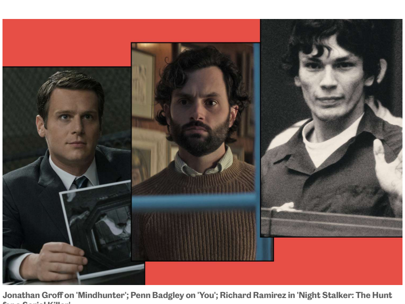
The 16 best serial killer shows streaming on Netflix right now

As the streamer corners the market on murder content, here are the serious series worth your time.

By **Declan Gallagher** and **Kevin Jacobsen** | Updated on April 1, 2025 07:32AM EDT

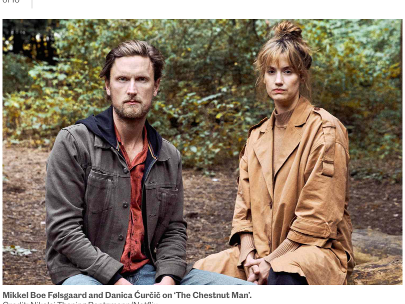


Jonathan Groff on 'Mindhunter'; Penn Badgley on 'You'; Richard Ramirez in 'Night Stalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer'.
Credit: Patrick Harbron/Netflix; Netflix (2)

For some reason, we feel an inextricable pull to understand the impulses of dangerous people, and Netflix has profiled just about every shade of serial killer content you could imagine. But how do you weed out the notable installments from the bunk?

EW has compiled a must-watch list of Netflix serial killer shows, including gripping documentaries and a handful of well-articulated narratives. Here are the 16 best streaming options right now, as of March 2025.

01 of 16 — *The Chestnut Man* (2021–present)



Mikkel Boe Følsgaard and Danica Ćurčič on 'The Chestnut Man'.
Credit: Nikolaj Thaning Rentzmann/Netflix

In the great tradition of nihilistic Danish mystery novels comes this delightfully spooky, occasionally transcendent twist on the successful formula. A woman is found brutally murdered on a playground with a bizarre totem constructed of chestnuts left next to her body. Solving the case, which is almost immediately tied to the missing child of a prominent politician, falls to detective Naia Thulin (Danica Ćurčič) and her partner, Mark Hess (Mikkel Boe Følsgaard). Cue ruminative looks from rain-dotted windows and some properly toe-curling violence. (The series has been renewed for a second season.) –*Declan Gallagher*

Where to watch *The Chestnut Man*: Netflix

Cast: Danica Ćurčič, David Dencik, Mikkel Boe Følsgaard, Iben Dorner

RELATED: The 16 best murder mysteries on Netflix right now

02 of 16 — *The Confession Killer* (2019)

Joyce Lemons (mother of victim Debbie Sue Williamson, in photograph) in 'The Confession Killer'.
Credit: Netflix/Courtesy Everett

One of Netflix's twistiest serial killer shows is this fascinating (though exhausting) five-part docuseries about Henry Lee Lucas, who confessed to hundreds of murders that he may or may not have committed. Lucas was tied to few or none of the crimes through physical evidence but was able to parrot sufficient details of the attacks to convince investigators and victims' families that he was to blame. At times you may worry *The Confession Killer* is attempting to exonerate Lucas or make him into some sort of folk victim, but, in fact, the show turns the mirror rather successfully on the audience. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *The Confession Killer*: Netflix

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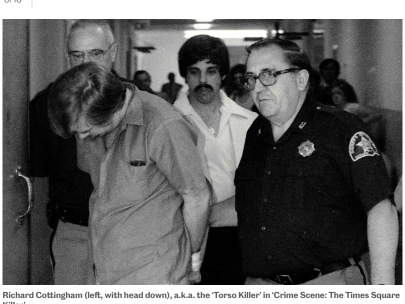
03 of 16 — *Crime Scene: The Times Square Killer* (2021)



Richard Cottingham (left, with head down), a.k.a. the 'Torso Killer' in 'Crime Scene: The Times Square Killer'.
Credit: Netflix

Joe Berlinger has made a career out of Netflix serial killer content, having helmed both *The Ted Bundy Tapes* and *Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile* (2019), the narrative twist on Bundy's crimes. He also directed the first *Crime Scene* installment, about the unfortunate case of Elisa Lam and the Cecil Hotel. *The Times Square Killer* is much better than that effort, primarily because it involves hard facts over errant speculation.

