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The New Orleans Sniper: A Phenomenological Case Study of Constituting the Other

By Frances Chaput Waksler

“A taut and engaging interweaving of philosophical reflection and criminal forensics. [It] challenges the reader to question some of our most basic notions of what it means to encounter another human being. This book will appeal to a wide-ranging audience, including practitioners and academics in philosophy, sociology, psychology, criminal justice, military science, and forensics.”

—Jonathan M. Wender, professor, Law, Societies, and Justice Program/Department of Sociology, University of Washington, and twenty-year police veteran

On January 7, 1973, shots were fired from Howard Johnson's Motel in New Orleans, LA. Six were killed, ten wounded. After the first sniper was killed, the search continued for others. A thorough police investigation, however, concluded that there had been only one—whose body was found on the motel roof. How did the idea of multiple snipers emerge? How was it decided that there had been only one after all? More generally, how does anyone come to a decision about the existence or nonexistence of another person? In prose both analytic and engaging, Waksler traces the course of this event and the claims and counterclaims made in the search to explain it.

Frances Chaput Waksler, professor emerita, Wheelock College, phenomenological sociologist, has written in the areas of deviance, sociology of childhood, and medical sociology.

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