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Why do Serial Killers Kill?

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Abstract

This study seeks to identify and understand the possible motives of serial killers. The study suggests that serial killers kill because of the impact of exposure to physical abuse, drug abuse, and alcoholism from an early age. Brain injury and mental disorders also play a significant role. Serial killers come from all walks of life and are usually abused in childhood by their parents or someone close to them. They typically show signs early on that they have issues, but those signs often go unnoticed because their families are either ashamed, don't have the knowledge or resources, or for some other reason don't address the situation. They are usually only discovered when they commit a crime or murder, and at that point, it is too late. Serial killers do not think the same way society would consider the norm. To them, raping or killing a victim may provide the same thrill anyone else would get from hitting a home run or celebrating their wedding day.

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Chapter 1: Understanding a Serial Killer

At first, serial killers were thought to be born killers, but research has shown that different factors combine to create a serial killer. While one can only fully understand a serial killer by being a serial killer, the data from the research can shed light on what motivates a serial killer. This data includes many different aspects such as their childhood, background, mental health status, sexuality, characteristics, and demographics.

Serial killers have been around for centuries, but the term “serial killers” was not utilized until 1970 (Van Aken, 2015). In the 1980s, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) started to profile serial killers and classify the different types of murders (Van Aken, 2015). The term “serial killer” has since been turned into a catchphrase among millions that have developed a fascination for the types of heinous crimes they commit. The media has misrepresented the actual reality of a serial killer and made them more appealing for entertainment purposes. Americans have been misled to believe that serial killers are rare and are easy to catch. The reality is multiple serial killers go undetected for extended periods of time because they do not tend to leave a pattern, making it hard to link them to the crimes (Pokel, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

The increase of murders in the second part of the twentieth century has sparked an interest in research on serial killers. Mental health and law professionals are searching for behavioral patterns that are shared by serial killers. Research has not been able to provide a distinct answer as to what motivates a serial killer to kill. This study could help advance research and come closer to finding an answer.

Purpose of Study

This study is designed to help understand the background, mental health, behavioral patterns, and motives that make up a serial killer.

Research Objectives

1. To understand the impact that early childhood has on serial killers.
2. To understand the role that mental health plays in serial killers.
3. To identify mental and physical abnormalities of serial killers.
4. To compare and contrast men, women, and couple serial killers.
5. To identify what motivates a serial killer.
6. To understand what impact incarceration, death penalty, and life sentences have on serial killers.

Section 1.1: Defining a Serial Killer

What comes to mind when one says, “serial killer”? One who kills a lot of people or an angry person that opens fire on innocent people? A serial killer is described as someone who murders three or more individuals over a period of at least a month with significant time in between crimes (Brogaard, 2017). This definition is fitting because it lists specific requirements when labeling a serial killer. Being able to differentiate between specific types of murderers is important because it helps professionals draw conclusions on what motivates a serial killer to follow through with his/her crimes. This, in turn, helps research by providing statistics about a specific group of criminals. However, many professionals argue that this definition is not accurate because the exact number of victims is not apparent until the offender is arrested and their confession is obtained (Pakhomou, 2004).

Many people often mistake mass murders and killing sprees with serial killers. While similarities can be seen between the three, there are some very evident differences. Mass murders are defined as a large number of killings in one setting at a single point in time. For example, the Columbine school shooting that occurred on August 20th, 1999 where 17 students were killed was a mass murder (Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2009). A Killing spree is defined when someone murders two or more individuals within a short time, often in multiple locations. An example of a killing spree would include an offender opening fire in an airport killing multiple random people, then driving to a grocery store and killing multiple people, and ending with the offender taking his own life. In this scenario, multiple deaths occur, and multiple locations are utilized; however, it happens within a short period of time. Serial killings differ because the murders repeat over a longer period of time. Some can go on for years and often occur at different locations (Bonn, 2015).

Serial killers find joy in killing and they do not want to be arrested. Mass murders, on the other hand, do not take the same precautions to avoid being caught. Serial killings happen for many different reasons while mass murders and killing sprees typically occur because of a psychotic break or a form of revenge (Bonn, 2015). In a mass murder and killing spree, the victims are typically randomly selected, though they can also be targeted. For instance, church shootings are targeted because of their religion. Mass murderers and killing spree offenders often die at the scene of the crime by law enforcement or they take their own life (Bonn, 2015). For example, the two students that were responsible for the Columbine shootings committed suicide once they were finished with the shootings. Serial killers, on the other hand, do everything in their power to avoid being caught.

Section 1.2: Fascination of a Serial Killer

Individuals in the public are fascinated with the different serial killers and the nature of their crimes. This is evident from the drawings and literary pieces serial killers create while they are incarcerated that are then auctioned as memorabilia for thousands of dollars. This provides evidence of the extreme levels of fascination people have with serial killers (McCready, 2016). The media has been successful in taking this public fascination and capitalizing on it. While doing so, the media has misrepresented the true character of a serial killer. Television shows and movies typically make serial killers fit into one of two criteria: they are either handsome, wealthy, young, and smart, or they appear to have mental disorders that cause them to do unlikely things. For instance, compare Ted Bundy to the character in Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Ted Bundy was intelligent, handsome, and was said to have a bright future ahead of him. The Texas Chainsaw Massacre was big, scary, and had a low IQ. He killed everyone he saw and used their skin to create masks that he would wear on his face. These depictions are nevertheless

stereotyping and do not accurately represent all serial killers. The typical serial killer is what some might call your “average Joe.” They have wives, children, homes, jobs, and are often said to have a promising future. McCready (2016) noted in her work that there is a massive difference in what the media defines as a serial killer versus the reality of one.

Section 1.3: Typographic

“Serial killer” is a broad term that fails to specify the individual characteristics of different serial killers. Serial killers may be grouped according to type rather than under the nonspecific umbrella of the phrase “serial killers” (Van Aken, 2015). These groups allow for a better understanding of what motivates serial killers to commit such crimes and how some are able to evade detection for so long. The Behavioral Science Unit, with the FBI, conducted a study on the different types of serial killers. This study further classified serial killers into three different groups: organized, disorganized, and mixed (Van Aken, 2015).

Organized serial killers like to have a plan intact. Planning the murders out is a fantasy for them. These types of serial killers make it hard to collect evidence because they do not kill at the place they kidnap their victim and they do not leave the victim’s body at the crime scene. The serial killer often takes the victim to multiple locations. They are fully prepared when they kidnap their victim; this includes their weapon of choice, means of transportation, and the exact steps they will take to avoid being caught. They enjoy watching themselves on the news. It fascinates them. Organized serial killers are often psychopaths who show no remorse for their actions. The mutilation of their victims often excites them (Brogaard, 2012).

Disorganized serial killers are the opposite of organized. They pick their victims at random and show no pattern to their choices. They do not bring weapons, but rather use the

closest weapon to them. Disorganized serial killers act on opportunity and do not plan out their attack. It is easier for police to catch disorganized serial killers because their work is sloppy and they do not move the body (Brogaard, 2012).

Mixed serial killers do not classify as organized or disorganized because they are a combination of the two. They are known to only kill occasionally. Their reasoning to kill is influenced by those around them. Mixed serial killers are also known to commit their crimes while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Unorganized and mixed serial killers often suffer from hallucinations and schizophrenia (Brogaard, 2012).

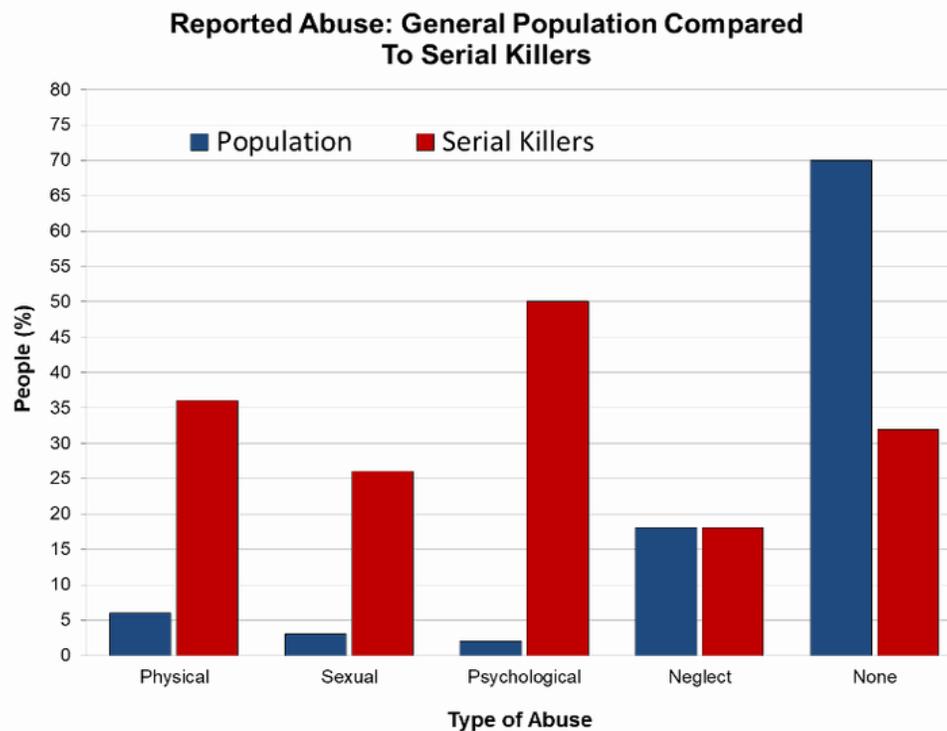
Many criminology professionals do not agree with the types listed above; they believe that serial killers are far more complicated. Homes and De Burger, authors of many criminology books, developed their own classification together. Rather than the three above, they developed four different classifications; visionary, missionary, hedonistic, and power or control. A visionary serial killer often claims a higher power told them to commit the murders. Missionary serial killers target a race or religion because they want that group to be nonexistent. The hedonistic type always commits their crimes for the sexual element. The power or control serial killers want full authority and power over their victim (Holmes and Burger, 1988).

