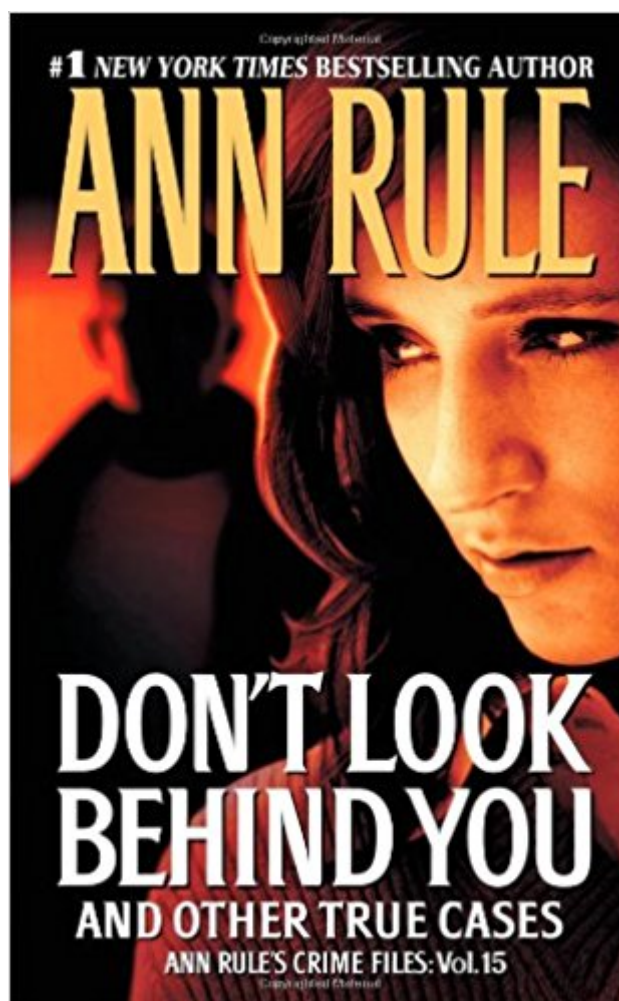


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Don't Look Behind You: Ann Rule's Crime Files #15



Synopsis

ILL BE WATCHING YOU Walking home on a dark night, you hear footsteps coming up behind you. As they get closer, your heart pounds harder. Who is closing in with dangerous intent—a total stranger? Or someone you know and trust? The answer is as simple as turning around, but don't look behind you . . . run. Ann Rule, who shared her own nerve-jangling account of unknowingly befriending sadistic sociopath Ted Bundy in *The Stranger Beside Me*, chronicles other fateful encounters with the hidden predators among us in this riveting collection, fifteenth in the bestselling series drawn from her personal files. First in line is a stunning case that spanned thirty years and took a determined detective to four states—ending, finally, in Alaska—where he unraveled not one but two murders. A second case appears to begin and end with the hunt for the Green River Killer, focusing on a Washington State man who was once cleared as a suspect in that deadly chain of homicides. But the millionaire property owner believed he had successfully buried his own murderous past and the awful truth behind his young wife's disappearance. She vanished soon after she left for a day at the Seattle World's Fair, and her three small children grew up believing their mother had abandoned them. But one amazing witness remained—the missing woman's best friend, who heard her last words in a frantic phone call—"He's coming!—before the line went dead. Only since Robert Hansen's suicide has the monster within been revealed. In another true story, a petite woman went to a tavern, looking only for conversation and fun. Instead, she met violent death in the form of a seven-foot man who had seemed shy and harmless. You'll feel a chill as you uncover these and numerous other cases of unfortunate victims who made one tragic mistake: trusting the wrong person—even someone they'd known intimately, or thought they knew.

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Customer Reviews

Ann Rule is the author of thirty New York Times bestsellers, all of them still in print. Her first bestseller was *The Stranger Beside Me*, about her personal relationship to infamous serial killer Ted Bundy. A former Seattle police officer, she knows the crime scene firsthand. For more than two decades, she has been a powerful advocate for victims of violent crime. She lives near Seattle. Visit her at AuthorAnnRule.com.

