



**That Lonely Section of Hell: The Botched  
Investigation of a Serial Killer Who Almost Got  
Away**  
*Lori Shenher*

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# That Lonely Section of Hell: The Botched Investigation of a Serial Killer Who Almost Got Away

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**That Lonely Section of Hell: The Botched Investigation of a Serial Killer Who Almost Got Away** Lori Shenher

**An ex-police detective's searing personal account of sexism, racism, and mishandling in the investigation of missing and murdered women.**

In *That Lonely Section of Hell*, police detective Lori Shenher describes her role in Vancouver's infamous Missing and Murdered Women Investigation and her years-long struggle with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of her work on the case. From her first assignment in 1998 to explore an increase in the number of missing women to the harrowing 2002 interrogation of convicted serial killer Robert Pickton, Shenher tells a story of massive police failure—failure of the police to use the information about Pickton available to them, failure to understand the dark world of drug addiction and sex work, and failure to save more women from their killer.

*That Lonely Section of Hell* passionately pursues the deeper truths behind the causes of this tragedy and the myriad ways the system failed to protect vulnerable women.

## That Lonely Section of Hell: The Botched Investigation of a Serial Killer Who Almost Got Away Details

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## **From Reader Review That Lonely Section of Hell: The Botched Investigation of a Serial Killer Who Almost Got Away for online ebook**

### **Kari says**

I really enjoyed this book! I liked that it was from Lori's perspective and about her and the VPD, rather than about Pickton specifically. I enjoyed the in-depth look at Canada's biggest criminal investigation, and I could definitely understand Lori's concerns and frustrations about the lack of resources provided for such an important investigation. Sex workers and drug addicts are people too and deserve to be treated like anyone else would be by the police, and I like that she showed that through her writing. I felt especially emotional reading her letters to some of the victims. A great, eye opening and personal read.

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### **Margaret says**

I picked this book up thinking it would be an escapist true crime story. Instead I found a book about a woman who invested herself in finding a serial killer. To read about the mismanagement of the investigation and how her attempts to move things forward were often blocked or dismissed made me feel angry and helpless with the author. For anyone who has ever suffered PTSD as the result of a stressful work place, dealt with sexism and the "old boys club," and/or worked for an organization where communication and oversight are nil, this woman's story is one you will be able to relate . I appreciated learning about an officer and colleagues who did truly care but were hindered by bureaucracy. For a first book, this is good though there is some uneven story telling and repetition that could have been edited. Still, I would say this is a good read.

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### **Deborah says**

A brilliant and harrowing memoir of the botched police investigation of serial killer Robert Pickton. Author and ex Vancouver police detective Lori Shenher pulls no punches, telling her story in such a way as to reveal the emotional and psychological cost of this investigation for the victims' families, and for some members of the investigative team. Among many other things, an important piece of contemporary Vancouver history.

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### **Hilary says**

Fascinating first hand account of the investigation into one of Canada's most notorious serial killers. Not for the faint of heart - some of the descriptions gave me nightmares. Shenher, a junior female detective who was in charge of this under-resourced police investigation, provides a pretty cutting critique of how the police managed, or didn't manage, this investigation. But it should probably be on the must read list for anyone living in proximity of the downtown East side, as it provides some real insights into this community, and puts a face to the women Pickton targeted.

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## **Lisa Horne says**

After reading this book, I felt the title of the novel (and every chapter in it) could rightfully be called "I F@#\$&ING TOLD YOU SO, YOU ASSHOLES!" because that was the phrase running through my head over and over.

The writing style was a bit unpolished and disjointed, but it was more than made up for by Shenher's candid and personal account of a sick sick bastard, and the shameful disregard for the sex workers of the Downtown Eastside shown by the people who are supposed to help them. Her own personal struggles as a result of not only working an incredibly difficult case but having to fight just for the barest resources to do so are laid bare in this novel, and that very same writing style that sometimes confuses the narrative is the writing style that makes the reader feel her frustration, helplessness, and determination.

Shenher also does something that is almost unprecedented in the true crime genre: she does not give the killer centre stage. This book is about the investigation and the victims first, and Pickton is only mentioned as much as is needed to comprehensively tell this story. She refuses to give him any more notoriety than he's already gotten, and I think that was a very smart choice.

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## **Katie says**

An in depth take on an important case - and a lesson that should be shared with LE agencies worldwide. The author details the many missteps, the fallacious thinking and the egos that got in the way of catching a serial killer years sooner than they did. I commend her for also exploring the toll it took on her, not only professionally, but also personally, as it's something that likely afflicts a lot more LE professionals, but shouldn't be something to be viewed shamefully. All that said, the readability wasn't the best - it got redundant and monotonous, and nothing really drove it forward a lot of times.

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## **Kayla says**

I was initially not really sure what to expect from this book. I had originally heard about it on CBC radio when I was driving.

I immediately went to my library and took it out. I think I am the second person to have read it.