Section 1.4: Common Characteristics

Research has proven that many serial killers share the same experience of abuse or neglect during their childhood. However, there are millions of Americans who face the same challenges and will grow up to be functional adults. On the contrary, some serial killers grow up in ordinary households and turn to killing. Research has shown that serial killers are linked to having brain abnormalities. Brain scans were run on serial killers and the results showed that the

tissue in the subcortical region of the brain was significantly thinner than a healthy brain. The subcortical region of the brain affects emotions and decision making (Brogaard, 2012).

DNA has also been a linked characteristic amongst serial killers. Many serial killers have parents that were linked to criminal activity; evidence has shown that these traits could be passed down to their children. In fact, DNA has been attributed to serial killers more than their upbringing (Brogaard, 2012). Nevertheless, many serial killers had parents who were violent, sexual predators, or murderers themselves. Experiencing these types of environments growing up could result in the person believing it is a standard way of life and adopting the abusive trait. As part of their upbringing, serial killers can also have abnormal relationships with their parents. Parents are meant to raise, protect, and keep their children from the evils of the world. Though with serial killers, their parents tend to isolate them, act inappropriately with them, and abuse them mentally and psychologically (Brogaard, 2012).



Data Source: Mitchell, H., and Aamodt, M.G. (2005) *The Incidence of Child Abuse in Serial Killers*

The chart above was used to compare data between the public and serial killers. The table indicates that serial killers had far more reported abuse than the average person. Psychological abuse was the highest abuse experienced by serial killers, with neglect being the lowest. When presenting this data, the need for separating serial killers by type was not a factor because all types of serial killers experienced the same kinds of abuse (Guy, 2019).

One of the most common characteristics experienced by serial killers is childhood trauma. For instance, if a friend or family member dies, that could be the breaking point for serial killers. While children tend to be resilient and bounce back fast, there are some that end up suffering from physiological problems (Brogaard, 2012). Children who suffer from trauma tend to cut everyone out of their world and live in a fantasy where they don't show emotions or feel

any remorse for their actions. These common characteristics often occur in serial killers (Hosier, 2014).

Section 1.5: Mental health aspect

Many serial killers tend to develop a certain type of mental illness; though, this problem typically goes unnoticed as most serial killers are often born into families that pay little to no attention to them. When serial killers realize they have a problem, they usually try to self-diagnose with drugs and alcohol, which makes the disorder worse (Holmes, Hickey, & Holmes, 2016). Some common types of mental illnesses that serial killers are affected by are multiple personality disorder, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, and antisocial personality disorder.

Dissociative Identity disorder is when another personality takes over the serial killer and commits the murder. Thoughts, feelings, and experiences are often not carried on into consciousness. Mental disorders are responsible for one-fifth of serial killers. (Holmes, Hickey, & Holmes, 2016)

Schizophrenia has been linked to some of the most notorious serial killers. For them, a voice inside their head was telling them to commit the murder. This disorder can be kept under control with heavy sedation and monitoring, but it usually takes murdering the serial killer to be diagnosed with the disorder. (Holmes, Hickey, & Homes, 2016)

Borderline Personality Disorder is another mental illness that some serial killers face. Borderline personality may make the affected individuals act on impulse and displace intense mood swings. Borderline Personality Disorder is more common in female serial killers. (Holmes, Hickey, & Holmes, 2016)

Antisocial Personality Disorder, formerly known as psychopathy and sociopathy, is a disorder experienced by some of the most dangerous serial killers. This disorder causes individuals to show no emotion for the crimes that they commit and their regard for human life may even be altered. These types of serial killers are very disconnected from the early stages of life and they typically never bond with their parents (Pickersgill, 2009). Not all individuals who suffer from Antisocial Personality Disorder become serial killers but people with this disorder make the perfect criminals because they are so detached. Serial killers with this type of disorder often use manipulation, lying, and control as their modus operandi (Pickersgill, 2009).

Section 1.6 Profiling

Warning signs start at a rather young age for serial killers. They are exposed to mental and physical abuse and tend to bottle up a lot of anger. These children gravitate toward isolation from the world as they have no one to show them how to function in society. They often wet the bed past the age of twelve and like to torture and kill animals. Serial killers often start their life of crime as children committing small acts such as stealing. These crimes typically get worse as they age and, eventually, can lead to committing murder (Van Aken, 2015).

As an adult, lots of emotions have been boiling up, and the individuals reach their breaking point. Often, adult criminals have planned out all stages of the crimes they are going to commit (Van Aken, 2015).

Section 1.7: Male/Female

Society has grown up believing that serial killers are men (Vronsky, 2004). Males are big and strong; they are monsters who prey on their poor, defenseless victims. At least that is what

society often thinks of when they think of serial killers. The main reason male killers kill is for the thrill of what death brings to them. Males are also much more violent with their victims and enjoy watching their victims suffer (Tron, 2017). Men start their crime sprees at a much earlier age than women. Male serial killers start hurting animals when they are very young because it arouses them. To males, serial killing is an art and they like to keep memories, such as pictures or body parts. Murder comes with full control and men commit the crime in a deliberate act, savoring every moment (Tron, 2017).

However, not all male serial killer's fantasies end with their victim dying (Vronsky, 2004). In some cases, witnesses could potentially identify their kidnapper. For instance, most male serial killers may only wish to dismember, torture, or rape their victims. Sometimes serial killers kill because they do not want to get caught. If a victim poses a threat that the serial killer could get caught, he will kill the victim (Vronsky, 2004).

Male serial killers have also been known to change their minds once they discover relevant facts about their victims (Vronsky, 2004). Male serial killers may start to empathize with their victims causing them to abandon their prior intention of murder. Male serial killers are more likely to kill strangers because once they get to know a victim, it sometimes changes the way they feel about their victims, and they often lose their fantasy feelings for them (Vronsky, 2004).

Female serial killers do not take their time or change their mind when killing (Vronsky, 2007). Females also do not kill to fulfill a fantasy; they merely kill because that is their goal. Females often get to know their victims on a personal level before they kill them. For example, female serial killers have been known to kill their significant other as well as their children. Female serial killers do not discard their victims' bodies like they are trash; they are usually left

where they were killed. Female serial killers also do not try and torture their victims; death comes to them in ways they would never expect, such as poison (Vronsky, 2007).

For females, material things usually outweigh the cost of human life. Females kill later in life around the age of thirty-two and have even been linked to killing up to their eighties. Menopause has also been linked to giving women the urge to kill later in life (Vronsky, 2007).

Section 1.8: Sexual / Non – Sexual

The part of the brain that feels pain and pleasure are very closely connected. Serial killers who have sexual motives are born with a smaller ventromedial cortex according to Criminology professional, Adrian Raine (Moon, 2013). Holding victims against their will and killing them is what serial killers relate to pleasure. Even though they are putting victims through all types of pain; for them, it is a release. The research states that when the women victims die, the men typically ejaculate because it is a form of the highest sexual gratification (Ressler, Douglas, & Burgess, 1988). Partners who enjoy pain during intercourse such as being whipped, bitten, and hit want a form of empowerment; which is the same thing that serial killers want (Aamodt, 2016). Research has been conducted on serial killers with both sexual and non-sexual elements. The research concluded that although many sexual fantasies end in death that is not the motive. Sexual serial killers play out an illusion, and sometimes the body cannot endure the pain that comes with the fantasy (Ressler, Douglas, & Burgess, 1988).

