

Not my reality

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Abstract

In 2008, Australian viewing audiences were first introduced to the fictional television series, *Underbelly*, a show based loosely on the so-called Melbourne gang-land war of 1995 - 2004. The airing of *Underbelly* coincided with the real-time criminal trial of one of the characters portrayed in the show, raising serious questions about due process and trial by media. In this paper, we analyse these events through the lens of some of the 'true life characters' represented in *Underbelly*. Drawing upon in-depth interview data, we highlight the role of the media in the construction of criminal 'others' and the impact of this on public perception of crime, criminals and the criminal process.

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