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STRANGER HOMICIDE IN CANADA: A NATIONAL SAMPLE AND A PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Homicide is understandable in cases where intense relationships such as romantic involvements or rivalries exist; it is, however, difficult to comprehend when total strangers have been killed. In this Article, acquaintance killers and stranger killers are examined in two studies. These studies—a national sample and a psychiatric sample—are compared on the basis of several factors identified as pertinent to homicide in general. These factors are: mental illness, history of violence, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual problems, and biological factors.¹ Each of these factors will be reviewed briefly, with special reference to stranger homicide. The national sample of homicides will be examined for the demographic features of stranger killers and for the ascertained circumstances of the offenses such as weapon, location, substance abuse, and motivation for the crime. The psychiatric sample of killers will be examined for the same variables, as well as for diagnosis, personality, parent-child relations, and other pertinent clinical variables.

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¹ Lang, Langevin, Holden, Figia & Wu, *Personality and Criminality in Violent Offenders*, 2 J. INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE 179 (1987); Langevin, Ben-Aron, Coulthard, Heasman, Purins, Handy, Hucker, Russon, Day, Roper, Bain, Wortzman & Webster, *Sexual Aggression: Constructing a Predictive Equation*, in *EROTIC PREFERENCE, GENDER IDENTITY AND AGGRESSION IN MEN: NEW RESEARCH STUDIES* 39 (R. Langevin ed. 1985).

II. FACTORS IN HOMICIDE

A. MENTAL ILLNESS

Because murder is such a heinous crime which is commonly perceived as involving extreme violence, it is frequently assumed that a motive of intense proportions is necessary for such acts. The killing of strangers tends to reduce the number of the more obvious motivations that could be involved in killings of family members or friends, such as intense anger, frustration, jealousy, or fear. As Satten, Menninger, Rosen, and Mayman have noted, examining psychiatrists have little difficulty in assessing responsibility when dealing with issues of insanity.² It is assumed that sane murderers are acting upon rational motives that can be understood by the average person. The insane person, on the other hand, is driven by irrational and senseless motives. If the irrational motives are accompanied by command hallucinations or delusions of persecution or involve the use of hallucinogens, the psychiatrist has little trouble in making decisions about the criminal responsibility of the person.³

There is great difficulty, however, in making decisions about insanity in cases of coherent and controlled individuals who commit bizarre, senseless homicides. Satten proposed that these seemingly normal individuals have severe lapses in ego control that make possible the open expression of primitive violence. Such lapses may be due to previous unconscious and traumatic experiences.⁴ These authors examined four men convicted of bizarre and apparently senseless murders. None of the subjects were psychotic and all were considered sane. Interestingly, three of the four cases involved asexual context and stranger victims. The murderers were puzzled, for the most part, about the reasons as to why they had engaged in the bizarre behavior and had killed. In each case, the killer had not used a weapon, but, instead, his bare hands or whatever was immediately available. Moreover, in each instance, the murder was unnecessarily violent and sometimes bizarre. Although three of the four men had a history of aggressiveness and frequently were involved in fights, all four showed evidence of altered states of consciousness which were often connected with violence. Their parental relationships were also riddled with alcohol abuse and violence, including sexual violence, during their own childhoods.⁵

² Satten, Menninger, Rosen & Mayman, *Murder Without Apparent Motive: A Study in Personality Disorganization*, 117 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 48 (1960) [hereinafter Satten].

³ *Id.* at 48.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* at 49.

In spite of these interesting cases, the incidence of homicides involving insane killers appears quite small in general.⁶ Gillies found in the western part of Scotland that 90% of the killers seen for psychiatric assessment were judged sane.⁷ Wolfgang, in his study of homicide in Philadelphia, found that only seventeen of 621 offenders (2.7%) were declared insane and that three additional offenders committed suicide after the homicide.⁸ All but one of the homicide relationships analyzed by Wolfgang were intra-racial, and, of the nineteen deaths accounted for, there were only two strangers among them.⁹ Thus, the expectation that insane people will kill strangers was not realized in Wolfgang's sample. Wolfgang's data also contrasts with the data formulated by East, who examined 250 cases of sane murderers and 325 cases of insane murderers at Broadmoor in England.¹⁰ East found that strangers were in danger of lethal violence by normal offenders more than twice as often than by the insane.¹¹

A number of authors have suggested that certain psychiatric diagnoses are more likely to result in homicide.¹² Schizophrenia, especially paranoid schizophrenia, is believed to be important.¹³ Wolfgang noted that the suspicion that the paranoid individual was more likely to kill a stranger has been discussed, but solid data has not been forthcoming.¹⁴ Depression has also been related to homicide, suggesting that an individual capable of carrying out suicide is also capable of externally directed aggression.¹⁵ It is assumed in some theoretical models that homicide and suicide are similar in aim, if different in object.¹⁶

Few systematic studies examining psychiatric diagnoses have been conducted. Works by Scott,¹⁷ Paitich, Orchard, Langevin,

⁶ E.g., Gilles, *Homicide in the West of Scotland*, 128 BRIT. J. PSYCHIATRY 105 (1976)[hereinafter Gillies, *Homicide*]; Gillies, *Murder in the West of Scotland*, 111 BRIT. J. PSYCHIATRY 1087 (1965)[hereinafter Gillies, *Murder*].

⁷ See Gillies, *Homicide*, *supra* note 6 at 105.

⁸ M. WOLFGANG, PATTERNS IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE (1958).

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ W. EAST, MEDICAL ASPECTS OF CRIME (1936).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² For a review of these authors, see Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *Diagnosis of Killers Seen for Psychiatric Assessment: A Controlled Study*, 66 ACTA PSYCHIATRICA SCANDINAVICA 216 (1982).

¹³ M. WOLFGANG, *supra* note 8.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Rosenbaum & Bennet, *Homicide and Depression*, 143 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 367 (1986).

¹⁶ For a review, see Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *The Role of Alcohol, Drugs, Suicide Attempts and Situational Strains in Homicides Committed by Offenders Seen for Psychiatric Assessment: A Controlled Study*, 66 ACTA PSYCHIATRICA SCANDINAVICA 229 (1982).

¹⁷ Scott, *Fatal Battered Baby Cases*, 13 MED. SCI. & LAW 197 (1978).

Handy and Russon,¹⁸ and Rosenbaum and Bennett¹⁹ have suggested that diagnosis is a random factor in relation to homicide. Lang, Langevin, Holden, Figia, and Wu examined the distribution of the diagnoses of killers and non-homicidal assaulters, as well as the non-violent controls seen on a forensic service of a psychiatric hospital. They found no significant differences among the distributions of diagnoses in the groups. Less than 20% of the cases were psychotic despite the offender's incarceration in a psychiatric hospital forensic service.²⁰

Similarly, personality variables have been postulated as important factors in predisposing individuals to commit murder.²¹ The aggressive personality has been labelled in terms of both MMPI profile types and sub-scales derived from it that purportedly measure aggressiveness. A variety of personality types, most of which include the Psychopathic Deviate (PD) scale of the MMPI, have been posited as predictive of violent tendencies.²²

"Aggressive" profiles have been found in less than 15% of the cases, making their practical utility limited.²³ The Overcontrolled Hostility (OH) scale is perhaps the single most widely reported MMPI derived scale considered predictive of homicide.²⁴ Megargee, Cook, and Mendelsohn suggested that killers are often normal individuals trapped in unusual life circumstances.²⁵ It is under these conditions that normal persons will kill. It is believed that such offenders over-control their hostility under normal circumstances; under stress, however, this hostility explodes in a sudden release of energy and results in an unexpected homicide that often involves extreme violence.²⁶

The unpublished work of Langevin and Handy did not support this contention.²⁷ These authors examined the OH scale and found that, not only did the scale fail to differentiate killers from non-assaultive offenders, but that it also lacked internal consistency.²⁸ The results of these personality scales and of diagnosis in relation to

¹⁸ Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* note 12.

