

**FBI** LAW  
ENFORCEMENT  
BULLETIN

AUGUST 1985

The background of the page is covered in various red ink splatters and stains of different sizes and shapes, creating a chaotic and violent visual effect. The stains are most concentrated in the lower half of the page, where they form a large, dark red mass.

*Violent Crime*



# FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN

AUGUST 1985, VOLUME 54, NUMBER 8

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*EDITOR'S NOTE: This special issue of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin reports the results of research on sexual homicide crime scenes and patterns of criminal behavior. It is the work of:*

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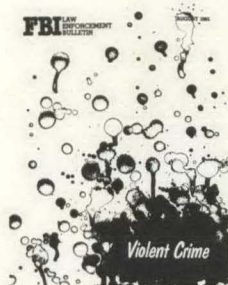
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# Director's Message

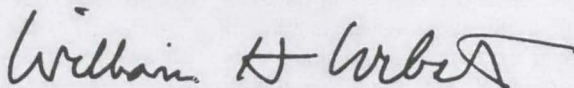
The concept of a National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime was developed a year ago; this special issue of the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* presents the first reportage of results to the law enforcement community of the extensive research undertaken by the Center.

One of the first tasks of the Center was to collect a data base on serial murders. We believe that this is one area where a nationwide approach would best serve the needs of local authorities because many of these murderers are highly mobile in their violent criminal activities. The assistance rendered by the Behavioral Science Unit of our Training Division in developing profiles in unsolved homicide cases has been recognized by local authorities across the country. It is now an integral part of the Center.

Your cooperation is sought in this undertaking by the Center, since without it we could not build the reliable data base needed to analyze the serial murders, rapes, arsons, and other crimes we have targeted. This research project has two specific objectives: (1) To develop statistical models (and companion computer software) to discriminate between patterns of homicide crime scenes, and (2) to identify patterns of behavioral and personality traits that correlate with the evidence found at the crime scene.

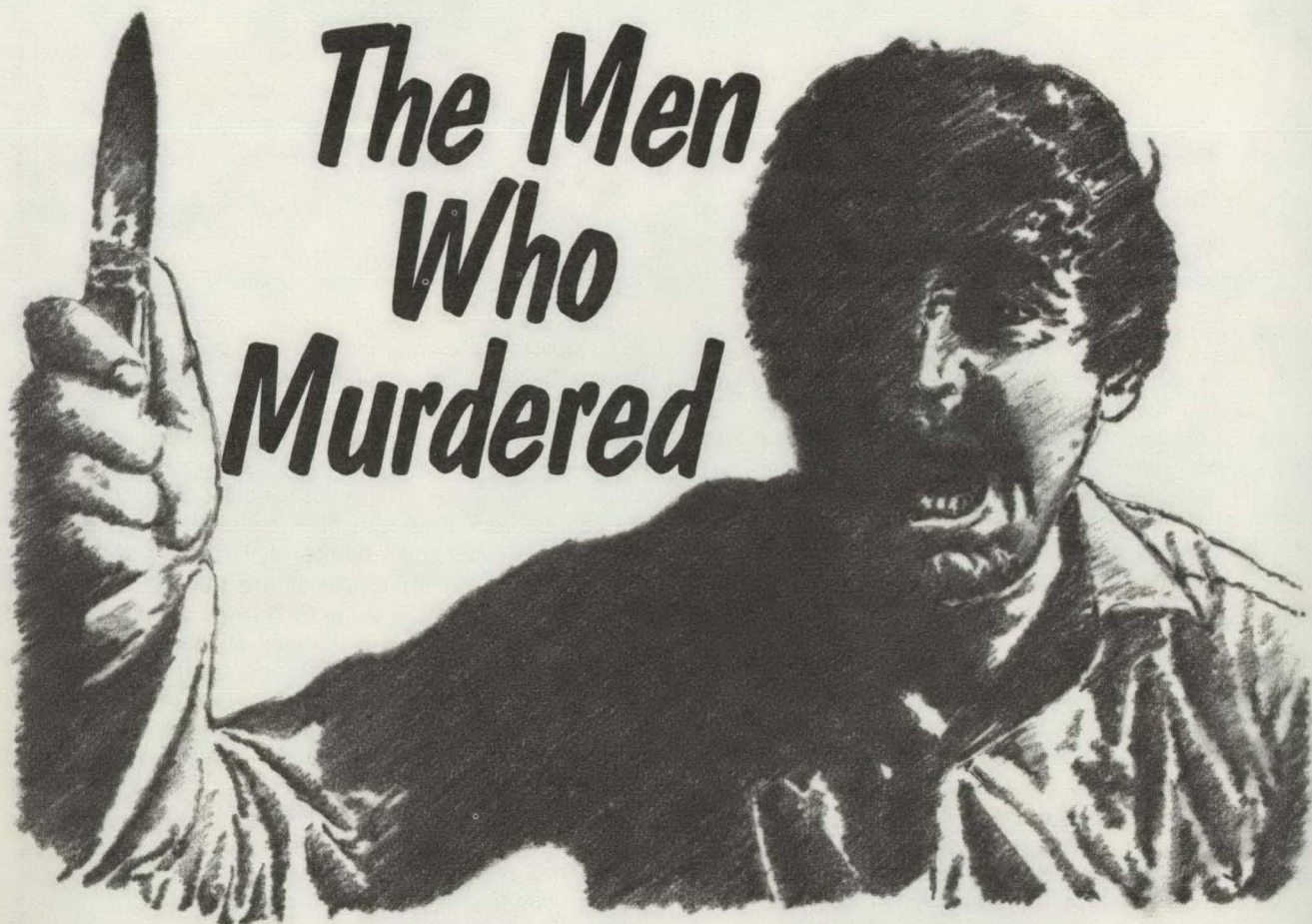
The National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime will be an important tool in solving these perplexing crimes that are committed by these mobile criminals in our society. We owe the Center's existence to the tremendous cooperation of officials like Pierce Brooks, former chief of police of three different cities, and longtime homicide investigator, who supervised the establishment of the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VI-CAP)—one element of the Center—and the material support of other Department of Justice agencies: The Office of Justice Programs, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

In the latest development at the Center, we are now training local officers selected for specialization in profiling and VI-CAP matters so that each can work on these difficult cases with a local FBI Agent, also specially trained. As we develop the data base on these crimes of violence, teams working at the Center will report their progress to the whole law enforcement community in various ways, including in the pages of the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*.



William H. Webster  
Director  
August 1, 1985





# The Men Who Murdered

Statistics from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports document the alarming number of victims of sexually violent crimes. One of the disturbing patterns inherent in these statistics is that of the serial or repetitive criminal. Law enforcement officials have questioned whether a small percentage of criminals may be responsible for a large number of crimes, that is, a core group of habitual serious and violent offenders. This has been documented in one study on juvenile delinquents,<sup>1</sup> and other studies have reported similar results,<sup>2</sup> with average estimates of from 6 to 8 percent of delinquents comprising the core of the delinquency problem.

To address this problem, law enforcement is studying techniques to aid in apprehending serial offenders. These techniques require an in-depth knowledge of the criminal personality, an area that, until recently, was researched primarily by forensic clinicians who interviewed criminals from a psychological framework or by criminologists who studied crime trends and statistics. Missing from the data base were critical aspects relevant to law enforcement investigation. Researchers have now begun to study the criminal from law enforcement perspectives, with a shift in focus to the investigative process of crime scene inquiry and victimology.

Our research is the first study of sexual homicide and crime scene patterns from a law enforcement per-

spective. It includes an initial appraisal of a profiling process and interviews of incarcerated murderers conducted by FBI Special Agents. The interviews contain specific questions answered from compiled sources plus lengthy, open-ended interviews with the murderers themselves. A subsample of 36 sexual murderers was selected for analysis to develop further information for profiling these murders. Here, we present what we learned about these 36 men. It is important to recognize that we are making general statements about these offenders. Not all statements are true for *all* offenders, although they may be true for *most* of the 36 men or for most of the offenders from whom we obtained data. Responses were not available from all offenders for all questions.



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## **“Law enforcement officials have questioned whether a small percentage of criminals may be responsible for a large number of crimes. . . .”**

### **Background Characteristics**

Although their birth years ranged from 1904 to 1958, most of the 36 offenders (all male) grew up in the 1940's and 1950's. They were predominantly white and were usually eldest sons (first or second born), which gave them a distinct advantage, given the dominant-male attitudes in the country at that time.

Most of these men, as adults, had pleasant general appearances, suggesting that as boys they were not unattractive. Their heights and weights were within the norms, and few had distinguishing handicaps or physical defects to set them apart in a group of boys or men. The majority of the men were of average or above-average intelligence, with one-third having superior intelligence.

The majority initially began life in two-parent homes, and half of the mothers were homemakers. Although the majority of fathers worked at unskilled jobs, they were steadily employed; only five men reported the family living at substandard economic levels.

Thus, poverty was not a significant factor in the socioeconomic status of families; mothers were in the home; fathers were earning stable incomes; the subjects were intelligent, white, eldest sons. With such positive personal characteristics and social factors, the question is: What went wrong? Is there any evidence of what may have turned these men into sexually oriented murderers?

### **Family Background**

It is often argued that the structure and quality of family interaction is an important factor in the development of a child, especially in the way

the child perceives the family members and their interaction with him and with each other. For children growing up, the quality of their attachments to parents and other members of the family is important in how these children become adults and relate to, and value, other members of society. Essentially, these early life attachments (sometimes called bonding) translate into a map of how the child will perceive situations outside of the family. Because of this, we were especially interested in specific factors within family relationships that best show the offenders' levels of attachment to people.

The family histories of these men revealed that multiple problems existed in the family structure. Half of the offenders' families had members with criminal histories; over half of the families had psychiatric problems. This suggests insufficient contact between some family members and the offender as a child, as well as the possibility of inadequate patterns of relating. Nearly 70 percent of the families had histories of alcohol abuse, one-third of the families had histories of drug abuse, and sexual problems among family members were either present or suspected in almost half of the reported cases. Thus, it is unlikely that most of the offenders experienced a good quality of life or positive interactions with family members.

When examining the patterns described by the murderers regarding their own families, one is impressed by the high degree of instability in homelife and by the poor quality of attachment among family members. Only one-third of the men reported growing up in one location. The majority (17) said they experienced occasional instability, and six reported chronic instability or frequent moving.

Over 40 percent of the men lived outside the family home before age 18 in places such as foster homes, State homes, detention centers, or mental hospitals. Twenty-five of the men for whom data were available had histories of early psychiatric difficulties, thereby minimizing their opportunity to establish positive relationships within the family. In addition, the families had minimal attachment to a community, reducing the child's opportunities to develop positive, stable relationships outside the family that might compensate for family instability.

As stated earlier, both parents were present in over half (20) of the cases, with the father being absent in 10 cases, the mother being absent in 3 cases, and both parents being absent in 2 cases. However, of importance is that in 17 cases, the biological father left home before the boy reached 12 years of age. This absence was due to a variety of reasons, including separation and divorce. It is not surprising, then, that the dominant parent of the offender during the rearing phase of his life was the mother (for 21 cases). Only nine offenders said the father was the dominant parent, and two said both parents shared the parenting roles.

Perhaps the most interesting fact revealed was that most offenders said they did not have a satisfactory relationship with their father, and their relationship with their mother was highly ambivalent in emotional quality. Sixteen of the men reported cold or uncaring relationships with their mothers, and 26 reported such relationships with their fathers.

Twenty of the offenders had no older brothers and 17 had no older sisters. In terms of having a strong role model during formative years,



## **"It appears that the childhood physical and sexual abuse experienced by these offenders was manifested in their preference for fantasy life."**

these men lacked an older sibling who might make up for parental deficiencies. Instead, they had to compete with younger siblings in an emotionally deficient environment.

Compounding the offenders' limited opportunities for positive attachments were their perceptions of parental discipline. Frequently, the men reported discipline as unfair, hostile, inconsistent, and abusive. These men believed they were not dealt with fairly by adults throughout their formative years.

This quote from a serial murderer illustrates these beliefs:

"See, if I had my way, you guys would never have grown up or become FBI agents. I wanted the whole world to kick off when I was about 9 or 10. I didn't want my family to break up; I loved them both. There was a lot of fighting and that had me crying watching it at night. They divorced. I've got two sisters and my mother treated me like a third daughter telling me what a rotten father I have. I'm supposed to be identifying with my dad and I never did. I got an older sister that beats up on me a lot—five years older. I got a younger sister that lies on both of us and gets us punished. I had the instinct to feel like I'm getting a rotten deal."