Not every serial killer has a sexual motive. Some serial killers kill because of sadistic beliefs, mental disorders, and financial gain. Most serial killers like the process of killing, while others love the art of murder. Many serial killers like to save a piece of their victims as a trophy

for their accomplishment, while others want to get rid of the remains as soon as they are finished (Aamodt, 2016).

Section 1.9: Statistics

Another interesting aspect of serial killers is the statistics identifying where serial killers often fit into society. Serial killers are usually in their twenties to thirties, have an average IQ, and have families of low socioeconomic status (Aamodt, 2016). Serial killers prefer to have jobs where they can be in control, such as police officers. With regard to that, they also want to be part of the investigation of their crime. As far as demographics go, Alaska is the state that has the most documented serial killers with Hawaii having the least amount (Frohlich, 2015).

In the 1930s seventy-six percent of serial killers were Caucasians, but by the 2000s that statistic changed to African Americans being the most common ethnicity. When it comes to age, serial killers are typically between the ages of twenty to thirty. Seventy-eight percent of serial killers are neglected as children. In the 1970s the highest percent of mass murders were recorded; however, that decade had the lowest percent of executions. The United States has seventy percent more serial killers than any other country (Aamodt, 2016).

Chapter 2: Killer Cases

Chapter two provides case studies of male, female, and couple serial killers. Chapter two is meant to take information from chapter one and apply it to specific serial killer profiles. The goal is to develop a pattern addressing the motives of serial killers.

Serial killers may have different backgrounds, lifestyles, and motives. The reasoning behind the “why” will also vary but, they do share one thing they enjoy killing. A case study that

was done on Kenneth McDuff and Clifford Boggess illustrates these differences. McDuff killed for pleasure and pure enjoyment while Boggess simply killed for financial gain. McDuff murdered over 30 women while Boggess only killed two. The research question asked if these two men deserved the same punishment. Some argue that both men committed capital murder and deserve the same sentence (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015). Boggess needed money because drugs and alcohol had taken over his life. As addressed in chapter one, drug and alcohol abuse typically comes from early childhood trauma or of an underlying mental health issue (Van Aken, 2015).

Section 2.1: H. H. Holmes The First Known Serial Killer

The first known serial killer dates back to the late 1890s. Howard Holmes grew up with an abusive alcoholic father Holmes developed a passion for killing stray animals and taking their bodies apart at an early age. This is addressed in section 1.6 under childhood profiling which was later known to be a serial killer trait. Holmes was always very bright and even graduated from medical school. Once Holmes graduated, he took a job at a pharmacy (Gaura, 2017).

Doctor Henry Howard Holmes, or more commonly known as, Dr. H. H. Holmes, was said to have murdered anywhere between twenty to two hundred people (Forensic Scholars Today, 2018). He would lure women into a house that was under construction, known as the murder castle, where he would torture and kill them and then throw their bodies in the basement. The construction house was an unfinished house Holmes was working on rebuilding. The houses had secret doors and windows making it easy to torture women and hide their bodies. It provided the perfect burial site for his victims as well. Holmes was said to not only be a serial killer but a con artist. He had over fifty cases pending against him for fraud. The only successful case brought against Holmes involved his friend and accomplice, Benjamin Pitezel. Pitezel had a

grand idea to commit fraud; he wanted to fake his death and collect the insurance money. However, Holmes had a bigger plan. He was going to kill Pitezal and collect the insurance money for himself. As we discovered in chapter one, financial gain is a big motive for serial killers. Holmes insisted that Pitezal was alive and had faked his own death. He even confronted Pitezal's wife with this information, but the truth was Holmes had killed him. Holmes was convicted of murdering Pitezal and was hung in 1896 at the age of 34 (Forensic Scholars Today, 2018).

Section 2.2: Ted Bundy

Theodore Robert Cowell was born to an unwed mother on November 24, 1946 (Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2009). During the 1950s being an unwed mother came with many problems. It was completely out of the social norm and children of unwed parents were made fun of. Bundy's mother did not want this to happen to her son, so she sent him to live with her parents. As stated in section 1.4, being abandoned by your parents are typical serial killer characteristics. For the longest time, Bundy thought that his grandparents were his parents and he would call his mom his sister. Bundy is said to have been a very handsome and popular child growing up. However, he faced problems at home. His grandfather had several issues. He would abuse his wife, the family dog, and had an addiction to porn (Harmening & Thomas, 2015). Louise, Bundy's mother, could not ignore this behavior any longer and relocated her and her son to Tacoma, Washington. It was there that she met Johnnie Culpepper Bundy who would become her husband and adopt her son. The couple would have two girls and a boy. Once the other children arrived, they soon forgot about Bundy (Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2009).

As a teenager, Bundy was shy and socially awkward. He struggled when communicating with girls, but overall, he was a good student. Like his grandfather, he too suffered from pornography addiction and he was caught on several occasions peeping in women's windows watching them undress. After graduating high school, Bundy decided that he would go to law school. He had been working with an upcoming politician and is said to of had a promising future (Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2009).

Bundy attended the University of Puget Sound for a year before transferring to the University of Washington. Just two years into college, Bundy's promising future suddenly turned dark. The University of Washington had been known as a beautiful and quiet campus. The campus had no rapes reported in the year 1973, one year before Bundy moved in, and the city of Seattle was said to have been considered a low crime city. 1974 was the year that Seattle's crime rate would make an unexpected rise, and no one could understand why (Hayden, 2018).

Twenty-one-year-old Lynda Healy was last seen in her door room on the University of Washington campus before she came up missing. A little over a year passed before anyone knew what had happened to Healy. She was found in a shallow grave alongside the remains of two other women (Hayden, 2018). Any beautiful young woman in Seattle could have been a potential victim for Bundy so the emotions were high during this time. In that year alone six young women had vanished, and the only evidence left behind was their bones. Suddenly, in late 1974 the murders in Washington stopped (Hayden, 2018).

Around that same time, in Salt Lake City, Utah, young women started to disappear just like in Washington (Hayden, 2018). However, one woman, Carol DaRonch, was kidnapped and would most certainly be dead if not for her escape. After Bundy lured her into his vehicle DaRonch quickly noticed things were not as they seemed and panic set in. DaRonch engaged in

an altercation with Bundy and managed to open her car door and jump out. At the police station, the police and DaRonch got to work on identifying her kidnapper. A photo of Ted Bundy was shown to DaRonch, but she confirmed he was not the same man who had kidnapped her (Hayden, 2018). During the investigation DaRonch said she remembered the kidnapper driving a Volkswagen. While the police knew Bundy was not a suspect according to DaRonch, they conducted a follow up on Ted Bundy anyway. The police had already begun a search for a guy named Ted who drove a Volkswagen, and Bundy was added to a list of more than twenty-eight hundred suspects (Paoletti, 2017). One night around 2 a.m. police observed a Volkswagen sitting on a dark road. When the police tried to pull the car over it sped away. When the car finally stopped, the police conducted a search of the vehicle and found a mask and an ice pick. Bundy was arrested but was not charged with the kidnapping, and he was released (Paoletti, 2017).

A few months had passed, and Bundy was finally arrested for the kidnapping charge. With the help of police, DaRonch realized Bundy had been her kidnapper. Bundy was sentenced one to fifteen years. Police in Utah, Washington, and Colorado came together to discuss Ted Bundy and evidence that had been discovered that linked Bundy to the states where young women were beaten, sexually assaulted, and killed (Hayden,2018). While Bundy was helping to prepare his trial, the police took their eye off him, and Bundy managed to escape (Husband, 2019).

Bundy had broken into the Chi Omega sorority house in Lake City, Florida and beaten, strangled, and sexually mutilated two women. He left teeth marks on the victims that would later be used to link him to the murders (Husband, 2019). Bundy was arrested and once again managed to escape from prison. He fled to Florida and decided to continue his killing spree. One of the last known victims of Ted Bundy, before he was killed by electrocution, was a twelve-

year-old girl from Florida; he had kidnapped her while she was walking home from school (Husband, 2019).

While on trial Bundy had a witness that testified on his behalf, Carol Boone. Boone testified that there was no way that Bundy was guilty of the crimes even with all the evidence that was presented against him. During his trial, Bundy proposed to Boone and she said yes. They were married in 1980, and while on death row, Boone became pregnant with Bundy's child. Bundy was able to spend time with his daughter before he was executed. Ted Bundy and Carol Boone's daughter, who is now 36 years old, decided it was in her best interest to change her name and remain hidden from the public eye. As of today, her identity remains a mystery (Husband, 2019).

Bundy was a charming, intelligent, and handsome man and for a long time, no one wanted to tie him to the murders. He blamed everyone around him for labeling him a murderer. Judges, lawyers, and police were the ones at fault according to Bundy, and he would never confess to what he had done. It was not until right before Bundy's execution that he finally admitted to all of his crimes. He only admitted these truths in hopes that his execution would be extended, but to his dismay, it was not. Bundy confessed to killing twenty-eight women, but it is believed that he is responsible for over one hundred deaths. The day of Bundy's execution the entire community came together to rejoice. Women were no longer in fear of walking alone and fathers could rest easy knowing their daughters would not disappear into the night without warning (Jenkins, 2019).