Don't Look Behind You Chapter One It was midafternoon on a very warm day • June 4, 2007 • when bulldozer operator Travis Haney paused to wipe the sweat from his forehead. He'd been demolishing an old farmhouse and leveling the topsoil on Canyon Road East in Puyallup (pronounced Pew-AL-up), Washington. It was a prime spot for a shopping mall in the Summit district of Pierce County. The Washington State Fairgrounds were close by, and land surrounding Puyallup was known for its rich soil and never-ending acres of daffodils. But just as the Kent Valley had been paved over to make room for the burgeoning Boeing Company and the parking lots, apartment houses, malls, and other businesses necessary to meet the needs of a startling influx of new residents, Puyallup's daffodils were beginning to disappear, along with the small truck farms and strawberry fields in the valley. It was dismaying to see the rich loam of the area buried under cement. But progress was progress. The tall yellow home that had once stood on this particular piece of property was probably built more than a hundred years ago. The house had been empty for a while, but even without care, many of the old-fashioned roses, lilacs, and other familiar perennials had managed to survive among encroaching weeds. The house was slowly dying. Its front porch sagged; some windows were broken and seemed like dead eyes staring out as the demo teams moved in. There had, indeed, been a ghostly presence surrounding the house, which no one wanted any longer. Workers didn't notice it much in the bright sunshine of summer days, but they certainly did as the sun began to set. In June, in the Northwest, that doesn't happen until almost 10 p.m. The house itself was gone by June 4; all the splintered boards and walls with a dozen layers of wallpaper had been hauled away to landfills. The last thing Travis Haney was thinking about on this Monday afternoon was hauntings

and bizarre secrets. He moved the backhoe close to the fence on the west/northwest section of the lot, idly glancing at the dirt the blade turned up. And then a black plastic trash bag rose up through the disturbed earth. Haney lowered the bucket again and the next scoop brought up the rest of the bag. He dumped it onto a pile of dirt. He could see that it was torn. Curious, he hopped down from his perch and opened the bag along one side. There were bones and rotted clothing inside and some tattered twine that might have been used to tie it all up. Finding bones wasn't particularly unusual for crews who were demolishing buildings and houses and rearranging dirt. Haney mused that these bones must have been in the bag for a long time. They could have been the bones of a dog or even a small farm animal. The presence of shreds of cloth, however, made him wonder if whatever had died here might have been a human being. Travis Haney called his father, Matt Haney, who was the chief of police of Bainbridge Island just across Puget Sound. Matt told his son to call 911. There was probably an explanation that wasn't ominous, but Travis's discovery should be reported. Just in case. Because you never know. Pierce County deputy Jason Tate responded to the address on Canyon Road, arriving at twelve minutes to four in the afternoon. As he headed toward the man standing next to the excavating equipment, he saw that construction had begun on some commercial buildings in one section of the property. There were a few people standing by, apparently curious about what Travis Haney had found. Deputy Tate peered into the bag of bones. He wasn't an expert, but he suspected they might very well be human bones. He contacted the Pierce County sheriff's dispatch and requested that the forensic unit respond. Adam Anderson arrived first. After studying the bones, he tended to agree with Tate. The remains did appear to be human. Anderson's supervisor, Steve Wilkins, headed out to the scene as the afternoon slipped into evening. On the way, he contacted the Pierce County medical examiner's office. They needed all the experts they could summon to establish the bones' species. As the investigators on the scene waited, one of the men standing nearby said his family owned the property. He said his name was Owen Carlson and that he owned the True Value hardware store that was located nearby. Carlson gave Deputy Tate a quick history of some of the myriad tenants who had rented the yellow house over many decades. "My family's had the old place here for years," he explained. "My sister has been in charge of renting it out since back in the seventies. She leased it to so many people, but she'll probably remember most of them—at least those families who stayed for a year or so. Myself, I only recall one family offhand. They lived here sometime in the midseventies; as I remember, it was a married couple and their daughter—or, rather, her daughter. They lived here about a year, I guess. "There was

kind of a strange thing, though," Carlson continued. "More than a year after they moved out, some women came by my store and asked me if I knew where they might be able to locate the older woman's husband and the younger woman's father. They were trying to find him because, I guess, he'd just plain disappeared. The store owner didn't think the women who contacted him were related to the family who had lived there; the little girl whom he'd seen actually living there was much younger than the two sisters, and the grown daughter was years older. "They told me that they were from someplace in New Mexico, I believe, and that their dad suddenly quit keeping in touch. Evidently, that wasn't like him. They wanted to walk through the property because this was the last location they had for him—our old house. "So you took them through it?" Tate asked. "Yeah—as I recall, I did, but I couldn't answer their questions; I just told them that everyone from that family had been gone for a long time. I had no idea where. Asked if he knew the allegedly missing man's name, the witness shook his head. "It was odd, though," "What was odd?" Deputy Tate asked. "One of the daughters said that her father's new wife was the type of person who would kill him. "Kill him?" Tate asked, surprised. "Was she serious?" "I don't know. I didn't know her—never saw her again. Don't even know her name—but I recall that her first name sounded like a nickname. She could have been exaggerating. My sister would know more, but she's on a trip and won't be back until Thursday evening. Forensics chief Steve Wilkins arrived and studied the bones in the black trash bag. He verified that in his opinion they were not animal bones after all. They were human. As Wilkins delicately examined the bones, Jason Tate looked down at the ground beneath the excavator, which was about fifteen feet away from the first bone find. He saw that there were several more bones lying there. He pointed them out to Wilkins and they marked their location with evidence flags. A Pierce County medical examiner's deputy—Bert Osborne—agreed with Wilkins's opinion. Osborne had no doubt that these scattered bones had come from a human being. How long they had been buried in the earth was anyone's guess; it surely had been a long time as they were all denuded of any soft tissue. It would take a meticulous laboratory examination by a forensic anthropologist to determine if they were male or female, the possible ethnic background of the deceased, along with height, weight, and other characteristics that had existed when they had been part of a living frame. Osborne and criminalist Wilkins made the decision to leave the bones where they were. In the morning, they would come back and set up