This three-part docuseries tells the story of New York City's "Torso Killer," who carved a bloody swatch across midtown Manhattan in the 1970s. There's a satisfying balance struck here between the facts of a little-known murder spree and respectful portraits of the victims, many of whom came from under-served communities and were only discovered to be missing when their family members took charge of the investigation. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *Crime Scene: The Times Square Killer*: Netflix

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04 of 16 — *Dexter* (2006–2013)

Michael C. Hall on 'Dexter'.
Credit: Randy Tepper/Showtime

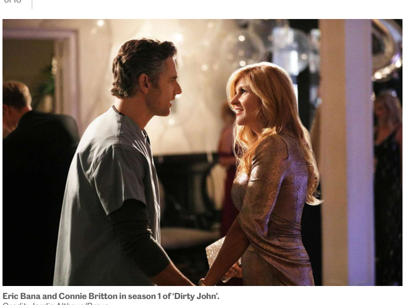
Dexter Morgan (Michael C. Hall) is a complicated man. Working as a forensic analyst for the Miami Metro Police Department, Dexter sees his fair share of heinous crime — and also witnesses how the justice system sometimes fails to prosecute perpetrators. Thus, he moonlights as a serial killer, hunting down criminals and methodically disposing of their bodies. *Dexter* has its ups and downs through eight seasons, but, at its best, there's nothing more darkly riveting on television, with a haunting central performance by Hall. –*Kevin Jacobsen*

Where to watch *Dexter*: Netflix

Cast: Michael C. Hall, Julie Benz, Jennifer Carpenter, Erik King, Lauren Vélez, David Zayas, James Remar, C.S. Lee

RELATED: *Dexter* star Michael C. Hall strikes some killer poses for EW's cover shoot

05 of 16 — *Dirty John* (2018–2020)



Eric Bana and Connie Britton in season 1 of 'Dirty John'.
Credit: Jordin Althaus/Bravo

This positively gripping anthology series based its first season (the only one worth your time) on the Wondery podcast of the same name. Connie Britton stars as a successful designer who falls for John Meehan (Eric Bana), a man who claims to be a doctor but harbors dark secrets. What follows is compulsively watchable television, with nice twists on the genre's typical trappings that keep viewers on their toes despite its nominally based-on-true-events status. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *Dirty John*: Netflix

Cast: Connie Britton, Eric Bana, Juno Temple, Julia Garner

RELATED: How Eric Bana became TV's most dangerous new lover in *Dirty John*

06 of 16 — *A Killer Paradox* (2024)

Choi Woo-shik and Lee Hee-jun in 'A Killer Paradox'.
Credit: Song Kyoung Sub/Netflix

This surprisingly white-knuckle South Korean thriller, based on an animated web series, follows Lee Tang (Choi Woo-shik), a convenience store worker who accidentally murders a serial killer in a holdup gone wrong. As a hard-nosed detective (Son Suk-ku) continues his search for the deceased slasher, Tang finds he has quite a knack for knocking off bad guys.

While the plot never truly acquits itself of comparisons to *Dexter* and *I Saw the Devil*, it's still a well-constructed, devious little thriller that benefits from sharp writing and a willingness to wade into tricky territory. It's the sort of show you could see really beginning to fly in its second season, if it's allowed one. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *A Killer Paradox*: Netflix

Cast: Choi Woo-shik, Son Suk-ku, Lee Hee-joon, Hyun Bong-sik

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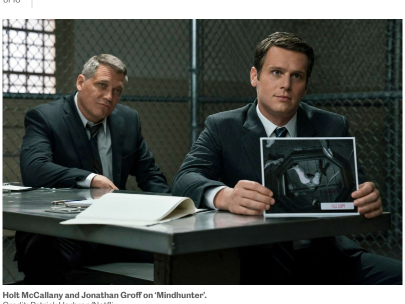
07 of 16 — *Mindhunter* (2017–2019)



Holt McCallany and Jonathan Groff on 'Mindhunter'.
Credit: Patrick Harbron/Netflix

David Fincher's eerily credible procedural follows FBI agents Bill Tench (Holt McCallany) and Holden Ford (Jonathan Groff), who develop the modern method of profiling serial killers by conducting interviews with some of the most fearsome criminals in the annals of history, including Charles Manson (Damon Herriman) and Dennis Rader (Sonny Valicenti). *Mindhunter* is, in many ways, the perfect distillation of Fincher's detailed approach to cinema and his fixation on the minds of murderers. It plays as a welcome follow-up to his 2007 masterpiece, *Zodiac*, while offering its own singular approach to the genre. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *Mindhunter*: Netflix