Section 2.3: John Wayne Gacy

John Wayne Gacy had a rough life growing up. His father was an alcoholic with a temper and he would often beat Gacy, his mother, and his sisters. Gacy also had a heart condition that was not diagnosed until he was seventeen and his father always insisted he was faking the condition (Taylor, 2013). Gacy showed signs that something was wrong, but those actions were never taken seriously. At only eight years old, Gacy and another boy were caught fondling a young girl and instead of addressing the issue, his father beat him (Taylor, 2013). At age eleven, Gacy was hit on the head by a swing. This incident would cause a blood clot in his brain and blackouts, which were not diagnosed until he was sixteen (Taylor, 2013). Gacy's education was interrupted by his family life, so he dropped out of school and relocated. During that time, it is said that Gacy suffered from depression and wanted nothing more but to come back home to his family (Taylor, 2013).

After moving back home to Chicago, Gacy decided to continue his education. While in college, he discovered he had a real passion for sales and would develop this into a career. Gacy was seen as a perfect member of society. He spent a lot of time throwing block parties for his community where he would attend them dressed as a clown he named, Pogo. Gacy also spent a lot of his time volunteering, which is where he met his wife (Sumter, 2019). Gacy's new father-in-law owned many Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises in Iowa and offered him a job within the company. Gacy and his wife decided that it was in their best interest to accept his proposal and relocate to Iowa. Gacy had two children, a boy and a girl, and the couple was said to be a picture-perfect family. Little did they know their ideal family would soon come crashing down. Rumors started that Gacy was hitting on young boys while at work, but his family knew that Gacy would never do such a thing and the rumors were dismissed (Taylor, 2013).

In December of 1968, Gacy was convicted of sodomy, which he forced on Donald Voorhees (Sumter, 2019). Gacy received a ten-year sentence but was released after only serving a year and a half for good behavior. Gacy's wife divorced him while he was still in prison. Once Gacy was released he moved back to Chicago (Sumter, 2019). Gacy was remarried for a short time to a woman he had known his entire life. She knew of Gacy's past but thought he had changed and together they were very involved in their community. One day, Gacy told his wife that he liked adolescent boys instead of grown women and she divorced him (Sumter, 2019).

Gacy took the life of Timothy McCoy in 1972. McCoy was Gacy's first known victim and the murder was not planned as Gacy recalls (Sumter, 2019). Gacy was at the bus station when McCoy arrived. McCoy was simply a tourist visiting Chicago and Gacy was looking for a victim. Gacy offered McCoy a clean bed to sleep in and a ride back to the bus station the next day. The following day as Gacy recalls, McCoy was standing in the kitchen with a knife, and Gacy feared for his life, so he defended himself and ended up killing McCoy and placing his remains in the crawl space of his own home. That was when Gacy discovered how much of a thrill it was to kill and continued the crime spree. Gacy later admitted that McCoy was holding a knife because he had just prepared breakfast (Sumter, 2019).

John Wayne Gacy had a crawl space in his house where he would throw twenty-seven young victims down. One day, Gacy had told a young boy to come to his house after work because he was interested in hiring him for labor. The boy told his parents that he would be home later because he had to meet with a contractor about a job. Hours had passed, and the boy never returned home. His mother remembered the contractor's name, and it was none other than Gacy (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994). Gacy proved to be useless when the police interrogated him, so they decided to obtain a search warrant. When they began searching

Gacy's residence they confiscated many items that had belonged to his victims that were reported missing. Finally, the police searched the crawl space and found the remains of the boys that Gacy had tortured and killed (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994).

Gacy was convicted on fourteen counts of murder and spent fourteen years on death row. During his execution, he was injected with legal toxins and what should have taken six minutes to kill him, took eighteen. Even as death approached Gacy, he showed no remorse for his actions (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994).

Section 2.4: Jeffrey Dahmer

Dahmer grew up in what seemed like a reasonably happy household (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994). He had two parents who reportedly loved him dearly and there were no known instances of abuse. Dahmer was said to have been very smart but lacked drive. Dahmer's alcoholism began in his teenage years after his parents informed him and his brother they were getting a divorce. Dahmer enrolled in college but would not take his education seriously and frequently indulged in drinking and partying. After his father noticed that he was not focused on his schooling he gave him two options: get a job or join the military (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994).

Dahmer's career in the military was short-lived, although he was said to have been an above average soldier. His drinking problem progressed and eventually he was discharged from the military. His father was disgraced by his actions and after unsuccessfully trying to wean him off the alcohol, he had no choice but to send him to live with his grandmother. He hoped that Dahmer would get back on his feet if he left his old environment behind, considering it led him to his criminal record. Unbeknownst to all, Dahmer had already committed murder. He killed his

first victim when he was just eighteen years old. Steven Hicks was a hitchhiker, whom Dahmer invited back to his house on the grounds that they would drink a couple beers together. After Hicks announced he was leaving, Dahmer hit him in the back of the head with a 10 lb. dumbbell. He buried the body behind his house, and no one knew until years later when he would confess (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994).

Over the next few months, Dahmer killed two more people and buried them under his grandmother's house. In 1988, Dahmer moved into his own home and the killings would continue more frequently. Dahmer not only killed young men, he tortured and raped them. Dahmer was proud of what he had done and would keep pieces of their bodies as trophies. As stated in section 1.7, keeping body parts as memories is common for male serial killers. Dahmer also had a desire to eat the flesh of certain victims (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994). Dahmer enjoyed doing experiments with chemicals to see how the bodies reacted and then he would dump them down the toilet. The neighbors around him would make complaints about the strange odors coming from his residence, but he would make excuses and the police would never investigate further (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994).

The last of Dahmer's victims was Tracy Edwards (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994). Edwards managed to escape his house of horror and bring the police to Dahmer's apartment. The cops searched his home and all of Dahmer's secrets were discovered. Dahmer was charged with 15 counts of murder and a prison term of 937 years. Dahmer was killed three years after his conviction by another inmate (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994).

Section 2.5: Aileen Wuornos

Aileen Wuornos had a strict upbringing. Her mother became pregnant with her at a very young age and shortly after she was born, her father left her mother, Aileen, and her older brother. Her father later died in prison of suicide after he was convicted of raping and kidnapping a seven-year-old girl. Around the time Aileen turned four years old, her mother abandoned her and her brother leaving them to live with their grandparents (Stockton, 2019). While living there, she was abused and sexually assaulted by her grandfather. Wuornos' grandfather once made her watch as he killed a kitten simply because she kept it after he told her not to (Vronsky 2007). "Referencing back to section 1.4, childhood abuse is a common characteristic of serial killers." After having such a horrific childhood, she turned to alcohol, prostitution, and drugs as an escape. When she was only eleven years old she started exchanging sexual favors for cigarettes, drugs, and food. Most of the boys at her school participated and when she developed a legitimate attraction for them, they would laugh at her and tell her it was not going to happen. She gave birth at the early age of fourteen and immediately placed her son up for adoption (Vronsky, 2007).

After returning home, it was not long until her grandmother died from apparent liver failure and her grandfather insisted Wuornos and her brother leave his home. With nowhere to go she turned to prostitution in order to obtain money, drugs, and food. Wuornos married a wealthy sixty-nine-year-old man she met after hitchhiking to Florida, and she thought her troubles were over. However, instead of living the high-society life she was gifted, she resorted back to her old ways. Her husband was forced to file a restraining order against her only weeks after their marriage, followed by an annulment (Vronsky, 2007). Again, Wuornos turned to violence and prostitution, but she met a nice guy named Jay Watts at a local bar. After several casual run-ins at the bar Wuornos asked Watts if she could stay with him for a couple days and he agreed. A

couple days turned to weeks and neither disputed the idea. Whether she knew it or not, Wuornos craved affection and love. She thrived off this feeling of being wanted and giving her love in return. Watts was the closest thing she had to a relationship and it made her feel complete. After an argument with Watts the night before, Wuornos started drinking and using drugs and decided to commit armed robbery. She was sentenced to three years. Watts became a distant memory for her after she was released from prison (Vronsky, 2007).

Wuornos then found love with a woman named Ty, whom she met at a Daytona Beach gay bar. Shortly afterwards, they moved in together and they would remain together for four and a half more years. Wuornos continued prostitution, while Ty worked as a housekeeper. It was not until Wuornos realized her looks were not working for her anymore that she decided something had to change (Vronsky, 2007). Wuornos went on a killing spree, murdering seven men during a twelve-month period (Jerkins, n.d.). Wuornos robbed all of her victims before she shot them to death and stole their cars. The police eventually caught on to this, but it took a year before she was finally arrested, after they found items belonging to one of her victims at a pawn shop. Before the jury reached their verdict, Wuornos claimed that these men had raped her, and she was merely acting in self-defense. Wuornos was convicted and sentenced for six murders. She received the death penalty and was executed by lethal injection in 2002 (Vronsky, 2007).