a grid, beginning where the first bones were found and extending throughout the property so they could be sure they had discovered any bones that remained, as well as other items that might give them some clue to who the dead man (or woman) had been. They didn't know yet if they were looking at what had been a natural death, an accident, a suicide, or a murder. If this was a homicide case, the investigators hoped against hope that a killer might have left something behind that would identify him or her too. It grew late. The sun had set and it was murky dark when the investigators cleared the scene close to eleven. The entire area was sealed off with crime scene tape, and deputies working the Third Watch were stationed around the large lot to protect it until the sun rose and they could work in daylight. Until they did, the mysterious bones would remain where they had probably rested for decades. Every single person who had entered the lot both law enforcement and citizens had been required to sign the sheriff's log that began when the first responding deputy arrived. Pierce County detectives had virtually nothing to go on at this point. Whatever had happened, it had occurred a long time before and they would need to explore the tangled misadventures of those who had once lived or visited here. They might be seeking the identity of a vagrant who had only bedded down for a time. The deserted house would have been tempting for someone low on cash. It offered protection from the rain and wind. Probably no one asked for rent or even noticed that a so-far nameless man or woman had hidden behind the dark windows. Deputy Robert LaTour arrived at the Canyon Road property at a quarter to nine the next morning Tuesday, June 5 and took over the security watch from Deputy Jim Junge, whose peers called him "Jungle Jim." An hour later, a man who lived right next door to the bone site walked up. He said that he hadn't talked to any of the investigators the day before, although the land was legally owned by his cousins. Still, he thought he might have something to add that might help. "My uncle passed away some years ago," he explained, "and this property kind of went downhill. I moved in next door right over there in 1995. That was after my mother passed. I moved into her house." "Any idea who the person we found might be?" LaTour asked. The neighbor shook his head. Unfortunately, he had little to add to the old property's history or knowledge about who the tenants might have been over the years. By 1995 when he moved in next door, there didn't seem to be any tenants at least not any who stayed very long. Next, a woman approached Deputy LaTour. She was concerned because someone in her family had called her after seeing a TV news report the night before about the discovery of the unidentified remains. "She told me to get a good criminal attorney," the woman said to LaTour. "And then she laughed because it

was a joke. But it wasn't too funny, now that she thought about it. "We lived on the property for ten years from 1985 to 1995," the former tenant explained. "And we had a dog that used to dig up bones in the yard. The dog pen was right over there." LaTour glanced at the area and realized that that was where the black plastic garbage bag of bones and some of the other bones were located. He asked the former tenant what she had done with the bones. "Oh," she said. "I took them away from my dog and threw them in the garbage. I figured they were animal bones but now that I think about it they were kind of big." Crime scene investigators (CSIs) Steve Wilkins and Adam Anderson, Clarence "Skip" Mason, and Steve Mell arrived at the bone site five minutes before eight the next morning, prepared to resume digging. With rebar posts and string, they marked off squares measuring two feet by two feet. This would enable them to accurately identify and revisit the location of whatever they might find. Ideally, they hoped to find a good portion of the body in a makeshift grave and learn what position it was in when it was buried. Sometimes that made the difference in determining if the person had died of suicide or homicide. They worked with trowels as well as shovels. If they found an actual grave, they would use brushes to carefully sweep dirt from bones. Now they began to dig and sift the earth they brought up. It was tedious work and the sun was baking hot. When each square had offered up whatever it held, they checked it off on the grid. Throughout the nine hours the investigators toiled, they found several more bones. But no real grave. They tallied up a grim list of what they discovered: 1. One black plastic bag: containing two pelvic bones, a femur (thigh bone) that appeared to have been cut with some kind of tool, a tailbone (the sacrococcyx), several rib bones, some almost unidentifiable fabric, and several lengths of string. 2. From the Grid Squares: #14, three ribs; #19, one vertebra; #20, three vertebrae; #21, two ribs and one vertebra; #22, one vertebra, #27, one vertebra, three rib bones, and cloth; #32, a bone fragment; #40, some charred bones; #42, one vertebra and a collarbone; #42, bone fragment; #44, piece of black plastic bag. On the west side of the grid, they found more vertebrae and a scapula (shoulder blade). North of the grid on the east side of the backhoe, they located another cut femur and more shreds of the plastic bag. On the east side of the dirt pile they found a small piece of metal, its use undetermined. On top of the dirt pile, the sheriff's searchers collected more rib bones, more vertebrae, clothing pieces, a leather belt, and some twine segments. Had any of the body parts been buried in lower ground that often became waterlogged, the searchers might have found what is colloquially known as "grave wax," where the flesh literally turns to a kind of soap. This transmogrification can remain for decades after death. It is, however, more often found in corpses located in lakes and rivers. The proper term for grave wax

