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## Product Description

# Strange Brains and Genius

## The Secret Lives of Eccentric Scientists and Madmen



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By [Clifford Pickover](#)

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350 Pages, Hardcover

Size: 9 x 6 inches

Plenum, 1998

ISBN: 0-306-45784-9

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## Information from the Publisher

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### From the Book Jacket...

In this unusual and penetrating work, Clifford Pickover -- internationally recognized science popularizer -- takes us on a wild ride through the bizarre lives of brilliant, but eccentric geniuses who made significant contributions to science and philosophy. Unveiling the hidden secrets of a number of the most intelligent and prolific real-life mad scientists,

Pickover delights us with unexpected stories of their obsessive personalities and strange phobias. These common threads lead us to wonder if creativity and genius are inextricably linked to madness.

A highly entertaining collection of oddity and mischief, this original new work playfully uncovers the scandalous details that lurk behind the unseemly lives of these geniuses. We discover the "Unabomber", Ted Kaczynski, a mathematical whiz with an IQ of 170, was pathologically shy, had an uncontrollable obsession with loud sounds, especially earthy bodily noises, and enjoyed playing practical jokes in high school, such as creating homemade gadgets that would pop loudly and emit a stream of violet smoke amid class -- a compulsion that may have turned deadly.

Then there was the great inventor Nikola Tesla who had a peculiar love for pigeons, particularly white ones, and was terrified of women's pearls. Plenty of other surprises abound, including the statistician and world explorer Francis Galton who quantified anything he saw -- including the curves of women's bodies, and then there are others who all lived exceedingly unusual sexual or celibate lives.

Moreover, a fascinating "curiosity smorgasbord" to whet our appetites teases us with provocative questions to ponder along the way... How does manic depression affect the creativity of artists? How does epilepsy effect religious and alien abduction experiences? Where is Einstein's brain? Is it true that humans use only 10% of their brain capacity? What is IQ? What is obsessive-compulsive disorder? Also, find out how you would fit into the astonishing results of Pickover's human mind survey on intelligence, memory, and the brain, which he conducted exclusively over the Internet.

This whimsical romp through mad obsessions, compulsive rituals, and brilliant theories will allow you to gaze unrestrained into the secret lives of extraordinarily brainy but peculiar people. An illuminating page-turner, it will surely satisfy anyone's curiosity as Pickover opens the doors to a disturbingly alluring realm of geniuses, eccentrics, and madmen.

## Praise

"Who else but the maestro of mathematical creativity, Clifford Pickover, to curate a museum of Strange Brains and write biographies of the scientific geniuses who formerly owned them? I'll never look at a pigeon, a pearl, or a Wheatstone bridge the same way again."

- Mark Frauenfelder, WIRED magazine

"Do geniuses tend to have strange beliefs and to exhibit bizarre behavior? Read this fascinating account of nine such men and decide what you think. Before you put the book down -- not easy to do! -- you will also learn a lot about the human brain and its major disorders. One cannot but wonder: Does Pickover, himself a genius in explaining mathematics and science in clear, entertaining ways, have any eccentricities?"

- Martin Gardner, Author of LAST RECREATIONS

"Pickover's originality has found itself the perfect topic....A compulsive account of minds just this side of the thin edge of madness -- and possibly beyond it."

- Ian Stewart, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

"Given his prolific nature and endless supply of ideas, Pickover would have been justified in adding a self-referential entry to this book. He certainly deserves to be described by the word genius, and this fascinating book is a testament to that fact."

- Charles Ashbacher, JOURNAL OF RECREATIONAL MATHEMATICS

"An extraordinary wealth of bizarre details about the life and behavior of many well-known scientists and others....Leaves one in awe of the variety and complexity of the human mind."

- Julien Clinton Sprott, Author of STRANGE ATTRACTIONS, Professor of Physics, University of Wisconsin-Madison

"Pickover presents a fascinating mix of scientists, inventors, and philosophers. Besides learning about the profound impact their works have had on our lives, we get a look at their darker sides. Most informative and entertaining."

- Theoni Pappas, Author of MATHEMATICAL SCANDALS

"Delightful descriptions of wonderfully peculiar people....Pickover is the first to bring an insider's view to such a list, and he does so with authority, but also with a light touch. It puts our Uncle Albert in context for us, too!"

- Dr. Jack Cohen, author of FIGMENTS OF REALITY

## Indexing Information Other Relevant Ufomind Pages

### Cross References

- [Nikola Tesla](#): Section on Tesla and his eccentricities

### Related Books

- [Time: A Traveler's Guide](#) by Pickover, Clifford
- [The Loom of God: Mathematical Tapestries at the Edge of Time](#) by Pickover, Clifford

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