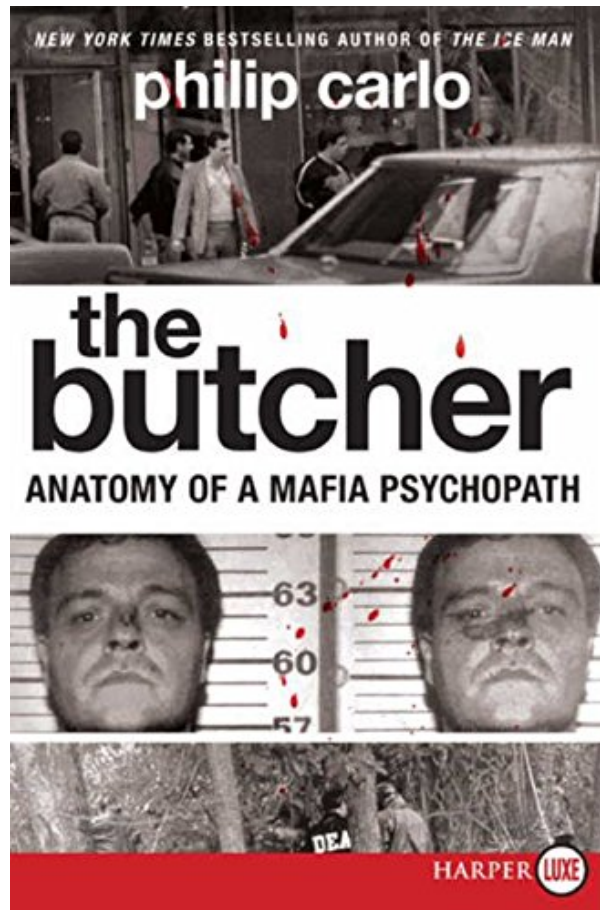
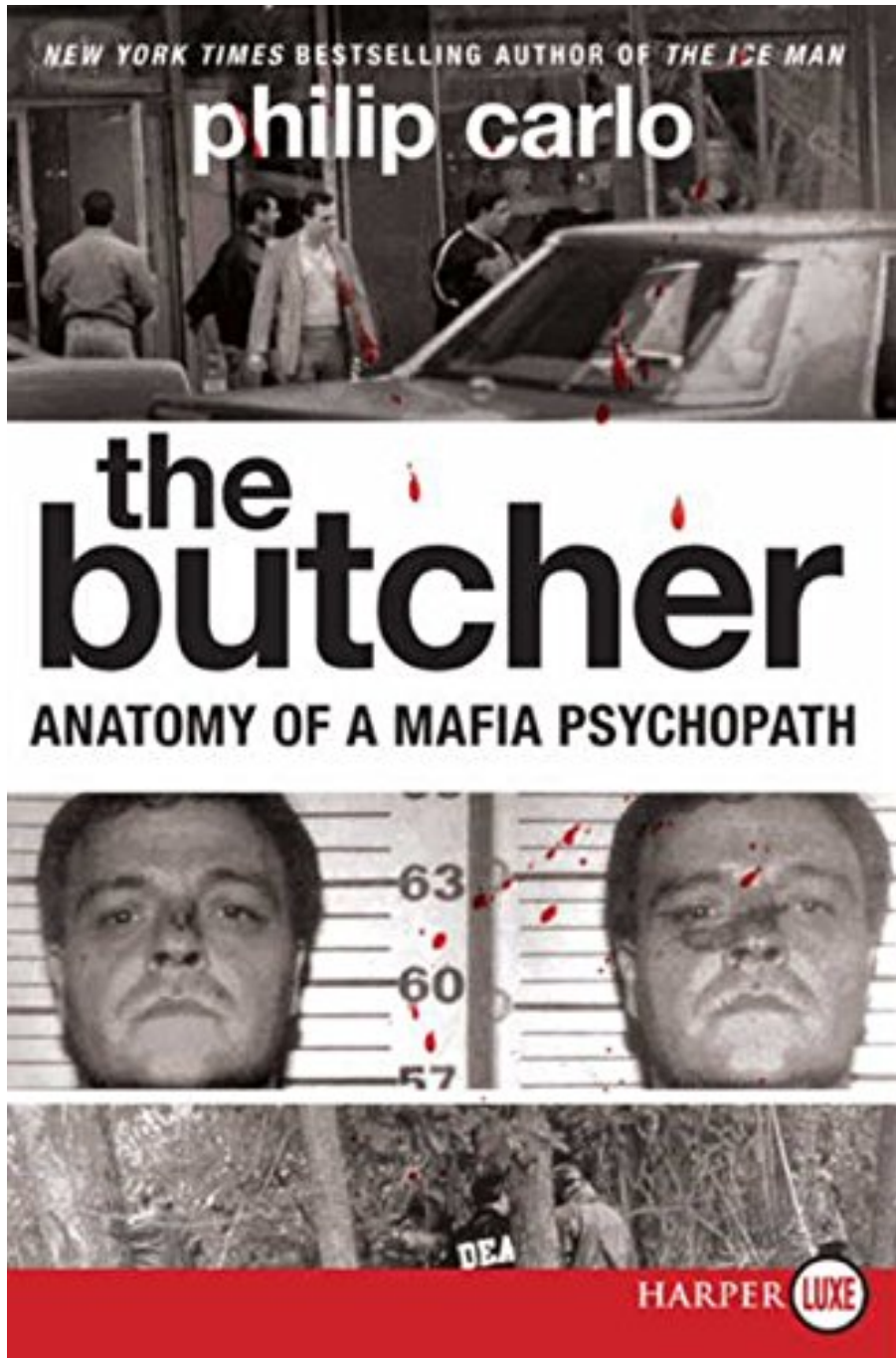


THE BUTCHER LP: ANATOMY OF A MAFIA PSYCHOPATH BY PHILIP CARLO



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The New York Times bestselling author of *Gaspipe* and *The Ice Man*, Phillip Carlo returns with a hair-raising portrait of arguably the most depraved psychopath in the history of the Mafia, mob enforcer Tommy "Karate" Pitera. *The Butcher* tells the riveting true story of a hit man who loved his work too much—a maniac believed responsible for more than sixty remarkably brutal murders—whom even organized crime's most cold-blooded assassins feared. Another riveting journey into the darkest corners of the underworld, Carlo's *The Butcher* is destined to be a true crime classic alongside *Wiseguys* by Nicholas Pileggi and *Underboss* by Peter Maas.