is "adipocere," but these bones were absolutely dry. All of the found body parts and debris were packed carefully and taken to the County-City Building evidence room in Tacoma for safekeeping.

I'm baffled about why some other reviewers have given this so few stars. The cases are "cold cases," true, but to my mind that makes them more intriguing. These murderers thought they got away with it long ago -- they thought no one would figure it out now -- but they were wrong. It's nice to see that murder cannot be hidden, however long it may take to be discovered. Ann Rule has done a lot of research about these cases, even though the murderers clearly wanted to hide their tracks. And it's a fascinating portrait of some families who regard murder as "just another day's work," as well as of some people who have survived terrible situations. My only complaint is that the Kindle edition doesn't seem to come with photos (not sure about the print edition). Ann Rule's collections of murder cases, the Crime Files, are always going to have shorter cases than the single-murder books, but there's still a lot of detail in here. And for what it's worth, I didn't spot a single typo.

It was not her best but come on people it was not that bad. I thought all of the stories were interesting and if you are familiar with her Crime Files books you should not expect current stories. Her worst book is still better than many of the true crime books out today. Yes, I found a few errors and omissions but I blame the editor/publisher for that. The last chapter on rapists was especially interesting to me.

As usual, Ann Rule does not disappoint in this collection of stories about crimes committed in the Northwest of Washington, primarily in and around Seattle. From the sad life and disappearance of a young mother more than fifty years ago to victims of a serial rapist who thought he looked like a movie star and a family that got away with murder, she provides us with examples of the existence of evil even disguised by a pretty face. Ann Rule makes our hearts beat faster as we fight the urge to look over your shoulders when footsteps approach. I highly recommend this book.

Generally I don't enjoy Ann Rule's crime case files books as much as the ones that have just one case in them, but this one was an exception. I am always fascinated by "cold cases", and this book was a great study in them. As other reviewers have said, the people who perpetrated the crime Ann Rule's books, and this one was no different, I read it through in about 2 days. I was disappointed

that I didn't get the photos with the kindle edition, but otherwise I didn't note any egregious errors or typos (and I am an editor at heart!). I can't wait for the next book to come out.

Excellent true crime reading as are all of Ann Rule's books. Such a shame she passed away and we can no longer look forward to her next one.

If you aren't familiar with Ann Rule, she was a crime reporter for years. She writes about true crime so vividly that you almost feel like you have been the one who was victimized. This book was no different...she was "dead-on" (excuse the pun!). There is more than one story...she always makes sure her customers get the most for their money. Her sympathy for the victims and their families comes through in her writing, which is a large part of how she pulls you in. I highly recommend it.

I am also surprised with the negative feedback regarding Ann Rule's newest crime files "Don't Look Behind You". I think that this was a good book, although not as good as some of her previous work. As most of Rule's fans know, her files are almost always from previous cases that are sometimes twenty years old plus. I think she has done a remarkable job in recreating these cases as usual. My favorite cases that Ann has reported on in the past are on the Jami Sherer case, Sheila Hawthorne Bellush, Green River Killer Gary Ridgway, and "Dead by Sunset". While this book isn't as interesting as those cases, I still found myself unable to put it down. While it isn't her best work, it's a good book nevertheless. Good solid book; I recommend it. Ann has an uncanny ability to get the reader to feel as though they are right there along with the victims and their families. She is still my favorite true crime author.

Knowing the perpetrator personally made very interesting reading. Unfortunately Ann Rule had only the information of the court records, and the interviews of Renée and the Children of the victim. Renée withheld many details to make herself look better. But it was quite a surprise to those of us how cold she and her brother executed the murder and disposed of the body parts. The circle of friends who knew her, all read the book, as it was our own past. Only the man interviewed is still in Alaska. The rest of us have long departed. We are all glad she got what she had coming to her.

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