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1. Welcome to Serial Thrillers!

A. Introduction

Studies have shown that humans are attracted to things that evoke the most powerful emotion in us all - fear. We satisfy our desire to feel this emotion in many ways. One way is by participating in the true crime genre.

The true crime genre has grown in popularity in recent years and one only needs to look at the current pop culture climate to see the genre's increased influence. Many readers are likely familiar with *Serial*, a popular 2014 podcast that examined the 2000 murder conviction of Adnan Syed. Hosted by Sarah Koenig, *Serial* had 68 million listeners after it was released (Lawson, 2015).

Women are especially drawn to true crime stories. A 2010 *Social Psychological and Personality Sciences* article "showed that women are significantly bigger fans of true-crime than men" (cited in Mars, 2017). The cable channel Investigation Discovery saw its ratings double in 2012 when it went to an all-true crime lineup and ended 2015 as the most popular cable network for women ages 25-54 (Battaglio, 2016). In addition, 70% of the reviews in the "true crime" section on Amazon are by women (cited in Marks, 2017).

So why do women love true crime so much? It's likely because most women carry anxieties about being a true crime victim and strive to protect themselves against it. According to Social Psychological and Personality Sciences, the true crime genre "provides [women] an outlet for managing anxieties about becoming victims" along with self-defense tips "on how to escape or outsmart predators" (cited in Hess, 2018). In a similar vein, the female listeners of the "My Favorite Murder" podcast say the show "opened the door to a virtual support group" (Marks, 2017).

Taking that into consideration, we have created *Serial Thrillers*, an online publication that captures that emotion and interest in an online community devoted to women who like and enjoy true crime.

So, who are we? In short, *Serial Thrillers* is an online publication that takes everything true crime related and puts it into one convenient place. However, *Serial Thrillers* is also much more. When we started to visualize *Serial Thrillers*, we realized that the true crime genre had a common problem - it had a tendency to exploit women. Critics have noted that as much as women may enjoy the genre, true crime "also seem[s] designed to keep [women] in a state of

anxiety, to exaggerate the dangers they face, and even to call into question their freedom to move about the world" (Hess 2018).

As fear is one of the most powerful emotions, humans have a tendency to try to harness it. Women are no exception. We seek to both solve this issue, and keep that element of fear alive by creating a safe place for women to explore the power of fear, while learn about the topics that peak their interests. We hope you enjoy!

B. Mission

Serial Thrillers mission is to provide a safe place for and empower women who enjoy the edginess and raw emotion of true crime while avoiding the "exploitive" feel of many true crime programs.

C. Website: www.serialthrillers.co

While we were looking into our url we realized that .com is desirable, but out of our budget. A September 2018 domain search at GoDaddy.com priced serialthrillers.com at nearly \$1,200; we decided to go with .co because it was within our budget.

2. Targeting

A. Target Audience

Serial Thrillers will target:

- women ages 25-54;
- Women interested in self-defense and survival techniques;
- Women looking for a supportive community; and
- Women looking for a true crime community that focuses on female empowerment and avoids exploitation.

As *Serial Thrillers* will foster a supportive and welcoming community, we will target a variety of true crime and mystery fans. Our audience (or our "Thrillers") will include the devoted true crime fans who are very familiar with the genre and want to look deeper into certain cases, podcasts and television shows; the more casual fans looking for recommendations on what true crime media they should consume; and the true beginners who just listened to *Serial* or watched *Making a Murder* and want to know what they should try next.

Thriller #1: Obsessed Olivia

Obsessed Olivia





Age: 26 Work: Junior Designer, Graphics 101 Family: Single Location: Chicago Character: The obsessed

Personality

Extravert
Feeling
Intuition
Perceiving

Goals

- To be apart of a community that empowers women
- · To learn tips on safety
- To get the latest and most accurate information on current true crime news

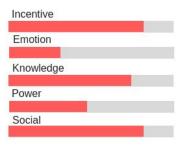
Frustrations

- Hates having to go to multiple sites to get her true crime fix
- Frustrated by the portrayal of women in certain true crime programs
- Has a deeper interest in true crime than most her colleagues

