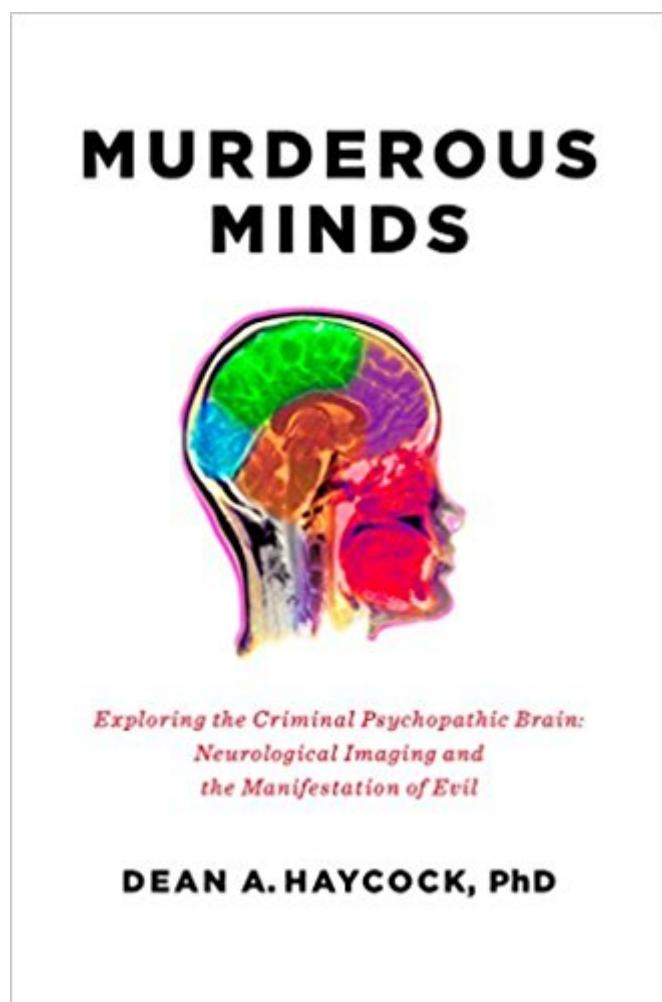


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# **Murderous Minds: Exploring The Criminal Psychopathic Brain: Neurological Imaging And The Manifestation Of Evil**



## Synopsis

“Part true crime, part neuroscience and a page-turner from start to finish,” this is a look at the biology behind violent psychopathic behavior (Kirkus Reviews). How many times have you seen a murder on the news or on a TV show like *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, and said to yourself, “How could someone do something like that?” Today, neuroscientists are imaging, mapping, testing and dissecting the source of the worst behavior imaginable in the brains of the people who lack a conscience: psychopaths. Neuroscientist Dean Haycock examines the behavior of real life psychopaths and discusses how their actions can be explained in scientific terms, from research that literally looks inside their brains to understanding how psychopaths, without empathy but very goal-oriented, think and act the way they do. Some don’t commit crimes at all, but rather make use of their skills in the boardroom. But what does this mean for lawyers, judges, psychiatrists, victims, and readers? for anyone who has ever wondered how some people can be so bad. Could your nine-year-old be a psychopath? What about your co-worker? The ability to recognize psychopaths using the scientific method has vast implications for society, and yet is still loaded with consequences.

## Book Information

File Size: 3464 KB

Print Length: 272 pages

Publisher: Pegasus Books; 1 edition (March 4, 2014)

Publication Date: March 4, 2014

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00IDTADTI

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #72,697 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #13

in Books > Medical Books > Medicine > Internal Medicine > Radiology > Diagnostic Imaging

#26 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Counseling & Psychology >