¹⁹ Rosenbaum & Bennett, *supra* note 15.

²⁰ See Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* note 12.

²¹ For a review, see *id.* at 219-20.

²² See e.g., Megargee, Cook & Mendelsohn, *Development and Validation of an MMPI Scale of Assaultiveness in Overcontrolled Individuals*, 72 J. ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY 519 (1966).

²³ See Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* note 12 at 219-20.

²⁴ See Megargee, Cook & Mendelsohn, *supra* note 22.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.* at 520.

²⁷ See Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* note 12 at 19-20.

²⁸ *Id.*

stranger homicide have not been explored in systematic research. This Article, therefore, examines diagnosis and personality. It is to be expected that paranoid schizophrenia and, perhaps, depression and cerebral dysfunction will be more frequently a factor in stranger killings than in lethal domestic disputes.

B. HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Violence among adults is a complex phenomenon that involves a number of factors, such as parental upbringing, violence in the family, school and peer relationships, marital strife, criminal record, use of weapons, and interest in violent hobbies. These factors may play some role in increasing the likelihood that an individual's underlying preoccupation with violence or violent tendencies will be expressed. Unfortunately, the relative weights to be applied to these factors is unknown at present, and a variety of measures must be employed. Clinical judgment at present weighs heavily in decisions about aggressiveness and violence-proneness.

Uncontrolled group studies and case reports have described the parental upbringing of future killers as excessively violent.²⁹ A 1983 study by Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy, & Russon, however, found few differences between killers and nonviolent offenders on the 16 scales of the Clarke Parent-Child Relations questionnaire.³⁰ In fact, five of six scales measuring family aggression were not statistically significant, even when compared to community controls. Nevertheless, parent-child relations (PCR) were generally poor in the criminal groups, suggesting that disturbed PCR may predispose an individual to antisocial behavior.³¹

Some studies suggest that poor PCR are not any more common in the killing of strangers than in the killing of acquaintances. For example, Satten found that all four offenders who committed the bizarre and senseless killings showed a history of extreme parental violence and chaotic family life.³² In a controlled comparison of parricide killers, killers of other relatives, and stranger killers, Corder, Ball, Haizlip, Rollins, and Beaumont found that all three groups had similar high levels of family and home disorganization

²⁹ For a review, see Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *Childhood and Family Background of Killers Seen for Psychiatric Assessment: A Controlled Study*, 11 BULL. AM. ACAD. PSYCHIATRY & LAW 331 (1983).

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.* at 335-6.

³² Satten, *supra* note 2 at 50.

and marked maladjustment of the parents.³³

Past violence is often said to be the best predictor of future violence. Indeed, previous work has shown that almost one-third of all killers had a previous conviction for non-homicidal violence.³⁴ The childhood triad of enuresis, firesetting, and cruelty to animals, presumably predictors of future violence, identified approximately one-fifth of killers but was equally common in nonviolent offenders. Less than 1% of the 109 homicide cases studied showed all three signs of the triad.³⁵

Edwards has suggested that the availability of weapons plays a major role in the occurrence of violent acts.³⁶ The large number of weapons available in the United States, for example, can be considered an important factor in the country's high rate of violence.³⁷ Thus, weapon availability may be related to the increase in stranger homicides, especially among women. Whereas a male who kills a female may have the advantage of physical strength, a woman may have an advantage over a male victim in the availability of weapons such as guns. One study found that killers were more likely to have weapons available around their homes. This study did not, however, report whether weapons are more likely to be available in stranger homicides than in domestic homicides.³⁸

C. ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

Alcohol, perhaps because of its wide availability, is associated with about half of all homicides.³⁹ The incidence of alcohol-related homicide varies from a low of 5% to a high of 83%.⁴⁰ Wolfgang also found that alcohol was involved more often in stabbings than in other deaths.⁴¹ It is noteworthy that killings associated with alcohol involve a greater degree of violence. Gillies described alcohol as causal in approximately half of his cases.⁴² He found that 28% to 31% of the offenders in his sample killed a stranger, but he did not specifically relate stranger homicide and alcohol abuse.⁴³

³³ Corder, Ball, Haizlip, Rollins & Beaumont, *Adolescent Parricide: A Comparison With Other Adolescent Murder*, 133 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 957, 959 (1976).

³⁴ See Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* note 12.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ Edwards, *Murder and Gun Control*, 128 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 811 (1972).

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* note 16.

³⁹ See *supra* note 16.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ M. Wolfgang, *supra* note 8.

⁴² See Gillies, *Homicide*, *supra* note 6 at 115; Gillies, *Murder*, *supra* note 6 at 1091.

⁴³ See Gillies, *Homicide*, *supra* note 6 at 113.

Little is known about drug abuse by killers, although violence and homicide is common in the drug subculture of the United States. Pertinent to stranger homicide is use of such drugs as amphetamines and phenycyclidine (PCP), which induce aggressive feelings as part of their effect.⁴⁴ Thus, drug-induced paranoia or even a temporary psychosis may lead to the motiveless killings of strangers.

D. SEXUAL PROBLEMS

Sex killings are rare, but they often involve total strangers, which makes the detection and apprehension of the offenders difficult. Fetishes and sadism as sexual anomalies have been linked to sex killings as has voyeurism.⁴⁵ The homicide may be part of a sexually gratifying sequence in itself or it may be carried out to cover up a rape. One would expect that some stranger killers manifest sexual anomalies.

Spouses, lovers, and third parties in love triangles are common victims of homicide, and case reports have often described their killers as sexually inadequate.⁴⁶ One would expect to see in such offenders poor courtship skills, unsatisfactory sexual and marital relations, as well as sexual dysfunctions, such as premature ejaculation, impotence, and frigidity.⁴⁷ Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy, and Russon found that 50% of the killers undergoing psychiatric assessment were having marital difficulties, and only 31% had acceptable courtship skills. Five percent had a history of impotence. None of these results, however, differed significantly from those of a non-violent control group.⁴⁸

E. BIOLOGICAL FACTORS

A variety of case studies have examined biological variables. Physical factors such as hypoglycemia and elevated levels of adrenalin, among others, have been considered important. Perhaps the two most persistent themes in such research have involved brain damage and endocrine disorders.

Marks and Irwin believe that the brain has aggression centers

⁴⁴ Ellinwood, *Assault and Homicide Associated With Amphetamine Abuse*, 127 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 1170 (1971).

⁴⁵ For a discussion of this topic, see Langevin, Paitich & Russon, *Voyeurism: Does it Predict Sexual Aggression or Violence in General?* in *EROTIC PREFERENCE, GENDER IDENTITY AND AGGRESSION IN MEN: NEW RESEARCH STUDIES* 77 (R. Langevin ed. 1985).

⁴⁶ See Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* note 16.

