



# Investigating crime in SOUTH AFRICA

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## Book Selector

The popularity of TV programmes such as the *CSI* trilogy attests to people's fascination with forensic science as a means of solving crimes. In South Africa, good titles have been published on the subject by respected authors. The Western Cape Library Service has acquired a wide range of titles covering crime-related aspects in South Africa, varying in scope from pathology to true crime stories and the cleaning up of crime scenes to policing. Have a look here at some of the latest acquisitions, as well as a few important older ones.

**Missing & murdered: a personal adventure in forensic anthropology** (Zebra Press, 2011) follows the pathway into forensics via the fields of anthropology and anatomy. Author Alan G Morris makes the practice of forensic anthropology, the skills base of skeletal biology and the study of archaeological skeletons hugely accessible to the layperson in a series of fascinating cases, from muti murders and political killings to the work of the Missing Persons Task Team. He answers questions like 'What can human bones tell us of a person's life, or even death?', 'How can information from bones solve mysteries – both modern and ancient?', and 'What makes the study of skeletonised human remains so

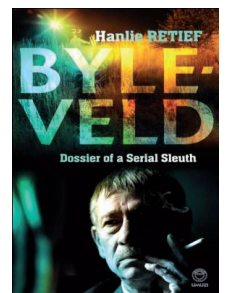
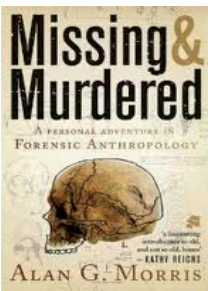
imperative in Southern Africa?' Morris is currently professor in the Department of Human Biology at the University of Cape Town. This is a gripping local title.

For a very long period of time, Dr David Klatzow was the only independent forensic investigator in South Africa. During the apartheid years, a time of police brutality and state cover-ups, he was the person human rights lawyers called when they needed independent forensic evidence to uncover the truth. Klatzow's investigations into countless notorious cases, such as the Gugulethu Seven, the Trojan Horse massacre, the murders of human rights lawyer Bheki Mlangeni and activist Dr David Webster, and the bombing of Khotso House and Cosatu House, made him a controversial public figure.

Hampered by the police and the legal system under apartheid, he was always fearless and earned a reputation of being an 'ANC supporter', even though he always remained impartial. On a non-political level, he was instrumental in changing the testing mechanism for drunk driving in the 1980s and became an expert in fire investigations. One of his most enduring interests is uncovering the truth behind the Helderberg airplane crash. More recently, Klatzow investigated the Paarl Press fire, the assassination of Brett Kebble and the murder of Inge Lotz. His book **Steeped in blood: the life and times of a forensic scientist** (Zebra Press, 2010), as told to Sylvia Walker, provides gripping accounts of dozens of these matters. ([www.safariandoutdoor.co.za](http://www.safariandoutdoor.co.za))

Former Brigadier Piet Byleveld is recognised worldwide as one of the best detectives of our time. If you've committed a murder and Piet Byl is called in, your place in jail is booked. If you've harmed children and he's on your case, you've sealed your own fate. And if you're a serial killer on the loose, he will not stop before you are behind bars. Hanlie Retief's book **Byleveld: dossier of a serial sleuth** (Umuzi, 2011) reopens the dockets of numerous murders that this courteous detective has solved over the years. Gruesome, tragic, exciting – and with the satisfaction that justice had prevailed. In-between we get the measure of the man Byleveld: how he matured in the tough world of the Brixton Murder and Robbery Squad; how he prevailed over deep personal setbacks; and the values that this farm boy carried with him to make an unprecedented success of society's grimmest job. Also available in Afrikaans as **Byleveld: dossier van 'n baasspeurder**. ([www.randomstruik.co.za](http://www.randomstruik.co.za))