## Customer Reviews

Bravo! Dean Haycock describes the psychopath with compelling clarity and accuracy. He draws on the expertise of those who have studied these men and women, particularly Canadian expert, Robert Hare. You can trust the conclusions of this readable book: that there are many psychopaths among us and they have no capacity to care about those that they hurt; that the concept of psychopathy has an interesting history with some academic argument still simmering, but with general consensus among those in-the-know; that a person can be a "full-blown" psychopath with a very high likelihood of relentless criminal predation; that one can have several of the traits that characterize the man without a conscience, but be less likely to act in criminal and violent ways. Dean Haycock simplifies but does not over-simplify the neurological science that locates psychopathic traits in various anatomical areas of the brain. He invites us to face the dilemmas that judges and parole boards face when criminals who do not experience genuine feelings of guilt - never have and never will - approach the end of their sentences. Some of us work in fields that expose us to psychopaths and their victims. Some of us live with psychopaths in our families. All of us live with psychopaths in our communities. This book helps the professional and the concerned citizen know just what it means to be psychopathic. Frank M Ochberg, MD Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Michigan State Former Associate Director, National Institute of Mental Health

A more clinical approach than that of "Evil Genes..." or "Snakes in Suits", *Murderous Minds* explores the quantitative data available from fMRI (functional MRI) scans of "normal" and "abnormal" (as determined by PCL-R evaluation) brains. If you have read either of the books previously mentioned, if you know who Dr. Robert Hare is or know what a PCL-R does, then you should find this book a fascinating addition to your knowledge base. If your only point of reference is Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho" or Hannibal Lecter in "Silence of the Lambs" you will probably find this tough going. Haycock gives an excellent overview of research immediately prior to publication (3/14) with extensive footnotes and bibliography. Well done and very readable!

An interesting look into the difference between a "normal mind" and one that had been altered whether it is a genetic condition, trauma in the womb or an accident at a young age. The similarities between the case studies and people that you actually know is frightening. This book

makes you take a moment and think about things that certain people have said or done in the past. Some of the medical and technical jargon is a bit dry, but worth staying through till the end.

If you have questions about psychopaths here you go a great book that is explained in laymen terms which is simply but not to simple. explains the neurological science of how the brain of a psychopath is wired. Since we are surrounded by psychopaths and don't even know it I do think this is a must ready for everybody.

A book everyone should read for their own protection. The psychopath looks like anybody else and often is more charming and persuasive. And more dangerous. They walk among us, and they don't have your best interests in mind. Learn how to recognize them and protect yourself from his/her evil schemes and devices.

I can't say I enjoyed reading this book. It has in-depth explanations about people with murderous minds, so some of the information the author shared, surprised me. It's not a layman read - like "Alone with the Devil" by Courtroom Psychiatrist [M.D. Ronald Markman. This book is more analytical. That being said, it is well written & documented. It holds the readers interest to the end.

Unfortunately, crimes occur on a daily basis. These crimes can range anywhere from its mildest form of an infraction to more serious crimes known as a felony. How can one find themselves in the far end of this crime spectrum? In other words, why do criminals commit the worst behavior imaginable: murder? Today, neuroscientists are looking at the brain as a source for insight as to why people have these violent tendencies that can lead them towards committing murder. In particular, neuroscientists are looking at the brains of psychopaths: those who lack a conscience. In *Murderous Minds*, neuroscientist Dean Haycock takes us on a journey that examines the different patterns of brain activity in psychopaths, and to what extent such patterns can influence their psychopathic behavior. Throughout the book, Haycock provides ample research that indicates how differences in brain structure/function, genetic markers, as well as environmental factors play a role in psychopathic behavior. In addition, he discusses the limitations of the techniques used to round up the research presented in the book. With the powerful line of research that he offers, Haycock helps us understand the psychopathic individual. Before delving into the mind of a psychopath, Haycock describes the general features of a psychopathic individual. He emphasizes how psychopathy differs from a psychosis. Although both of these individuals can commit the same type

