

What Happens After the Credits?

Every episode of Criminal Minds ends with the capture of a serial killer. The audience watches as Hotch or one of his team members handcuffs the killer and we applaud a job well done. But after going on a Criminal Minds binge last week consisting of eight episodes with a break to make popcorn, I couldn't help but wonder what happens to the killers once the credits start rolling. Criminals Minds is a 45-minute show, but I wonder what would happen if it lasted an hour...

If the creators extended it 15 minutes, what would the audience see?

First, the killer would be taken to prison in a speeding cop car. Hotch and Morgan would stand with smiles on their faces; they got another murderer off the streets. Next, the audience would see a shot of the end of a trial (because no one actually cares what happens during the rest) as a jury delivers a verdict: guilty. The members of the BAU who attended, most likely boy genius Reid and intellectually curious Gidion, would look unfazed—*obviously the guy is guilty*. But their ears would perk up in preparation for what they actually wanted to hear: life in prison or the death penalty. In Criminal Minds, the killer would always receive the death penalty (unless the criminal plead not guilty by reason of insanity, then they might be okay, or if the trial takes place in a state that abolished the death penalty) because the criminals are always *serial* killers. They are not people who accidentally hit someone with their car or pushed someone down the stairs. These are people who mutilate, rape, and torture because they *need to*, for pleasure, to fulfill some sexual fetish, or maybe because they're bored. They don't feel remorse. They will, every time receive the death penalty because 1. They felt justified to take innocent

lives and 2. The majority of people in the country actually support the death penalty (63%!). I was shocked; I'm a strong proponent for the abolition of the death penalty and after doing countless research papers on the subject, I do not understand why capital punishment still exists.

But I digress.

So basically, I established that in the fifteen minutes the audience loses to "The Stalker"—the show that airs post criminal minds—we would see a killer disappear in a cop car, stand at his trial, and hear his (death) sentence. This is what I think we *would see* based off my seven years fanatically watching the show, but that does not mean I think this is what we *should see*. Which brings me to my next point.

If the creators extended Criminal Minds 15 minutes, the audience should not see the death penalty.

They should see the trial, the guilty verdict, even the sentence—they should not, however, see any sort of execution. Not because it would be taboo to execute someone on network television, but because capital punishment has no place in the 21st century.

Before I get too far ahead of myself, I need to make a little PSA: I am veering off from Criminal Minds to take the opportunity to tell you readers how I feel about the death penalty, and why I feel this way. I will not bore you with too many facts, but I have attached a link to a research paper on capital punishment that I wrote in my freshmen year at the University of Michigan, called Death of Capital Punishment.

To sum it up for those of you who would rather not read 18 pages, the death penalty does far more harm than good.

1. It costs a lot of money.
2. There is no evidence that it deters crime.
3. It is not fools proof.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/159770/death-penalty-support-stable.aspx>

MY PLAN:

Three (or two, maybe) blog posts, a “series” per say.

1. Analyze an episode of Criminal Minds
 - a. Explain the show, how I got into it, why other people like it, etc.
 - b. I watched an episode (The Tribe) based on Charles Manson and his “family”
 - c. I want to look at where the comparison between fiction and nonfiction works, and where it doesn’t
2. Charles Manson
 - a. Talk about Manson
 - b. Maybe this just goes into the first post to make a longer post?
3. THIS ONE.
 - a. Except instead of speaking about a hypothetical killer, I’m going to talk about the ones in The Tribe episode
 - i. First, what probably would happen (what I have)
 - ii. Second, what I think should happen
 - b. When I talk about the death penalty, I’m going to pull from a paper I wrote freshmen year that argued for the abolition of capital punishment

Notes:

- Why don’t they have an ending? How would it change the show?
 - Would adding an ending cause controversy? Yeah, it would make people think and debate
 - Mandy Patinkin shit on it because of the violence... what if it was longer?
- CLARIFY: Not all states use the death penalty
- Motive behind creating criminal minds

Annotated Bibliography

- Saad, Lydia. "U.S. Death Penalty Support Stable at 63%." *U.S. Death Penalty Support Stable at 63%*. Gallup, 9 Jan. 2013. Web. 13 Oct. 2014. This Gallup Poll shows the percentage of the population in the United States that supports capital punishment (63% in 2013). The author also breaks this number down in terms of political party, age, gender, and race, demonstrating that White Republican males between ages 18 and 34 support capital punishment most widely. This poll adds to my paper because it proves that the majority of Americans support the death penalty, leading me to infer that television shows would probably enact it (to align with viewers' beliefs).
- "States With and Without the Death Penalty." *DPIC*. Death Penalty Information Center, 2014. Web. 14 Oct. 2014. This website lists all the states in this country with the death penalty and all those that have abolished it. Right now, there are 32 states that still use the death penalty and 18 that do not. California and Texas, the

two states with the largest population, enforce the death penalty while New York does not. This helped me write my blog post because it provides proof that not only the majority of the population, but the majority of states still support the death penalty.

http://www.crimelibrary.com/serial_killers/notorious/manson/skelter_6.html

If Criminal Minds took up an hour of my Wednesday nights instead of only 45 minutes, it would change everything. That is, assuming (for argument's sake) those extra 15 minutes are spent showing the audience a

In her article American TV's love affair with serial killers, Ellen Gray calls Criminal Minds uninteresting. Although I am obviously not a mind reader and thus have no idea why she finds the show uninteresting, I do have