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 237.

which, if properly stimulated, can produce an aggressive response.⁴⁹ Marks and Irwin presented case studies in which electrical stimulation of brain foci resulted in the sudden intensive release of aggression unrelated to any provocation from the environment. They also discussed the episodic dyscontrol syndrome.⁵⁰ Due to brain injury or other unusual brain features, some offenders are driven to periodic outbursts of senseless violence. In some cases, this violence resulted in homicide.⁵¹

Several studies have suggested that chronically violent individuals are likely to show brain damage.⁵² The few studies that have been done indicate that violent people have more brain damage and learning disabilities than non-violent ones, but the results are not clear-cut. For example, one study found that killers and assaulters showed more overall impairment than non-violent offender controls; the differences, however, were weak and were not systematically related to one aspect of the brain or another.⁵³ Offenders who had a sadistic sexual preference, including those who had murdered their sexually assaulted victims, were likely to show dilatation in the right temporal horn of the brain and were also more likely to show overall neuropsychological impairment on the Halstead-Reitan battery.⁵⁴ It might be expected that individuals killing strangers would be more likely to have brain damage because a lack of motive is more understandable if produced by an inability to discriminate reality appropriately and to act in a rational way.

Sex hormones also have been related to violent behavior. Available research has been directed to mixed groups of violent male subjects.⁵⁵ The studies, which used questionnaires and university students, have produced inconsistent results. Studies carried out on groups of incarcerated, chronically violent men, however,

⁴⁹ V. MARKS & F. ERWIN, *VIOLENCE AND THE BRAIN* (1970).

⁵⁰ For a discussion, see Bach-Y-Rita, Lion, Climent & Ervin, *Episodic Dyscontrol: A Study of 130 Violent Patients*, 127 *AM. J. PSYCHIATRY* 1473 (1971).

⁵¹ V. MARKS & F. ERWIN, *supra* note 49.

⁵² *E.g.*, Bryant, Scott, Golden & Tori, *Neuropsychological Defects, Learning Disability, and Violent Behavior*, 52 *J. CONSULTING & CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY* 323 (1984); Lewis, Pincus, Feldman, Jackson & Bard, *Psychiatric, Neurological, and Psychoeducational Characteristics of 15 Death Row Inmates in the United States*, 143 *AM. J. PSYCHIATRY* 838 (1986); C. Bell, *Black-on-Black Murder: A Critique of the Subculture of Violence Thesis—A Chicago Example*, (1985) (paper presented at the meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, Washington, D.C.).

⁵³ Langevin, Ben-Aron, Wortzman, Dickey & Handy, *Brain Damage, Diagnosis and Substance Abuse Among Violent Offenders*, 5 *BEHAV. SCI. 7 & L.* 77 (1987).

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ Langevin, Ben-Aron, Courthard, Heasman, Purins, Handy, Hucker, Russon, Day, Roper, Bain, Wortzman & Webster, *supra* note 1.

have tended to show the presence of elevated levels of testosterone as compared to the control subjects. Unfortunately, these studies also tend to report cases of excessive alcohol consumption and, in many instances, alcoholism.⁵⁶ Research on rapists by Langevin, Ben-Aron and their colleagues⁵⁷ in 1985 and by Rada and associates⁵⁸ in 1976 and 1983 showed that testosterone levels tended to be elevated in heavy drinkers and alcoholics when they were young. In cases of chronic drinking by older men, the levels of testosterone are likely to be reduced and feminization may occur. The relationship of testosterone to aggressiveness is most likely an artifact arising from the high percentage of violent men who are alcoholics.⁵⁹ Bain, Langevin, Dickey, and Ben-Aron, in a 1987 study, found no differences between killers and non-violent controls on nine hormonal measures.⁶⁰ At present it is unknown whether stranger homicides involve greater consumptions of alcohol and/or drugs or show differences in brain pathology.

III. THE NATIONAL SAMPLE OF KILLERS

In this study, a Canadian sample was examined to determine the incidence of stranger homicide in Canada and to relate it to the underlying variables and motivations which might be important in such offenses.

A. STATISTICS CANADA DATABASE

As part of their expanding attempts to aid researchers, Statistics Canada has released their homicides databank. All relevant information was provided, with the exception of any item which might enable the examiner to identify the killer in question. Data from years 1978 through 1983 were examined. Only those individuals who had been convicted were examined, resulting in a total sample of 1418 cases. The cases were subdivided into "stranger" killers and "acquaintance" killers, based on the Statistics Canada item "relationship to victim." There were a total of 422 who had killed strangers, and 996 had killed people known to them in at least a casual relationship. All categories other than "stranger" were in-

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ See *supra* note 55.

⁵⁸ Rada, Laws & Kellner, *Plasma Testosterone Levels in the Rapist*, 38 *PSYCHOSOMATIC MED.* 257 (1976); Rada, Laws, Kellner, Stivastava & Peake, *Plasma Androgens in Violent and Nonviolent Sex Offenders*, 11 *BULL. AM. ACAD. OF PSYCHIATRY & LAW* 149 (1983).

⁵⁹ See Rada, Laws, & Kellner, *supra* note 58 at 264.

⁶⁰ Bain, Langevin, Dickey & Ben-Aron, *Sex Hormones in Murders and Assaults*, 5 *BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE & LAW* 95 (1987).

cluded in the "acquainted" group; however, when the data were re-analyzed with "casual acquaintances" removed, the results were essentially the same.

B. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the demographic features of the sample of convicted killers.

The great majority of killers were male. As a result of the large sample, significantly more males kill strangers than kill known victims. The difference is quite small—a total of 5.9%—and suggests that this result is both weak and is dependent on the large number of cases for its statistical significance.

The individuals who kill strangers are on the average two to five years younger than offenders who kill known victims. This finding replicates Wolfgang's study in Philadelphia thirty years ago.⁶¹ The number of juveniles is quite small in both groups and is not statistically significant.

Differences in marital status between the two groups was statistically significant. More stranger killers were single, and few of them were involved in any kind of relationship with a female. The combined categories of married and common-law are 21.0% for stranger killers and 38.8% for acquaintance killers. This result, however, is deceptive. Between forty-four and forty-five percent of the individuals in the sample were married in Canada between 1978 and 1983. Thus, the percentage of married persons in the "acquainted" category appears to be average, but the stranger category appears overrepresented by single individuals. However, when one excludes all individuals under fifteen years of age because these individuals are very unlikely to be married and when one corrects for sex and significant age differences between the two groups in the present study, it is expected that 39.1% of the stranger killers and only 17.3% of the acquaintance killers would be single. Using these figures as criteria, it appears that the stranger homicide group has an excess of 25% in the single category, and the acquaintance homicide group has almost a 30% excess. These percentages suggest that the acquaintance killers category is, in fact, somewhat more overrepresented by single individuals than is the stranger killer category. Similarly, it is expected that, for the stranger group, 58% would be married, whereas, for the acquaintance group, 77% should be married, indicating that there is a 45% deficit of married people in the stranger group and 56% in the acquaintance group.

⁶¹ M. WOLFGANG, *supra* note 8.

TABLE 1
FEATURES OF CONVICTED KILLERS: NATIONAL SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE		STRANGER (N = 422)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 996)
Sex:*	Male	92.9	87.0
	Female	7.1	13.0
Age:*	Mean + S.D.	25.1 + 7.8	30.35 + 12.1
	Juveniles	4.7	4.5
Marital Status:*	Single	64.7	46.4
	Married	13.0	21.4
	Separated	6.4	6.5
	Divorced	1.9	4.6
	Common Law	8.0	17.4
	Widowed	0.7	1.1
	Unknown	5.2	2.5
Race:*	Caucasian	79.6	69.7
	Negro	3.6	2.4
	Mongoloid	0.7	0.9
	Canadian Indian	11.8	19.1
	Eskimo	0.5	0.6
	Metis	1.7	2.6
	Unknown	2.1	4.7

* Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding error.