First off, I read the front page and it says "a horrifying and compelling read" from Peter Vronsky.

I expected this book to be a totally gruesome account of all the disgusting and horrible stuff Robert Pickton had done to the women he terrorized and murdered.

In the end, the book was nothing like that.

The local newspaper in Vancouver had way more detail about the Pickton murders that I would read while chomping on my breakfast.

This was a book way more about how even the most amazing and competent people can be dragged down and around by work and workplaces. Lori wrote a very factual, clear and concise book on her experience as a police officer in Vancouver BC looking into missing and murdered women over a period of time. That was about 80% of the book.

The last 20% was about her life after being completely sucked dry (emotionally, mentally, and physically) by working in a place that was no longer a healthy place for her to work.

I think a lot of people can relate to this.

I definitely can.

Overall, good book.

I think Lori wrote this book more of a personal accomplishment through her PTSD and life after a career that she envisioned would be 30 years in policing, and ended up being cut much shorter based on unforeseen circumstances.

Thank You for writing this Lori.

I hope that you find peace and comfort and happiness.

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### **Vivian Hilder says**

This is a heartbreaking memoir of the author's attempt to do what was assigned to her about what we eventually came to know as the Pickton murders. Her struggle to do a thorough and professional investigation at an early stage was sabotaged by a lack of resources, will or caring by those assigning the work. She names names and describes the terrible personal cost to her of feeling that she failed the street workers and their loved ones who she came to know during her investigation.

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### **Steve says**

A deeply personal memoir about the search for the serial killer on the Lower East Side who turned out to be Robert Pickton.

You get a clear view of the ins and outs of police investigation even if it sometimes feels a bit unfocused as Shenher skips across swathes of time.

It's a good perspective of one part of the case but is obviously too deeply involved to give you a look at all aspects of the case. You get a sense of just how big and impersonal the justice system can be, and are by no means surprised by Shenher's decision to part ways with the VPD in the end.

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### **Claire Franceschetti says**

Definitely worth reading. It will make you question how investigations are conducted, why police forces still don't cooperate with each other, and how only one person could be assigned to track down one of Canada's most heinous serial killers.

As the memoir shows, Pickton could have been stopped a lot earlier if more value was placed on the disappearance of sex workers from the lower east side of Vancouver.

Well written and the author should be commended for telling about the investigation without giving any extra, lurid attention to Pickton's crimes.

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## **Cat says**

Best book on Pickton yet and the only one that really made sense as far as him and the investigation. Also, despite On The Farm 's obvious attempt to individualize the murdered women, only Shenher really manages it. I felt I knew these women and the investigation by the end of the book. On The Farm was lacking in order and sense and this one was not. It answered the questions I had. Mostly. And Aside from the very end, which was repetitive and unnecessary, she covers PTSD well too. Good read. Emotional. Tragic. Unfortunate.

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## **Chad Gilmour says**

This should have been titled "The autobiography of Lori Shenher". If you want to learn about the Pickton trial this is not the book for you as it consisted 5% of Pickton, 5% of the missing women and 90% of Lori's personal life. I found the constant cutting up of the VPD, RCMP and fellow coworkers unprofessional and frustrating to read.

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## **Alexis says**

This is a riveting and disturbing first person story about the Pickton investigation and everything that went wrong with the investigation, from one of the police officers who was heavily involved with the investigation. Lori suffered PTSD and severe mental problems as a result of their involvement with the investigation. It's impossible to read this book and not feel angry and haunted by this story. The book really reveals the failures of the Vancouver Police Department.

This was an important book, and I'm so glad that Lori wrote it. Lori was also careful to honour and respect the women, and humanize the women and their loved ones. This was very respectful book and the author avoided sensationalism in the story.

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## **Kathleen O'Grady says**

One of the most honest books I've ever read. Shenher's story-telling skills are top notch, but it's her brave, soul-bearing testimony that gives this book its life breath. She's careful to keep the emphasis on the tragedy of the victims and their families, but she also carefully documents her own struggles as an investigator working on a case that was vastly under-resourced and largely ignored for years -- with deadly consequences.

She also cleverly tells the tale of the missing and murdered women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside without letting the murderer himself take centre stage, a failing of most books in the true crime genre (sensationalizing the killers). Her capacity for empathy with the victims and their families is what gives Shenher her tenacious and thorough detective skills and her ability to craft this remarkable book.

A must read, and a top book of 2015.

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## **Kelly Dennison says**

Rated three stars, but actually it's more like 3.5. I enjoyed this book, and liked that she focused more on the victims than Picton himself - that she wouldn't give him the satisfaction of talking about him too much.

A couple of criticisms: I would have liked to see pictures of the women to put their faces to the names. (I did, however love her "letters" to them. I found that very moving. Perhaps that's why I wanted a photo to access, to carry on that emotional attachment, maybe?) I also must say that the book was a little repetitive in parts and the end dragged on and on. It was tough for me to plow through those last 40 pages or so.

All in all, a good read though.

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