Bio

Olivia has been working at Graphics 101 for four years. Her love of true crime is an intense hobby, and most of her friends do not share her enthusiasm. She would love a place to find the most up-to-date information and like-minded individuals

Motivations



Preferred Channels



Thriller #2: Casual Carol

Casual Carol Goals Motivations · To explore her individuality Incentive · To discover new hobbies To access the best true crime media on her own Emotion time Knowledge Frustrations Power · Too much content - What's actually worth her time Social Frustrated by the portrayal of women in certain Age: 50 true crime programs Work: Marketing Manager Family: Married; two daughters · Feels left out in the current demographics Location: Nashville, TN Preferred Channels Character: The casual fan Online Streaming Audio Bio Personality Carol has been the Marketing Manager at her Online & Social Media Introvert Extravert company for 20 years. She grew up reading Nancy Feeling Thinking Drew and has always loved mysteries; her interest in Referral true crime has grown from this. As a mother of two Sensing Intuition daughters, she is also concerned with the dangers they face and wants to keep them safe. Judging Perceiving

B. Competition

The True Crime genre is not as niche as one might think. Serial Thrillers competition is plentiful; however, each publication/entity has different focuses and functions. My Favorite Murder (www.myfavoritemurder.com), a very popular true crime podcast that has been built up by a faithful fan base-turned-community, is Serial Thrillers' #1 competitor. My Favorite Murder fans have nicknamed themselves the "Fan Cult" (My Favorite Murder, n.d.) My Favorite Murder's listeners are a perfect example of the community that Serial Thrillers is looking to create. Serial Thrillers has an advantage over My Favorite Murder because My Favorite Murder is mainly known as a podcast, not a discussion area.

True Crime Diva (https://truecrimediva.com) is a very popular personal opinion-based blog. *True Crime Diva* has a large following and is strongly geared towards women. However,

due to *True Crime Diva*'s opinion-based content and one-sided voice, *Serial Thrillers* is a stronger suitor because the publication will be backed by research. Furthermore, *Serial Thrillers* will use a more general voice that more women can relate to.

Lastly, *The Line Up* (https://the-line-up.com) is a strong true crime competitor for *Serial Thrillers*. Their articles are very detailed with impeccable imagery, which will be strong competition for *Serial Thrillers*. However, *The Line Up*'s site is not very organized and it is difficult to navigate. Furthermore, *The Line Up* has a strong focus on gore and the more exploitive aspects of the true crime genre. *Serials Thrillers* will be aimed towards women who want to avoid that more gruesome vibe.

3. Content

A. Verticals

Serial Thrillers will have five content verticals:

- 1 Women in Crime
- 2 Current Crimes
- 3. Books
- 4 TV
- 5 Podcast

Each of these content verticals will contain articles, videos, and multimedia which aligns with our mission of providing a safe, non-exploitative place for women to explore true crime.

Women in Crime

Since our mission is to empower women and give them a safe space to explore the realm of true crime, we want to have a content vertical that is specifically dedicated to them. The content that will fall under Women in Crime will include interviews and discussions with women who write about true crime, interviews and discussions with women involved or affected by true crime, and safety tips for women to feel safer and protected when it comes to living in a world of true crime.

Current Crimes

One of the issues we discovered in our research phase was that true crime lovers lacked a place where they could get current true crime news all in one place. We wanted to solve that issue by creating a content vertical on *Serial Thrillers* that is dedicated to just that. A current crime article will be published daily about the latest news on current crimes happening throughout the United States. For instance, information about the Golden State Killer and the current trial occurring and other true crime news that our readers will love. Since Current Crimes

is more newsworthy and detailed in the way that the content is presented, we wanted to set up a paywall for that content to be accessed. Subscribers who pay will also receive reviews and more anticipated content before non-subscribers.

Books

As books are a great source of true crime for our Thrillers, we wanted to incorporate them into our site. The articles will include content such as lists of true crime books, recommendations, true crime book reviews and interviews with other true crime authors about their books.

TV

Similar to the Books content vertical, TV will be about anything true crime related shown on TV. For example, Netflix has several true crime documentaries and docu-series which have become extremely popular. The TV content vertical will include content such as lists of true crime related series, movies and documentaries, recommendations for true crime lovers, as well as reviews of such content.