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Most helpful customer reviews

35 of 39 people found the following review helpful.

Nobodies Wanting to be Somebody

By Bill Emblom

Greed and fame (infamy) are the reasons individuals choose to join the mafia. Forget the oath of omerta. When it comes to saving one's skin mafia members will turn on one another. Paranoia reigns! "I better kill him before he kills me." An early grave or a prison sentence await their members. I enjoy reading about gangsters while keeping in mind there is nothing cool about being one. In the case of Tommy Pitera the man with the Minnie Mouse voice became a target for bullies while growing up in a Brooklyn neighborhood that preyed upon the vulnerable. The die was cast.

Philip Carlo has done a wonderful job in bringing the tragic case of Tommy Pitera to life. It is even more tragic for the many individuals he murdered and cut up into six pieces before depositing the bodies on Long Island or in a wildlife refuge on Staten Island. Especially gruesome was his habit of placing the dead body in a bathtub, stripping naked, and carving up the corpse. Even other mafia members felt this went over the line particularly with the corpse of a woman. Pitera would also save rings and other jewelry from his victims, chopping off digits if necessary. This provided additional evidence of those he killed. Author Carlo does an excellent job in describing the job of law enforcement in getting these thugs off the street.

It wouldn't be proper for me to say I enjoyed this book, but I did find it to be a riveting read and hard to put down. I also appreciated the fact that the author spared us much of the gory details just for the sake of including them in the book. He included what was necessary while not getting carried away. If you enjoy reading books on the mafia this is one to include in your library. These people are thugs pure and simple. Certainly not anyone to look up to.

36 of 44 people found the following review helpful.

interesting story poorly told

By Terry R. Nye

"The Butcher" is billed to be an "anatomy of a mafia psychopath." The author, Philip Carlo, is billed to be "one of the foremost chroniclers of the New York Mafia and the criminal mind" and a "New York Times bestselling author." But this book does not live up to either of those claims.

I enjoy reading books about crime. It is interesting to read about people who don't seem to have a conscience or follow the same set of life's rules that the rest of us have and try to understand how and why they act that way. Most of these books give a good perspective of how someone went bad.

But Carlo does very little, if anything, to shed light on Tommy Pitera, a capo in the Bonanno crime family who was convicted of several murders and gruesome mutilation of his victims. The subject of the story is interesting enough, but Carlo seems to have done little homework to explain how or why Pitera became such a vicious killer. Young Tommy Pitera enjoys karate as a boy. He wins an opportunity to study it further in Japan. He returns home and gets hooked up with bad guys. Suddenly, he has a reputation as a feared killer. How does all this happen? Why does all this happen? Carlo explains none of it. Interestingly, Carlo has more insight into the detectives chasing Pitera than he does his criminal subject.

There are a few photos included in the book. But these photos seem to be very disconnected from the events portrayed in the book, and many of them refer to people who are given only passing mention in the book. Historical and biographical books are more interesting when they contain photos, but the ones in this book add very little interest.

The writing style of this book seems very much unlike that of a New York Times bestselling author. It reads more like a dime store novel. There is very little style in the writing, and Carlo does little to flesh out the main character.

Overall, this was an okay read. This is not a book to really sink your teeth into. It is more a book that one might read when you have time to kill (no pun intended).

83 of 107 people found the following review helpful.

The Butcher

By Allen Rosen

I'm a lazy guy. I like to read books, but normally can't be bothered to write reviews. I also don't like negative reviews. It is all too easy to sit in the comfort of your home or office and trash a book to which someone else has devoted countless hours of hard work.

That said, I'm going to make an exception in the case of this book. Someone needs to warn all the innocent readers out there that this is a truly dreadful book. I can't remember the last time I read a book this badly written. People go to jail for lesser assaults on the human senses. The subject matter itself is interesting -- a psychopathic mafia killer named Tommy Pitera, who likes to kill people and chop them up into pieces, then stuff the bits into suitcases and bury them in a bird sanctuary.

So far, so good. This could have been a fascinating story. Most of us are intrigued by such individuals. And then, of course, there is the sheer fun of reading about Mafia guys whacking other Mafia guys, which, for the most part, is what they seem to spend their free time doing. Well, I guess it isn't exactly "free time", since it is part of the job, but you get the idea.

The problems is -- and it's a big problem -- that the author's prose is abominable. Have you every heard anyone refer to "urban cities"? Neither had I, until I read this book. Another reviewer said that the writing reminded him of a dime store novel. That is probably about right, though perhaps too unkind to dime store novels. The author, Philip Carlo, loves adjectives -- apparently any and all adjectives. No sentence appears to satisfy him unless it is larded with cliches and over-the-top prose. I could go on, but why bother?

Reader be warned: unless you are i) just starting to learn English as a second language, ii) struggling to complete your G.E.D., or iii) have very campy tastes -- think of a literary version of Reefer Madness -- you will be as appalled by the quality of the writing in this book as I was.

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