Section 2.6: Velma Barfield

Velma Barfield, born Velma Bullard, grew up in a time when money was hard to come by. She was born shortly after the Great Depression had ended. Her family would have been described as very low-class. She would often get ridiculed at school for her clothes, shoes, and what her lunch consisted of (Vronsky, 2007). However, being at school was better than being at home. Her home life was awful; she was made to leave school early to go home and do chores.

Her father had a horrible temper and suffered from alcoholism. The more her father drank, the more resentment she held for alcohol. Barfield would often feel the blow of her father's hand and hated the fact that her mother just stood idly by and allowed the abuse. As stated in section 1.4, abuse is common amongst serial killers. With that, she started to despise her mother (Vronsky, 2007). When her father drank alcohol, his rage and anger would turn to violence. He would rape Barfield although she did not blame him; she blamed her mother for being submissive and not intervening. Barfield once stated that she would still bring her children to see her father, even after knowing what he would do to them. She longed for his attention, even though he had done those horrible things to her. This behavior is common among survivors because it has become a way of life for them, something they have become accustomed to (Vronsky, 2007).

Barfield was still in high school when she decided to marry Thomas Burke; she knew it was the only way to get out of the horrible situation she had been born into (Vronsky, 2007). A few years into her marriage she had a son and then a daughter. Her only goal in life was to make sure her children were happy and healthy and that they never had to experience the same pain she endured during her childhood. Barfield was an amazing mother and she had an apparently great life until one day, it just was not anymore. Barfield underwent a hysterectomy due to health problems; little did she know the horror it would inflict upon herself and her family. After the surgery, Barfield would be a completely different person. She started to have anger problems and soon became addicted to the painkillers she was prescribed. After her husband, Burke was involved in a car accident, his drinking increased as a way to cope with the pain. The drinking reminded her of her father and the pain she suffered because of the effects of alcohol (Vronsky, 2007).

Barfield was annoyed by her husband's drinking and their constant arguing. She did not have to worry about that for long because she came home one day to find her house on fire with her husband in it. Her grief was short lived, and she decided to set the house on fire again to collect the insurance money (Vronsky, 2007). Barfield moved on rather quickly and married Jennings Barfield in August 1970. However, Barfield's children knew this was not a good idea and told their mother not to marry Jennings, but she did not listen to them. Their marriage would end soon after it began due to Barfield's drug addiction. During this time, Barfield committed her first murder. She killed Jennings with rat poisoning. When the autopsy came back there was no trace of the poison; instead, the doctor advised he had died from gastroenteritis. It was there Barfield realized that rat poison showed no trace in an autopsy and it was downhill from there. Barfield could not get her life together. She was continually stealing blank checks and forging them, so she would have money to buy pills. She would buy the pills, and almost every time she would overdose on them (Vronsky, 2007).

Barfield moved in with her mother and faced the same problems of stealing checks and doing drugs. One day she decided to take a loan out in her mother's name against her mother's house. Her mom found out and thought it had to be some mistake made by the bank, so she just ignored it. Barfield did not know what to do because there was no way she could pay the bank back, so she poisoned her mother. Once again, the autopsy showed she died from natural causes (Vronsky, 2007).

After her mother's death, everyone thought that Barfield had gotten her life back on track. She got her own house, and she even started a new job, caring for an elderly couple, the Edwards. It was not long into her employment that Mr. Edwards died. Mrs. Edwards however was still alive and healthy. One day out of nowhere Barfield rushed the elderly lady to the

hospital. She too apparently died of natural causes but that was not the case at all. Velma had once used poison to kill. In a weird string of events, everyone started to feel sorry for Barfield because everyone around her was dying. Little did they know the reason was her. Velma went on to kill another couple she was taking care of because she needed that extra money to support her drug habit. Her last victim to die was her new finance (Vronsky, 2007). It was the same pattern that had become such a routine to Barfield. She would write checks after stealing them from the victims, and before she took a chance on being caught, she would poison them. Barfield always claimed the deaths were not her fault. When the doctors would diagnose the victim with death by natural causes, Velma believed that to be true and would never admit to the fact they died because she poisoned them (Vronsky, 2007).

Barfield even went on to poison her daughter and son-in-law because they would not let her use their car to pick up pills. Luckily, they only received a small dose of poison and survived the toxins. All the murders started adding up, and people realized that something was not right. Finally, doctors realized that Barfield was poisoning people with ant killer that did not show up in an autopsy. Barfield was executed by lethal injection on November 2, 1984 (Vronsky, 2007).

Section 2.7: Genee Jones

Genee Jones had one of the better upbringings of a serial killer. She was placed for adoption the second she was born, and she was adopted very soon by a wealthy family (Cole, 2016). She grew up in a mansion, and her family would take her and the siblings on trips and spend a lot of time with them, which is unusual for serial killers (Cole, 2016). Although privileged, Jones lacked popularity and looks. She was soon known as the girl who lied all the

time. She would make up these outlandish stories in hopes that she would become the center of attention. She lost her father and brother in her teenage years, and that could have been what sent her over the edge (Vronsky, 2007).

Jones was a hypochondriac who would always think a cold or a rash meant she had the first stages of cancer (Lamoureux, 2018). So, she decided that being in the medical field was just the career for her. Jones was a single mother at the age of twenty-five and talked her mother into paying for her to go to school to become a nurse. In nursing school, Jones was the popular girl she was naturally talented, and everyone loved her (Vronsky, 2007).

Jones soon learned that her nursing career was anything but good. She only worked a short time in her first nursing job and was fired for the way she talked to her patients. It was not very long until Jones landed another job. She was there only a few months and left for surgery and never came back. At that time nurses were in high demand so finding a job was easy for Jones; the problem was keeping a job. Soon, she was hired for a job working with critically ill children, and although she had no experience she received a job offer (Cole, 2016).

Jones was deemed very odd from the moment she began working at the hospital. One of her patients only spent a short time in the hospital before he died, and when he died, Jones, who barely knew him, would cry by his bedside for hours (Lamoureux, 2018). However, her talents outweighed her strange behavior, so she kept her job. She had an unusual gift for telling when a baby was about to have seizures or go into cardiac arrest before the baby showed any signs whatsoever. Jones did not care about anything but her patients, which most people would agree was an excellent quality to have. She never listened to anyone's orders, and she went to work under the influence of alcohol. Although she performed poorly, because they had such a small number of nurses, they kept her on (Cole, 2016).

Jones was starting to show concerning patterns; not only could she predict when her patients would code but a lot of her patients were dying. The hospital never really figured out if she was killing her patients on purpose or if she was not qualified to do the job at hand. They terminated her job, but they said she was eligible for rehire. A few months passed, and a new clinic opened in town. Jones was offered yet another job. It was not until patients coming in for treatment of a cold began ending up in the ICU for cardiac arrest (Vronsky, 2007).

Finally, the doctor of the clinic figured out that Jones had been injecting her patients with medicine that would make them code so that she could save them. However, some babies were not healthy enough to come out of cardiac arrest, and it killed them. When individual patients died, Jones would become hysterical and cry as they were her children. Jones was suspected in the deaths of forty-seven babies but was never charged (Cole, 2016).

Jones suffered from a condition called Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (Vronsky, 2007). Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy is an illness that a caregiver has where the caregiver fabricates that a child is seriously ill. By treating the children like they are seriously ill, the caregiver receives a lot of attention, which seems to be a motivating factor in the disorder. This disorder is characterized as child abuse with mild and severe cases (Squires & Squires, 2013). Jones used her young patients as victims. She thought it would be a good idea to treat babies like they are dying and then try to save them. Most of the time, the babies did not survive the injection because they were fragile. Referencing back to section 1.5, many serial killers suffer from mental disorders.

Although Jones was suspected of forty-seven deaths of babies, only one lead to her conviction (Cole, 2016). Instead of capital punishment Jones was sentenced to 159 years in a Texas prison and was never charged with murder. She is currently alive in the prison system and

trying to obtain parole, but the state of Texas is trying to convict her of the other crimes she had committed (Goad, 2018).