Podcast

The Podcast content vertical of Serial Thrillers will be a place where users can both listen to our podcasts as well as explore other podcasts that have to do with true crime. Since Serial Thrillers aims to be he top place to satisfy all your true crime craving, we want provide an open experience to our users. The Podcasts section will be similar to books and TV where we will have articles on podcast recommendations and reviews.

B. Headline Examples



Women in True Crime

Michelle McNamara's True Crime Work

An Interview with True Crime Survivor Erica Pratt



Current Crimes

Update on the Golden State Killer Case

Two Current Crimes on our Watch



Books

True Crime Books with the Best Plot Twist Add These True Crime Books to your TBR Pile Now



TV/Films

Our Review of The Staircase

Binge-Worthy Docu-Series for every Streaming Service



Podcasts

Episode 3: Our Thoughts on Johnson Family Case

True Crime Podcasts that you Need in your Life

C. Video Content

Serial Thrillers video content will be hosted on YouTube. YouTube's ease of use and options to seamlessly incorporate ads into the videos aligned well with our plans.

Examples of video content that we would create:

- Top 5 True Crime events
- Top 5 True Crime twists
- Top 5 True Crime Women
- Top 5 Survival stories in True Crime
- 5 Easy Self Defense Moves for Women

Video Ads

The ads that our videos will feature will be played in the pre-roll at the beginning of the video. A video that is shared socially will feature ads in the middle of the video in hopes to retain viewership throughout the entire video.

Our website will also feature video content in article and different pages on the site. We will accomplish this by posting them on our YouTube channel and then embedding them in articles, pages and wherever we see fit to have video content.

4. Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

A. Keywords and Phrases

A September 2018 search of SEMrush indicated that some of the most popular search phrases include "true crime," "true crime podcast," "law and order true crime" and "best true crime podcasts."

Serial Thrillers will utilize the following keywords in its SEO:

- True Crime
- Crime Map
- local crime
- crime
- Crime podcast

Long-tail searches for *Serial Thrillers* will include:

- best true crime podcasts of 2018
- true crime for women
- inspiring true crime stories for women
- true crime stories with women heroes
- states with the most serial killers

When reviewing the SEMrush report, it should be noted that "podcast" showed up twice in the top searches. Many people who are searching for true crime material are looking for new true crime podcasts. A recent 2017 report by Edison Research found that, of these podcast listeners, "69% use a smartphone, tablet, or other portable devices" (cited in Young, 2017). Therefore, *Serial Thrillers* will target mobile users who may be searching for the newest hit podcast to download.

The same Edison Research report also indicated that of these podcast listeners, "[76%] of monthly podcast consumers subscribe to on-demand video services like Netflix, Amazon, and Hulu" (cited in Young, 2017). *Serial Thrillers* ads will reference popular true crime programs featured on these services, such as *Making a Murder* and *OJ: Made in America* in its advertisements as well

B. Geographical Targeting

Serial Thrillers online ad campaigns will focus on certain cities in the United States and tailor specific ads for these specific areas. We will focus our advertising efforts in New York City, Orlando, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and Austin.

Online advertising would reference famous crimes and popular true crime podcasts related to that particular location. For example, we would arrange for ads to be shown in Boston in September 2018 to mention the Gardner Museum heist. This would attract potential visitors who are familiar with the famous local crime and also tie into the release of the podcast *Last Seen*, which covers the crime.

C. Three Ad Examples

"Last Seen" Reviewed | Serial Thrillers

www.serialthrillers.co

Is "Last Seen" worth your time? Reviews and more.

Find the Best True Crime Podcasts | Serial Thrillers

www.serialthrillers.co

Reviews and more from three true-crime obsessed ladies. Get recommendations today!

