

ENTERTAINMENT

Man Who Studies Murder examines the causes of killing

By Stephen Cooke
Entertainment Reporter

During the new National Film Board documentary *The Man Who Studies Murder*, there's a chilling scene where we watch a Las Vegas crime reporter viewing home video footage of a brutal street slaying on a tiny monitor.

By removing us two steps from the footage—we're watching someone else watching it—director Barbara Doran maintains her analytical approach to the film's theme of why people feel the need to kill other people, while still imparting the horror of the act.

For Doran, a certain distance is necessary, not just to avoid sensationalism, but for her own peace of mind as well.

"I once made a film about three women who killed their husbands," says Doran, whose docu-



23rd
Atlantic
Film Festival

mentary screens tonight at the Atlantic Film Festival, 7:15 p.m. at Park Lane.

"I saw the autopsy pictures and went to the scenes of the crimes and all that stuff, but I've never actually been anywhere near a murder and I hope to God I never have to be."

Doran's guide through the world of man's inhumanity to man is Memorial University anthropologist Elliot Layton, author of the bestsellers *Hunting Humans* and *Men of Blood*.

"We think we know a lot about murder because we're bom-

barded by the six o'clock news, crime shows, newspaper coverage, tabloids," muses Doran. "It's everywhere, yet our understanding only goes skin deep."

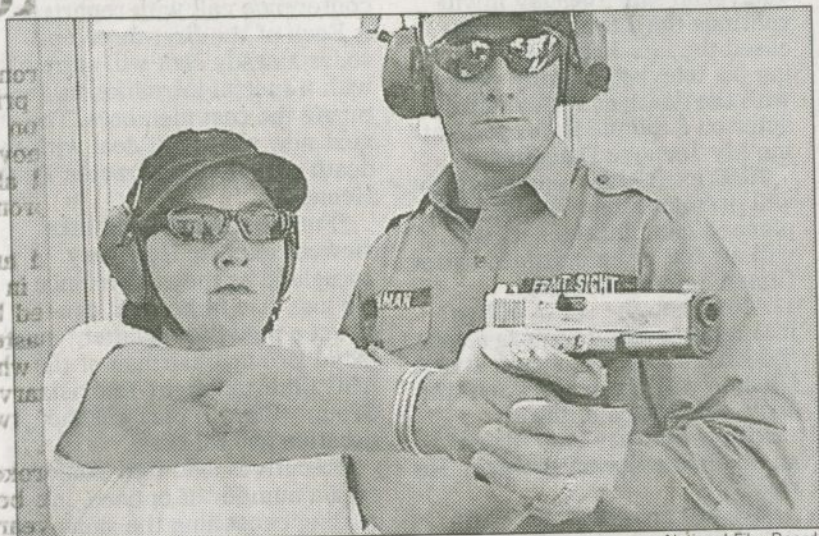
"We seldom pick the threads apart to find out what really motivates one person to kill another. And why do some countries produce more killers than others?"

While Layton ponders the modern history of murder, from Jack the Ripper to Ted Bundy, Doran shows us the bland face of evil, from a young Nevada man seemingly unfazed by his brutal stabbing of a teenage girl to person-

able-but-hulking death row inmate David Middleton, whose outgoing demeanour betrays little sign of a man convicted of a string of brutal murders.

"He was the most charming guy, and I found myself sitting across from him, smiling away. But of course that's how he was able to get access to his victims."

"He was the cable guy, charming and sweet and very polite. When the interview was over he put his hand out to shake mine, and I hesitated, but I shook his hand, thinking that if I hadn't, that might have been the thing that sets him off."



National Film Board

Newfoundland documentarian Barbara Doran investigates the climate of fear and social programming that creates killers in *The Man Who Studies Murder*. It's part of the Atlantic Film Festival tonight at 7:15 p.m. at Park Lane Cinemas.

Everybody needs a little
now and then...