The data have suggested that most of the 36 murderers, while growing up, had weak attachments to family members. They felt uninvolved with their fathers, ambivalent toward their mothers, and little attachment to younger siblings. The parents were preoccupied with their own problems of substance abuse, criminality, or aberrant sexual behavior and were often arguing. It appears that while parents offered little guidance, they were role models for deviant patterns.

### **Individual Development**

When looking at individual development of the offenders, two factors stand out—the dominance of a fantasy life and a history of personal abuse.

Many of the murderers were able to describe the importance of a fantasy life in their early development. These fantasies were primarily violent and sadistic in nature. Twenty offenders had rape fantasies before age 18, and seven of these men acted out these fantasies within a year of becoming consciously aware of them.

There was evidence of abuse in the childhood histories of these men. Physical abuse (13/31), psychological abuse (23/31), and childhood sexual abuse (12/31) were noted.

When the offenders were asked to rank their sexual interests, the highest ranking activity was pornography (81 percent), followed by compulsive masturbation (79 percent), fetishism (72 percent), and voyeurism (71 percent). It is interesting to note the seemingly solitary pattern of these sexual expressions.

It appears that the childhood physical and sexual abuse experienced by these offenders was manifested in their preference for fantasy life. In addition, when questioned about the murders themselves and their preparations for the murders, the men identified the importance of fantasy to the rapes and murders. After the first murder, the men found themselves deeply preoccupied and sometimes stimulated by their memories of the act, all of which contributed to fantasies for subsequent murders.

One begins to understand how an early pattern used to cope with an unsatisfactory family life might turn a

child away from reality and into his own private world of violence where the child can exert control. The control of the fantasy becomes crucial first to the child and later to the man. These are not fantasies of escape to something better, as one often sees in children recovering from sexual assaults and abusive treatment. These men did not overcompensate for the stimulation and aggression by idyllic thinking or creative interests. Rather, their energies were funneled into fantasies of aggression and mastery over other people, suggesting a projected repetition of their own abuse and identification with the aggressor. As one murderer stated, "Nobody bothered to find out what my problem was and nobody knew about the fantasy world."

### **Performance**

Examination of performance behavior of these murderers revealed another paradox. Despite intelligence and potential in many areas, performance in academics, employment, sexual relationships, and military service was often poor. In all of these areas, performance did not match potential.

Although these men had the intelligence to perform well in school, academic failure was seen in their having to repeat elementary grades. The majority did not finish high school. In addition, school failure was frequently mentioned by the men, suggesting that they related this early failure to their sense of inadequacy.

The men also had the intelligence needed to perform skilled jobs; however, most offenders had poor work histories in unskilled jobs, and only 20 percent had ever held steady jobs.

About half of the offenders entered the military. Only 4 of the 14



who were in military service received honorable discharges, and 1 of the 4 had a criminal history in the service. Two men received general discharges, three were dishonorably discharged, three had undesirable discharges, and two received medical discharges.

The sexual performance of the offenders was generally at an autoerotic (solo sexual activity) level. Although 20 men were able to state an age of first consenting sex to orgasm, they did not report an extensive, peer-related sexual history. The ages of first consenting sexual experience ranged from 11 to 25. Of the 16 who did not report an age, it was clear to the interviewers that many never experienced consenting "normal" sex. There was an obvious preference for autoerotic activity.

The interviews with the offenders revealed many expressions of low self-esteem prior to the murders. Many offenders felt a sense of failure beginning at a young age. Again, we can speculate on the importance of fantasy life. It appears that what compensates for poor performance is the fantasy, in which the variables can be controlled.

### **Resultant Attitudes and Beliefs**

In reviewing background characteristics for the offenders as a group, a pattern emerges as we look at issues critical to sexual homicide. Although the personal strengths of the murderers (high intelligence, good appearance, average socioeconomic family status, oldest son or first/second born) are usually positive attributes for success, something occurs which causes a negative outcome for these men. From the perceived quality of family structure and

function, the history of abuse, the dominance of fantasy, the preference for solo sex, and the performance failure of these men, the data suggest the emergence of certain attitudes.

### *Devaluation of People*

The men in the study experienced low social attachment, felt detached from family members as well as from peers, and did not experience the bonding through which people develop sensitivity toward other people. The murderers frequently described themselves as loners or as feeling different from others their age. The resultant attitudes include beliefs that do not consider or are insensitive to the needs of others. Essentially, the offenders do not value relationships—they are self-centered.

### *World Viewed as Unjust*

The men perceived discipline in the home, school failures, and other inadequate performance as part of an unjust and unfair world. Their resultant belief is that other people are responsible for their fates.

### *Authority and Life Viewed as Inconsistent*

These men view authority and life as inconsistent, unpredictable, and unstable. As a result, the offenders do not value or trust authority.

### *Obsession with Dominance through Aggression*

The intense desire to be strong, powerful, and in control becomes an obsession to dominate through aggression. This desire results from the way the offenders responded to the abuse in their families. It was subsequently manifested in their fantasies and later in their acts.

### *Autoerotic Preference*

The men reported few attachments to persons outside of the family. Rather, they admitted to an autoerotic preference (masturbation) that combined with fantasies of aggression and the realities of the abuse they were concurrently experiencing. Their visual interests (pornography, fetishism, and voyeurism) reinforced the sex and aggression.

### *Fantasy is Reality*

The offenders' active participation in the social world is limited, and their efforts at performing and fitting in are frustrated. Their need for a sense of adequacy and mastery of life is noted in their development of private worlds where fantasy and delusions predominate. This retreat triggers the thoughts that dictate criminal behavior.

### **Deviant Behaviors**

The data suggest that the deviant behaviors of rape, mutilation, torture, and murder have some roots in both the offenders' background characteristics and their attitudes and beliefs. (See fig. 1.) The deviant behavior identified at the crime scene provides some clues for understanding the type of criminal personality responsible for the crime.

### *Rape*

Rape is sexually deviant behavior that exhibits absolute disregard for the worth and value of an individual. Rape fantasies range from having power and control over a victim to more violent sadistic fantasies. Those who rape before killing are seeking to



dominate others, regardless of the consequences; those who sexually assault after death (necrophilia) need the absence of life to have total domination without fear of resistance and/or rejection. In both cases, there is a high amount of sexual dysfunction, most frequently ejaculatory failure. This inadequacy is projected onto the victim and may play a part in the escalation to murder.

#### Mutilation and Torture

The act of mutilation may be predicated on a primary fantasy (sadism) or on a secondary fantasy (e.g., disposing of the body). A mutilation fantasy includes symbolic patterns to the cuttings and markings on a body or the amputation of the sexual parts of the body. This is in contrast to the practical aspect of dissecting a body for disposal or transportation purposes.

Torturing a victim is part of a sadistic fantasy. Such fantasies include some type of stimulus enhancing an autoerotic condition and include slicing, cutting, burning, pulling out hairs or body parts, and biting.

#### Murder

Murder is the ultimate expression of dominance. The offender's aggression is self-generated from his own fantasies, not from any societal model of strength or power. His idea of mastering other people emerges through his violence and aggression. For these murderers, sexual interest is linked with violence and exploitation rather than gentleness or pleasure. Murder fantasies range from conscious deliberate planning to a spontaneous outburst of rage. Although the offender's fantasy life develops his predatory activities, the first actual-

Figure 1

### General Characteristics, Resultant Attitudes and Beliefs, and Deviant Behaviors of 36 Sexual Murderers

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS		
Family Background	Individual Development	Performance
Detachment	Dominance of fantasy	School failure
Criminality	History of personal abuse	Sporadic work record
Substance abuse		Unskilled employment
Psychiatric problems		Poor military record
Sexual problems		Solo sex
Inconsistent discipline		
RESULTANT ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS	DEVIANT BEHAVIORS	
Devaluation of victim and society	Rape	
World viewed as unjust	Mutilation	
Authority/life viewed as inconsistent	Torture	
Autoerotic preference	Murder	
Obsession with dominance through aggression		
Fantasy as reality		

izing of the fantasy makes them real. Acting out the fantasy links the fantasy with reality, and the fantasy *becomes* reality. The offender believes he can now control reality.

#### Conclusion

What, then, can we glean from an analysis of background information and interviews with 36 sexual murderers? Although any speculations are general in nature and will not apply to every sexual killer, our sample indicates that child/adolescent energies were funneled into fantasies rather than into goal-directed learning behavior. Excessive involvement in solo sex, noted through the frequency of masturbation and the preference for visual isolated sexual experiences, such as fetishes and voyeurism, may have a link with the offender's dominant fantasy world. A high interest in pornography detracts from engaging in reality and relationships and further reinforces the fantasy. Excitement lies within the offender, not in his relationships with other people.

The roots of the murderer's actions appear to stem from their background experiences. The combination

of low social attachment, physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse, and a dominance of a violent, sexualized fantasy life sets into motion the attitudes and beliefs that trigger the deviant behavior of rape, mutilation, torture, and murder. One of the major relationship deficiencies for these murderers is in their interaction with men, perhaps stemming from the absent, cold, and unavailable father.

An understanding of some of the dynamics behind sexually deviant behavior provides law enforcement officials some insight into the suspects they are trying to identify and apprehend.

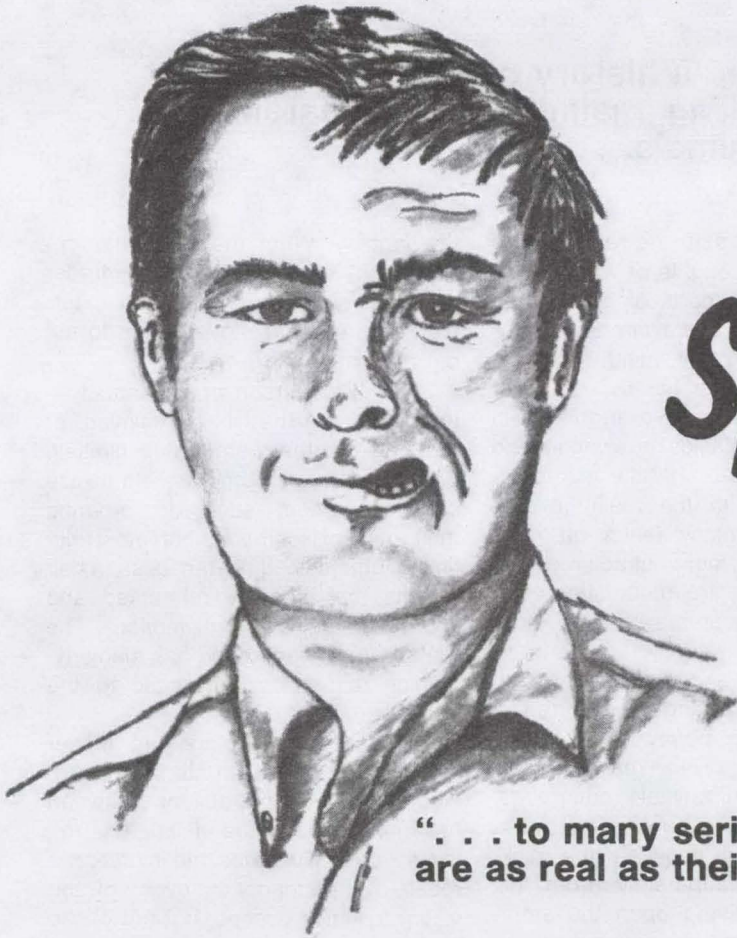
**FBI**

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> M.E. Wolfgang, R.M. Figlio, and T. Sellin, *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> R.M. Figlio and P.E. Tracy, "Chronic Recidivism in the 1968 Birth Cohort," unpublished manuscript, Washington, DC, NIJJDP, 1983; D.M. Hamparian, R. Schuster, S. Dinitz, and J.P. Conrad, *The Violent Few* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co., 1978); L.W. Shannon, "A Longitudinal Study of Delinquency and Crime," in *Quantitative Studies in Criminology*, ed. C. Wellford (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978).