Famous True Crime Cases | Golden State Killer

www.serialthrillers.co

Latest updates from the Golden State Killer case and the work of Michelle McNamara.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

A. Platforms

Serial Thrillers will use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest. We will use Facebook because of the potential for discussion; audiences are more likely to join/contribute to discussions on Facebook. Twitter will be used for polls, further discussion, and contests. Instagram will be used for vivid imagery, photo stories, snippets of Serial Thrillers' multimedia content, and promotion of our podcast and additional multimedia content. Serial Thrillers' YouTube channel will house all of our video content, including our video podcasts and multimedia stories. Pinterest will include links to our blogs and articles on their respective boards.

B. Social Media Listening

In order to appeal to our audience and be as relatable as possible, our social listening strategy will be intensive. So that we can keep our Thrillers thrilled, we will listen in the hottest true crime topics in order to know exactly what our audience wants to learn more about. By staying up to date on national crime reports and our users' opinions of them, we can narrow our informative content focus on what matters most. Along with listening in on our Thrillers' conversations, we want to elicit opinions and feedback on our current content. Furthermore, our

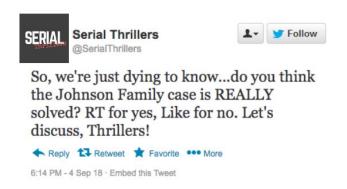
polls on Twitter will enable us to receive information on the quality of our media and exactly how our audience consumes it. From here, we can take our audience feedback and produce what we know they will enjoy for a fact!

C. Content

Facebook

This is a promotional graphic on our Facebook for our review of a popular True Crime television series that our readers enjoy. We will run a poll asking our readers which podcast, novel, or documentary that they would like our input on. In the comments, Thrillers are encouraged to discuss the review amongst each other.

SERIAL Serial Thrillers Yesterday at 6:55pm · @		~
OUR REVIEW OF THE STAIRCASE	ERI	llers
Our review of 'The Staircase' is live on our site! Check it out!		
www.serialthrillers.co/reviews/thestaircase/		
🖒 130 thrillers like this.		
⇔ 471 shares		
Write a comment	0	



Twitter

This is an example of one of our Twitter polls regarding a specific murder mystery case. The format of the tweet allows for open-ended discussion amongst Thrillers in the replies section. The main focus of our Twitter would be to facilitate discussion amongst our audience and ask for their opinions.

Instagram

This is a promotional graphic on our Instagram for the Official Serial Thrillers Podcast. The focus of our Instagram is to push our original content, mainly our podcast and other multimedia. The link to our podcast is included in our Instagram bio for easy access. Whenever a new episode is released, we alert our Thrillers promptly.



6. Email

A. Email Collections

We will include a sign-up box on the *Serials Thrillers* website asking interested visitors to sign up for our mailing lists. There are a variety of email marketing services out there. *Serial Thrillers* will use MailChimp (www.mailchimp.com) for our email marketing campaigns. Coincidently, MailChimp was one of the early sponsors for the *Serial* podcast. MailChimp's interface is clean and easy to use, and its A/B testing and reporting features will be essential tools as we revise and strengthen *Serial Thrillers*' email campaigns (MailChimp, n.d.).

B. Sending Emails and Content Design

Each visitor who signs up will receive an automated introductory email welcoming them to the *Serial Thrillers* community. This introductory email will include a link to a recent recommendation list on our website, to encourage visitors to return to our website and continue to visit.

Serial Thrillers will send out a monthly content email with a featured article and our true crime media recommendations for the month. We will also send out an email to visitors who have not engaged with the website for some time, pointing them to content they may have missed. We would also alert users to fun community events, such as a giveaway, to encourage them to return.

We will use A/B testing for in the subject lines and email pre-headers to determine the strongest open rates. Some sample headlines and pre-headers are included below

Welcome email

From: kathryn@serialthrillers.co Subject: We're thrilled to have you! Pre-header: Welcome to Serial Thrillers!

From: kathryn@serialthrillers.co

Subject: Welcome to the Serial Thrillers Community Pre-header: Get our podcast recommendations now!

Content email

From: abbey@serialthrillers.co Subject: Your monthly "Thrills"

Pre-header: What to watch, listen, read

From: abbey@serialthrillers.co

Subject: Golden State Killer update and In the Dark Season 2 Pre-header: Need recommendations? We got them here!





Welcome to Serial Thrillers.

Dear [NAME]

Welcome to the Serial Thrillers community! We're dedicated to finding the best and most amazing true crime stories and content.