Section 2.8: Killer Couples

As mentioned in chapter 1, the trend seems to be that male serial killers like a messy crime scene and female killers do not focus on that aspect. However, when they are together as a team, the killings are often ruthless (Vronsky, 2007). Women usually act as the accomplice while their partners typically handle the murder and disposal of bodies. In most cases, while women are just as guilty as men, the women usually escape without major convictions, whereas the men have traditionally faced the death penalty. The women have been likely to say that they were the victim and were being abused and made to commit the acts they did, and the jury believes them (Vronsky, 2007). While women who kill alone are likely to experience a mental disorder, abuse, or neglect, women in a killing relationship do not typically have any of these signs. They seem to kill to make their significant other happy. Some women have a hard time being alone, long for a male companion, and will do whatever it takes to keep him. Thus, it is like women staying in abusive relationships because they do not want to be alone (Walker, 2018).

Section 2.9: Lonely Heart Killers

Martha Beck's father abandoned her and her family when she was very young (Blust, 2016) According to section 1.4, abandonment is common among serial killers. Beck was often teased at school, had no friends, and spent a lot of time alone. She graduated at the top of her class, but she had unfortunate weight problems which made it very difficult for her to get a job. She joined the military and became a nurse. During this time, Beck became pregnant and asked the father to marry her, but he committed suicide instead. Very upset by this, she decided to

come back home and hide the misfortune about her baby's father from her family. Soon after her first baby, she had another one fathered by a bus driver, whom she married. Beck eventually got a job at a local hospital and advanced in rank, but she was very lonely. She put an ad into the newspaper to find a mate. That's when she met Raymond Fernandez (Blust, 2016).

Raymond Fernandez had a typically normal childhood. He was from Spain and in the Spanish military. Fernandez was married and had two children. He and his wife decided it was best if Fernandez came to the United States to find a job, and then his wife and children would join him permanently (Blust, 2016). However, tragedy struck when he had a work accident that resulted in permanent brain damage. As stated in section 1.4, brain damage is a common trait in serial killers. The brain damage changed Fernandez completely. He became impulsive and violent, committing crime after crime. He never sent for his wife; instead, he met a woman through an ad. They would become a killer couple that no one would ever forget (Blust, 2016).

Fernandez wanted nothing more than to control women so that he could take advantage of them. He would ask for locks of women's hair thinking that he could perform voodoo on them for total control. Beck became obsessed with Fernandez and would do absolutely anything that he asked of her. In the beginning, he had only wanted to use her for money, but he learned as a single mother that she had none. He also realized she was not going away. Everything Fernandez told Beck to do, she did without question. Fernandez told her she needed to get rid of her kids, so that is just what she did; she left them for someone else to have. Beck learned of Fernandez's crime spree, marrying and robbing women but she did not care and even started volunteering to help Fernandez take advantage of women (Blust, 2016).

In the beginning, he would marry women, rob them, and leave or divorce them. However, sometimes they would slip up, and the women would catch on. Fernandez would tell Beck to

take care of them, and Beck would kill the women and even their children if Fernandez told her too. Love changed Beck, and she was no longer the naive nurse; she was a cold-blooded killer (Blust, 2016).

Their last victim was a two-year-old girl. Beck had killed her mother when the mother caught them lying to her. The two-year-old little girl cried for a few days wanting her mother, and when Beck had enough of her crying she drowned the little girl. However, hearing two days of a two-year-old crying was enough to get the neighbors' attention. The neighbors called the police because something just was not right (Blust, 2016).

Beck and Fernandez were arrested that day. They thought that they had gotten off easy because Michigan did not have a death penalty. Little did they know, they would be transported to New York and sentenced to death. When asked why they did what they did they both said for love (Blust, 2016).

Section 2.10: Barbie and Ken Killers

Karla Homolka had a good childhood. She had two sisters and parents who showed her love and support. Homolka was considered an attractive girl who had a lot of friends. In high school, she started to exhibit strange behavior, and she would fantasize about hurting herself. Some people would describe Karla as "crazy" with fantasies about killing while others would describe her as ambitious with a bright future. She and a group of friends decided that they were going to marry rich older men and have a life of beautiful things and a big house (Williams, 1997).

Paul Bernardo had a background more typical of a serial killer. Even though he had parents who were around, his father was a criminal. His dad began raping Bernardo's sister at a

very young age, and that abuse continued for a long time. Bernardo's sister even had suspicions that their father abused her daughter, his granddaughter. Also, it later came out that the man Bernardo knew as his father really was not. Despite his troubled upbringings, Bernardo was a successful accountant, and was described as handsome, athletic, and very successful (Williams, 1997).

Homolka was away with her friends on vacation when she met Bernardo. He was six years older than she, but they immediately connected. After the trip, Bernardo would make trips to visit her at home. Little did Homolka know that every time he came to visit her he would brutally rape and stalk young girls in the area. She did not find this out until later into their relationship. Bernardo was charming, older, and her parents seem to like him. She believed their relationship was great. She loved him and would do anything for him. He started asking for her to call him obscure names and even started to make her do things that she did not want to, but she did because she loved him and wanted to marry him (Williams, 1997).

The relationship changed when Bernardo told Homolka that he wanted to rape and take her little sisters' virginity. She was only fifteen, and although at first, she said no, he grew angry, so she let Bernardo do whatever he wanted to her sister (Williams, 1997). Homolka was working at an animal clinic and took some sedatives to from her work. She drugged her sister that night, allowing Bernardo to rape her. Her sister was unconscious the entire time, and he videotaped all of it. When Bernardo was finished, he made Homolka rape her sister and even though she pleaded at times that she did not want to do it. Bernardo grew angry at her, and so Homolka complied. Bernardo noticed that her sister was not breathing. She had died from the sedation that Homolka had given her. Homolka called the ambulance and staged it as an accident. No one would ever believe what happened to her sister and they never pushed the issue. It seemed not to

affect Homolka or Bernardo. After that night, Bernardo started making Homolka pretend to be her sister and act out the night she died. They would often have sex on her sister's bed, and Bernardo would be holding a picture of Homolka's sister fantasizing about her. Bernardo wanted more, and Homolka was desperate to give him everything he wanted. Homolka kidnapped a girl, and they drugged and raped her. This time, Homolka was careful of the dosage, and everything went smoothly. Homolka dropped the girl off the next day, and the girl had no idea what had happened to her. She stated that she felt weird and thought she had the flu due to having been heavily drugged. Bernardo preferred more of a challenge though. He liked the thought of torturing his victims and violently killing them. That is when Bernardo and Homolka went from serial rapists to serial killers (Williams, 1997).

Bernardo continued to rape and beat girls and brings them home where Homolka would be actively involved in the crimes. Later in his confessions, Bernardo states that Homolka even killed some of the girls that he brought back. When Bernardo would have cooling off periods in between his murders, (a break in between murders to keep police off of his tracks) he would start to beat his wife (Williams, 1997).

It was like Homolka was never enough for Bernardo, and he just used her as a backup for when he needed his fix and could not get it. He continued to beat her and act like her life meant nothing to him. One day he beat Homolka with a flashlight in the face, leaving her bloody and banged up. She had enough of the abuse and ran to her parents' house. They took her to the hospital and Bernardo was arrested and charged with assault. She went to live with her aunts so that Bernardo could not find her. He went crazy without Homolka there as he had no one to control. He made videotapes begging for Homolka to come back to him stating that he would

change, and everything would only be about her. But, Homolka was finished and had already started a new love interested (Williams, 1997).

The police started to put together the pieces that Bernardo might be the perpetrator in the Scarborough rapes. At this point, Homolka had confessed what they did to her aunt, although she left out any sign that she was a part of it. Homolka claimed to be an abused spouse. Homolka was asked to testify against Bernardo in exchange for receiving only four years in prison. She agreed, and everything looked like it was going to be pinned on Bernardo until he told the police where all the tapes were that he had recorded. At this point, they had already offered Homolka the deal, and they could not take it back (Williams, 1997).

Homolka only received twelve years for everything she had done. She was released from prison in 2005 in Canada and is out and about in this world. She changed her name due to the notoriety of the case (Williams, 1997). Bernardo received twenty-five years with no change of parole (Vronsky, 2007).

Section 2.11: Moors Killers

Ian Brady grew up in foster care and was involved in a lot of criminal activity growing up. He would bully kids in school and had no friends. Brady was obsessed with hurting animals at a young age. As mentioned, in section 1.7, hurting animals is common with serial killers. While in school, he cut the heads off of bunnies. Brady had an interest in Nazis and became obsessed with women who died in the Nazi camps. He even went as far as to say he was German and learn the language (Padnani, 2017).

Myra Hindley was said to love children and had a normal childhood. However, her mom said she did not want her anymore when her younger sister was born and sent her away. Her

grandmother only lived a short distance and let Hindley have anything she ever wanted. Hindley developed a great relationship with her neighbor and acted as his big sister. He had asked her to go swimming with her one day, but she was not in the mood to go swimming and said no. He drowned, and it is reported that she blamed herself for that tragedy and never recovered from it. As discussed in section 1.4, trauma of this aptitude can push serial killer behaviors (Padnani, 2017).

