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The Social Construction of the Serial Killer

by

John Gordon Cater

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Department of Sociology  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Sociology  
Specializing in Criminology at the  
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1995

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### Abstract

The research examined the social construction of the serial murderer. The primary theoretical proposition was that the serial murderer had learned to become such a murderer and therefore is a product of society.

Sociological profiles of different types of serial murderers were created. The typologies employed in the research were the frequently cited typologies of serial murderer offered by Holmes and DeBurger (1988).

The main source of data for the research was all available secondary information on the convicted serial killers Clifford Olson, Arthur Shawcross and Jeffrey Dahmer. The research followed a case study methodology and format.

The results of the research determined that the hedonistic, power/control and mission-oriented typologies employed in the study were too general to be mutually exclusive and definitive. The typologies could become more valuable in terms of explanation through the continuing study of the social construction of the serial killer, and the creation of more social profiles.

The research concluded that the study of the social construction of the serial killer through social profiling has much practical and theoretical usefulness. A recommendation for future research was to undertake the functional analyses of the social profiles of a larger number of serial murderers to increase the validity of social profiling criteria and ultimately provide the best explanation of how society produces the serial murderer.

### Acknowledgements

The production of a research paper is often a monumental task. The abilities and resources of the researcher must be stretched to their limit. For most people, to attain such a goal would not be possible without the support and guidance of others along the way. It has now been four years of friendship, support and guidance that I have received from Dr. Thomas Fleming. As my main advisor for this thesis, Dr. Fleming has exercised enormous patience and a neverending belief that I was capable of contributing to the knowledge in some small way. For this, I will always be thankful.

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## Chapter I

### The Social Construction of the Serial Killer

"Society's had their chance...  
I'm going hunting...hunting humans"

James Huberty, (cited in Newton, 1991:1)

#### Introduction

Serial crimes and in particular serial murder have, in the last decade, become significant foci of academic inquiry (Levin and Fox, 1985; Holmes and DeBurger, 1988; Leyton, 1986). Several important topics have merited sustained analysis including society's reaction to violent crime (Jenkins, 1994), law enforcement response and techniques (Egger, 1990), and the study of the victims (Hickey, 1991).

Data gathered toward understanding the offender and his/her offence have grown steadily over the past decade. More recently, research on the examination of the social construction of the phenomena has emerged in the work of several scholars (Jenkins, 1994; Dietz, cited in O'Reilly-Fleming, 1995).

Rossmo (1993), a detective and academic researcher, stated the problem succinctly,

It is crucial to expand scientific knowledge we hold concerning serial killers and their behaviour if we ever hope to reduce or control this form of extreme and apparently random violence.  
(p.3)

The serial killer is a pure predator, with no **apparent** motive, who shows a complete lack of remorse, and who has little fear of being apprehended. Of particular concern is the extent to which serial murderers appear to believe that violence against human beings is a normal and acceptable means of implementing their goals and motives (Holmes and Deburger, 1985:29). What theories can be developed which would explain the social construction of a person who commits crimes that are totally unpredictable? What theories can be developed which could explain one who hunts humans?

The United States averages about 20,000 homicides per year (Hickey, 1991:2; Wilson and Seaman, 1992:114). Of this total, approximately 20% remain unsolved (Holmes and DeBurger, 1985:29). Based on these figures, a few authors (Darrach and Norris, 1984; Holmes and DeBurger, 1985:33) have estimated that serial murderers kill upwards of 5000 people per year. Other researchers believe this number of deaths attributed to serial killers is highly unlikely (Jenkins, 1994:60). Jenkins (1994:29) stated that any estimate of victims of serial murderers that "involves significantly over 1 percent of all murders should be greeted with great suspicion."

The United States Department of Justice Statistics (1993; cited in Jenkins, 1994:25) reported that by the end of 1992, the main list of serial murderers had recorded 447 names since 1900. Throughout the whole 20th century, the total number of victims of serial murder from both known and **suspected** murders, is 4,475. This total represents an average of about 50 victims of serial killers per year.

The murder rate in Canada has remained relatively consistent over the past ten years. There have been just under 700 murders in total per year (MacKay, 1992). The number of active or known serial murderers (per se) in Canada has not been officially estimated with the exception of "stranger murder" statistics recorded by Silverman and Kennedy (1993:102/3). Motiveless stranger murders

accounted for only 7% (N=886) of all murder between 1961-1990, and male offenders were responsible for the majority of stranger murder (96%), in Canada. Based on a generalization of the U.S. statistics on serial murderers, it could be hypothesized that serial murderers may account for a portion of these stranger murder statistics in Canada.