To get you started, check out our latest list of the best true crime content being released this month.

Get Your True Crime Fix

Is there a great podcast or book out there that we are missing? Drop us a line at abbey@serial-thrillers.com and let us know.

Welcome to Serial Thrillers...we are thrilled to have you!

-Savanna, Abbey and Kathryn









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Our mailing address is: 900 South Crouse Ave. Syracuse, NY 13244

Want to change how you receive these emails? You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

Re-engagement email

From: savanna@serialthrillers.co

Subject: We miss ya!

Pre-header: Here's what you may like

From: savanna@serialthrillers.co Subject: We think you'll like this... Pre-header: Enter our giveaway!

All Serial Thrillers emails will be from and signed by a website owner, such as abbey@serialthrillers.co, savanna@serialthrillers.co, and kathryn@serialthrillers.co.

We will regularly conclude our emails with a request to readers to let us know their thoughts on content they would like to see. This will help emphasize the sense of community and support we want visitors to associate with Serial Thrillers. We will tailor our offered email content and send frequency based on the feedback from readers in addition to the standard A/B testing.



Update On The Golden State Killer Case

Another murder charge against the suspected Golden State Killer has boosted the number of victims from 12 to 13. Read more about the recent update here.



Fresh Thrills



10 Safety tips every woman

Whether you live in the city or just want to some tips for your next jog outside, these are safety tips that every woman needs to know.



Netflix and Thrill

Review: The Staircase

You've probably seen The Staircase on your recommended watchlist on Netflix, but does the story measure up to the hype of the actual case? We broke the Season 1 down just for you.

SPOILERS AHEAD - vou've been warned.



Women Supporting Women

Erica Pratt: Life as A True

We sit down with Erica Pratt, a woman who was kidnapped when she was 7-years-old. She managed to escape via her sheer will power, and her bravery won her a National Courage Award.







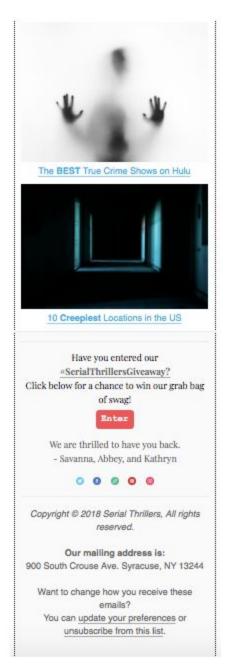


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Our mailing address is:

Want to change how you receive these emails? You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.





7. ADVERTISING

A. Potential Advertisers

Book of the Month

Book of the Month is a book subscription service that sends consumers a new read every month. In each reader's monthly "My Box" there is a book of their choosing and a "special surprise" included. Our strategy would be to partner with BotM and include an informational whitepaper/small pamphlet about *Serial Thrillers* in each book that is in the crime or mystery genre. This way, we know that we are only targeting true crime fans that would enjoy our content and could benefit from it.

Allowing subscribers to "discover products for a life well lived," FabFitFun is a product subscription service geared specifically towards women (FabFitFun, n.d.). Each season, users can choose their desired products to be included in their boxes. Our strategy with FabFitFun would be to have our promotional swag included in their Fall and Winter boxes



that are shipped out to users. We could ensure that our swag is in line with the contents of the user's box as well as the holiday seasons in the Fall and Winter. More specifically, a partnership that coordinates *Serial Thrillers* with Halloween themed items would be beneficial.

Audible is Amazon's audiobook platform. A partnership with Audible would include a *Serial Thrillers*' exclusive True Crime "book of the week" that is available for free. Offering our audience our most talked about/highly reviewed books to read for free allows for more enjoyable engagement on our platform



as well as more users for Audible. Furthermore, any True Crime book that is reviewed on *Serial Thrillers* will be available to our users for free on Audible. We also will work with Audible to implement a *Serial Thrillers* promotional code (THRILLERS2018) that will give users half off their Audible subscription for the year.

