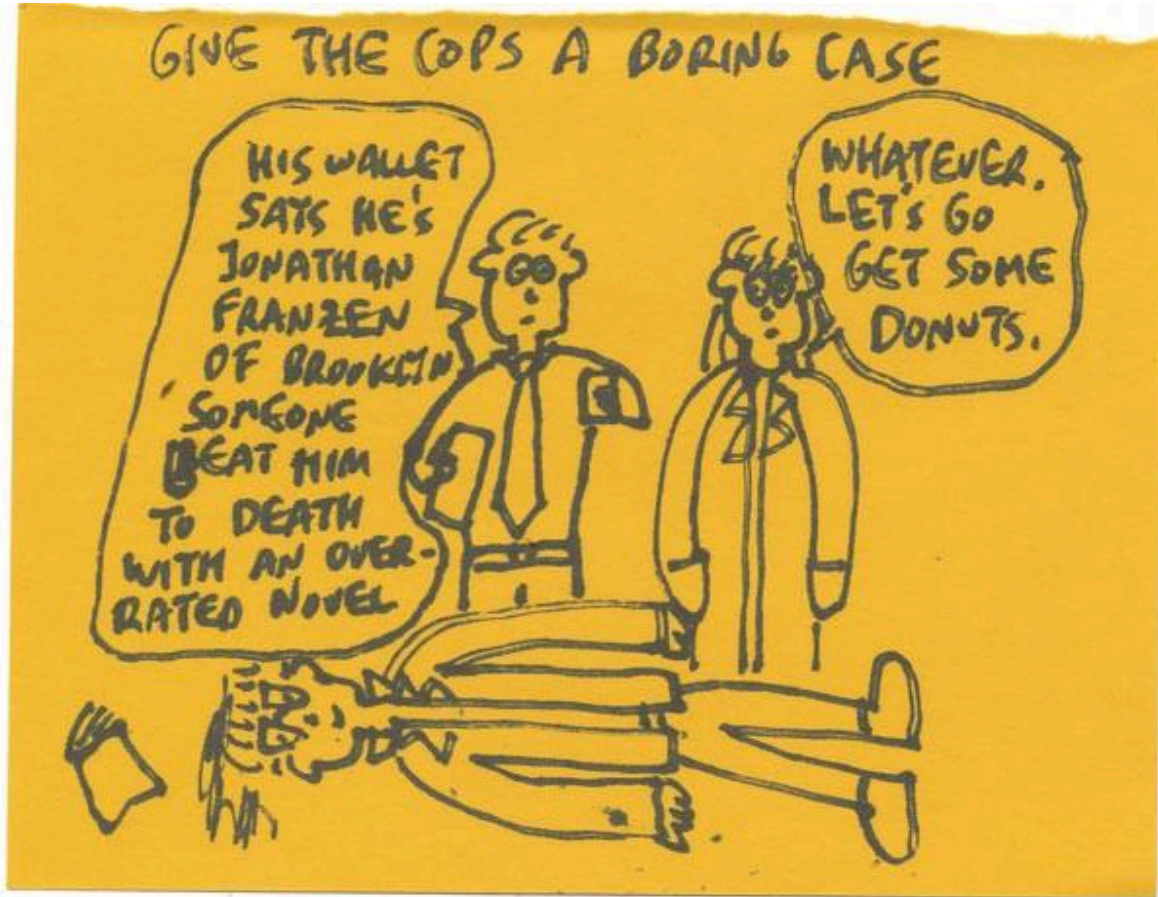


The Only Murdering Murder Guide You'll Ever Need, You Murderer

by JIM BEHRLE January 19, 2012



First things first: Murder is wrong, OK? But let's say, hypothetically, that you're considering committing one anyway: how would you do it? Practically everyone wants to murder someone. That jerk that got the job you want. That guy who gets all his books reviewed while your books don't even get published. That handsome, horrible dude everyone loves when only you know he is a complete fraud who must be exposed. Jonathan Franzen. Maybe you want to murder novelist Jonathan Franzen. Let's say you do. You want to stand over Jonathan Franzen's wrecked body as it bubbles over with his own blood. You're laughing and he's just kind of lying there, gurgling. You beat him to death with an iPad and now there won't be any more sprawling family angst novels

from Mr. Handsome Fake Genius Man. Maybe that is who you want to murder. Maybe you would really enjoy wringing his skinny Brooklyn neck. His skinny, pretentious, overrated, Brooks Brothers neck. Hypothetically. Here are some things to think about while you're totally planning the fake murder you have no intention of actually doing and by reading this sentence you hereby absolve the writer of any complicity in the crimes you will in no way go out and commit here comes the period and Jim is absolved.