# The Split Reality of Murder

**“. . . to many serial killers, . . . fantasies of murder are as real as their acts of murder.”**

“Murder is very real. It’s not something you see in a movie. You have to do all the practical things of surviving.”<sup>1</sup>

Murder is, indeed, very real. Yet to many serial killers, their fantasies of murder are as real as their acts of murder. To them, their existence is split into two realities: The social reality of the “normal” world where people do not murder, and the psychological vitality of the fantasy that is the impetus for the killer to commit his heinous crime. It is a split reality because the fantasy life is such a preoccupation. It becomes an additional reality, distinguishable from the “other” reality of the day-to-day social world.

Interviews with 36 convicted sexual murderers have provided insights into their attitudes, beliefs, and justifications for their crimes. In order to interpret the murderer’s sense of

what is important, this article presents thoughts and beliefs articulated by the murderers themselves. First, we discuss the structure of conscious motives for murder, the killer’s longstanding fantasy of violence and murder. Second, we look at what happens when the fantasy of murder is played out through its various phases. By presenting our interpretation of the fantasy’s importance to the serial killer, we hope to suggest perspectives for law enforcement on the investigation of sexual homicide.

### **Motive and Fantasy**

How does the motive for a murder evolve, and what triggers the murderer to act? Many murders puzzle law enforcement because they appear to lack the “usual” motives, such as robbery or revenge. Motives, however, need to be determined, since understanding the motive is criti-

cal to the subsequent apprehension of a suspect.

The 36 murderers in our study, replying to this fundamental question of what triggered their first murders, revealed that as a group, they were aware of their longstanding involvement and preference for a very active fantasy life and they were devoted to violent sexual fantasies. Most of these fantasies, prior to the first murder, focused on killing, while fantasies that evolved after the *first* murder often focused on perfecting various phases of the murder. The following illustrates an early fantasy of one of the serial murderers that developed following the move of his bedroom to a windowless basement room. This fantasy



**“. . . many offenders reported a history of sadistic behavior toward animals, such as killing, maiming, and threatening small animals. . . .”**

seemed to introduce him in a more conscious way to a fantasy life which occupied much of his life:

“I was eight years old, having nightmares, that’s when I went off into the morbid fantasy and that’s when the death trip started. The devil was sharing my bedroom with me, he was living in the furnace. The furnace was there battling away in the corner with an eerie glow in the middle of the night.”

This man later in the interview described a conscious awareness of his motive to kill:

“I knew long before I started killing that I was going to be killing, that it was going to end up like that. The fantasies were too strong. They were going on for too long and were too elaborate.”

Following the first murder, the fantasy becomes reality that requires a change in the structure of the fantasy in order to repeat the crime. The same murderer tells of this fantasy development:

“It was almost like a black comedy of errors, the first killings, two people, it was terrible because I made three fatal errors in the first 24 hours. I should have been busted . . . I saw how loose I was and I tightened it up and when it happened again and again I got tighter and tighter and there weren’t any more slips.”

Motivation operates on many levels. We are referring here to the conscious or preconscious awareness of the murderers, the structure of their fantasies, and the resultant act of murder. We use the term “preconscious” since many of the interviews with the murderers reveal this level.

The man would state he remembered having vague thoughts or was able to remember some parts of his thinking but did not have this awareness clearly structured in his mind. This response in subjects led to our belief that much of the motive and intent in the form of fantasies are vague and loosely formulated *until* the murderers actually kill. With the reality of the murder, the fantasy feeds off itself and becomes more structured. As more murders are committed, the phases of the murders become more organized.

Although we discuss the “first” murder, many offenders reported a history of sadistic behavior toward animals, such as killing, maiming, and threatening small animals (cats, birds, fish). In one case, the murderer, as a young boy, had acquired the nickname “Doc,” apparently from his fondness for slitting open the stomachs of cats and observing how far they could run before they died.

One murderer connected his murderous acts to dismembering his sister’s doll heads. “I used to do my sister’s dolls that way when I was a kid . . . just yanked the head off her Barbie dolls.” Although this offender was able to note the connection to his early violent fantasies, many offenders were not able to make this link.

We are not discussing in this article any motives based on childhood experiences. Instead, we are referring to a level of motivation that later in the life of the offender serves as a basis for or triggers the murder.

It is at this later level of motivation that the offender’s fantasy life reflects itself in his social behavior—the line between fantasy and reality blurs. The offender may become isolated or socially aloof rather than acting on the fantasy. This social isolation perhaps helps in inhibiting his desire to act on

the fantasy. What these 36 men revealed in terms of their first murder was that something happened externally to them that moved them to act out this fantasy.

The key person in the fantasy—the one doing the killing, maiming, or torturing—is the perpetrator himself. Sometimes, perpetrators fantasize self-victimization, such as ordering their own evisceration, but most victimize others in their fantasies. Their actions are mentally rehearsed and are accompanied by emotion. The fantasy life is varied and has many dynamics that are idiosyncratic to the murderer.

A variety of factors can trigger the offender to act on his fantasy, including certain interactions between the murderer and the victim. The following case illustrates the murderer’s recall of the triggering event of the victim trying to escape, but not of the murder:

*Subject:* “We were upstairs and I was taking my clothes off. That’s when she started back downstairs. As a matter of fact, that’s the only time I hit her. I caught her at the stairs.”

*Agent:* “What happened?”

*Subject:* She wanted to know why I hit her. I just told her to be quiet. She was complaining about what time she would get home and she said her parents would worry. She consented to sex . . . then I remembered nothing else except waking up and her dead in the bed.”

Some murderers were aware of their fantasy to rape and their motive to kill. The fantasy of one juvenile who was caught after his first rape depicted total control over women. He



was infuriated at the female judge who sentenced him to a residential facility, and he continued to rape when on leave from the facility. The rape fantasy escalated to include murder when there was a threat to this power and control, i.e., his detection. One rape victim was killed because she showed some assertiveness by running away, even though she had said she wouldn't tell. The murderer revealed his fantasy for total control when he said, "When I think she is going to tell, I know I have to kill her." He raped and murdered four more victims.

Some of the murderers in our study did not report fantasies in a conscious way. Instead, they often described states of dysphoria, such as they were not feeling well, they were depressed, or they had been drinking. These descriptions often revealed an underlying stress that may have been based in their fantasy. The following is an example:

Subject: "It was the same as with the other one. I had been drinking at the bar. I don't even remember leaving. I don't know what made me kill her. I don't even know why I raped her. I had a good looking wife at home. I saw her get into her car and I walked up and got in the car with her, yelled at her, took her down there where I raped her. I kept telling her I didn't want to hurt her but I just started choking her."

We suspect that these offenders were preoccupied with a kind of internal dialog that sustained anger, discontent, irritability, or depression. Drinking or drugs are attempts at moderating the internal stress, yet the fantasy continues. These offenders are unaware of how much internal dialog they experience. For example,

when chastized by a teacher or boss, these offenders talk to themselves about it—"If I ever got that son of a bitch I'd rip him apart; I'd smash him up." One offender, after performing poorly in the service and being intimidated by his sergeant, went a.w.o.l. on a drinking binge. While out on the street, he beat a drunk to death after the man grabbed at him. The offender felt justified in his actions and was unaware of the intensity of his rage or the impact of his blows. He then beat to death a second man. Finally, he abducted a female acquaintance. When he awoke the next morning, her dead body was beside him with a broomstick impaled in her vagina with such force that it had penetrated her lungs. Although he believes he killed her, he has no recollection of the incident. He even helped the police look for her.

Most people are aware of their fantasy life in terms of making pictures and carrying on dialog. When people report hearing voices, it is most often an hallucination. It is often described as either a voice from the outside or as someone transmitting thoughts into their mind. Something is in their heads of which they are consciously aware but they believe it is in the control of someone else and that they are the passive victim.

The fantasy of the serial murderer is a separate, distinct reality. It is vibrant and vital, distinguishable from the "other" reality of the social world. The offender believes he can move from one reality to the other, that ideas generated in fantasy are viable. No fantasy thought is ever seen as abnormal. For example, one murderer's fantasy involved an exceptionally good sexual experience, and when the woman's behavior did not match the fantasy, he became enraged and killed her.

Fantasies provide a sense of control to the offender. For the serial murderer, they become obsessions. Efforts are made to improve the fantasy's weak areas, and once this is accomplished, the offender moves to gain access to a victim. The symbolic figure in the fantasy is replaced with a real person in reality.

### Phases of a Murder

The fantasy underlying a sexually oriented murder drives the offender's actions through various phases of that murder. The act of murder has at least four major phases, including: 1) Antecedent behavior, which includes the motives and planning or thinking about the murder; 2) the murder itself, including gaining access to the victim and carrying out the crime; 3) disposal of the body; and 4) postcrime behavior, including reaction to the discovery of the body.

#### *Phase 1: Antecedent Behavior*

Murder is a behavioral act. Motivations for this behavior include either a conscious fantasy, plan, directive, or reason to kill or a triggering environmental cue that activates an unconscious fantasy for murder. Murderers who operate primarily on a conscious motivational level usually remember their thoughts prior to the murder. One of the murderers in our study described his entangled fantasy and perversions and said, "I had a compulsion during the day and hoped it would settle down—hoped I could wipe it out drinking." It did not settle down, and he acted out the fantasy and murdered after leaving the bar.

Murderers who are triggered into action by an environmental cue often state that they cannot remember their



## **“Sexual homicide is an act of control, dominance, and performance that is representative of an underlying fantasy embedded with violence, sexuality, and death.”**

precrime behavior, although they can recall how they murdered. They state they found themselves in a compromising situation, and they reacted with explosive rage. (“She was screaming and I strangled her.”) These killers usually described a spontaneous murder. The vagueness of the crime continued with subsequent murders; however, the men are aware that they will kill again.

### *Phase 2: Committing the Murder*

Selecting a victim begins the acting-out level for the murderer with a conscious fantasy. The offender may have a list of criteria for choosing a victim, and many murderers are known to seek out the right victim. A delay before killing the victim often implies conscious planning and rehearsing of the fantasy. In these cases, the murderer often held an elaborate fantasy, laced with violence, aggression, torture, and sexuality, which also included the fate of the victim.

The history and circumstances of the victim are often important to the offender's fantasy. The victim may be symbolic of someone in the offender's history, as in one case where all the young women killed were symbolic of the offender's sister for whom he harbored great jealousy. Certain actions of the victim may also trigger the fantasy. One murderer, who selected his victims through hitchhiking, said, “She was playing up the role, the big beautiful smile and getting in the car which was kind of tragic but she had advertised to get blown away.”

For the murderer without a conscious fantasy, a certain person or situation may, for example, cue in a strong belief of an unjust world. The

offender feels unfairly treated, and this sets into motion the justification to kill. As one murderer said, “I couldn't perform sometimes. Somebody made fun of me and I blew my stack.”

Killing the victim moves the offender to another level of the fantasy. At this point, the reality of murder comes into play. The victim may not die the way the offender planned. The offender might have to use more violence, he may feel more frightened than anticipated, or he might be startled by the fact he feels excited. Some murderers are exhilarated—they broke the rules, they killed. Some will kill again, while others will, in horror over what they did, turn themselves in to the police.

During this phase, murderers are also confronted with the reality of a dead body. There is no such thing as killing with impunity—there is always some response. Some murderers respond by covering the body, washing the wounds, or otherwise caring for the body, a response that exhibits remorse or concern for the victim. Some murderers hide or bury the body, raising some questions about their motives. One reason for hiding or burying the body is to keep the secret and maintain control. Other murderers openly display the corpse in a public area, hoping the display will shock and offend society.

Some murderers need to believe that they will not show any concern for the victim. The actual murder goes beyond their fantasies of that killing. One murderer described his heightened excitement when driving his car with the dead bodies in the trunk. There is confirmation and reinforcement of the fantasy and pleasure or triumph in the power of the kill. These killers may torture and then kill, or kill and then mutilate the body.

The power of the fantasy during the murder is illustrated by one fetish burglar. He killed his victims only when he was interrupted, but not because he was afraid of being identified. He was acting out an intense fantasy, and the unexpected interruption made him furious. He acted on this rage and felt justified in the murder.

### *Phase 3: Disposing of the Body*

After committing the murder, the offender must decide what to do with the body. If this confrontation with reality has not been anticipated, the murderer may give himself up to the authorities. As one murderer said, “It blew my mind killing those people. I wasn't ready for that. The fantasies were there but I couldn't handle the death trip and dead bodies. I freaked out and gave myself up.”