Hindley took a job at an industrial supply company, and Brady was her boss. Although they did not speak for a while, Hindley became obsessed with Brady. She stated that she loved him before they even really talked. They eventually began to date, and just like in the Homolka and Bernardo story, Brady would force Hindley to do things with which were not comfortable, but she did them because she was so obsessed with him. She changed her views on religion and her appearance just because of his influence. Brady told Hindley that they needed to perform the perfect murder to make their love official. That is when they started their killing spree. They would rape and killed young boys and girls and crudely dispose of their bodies (Padnani, 2017).

They eventually attempted to recruit Hindley's brother-in-law (Padnani, 2017). When they committed a murder in front of the brother-in-law, he went home and told Hindley's sister, and they called the police. Both Brady and Hindley were sentenced to life in prison. They continued to be together while they were in jail and even tried to get married. Eventually, Hindley told people that she forced by Brady to do the crimes. However, she died in prison from a heart attack, and Brady remains incarcerated in a Canadian prison (Padnani, 2017).

Chapter 3: Incarceration

The United States has more individuals who are incarcerated than other country in the world. During the twenty-first century, people did not receive a long-term sentence. Most individuals were hanged, mutilated, or made into a joke in front of everyone. Once the punishment was received if death was not given, the criminal was forgiven and accepted back into society (Bibas, 2015). This allowed the person to still provide for his family and not put a hinder on them. Today, prison is the most commonly used form of punishment. This in turn, can do the opposite of what it is supposed to do, deter crime. When someone is sentenced to prison they often lose their job and house, and this puts a damper on their families. Thus, prison can have the opposite impact that it is meant for (Bibas, 2015).

Does incarceration deter crime? The idea of prison was to make individuals refrain from committing crimes. Most criminals do not have the discipline that is needed to be able to live and follow the rules of society. Most criminals suffer from underlying conditions that are self-treated with drugs and alcohol making deterrence for them a problem in itself. Also, the number of laws contributes to more incarcerations (Bibas, 2015). Incarceration is meant as a punishment to keep serial killers locked up and away from the public. Many serial killers receive a death sentence, but there are a lot of serial killers who only face prison time, and some even have an option of parole (Lyon, 2014). Serial killers who get charged with multiple murders often receive a life sentence without the possibility of parole (Lyon, 2014). It is unfortunate, but some serial killers are offered probation and go back out into the community. Often, they change their names, and blend anonymously into the community. Some serial killers go on to be a part of the community while others kill again (Lyon, 2014).

Section 3.1: The Death Penalty

In the twentieth century, it was common to sentence someone to a hanging for stealing. Today, only thirty-two states have the option for the death penalty, and five methods of death are approved.

Lethal injection before 2012 consisted of injecting Sodium Thiopental (sedative) Pancuronium bromide (collapses the diaphragm and lungs), and Potassium chloride (stops the heart). Currently, lethal injection consists of Pentobarbital. The offender typically dies within eight minutes of the drug distributed. John Wayne Gacy was sentenced to lethal injection, and it took eighteen minutes before he was pronounced dead (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015)

1. Hanging- the last hanging was performed in the United States in Owensboro, Kentucky on June 7, 1936. Even though it is an approved method of execution, it is rarely used (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015).
2. Electrocutation- the offender sits in a metal chair while bolts of electricity are sent through his/her body (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015).
3. Gas chamber- deadly gas or asphyxiated gas is emitted to the offender within a sealed room (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015).
4. Fire Squad- Is where guards line up with guns and shoot the offender in a vital organ killing them instantly (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015).

Even though these five methods of execution are permissible, not all states allow them to be used. Fifteen states do not have the death penalty as a form of punishment. Alabama, Arkansas, South Carolina, Virginia, Florida, and Kentucky use lethal injection and electrocution. Arizona, Missouri, and Wyoming use lethal injection and the gas chamber. California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and

Oregon use lethal injection as their only form of execution. Delaware, New Hampshire, and Washington use lethal injection, electrocution, and hanging. Idaho and Utah use lethal injection and the firing squad. Oklahoma uses lethal injection, electrocution, and the firing squad (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015).

Whether or not the death penalty is unconstitutional is one of the most controversial topics in history. Does the death penalty violate one's constitutional rights? The answer is not simple; it is merely a matter of opinion, religion, and which way you perceive the Constitution (Lyon, 2014).

Since 2012, use of the death penalty has dropped drastically (Lyon, 2014). Each form of execution has been legally challenged because of the Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clause in the Constitution. Race and gender have also been used as grounds to challenge the death penalty. Historically, women were seldom sentenced to the death penalty because people believed that women, considered natural nurturers, would be incapable of murder (Lyon, 2014). Mentally impaired criminals may not understand what they did was wrong, so sentencing them to death has no outcome of deterrence; therefore, a lot of murders who are on death row plead insanity (Lyon, 2014).

Once a criminal has been convicted and sentenced to the death penalty they may wait for twenty to twenty-five years for the sentence to be carried out. One reason it may take so long is because criminals often challenge the decision and try to fight their conviction. Murderers who are in prison for life sometimes ask the judge to send them to death row because of how much better it is for them. On death row, prisoners have more free time, better food, and receive contact visits with their loved ones. Take Ted Bundy for example, he managed to get married, have a child, and visit his child while on death row (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015).

Section 3.2 Security Measures

In the 1980s there were security measures like we have today, but they were not as advanced. It took the police longer to make connections with criminals to murders and even then, it was hard to show proof beyond a reasonable doubt (Schwartz, 2015). It was also tricky to identify victims. In a lot of serial killer cases, victim remains have not been identified and even today are listed as Jane and John Does (Schwartz, 2015). It was not until dental records came into play that Ted Bundy was identified as the suspect. Ted Bundy was able to escape two from jail and prison because police officers trusted him, and he was able to have a baby on death row even though that was not allowed. Dahmer was able to convince police that his drugged-up underage victim was a boyfriend who he was having relationship issues with and that is why the victim was on the street naked. Homolka and Bernardo were able to convince family and the police that Homolka's sister died of natural causes without the police even giving it another thought. Even after suspicion, Jones was able to continue to inject babies (Vronsky, 2007).

Today, our security measures are a lot more advanced. For instance, when someone is pulled over, two different police officers stop no matter what. Cameras and security systems are readily available to the public. Police can investigate if they had even a suspicion of criminal activity. Sex offenders must register with the police, and that registry is made available to the public. Social media provides instant communication and has helped bring criminals forward and helped find missing persons (Dorwart, 2018). Hardly anyone escapes from prison, and if they do, it was an error on the security officer and not on a violation of safety measures (Dorwart, 2018).

3.3: Insanity Plea

Some serial killers use insanity as their last desperate attempt to escape a life in prison sentence or the death penalty. Although normal people would assume that every serial killer is insane because it is hard to fathom that any person would be capable of such horrific crimes, most serial killers are not insane at all. How is insane defined in the court of law? To be deemed insane, these requirements must be met. First, the offender did not know what they were doing at the time of the murder, and second, they do not know how to differentiate right and wrong. The offender must admit guilt so that they cannot change their plea to not guilty if the insanity plea is denied (Ranker Crime, 2019).

Jeffrey Dahmer was one of the most horrific serial killers who killed and ate seventeen young boys. He entered a plea of insanity, but the judge denied it, and he was sentenced life in prison, although he was killed by another inmate. Serial killer Albert Fish told the courts God told him to kill children even though the court agreed that he was insane they still sentenced him to the death penalty (Marlowe & Greig, 2016).

. Most insanity pleas are denied, but a few are accepted, and those offenders avoid jail and the death penalty. Ed Gein was the reason we have the characters Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Leatherface, and Norman Bates. He used the body parts for things such as mask and belts. Gein plead guilty but insane, and the courts agreed that he was insane. He avoided the death penalty but spent his life in the mental hospital. The woman who drowned her children in the bathtub due to postpartum depression, Andrea Yates, pleaded insanity, and the judge accepted her plea. She

is also living in a mental hospital. Postpartum depression is a newly accepted form of mental illness (Logsdon, Wisner, & Shanahan, 2007).

Chapter 4: Conclusion

In conclusion, serial killers kill for a variety of reasons such as mental health issues, neglect, and abandonment, abuse at a young age, brain trauma, financial gain, and fulfilling personal fantasies. Mental illness has been linked to many of the most notorious serial killers such as Ted Bundy, Aileen Wuornos, and Jeffrey Dahmer. In the same sense, many serial killers had no mental disorder, and they had a happy family McCready (2016).

Many serial killers showed signs at an early age and began to self-medicate themselves with drugs and alcohol making their condition worse. For instance, Jeffrey Dahmer would torment animals and bury them in his backyard. Had his parents noticed, his story might have had a different outcome. Aileen Wuornos had a mood disorder where she made irrational decisions. Ted Bundy was a psychopath, and he had no feeling towards his victim (Pickersgill, 2009).