Hardus and Nicolette Lotter and Nicolette's ex-boyfriend Mathew Naidoo, were convicted of murdering Johannes Petrus (Johnny) Lotter and Maria Magdalena (Riekie) Lotter in their Durban home on July 19, 2008. Naidoo received a double life sentence in the Durban High Court for his part in the killing, while Nicolette was sentenced to twelve years and Hardus to 10 years in jail. During the trial, the brother and sister told the court they had acted at the behest of Naidoo, who had convinced them



he was the third son of God. The Lotter's original attorney Danie Grundlingh has written the book **Innocent acts of evil** (Grundlingh Attorneys, 2011) about the murder of their parents, as seen through Hardus's eyes. The book was written and printed long before the trial of the Lotter siblings, and corroborates evidence given in court by clinical psychologist professor Laurens Schlebusch. 'The book explains most of the public's unanswered questions and can change the public perception of the siblings' actions and enlighten society about cultism, brainwashing and fanaticism,' Grundlingh said.



In **Monkey business: the murder of Anni Dewani – the facts, the fiction, the spin**

(Umuzi, 2011), Mike Nicol records the tragic murder of the beautiful Anni Dewani and the incredible aftermath as told by a chorus of family, friends, lawyers, spin doctors, reporters, bloggers, politicians, cops, psychologists, even a kinky sex worker – a story that played out in the international media and on social network sites. Instead of simply retelling the well-known details of how Anni was murdered in a township hijacking while honeymooning in Cape Town with Shrien Dewani, her husband of 12 days, Nicol sets out how the shocking event and its aftermath have been portrayed in the media. He offers no commentary but lets the story unfold by presenting material in a mostly chronological fashion. It is fascinating and all leads to one question: did Shrien Dewani organise the hit and if so, why? The book is as much a social commentary as a whodunit. ([www.you.co.za](http://www.you.co.za))

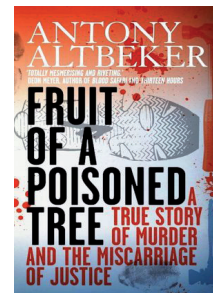
Lolly Jackson, Teazers' boss, made front page headlines around the country when he was gunned down in Kempton Park in Johannesburg in May 2010. Three authors have come together to lend their particular expertise and craft to a tell-all tale of him, his empire and his fall in their book **Lolly Jackson: when fantasy becomes reality** (Jacana, 2012). They are Sean Newman, an employer of Jackson, top legal reporter Karyn Maughan and former *Playboy South Africa* editor, Peter Piegler. Amidst the confusing reports, moneylaundering on a grand scale, SARS investigations and mafia-like killings, they add their significant contributions to make this a riveting read. The book opens on the night of Lolly's murder and is a personal inside track into the reality of Lolly's private and business lives, never before made public.

The brutal killings of Richard Bloom and Brett Goldin on 16 April 2006 in Cape Town remain indelibly imprinted on the minds of many South Africans. Bryan D Hellmann, Richard's partner, tells in his book **Soul conductor: a tale of grieving and healing** (Aardvark Press, 2008) about this case and of his private journey of grief and subsequent healing. He provides a form of self-help guide for those in need of it. Although Hellmann's psychological training and expertise remain prevalent throughout, his human sensitivity prevents it from becoming a mere psychological handbook. It is also a courageous exposé of a young gay man's personal experience of grief.

In September 2005 Brett Kebble, a prominent South African mining magnate, was killed on a quiet suburban street in Johannesburg in an apparent 'assisted suicide'. The top-level

investigation that followed was a tipping point for democratic South Africa. It exposed the corrupt relationship between South Africa's Chief of Police, Interpol President Jackie Selebi and his friend, Glenn Agliotti, and revealed an underworld dominated by drug lords, steroid-fuelled bouncers, hitmen-for-hire, an international smuggling syndicate, a dubious security unit moonlighting for the police and sinister self-serving sleuths abusing state agencies. Indemnified by an agreement struck with the state, Mikey Schultz, Nigel McGurk and Fiazal 'Kappie' Smith come clean to award-winning *Eyewitness News* journalist, Mandy Wiener; in exclusive interviews. Glenn Agliotti, the man once accused of orchestrating the hit, has also provided Wiener with unlimited access to his story. This is published in **Killing Kebble: an underworld exposed** (Pan Macmillan, 2011). It was shortlisted for the 2012 Sunday Times Alan Paton Award. ([www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com))