It is unclear why some murderers just leave the body, while others use elaborate methods of disposing of the body. One offender who described his internal dialog as he confronted the body of his first murder victim said, “I got a dead body on my hands. People see me come in here. How am I going to pack this out? Am I gonna put it in a double bag or sheet and carry it out of here? I figured the smaller the better. I chopped it up . . . stuffed some in the refrigerator . . . dumped guts in vacant lots . . . throwing pieces here and there what ever came out of the bag first . . . I was scared.”

In a second case, the murderer described a planned dismembering of the body after killing the victim in a car. He then carried the body in a



bag, up two flights of stairs to the apartment he shared with his mother, passing two persons coming down the stairs. He said, "It took meticulous work . . . about four hours . . . dismembering it, getting rid of the blood, the gore, completely cleaning the bathroom."

Some murderers became involved with the body through sexually sadistic acts. This may be part of the old fantasy or development of a new one. While the offender who "freaked out" and gave himself up was in prison, he spent an enormous amount of psychic energy rehearsing and mastering the body disposal phase. After his release, he murdered eight more women. He stated, "I got rid of that icky feeling of messing with the dead. Only one guy that gets more casual around a body than me . . . a mortician or a pathologist. But some of my fantasies were so bizarre that it would turn the stomach of a pathologist."

#### *Phase 4: Postcrime Behavior*

During this phase, the murderer's fantasy becomes reality, providing a sense of purpose for the offender. The authorities are looking for him so he now focuses his energies on not getting caught and perhaps even into improving his methods for the next murder.

An important aspect of the post-crime behavior is the discovery of the body. This discovery is sometimes included in the fantasy, and the murderer may try to maintain his level of excitement. He may telephone or write to the police, or he may be in a crowd at the scene when the body is discovered. The murderer may even confess to the crime in order to accompany police to the location of the body.

The importance of postcrime events to the overall fantasy is illustrated by one case in which the offender worked as a hospital ambulance driver. He kidnaped his victims from the parking lot of a restaurant and took them to another location, where he raped and murdered them. He then anonymously telephoned the police to report seeing a body, returned to the hospital to receive the ambulance call, and then drove the ambulance with the body back to the hospital. In essence, he orchestrated a scene that he had rehearsed numerous times in his mind.

#### **Conclusion**

Sexual homicide is an act of control, dominance, and performance that is representative of an underlying fantasy embedded with violence, sexuality, and death. Yet, for some killers, one act of murder fulfills their fantasy, while others feel compelled to continue killing.

Some murderers, while in prison, attempt to determine how they failed in the murder in order to be successful the next time. Their need to repeat the act of murder is connected with their sense of control.

Other murderers live in fear of repeating the crime; their compulsion to kill is bewildering to them. They don't want to get caught, yet at the same time they are hoping they will be caught. Several murderers wrote "stop me" statements in notes to police or on the wall at the murder scene, while others turned themselves in to police. Yet, the fantasies continued. One killer stated, "It is a development . . . getting tired of a certain level of fantasy and then going even farther and even more bizarre. Year after year [the development continued] and finally it got off in such deep ends that I'm still not exposed

to the worst of the fantasies that I have."

Interviews with sexual murderers provided information about their fantasies which, in turn, provide us with a partial answer to murders that appear to be motiveless. These crimes are committed, in part, as a result of the acting out of a psychological fantasy. These fantasies are extremely violent and range from rape to mutilation or torture and murder. Fantasies are an important part of the offender's basic personality and move beyond normal sexual, consenting, pleasure-based daydreams to aggressive, sadistic, and destructive thoughts. These fantasies become so vivid that they provide the impetus for the offender to act them out with victims of opportunity.

It is important for law enforcement officers to be aware of the existence of these fantasies and of the types of individuals who have them. While the crime, and therefore the fantasy, may appear to be bizarre to law enforcement, it is essential to realize that these fantasies play an important part in the offender's basic personality. Therefore, as law enforcement officers become sensitive to this phenomenon and seek out clues which imply the presence of fantasy, they will aid in profiling and apprehending the offender.

**FBI**

#### **Footnote**

Serial murderer convicted of killing 10 people.







# *Classifying Sexual Homicide Crime Scenes*

## Interrater Reliability

The unsolved homicide presents a major challenge to law enforcement officers. These unsolved cases, which often include a sex-related component, usually have no apparent motive. The victim has been sexually abused, and the nature of the killing indicates behavior patterns that reflect sexual deviation, specific character traits, and perhaps even psychopathology. Also referred to as lust murders,<sup>1</sup> these murders often include severe beating and multiple stabbing of the victim, body mutilation (such as removal of sexual organs), and sexualized positioning of the body after death.

The FBI's Behavioral Science Unit (BSU) has been involved since 1972 in assisting city, county, and State law enforcement agencies in their investigations of unsolved murders by preparing profiles of the unidentified offenders, after extensive examination of the crime scene data, victim characteristics, and autopsy reports. This profile may include the perpetrator's age, race, sex, socioeconomic and marital status, intellectual and educational level, occupation, life-

style characteristics, arrest history, location of residence in relation to the scene, and certain character traits.

The Agents responsible for preparing the offender profiles have found it useful to classify the type of crime and the organizational structure of the crime scene. The crime is classified as sex-related, nonsexual, or unknown. Evidence of a sexual component anywhere within the crime scene justifies the sex-related classification. The organizational structure of the crime scene is determined by evidence of the amount of planning and premeditation by the offender, as well as of the offender's control over the victim. For example, a weapon taken to a crime scene and carried away suggests planning, as contrasted with a weapon used and left at the crime scene, suggesting opportunity and spontaneity.

In sex-related crimes, the structure of the crime scene provides insight into the offender's patterns of behavior. For example, a well-organized crime scene indicates an offender with a conscious plan of action after the murder to avoid detection and apprehension.

Currently, the BSU is systematically studying their profiling procedures through scientific and statistical analyses. Because of the importance

of correctly classifying the crime and the crime scene, we needed to establish the reproducibility of these classifications. This article reports our investigation of the Agents' ability to reproduce independently each other's classifications. This ability to replicate decisions is called *interrater reliability*.

### Study Design

Six BSU Special Agents with varying levels of experience in profiling participated in the reliability investigation. Data from 64 murder scenes, covering a variety of circumstances both sexual and nonsexual, were selected for the study. For each crime scene selected, one of the participating Agents was thoroughly familiar with the case. This Agent presented a short description of the crime scene and showed crime scene photos.

The presentation was restricted solely to information immediately available at the crime scene; no information from laboratory tests or later investigation was divulged. This restriction allowed the other Agents to focus on immediate data. Other details of the investigation, if discussed by the presenter, might have influenced the Agents in forming their



## "In sex-related crimes, the structure of the crime scene provides insight into the offender's patterns of behavior."

opinions. Therefore, we decided to have the Agents make judgments based on minimal unbiased data. We theorized that if there was good agreement among the presenter and the other Agents, then the agreement would become even better if more detailed information was available. Thus, the most stringent test of interrater reliability would be based on the minimal data presentation.

After the presentation, the Agents were allowed to ask questions about the crime scene data in order to remove any misunderstandings generated from the presentation. The combined presentation and question and answer period took about 10 minutes. The following is an example:

*Case A:* This case involves an elderly couple found shot to death in their rural farmhouse. The woman was shot with a .410-gauge shotgun in the back of the head, apparently as she was typing a letter. She died immediately. When the elderly gentleman came home, he also was shot with a .410-gauge shotgun by a person who lay in wait. Neither body was moved or molested. There was no indication of any manipulation of the bodies after the initial gunshot, and nothing was taken from the home. There was no sign of forced entry and no evidence of defense wounds or

escape attempts. Apparently, the victims were totally surprised. Because of these facts, it was difficult to establish a motive.

*Question:* Were there any fingerprints or footprints found?  
*Answer:* There were fingerprints and footprints found at the scene, but they were not necessarily foreign to the people who had normal access to the house. There were no suspicious fingerprints, footprints, etc.

*Question:* Did the weapon belong at the scene?

*Answer:* The weapon was not found at the scene.

At this point, the Agents were asked to make a determination of both the type of crime and the structure of the crime scene.

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### Type of Crime

After a presentation similar to the above, each Agent was asked to classify independently the crime. Although the presenter had additional information available to him, he also classified the crime solely on the basis of what he believed the crime scene information indicated. The breakdown of the 64 murders by type, as given by the presenters, is listed in figure 1.

#### Sexual Homicide

There are various observations and evidence that point to a crime being classified as sex-related, including the body's attire or lack of clothing; exposure of the victim's sexual parts (such as breasts or genitals); sexual positioning of the body; sexual injury; evidence of sexual activity on, in, or near the body; and evidence of substitute sexual activity or sadistic fantasy. Case B is an example of a sexual homicide.

Figure 1

#### Homicide Classification By Presenters

Type	Number	Percent
Sexual.....	46	71.9
Nonsexual .....	8	12.5
Unknown .....	10	15.6
Total.....	64	100.0

*Case B:* A female was found behind a group of trees about 100 yards from a main road of a major city. Her clothes had been carefully removed, a stick has been inserted into her vagina, her breasts had been amputated, and her head had been beaten so severely that her face was obliterated. A bloody rock was lying to the right of the head. Evidence of sperm was found on the victim's dress and body. Her pantyhose had been removed carefully, and her clothing was not torn.

#### Nonsexual Homicide

Cases judged nonsexual in nature have no evidence supporting a sexual component. Case C illustrates this type of murder.

*Case C:* A priest was found dead in a confessional booth. The investigation indicated that he was probably talking to someone on the other side of the booth who came around, opened the door, and stabbed him. There were multiple stab wounds in the victim's chest area, and the murder weapon was not left at the scene.







## “This study demonstrated that there is reliability in the classification of crime types and scenes by BSU Agents.”

### Unknown Homicide

When it is not obvious whether a crime is sex-related, the homicide is classified as unknown. For example, a skeleton buried or abandoned may not provide useful evidence, and a partially decomposed body may give confused indications, especially if the body has been mauled by an animal.

### Structure of the Crime Scene

After the classification of crime type, each Agent was asked to classify independently the structure of the crime scene as organized, disorganized, mixed, or unknown. The presenter also classified the crime scenes based on what he believed the scene alone indicated. The distribution of the 64 murder scenes, as given by the presenters, is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2

#### Crime Scene Classification By Presenters

Crime Scene Type	Number	Percent
Organized.....	31	48.4
Disorganized..	21	32.8
Mixed .....	9	14.1
Unknown .....	3	4.7
Total.....	64	100.0

### Organized Crime Scene

The organized crime scene indicates planning and premeditation on the part of the offender. For example, the crime may be committed in a secluded or isolated area selected by the murderer, or the victim may be killed in one location and transported to another.

*Case D:* This case involved a series of homicides in which the victims, who were found in rivers, had automotive parts tied to their bodies. The female victims were all grossly mutilated (removal of breasts and feet, pelvic damage). The victims had been reported as missing during the course of a day; one never returned after shopping. There were indications that they had been kept for several days before being thrown into the river. The murderer would have needed a car to transport them from where they were last seen alive to where their bodies were discovered.

### Disorganized Crime Scene

The disorganized crime scene indicates spontaneity and a more frenzied assault. The scene itself is most likely the location of encounter.

*Case E:* A 16-year-old girl was last seen leaving to ride her horse in a favorite riding area. Police were notified when she was several hours late in returning home. A search team found the girl's body one-half mile from the farm where she lived. Her body was face up, spread-eagled, jeans and underpants pulled down to the ankles, a hooded sweatshirt draped across the left breast, her bra was pulled below both breasts, and another item of clothing was draped across her neck. A 10-inch vertical cut was present at the base of her neck; another cut was just below her right jaw. Blunt-force wounds were present on her head. It was determined at the crime scene that she had been raped, but probably after death.

### Mixed Crime Scene

The mixed crime scene has signs of both organization and disorganiza-

tion. There may be two or more offenders involved in the homicide, or the offender may begin the crime in an organized manner before his planning deteriorates as unanticipated events occur. Inconsistencies are noted in the behavior of the offender. Although the organized or disorganized classifications fit many cases, not all crime scenes fit into one of these categories. In addition, crime scenes may display varying degrees of organization and disorganization. It is in these instances that the mixed category is useful.

