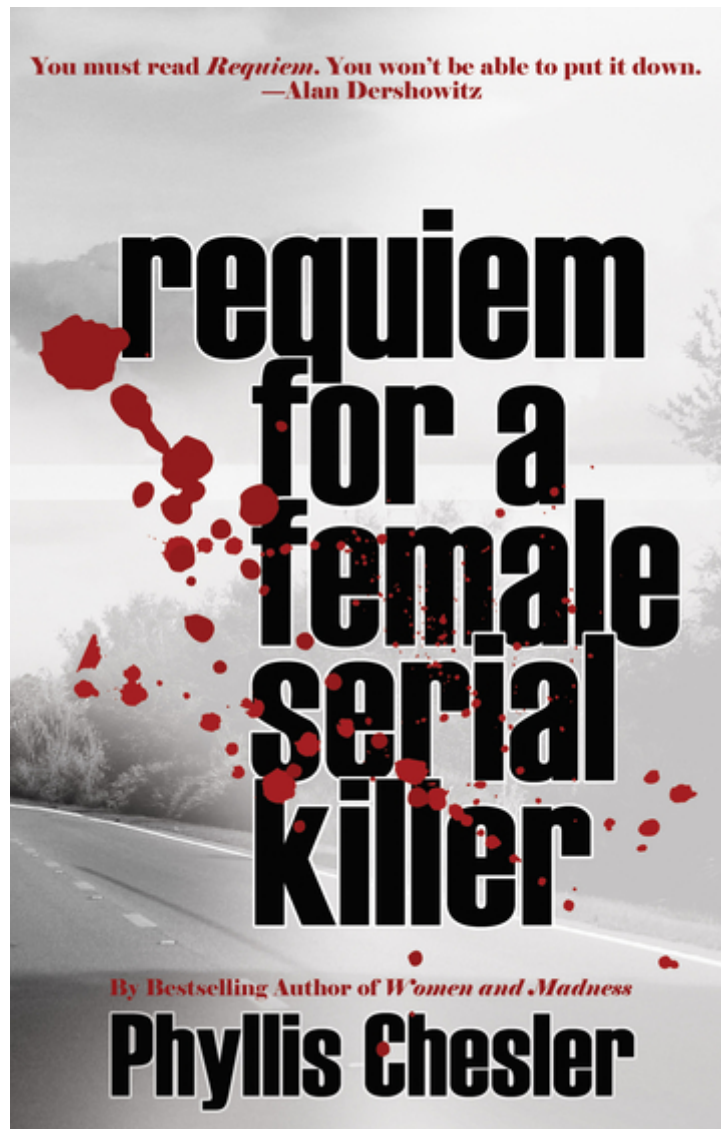


Profiling a Unique Female Serial Killer: Aileen Wuornos's Life of Violence

by Phyllis Chesler



Like the great, late Ann Rule (Rule, 1980), I, too, am haunted by my time with a high-profile serial killer.

I am talking about Aileen Carol Wuornos. There has never been a female—or male—serial quite like her, not before or since (Chesler, 1993; Chesler, 2020, Kester and Gottlieb, 2012; Russell, 2002; Shipley and Arrigo, 2004).

Wuornos was seen as a “monster,” as an unacceptably “bad” girl (Fahs, 2014; Hart, 1993). Male serial killers (Caputi, 1987; Hickey, 1991; Larsen, 2003), who have been known to kill scores of girls and women are often glorified and portrayed again and again in books and films. Many people, especially women, including some feminists, found Wuornos too “hot to handle,” not a good role model for a feminist movement under siege. There were, of course, many exceptions who were drawn to her as some-thing of a folk hero, as their kind of outlaw.

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