B. Native Advertising

As far as native advertising is concerned, we don't want to overwhelm our readers by being intrusive. Advertisements for sponsors will be placed within our blog posts, and we will also give "Sponsor Shoutouts" in our original content. For our Sponsor Shoutouts, we will be sure that the content pertains to a service that our sponsor offers so that readers will find the mention to be relevant. We will also include sponsor product placement in our cover or feature photos for our original content.

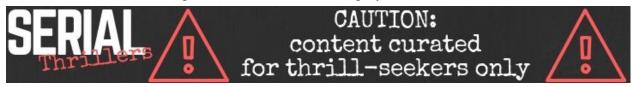
C. Premium and Non-premium placement

Premium placement on our site includes ads that are embedded into our content as well as banner ads. Furthermore, anything that is above the fold on the top half of our website is to be considered premium. Premium placement exists on *Serial Thrillers* without the mention of "sponsored" content.

Non-premium placement would be anything below the fold of the Serial Thrillers site. More specifically, footer ads would be considered to be non-premium placement.

Display Ads

Here are some examples of Serial Thrillers' display advertisements.





These display advertisements would be used to reach potential Thrillers on different websites and social media accounts.

8. Website Implementation

A. Content Management

The web platform that *Serial Thrillers* will use will be WordPress. Due to the ease of usability, it will be an excellent start for our website. WordPress offers themes and plugins that will help make implementing different features into the site.



Due to the cast use of mobile, WordPress became our top option due to the responsiveness of the CMS when it comes to mobile. Content is condensed down into an easy-to-read mobile site for all to enjoy.

We understand that *Serial Thrillers* could evolve from WordPress as we grow and receive feedback. As the needs from our site will likely change, we will be prepared to accommodate with either developing a better platform in the future or hiring a third-party to help create more custom content on our website.

B. E-Commerce

SSL Certificate

An SSL certificate was very important to us due to the fact that we want to have a secure connection so our users can safely and securely make payments. We will also take advantage of the fact that the SSL will slightly boost our search ratings as well as make our website look more credible.

Payment Gateway

The payment gateway for our website will be when users try to access content from the Current Crimes section of our website. Since Current Crimes is more newsworthy and detailed in the way that the content is presented, we wanted to set up a paywall for that content to be accessed. Subscribers who pay will also be able to access reviews and highly anticipated content before non-subscribers

The gateway we chose is PayPal for WooCommerce. We went with this gateway because we'll be using WooCommerce for our shopping cart and it has built-in support for standard PayPal accounts; PayPal for WooCommerce also provides support for the PayPal express checkout and PayPal Pro API support (Balkhi, 2017). PayPal Pro API allows us to better customize our checkout look so that we're staying on brand even during checkout; it also checks the user out by using PayPal's secure and trusted site (PayPal, n.d.).

Shopping Cart

Since our website uses WordPress, we will be using WooCommerce as our shopping cart. This is already something that's integrated into the system so it won't take any unnecessary steps to get set-up and ready for use. Looking towards the future, we want to have branded merchandise which will also need to be implemented into the shopping cart.

C. Mobile

To make sure our website is a pleasant user experience from a variety of devices, *Serial Thrillers* will utilize *Responsive Web Design* (RWD). Both the desktop homepage and mobile

homepage will be similar overall. The design will be simple and clean, utilizing images so that the articles can be easily recognizable from a smaller screen. The site will be designed so that it converts to a stacked vertical layout the smaller the device screen gets. Wordpress offers several mobile-responsive templates.

9. APIs and Interactive Elements

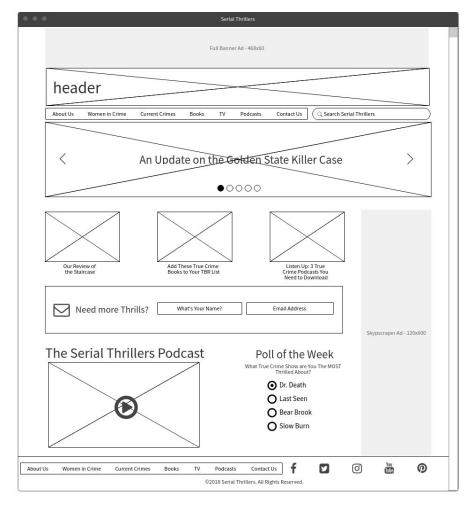
Serial Thrillers will incorporate Listen Notes podcast search API (located at https://www.listennotes.com/api/) to create a true crime podcast database for our visitors. Visitors will be able to use this database to search through true crime podcasts.