The first step is to give up on the idea of committing the “perfect murder.” That's the terrain of Agatha Christie novels, and no Agatha Christie novel ever ends with the murderer eating cheese as they sit in their Tuscan countryside villa, laughing to themselves about the murder they got away with. That's more like Patricia Highsmith territory. The end of 100% of the mystery novels in world literature—go check them all, I'll wait—is that the murderer gets caught. The case is complicated, there are many twists and turns, but then the detective solves it, the local constabulary drag the murderer away, the end. Mysteries on TV, too. I want just one to end with like Andy Sipowicz saying to a murderer, “I want you to know that I know that you did it. And I will figure out some way to prove it eventually. So keep looking over your shoulder. Because I'll be there.” So don't think about the perfect murder, the one that goes exactly as planned and without a hitch. This is murder—there are always hitches. Think about the perfect outcome: Cheese, villa, laughing.

Have a really good reason. 99% of murders are for money, love, revenge or to cover up another crime. The 1% ones are about using people's skins to sew together a ladysuit. Let's focus on the majority.

If your reason is money, make it for *a lot* of money. If it's revenge, make it revenge for something great. You probably will only get one chance at getting away with murder. The NYPD clears, like, 60% of murders. Each murder, you keep rolling the dice. You can murder an anonymous stranger, just to see what it's like to kill someone. But what fun is that? Especially if you only get to kill one? That's like only eating one delicious slider at White Castle. Do they even sell single sliders at White Castle? I don't think so.

Because you wouldn't be satisfied. Anyway, killing randomly and for no reason might increase your chances of getting away with it, but it won't soothe your unbearable bloodlust. People generally kill people they know, it's just way more satisfying.



Perhaps you want to kill the person who has the job you want. Say Anna Wintour—or Carmelo Anthony. You're just not getting the ball at the top of the key anymore because Mr. Ball Hog takes, like, 40 shots a night for the Knicks. Or you want to be the one occupying that office atop the Manhattan skyline, deciding who gets to be cool and who has to move to Hartford Forever. Sure, go ahead—if you're *sure* the Knicks will say "Now that 'Melo has vanished from the face of the earth, please be our Small Forward." Or that Si will turn to you and not some other horrible ambition monster. Otherwise it's not worth it.



It's a bad idea to try to eliminate all evidence from a crime scene. A tempting strategy, but completely the wrong way to go. Instead of going for zero evidence, what you want to do is make sure there's plenty of evidence *all over* the crime scene. Like a huge puddle of semen or a big pile of pubes. As long as it's someone else's semen and pubes. Or pour some buckets of other people's blood all over the dead body. Sort that out, coppers!

In trying to eliminate evidence you will probably leave more evidence and then you will be in a lot of trouble. When juries don't see any evidence, and just have the word of the police over the word of the murderer, well, nobody likes police. Except me. I've always liked them for some reason. The uniforms, maybe. I like UPS delivery people, too. And the Starbucks uniform is practically erotic lingerie to me. But anyway, who are you gonna believe? The Cops? Or The Evidence that says that some other person came and bled all over the crime scene? People on juries watch nothing but "CSI" shows. They'll always go with The Evidence. So steal a bunch of someone you want to frame's

pubic hair (or regular hair, if you want to be boring) and sprinkle it generously all over the crime scene.

Take the serial killer Dexter, for example. He does that whole plastic-wrapped killing hole thing every time he does a murder. That is *so much work*. The guy at the plastic store has probably called the cops on him a billion times by now. “This guy uses a lot of plastic and is always buying shovels all the time.” Bad idea. Real assassin type killers leave all the evidence at the crime scene. Just drop the Candlestick in the Conservatory, Professor Plum. Sure, your fingerprints may be on that candlestick. But most likely so are the maid’s. And whoever’s been using it as a dildo. You can try and smudge your prints if you wish in this murder scenario. Which isn’t the best example of the kind of murder you’ll get away with. They’ll have all kinds of “a person this tall and right-handed struck the fatal blow” evidence on you anyway. But it’s better than trying to take it with you, throwing it in the East River. Buried in your backyard, that candlestick is going to jail. You might think throwing it deep into dirty water might help, but someone will probably see you throw it in. And the thing probably isn’t real gold, it’s probably some kind of cheap metal that floats. Floatarium!

You might be wanting to hide the body by cutting off the head, feet and hands and removing any distinguishing marks on the skin. You’re going to carry a body around town with you? You got a duffel bag for the head, feet and hands? Yeah, sure you do. One that drips drip drips blood right back to the tool shed in your backyard. As bad as it is to leave all the evidence in one place so the police can find it all, it’s worse taking any of it with you. The police generally approach a crime in a rather narrative way. Looking for clues and then asking people questions and then arresting the murder victim’s husband or loser boyfriend. Which brings me too...

Don’t kill someone you’ve been sleeping with. A. It’s just really bad form. B. You will be the only real suspect: Anytime a married woman is murdered, they immediately jail the husband. And then go get donuts. The best revenge as a spurned lover is not murder, but screwing someone else and throwing it in that person’s face. Like you see

them at a party and are like “Hello.” And they are all like “Hello.” And you’re like, “This is Jeff.” And they are like, “Hello, Jeff.” And you are like, “When we make love we make jokes about you.” And they are like “Really?” And you and Jeff are like “Oh, yes. Really.” That is way better than any murder. Anyway, it’s way more fun to kill your parents, who probably screwed you up way worse than any relationship person. Fight the real enemy.

