

Call for Papers

13 luglio 2026

**Framing True crime
Forms, Representations, and Transmediality**

Edited by Daniela Cardini (IULM, Milano), Diletta Cenni (IULM, Milano), Antonella Mascio (Università di Bologna), Andrea Bernardelli (Università di Ferrara)

In recent years, true crime has emerged as one of the most pervasive narrative genres in contemporary media culture, circulating across television, streaming platforms, podcasts, and digital spaces (Punnett, 2018). Its current transnational prominence is closely tied to processes of serialization and transmedia expansion, which enable the continuous reconfiguration of criminal narratives across diverse formats, platforms, and audiences (Franks, 2016; Horeck, 2019). Yet, true crime is not solely a contemporary phenomenon; it is rooted in a deeper cultural genealogy that stretches back to early forms of serialized storytelling and longstanding practices of narrating crime and deviance (Biressi, 2001; Murley, 2008; Flanders, 2011).

Despite its cultural significance, true crime remains relatively underexplored and undertheorized. This issue aims to position true crime as a dynamic field of meaning-making, while also contributing to the definition and theorization of the genre through the analysis of its formal, narrative, and discursive configurations across different media and cultural contexts. From this perspective, the issue seeks to welcome contributions that, in addition to analyzing case studies, also propose methodological tools and interpretive models capable of accounting for the complexity of true crime as a serial and transmedia phenomenon.

Building on these premises, the issue explores several central questions, including: How do different media forms — from literature to television, from film to podcasts — contribute to defining true crime? Which methodological approaches and disciplinary perspectives prove most effective for analyzing a hybrid, transmedia, and culturally situated object such as true crime? How can one contribute to a more systematic theorization of the genre? How are the figures of the victim, the perpetrator, and the investigator constructed and negotiated across different cultural contexts, including in relation to representations of gender, family, and celebrity culture? In what ways do global formats come into tension with local narrative practices, giving rise to processes of adaptation, hybridization, and reinterpretation? Finally, how

does true crime participate in shaping public discourse on crime, justice, and memory?

The issue pays particular attention (without being limited) to the following themes:

- the narrative and discursive configurations of true crime across different media (literature, television, film, podcasts);
- the methodological approaches and disciplinary perspectives most effective for analyzing a hybrid and transmedia object;
- the processes of defining and theorizing the true crime genre;
- the construction and negotiation of the figures of the victim, the perpetrator, and the investigator, including in relation to gender, family, and celebrity culture;
- the tensions between global formats and local narrative practices, and the processes of adaptation and hybridization;
- the participatory dimensions of contemporary true crime, including fandom practices, digital communities, and amateur investigative activities;
- the role of true crime in shaping public discourse on crime, justice, and memory;
- the ethical issues and legal/institutional challenges posed by the true crime genre.

By incorporating contributions from different methodological and disciplinary perspectives, the issue aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of true crime as a semiotic and cultural phenomenon.

Submissions are accepted in English and Italian.

References

- Biressi, A. (2001). *Crime, fear and the law in true crime stories*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Flanders, J. (2011). *The invention of murder: How the Victorians revelled in death and detection and created modern crime*. Harper Press.
- Franks, R. (2016). True crime: The regular reinvention of a genre. *Journal of Asian-Pacific Pop Culture*, 1(2), 239–254.
- Horeck, T. (2019). *Justice on demand: True crime in the digital streaming era*. Wayne State University Press.
- Murley, J. (2008). *The rise of true crime: 20th-century murder and American popular culture*. Praeger.
- Punnett, I. C. (2018). *Toward a theory of true crime narratives: A textual analysis*. Routledge.

Deadlines

Abstract submission: **September 30, 2026**

Abstract acceptance: **October 31, 2026**

Full paper submission: **February 28, 2027**

Feedback after double-blind review: **May 30, 2027**

Submission of revised final papers: **June 30, 2027**

Publication: **November 30, 2027**

The abstract must be sent jointly to the four editors

Daniela Cardini; daniela.cardini@iulm.it

Diletta Cenni; diletta.cenni@iulm.it

Antonella Mascio; antonella.mascio@unibo.it

Andrea Bernardelli; andrea.bernardelli@unife.it

Submission guidelines

- The abstract should be approximately 1,000 characters (including spaces) and must be submitted in both Italian and English.
- Accepted languages: Italian and English.
- The acceptance and publication of the essays are subject to a double-blind peer review process.
- Articles are not subject to strict length limits; however, they should be approximately 40,000 characters (including spaces, notes, and final bibliography).
- Standard formats accepted: .doc, .docx, .odt.
- Articles may include images of any kind.
- Images (photographs, graphs, tables) must be provided both within the text file and separately, in .jpg, .png, .tif, .eps, or .psd formats.
- Authors must submit two files: one anonymized version for peer review, and one containing name and surname, affiliation, email address, optional website, and a short biographical note (approximately 100 words). Each version must be a separate file.
- In the anonymized file, all bibliographic references to the author's name and surname must be replaced with "Author," and all publication titles must be replaced with "Publication Title." The publication date should remain visible

For the preparation of the article, authors are kindly requested to consult the “How to collaborate” page available on this website:

<https://www.ocula.it/collaborazioni.php>, and to follow the procedures and guidelines provided therein, as well as the editorial guidelines and standards.

The editorial team would like to thank you for your kind attention.