**Nathan Brooks**

“Zodiac Killer”

The author of the article “Zodiac Killer – As Yet Unsolved,” Brian Innes, tells a chilling story of a man who wrote threatening letters to the police and news agencies telling them about his past murderous deeds and plans for further more murders. These letters taunted the police and lent credence to his persona as the one who was doing the killing.

These letters start by outlining his plans to force a school bus to stop by shooting out the tires then gun down children as they tried to escape the bus. The Zodiac Killer never accomplished this goal although equally horrifying acts are credited to his name.

His first kill was Cheri Jo Bates. The Zodiac Killer tampered with her car so he could attack when he offered to give her a ride. The man dragged her into the bushes, kicked her in the head, stabbed her twice and nearly decapitated her.

The Zodiac Killer wrote to the police telling them key details about the murder. He said it wasn’t his first kill and it wouldn’t be his last.

The killer proceeded to leave clues for the police while threatening to kill more if they didn’t play along. He killed mostly women while on dates, one while teenagers kissed by a lake, another woman was killed while she cheated on her husband, and yet another woman was killed while picnicking. The Zodiac Killer attempted to kill the men these women were with, succeeding with the first and second but the third survived by playing dead. The Zodiac also killed a taxi driver and attempted to kill a woman and her ten-month old child.

After the last attempted murder the Zodiac killer went silent. After four years a news agency received a letter saying “I am back with you…I am now in control of all things.” There were no murders after this final letter except for possible copy-cat murders.

The Zodiac Killer, Jack the Ripper, and Ed Gein are all very influential serial killers with many novels and movies made from their stories, but the most influential killer is most likely Jack the Ripper.

Based on the number of popular-culture references that exist, the number of movies, video games, and novels written about Jack the Ripper have made him the most notorious of the three. The Ripper’s story might not be the most thrilling of the three serial killers, that sentiment is up to personal opinion, but his story stands out as the most likely to be heard of.

Jack the Ripper is probably the most influential because of the time period he was from. People have a romanticized view of the 1800s and a character like Jack the Ripper heavily disrupts the image of the time. With multiple works of fiction and non-fiction glorifying the upper class of the 19th century, it is disturbing to hear of this darker side of the time period.

Jack was also the earliest example of a modern-era serial killer making his story stand out more than others (History of Serial Killers). His story is particularly chilling because he was never caught and never showed signs of giving up, except the fact that his kills just stopped. Ed Gein was caught and the Zodiac Killer submitted a letter saying he was ultimately done killing; the Zodiac Killer was in control now. We know that these two killers are finished. Fear of the Ripper is past only because it has been long enough for a person that lived in the time period to have died of old age by now. Jack drove fear into people for much longer than the other two killers.

Innes, Brian. “Zodiac Killer – As Yet Unsolved”. *Serial Killers:* *The Stories of History's 50 Evilest Murderers*. Book. November 30, 2006.

“History of Serial Killers”. <http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring05/Charney-Perez/history.htm> Web. Accessed on 01-29-2015.