Serial Thrillers will also utilize Facebook API to allow Thrillers to log into our website and access content through their Facebook account.

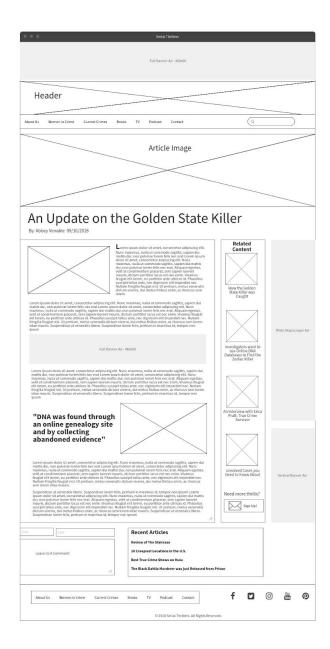
10. Wireframes

We expect that visitors to Serial Thrillers will access the site from a variety of devices.

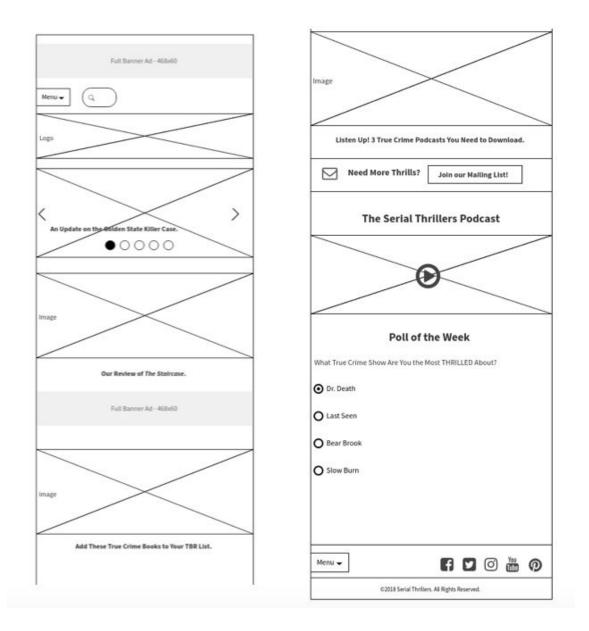
The homepage design of *Serial* Thrillers will be uncluttered. The main menu will be included on the header and footer will have seven sections--About Us, Women in Crime, Current Crimes, Books, TV, Podcasts and Contact Us. Social media icons will be featured by the footer. A feature article will take up the main section of the page, with smaller related articles underneath. Our email sign-up box will also be prominently displayed, as will a link to the latest episode of our podcast and the Poll of the Week.



Our article content page will include images and call-out posts to liven up the page and break up the text. Ads will be disbursed through the article are the reader scrolls down, but will remain as unobtrusive to the user experience as possible. We will also include links to other articles and related content our Thrillers will be interested in.



The mobile homepage will include the same information from the desktop homepage design, but in a "stacked" format so it will be easier to read.



11. Concluding Remarks

It may be bit strange to associate True Crime, a genre with violent overtones and potential exploitation, with words like "fun," "supportive" and "community." However, it cannot be denied that under the right circumstances, a publication dedicated to the true crime gene could be just that. This is a genre that has been growing rapidly in popularity and has a vibrant audience looking for a supportive community.

It is "community" that the *Serial Thrillers* team keeps coming back to. We are confident that our social media and advertising strategies, as well as a strong website, will help foster a supportive environment that women will seek out and tell their fellow true-crime obsessed friends about.

In order to truly satisfy a person, you have to appeal to them in many different ways. *Serial Thrillers* aims to harness the emotions of fear, suspense and true crime to create a community of like-minded women who share at least one thing - the love of true crime. *Serial Thrillers* also aims to empower these women so that future generations of women can also be empowered by the things that haunt us most. Thank you for letting us thrill you!

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