EW grade: N/A (read the review)

Cast: Holt McCallany, Jonathan Groff, Anna Torv, Cameron Britton, Hannah Gross

RELATED: Manson speaks: *Mindhunter* actor on playing the cult leader again in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*

08 of 16 — *Night Stalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer* (2021)

Richard Ramirez (left) in 'Night Stalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer'.
Credit: Netflix

This straightforward, horrifying docuseries gives an admirable just-the-facts recitation of Richard Ramirez, surely one of the most fearsome serial killers in history. It's one of Netflix's most blunt offerings, and there's little enhancement or drama here, as it's entirely unneeded as Ramirez's crimes read like a depraved horror novel. His more or less accidental ability to elude police (until he couldn't) was so incredible that, if not for the fact that it actually happened, they would defy credulity. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *Night Stalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer*: Netflix

RELATED: *Night Stalker* director Tiller Russell on unraveling Richard Ramirez's untold stories

09 of 16 — *The Ripper* (2020)

Peter Sutcliffe in 'The Ripper'.
Credit: Netflix

Looking across the Atlantic, this four-part docuseries examines the crimes of Peter Sutcliffe, a.k.a. "The Yorkshire Ripper," who murdered 13 women between 1975 and 1980 in England. It's an exhaustive, well-told account of Sutcliffe's terror reign, which isn't particularly well-known Stateside. This series also thoughtfully examines how the police response might've been different if his victims were men. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *The Ripper*: Netflix

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10 of 16 — *The Serpent* (2021)

Jenna Coleman and Tahar Rahim in 'The Serpent'

Jenna Coleman and Tahar Rahim in 'The Serpent'.
Credit: BBC/Mammoth Screen

This underseen series dramatizes the account of Charles "the Serpent" Sobhraj, a serial killer who drugged and murdered young backpackers in Thailand circa 1975 and 1976. The brilliant Tahar Rahim (the villain in the not-so-brilliant *Madame Web*) stars as Sobhraj, bringing a dose of empathy to the monster without justifying his crimes. Billy Howle plays a Dutch official who begins investigating several of his countrymen's disappearances, leading him into the murderer's orbit.

Originally produced for the BBC, *The Serpent* takes time to unwind itself but never loosens its grip on your attention. Meanwhile, Rahim gives a highly credible performance of a serial killer and all-around creep; he's charming, but not *that* charming, unsettling, and shifty, but not outrightly *suspicious*. His performance, much like the show, is wonderfully calibrated. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *The Serpent*: Netflix

Cast: Tahar Rahim, Billy Howle, Jenna Coleman, Ellie Bamber, Fabien Frankel

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11 of 16 — *The Sinner* (2017–2021)

Jessica Biel in season 2 of 'The Sinner'

Jessica Biel in season 2 of 'The Sinner'.
Credit: Brownie Harris/USA

The Sinner is another reliable anthology thriller, with the first stellar season based on German mystery novelist Petra Hammesfahr's novel about homicide detective Harry Ambrose (Bill Pullman). All four seasons concern Ambrose as he attempts to solve murders that are more complicated than they initially appear, and each is nicely old-fashioned, with Pullman making for a grounding guide through all this mayhem.

As the series goes on, it adopts the pleasantly antiquated feel of something like *Prime Suspect*, where we follow a single detective on an understated journey without the noise of multiple side characters or killing-of-the-week distractions. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *The Sinner*: Netflix

EW grade: N/A (read the review)

Cast: Bill Pullman, Jessica Biel, Christopher Abbott, Carrie Coon, Tracy Letts

RELATED: *The Sinner* season 4 sends Bill Pullman down a dark rabbit hole after a missing woman

12 of 16 — *Slasher* (2016–present)

Eric McCormack and Thom Allison in season 5 of 'Slasher'

Eric McCormack and Thom Allison in season 5 of 'Slasher'.
Credit: Cole Burston/Shudder

As with any slasher series — or, in this case, anthology — some installments are better than others. Across its five seasons (three are on Netflix) and counting, *Slasher* has covered tried-and-true genre territory and delved (at times less successfully) into more experimental fare. Season 1, one of the best, follows a series of vicious present-day copycat murders after an '80s Halloween massacre. Then there's season 3, which feels like one of those particularly cruel straight-to-video cheapies.

