

Harold Schechter to Deliver Alfred University's Greiff Lecture: The Macabre Tale of Belle Gunness
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Professor Harold Schechter and
the Lady Bluebeard of La
Porte, Ind., Belle Gunness.

Renowned true crime writer Harold Schechter will deliver the Greiff Lecture in English Tuesday, March 14 at 5:30 p.m. in the Knight Club on the Alfred University campus. The lecture, which focuses on the alleged serial killer Belle Gunness "The Lady Bluebeard of La Porte, Ind." is free and open to the public.

Schechter is the author and editor of numerous books, including *Psycho USA: Famous Serial Killers You've Never Heard Of*, *The Mad Sculptor*, and *Depraved: The Shocking True Story of America's First Serial Killer*. As a poetry editor, he also edited *Killer Verse: Poems of Murder and Mayhem*.

His lecture on Belle Gunness, a fascinating and gruesome true tale with modern implications of gender and class, will examine a true crime character, Belle Sorenson Gunness, whom authorities estimate murdered between 25 and 40 people. Gunness may have been responsible for the death of two husbands, several suitors and two of her daughters; but she also allegedly participated in many more killings as authorities eventually discovered the remains of her alleged victims buried in a hog pen on her property in La Porte. Her own death remains an open question. Her home was destroyed by fire in 1908, and a woman's body was identified as hers; however, sightings of Gunness alive and well and living a comfortable life continued to be reported as late as 1931.

While Schechter has written extensively on true crime literature, he also is the author of a series of detective novels featuring Edgar Allan Poe in the role of the crime solver who joins forces with myriad characters including P. T. Barnum, Davy Crockett, and Louisa May Alcott.

As a scholar, Schechter is the author of numerous books, including *Bosom Serpent: Folklore and Popular Art and New Gods: Psyche and Symbol in Popular Art*. He received his PhD from the State University of New York at Buffalo and is an Associate Professor of English at Queens College.

The Greiff Lecture is named in honor of Alfred University Emeritus Professor of English Louis Greiff.