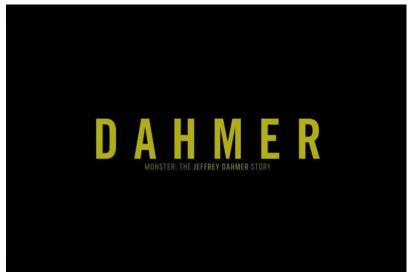# Monster's Monstrous Lies: New Netflix Dahmer Series Is an Anti-police Hit Job

The latest manifestation of America's fascination with serial killers, the 10-part miniseries *Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, has received much criticism. Some say the work glamorizes Dahmer (it doesn't); others claim it exploits the victims, and some of their family members [have complained](#); and yet others [are upset](#) that it originally bore an LGBTQ tag, with a psychologist "[warning](#)" that *Monster* could fuel fear that homosexuality is "abnormal." But the biggest problem with the series is that it's an anti-police hit job — and uses deception to achieve this end.

YouTube

Monster introduces to a new generation the story of Jeffrey Dahmer, a homosexual serial killer who murdered, dismembered, and in certain cases cannibalized 17 men and teen boys between 1978 and '91, mostly in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The introductions are vast, too: Rolled out September 21, the series registered Netflix's [second-biggest opening](#) after *Stranger Things 4* and as of October 4 was already the platform's [ninth-most-watched](#) English-language series of all time. This becomes an issue because, unfortunately, too many people mistake dramatized "true stories" from Hollywood (and the like) for history.

Monster does have much to recommend it artistically speaking. Created by Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan, it's well-directed and -acted, with 35-year-old Evan Peters, who plays the title role, doing a stellar job. This makes its deceptions all the more effective.

Noting its inaccuracies is the journalist who first broke the shocking Dahmer story more than three decades ago, Anne E. Schwartz. In a [recent interview](#) with The Independent, she said that the series "does not bear a great deal of resemblance to the facts of the case." To the point here, Schwartz related that "the depiction of city police officers as racist and homophobic was incorrect," as the site puts it.

"I've spent a lot of time with them, interviewing the people who were at the scene," The Independent continued, quoting the journalist directly. "Again this is a dramatisation, but at a time when it is not exactly easy for law enforcement to get trust and buy in from the community, it's not a very helpful representation." That could be the understatement of the year.

Schwartz had trouble right off the bat with the depiction of Glenda Cleveland, a black woman who was portrayed as Dahmer's next-door neighbor at Milwaukee's Oxford Apartments. In reality, Cleveland lived in an entirely different building.

"'In the first five minutes of the first episode you have Glenda Cleveland knocking on his door. None of that ever happened,' says Ms Schwartz," The Independent relates. This wasn't just harmless artistic license, either. The misrepresentation was integral to the anti-police propaganda.

That is to say, Cleveland was portrayed as mounting a one-woman crusade to expose Dahmer for the

monster she "knew" him to be. She's seen in the series frequently calling the police about how she continually smelled the stench of rotting flesh through a vent from Dahmer's apartment, and about how she heard pleading, screaming, and then the sounds of a drill (the killer did drill holes in some victims' heads) coming from next door as well.

But the police didn't listen. Cleveland could be heard making comments in the series to the effect of, "You never listen to us" (black people); "You never hear us." She also was shown enraged and half crying when the cops finally arrested Dahmer, issuing plaintive I-told-you-so's.

Yet none of that happened. Dahmer was, in fact, "so well-behaved that his neighbors recognized him as a gentleman," wrote DMTalkies.com. What's more, his real next-door neighbor, a black woman named Pamela Bass, was friends with Dahmer, initially believed he'd been framed when hearing about the murders, and reportedly cried upon learning he was killed in prison, writes the *Irish Mirror*.

In fairness, this 1999 Slate article claims that Bass should have viewed certain next-door happenings as red flags. But the point is that she didn't.

To be fair again, in real life Cleveland did call the police to follow up about Konerak Sinthasomphone, a 14-year-old boy who'd escaped from Dahmer's apartment and made it onto the street, at which point Cleveland and her daughter and niece tried helping him. (Dahmer ultimately convinced the police that Sinthasomphone was incoherent, 19 years old, and drunk, and that the two had had a lover's spat.) She deserves credit for this, and John Balcerzak and Joseph Gabrish, the two officers who returned Sinthasomphone to Dahmer, might not have shown due diligence and perhaps deserve criticism. But *Monster* goes *far* beyond that.

The series portrays the two officers getting "Officer of the Year" commendations from their department; in truth, they were fired by the Milwaukee Police in 1991. They *were* reinstated three years later, but by a judge — *not* the police.

As for alleged warnings given to authorities, it wasn't just that real-life neighbor Bass didn't call the cops. Journalist Nancy Glass, who interviewed Dahmer in prison in 1993 and was struck by how "normal" he seemed, said recently in reaction to *Monster*, this "idea that neighbors called all the time, they didn't. That was not true."

Echoing this was Schwartz. Speaking of how she was able to see Dahmer's apartment when the case first broke, she said, "I guess the thing that was strange was that it [his place] didn't look strange." She said she did detect a smell; not of rotting flesh, however, but "a very chemical smell." (It was this that neighbors sometimes complained about to building management.)

Continuing the anti-police theme, *Monster* shows Cleveland's daughter being arrested for having slapped a camera out of the hands of a young white fellow, who was ghoulishly taking pictures of post-arrest "celebrity" Dahmer's home, on the sidewalk outside their building. The message was clear: A young black woman is shackled for trying to enforce decency, while Dahmer skated for years because of "white privilege." But this incident, too, never happened.

As portrayed in the series, it does appear that a few police officers, and a spouse of one of them, might have made threatening calls to the Sinthasomphone family after disciplinary action was taken against Balcerzak and Gabrish, according to then-Milwaukee police chief Philip Arreola. But the chief also offered the family 24-hour protection, which they didn't accept. The calls ceased after the police put a trace on the Sinthasomphones' phone.

Lastly, *Monster* emphasizes how Dahmer's victims were mainly non-white, with the majority being black (he was in a heavily black area). But it doesn't portray how the last two out of three of the murdered men, including the very last, were white. This just doesn't align with the BLM narrative.

The bottom line is that the police didn't ignore Dahmer's crimes, driven by racial animus to turn a blind eye to multitudinous red flags. Rather, he eluded justice for a time for the same reason many serial killers do: He was good at keeping a low profile and giving an impression of normality.

The facts won't matter to some people, though. For example, the only commenter under The Independent article actually criticizes Schwartz for trying to correct the record and writes, "Of course the police were racist and homophobic — it was the 80s. Does she think the journalists who did the Netflix drama aren't also researchers?" "Of course the police were racist." Well, the poster is right about one thing: Ingrained, irrationality-born prejudice certainly is a problem.