Hickey (1991b), reported that there are about eight convicted serial murderers incarcerated in Canada at the present time. This number may be surprising to the average Canadian because the cases of these offenders have not been as well publicized as that of Canadian serial murderer Clifford Olson. One exception was the Paul Bernardo serial rape and double murder trial in Toronto, Ontario. The trial had been dubbed the "Canadian trial of the century", with stories that appeared almost daily in newspapers across the country (e.g., Vancouver Sun, 95/05/16:A5; Toronto Star, 95/05/15:A1).

Statistics are often problematic with research on serial murderers in terms of reliability and validity (Jenkins, 1994:25-29). Leyton (1986) stated,

Statistics are utterly unreliable, and often unavailable for multiple murder, and we are forced to gather evidence where and when we can. Even that is weakened by the number of killers who are never captured whose many crimes lie buried in wilderness groves and suburban yards. Even the renowned FBI Uniform crime reports are dependent on the whims of many tiny police jurisdictions, who may file their reports as they choose (p.9).

Rampant exaggerations from both sensationalistic sources and even mainstream accounts of murderers are particularly suspect in statistical manipulations. Many authors who write books on serial killers, and newspaper reporters who report on serial killers may be financially motivated to enhance statistics in order to make the serial murder problem seem more alarming than it really is (Jenkins, 1994:30; O'Reilly-Fleming, 1992). It may be hypothesized that the total number of serial killers will, in all probability, never be known (Hickey, 1991:19).

In this century, many serial murder cases are as yet unsolved. A current example is the case of the "Green River killer" in the Seattle, Washington area. The Green River killer has been estimated to be responsible for over 40 killings to date (Smith and Guillen, 1990). Another example is the Zodiac killer in California (Graysmith, 1987), thought to be responsible for over 15 murders.

The Canadian experience with serial murder appears to involve cases "few and far between." With the exception of the Olson and Bernardo examples, the cases have been processed without the media frenzy and sensationalism reminiscent of the United States. O'Reilly-Fleming (1992) considered that the lack of sensationalism in Canada is due to Canadian newspapers being more restrained or balanced in their reporting. Reporting in Canada is more a display of useful and factual information for the Canadian media.

Jenkins (1994:42) agreed with these views and added that courts of law based on British precedent (i.e. Canadian law) place severe restrictions on media coverage and enforce limitations with harsh penalties for contempt. The United States judicial system exhibits greater legal freedoms in their media reporting.

An example of this apparent international difference in media dynamics was a Canadian judge's initial publication ban for the Holmolka-Bernardo murder/serial crime trial (Toronto Star 93/07/01:A3). This case is in stark contrast to the sensationalistic media in the United States which aired the Jeffrey Dahmer trial live on Court Television. Another example involved one worker from a television station in Chicago who stated "this is just the kind of break we needed for our ratings," after finding out that his station had just won a media drawing to witness John Wayne Gacy's execution (Vancouver Sun 94/05/09:A7).

There are a number of myths surrounding serial murder. Perhaps the most common myth being that serial murder is a relatively new phenomena and is merely synchronous with an increasingly violent North American society. The actual concept of serial murder has existed for over a century.

For many authorities, the case of Jack the Ripper, a series of five murders in the Whitechapel district of London, England in 1888, is considered the first identified case of serial murder by a single perpetrator (Rumbelow, 1988). Doubtless other earlier examples are known to researchers (Jenkins, 1994; Hickey, 1990). In light of this, it was not until the 1980s that systematic descriptions and analyses of a multiple-murder problem were acknowledged.

The acknowledgement and contemporary interest in the phenomenon of serial murder appears to have developed from a few celebrated cases such as Ted Bundy and John Gacy. These cases induced relentless media reports from reporters, keen to inform the world of these new "monsters who appeared out of nowhere" (Jenkins, 1994:8).

Researchers have demonstrated that serial murder as a social/crime problem, and serial murderers as an identified criminal type, have not just suddenly appeared as the new ultimate human horror (Egger, 1990; Hickey, 1991; Jenkins, 1989). Serial murder is not a totally new kind of criminal behaviour (Holmes and DeBurger 1985:29). In fact, Jenkins (1994) pointed out

serial murder was a well-known phenomena in the early twentieth century... and between 1900-1940, there were dozens of recorded incidents in the United States, and extreme cases (defined as 10 or more victims) occurred almost as frequently as they have in the last two decades. (p.8).