Sex: Chi Square = 10.16, df = 1, $p < .01$;

Marital Status: $X^2 = 65.60$, df = 11, $p < .00001$;

Race: $X^2 = 20.99$, df = 6, $p < .01$;

Age: $t = 9.66$, df = 1190.77, $p < .001$, separate variance estimate;

% Juveniles: $X^2 = 0.03$, df = 1, $p > .05$.

When these factors are taken into account, it appears that, although there is a greater number of single individuals in the stranger category, these figures are more in line with the stranger groups' age and sex status, and that both stranger and acquaintance homicide groups show an excess of single individuals and persons who have never been married.

The racial differences in the groups are significant but are not remarkable. There is an almost 10% greater difference in Caucasians who kill strangers than those who kill others. The other striking factor in the results is the overrepresentation of Canadian Indians who commit homicide; they are, however, much more likely to kill individuals known to them than to kill strangers.

Table 2 shows the education and occupation for the groups.

TABLE 2
EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION OF CONVICTED KILLERS:
NATIONAL SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 422)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 996)
Education:*		
Illiterate/None	0.0	0.3
Primary	44.1	42.9
High School	3.8	0.6
University	0.5	1.6
Business/Vocational/ Technical	0.0	0.1
Unknown	51.7	54.5
Occupation:*		
Agriculture	0.2	1.6
Military	0.2	0.3
Clerical	0.0	0.6
Commercial	0.7	1.7
Communications	0.0	0.4
Construction	4.5	2.6
Electrical	0.0	0.3
Finance	0.2	0.3
Fish, Trap, Logging	0.7	1.8
Laborer	21.3	21.5
Managerial	0.2	0.9
Manufacturing & Mechanical	2.6	5.4
Mining	0.2	0.5
Professional	0.2	1.9
Service	5.9	6.4
Transportation	1.2	2.5
Housewife	0.7	3.1
Student	5.5	5.7
Retired/Pensioner	0.2	2.2
Employment History:*		
Employed	4.7	5.9
Unemployed	32.0	24.2
Unknown	63.3	69.9

* $X^2 = 43.53$, $df = 19$, $p < .01$ for education;
 $X^2 = 71.02$, $df = 22$, $p < .0001$ for occupation;
 $X^2 = 9.44$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$ for employment history.

The differences in education are statistically significant, but the differences between the stranger and acquaintance groups are quite small. One percent more of the stranger offenders had primary education than did the acquaintance offenders. The largest difference

between the groups is that the stranger killers have more high school education than the other group. Additionally, between the two groups, there are slightly more cases in which the education of the acquaintance group is unknown. It is interesting to compare both groups with the Canadian national sample. Approximately 20% of all Canadians fifteen years of age and older have had only primary education, as compared to over 40% of both the stranger and acquaintance homicide groups. Also, 41.1% of all Canadians have some secondary school education, with or without graduation as compared to the 3.8% of the stranger group and 0.6% of the acquaintance group. Moreover, 15.9% of all Canadians are in some university program, as compared to 0.5% of stranger killers and 1.6% of acquaintance killers. These results suggest that individuals who kill are overrepresented by poorly educated persons. This result may support the contention that persons who kill may have learning disabilities; or it is also possible that their poor socialization, their history of violence, and the presence of disturbed parenting contribute to their poor performance in school.

As a result of such poor education, members of both groups also have jobs that require little skill. The single largest occupational category in both groups is laborers, with approximately one-fifth of each group in this class. The differences in the occupational categories are statistically significant, but most of the differences are quite small. Few of the individuals are students, housewives, professionals, or managers.

Employment history was unknown in 60-70% of the samples. Of those known, however, only 4.7% of the stranger group and 5.9% of the acquaintance group had a steady employment history, suggesting that these individuals have unstable work records. The composite picture of the stranger killer, therefore, is very similar to those who kill known individuals. Stranger killers tend to be young white males with poor education, poor work skills, and a history of unemployment.

When one examines the victims of homicide in Table 3, there are statistically significant differences in every variable noted. Both categories of killers tend to have more male than female victims. Male victims outnumber female victims by approximately two to one in both categories, although there is a slight edge of 6.5% more males killed by strangers than by acquaintances. In contrast to the perpetrators' own ages, strangers tend to kill significantly older people than do killers who know their victims.

The victims of stranger homicide tend more often to be single than married or in common-law relationships. These results are

TABLE 3
VICTIM OF STRANGER HOMICIDE: NATIONAL SAMPLE 1979-1983

PERCENTAGE		STRANGER (N = 349)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 1009)
Sex:*	Male	67.6	61.1
	Female	32.4	38.9
Age:*	Mean + S.D.	39.6 + 21.4	35.21 + 19.0
Marital Status:*	Single	52.1	40.7
	Married	25.2	29.1
	Separated	5.2	6.4
	Divorced	4.9	5.8
	Common Law ^a	3.7	14.3
	Widowed	8.3	2.3
	Unknown	0.6	1.3
Race:	Caucasian	84.5	74.5
	Negro	1.4	1.6
	Mongoloid	0.6	1.0
	Canadian Indian	6.9	16.9
	Eskimo	0.0	0.6
	Metis	1.1	1.6
	Unknown	5.4	3.8

* Sex: $X^2 = 4.38$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$; Age: $t = 3.43$, $df = 549.56$, $p < .001$, separate variance estimate. Percentages may not total exactly 100% due to rounding error. The number of victims does not equal the number of convicted offenders because in some cases more than one person was convicted for the murder and, in others, there were multiple victims for one offender. However in the majority of cases there was one offender and one victim.

^a Includes Statistics Canada categories, common law, married - common law, separated - common law, widowed - common law, divorced - common law, single - common law.

again deceptive for the age group because both groups are over-represented by single individuals and underrepresented by married individuals.

The victims are likely to be in the same racial category as the perpetrator, and, in the great majority of cases, the category is Caucasian. Once again, the Canadian Indians are overrepresented in homicide categories for their numbers in the community, and they most often kill other Indians.

Table 4 shows that the location of the offense differs for stranger and acquaintance killers. Strangers kill in more densely populated areas than do killers acquainted with their victims. Strangers are less likely to kill in the victim's home or in their own home, and

TABLE 4
LOCATION OF OFFENCE: NATIONAL SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER	ACQUAINTANCE
Population - Mean*	6147.8	3927.7
Victim's home	37.0	48.9
Suspect's home	3.7	9.9
Other private/work place	16.0	15.8
Penal or mental institution	1.7	1.4
Public place	32.4	18.7
Other, i.e. car	5.2	2.2
Unknown	4.0	3.2

* population: $t = 3.36$, $df = 439.15$, $p < .001$ separate variance estimate. Values are in hundreds. Others $\chi^2 = 51.25$, $df = 8$, $p < .00001$.

they are more likely to kill in a public place or another place, such as a car. This statistic is not surprising since the stranger would be unlikely to be in the individual's dwelling or in some place where social contact would occur, otherwise they would have been recategorized as non-strangers.

Table 5 shows the means of homicide for the two groups. The

TABLE 5
MEANS OF HOMICIDE: NATIONAL SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 349)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 1009)
Shooting	19.2	31.9
Beating	22.3	22.3
Stabbing	30.7	28.0
Strangulation	12.3	7.0
Suffocation	6.3	6.3
Drowning	1.7	0.6
Arson	3.7	0.8
Other	3.4	2.9
Unknown	0.3	0.1

$\chi^2 = 42.90$, $df = 8$, $p < .00001$.

strangers, surprisingly, are less likely to shoot their victims and are more likely to strangle them than are acquaintance killers. Stranger killers are also more likely to engage in arson than are acquaintance killers.

