

## Respectable Crimesploitation

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In our previous work, we have described "crimesploitation" as a genre of commercial television programming that depicts the commission, detection, prosecution, and punishment of crimes committed by persons who are understood by audiences to be "real people," that is, non-actors. A pseudo-documentary veneer surrounds this programming, and it explicitly and implicitly generates folk knowledge about the causes and consequences of crime and the purposes and effects of punishment. Thus far in our analysis, we have focused on commercially successful reality television programs that are produced by corporate media giants and disseminated on cable TV during prime time. For this talk, we will discuss a new direction in our study of crimesploitation, the phenomenon of overtly 'serious' journalistic investigations into real crime, as evidenced recently by programs such as the podcast *Serial* and the Netflix Original show *Making a Murderer*. While these shows avoid some of the unethical features of primetime cable reality TV, they nevertheless exploit crime and benefit from human suffering. In this talk, we will describe characteristics of 'middle-brow' crimesploitation and discuss its ethical implications.