



# Thirty-Eight Witnesses: The Kitty Genovese Case (Melville House Classic Journalism)

*A. M. Rosenthal*

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**Thirty-Eight Witnesses: The Kitty Genovese Case (Melville House Classic Journalism) A. M. Rosenthal**  
**A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist's groundbreaking account of the crime that shocked New York City—and the world**

In the early hours of March 13, 1964, twenty-eight-year-old Catherine “Kitty” Genovese was stabbed to death in the middle-class neighborhood of Kew Gardens, Queens. The attack lasted for more than a half hour—enough time for Genovese’s assailant to move his car and change hats before returning to rape and kill her just a few steps from her front door.

Yet it was not the brutality of the murder that made it international news. It was a chilling detail Police Commissioner Michael Joseph Murphy shared with A. M. Rosenthal of the *New York Times*: Thirty-eight of Genovese’s neighbors witnessed the assault—and none called for help.

To Rosenthal, who had recently returned to New York after spending a decade overseas and would become the *Times*’s longest-serving executive editor, that startling statistic spoke volumes about both the turbulence of the 1960s and the enduring mysteries of human nature. His impassioned coverage of the case sparked a firestorm of public indignation and led to the development of the psychological theory known as the “bystander effect.”

*Thirty-Eight Witnesses* is indispensable reading for students of journalism and anyone seeking to learn about one of the most infamous crimes of the twentieth century.

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