The type of firearm used is analyzed in Table 6. Stranger killers are much more likely to use illegal weapons, such as handguns, than

TABLE 6
TYPE OF FIREARM: NATIONAL SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 349)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 1009)
handgun	8.0 (41.8)	7.1 (22.4)
rifle	6.6 (34.3)	15.5 (48.4)
sawed off rifle	0.3 (1.5)	0.4 (1.2)
shotgun	3.7 (19.4)	8.1 (25.5)
sawed off shotgun	0.6 (3.0)	0.7 (2.2)
unknown	0.0 (0.0)	0.1 (0.3)
Total	19.2	31.9

Percentages in brackets are firearm as percent of total firearms. $X^2 = 29.30$, $df = 6$, $p < .0001$.

are acquaintance killers and are less likely to use legal weapons such as rifles or shotguns. This phenomenon relates to the motivation for the offense, which is noted in Table 7. Most of the stranger

TABLE 7
MOTIVE FOR HOMICIDE: NATIONAL SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 349)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 1009)
revenge	2.6	8.7
jealousy	0.6	8.7
anger	3.7	18.2
argument	7.7	41.3
robbery	44.4	1.1
sexual assault	21.2	0.5
self defense	0.0	0.2
escape	0.3	0.0
during other crime	10.3	0.0
inadvertent act	0.6	5.6
mentally retarded/ill	1.7	7.7
other motive	2.6	3.3
unknown	4.3	4.7

$X^2 = 894.42$, $df = 12$, $p < .00001$

homicides involve robbery or sexual assault. Combined, these two crimes explain 65.6% of the motivations for stranger homicide, as compared to 1.6% of the acquaintance category. The most common motives for the homicide of a known victim are anger and argu-

ments. These motives account for 59.5% of the acquaintance kill motives and only 11.4% of the stranger killers' motives. When one combines the obvious motivations expected in violent acts, such as revenge, jealousy, anger, and argument, only 14.6% of the stranger killings are explained, as compared to 76.9% of the cases involving a known victim. Thus, robbery and sexual assault appear to be outstanding features of the stranger's motives for killing his victim.

In most cases additional circumstances were unknown in the national sample. There is, in fact, a bias for lesser information on

TABLE 8
HOMICIDE EXTRA CIRCUMSTANCES FOR VICTIMS:
NATIONAL SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE*	STRANGER (N = 349)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 1009)
Drinking	18.6 (71.4)	40.2 (89.4)
Drugs	6.9 (26.4)	3.6 (7.9)
Gangland	0.6 (2.2)	1.2 (2.6)
None or unknown	73.9	55.0

$X^2 = 57.81$, $df = 3$, $p < .00001$. Percentages in brackets represent results as percent of known cases.

drinking, drugs, and gangland killings among strangers than in the cases in which victims are known. In situations in which information is available, the known victims were killed twice as frequently while drinking than were the victims of stranger homicides. On the other hand, almost twice the percentage of stranger homicide victims were using drugs when killed, as compared to known homicide victims. These results are distorted by group differences in available information. If cases for which no data are available are excluded, both groups of victims show a high incidence of drinking at the time of their demise, and differences in drug use for stranger homicides are even more pronounced. Gangland killings accounted for a very small fraction of the homicides in both groups.

C. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The individual convicted of killing a stranger in Canada is likely to be a single white male in his mid-twenties who possesses less than a high school education and poor job skills. The killing is most likely carried out in conjunction with a robbery or a sexual assault. The stranger killer's victim is more likely to be strangled, but beatings and stabbings are common. When a weapon is used, it is likely

to be an illegal weapon. The stranger homicide is more likely to occur in public places of more densely populated regions, such as in the streets of the big city. The victim of the stranger homicide is likely to be using alcohol, and over 25% of the known victims use illegal drugs.

IV. A PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE OF KILLERS

The questions addressed by this study are: (1) whether a psychiatric sample of stranger homicides would differ from the national sample, and (2) whether stranger and acquaintance killers differ on clinical variables considered important in homicide.

A. THE DATABASE

In a retrospective study of psychiatric referrals at the Clarke Institute, Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy, and Russon examined 109 killers and 38 non-violent non-sex offender controls.⁶² For purposes of the present study, the nineteen cases involving stranger killers were compared to the eighty-nine cases involving acquaintance killers. One case was lost for the present study. The two groups were selected in the same way as the group in the National Sample of killers. Differences between killers and a non-violent offender control group were reported in the original studies. Variables involving clinical judgment were assessed by two raters for reliability. These variables were originally selected to examine major hypotheses about homicide from the existing psychological literature.

B. RESULTS

Table 9 shows that sex, age and marital status of the psychiatric sample of stranger killers was very similar to the national sample of killers. They were mostly single males in their twenties. There were slightly more males in the psychiatric sample than in the national sample (94.7% vs 92.9%), they were older (27.9 years vs. 25.1 years), and they were less often single (61.1% vs. 64.7%).

The disparity in sex, age, and marital status between stranger and acquaintance cases in the psychiatric sample was similar to the disparity in the national sample, but the sex and age differences were not statistically significant. The group difference in marital status, however, was significant, with more stranger killers being sin-

⁶² Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* notes 12, 16. They examined these groups on a number of variables which have been reported in the literature. The details of that sample can be obtained from the original sources.

TABLE 9
FEATURES OF KILLERS SEEN FOR PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENT

PERCENTAGE		STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
Sex:*	Male	94.7	82.0
	Female	5.3	18.0
Age:	Mean + S.D.	27.9 + 14.6	32.9 + 13.3
Marital Status:*	Single	61.1	36.0
	Married	16.7	31.5
	Separated	11.1	13.5
	Divorced	11.1	3.4
	Common Law	0.0	14.6
	Widowed	0.0	1.1
	Marital problems	27.8	56.0
Job Status:	Employed	44.4	45.9
	Unemployed	55.6	51.8
	Unknown	0.0	2.4
Financial Difficulties:	Yes	68.8	47.0
	No	12.5	28.9
	Unknown	18.8	24.1
Job Strain:		11.8	24.1
Welfare Recipient:		5.9	4.8

* Marital status $X^2 = 8.30$, $df = 5$, $p = .1403$ but for single vs others $X^2 = 3.94$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$. The other variables did not significantly differentiate groups.

gle. The same arguments noted for the national sample apply here, and the age differences in the two groups may be more important than marital status. In terms of sex, age, and marital status, the psychiatric and national samples appear comparable.

Both the stranger and the acquaintance group members of the psychiatric sample tended to be unemployed at the time of their offenses. Of those working, about a quarter of the stranger group and over half of the acquaintance group considered their jobs a strain. Generally, members of both groups were in financial difficulties, and 5% to 6% were on welfare. There were, however, no differences between the two groups in these measures.

The victims of the psychiatric sample were similar to the victims of the national sample (Table 10). Again, this result parallels the results of the national sample. As in the national sample, strangers were also less likely to shoot their victims and were more likely to

TABLE 10
FEATURES OF VICTIMS: PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
# victims:		
1	88.9	89.3
2	11.1	6.0
3	0.0	3.6
4	0.0	1.2
Sex: Male	73.7	58.0
Female	26.3	42.0
Age: ⁺ Mean + S.D.	34.9 + 27.6	33.0 + 19.5

⁺ age of victim was known for 11 stranger cases and 64 other cases. Age and sex are results for first victim only.

stab, hit, or use other means to kill (Table 12). Mostly male and in their thirties, 15.7% more of the stranger victims were male compared to acquaintance victims in the psychiatric sample, while 6.5% more of the stranger victims were male in the national sample. Unlike the national sample, the group differences in age were not statistically significant. The number of multiple victims was similar in both groups in the psychiatric sample.