Jenkins (1994:33) divided the American experience with serial murder into three distinct periods;

1. "intense activity" - pre 1940 (absolute minimum of 100 serial murder cases).
2. "relative tranquillity" - 1940-1969 (50 recorded cases).
3. "murder wave"\* - mid 1960s to the present, (1971-1990 : 60 cases).

\* The murder wave appears to be continuing.

The elusive answers to questions of the genesis, motivation and modus operandi of serial murderers have been researched by scientists, law enforcement personnel, and various academic researchers in the quest for greater understanding of this relatively rare but important social problem. Hickey (1991:64) noted that research into serial murder is in its infancy and that it would be dangerous for students of the field to "draw hasty conclusions about its etiology."

Serial murder is an important social problem because serial murderers have such a tremendous impact on society in terms of the number of victims, the drastic effect on communities, and the challenge to law enforcement resources. One example of how the presence of a potential serial killer can affect a community was the experience of the University of Florida, Gainesville murders. After a discovery of five mutilated victims, the campus and the entire city of Gainesville went into a virtual panic. Many students left the city altogether, while those remaining stockpiled various weapons to protect themselves. "In fact, most students felt that they were in danger all the time" (People, 90/09/17:38).

Brooks, Devine, Green, Hart and Moore (1987:40) stated that the challenge to law enforcement is heightened by the killer's lack of any identifiable motive, which is contrary to law enforcement strategies for protecting the public and apprehending violent criminals.

The importance of serial murder as a social problem is underscored by the fact that the serial murderer operates in a completely random manner which means everyone is at risk (Egger, 1984:352). Finally, Leyton (1992), reminded us that "there is no such thing as a single murder, rather, that these acts murder families, communities, indeed the fabric of society."

The primary goal of the research is to demonstrate that the study of the social construction of the serial murderer is of great benefit toward furthering the understanding of the act of serial murder. This goal will be achieved through data analysis and discussion elicited from the completion of three distinct case studies on the convicted serial murderers Clifford Olson, Jeffrey Dahmer and Arthur Shawcross. It is expected that the research conclusions will support the primary research goal.

In order to learn about serial killers, researchers must focus their efforts on finding out what factors in the offenders social construction can explain such behaviour. These efforts will be addressed through the analysis of data from the three case studies which will generate social profiles of the three defined types of serial killers included in the criteria of the study. The results of the three case studies will be supplemented further through the presentation of data and theoretical propositions from other specific cases of serial murderers.

The discussion of results in the cross-case analysis will determine if the categories described by Holmes and DeBurger (1985:31; Holmes, 1990:56) were applied correctly toward each of the three case studies and whether there appears to be a need for more specific typologies of serial murderers.

The research is expected to identify unique social characteristics within each category of offender to determine what makes each different from the other from a sociological perspective.

The research also seeks to address a number of other theoretical and more general propositions. One of these propositions is to construct "truly sociological profiles of different types of serial murderers." In essence, the end results of the three case studies will be examples of sociological profiles of the three different types of serial murderer as defined by Holmes and DeBurger (1985:31; Holmes, 1990:56).

Another goal of the research is to identify any new or rival sociological theories on serial murderers that the findings may elicit. The research may help to determine whether existing theory should be developed further to assist in understanding serial murderers, or whether it would be possible to develop new or rival theories that could generate better answers or understanding.

It is expected that the conclusions of the research will support contemporary sociological theory on serial murder and different types of serial murderers. Theories of inadequate socialization and social learning theories are likely to remain the dominant theories in understanding the social construction or socialization of serial murderers. However, it is also anticipated that the study will support theoretical arguments of the need for more rigorous research on serial murderers from the aspect of social profiling via the case study method.

The research will address other associated hypotheses and assertions about serial murderers. It is expected that the research may help to identify the types of reinforcements (i.e., alcohol and/or drugs, pornography, ineffective social environment) that may have contributed to an offender's motivations in each of the three cases. The data may provide an explanation as to why an offender was

drawn to a specific victim type. The study will discuss whether the results are transferable to other serial murderers.

Finally, it is expected that cross-case analyses will identify overlapping characteristics of the three cases that may help investigators understand serial murderers in general. It is anticipated that the cross-case analyses and discussion will strongly support the theoretical proposition of the primary research goal and the subsequent theoretical issues.

### Categorization

The research utilized three of the four main categories of serial killers outlined by Holmes and DeBurger (1985:31; Holmes, 1990:56). These included the hedonistic, the power/control, and mission-oriented offender. Preliminary overviews of numerous serial murder cases revealed that the "visionary type" as described would present difficult, if not impossible, obstacles to the gathering of reliable data. This notable exclusion from the research was addressed earlier in the review of the literature.