In June 2005, Fred van der Vyver, a young actuary and the son of a wealthy Eastern Cape farming family, was charged with murdering his girlfriend, Inge Lotz, allegedly bludgeoning her to death with a hammer as she lay on a couch in her lounge. The case against Van der Vyver seemed overwhelming. His behaviour at the time of the murder appeared suspicious and incriminating, and a letter, penned by Inge on the morning of her death, suggested that the two had been fighting. But it was forensic evidence that seemed to prove his guilt. And yet, in one of the most sensational and controversial murder trials in South African legal history, Van der Vyver's lawyers turned the tables on the police, accusing them of fabricating evidence and lying to the judge. Antony Albeker's eyewitness account of the trial in his book **Fruit of a poisoned tree: a true story of murder and the miscarriage of justice** (Jonathan Ball, 2010), presents the reader with all the evidence and testimony, while also placing it in the context of a society and a justice system that are being stretched to breaking point. The book reads like a forensic thriller and is his third book about crime and justice in South Africa. ([www.kalkbaybooks.co.za](http://www.kalkbaybooks.co.za))

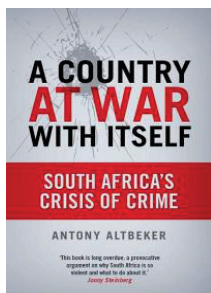


Altbeker also wrote **The dirty work of democracy: a year on the streets with the SAPS** (Jonathan Ball, 2005), which won the Recht Malan Prize for Non-fiction and was short-listed for the Sunday Times Alan Paton Award. It is his account of the year he spent observing South African police in action and sets out to answer the question: 'What does it take to police our country's streets?' He offers insight into the people behind the badge, neither superheroes nor saints, but ordinary, fallible people



who see more pain and sadness every day than many of us do in a lifetime.

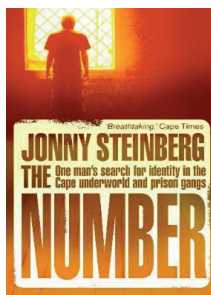
Altbeker's **A country at war with itself: South Africa's crisis of crime** (Jonathan Ball, 2007) is widely regarded as the most authoritative popular account of the causes of South Africa's crime problem and what to do to fix it.



Crime of some sort has affected almost every South African. Rising to unprecedented levels after the transition to democracy in 1994, it was the emotional hook used by most political parties in their 1999 election campaigns and, after a spate of bombings in the Western Cape in late 1999 it continued to be the most talked-about subject across the country. Jonny Steinberg, one of South

Africa's foremost criminologists and a journalist of international repute, has brought together the research of some of the country's leading criminologists, sociologists, independent researchers, investigators and prosecutors in his book **Crime wave: the South African underworld and its foes** (Witwatersrand U.P., 2001). At the time of publication this collection was the most sustained and wide-ranging analytical commentary on crime and law enforcement written since the transition to democracy in South Africa. ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))

In Steinberg's provocative book **Thin blue: the unwritten rules of policing South Africa** (Jonathan Ball, 2008), he argues that policing in crowded urban space is like theatre. Only, here the audience writes the script, and if the police don't perform the right lines, the spectators throw them off the stage. Several months before they exploded into xenophobic violence, Steinberg travelled the streets of Alexandra, Reiger Park and other Johannesburg townships with police patrols. His mission was to discover the unwritten rules of engagement emerging between South Africa's citizens and its new police force. What emerges is a lucid and original account of the relationship between ordinary South Africans and the government they have elected to rule them. ([books.google.co.za](http://books.google.co.za))