*Case F:* A 21-year-old woman's body, partially hidden from view, was found at a garbage dump. The body had stab wounds in the vagina and groin, and the victim's throat had been slashed. In addition, her nipples had been amputated and her face severely beaten. Her hair had been cut and was found hanging from a nearby tree branch. Test results indicated the victim had been sexually assaulted and murdered shortly after leaving her job. Investigation revealed two brothers were involved in the murder, one of whom the victim was living with at the time of her death.

### Unknown Crime Scenes

The unknown scene pertains to those cases that cannot be classified based on immediate crime scene data. For example, a decomposed, buried body probably would not provide enough information upon which a classification could be based.



Figure 3

**Agreement of Agents' Homicide Type Classifications With Presenter's Classification**

Agent	Cases Classified	Case Agreed	Percent Agreement
1	62	48	77.4
2	40	35	87.5
3	55	45	81.8
4	30	23	76.7
5	27	25	92.6

**RESULTS**

**Type of Crime**

Not all participating Agents were available to classify each of the 64 homicide types (sexual, nonsexual, or unknown). In total, the 6 Agents made 285 classifications, 64 of which were made by the Agent presenting the case. Thus, there were 221 classifications that could be used for comparison with the presenter's classifications. Of these, 180 classifications (81.4 percent) agreed with the presenter's classification.

Of the 6 Agents, 1 Agent made 57 (89 percent) of the presentations. Because the percentage of his presentations was so large, comparing his classifications with the presenter's would not be informative. The agreement rate for the other five Agents and the number of cases they classified are shown in figure 3. Given the minimal amount of information supplied by the presenter, these agreement rates are high.

When the classifications of each Agent were compared with those of any other Agent, the agreement rate ranged from 77 percent to 100 percent. Again, these are high agreement rates.

**Structure of Crime Scene**

There were 220 classifications of the structure of the crime scene (or-

ganized, disorganized, mixed, unknown) that could be used for comparison with the presenter's classification. Of these, 163 (74.1 percent) agreed with the presenter. (See fig. 4.)

The agreement rate between any two Agents ranged from 45 percent to 89 percent. The agreement rates of Agents with the presenter and with each other varied substantially. This appears due mainly to variation in experience and involvement with the process of classifying crime scenes. The agreement rates among the three Agents routinely involved with this process ranged from 62 percent to 80 percent. Given the minimal data supplied by the presenter, these agreement rates must be considered good. However, classification in any field is a skill learned and reinforced by continuous involvement. In the medical field, for example, the diagnosis of a patient's medical condition is similarly learned and reinforced through continuous involvement.

The interrater reliability study evaluated the agreement of Agents in classifying homicide by the type of crime and by the structure of the crime scene. In particular, the classification of crime scenes as organized has proven to be useful in profiling offenders in unsolved and motiveless murders.

This study demonstrated that there is reliability in the classification of crime types and scenes by BSU Agents. Given only minimal information about the crime, agreements of Agents with respect to crime types was high (at least 77 percent). Agreement of Agents with respect to classifying the crime scene, while not as high as the crime-type agreement, appeared to be related to Agent experience and involvement in the classification process. For experienced and active Agents, who were given only minimal information about the crime scene, agreement rates ranged from 62 percent to 80 percent. More information would certainly have improved the agreement rates.

**FBI**

**Footnote**

Robert R. Hazelwood and John Douglas, "The Lust Murderer," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, April 1980, p. 6.

Figure 4

**Agreement of Agents' Crime Scene Classifications with Presenter's Classification**

Agent	Cases Classified	Cases Agreed	Percent Agreement
1	62	48	77.4
2	40	28	70.0
3	55	42	76.4
4	29	15	51.7
5	27	23	85.2



# Crime Scene and Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murderers

“. . . there were significant differences in the crime scenes of organized and disorganized offenders. . . .”

When requested by a law enforcement agency to assist in a violent crime investigation, the Agents at the Behavioral Science Unit (BSU) of the FBI Academy provide a behaviorally based suspect profile. Using information received from law enforcement about the crime and crime scene, the Agents have developed a technique for classifying murderers into one of two categories—organized or disorganized, a classification method evolving from years of experience and knowledge. In the service of advancing the art of profiling, the Agents were anxious to know if this classification system could be scientifically tested. This article describes the research study and statistical tests performed by a health services research staff on data collected.

## Objectives of the Study

Thirty-six convicted sexual murderers were interviewed by FBI Agents for a study on sexual homicide crime scenes and patterns of criminal behavior. These study subjects represented 25 serial murderers (the murder of separate victims, with time breaks between victims ranging from 2 days to weeks or months) and 11 sexual murderers who had committed either a single homicide, double homicide, or spree murder.



The major objectives of this study were to test, using statistical inferential procedures, whether there are significant behavioral differences at the crime scenes between crimes committed by organized and disorganized murderers and to identify variables that may be useful in profiling orga-

*Crime scene of an organized offender investigated by Pierce Brooks in 1958 while a homicide detective sergeant with the Los Angeles Police Department.*



## “Victims of serial murderers have been noted to share common characteristics.”

nized and disorganized murderers. In order for the study to achieve its objectives, the Agents first had to classify the 36 murderers into the organized or disorganized group, the breakdown being 24 organized murderers and 12 disorganized murderers.

### Results of Analyses

The study determined that there were significant differences in the crime scenes of organized and disorganized offenders, and that certain background differences were also found between them. There were four aspects of the crime where differences between organized and disorganized murderers were analyzed: (1) The murderer's action during the offense, (2) victim characteristics, (3) use of vehicles in the crime, and (4) types of evidence left at the crime scene. Table 1 provides the profile characteristics that achieved levels of significance between the organized and disorganized murderers, while table 2 shows the crime scene characteristics for the two groups.

**Table 1**

### Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murders

ORGANIZED	DISORGANIZED
Average to above-average intelligence	Below-average intelligence
Socially competent	Socially inadequate
Skilled work preferred	Unskilled work
Sexually competent	Sexually incompetent
High birth order status	Low birth order status
Father's work stable	Father's work unstable
Inconsistent childhood discipline	Harsh discipline as child
Controlled mood during crime	Anxious mood during crime
Use of alcohol with crime	Minimal use of alcohol
Precipitating situational stress	Minimal situational stress
Living with partner	Living alone
Mobility with car in good condition	Lives/works near crime scene
Follows crime in news media	Minimal interest in news media
May change jobs or leave town	Significant behavior change (drug/alcohol abuse, religiosity, etc.)

### Organized Offender: Profile Characteristics

Organized offenders have a high birth order, often being the first born son in a family. The father's work history is generally stable, and parental discipline is perceived as inconsistent.

Although the organized offender has an average or better than aver-

age IQ, he often works at occupations below his abilities, yet prefers a skilled occupation. His work history is also sporadic.

Precipitating situational stress, such as problems with finances, marriages, employment, and relationships with females, is often present prior to the murder. The organized offender is socially adept and is usually living with a partner.

The organized offender may report an angry frame of mind at the time of the murder or state he was depressed. However, while committing the crime, he admits being calm and relaxed. Alcohol may have been consumed prior to the crime.

The organized offender is likely to have a car that is in good condition. Evidence of continued fantasy is present in terms of taking remembrances of the victim or crime scene. Newspaper clippings of the crimes are

**Table 2**

### Crime Scene Differences Between Organized and Disorganized Murderers

ORGANIZED	DISORGANIZED
Planned offense	Spontaneous offense
Victim a targeted stranger	Victim/location known
Personalizes victim	Depersonalizes victim
Controlled conversation	Minimal conversation
Crime scene reflects overall control	Crime scene random and sloppy
Demands submissive victim	Sudden violence to victim
Restraints used	Minimal use of restraints
Aggressive acts prior to death	Sexual acts after death
Body hidden	Body left in view
Weapon/evidence absent	Evidence/weapon often present
Transports victim or body	Body left at death scene



## “Fantasy and ritual dominate with the organized offender. . . .”

often found during searches of the subject's residence, indicating the offender followed the criminal investigation in the newspaper.

### Crime Scene

The initial observation at the crime scene of an organized offender is that some semblance of order existed prior, during, and after the offense. This scene of methodical organization suggests a carefully planned crime that is aimed at deterring detection.

Although the crime may be planned, the victim is frequently a stranger and is targeted because he or she is in a particular location staked out by the offender. In this sense, the victim becomes a victim of opportunity. Victims of serial murderers have been noted to share common characteristics. The offender often has a preference for a particular type of victim, and thus, may spend considerable time searching for the “right” victim. As one offender said: “I’m a night person. Plenty of times that I went out looking, but never came across nothing and just went back home. I’d sit waiting, and as I was waiting, I was reliving all the others.”

Common characteristics of victims selected by an individual murderer may include age, appearance, occupation, hairstyle, or lifestyle. Targeted victims in this sample included adolescent male youths, hitchhiking college coeds, nurses, women frequenting bars, women sitting in automobiles with male companions, and solitary women driving two-door cars.

The organized offender is socially adept and may engage in conversation or a pseudo-relationship with the

victim as a prelude to the attack. Offenders may use impersonation as a method to gain access to a victim. The offender's demeanor is not usually suspicious. He may be average or above average in appearance, height, and weight; he may be dressed in a business suit, uniform, or neat, casual attire. In the organized style of attack, aimed at gaining the confidence of the victim, there is first the effort to use verbal means to capture the victim rather than physical force. The organized offender frequently uses his or the victim's vehicle in the offense.

Rape, as well as murder, may be the planned crime. Murder is always a possibility following rape; the assailant threatens the victim's life and brandishes a weapon. Sexual control is continued past conversation to demands for specific types of reactions (fear, passivity) during the sexual assault. When the victim's behavior stops being passive and compliant, aggression may be increased by the offender.

Control over the victim is also noted in the use of restraints, such as a rope, chain, tape, belt, clothing, chemical, handcuffs, gag, and blindfold. The way weapons are used may suggest a sadistic element in the offender's plan. The killing is eroticized, as in torture where death comes in a slow, deliberate manner. The power over another person's life is seen in one example in which a murderer described tightening and loosening the rope around the victim's neck as he watched the victim slip in and out of a conscious state.

Fantasy and ritual dominate with the organized offender; obsessive, compulsive traits surface in the behavior and/or crime scene patterns. The offender often brings a weapon with him to the crime, taking it with him upon departure. He carefully

avoids leaving evidence behind and often moves the body from the death scene.

While sexual acts are part of the fantasy planning of the crime, murder may not be a conscious motive until there is a triggering cue. This is illustrated by one murderer's following statement:

“I had thought about killing her . . . saying what am I going to do when this is over. Am I going to let her go so she can call the cops and get me busted again? So when she took off running—that decided it in my mind that killing her was what I was going to do.”

### Case Example of an Organized Offender

The following case involves the rapes and murders of five women by one juvenile offender:

Victim 1: A woman in her late 20's was found about 150 yards into a wooded culvert area outside her apartment. Her car was found in the parking lot.

Recreating the scene, police speculated that the victim was approached after she parked her car. It was known she arrived home late at night from work. She was found in a stream after being assaulted, drowned, and strangled. Her head had been held under water while she was being strangled. There was no evidence of severe beating to the body; although some defense wounds were present, mutilation did not occur.

The only item taken from the victim was a ring of little value. The victim was found partially clothed. Her shoes, found further down the trail, suggested the location of the sexual



assault. Footprints were present at this site; tire tracks were not. The victim lived in a highrise building with many apartments, parking lots, and cars.

Victim 2: A woman in her mid-20's was found fully dressed in a wooded area less than a quarter mile from the location of the first victim. She was not near water. She had been stabbed to death repeatedly in the chest. Although there was evidence of sexual assault, there was no overkill to the body, no mutilation. Again, the victim was coming home late at night. Apparently she parked her car and was abducted prior to reaching her apartment.

Victim 3: This victim was similar in physical appearance, age, and manner killed to the second victim. There was evidence of sexual assault; underclothing in disarray suggested she was re-dressed after death. A stocking was missing, although her shoes were on.

Victim 4: Several months later, a similar crime occurred in the same general vicinity. A black woman, in her early 30's, was found dead. She usually worked late and arrived home between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. Her car was also parked where she would have entered the apartment building. Although discovered further away than the other victims, she was still not more than a half mile from where she lived. There was evidence of sexual assault, and she too had been strangled and drowned. The method and location were similar to the first crime scene and was consistent with the work schedule of the victim.