Slasher is more straight-faced and restrained than the similarly structured *American Horror Story*, calling back to the genre's heyday with a bit more realism and genuine reverence. –*D.G.*

Where to watch *Slasher*: Netflix

Cast: Paula Brancati, Christopher Jacot, Katie McGrath, Brandon Jay McLaren, David Cronenberg

RELATED: Legendary filmmaker David Cronenberg on his role in *Slasher: Flesh & Blood* and his return to directing

13 of 16 — *Somebody* (2022)

Kang Hye-rim (seated) on 'Somebody'

Kang Hye-rim (seated) on 'Somebody'.
Credit: Nathan K. H. Jang/Netflix

Another remarkably creepy South Korean chiller, *Somebody* follows Kim Sum (Kang Hye-rim), a developer for the titular dating app who finds herself drawn into a dangerous web after a user is murdered. Kim sets

out to reveal the slasher's identity, who might be stalking her, with the help of her friend, Detective Gi-eun (Kim Su-yeon). A more thoughtful addition to the well-trod K-thriller genre, *Somebody* benefits most from the strong acting of its leads and a rather haunting, peculiar visual sense. *–D.G.*

Where to watch *Somebody*: Netflix

Cast: Kang Hye-rim, Kim Su-yeon, Kim Young-kwang, Kim Yong-ji, Kim Soo Yeon

RELATED: Plot twist! The 13 best thriller movies on Hulu

14 of 16 *Somewhere Between* (2017)

Paula Patton and Devon Sawa on 'Somewhere Between'.
Credit: Elke Schreiter/Disney General Entertainment Content via Getty

This single-season wonder pleasingly recalls weekly network thrillers of the late '90s and early-aughts with its story of San Francisco news producer Laura Price (Paula Patton), who is given a chance to prevent her young daughter's murder when she travels back in time. Now, Laura has seven days to identify the killer and reverse the course of fate.

Originally aired on ABC, this twisty, unexpectedly spiky procedural has a real sense of place (despite being shot in Vancouver) and a supremely chilly atmosphere. Patton is always wonderful, and here she's joined by Devon Sawa in an energetic, likable performance as an ex-cop reeling after the murder of his fiancée. It's a shame the show never got a second season, as it's practically begging for the treatment Netflix gave *You*: pulling it from a network and sexing it up with an R-rating. As it is, these 10 episodes play pretty perfectly as a single story. *–D.G.*

Where to watch *Somewhere Between*: Netflix

Cast: Paula Patton, Devon Sawa, JR Bourne, Aria Birch, Catherine Barroll

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15 of 16 *The Watcher* (2022–present)

Naomi Watts and Bobby Cannavale on 'The Watcher'.
Credit: Courtesy of Netflix

Of course, being a Ryan Murphy creation, this fictionalized account of a bizarre case in upstate New York is one very full sink. It stars Naomi Watts and Bobby Cannavale as a testy married couple battling with independent kids, a whacked-out realtor (Jennifer Coolidge), nosy neighbors (Mia Farrow), and spooky notes from someone who really, really wants them to leave their new estate.

One of the joys of a Murphy production is watching all of the spinning plates and wondering which will topple first, but this one actually keeps most of them airborne throughout the season finale. No one does the blend of crime and soap quite like Murphy, and his ability to goad some of our generation's best actors into increasingly wide-eyed theatrics remains unparalleled. *–D.G.*

Where to watch *The Watcher*: Netflix

Cast: Naomi Watts, Bobby Cannavale, Isabel Gravitt, Mia Farrow, Jennifer Coolidge

RELATED: Naomi Watts breaks down THAT final scene in *The Watcher*: It's the 'indictment of the American Dream'

16 of 16 *You* (2018–2025)

Penn Badgley on 'You'.
Credit: Netflix

A blessedly perverse spin on both CW shows and classic psycho-thrillers, *You* confidently and effortlessly reinvents itself throughout four seasons (with a fifth/final one on the way). It follows bookstore employee and serial killer Joe Goldberg (Penn Badgley), who develops an obsession with Guinevere (Elizabeth Lail) and wiggles his way into her friend group.

You is wonderfully knowing and often surprising, never content to milk one narrative thread for too long. As the later seasons segue into a sort of twisted serial killer version of *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, the show finds its satirical feet. The final season drops on April 24. *–D.G.*

Where to watch *You*: Netflix

EW grade: B+ (read the review)

Cast: Penn Badgley, Elizabeth Lail, Jenna Ortega, Victoria Pedretti, Dylan Arnold

RELATED: Joe Goldberg says goodbye in *You* final season teaser trailer

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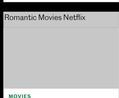

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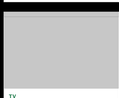

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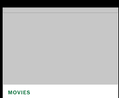

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