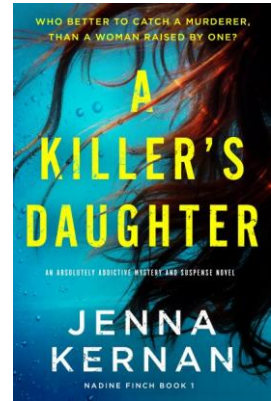


## Five Things I Learned while Researching *A Killer's Daughter*

See the article at Crime Spree Magazine [here](#).

### 1. Women weren't included

The most current research on the FBI website from the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) states that “Due to the lack of submitted cases... this study did not include female offenders.” This inexplicably infuriated me, and in that instant my male protagonist and his father changed to a female profiler and her serial killer mother. I was worried that there wouldn't be any female serial killers, which is a funny thing to worry about, but I needn't have, because there are more than you would think.



### 2. Think Twice

In 2018, I was sitting in a workshop by crime writer Lawrence Sanders when he said this about a serial killer. “Once you meet him, you can't unmeet him.” And though there are many incarcerated serial killers here in Florida, I made a conscious decision never to contact one and to always keep a barrier between me and the real deal. That got me thinking, *what if you couldn't avoid a relationship with a serial killer because they were a member of your family?* That question sent a chill straight down my spine and gave me the idea for my heroine whose mother is a convicted serial killer.

### 3. Why would anyone want to be a coroner?

The book, *Working Stiff*, written by Judy Melinek, M. D., gave me such a vivid picture of the life of a medical examiner, informing the creation of my heroine's best friend, the fictional medical examiner, Dr. Juliette Hartfield. Some reasons for entering this career were practical, like having regular hours instead of being called in to do emergency surgery at three in the morning. Other reasons were more personal and related to the death of her father. And some were very altruistic. I recall another forensic pathologist saying in a workshop that his population doesn't vote. Neither do they pay taxes, but there are many who believe deeply that they are the voice of the dead and have an obligation to provide answers to the family of the deceased and society.

### 4. Listen to what they say and how they say it

One of my favorite conferences is organized by Writers Police Academy. They have a yearly collection of law enforcement professionals and associated physicians, coroners, psychologists, firefighters all gathered to help writers 'get it right'. Initially, much of the conference was practical. I took part in 'shoot or don't shoot' scenarios, fired a long gun and practiced slapping on the handcuffs (painful). Recently the conference transitioned to more lecture-style workshops and less practical experiences, which is better for me. Over four years, I've had the opportunity to listened to a variety of professionals. I love to write down how they say things. It helps me build realistic characters. Here are a few snippets from my notes, in no particular order, of things that struck me as revealing of character.

“I watch comedies or violence.”

“I worked six or seven parachute fatalities and then went to jump school.”

“I'm talking deep freeze cases. Not just cold. They give you frostbite.”

“We don't catch 'em all. We aren't CSI.”

“I'm the Oprah Winfrey of EMS. 'You get a tourniquet! And you get a tourniquet!'”

"Put rubber to the road and shoot stuff."

"Biggest challenge was kicking the cat out of the driveway."

"We got a case over here that we could probably get solved if we had the money."

**5. Don't forget to clean the sink drains!**

One of the FBI Special Agents presenting at Writers Police Academy mentioned that their crime techs check the sink drain for trace blood evidence and I thought, 'A killer could get a lot of useful information eating lunch with crime techs.' So my killer does just that.

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