

# FINDING THE ZODIAC KILLER

by David Daniel

## EXCERPT

### INTRODUCTION

#### IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

This book tells the story of the murders committed by the Zodiac Killer, his taunting of the police, press, and public, the 50-year search for his identity and, finally, the story of how I uncovered his identity.

It begins with a prologue—a story of some very strange encounters that I have had. They include my encounters with serial killers. I have met three. That is three more than most people have ever met and three more than most people would ever want to meet. You might say I was in the wrong place at the right time.

And I have met three people who have had encounters with serial killers. One of these encounters was safe enough, but the other two people I have met have had close ones. They were definitely in the wrong place—but at the right time. In both of these cases, they are very lucky to have survived.

On top of all this, I was there when law enforcement came to question an employee that resembled the 1985 sketch of a serial killer called the Night Stalker. Elsewhere, a friend's father painted their house out of fear that the color was too similar to houses invaded by the Night Stalker.

I have also made intelligent, educated guesses about serial killers. One was regarding the Hillside Stranglers being two men instead of one. Years later, I made an educated guess on the whereabouts of the Grim Sleeper's residence. I told people the Grim Sleeper lived near the corner of 81st and Western. He did.

And I found the codes and clues that reveal the secret identity of *Red John*—a serial killer on the TV series *The Mentalist*. That is the subject of one of my books—*The Mentalist Code and the Search for Red John*.

Solving the identity of a fictional serial killer after just the first two episodes of *The Mentalist* was a lot of fun, as was continuing to watch for and follow up on codes and clues for several years throughout the series until the big reveal.

But solving the identity of a real serial killer has been a very different journey. It has meant reading about the horrific murders of real people and reading about the real taunts of the real public, the real police, and the real press by an authentic—not fictional—narcissistic psychopath. A monster with no regard for human life.