Victim 5: The fifth victim, a woman in her mid-20's, was last seen at a party at 1:30 or 2:30 a.m. She left the party with several people and was later found dead in the same wooded culvert area as previous victims. She was found stabbed several times in the chest and had been partially buried in the culvert. There was evidence of sexual assault.

Considering the dynamics and pattern of the aforementioned case, the following crime scene assessment and subsequent criminal personality profiling would be possible.

The offender selects victims who are returning home during the late evening or early morning hours. The assaults generally take place near the victims' homes, as they are walking from their parked cars. The offender is watching the parking areas for single women returning during these times. He takes the victims from the apartment complex to wooded areas close by for the assaults. He chooses the time and place of assault. Since no scream or resistance is evident, one must assume the assailant carries a weapon and instructs the victims to accompany him to the secluded area. This indicates a persuasive, articulate person who convinces them no harm will come to them if they "do as he instructs." He would be manipulative and have a history of anti-social traits and behavior. He is youthful and aggressive, probably macho.

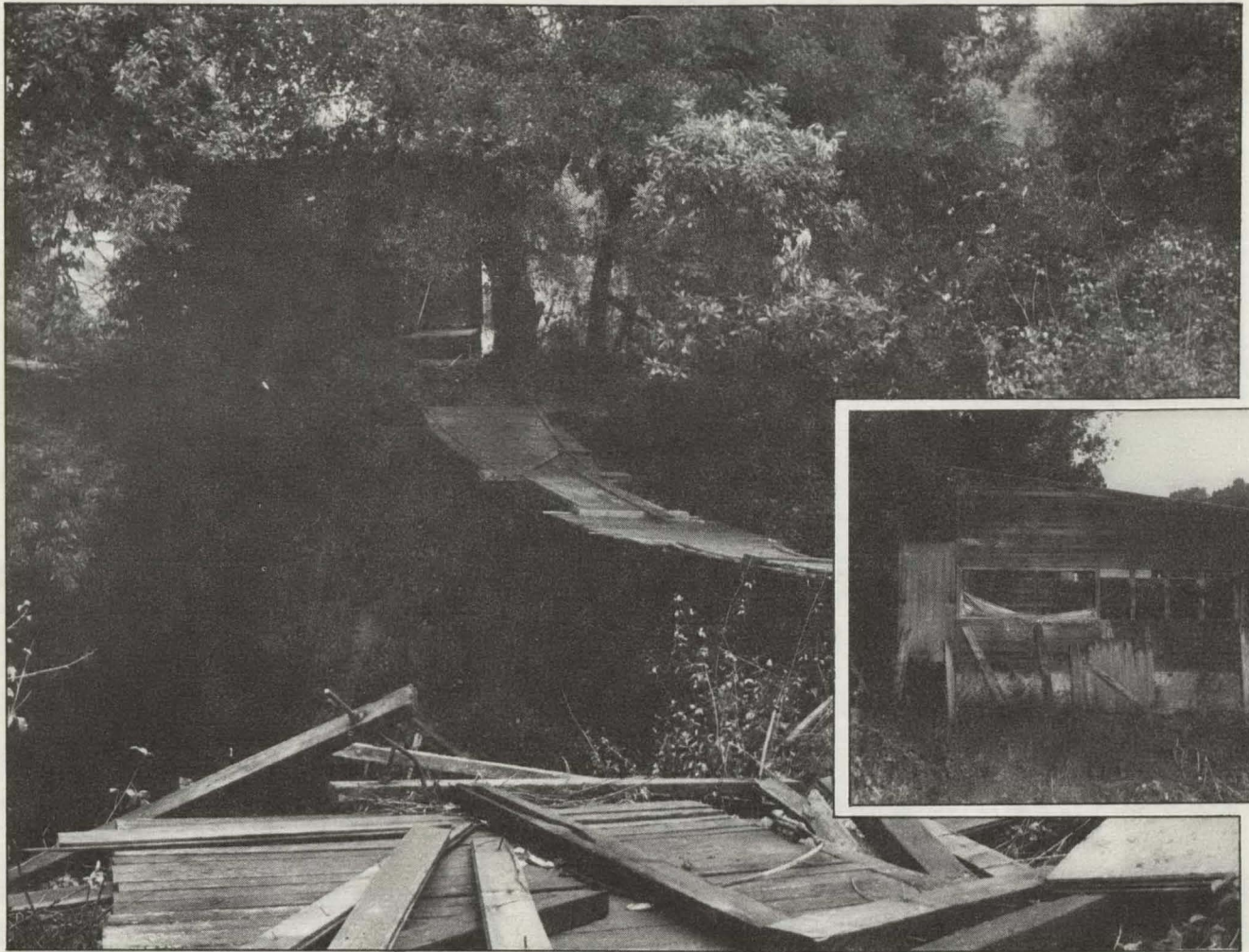
Since he uses the same MO in each assault, one must assume he knows the territory well, both the traveled built-up areas and the surrounding woods. He probably lives in the area, is youthful, and has grown up and played in the woods as a child. He is a long-term resident.

Medical examination and crime scene assessment show rape prior to death, and death is sudden with minimal mutilation, again indicating the well-planned crime by the organized antisocial criminal. The victims are "sized up" prior to the approach, and the killer knows they will not resist if he promises release after rape. He has raped before the killing started, but some life trauma has triggered the taking of the life of victim #1. The offender has had past problems with law enforcement, and once he has killed, he feels he must continue to kill to avoid victims testifying against him. He does not value the life of a victim over the chance that she may identify him to the police.

In summary, the assailant in the five homicides is an organized, anti-social personality. He is a youthful white male, has good intelligence, is articulate and manipulative. He fits into the community and has lived there for many years. He lives in close proximity to all victims. He precipitates his crimes with alcohol and/or drugs, possibly is first born in his family, and is sexually competent. He probably has a girlfriend; yet had a recent problem with her prior to the first killing. Considering his age, he would live with a single parent and would have no car since he selects victims on foot, sometimes using their cars in the assault. He probably would follow the media reports of the crime and may be in a crowd of onlookers when the police locate the bodies.

The police investigation in this case of multiple rape-murder led to a 17-year-old white male living very close to all victims who lived within a





1-mile radius in a large city suburb. He was bright, yet a marginal achiever in school, lived with his mother, and did not own a car. He was known as a macho ladies' man and a "con artist" among his peers. He used beer and marijuana to precipitate his offense and selected victims in an area he grew up in. He had a girlfriend he called "his fiancée" who jilted him shortly before murder #1, when she went away to college. He followed the crime in the paper, and on one occasion, watched the police investigator from his window. He had a lengthy juvenile record, including sexual assault and rape.

#### **Disorganized Offender: Profile Characteristics**

The disorganized offender is likely to be of below-average intelli-

gence or of low birth status in the family. Also, harsh parental discipline is sometimes reported as a child. The father's work history is unstable, and the disorganized offender seems to mirror this pattern with his own inconsistent and poor work history. Typically, this offender is preoccupied with recurring obsessional and/or primitive thoughts and is in a confused and distressed frame of mind at the time of the crime.

The disorganized offender is socially inadequate. Often, he has never married, lives alone or with a parental figure, and lives in close proximity to the crime scene. This offender is fear-

ful of people and may have developed a well-defined delusional system. He acts impulsively under stress, finding a victim usually within his own geographic area.

The disorganized offender is also sexually incompetent, often never having achieved any level of sexual intimacy with a peer. Although the offenders in this sample claimed to be heterosexual, there is a clear suggestion that the disorganized offender is ignorant of sex and often may have sexual aversions.

#### **Crime Scene**

The overall imprint of the disorganized crime scene is that the crime is committed suddenly and with no set plan of action for deterring detection.



*Pictured below is a crime scene of a disorganized offender who, as a result of his paranoid psychotic delusions, killed an entire family and left their bodies floating in the pool. His residence, pictured left, reflects his paranoid state of mind in that the plank bridge leading to the shack was drawn each night to protect him from his "enemies."*

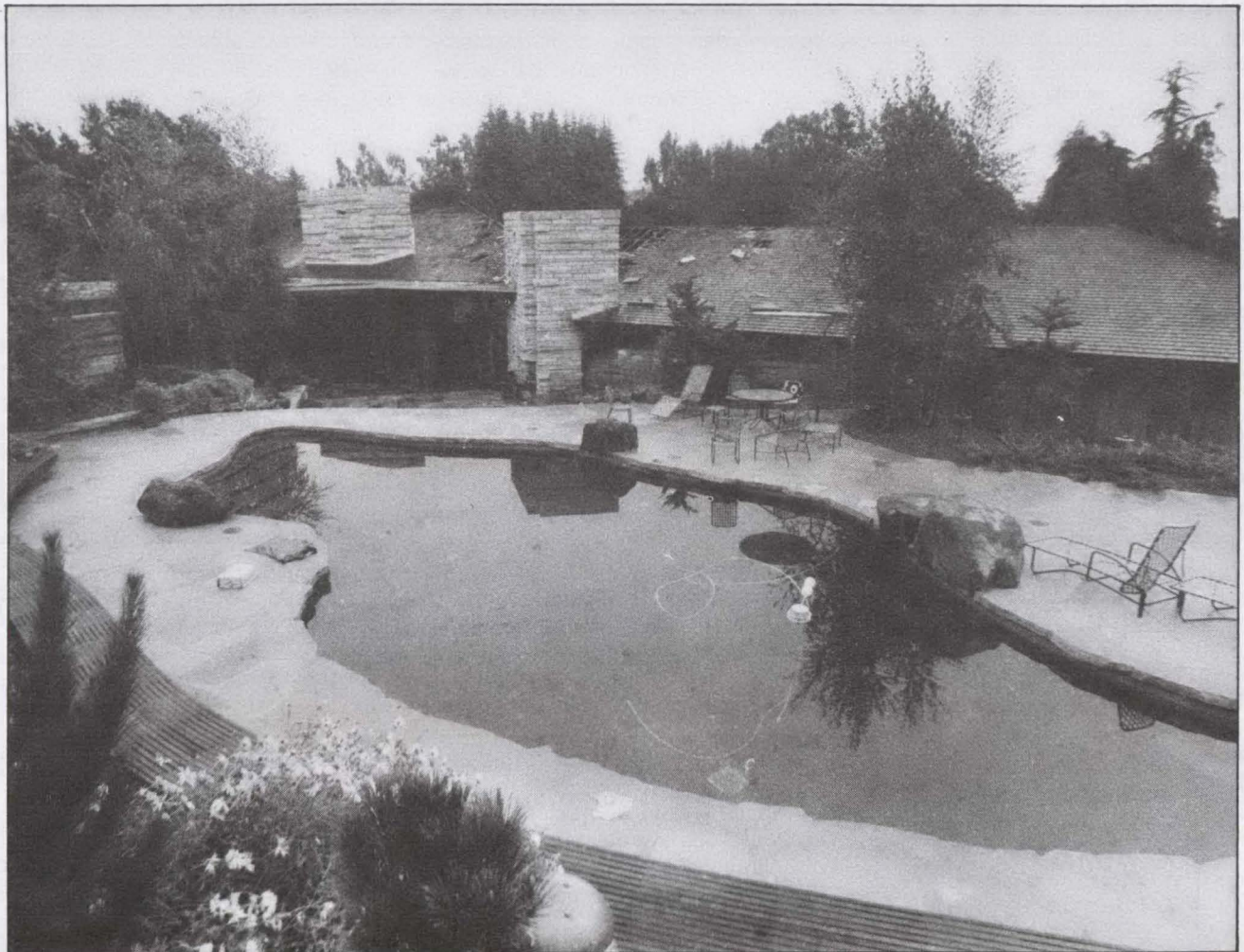


The crime scene shows great disarray. There is a spontaneous, symbolic, unplanned quality to the crime scene. The victim may be known to the offender, but age and sex of the victim do not necessarily matter.

If the offender is selecting a victim by randomly knocking on doors in a neighborhood, the first person to open a door becomes the victim. The offender kills instantly to have control; he cannot risk that the victim will get the upper hand.

The offender uses a blitz style of attack for confronting the victim, who is caught completely off guard. He either approaches the victim from behind, unexpectedly overpowering her, or he kills suddenly, as with a gun. The attack is a violent surprise, occurring spontaneously and in a location where the victim is going about his or her usual activities.