The offenses were located, for the most part, outside the home in stranger homicides and inside the home in acquaintance homicides (Table 11). Again, this result parallels the results of the National sample. As in the national sample, strangers were also less likely to shoot their victims and were more likely to stab, hit, or use other means to kill (Table 12). The amount of force also tended to be excessive in the stranger group as compared to the acquaintance group. This result may reflect the less frequent use of guns by the stranger group.

Motives for the homicides tended to reflect the motives in the national sample; however, multiple motives were recorded in the psychiatric sample, and only the dominant motive was recorded in the national sample (Table 13). Most of the acquaintance group killed because of a quarrel, anger, jealousy, or revenge. A noteworthy 32.6% of the acquaintance group had no obvious motive, and the killings appeared to be senseless; this result is similar to the percentage of motiveless homicides committed by the stranger group (27.8%). The predominant motives for stranger killing in both the psychiatric and the national sample were sex (sexual frustration 27.8%, rape 16.7%, and sadism 5.5%) and robbery (27.8%). Some

TABLE 11
LOCATION OF OFFENCE: PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
Killer's home	22.2	13.3
Victim's home	11.1	30.1
Joint home	0.0	41.0
Streets	11.1	6.0
Elsewhere	55.6	9.6
Indoors	57.9	84.7
Outdoors	42.1	14.1
Unknown	0.0	1.2
Time of day:		
Dark	75.0	45.2
Light	25.0	53.4
Unknown	0.0	1.4

$X^2 = 28.23$, $df = 4$, $p < .0001$ and for three 'home' categories vs 'streets' and 'elsewhere' $X^2 = 20.66$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$. Indoors $X^2 = 7.95$, $df = 2$, $p < .02$.

TABLE 12
METHOD OF HOMICIDE: PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER X (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE X (N = 89)
<u>Method:</u>		
Shooting	5.3	46.4
Stabbing	47.4	29.8
Strangulation	10.5	14.3
Hitting	26.3	19.0
Sharp instrument	5.3	4.8
Blunt instrument	15.8	4.8
Suffocation	5.3	3.6
Poison/Drug	0.0	1.2
Other	36.8	13.1
<u>Amount of force used:*</u>		
minimal or none	5.3	0.0
just sufficient to kill	15.8	39.5
somewhat more than necessary to kill	15.8	40.7
clearly excessive	31.6	5.8
unknown	31.6	14.0

* More than one means was used so percentages do not total 100%. Chi square was computed for 'strangers' and 'acquaintance' separately comparing observed frequencies of methods versus chance frequencies. For 'stranger', $X^2 = 29.8$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$, for 'acquaintance' $X^2 = 120.6$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$. For 'amount of force used', $X^2 = 22.37$, $df = 4$, $p < .0002$.

TABLE 13
MOTIVE FOR HOMICIDE: PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
Sexual Frustration	27.8	20.9
Money	11.1	7.0
Long-term anger	5.5	36.0
Sudden provoked anger	22.2	18.6
Quarrel	11.1	45.3
Robbery	27.8	8.1
Jealousy	5.5	36.0
Revenge	0.0	23.3
Rape	16.7	3.5
Psychotic motive	0.0	4.6
Self-defense	22.2	17.4
Sadism	5.5	0.0
Homosexual	0.0	2.3
Accident	5.5	9.3
Suicide pact	0.0	1.2
Avoiding arrest	11.1	3.5
Punishment	5.5	1.2
Protecting another	0.0	2.3
No obvious motive/senseless	27.8	32.6
Macho personality	5.5	1.2
Insult	0.0	2.3
Paranoia	22.2	8.1
'Impending doom'	0.0	1.2
Other	16.7	19.8
Provoked*	15.8	35.3
Unprovoked	84.2	51.1
Unknown	0.0	10.6

* The difference in motivation for the two groups was significant: $X^2 = 281.70$, $df = 23$, $p < .001$. When the categories 1) sexual (sexual frustration, rape and sadism) 2) robbery and 3) anger (long term anger, sudden provoked anger, quarrel and jealousy) alone are compared $X^2 = 180.86$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$ supporting the results of the national sample, for 'Provocation', $X^2 = 6.23$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$.

offenders in the psychiatric sample were also aroused by sudden provoked anger (22.2%) and by paranoia (22.2%). Psychotic motivation was relatively rare in both groups.

Table 14 compares the alcohol and drug use of the offender groups. Over one-half of both groups were consuming alcohol at the time of their offense, and about one-third were intoxicated. Over 40% of both groups chronically abused alcohol but the difference between the percentages of alcohol abusers in the stranger and acquaintance groups was not statistically significant. Drugs were

TABLE 14
HOMICIDE CIRCUMSTANCES: PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
Alcohol at time of offence:		
Marked	29.4	36.9
Moderate	23.5	16.7
None	29.4	26.2
Unknown	17.6	20.2
Chronic alcohol use:		
Marked	44.4	41.2
Moderate	38.9	35.3
None	11.1	12.9
Unknown	5.6	10.6
Illegal drug use at time of offence:		
Marked	0.0	7.3
Moderate	5.9	14.6
None	64.7	50.0
Unknown	29.4	28.0
Chronic use of illegal drugs:		
marked	6.3	8.6
moderate	25.0	32.1
none	56.3	42.0
unknown	12.5	17.3
Memory for offence:		
none	0.0	8.2
a little	16.7	17.6
some	16.7	18.8
a lot	55.6	36.5
complete	0.0	11.8
unknown	11.1	7.1
Homicide impulsive act:		
clearly impulsive	61.1	65.5
some planning	27.8	14.3
considerable planning	11.1	4.8
unknown	0.0	15.5
Accused admits offence:	88.2	75.6

used by 5.9% of the stranger group and 21.9% of the acquaintance group at the time of the offense. Approximately one-third of the members of each group used illegal drugs regularly. Finally, memory of the offense and the impulsiveness used in its commission were similar for members of both groups.

Diagnostic and neurological findings in Table 15 show that the

TABLE 15
CLINICAL FEATURES OF KILLERS SEEN FOR
PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENT

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
Diagnosis*		
Psychotic	26.7	27.1
Neurotic	6.7	37.1
Personality Disorder	33.3	21.4
Alcoholism	33.3	21.4
Drug Dependence	13.3	1.4
Mental Retardation	0.0	8.6
Other	0.0	4.3
Previous Psychiatric History	33.3	45.3
EEG - Abnormal	13.3	9.3
Other Neurological Tests - abnormal	0.0	4.7
History of seizures or brain injury	5.9	15.7
Previous suicide attempts*	5.6	31.3
Attempted to be restrained against murderous impulses:		
Yes	0.0	1.2
No	82.4	92.8
Unknown	17.6	6.0
At time of offence:		
Mentally ill	35.3	34.1
Hallucinating*	17.6	3.6
Delusional	17.6	10.8
Attempt suicide after homicide	0.0	13.1

* For diagnosis, 85 cases were available, 15 stranger and 70 acquaintance killers $X^2 = 54.92$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$. The Neurotic, Drug Dependence, Mental Retardation and Other diagnostic categories were combined to overcome the problem of small frequencies. Acquaintance killer values were used as observed frequencies and expected frequencies computed from the stranger killer values. For Hallucinating at time of offence $X^2 = 3.28$, $df = 1$, $p < .10$. For previous suicide attempts, $X^2 = 6.69$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$.

two groups were, in this regard, quite similar. The acquaintance killers reported more previous suicide attempts than did the stranger killers, but about one-third of each group was diagnosed as being mentally ill at the time of the offense. The distribution of diagnoses was significantly different for the two groups. This result is attributable mostly to the more frequent neurotic diagnoses which

the acquaintance killers received. Finally, more stranger killers hallucinated at the time of their crime than did acquaintance killers.