Always do it all yourself. The fewer people you include, the fewer people you will have to kill later. If you want to get away with murder, no one else can know about it. Not your mom, not the cat. You should probably avoid even making eye contact with anyone while you’re thinking about the murder. Maybe that person is clairvoyant. You don’t know. The more people who know about your murder the more people you may have to someday murder to keep them quiet. Because they’ll blackmail you and stuff; people are such creeps. And word to the wise: if you build an awesome killer ninja robot to be your accomplice, then you will have to take the whole thing apart after the murder is done and then hide all the bloody pieces. Don’t accumulate witnesses or conspirators. It will only increase your chances of getting caught.

And whatever you do, *do not* hire someone to do the murder for you. They will fuck it up and leave you hanging out to dry. In general, other people are unreliable and completely selfish, especially when it comes to criminal enterprises. You should only hire someone to commit murders for you if you’re really excited about having them blackmail you later. Like if you are way into that. Because they will keep hassling you for hush money constantly on your lunch break and at movies during the coming attractions.

Give the cops a boring case. It’s not that the police are dumb. They aren’t. They just have a lot to do. And they’re not going to want to spend a ton of time on some bullshit murder unless they think it might be a real moneymaker down the road. Like a murder they can get serious overtime on and write books about and will have Chloë Sevigny playing them in movies. That kind of thing. Which is why you don’t leave letters under their fingernails or paint a riddle in the murder victim’s blood. Don’t do anything that might make a great hook for David Grann someday. Leave all the evidence at the crime

scene. Take all the folding money in the murder victim's wallet. It doesn't matter how much there is . Just take it. The possibility of a failed robbery, however unlikely, is something the cops will have to consider and one they may default to. Cops have seen lots and lots of murders and there's no reason to think your murder is all that special unless you make it special. Which is why you shouldn't leave a fortune cookie in your murder victim's mouth or write the lyrics to Sonic Youth songs with their entrails. That's the fast way to get HLN and Nancy Grace all up in your shit.

Murder cases are built on progress. When no progress is forthcoming they squish down like a jack-o'-lantern after Halloween. The boss cop goes, "How's that Jim Behrle murder coming along?" And the cop on the case is like "Half the city wanted that guy dead. We're nowhere." And the boss cop goes, "Fuck it. Move on."



Juries are crazy. "The Twinkie Defense" was formulated before many of you were born. But believe me, juries will buy just about anything. Some murderers are afraid to face a jury of their peers, but they shouldn't be. Half of the people on your jury will probably have committed their own murders and will totally want you to get off. The other half will

have watched so many episodes of “CSI” they expect all cases to have exciting montages of fiber analysis, footage of cops taking off their sunglasses and putting them back on, arrows with detached retinas on their tips. Without those elements your jury will probably fall asleep and you’ll get a mistrial. Who knows if they’ll even prosecute you a second time?



Be sure you have it in you to kill. Murder is something you will carry around with you all your days. Some people are great at compartmentalizing. Like me, for example. I wouldn't steal a pack of gum from a store. But I love owing large corporations money and never paying them. It is a huge part of my life. A lot of getting away with murder will be up to you. If the cops do suspect you, can you avoid saying something stupid and incriminating to them? And don't be calling the detectives to see if they have any leads. You'll know if they have any leads on you, because they'll be following you around and bothering you and all your friends. Are you really good at keeping secrets? Because I am not. I would kill someone and then just blab about it all the time, making jokes that

got increasingly higher pitched and hysterical before breaking down in tears and confessing it darkly to people.

Then there's the human conscience. What a weird invention. Sociopaths are the best murderers, because they feel nothing except unlimited rage without consequence. But what about the rest of us, who practically burst into tears when we cut people in line at Duane Reade?

Don't kill anyone really great. How long do you think the investigation in "Twin Peaks" would have gone on if Pete the Fisherman had been shot? There wouldn't have even been an investigation. They would have just arrested Piper Laurie and burned down the old mill. Laura Palmer was young, beautiful and promiscuous. Even Agent Cooper had weird sexy dreams of her! Don't kill anyone who would inspire any sort of life-long search or outcry. They're still going on and on about Jesus dying on the cross, and that was 2,000 years ago! Conversely, no one mourns lousy people all that long, and their unsolved murder won't bother anyone all that much.

Remember, murder is wrong. And "vengeance is mine" sayeth the Lord. Right. So it's bad for people to murder other people but it's OK for God to give people cancer for no reason. Sure, sure, whatever. But God has made murder messy and getting away with it difficult, but not impossible. So God must want some people to get away with murder. Maybe you!