In light of the three remaining categories, the hedonistic, power/control and the mission-oriented categories, the writer committed to having made three important inferences or assertions prior to data gathering. These assertions are that Olson is believed to belong in the hedonistic offender classification, that Shawcross belongs in the mission-oriented offender classification, and that Dahmer belongs in the power/control-oriented offender classification.

### Case Strategy

The case studies have been divided into two major sections, which are then further subdivided. The first major section is the "first scan social profile", which includes strictly objective criteria of the subject's life. The subdivisions created within the first scan include "family demographics", "education", "relationships" and "criminal record".

The second major section is entitled "second scan social profile", which addresses behaviour and lifestyle characteristics of the subject. This section is further subdivided into three sections, including "birth to adulthood", "the adult years", and "Modus Operandi" (or method of operation). The first and second scan social profiles follow a chronological order of the subjects' life.

There is some overlap of information that is stated in the first scan and then further developed in the second scan. The reason for this overlap was to stay within the definitional guidelines within each scan. The Olson case, for example, lists his criminal record in the first scan as objective data. The second scan is more detailed concerning particular incidents related to the criminal record which further illustrate behaviour and lifestyle. This method was identical in each case study.

Following the second scan, a section was necessary to establish "uncorroborated evidence", which included conflicting information about a subject, or information that may be considered suspect in reliability. The discussion section on each case follows the uncorroborated evidence data. The discussion was divided (i.e. one section per case) so that the information and criteria within each typology could be assessed individually.

The last section in each complete study offers additional case study evidence by including brief details about other serial murderers who are considered to be part of the same typology.

A cross case analysis is presented after the third complete case, which will analyze similarities and differences among the three cases. The final major section is a discussion of results, which addresses the primary goals of the study, theoretical issues and suggestions for further research.

## Chapter II

### Review of the Literature

Sociological theories that offer some explanation towards the understanding of serial murder and the offenders themselves include social structure theory, social control theory, and labelling theory (Hickey, 1991). Although each of these theories could be useful or molded to the topic, theories of inadequate socialization are the most frequently cited as explanations of the serial murderer's behaviour (Egger, 1990:29).

Leyton (1984:18) stated "what remains largely undeveloped is a truly sociological profile of different types of murderers", including serial murderers. The study of the social construction of the serial murderer must arguably be of great benefit toward furthering the understanding of this deviant behaviour.

The concept of social construction is directly related to the idea of generating social profiles of serial killers outlined by Leyton (1984). The research of the social construction of a serial killer would involve creating and examining a social profile that identifies objective and public sets of criteria. In contrast, psychological profiling of serial murderers is deemed to be of somewhat limited value because it is subjective and private (Leyton, 1984:17). (Canter (1994:89) referred to psychological profiles as examining a subject's "inner narrative.").

The social profile of a subject described by Leyton (1984:20) is used in two phases or scans. The first scan would gather data about such objective social traits as family status (i.e. adopted, illegitimate child), and background. The second scan would focus on behavioral and life-style characteristics. Convicted serial murderers, for example, have made extreme presentations of self as a hard-working businessman (e.g. John Gacy), or an unbalanced personality (e.g. Charles Manson). The

second scan would also examine a subject's obsession with things (e.g. violent pornography) and would identify anti-social behaviours (e.g. alcoholism).

Canter (1994:85) presented an example of what would essentially be the focus of a second scan in a social profile. He wrote of a comment made by a police officer at a murder scene. The police officer had exclaimed "he's a nutter," in referring to the perpetrator. Canter stated that "implicitly at least, this comment hypothesized that the behaviour in the offence reveals some general characteristics of the offender that might be available to public scrutiny" (p.86). In practice, to satisfy scientific theory, one would need more specifics of how "a nutter" would be recognized. These specifics would include determining whether the perpetrator had been in a mental hospital and whether there was any evidence that people in mental hospitals commit such acts (Canter, 1994:86).

In light of the proposed study, the most useful of the numerous theories of inadequate socialization appear to be "social process theories" (cited in Hickey, 1991:57). Social process theories contend that criminal behaviour is a function of a socialization process. More important is the underlying concept of social process theories which hypothesize that anyone has the potential for such criminal behaviour.

At a micro-sociological level, humans are externally similar but inherently different. We share similar biological features and we have discovered that genetics ensure common hereditary physical qualities. Genetics also appear to be a "natural" influence on individual behaviours and personalities. In light of these facts, it remains that humans are social animals, and as such, we are socially constructed from the moment that we are born. Sears (1991:79) noted "any sociological explanation of what motivates human behaviour must start at the beginning of life." Social constructionism or socialization is what makes us all vastly different.



