

TV

8 THINGS TO WATCH THIS WEEK

TANGLED WEB

New docuseries tracks the path of serial killer who terrorized Australia

THE NIGHT CALLER
Tuesday on Sundance Now

In the early 1960s, a string of seemingly random murders shook the sleepy coastal city of Perth, Australia, to its core.

The killings — shootings, stabbings, hit-and-runs, stranglings — ultimately claimed eight lives; others survived and were scarred for life.

Three men were arrested for the crimes and were all convicted. But only one of them was responsible: Eric Edgar Cooke, aka "The Night Caller," a married father of seven with

a cleft palate and speech impediment who's gone down as one of Australia's most prolific serial killers.

His story, and the collateral damage he left behind among his victims, including the wrongly imprisoned John Button and Darryl Beamish, the citizens of Perth and a maligned police force, is recounted in "The Night Caller."

The gripping four-part docuseries from filmmaker Thomas Meadmore premieres Tuesday on Sundance Now.

Meadmore, a Perth native, spoke to *The Post* about Cooke's reign of terror.



Filmmaker Thomas Meadmore (below left). Right: serial killer Eric Cooke, the subject of Meadmore's "The Night Caller."

Why did you want to tell this story?

It was an urban legend if you grew up in Perth. Because of the trauma, the way people there experienced it was so extreme. A free and easy paradise was turned into a place where you had to stay indoors at all times and couldn't trust anybody. Growing up, I would hear these stories and how shocking it was.

The narrative has so many disparate elements

It's been one of the most challenging filmmaking experiences of my career, to date, because of the story's complexity and weaving the

threads together and making them all speak to each other. It's very relevant: the film explores the theme of accountability — of the community members and the roles they played regarding the men convicted, and of the police. The beautiful irony is the ultimate redemption at the center of the story.

Was interviewing Cooke's wife, Sally, a coup for you?

She defined the series for me. I reached out to her very early on. I was so nervous about contacting her because I thought there's no way she's going to talk to me. I found her name in the [phone] book and

rang her. She's from Liverpool, and she said, "What do you want to know? I'll tell you everything. It's no problem. I was taught that you stay and face things and don't run and hide." The moment she said that to me, this woman was a hero. That was the linchpin of the story. She had more accountability, more backbone, than the "trusted" public servants who found Cooke and put him away.

Cooke didn't appear to have any remorse

Estelle [Blackburn, who wrote a book about the murders] talks about him having a conscience in the sense that, even though he did all of this and was lacking contrition in his testimonies, at the same time he was a loving father to his kids. He did have awareness on some level about the impact of what he'd done, as evidenced by his actions after he was caught. He went to great lengths to continue to confess and to do the right thing and exonerate Beamish and Button. You could argue that he was trying to aggrandize himself...but you can't ignore the fact that even up to his death he was trying to make people hear him.

— Michael Starr

2 PAINTING WITH JOHN

Friday, 11 p.m., HBO
Musician/actor/painter John Lurie (right) stars in this new unscripted series in which he shares his reflections on what he's learned in life — through the lens of his original watercolors.



5 B POSITIVE
Thursday, 8:30 p.m., CBS

Gina (Annaleigh Ashford) needs to keep herself together to pass a psych evaluation while dealing with the news of an ex's engagement. Below: Ashford and co-star Thomas Middleditch.



6 NANCY DREW
Wednesday, 9 p.m., The CW

Season premiere: Nancy (Kennedy McMann) and her pals are still reeling from witnessing visions of their deaths — and hatch a plan to stop the Aglaeca before it's too late.



7 9-1-1

Monday, 9 p.m., Fox
When the Hollywood Reservoir dam breaks, Bobby (Peter Krause, left) and the nā race into action to save passengers on a city bus that has crashed into a building several stories in the air.

3 BATWOMAN
Sunday, 8 p.m., The CW

The season premiere finds Kate's friends and family hoping she may still be found — while a homeless 25-year-old, Ryan Wilder (Javicia Leslie, right), finds Kate's Batwoman suit and becomes the superhero.



4 SALT-N-PEPA
Saturday, 8 p.m., Lifetime

This original three-hour movie follows the journey of Cheryl "Salt" James (GG Townson) and Sandra "Pepe" Denton (Laila Odum) as they enter the world of rap and hip hop and find international stardom.



8 FINDING YOUR ROOTS
Tuesday, 8 p.m., PBS

In this episode, "To the Manor Born," Henry Louis Gates, Jr. explores the privileged lineages of Glenn Close (inset) and John Waters, who join him to share in his discoveries.