Sexual problems were most noteworthy in stranger killers (Table 16). Significantly more members of the stranger group had a

TABLE 16
SEXUAL FUNCTIONING: PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
Courtship Skills:*		
good	0.0	2.4
satisfactory	11.1	32.9
unsatisfactory	5.6	6.1
very unsatisfactory	11.1	1.2
unknown	72.2	57.3
Sexual Anomaly*	44.4	20.5
History unsatisfactory relationships*	50.0	20.0
History sexual inexperience	66.7	42.2
History sexual dysfunction	5.9	4.3

* Courtship skills $X^2 = 8.23$, $df = 4$, $p < .10$; Sexual anomaly, $X^2 = 4.57$, $df = 2$, $p = .10$, excluding unknown category, $X^2 = 4.02$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$; history unsatisfactory relationships $X^2 = 6.96$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$

history of unsatisfactory relationships and showed trends towards poor courtship skills and the presence of a sexual anomaly. These trends relate to the prominence of sexual motivations for homicide which was noted in both the national and psychiatric samples. Sexual dysfunction occurred only in a minority of cases. Although 66.7% of the stranger group had a history of less experience with conventional sexual outlets, this result was not statistically significant as compared to the acquaintance group.

MMPI results were not available in every case, but the contrast in the two groups is interesting, as Table 17 shows. Two scales were significant. The stranger group showed significantly lower Repression and Ego Strength than did the acquaintance group. Although average T-scores were within normal limits for both groups, the strangers were less likely and less able to defend against their impulses, which were, in some cases, anomalous sexual impulses connected with the homicide. The standard MMPI scales showed the stranger group members tending towards more confused thought processes (Sc) and more freefloating anxiety (Pt) in criminally-in-

TABLE 17
MMPI RESULTS: MEAN SCALE T-SCORES

	STRANGER (N = 10)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 43)
L - Lie	51.2	51.7
F	73.4+	68.1
K	50.0	53.1
Hs - Hypochondriasis	61.0	63.5
D - Depression	68.4	72.0+
Hy - Hysteria	62.4	66.1
Pd - Psychopathic Deviate	75.6+	75.1+
Mf - Masculinity-femininity	63.1	58.8
Pa - Paranoia	69.7	69.7
Pt - Psychasthenia	73.6+	67.6
Sc - Schizophrenia	82.6+	73.7+
Ma - Mania	65.2	62.3
Si - Social Introversion	59.9	57.4
Anxiety	59.9	55.5
Repression*	46.2	53.9
Ego Strength*	33.5	44.4
Overcontrolled Hostility	50.1	54.4

* For Repression, $t = 2.31$, $df = 51$, $p < .03$; for Ego Strength, $t = 2.19$, $df = 51$, $p < .04$.

+ Clinically significant elevations. With Colligan research norms, no scale is significantly elevated and of clinical note.

clined individuals (Pd). The Pd scale reflects both family disturbance and criminal tendencies. The acquaintance group members showed a trend towards more depression (D), with somewhat less confused thinking (Sc), but still within a criminally-inclined group (Pd).

Table 18 highlights the familial difficulties of the two groups. Whereas approximately 5% of the Canadian population have an alcohol problem and 16% are heavy drinkers, over one-quarter of the fathers of the psychiatric sample members had serious alcohol problems. The results for the mothers of the sample members were within chance expectation, based on the average in the national sample. Mental illness was also more common than expected for both mothers and fathers. One out of every five or six sample members incurred significant beatings by his/her father. The results of the Clarke Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire⁶³ showed that both

⁶³ Normative information on this questionnaire are found in Paitich & Langevin, *The*

TABLE 18
FAMILY BACKGROUND: PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
<u>Father:</u>		
alcoholic/heavy drinker	27.8	29.3
mentally ill	0.0	6.0
beat accused	16.7	15.9
often absent from home	35.3	25.3
<u>Mother:</u>		
alcoholic/heavy drinker	5.9	3.7
mentally ill	11.8	13.1
beat accused	0.0	2.4
often absent from home	23.5	17.1
Mother's Aggression Scale - mean centiles*	49.8	69.0
<u>Parents:</u>		
criminals	5.9	9.6
fought frequently	47.1	30.5
Mother's Aggression to Father Scale - mean centiles	43.0	66.3
<u>Accused:</u>		
adopted/foster*	33.3	10.8
violent with sibs*	41.2	25.3
theft*	52.9	26.5
truancy/suspension from school	23.5	28.0
temper tantrums*	29.4	9.8
childhood history of violence	47.1	27.7
enuresis	35.3	15.5
firesetting	17.6	4.8
cruel to animals	5.9	8.4
run away	21.1	19.5
nervous habits, e.g. tics, nailbiting	31.3	26.5

For Accused adopted, $X^2 = 6.33$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$; violent with sibs, $X^2 = 7.52$, $df = 3$, $p < .10$. Theft, $X^2 = 5.60$, $df = 2$, $p < .10$; temper tantrums $X^2 = 4.84$, $df = 2$, $p < .10$. Mother's Aggression Scale $t = 2.14$, $df = 22.64$, $p < .05$ and Mother's Aggression to Father Scale, $t = 2.90$, $df = 33.69$, $p < .01$ separate variance estimates.

the stranger group members and the acquaintance group members experienced clinically significant aggression from fathers who were also strict and aggressive with the group members' mothers as well.

The only significant differences between the stranger and acquaintance groups were in reference to the mother scales. The mothers of stranger killers were less aggressive towards their children and towards their husbands than were those mothers of the acquaintance killers. Mothers in both groups indulged their children, but tended also to be unaffectionate. The stranger group members had significantly more often been adopted or had been foster children who had shown early trends to problems such as theft, temper tantrums, and sibling violence.

The differences in the childhood violence patterns of the two groups' members, however, were not maintained in adulthood, as both groups showed a history of adult violence (Table 19). It is noteworthy that examining psychiatrists found that one-half of the stranger killers and only one-third of the acquaintance killers had previously been considered violent. Over one-third of the stranger group had previously been considered dangerous and had a criminal record for common assault; 11.8% had a criminal record for sexual assault. These figures are higher than the acquaintance group figures, but they are not statistically significant, a result likely due to the small number of cases analyzed. It is noteworthy that 58.5% of the stranger group and 37.5% of the acquaintance group had engaged in previous violence that was not reported to police or that did not result in arrests. On the whole, both groups had a history of violence. Some members of both groups overcontrolled their hostility, but the majority did not.⁶⁴

V. DISCUSSION

Five sets of factors have been examined for individuals convicted of stranger homicide: mental illness, alcohol and drug abuse, history of violence, sexual problems, and the biological factor of brain damage. Examination of the national and psychiatric samples shows the numerous similarities between stranger killers and acquaintance killers. Both groups were composed, for the most part, of young white single males who were grade school dropouts with poor job skills. Their victims were older white single males whom they killed in public places mostly by means of stabbing, beating, and shooting. There were many statistically significant differences between the stranger and acquaintance groups in the national sample which were relatively small and which were, in part, a product of the large number of cases. The stranger group, as compared to the

⁶⁴ For a discussion of "overcontrolled hostility" see Megargee, Cook & Mendelsohn, *supra* note 22.

