

MIKITA BROTTMAN was born and raised in Sheffield, England. She has a PhD in English Language and Literature from Oxford University, and has taught in various universities in Europe and the U.S. Her main field of research interest is the pathological impulse in contemporary culture; she has authored and edited a number of books on this subject, including, *High Theory, Low Culture*. She writes regularly for a number of publications, both mainstream and alternative, and is also a psychoanalyst in private practice. She is currently Professor of language, literature and culture at the Maryland Institute College of Art.

Brottman likens her new book, *Thirteen Girls*, to a casebook of the sort one might find in fields of study, like law, medicine, or therapy, with each case illustrating a particular concept or problem. She calls *Thirteen Girls* “a casebook of loss.” Describing these fictionalized narratives, each based on true events surrounding a real victim of a serial killer, she says, “Each is told from a different perspective, and each case shows a different response to the girl's death. Some people are traumatized forever, other people hardly notice she's gone.” I would argue that this book will ensure we remember them.

You've said that with *Thirteen Girls*, you're more interested in the victims than the perpetrators. You want to focus on victims of serial killers -- about 70% of which are female. How did you give voice to these women's stories without sensationalizing violence against women, the way that horror films do and even the news does?

Why do you think that our culture is fascinated by serial killers more than regular-Joe killers?

Do we regard serial killers as the “go-getters” of the criminal underworld?

You've been quoted as saying, “Random murder is extremely rare. Most of the time, nothing happens. The frightening truth is that life is basically pretty dull, and that no one really cares about you all that much, even as a victim. They're just not that into you.” I guess that wouldn't make for very good fiction.... Does our American individualism lead us to believe that we are more desirable/special to criminals than we really are?