of crimes, their mental states are different. The difference is that a psychopath is aware of their actions and knows that it is wrong. Essentially, they are touch in with reality. By contrast, a psychotic person is out of touch with reality; they are encumbered with delusions and cannot differentiate between reality and the thoughts within their head. Other key features of psychopathy include lack of empathy, lack of conscience, superficial charm, impulsiveness and callousness. Although these are some features that describe psychopathy, psychologists are not in full agreement as to what a psychopath is. Once full agreement takes place, researchers can gather meaningful data about what differentiates a psychopath's brain from a normal brain. A direct way to do this is through the use of one of neuroscience's most popular tool: functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). With the use of fMRI, scientists have reported subtle differences in structure and function between psychopaths and non-psychopaths. It provides us brain scans that reflect the brain activity of working brains. The overall trend of fMRI research suggests is that psychopathy can be linked with impaired regions of the brain that regulate emotions. The network involving these regions is known as the prefrontal-temporal-limbic system. Psychopathic behavior is linked to impairment in the structures belonging to this system.

Impairments include decreased volume of gray matter, decreased brain activity, and disturbances of neural pathways that link regions within this prefrontal-temporal-limbic system. These impairments can affect the regulation of emotions; studies have linked the psychopath's inability to process emotions to such impairments. Even though the fMRI provides brain scans that reveal these brain impairments, it comes with limitations. Haycock indicates that changes in the brain's blood activity aren't large; they are small changes that are difficult to identify since the brain's activity is like

"noise" consisting of many signals. In addition, Haycock encourages the audience to be wary when looking at brain scans, particularly when looking at the color coding; color coding may give the illusion of huge differences in brain activity when little actually exists.

Despite of its limitations, fMRI has provided the groundwork in outlining a pattern that points to problems involving regions of the cerebral cortex. Problems involving the cerebral cortex can also be linked to genetic variation. Genetic variation can influence a person's behavior. Furthermore, the different effects of genes on brain development can influence a person's violent tendencies. Specifically, the variations of genes can affect the metabolism of certain neurotransmitters. Studies have indicated that the inheritance of the "warrior" gene can be linked towards aggressive behavior. Another genetic variation affecting the metabolic of serotonin has also be linked to putting an individual at

risk for developing psychopathy. Haycock, however, emphasizes that inheriting one or even multiple genes does not make someone violent or a psychopath. More importantly, it is not yet known what specific genes might influence psychopathic behavior. If certain genes are not yet identified, then how about environmental factors? What role does it play in the development of psychopathy? Haycock introduces the issue of an environment involving child abuse. He draws upon a Swedish longitudinal study that revealed that children who were exposed to high victimization were more aggressive and scored higher on the PCL test (measure of psychopathy) compared to those males from the same background, but were not abused. This study replicated the results from a previous study that had a larger sample size located in the US Midwest. Given the results, research suggests a connection between child abuse and the risk of developing psychopathy. However, Haycock points out that even though there may be a connection between the two variables, it isn't required for the development of psychopathy. He supports this by providing case studies where real life psychopaths, such as Eric Harris, were raised by decent parents. Given the research regarding fMRI brain scans, genetic variations and environmental factors, there seems to be more than one way of influencing the development of psychopathy. Even though research has shown correlations that point to problems in the subcortical regions of the brain, it is not possible to create a cause-and-effect relationship between brain impairments and psychopathy. One thing that we can confidently say is that psychopathic individuals display different brain activity patterns compared to non-psychopaths in regions involving the processing of emotion and making moral decisions. If one has a keen interest in learning about the nervous system, more specifically in the brains of psychopath, I recommend this. However, I believe it would be a little difficult to read for those who are not familiar with the vocabulary used in neuroscience. Since I'm currently taking intro to Neuroscience, I already have a sense of familiarity with most of the terms which aided my reading comprehension; this was particular beneficial for me when I read the section regarding how fMRI worked and its limitations. Haycock uses many of these technical terms which can bog down the audience. Even though Haycock cites plenty of scientific studies that are highly informative regarding the brain activity of psychopaths, I wish he provided more case studies of real life psychopaths. Given my evaluation, I would give this book 4 out of 5 stars. Haycock does an excellent job in providing a narrative that describes the behavior of psychopathic individuals in scientific terms by providing ample fMRI research. However, he needs to balance much of the scientific research provided with more case studies of real life psychopaths that would illustrate much of the typical psychopathic behaviors discussed in the book.

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