



Moving Targets: Women, Murder, and Representation

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The rampaging female has become a new cliché in Hollywood cinema, a sexy beauty stabbing and shooting her way to box-office success. *Fatal Attraction*, *Thelma and Louise*, *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, and *Single White Female* are a few of the recent mainstream films that have attracted huge audiences.

Meanwhile, true accounts of a teenager shooting her lover's wife and a battered woman bludgeoning her husband to death get prime news media coverage—and are quickly made into TV movies.

This pioneering collection of essays looks at our enduring fascination with women who murder. The authors explore how both fictional and real women are represented, as well as the way society responds to these women. The result is an often shocking picture of female violence that covers a vast territory: the Australian outback, a Florida highway, an Austrian hospital, a French village, and Hollywood. The women are as diverse as their settings: middle-class housewives, prostitutes, house maids, nurses, high-powered professionals.

There is much here to provoke controversy. Society's uncertainty over the role of premenstrual syndrome, the fear of lesbianism, female violence as self-defense against patriarchy, and "appropriate" female behavior are issues that push buttons on several levels. *Moving Targets* is must-reading for anyone concerned with violence and representations of women in our culture.

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