The offender depersonalizes the victim, targeting specific areas of the body for extreme brutality. Overkill or





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**“. . . variables do exist that may be useful in a criminal profile and that do differentiate between organized and disorganized sexual murderers.”**

excessive assault to the face often is an attempt to dehumanize the victim. Such facial destruction may indicate knowledge of the victim or that the victim resembles or represents a person who has caused the offender psychological distress. The offender may wear a mask or gloves, use a blindfold on the victim, or cover the victim's face as he attacks. There is minimal verbal interaction except for orders and threats. Restraints are not necessary, as the victim is killed quickly.

Any sexually sadistic acts, often in the form of mutilation, are usually performed after death. Offenders have attempted a variety of sexual acts, including ejaculating into an open stab wound in the victim's abdomen. Evidence of urination, defecation, and masturbation has been found on the victim's clothing and in the home. Mutilation to the face, genitals, and breast, disembowelment, amputation, and vampirism may also be noted on the body.

Disorganized offenders might keep the dead body. One murderer killed two women and kept their body parts in his home for 8 years. He made masks from their heads and drums and seat covers from their skins. Earlier, he had exhumed the bodies of eight elderly women from their graves and performed similar mutilative acts.

The death scene and crime scene are usually the same in murders committed by the disorganized offender, with the victim being left in the position in which she or he was killed. If the offender has mutilated the body, it may be positioned in a special way that has significance to the offender.

No attempt is made to conceal the body. Fingerprints and footprints may be found, and the police have a great deal of evidence to use in their investigation. Usually, the murder weapon is one obtained at the scene and is left there, providing investigators with evidence.

**Case Example of a Disorganized Offender**

**Murder 1:** A husband returning from work at 6:00 p.m. discovered his wife's body in the bedroom of their home. An autopsy revealed she had been murdered sometime in the morning after being confronted by the assailant as she went to empty the garbage outside. The victim was shot in the head four times, and thereafter, disemboweled with a knife obtained in her home. Other than slash wounds to breasts and mutilation to internal reproductive organs, no evidence of sexual assault or molestation was found. The victim was first slashed in the abdomen, and the assailant pulled her intestines out of the body cavity. The victim had what was later determined to be animal feces in her mouth. Garbage was strewn about the house. A yogurt cup was found, and indications were that the murderer used the cup to collect blood from the victim, which he then drank.

**Crime 2:** On the same date, a house burglary occurred within one-quarter mile of the victim's residence. Garbage was strewn throughout the home. Evidence indicated the burglar urinated on female clothing and also defecated in the house. No one was home at the time.

**Crime 3:** Two days later, the carcass of a dog was found in the same neighborhood. The dog had been shot in the head, and the bullet was determined to have come from the gun

used in the first murder. The dog was disemboweled.

**Murder 2:** Four days after the first slaying, a woman, waiting for a male friend to pick her up for a day's outing with her neighbor, noticed the man's car had pulled into her neighbor's driveway. She telephoned to say she would be right over; however, receiving no answer, she looked out her window again to note the man's car was now gone. Becoming suspicious, she went over to the house and discovered the bodies of her male friend, her female neighbor, and the neighbor's child. A 22-month infant was missing from the home; however, a bullet hole was found in the pillow of the child's crib, along with what appeared to be brain and skull matter. This was also found in the half-filled bathtub, indicating the child had been killed and the body washed and removed from the scene. The female victim had been severely slashed and mutilated. She had been murdered in the bedroom where she had been disemboweled from breast bone to pelvic area. Internal organs, including spleen, kidneys, and reproductive organs, had been removed and mutilated. No attack was noted to external genitals. The murderer had attempted to remove an eye and also had inserted a knife into the anal canal, cutting the victim severely in this area. Definite fingerprints with blood were found on the abdomen, shoulders, and legs of this victim. Additionally, a ring of blood was found on the floor, indicating a bucket-type container was used to collect blood.

The following information was extracted from a profile developed by the BSU:

Suspect description: White male aged 25-27; thin, undernourished



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appearance; single, living alone in a location within 1 mile of the abandoned station wagon owned by one of the victims. Residence will be extremely slovenly and unkempt, and evidence of the crimes will be found at the residence. Suspect will have a history of mental illness and use of drugs. Suspect will be an unemployed loner who does not associate with either males or females and will probably spend a great deal of time in his own residence. If he resides with anyone, it will be with his parents. However, this is unlikely. Subject will have no prior military history; will be a high school or college dropout; probably suffers from one or more forms of paranoid psychosis.

The police narrowed their search to a 1-mile radius of the stolen vehicle, seeking a man of the suspect's description. A 27-year-old white male, 5'11" and weighing 149 pounds, was located in an apartment complex within the same block as the abandoned car. The man was in possession of a gun that matched the murder weapon in the slayings. Also found in the apartment were numerous body parts thought to be animal and possibly human. The man had previously been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic and had been committed to a mental facility after he was found sucking blood from a dead bird. After he had been released, he was found in the desert bloodstained and wearing a loincloth. He told police he was sacrificing to flying saucers. He was released by police; however, later a child's body was found in the same vicinity. Evidence was found in his apartment indicating his obsession with blood, mutilation, and possible cannibalism of humans and animals.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, this research study of differences between organized and disorganized sexual murderers with regard to profile characteristics and crime scene indicators provides an important foundation for the investigative technique of criminal profiling. By achieving the two study objectives, we have established that variables do exist that may be useful in a criminal profile and that do differentiate between organized and disorganized sexual murderers. It is important to be aware of the limitations of this study. We do not mean to imply that all unsolved cases can be profiled successfully. We wish to emphasize that this study was exploratory and indicates that we have identified significant variables in crime scene analysis.

A second important step can now be taken—that is, performing test profiles using previously identified variables and comparing results with cases which have already been profiled by BSU Agents. These test profiles would be the second phase for advancing the scientific study of the profiling process.

Further refinement of profile characteristics and deductive reasoning used by "experts" will provide an advancement in the state of the art in building an "expert knowledge-based system" for law enforcement. Expert knowledge-based systems are a subset of the field of artificial intelligence and are derived by using knowledge and reasoning patterns of experts to create computer programs which emulate these experts. These systems are easy to use, require mini-

mal training, and have English-language interface with the users. Expert systems, currently used in many fields, are continually being adapted as more knowledge is gained through their use and application. As in these other applications, expert systems will never replace skilled law enforcement representatives, but are a tool that is continually being updated by the knowledge gained through use. **FBI**



# Interviewing Techniques for Homicide Investigations

*BSU Agent interviews a serial murderer who claimed 10 victims.*



*This article discusses techniques that have been used in the interviews of persons who have already been convicted. Law enforcement officers should seek appropriate legal advice before using these techniques in attempts to obtain judicially admissible confessions.*

One goal of the study of sexual homicide crime scenes and criminal behavior patterns was to explore how murderers commit their crimes. An in-depth analysis of interviews with convicted murderers allowed us to retrieve first-hand information about their patterns of values and beliefs, patterns of information storage, levels of recall on the crimes, and admission of responsibility for the murders.

This article presents our experiences in interviewing convicted serial sexual murderers with the hope of adding to law enforcement's knowledge of interviewing techniques. Although our interviews were conducted with murderers already convicted and incarcerated, we believe our observations provide insight for interviewing suspects in order to identify a killer.



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**“. . . the interviewer needs to be thoroughly familiar with any pertinent existing information, including crime scene photographs, records, and files.”**

### **Terms of the Interview**

Before beginning any interview, the interviewer needs to be thoroughly familiar with any pertinent existing information, including crime scene photographs, records, and files. This information can be used not only to draw conclusions but to establish a focused interest in the offender. By showing interest, respect is conveyed to the suspect, an initial objective in establishing rapport. Although it is often difficult in cases of violent and brutal crimes, this show of respect often allows the interviewer to get to the point of the interview more quickly since less time will be spent by the subject in evaluating the interviewer.

To be successful, the interviewer needs to convince the subject that the interview can be beneficial for him or her. In our study, some offenders admitted their crimes. In these situations they found value in the interview, believing they were contributing to increased understanding or to clarify other people's conclusions about them. Offenders who would not admit to their crimes cooperated in order to point out why it was impossible for them to have committed the crimes. Other offenders consented to the interviews in order to "teach" police how the crimes were committed and motivated. Those who refused interviews had reasons ranging from advice of an attorney to their own psychotic states.

### **The Communication Link**

Rapport was the key communication link in our interviews. Once established and recognized, it allowed the interviewer to lead the interview and

to re-establish communication when it broke down. Rapport was frequently gained when the investigator mirrored, below the level of conscious awareness, the subject's spoken and unspoken behavior. This included matching the words of the subject, adopting aspects of his posture, and speaking in a similar tone and rate of speech.

### **Eliciting Information**

Once communication had been initiated and rapport established, the questioning began. In our study, the what/where/when sequencing and descriptions of places where the crime events occurred were sought first. Next, the interviewing Agents asked questions about how the victim was chosen. Finally, questions about thoughts, feelings, and images were posed.

Questions were generally organized around four phases of the murder. These phases are: (1) The precrime phase, (2) the murder event, (3) the disposal of the body, and (4) the postcrime phase.

*Precrime Phase*—Conscious motive for the murder was often elicited by asking what triggered the murder. Those murderers with conscious intent were able to describe this in detail. Those without conscious motive would usually say they could not remember why they killed, but they were able to describe their feelings prior to the murder. Reconstructing the scene prior to the murder helped interviewing Agents determine the cues that moved the offender's murder fantasy into action. For example, offenders were asked to describe their day prior to the murder and their thoughts and feelings before encountering the victim.

*The Murder Event*—Memory recall of details specific to the murders varied among the offenders interviewed. Those murderers who deliberately planned the murder through a fantasy generally continued to remember details about certain aspects of the murder. During one interview, the Agents remarked that the subject seemed to have almost total recall. The subject corrected the Agents:

"Actually, that's overblown because I really don't (remember everything). I have shabby memory on things I don't want to remember, and things that are shocking or very vivid, I don't forget. I trip on those for years."

What the subject avoids or refuses to talk about provides information on areas where strong emotions may exist. (In one case, the murderer began the interview by stating he would not discuss his family.) The interviewer should concentrate on important aspects of the event, such as how the suspect gained access to the victim, conversation and behavior involving the victim, transporting the victim from one location to another, what the murderer did sexually before, during, and after the victim's death, methods of torture, behaviors after the victim's death (such as mutilation or amputation), and thoughts and feeling during these acts.

*Disposal of the Body*—Our interviews with the murderers made clear the importance of a fantasy in disposing the victim's body. Once the act was committed, the murderer had to



**“Because of the importance of fantasy to sexual homicide, information about a subject’s fantasy can be valuable.”**



*This sketch, and those that follow, were drawn by a convicted rapist who was interviewed as part of the FBI's research program. He was asked to draw:*

*Himself at a younger age . . .*

decide what to do with the body. At this phase, the murderer may first consciously realize the reality of his act. Our questions concentrated on what was done with the body, how the offender left the scene, what (if anything) was taken from the body or the crime scene, and what thoughts and feelings did the murderer experience during these various acts.

**Postcrime Phase**—A series of behaviors occur after a murder. We

asked each offender what he did right after the murder (did he wash or change clothes, go out with friends, go to sleep, or eat); how he thought and felt about it; whether he dreamt about it; whether he returned to the crime scene, attended the funeral, read about the murder in the newspaper; or talked to police. We were careful to include questions about the recovery of the body (did the offender assist police in the recovery, was he present when the body was recovered, and was his confession necessary for police to find the body).

#### **Specific Techniques**

Because of the importance of fantasy to sexual homicide, information about a subject’s fantasy can be valuable. However, people with a longstanding fantasy life may not talk about it easily. Often a low-key approach is successful in encouraging the discussion of the fantasy. A fantasy is an elaborate thought with great preoccupation and emotion. The person keeps going back to the thoughts. The subject may only be aware of images, feelings, and internal dialog at certain heightened times.

One of the indications of the presence of a fantasy is the great amount of detail provided by a subject, details that provide the best information on how the subject operates. For many of the murderers we interviewed, their detailed planning was their statement of superiority, control, and cleverness. The fantasy usually provided a sense of power and control, as well as emotional stimulation. In some instances, the fantasy appeared to protect them from becoming totally disorganized or psychotic. We discovered this, through interviews, in their reports of becoming enraged when victims inter-



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rupted their plans. These murderers were very sensitive to being called crazy or maniacal, as they associated those characteristics with carrying out acts in ways that are stupid, foolish, and not in control.