The first known serial killer H.H. Holmes scammed and killed around a hundred people in his murder castle, a house that was under construction that had a lot of secret tunnels and rooms. It was not until Holmes scammed his friend and took the insurance money that police connected Holmes to the crimes. He was charged with twenty-seven murders and received execution by hanging (Garau, 2017).

Female serial killers tend to plan out their murders, and the scene is usually very clean. Women favor using poisons because it is not sloppy and does not require moving the victim. They stay where they were when they died. Women also kill people that they know like their

husbands, children, and parents. Most of the time, women kill for the financial gain and material items. For example, women kill their husbands to get the insurance money because he has cut her off or has limited her spending or they kill their children, so they do not have to deal with them anymore (Vronsky, 2007).

Genevieve Jones was a nurse at a hospital for critically ill children. She was known as the nurse that always knew when babies were about to go into cardiac arrest. At first, people thought she was talented, but they quickly learned that she was responsible for making them code. Jones was abandoned by her birth parents but was adopted by a nice wealthy family. She was an exceptional storyteller in school and always told lies. She had no friends except a sibling in which she was close with. He died when she was in high school and shortly after that her father died. It is believed that is what sent Jones over the edge (Vronsky, 2007).

Male serial killers do not typically kill to kill, but they kill to carry out their personal fantasies, and if those fantasies are reached by doing other things, then they do not care if you live or die. Men kill people that they do not know. If you tell the male serial killer personal information, they typically will not kill you. Male serial killers are often very sloppy with their murders and will dismember the body (Vronsky, 2007).

Jeffrey Dahmer was not only a serial killer but also a cannibal. He had two parents that loved him and had no known abuse from them growing up. He did enjoy torturing and killing animals and burying them in his backyard. He would murder young boys and use toxic chemicals to mutilate their bodies and flush them down the toilet. He would keep their skulls as memorabilia and paint them, so everyone would think they were art. Police once even brought a victim back to his apartment because he had drugged that victim up so bad that he could not tell

the police what was happening to him. Hours after the police brought the young boy back, Dahmer murdered him (Jentzen, Palermo, Johnson, Ho, & Stormo, 1994).

Killer relationships often involve one dominate person. In serial killer couples, the chance that either one would have been a solo killer are slim. Women often play the battered victim when they get caught, but the women are usually just as involved as men. The need to kill is usually only one member of the couple's fantasy, but the other end up enjoying it. The lonely heart killers wanted it all. They would pose as brother and sister and talk lonely wealthy women into marriage. Martha Beck was obsessively in love with Fernandez and would do anything for him. They would rob women, and sometimes things would go wrong, and they would kill them. Beck was the one that completed the killings, but Fernandez would tell her what he wanted her to do. Their last victim was a two-year-old. They had previously killed the mother and then the baby would not stop crying for her mother. Beck decided to get rid of the baby because she said she could not take the crying any longer. The neighbors reported the crying to the police, and that is when they were arrested. They were sentenced to death (Vronsky, 2007).

Thirty-five out of fifty states have the death penalty while many of those states do not enforce it. Fifteen out of fifty states do not have the death penalty at all. Serial killers in those states that do not have the death penalty often get life sentences, some with the option of parole. Many of the states that enforce the death penalty end up with offenders dying on death row before even reaching the death penalty phase. Most of the time serial killers are sentenced to death unless they are in a state that does not have the death penalty. If the crime was committed in the state that does not offer the death penalty, often the inmates will be transferred to a state that provides the death penalty (Vollum, Frantzen, & Cheeseman, 2015).

Current security measures compared to the 1980s and 1990s have improved drastically. Advances in technology have also made it easier to catch criminals. Criminals are not able to get away with things as they used to and pinning down a murderer is a lot easier than it used to be. The security in prison has also been upgraded making it a lot harder to escape. Cameras and security systems are readily available and make it harder on the criminals (Stephens, n.d.).

Section 4.1: Personal thoughts

I believe we have no idea what truly makes a person want to kill. Although, we have made many efforts to identify the cause, there is nothing in black and white. I believe that a lot of factors make serial killers more prone to kill, but it does not make them “pull the trigger,” if you will. A scan of the brain was done on psychopathic serial killers, and it showed that their brain tissue was noticeably thinner than a normal human brain (Moon, 2013). However, being psychopathic does not mean that you are a serial killer. It does not even mean that you will murder or be harm to society. What the study should have done was completed scans of all psychopaths whether they murdered or not. That would have given us a better understanding if brain abnormalities were specificity linked to serial killers (Hagerty, 2010).

The Barbie and Ken killers (Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo) were the most interesting serial killers to me. Karla was a normal teenager; she was pretty and had friends. How does she let someone like Bernardo walk into her life and make her assist in the slaying of her little sister? She did not face any of the normal serial killer statistics. It has been blamed on love but what about the love she had for her little sister? It seems to me that Homolka showed no emotion for what she was doing. After her little sister was brutally murdered, she showed no remorse knowing that she and Bernardo were responsible. Instead, she did not care until the tables turned and Bernardo started beating her that is when she decided to get out.

Ted Bundy was also very different. He had a charm about him that made people believe he would never be capable of murdering all those women. I watched his tapes that were released about his final moments in prison, and I believed that he was innocent right up until he confessed which the day before his electrocuted. Bundy was smart and had a promising future as a lawyer. Unfortunately, one day something clicked for him, and that sent him over the edge to become one of America's most prolific serial killers.

Serial killers are unlike any other criminals including murderers. People who murder just once often do it out of rage and do not plan their killings. They also usually feel bad and remorseful the moment they realize what they have done. Someone who kills one person is likely never to murder again. Serial killers, on the other hand, plan out their murders, kill and either like it or are unphased, so they murder again and again. Understanding a serial killer is a tough task, unlike someone who commits one murder. This research paper enabled me to link the different research that helps define the reasoning why serial killers kill.

It was interesting for me to learn that women serial killers are clean with their murders, but if you add a male to the mix as a killer couple, they are a lot different and sloppy, showing no regard for human life. I believe that serial killers start with different things that they face as a child. However, I think that they have the choice to be different than what they had, and they choose to be a follower. Reading some of the statistics of serial killers I was able to link them to personal childhood experiences. I was abandoned, abused, and neglected at a very young age. With that being said, I decided to be different and better, and that is just what I did. I know many serial killers face a mental illness, but I believe everyone around them failed to see the signs that they were portraying or were unwilling or unequipped to address them.

I also think that the criminal justice system fails sometimes. If we have a serial killer that has been found guilty, admitted to, or we have proof beyond a reasonable doubt that they killed multiple people, we should immediately sentence them to execution and not let them sit on death row for twenty years. They decided to take numerous lives, so they should give theirs in exchange. Right now, serial killers are dying on death row because it takes so long actually to carry out an execution. The families of the victims deserve some justice, and that is just what the death penalty signifies.

I also do not believe you should pick the type of death that you want. I think it should be up to the judge, and the harsher the crime, the more stringent punishment. In my opinion, we are letting these serial killers live a great life on death row where they get good food, more visits, and more privileges. They deserve the opposite worse food, treatment, and no visits; they should lose every right; they have the moment they decided to take someone else's life into their own hands.

With that being said, what I did not know was that serial killers are everywhere, they are on the bus with you, they sit beside you, and maybe you even know them personally. When that story breaks you become shocked and immediately start confessing that they have the wrong person. My husband went to school with a serial killer, and he did not even know about it. He described the guy as popular, normal, smart, and athletic. A year ago, he was on the news for murdering three people. The killings were done in their homes. If I had known him growing up or his home life, I could compare the characteristics with other serial killers.

While writing this paper, I have learned a great deal about serial killers and their reasons for targeting and killing innocent victims. Thus, I now understand a little better what goes on in a serial killer's mind when they are committing murders. I have always had a fascination with

serial killers. I always thought it was odd, but I think I could not understand them. I thought serial killers were people just like me who just enjoyed killing. I now realize that is not true at all. Serial killers like everything about the kill such as the chase, the thrill, the passion, the excitement, and the control, and that typically ends with the victim stops breathing. I still do not fully comprehend how they could do it and feel nothing, but then again, I have emotions, and they do not so I will never fully understand.

My final thoughts are, if we as a community could recognize signs when children are being abused mentally and physically at home, we could potentially save lives. If parents paid more attention to their children, they could understand the signs. In McCracken County alone, there are roughly seven-hundred child abuses and child neglect cases that go in front of the judge and assigned a caseworker. Social workers are faced with as many as sixty cases at a time and are not able to investigate thoroughly. If John Wayne Gacy was never abused, would that have made a difference? The answer is unknown, but at the very least it could have provided another chance at life for someone or at the very least more answers in research.

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