TABLE 19
METHOD OF HOMICIDE: PSYCHIATRIC SAMPLE

PERCENTAGE	STRANGER (N = 19)	ACQUAINTANCE (N = 89)
Overcontrolled hostility	23.5	35.8
Previously considered violent	47.1	32.1
Previously considered dangerous	38.9	19.3
Owens weapons	11.8 (22.2)	19.3 (26.6)
Criminal record for:		
sexual assault	11.8	4.8
common assault	35.3	16.7
Reported violence, no arrests:		
marked	29.4	15.0
moderate	29.4	22.5
none	35.3	51.3
unknown	5.9	11.3

Weapon ownership was not ascertained in 53% 'stranger' and 28% of the 'acquaintance' group.

acquaintance group, had 5.9% more males, were 5.22 years younger, were single 18.3% more often, and had 9.9% more Caucasian members.

The most significant feature differentiating the two groups in the national sample, however, was the motivation for the homicide. Robbery and sexual assault were prominent motives for 65.6% of the stranger group, whereas anger or argument were motives for 59.5% of the acquaintance group. The psychiatric sample also reflected this difference in motivation. The senseless and apparently unmotivated killing occurred with comparable frequency in both the stranger group (27.8%) and in the acquaintance group (32.6%), indicating that unmotivated killing is not more common in stranger homicides.

It is also possible that there was an overlap of robbery and sexual motives in the stranger killers. Violent offenders are often property offenders as well. Previous samples of data indicate that theft and break-and-enter are as common as sexual offenses among sexually aggressive men;⁶⁵ a rape-murder may be coincidental to or an after-thought of robbery.

Motives for homicide related to mental illness are rare in Can-

⁶⁵ Langevin, Paitich & Russon, *Are Rapists Sexually Anomalous, Aggressive, or Both?* in *EROTIC PREFERENCE, GENDER IDENTITY AND AGGRESSION IN MEN* 17 (R. Langevin ed. 1985).

ada. In the national sample, only 1.7% of the stranger group and 7.7% of the acquaintance group were mentally retarded or mentally ill. This data has been characteristic of broad based samples of killers.⁶⁶ Even among the cases admitted for psychiatric examination, none of the stranger group members and only 4.6% of the acquaintance group members had a clearly psychotic motive; however, paranoia and impending doom, which have psychotic overtones, explain an additional 22.2% and 9.3% of the cases, respectively. Although over one-third of each group was mentally ill at the time of the homicide, sexual assault and robbery in the stranger group and anger in the acquaintance group were the most prominent motives. Members of both groups were under additional strains from unemployment, jobs, and financial and marital difficulties which could have contributed to their actions.⁶⁷ There was a trend for more stranger killers to be hallucinating at the time of their offense, and it may prove useful in the future to examine types of these hallucinations, such as "command hallucinations,"⁶⁸ to determine whether their content played an important role in the homicides.⁶⁹

Alcohol and drug abuse were equally noteworthy in both samples and added an additional factor to the sexual frustration or anger of the group members. Alcohol abuse was more common among the killers than among Canadians in general, but the percentages of the stranger killers abusing alcohol did not differ from the percentage of the acquaintance killers.

Results of the psychiatric sample indicated that both groups studied were familiar with violence. Members of both groups came from violent homes, and 25% of the fathers of the group members were alcoholics or heavy drinkers. It is noteworthy that this feature is common to criminals in general and may predispose the individual to commit antisocial acts; it is not, however, a sufficient explanation of violence per se. Stranger killers more frequently misbehaved at an earlier age by stealing, fighting, and having temper tantrums, but, since the distinctions with the acquaintance killers were weak, and a larger replication sample is required.

Perhaps the most important distinction of stranger versus acquaintance killers was in terms of sexual behavior. The stranger group, as compared to the acquaintance group, more frequently had

⁶⁶ Cf. M. WOLFGANG, *supra* note 8.

⁶⁷ Compare Langevin, Paitich, Orchard, Handy & Russon, *supra* note 16.

⁶⁸ "Command hallucinations" are those in which a person believes he or she is hearing voices which command him or her to commit certain acts.

⁶⁹ Compare Hellerstein, Frosch & Kuenigsberg, *The Clinical Significance of Command Hallucinations*, 144 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 219 (1987).

a history of unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships, sexual inexperience, and tended towards both poorer courtship skills and the presence of a sexual anomaly. This data reflect the findings from the national sample that sexual assault is a prominent motive in stranger homicides. Almost one-half of the stranger killers and one-fifth of acquaintance killers in the psychiatric sample manifested unusual sexual behavior that would be clinically labelled as a sexual anomaly or deviation.

Since the present study was retrospective, one does not know whether an unreported behavior was absent or was not inquired into. Thus, even more group members' cases may have possessed unusual sexual behaviors. It is not clear from our data how many men had a sadistic sexual preference; but this question appears to be one of the most important to explore in future studies of stranger homicide. This inquiry may be difficult based on self-reported information since, as has been noted, killers tend to lie about the extent of their aggressive behavior.⁷⁰ Phallometric testing which measures penile erection response to erotica may prove useful in this respect.

Of the biological variables considered important in violence, only brain damage, as measured by neurological examination and an EEG, was considered in the present study. Unfortunately, not every case was tested. A previous study found that one-fourth of the killers show CT (computer-tomography) abnormalities and neuropsychological impairment, but the results tended to be non-specific and not distinct from non-violent offender controls.⁷¹ Sexual sadists, including those who kill their victims, tended to show a statistically significant and specifically higher incidence of right temporal horn dilatation in the brain. The temporal lobe site of this anomaly is theoretically important since it has been associated with changes in sexual behavior, including the presentation of sexual anomalies seen in some cases of temporal lobe epilepsy.⁷² Other clinical features have been noted in sexual sadists as well, such as endocrine abnormalities, feminine gender identity, and preferential sexual arousal by the controlling, terrorizing, and injuring of their sexual assault victims.⁷³ It would be valuable to explore sex killers and stranger killers for the presence of these clinical features.

⁷⁰ Lang, Langevin, Holden, Figia & Wu, *supra* note 1.

⁷¹ Langevin, Ben-Aron, Wortzman, Dickey & Handy, *supra* note 53.

⁷² Compare J. CUMMINGS, *CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHIATRY* (1985).

⁷³ Langevin, Ben-Aron, Coulthard, Heasman, Purins, Handy, Hucker, Russon, Day, Roper, Bain, Wortzman & Webster, *supra* note 1.

VI. CONCLUSION

Using data from both a national and a psychiatric survey, it is apparent that stranger killers, in most respects, are similar to acquaintance killers. Stranger killers tended to be somewhat younger, perhaps reflecting the urgency of sexual needs prominent in some cases, and robbery and sexual assault seemed to be the most important motives for the homicides which they committed. Stranger killers were also more likely to use excessive force on a victim who had not provoked them. This result may reflect the tendency of stranger killers to maintain higher levels of freefloating anxiety and confused thinking. The amount of force used in the homicide may also reflect sexual excitement. Stranger killers were less likely to have attempted suicide than acquaintance killers, but the former group tended to hallucinate more often at the time of the offense. As a group, the stranger killers had poorer interpersonal and sexual relationships than the acquaintance group members. This result may reflect the presence of underlying anomalous and sadistic sexual preferences. Members of both groups of killers were similar in their abuse of alcohol and drugs, disturbed family backgrounds, and histories of excessive violence. The exploration of sexual motivation for homicide and robbery, which is, perhaps, related to sexual or power needs, appears to be the most fruitful area to explore in further differentiation of stranger and acquaintance homicides.