The importance of terminology used in the interview was illustrated in one case:

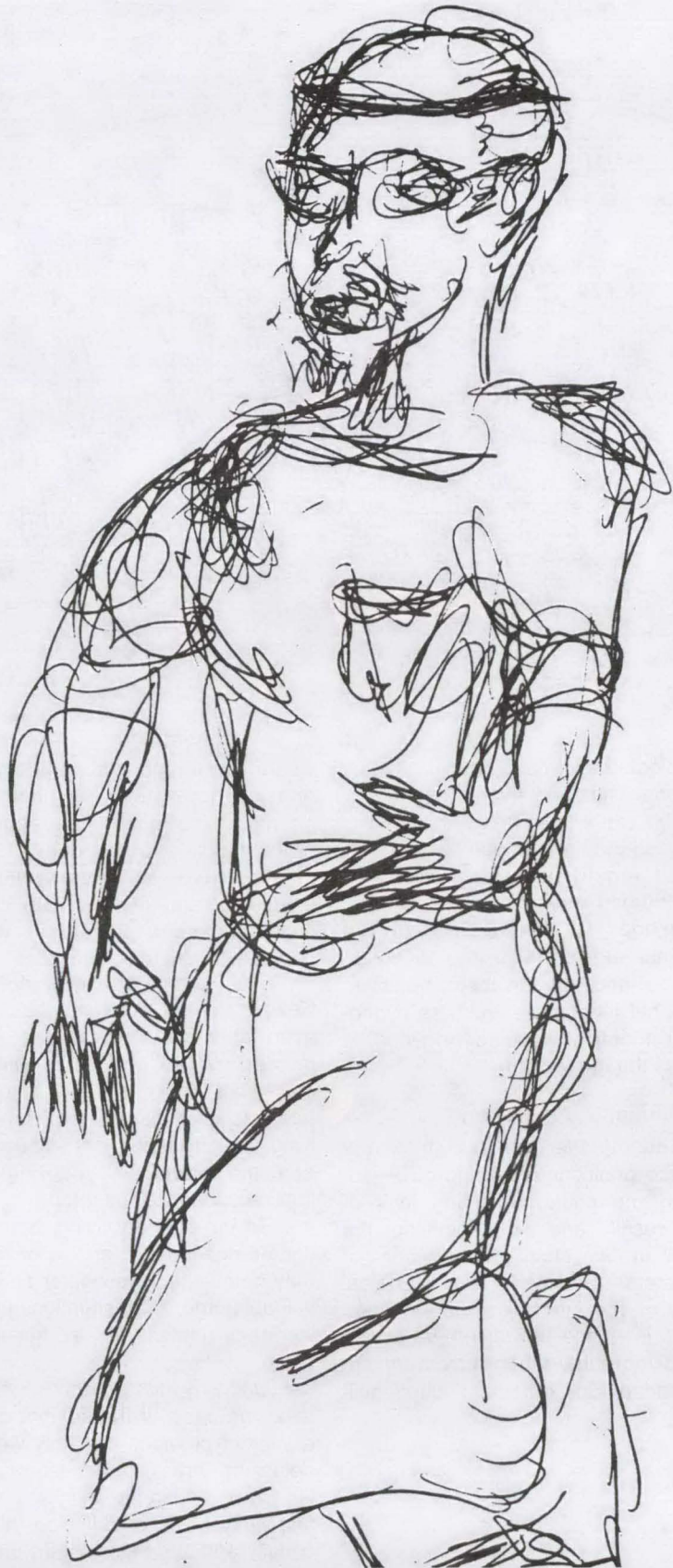
Agent: Do you think your fantasy life was out of control?

Subject: I'm going to have to change your terminology, not because I'm banting words, but my fantasy world, no I don't think it was out of control, I think my world of realism was out of control. My perception of the real world was distorted.

This exchange illustrated how the murderer felt in control of his fantasy and out of control in the real world.

In contrast to murderers who consciously plan a crime through fantasy, our interviews revealed that some murderers acted more in response to external cues. Such people may not be able to relate why a particular act happened. These murderers were concerned with particular acts at certain times; suddenly, they lost control. It is possible to talk about the existence of the fantasies without eliciting details of them and to obtain information about the serial murderer's blockage of certain memories:

Agent: Did you have any unusual fantasies preoccupying you to any period of time or that you felt you were over-involved in?



... Himself now ...





... His family doing something together (In this case, the family is in a restaurant) ...

Subject: Well, I can't say if I have or I don't. There are a lot of aspects of this crime I can't give an answer, cause I put up a mental block. I don't want to think of it. It makes me do bad time. I'm doing a long time and I just block it clear out.

The murderer confirms the likelihood that the fantasies are there; however, additional techniques, such as hypnosis or therapy, would be needed to access the information.

### Continuum of Admission

The offender generally took one of three positions regarding guilt—admitting the crime, admitting lack of total recall, and not admitting the crime. In our study, the majority of murderers admitted their crimes. Some of the murderers turned themselves in to the police; others admitted to the crime when they were apprehended. Still others admitted guilt

when confronted with evidence. As one murderer told the interviewing agents, "The police unwrapped the broomhandle and that did it." Several of the murderers interviewed were unable to remember actually committing the murder, but agreed the evidence incriminated them.

One group of murderers interviewed did not admit to their crimes even after their convictions for the murders. When confronted with such individuals, the interviewer should attempt to determine if the individual is lying (which implies conscious intent) or if the individual is denying (which implies subconscious intent).

To the offender, lying to an investigator provides a form of control. It may detour the investigator and waste valuable time, as in situations in which incorrect names and addresses are given.

One way investigators identify lies is on the basis of the amount of detail a subject provides. Fantasy worlds or delusions are usually very detailed. However, when a subject tries to feign psychosis or delusion, his story usually appears inconsistent and lack-

ing in detail. Investigators detecting this type of defense and bringing it to the offender's attention may be successful. In one case, the murderer claimed to have committed the murders because of instructions from a centuries-old dog. The Agents refused to accept this ploy. They pointed out good naturedly that the murders had been carefully planned and executed, which was a lot to expect from a dog. The murderer finally accepted the "credit" for the crimes and discussed them in detail with the interviewers. Even when suspecting that a subject is lying or denying, the interviewer should try to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect.

There are reasons why a suspect might deny a crime. The denial might serve to protect the subject from legal action as well as from the psychological impact of admitting such a crime. One murderer interviewed denied any actual knowledge of committing the crime. He stated that he was coerced, forced to confess to the crimes, and possibly drugged before entering a plea of guilty. In the interview with the



**“One reason a murderer may not be able to admit the crime is that admission would destroy his premise of justification.”**

Agents, he had an elaborate answer for each piece of evidence presented. He said friends had given him the 100 pairs of high-heeled shoes in his closet. He argued that photographs found in his possession were not his, because he would not be such a sloppy photographer. He presented extreme detail for each piece of evidence brought against him to “prove” why he could not have been the murderer.

There also may be cases where the murderer justifies in his own mind the issue of admitting or denying guilt. The following statement from a serial murderer illustrates this position:

Agent: Could the police have done anything for you in order to get a confession?

Subject: Well, at first I didn't admit my guilt. I wouldn't admit to anybody. But I didn't really deny either.

We found that when someone outright denied they had murdered or had anything to do with the crime, the use of an imaginary third person was helpful. The Agents would go through the details of the crime and ask the subject why he thought this third person would commit such an act. This technique projected responsibility or guilt away from the subject and onto someone else. Note this strategy in the following interview by the Agents with a murderer:

Agent: Suppose we do it this way. Let's just divorce you from that situation. I'm sure you've thought about it alot. Suppose it wasn't you involved and it was someone else. What, in your mind, would be the reasons for someone doing something like that?

Subject: I'd say she either said or did something extremely wrong.

Agent: Like what, for instance?

Subject: Well, it could have been that his [sexual] performance was inadequate. She might have thought it was. Or he might have thought it was and she said something about it.

This conversation illustrates that the murderer was able to provide a reason (sexual inadequacy) for the crime being committed and suggests that the intent to kill was triggered into action through an internal dialog process within the offender.

Often someone who denies justifies his or her actions by blaming someone else. In our study, for example, a murderer justified his killing by describing the victim as a “tramp.” One reason a murderer may not be able to admit the crime is that admission would destroy his premise of justification.

Obtaining information from suspects is a critical technique for law enforcement. Well-developed skills in interviewing can provide important information, which can be linked with crime scene data. Through the use of various interviewing techniques, the investigation can receive maximum benefit from the interview process. Interview techniques discussed in this article have given members of the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit new insight for tapping into the fantasy systems of these criminals and for effectively dealing with their defenses.

**FBI**



... and a picture that includes a house and a tree.



# WANTED BY THE FBI



Photograph taken 1980

Date photographs taken unknown

## Lawrence William Fishman

Lawrence William Fishman, also known as Larry Fishman, Lawrence Fishman, and Lawrence W. Fishman

### Wanted for:

Interstate Flight—Murder

### The Crime:

Fishman is wanted by the FBI in connection with the November 28, 1980, murder of his father and wounding of his mother in Silver Spring, MD, using a 9 mm automatic pistol.

A Federal warrant was issued on January 5, 1981, at Baltimore, MD, charging Fishman with unlawful interstate flight to avoid prosecution for the crime of murder.

*Because of the time factor in printing the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, there is the possibility that this fugitive has already been apprehended. The nearest office of the FBI will have current information on this fugitive's status.*

## Description

Age..... 34, born August 29, 1951, Washington, DC.  
 Height..... 5'11" to 6'.  
 Weight..... 160 to 180 pounds.  
 Build ..... Medium.  
 Hair ..... Short curly brown.  
 Eyes ..... Brown.  
 Complexion ..... Medium.  
 Race..... White.  
 Nationality..... American.  
 Occupations ..... Cab driver, public speaker, public health lobbyist, editor, research student, law clerk, lawyer.

### Social Security

Number Used..... 214-52-6075.

Remarks ..... He wears glasses; has been treated for various mental disorders; has been known to frequent university facilities and obtain lodging in YMCA residences or communal housing near universities.

FBI No. .... 686 036 S5.

## Caution

Fishman is being sought in connection with the murder and wounding of two members of his family where the victims were allegedly shot with a 9 mm automatic pistol. Fishman should be considered armed and dangerous.

## Notify the FBI

Any person having information which might assist in locating this fugitive is requested to notify immediately the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC 20535, or the Special Agent in Charge of the nearest FBI field office, the telephone number of which appears on the first page of most local directories.

## Classification Data:

NCIC Classification:  
 AAAAAAAAAA12PMAAAAAA10

Fingerprint Classification:  
 5 aA2a 12

1 A2a

I.O. 4967



Left middle fingerprint



# Change of Address

Not an order form

# FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN

Complete this form and return to:

Director  
Federal Bureau of  
Investigation  
Washington, D.C. 20535

Name

Title

Address

City

State

Zip

## Interesting Pattern

The interesting pattern presented serves to illustrate the minimum requirements for a whorl, namely, two deltas with a recurve in front of each. In the FBI's Identification Division, this impression is classified as a plain whorl with a reference to a central-pocket, loop-type whorl. The tracing is meeting.





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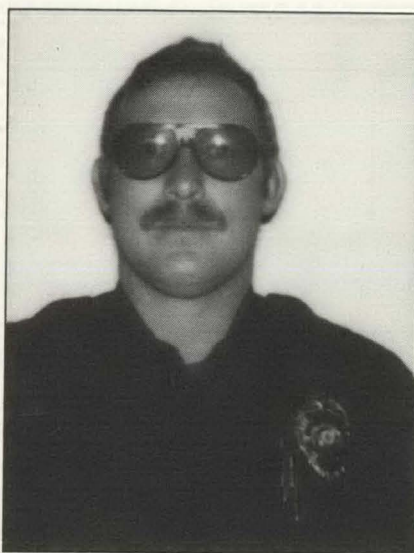
*Washington, DC 20535*

Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use \$300  
Address Correction Requested

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## The Bulletin Notes

Sgt. Gene Plambeck, of the Cody, WY, Police Department, after successfully handling a 3 a.m. SWAT call on Thanksgiving, 1984, on his way home at daylight responded to a call about a heart attack victim. Sergeant Plambeck, an emergency medical technician, revived the victim with another officer's help. The Bulletin joins the Cody Chief of Police in recognizing Sergeant Plambeck's service to his community.



*Sergeant Plambeck*

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