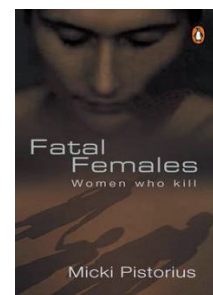
**The number: one man's search for identity in the Cape underworld and prison gangs** (Jonathan Ball, 2004), is an account of Steinberg's conversations with a man named Magadien Wentzel and of Steinberg's

journeys to the places and people of Wentzel's past. They'd met in Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. Wentzel had a lifelong career in the 28s, South Africa's oldest and most reviled prison gang, for decades rumoured to have specialised in rape and robbery. By the time Wentzel was released, he and Steinberg had spent more than 50 hours discussing his life experiences. It is a tale of modern South Africa's historic events seen through the eyes of the country's underclass. The book won the 2005 Sunday Times Alan Paton Award for Non-fiction.

**Street blues: the experiences of a reluctant policeman** (Zebra Press, 2008) was award-winning Andrew Brown's first work of non-fiction, in which he writes about his experiences as a police reservist, taking the reader into the day-to-day life of a policeman

on the beat. The book covers car chases, accident scenes, hijackings, gangsterism, prostitution, drug busts, fire fighting and other dramas that comprise daily fare for policemen and women. Shifting between tragedy and humour, Brown's writing gives personal insight into a world that is normally accessed only through statistics and news reports. ([zebra.bookslive.co.za](http://zebra.bookslive.co.za))

Micki Pistorius, a psychologist whose doctoral thesis was on serial homicide, spent six years as head of the investigative psychology unit of the SAPS. Her account of these years was **Catch me a killer**. In her book **Strangers on the street: serial homicide in South Africa** (Penguin, 2002), she offered 'the first comprehensive study of serial homicide in South Africa', with details of many notorious cases. Though intended for psychologists, students, educators and police officers who require background on the behavioural patterns and motives of serial killers, this will appeal to local true crime buffs as well. Pistorius also wrote **Fatal females: women who kill** (Penguin, 2004), where she looked at some fifty South African female murderers, with concise accounts of their crimes and analyses of what made them do it.



Award-winning Chris Karsten was, as a journalist, involved with many of the stories that later appeared in his *True crime* and *Ware misdaad* series (published by Human & Rousseau in 2007/2008): **Bad kids: South African youngsters who rob and kill; Headline murders: slayings which shocked South Africa; Killer women: fatal South African females; Unsolved: no answers to heinous South African crimes; Boos en bisar: wrede Suid-Afrikaanse misdade met 'n kinkel; Suid-Afrikaanse gewelddenaars sonder genade; Verlore onskuld: Suid-Afrikaanse kinders wat moor en roof; Dodelike vroue: wanneer passie in bloed eindig; Opspraak deur moord: Suid-Afrikaanse doodslag skok; Riller in die raaisel: onopgeloste Suid-Afrikaanse misdade.**

**Bad kids** tells ten true stories of youngsters involved in serious crime. There are tales of unspeakable malice. But sometimes heroism and hope flow from tragedy: many people on both sides of the Atlantic still benefit from Amy Biehl's legacy after she was stoned to death by teenagers coming from a political rally. Karsten follows the often bizarre twists and turns in the story behind the headline crime, masterfully recreating the suspense and action. ([www.nb.co.za](http://www.nb.co.za))

And lastly, something a little different.

Eileen de Jager and Roelien Schutte's job is most people's worst nightmare: they clean up crime scenes - a job they perform with compassion and empathy. From farm attacks to family murders and suicides, scenes where somebody died brutally or where there are partially or fully decomposed bodies. These women come armed with the correct equipment and chemicals, but above all, a lot of courage and humanity. Narrated by Ilse Salzwedel, they tell their story in the book **Blood sisters: the stories of two women who clean crime scenes** (Lapa, 2012). Also available in Afrikaans as **Bloedsusters: die verhale van twee vroue wat misdaadtonele skoonmaak** (Lapa, 2011). Warning: may disturb sensitive readers!