The social construction of humans begins with the nurturing of the primary caregiver who, in addition to meeting the physical requirements for life, passes on infinite amounts of socialization information. Over the years, secondary socialization, the encountering of new stimuli and the assessing and reassessing of the social world nurtures the person. In this way, people develop themselves within the conditioning environment called society and they attempt to find a comfortable place for themselves in it.

Leyton (1986:319) stated "the simple fact of human life is that in order for individuals to behave normally, they must grow up feeling that they have some place in the social order - which is to say a coherent and socially constructed identity." If people fail to find a place in the social order, they could feel socially isolated and in the continual struggle to find their place, they may resort to a way of being drastically different. One of these ways unfortunately is serial murder (O'Reilly-Fleming, 1995b).

Since all humans are socially constructed, those humans labelled as "serial killers" are also socially constructed. In essence, they are a product of socialization. Wilson and Seaman (1991:307) declared that "the serial killer is a virtually inevitable product of the evolution of our society."

Holmes and Deburger (1985:29) discussed the point that the basic processes of socialization which have an ongoing effect on individual behaviour are "saturated with a potential for violence in interpersonal relations." These basic socialization processes are redefined by individuals who encounter different life events and situations. In this way, behaviour which may be considered normal or socially acceptable to one person may not be considered so for another.

There are various combinations of life situations that North American society deems to be undesirable or detrimental for a healthy developing life for the individual. Hickey (1991:66) referred to these life situations as "destabilizing events" or "traumatizations". The most prominent of such

destabilizing events that have been generally identified include alcohol and/or drug abuse, psychological abuse (e.g. neglect), sexual and physical abuses, segregated nuclear families, criminal record history, and subsequent institutionalization in penal systems.

In regard to destabilizing events, it is imperative to recognize that the combined effect of various traumatizations is greater than any single trauma (Hickey, 1991:67), and that there has been "no one specific factor identified that is useful in predicting who may be prone to serial murder" (Hickey, 1991:106).

All convicted serial killers have had their life histories thoroughly researched and the results indicate a high incidence of the previously identified destabilizing events. Indeed, many of these individuals often blame their situations for their criminal rampages. There are examples of such individuals shown below, including their brief case histories and the approximate time period during which they actually committed their crimes.

1. Peter Kurten  
(1929)
  - one of ten children in the family
  - received beatings from alcoholic father
  - criminal record at 11 years of age
  - practised animal torture and arson  
(Time-Life book, 1992:96).
2. Albert Fish  
(1920s-  
1930s)
  - spent life in an orphanage and he
  - subsequently blames his actions  
on abuses that he experienced and saw  
(Schechter, 1990).
3. Ed Gein  
(late-1950s)
  - alcoholic father, domineering mother  
(Gollmar, R., 1981).
4. Albert DeSalvo  
(1962)
  - one of 6 children in the family
  - abusive, alcoholic, thieving father  
who taught him to steal at age 5 yrs.  
(Frank, 1966).

5. Richard Ramirez  
 (mid-1980s) - substance abuse by the eighth grade  
 (Linedecker, 1991).

These five individual cases indicate various early-life traumatization highlights and demonstrate an historical consistency. Over the four decades noted, the forms of traumatization are repetitive from case to case. For example, alcohol abuse appears in four of the five cases. In light of the very small sample, there does not seem to be some identifiable "traumatization of the times", that is, something specific to any particular era in each case, rather, such traumatizations are familiar to us to the present day.

One example of a serial killer from the Canadian experience is Clifford Olson, whose life history indicates numerous traumatizations. Canada's most notorious serial murderer, Clifford Robert Olson was institutionalized in a juvenile home early in his life (Leyton, 1986:319) and he began a life of crime while he was still quite young.

Olson logged 94 separate arrests and served about twenty-five years in various prisons for charges that ranged from fraud to armed robbery and sexual assault. These charges preceded his January 11, 1982 conviction of eleven counts of murder and his sentencing on eleven concurrent life terms (Mulgrew, 1991; Newton, 1991:256). Olson reported that prison had an adverse effect on him, which combined with alcohol, triggered his murderous rampages. He was quoted as saying "they never should have let me go" (Hickey, 1991:63).

An example of an American serial killer is John Wayne Gacy who was convicted in 1980 of murdering 33 young boys. He had previously served time in the Iowa State Reformatory on a sodomy charge involving a young boy (Cahill, 1986). In addition, Gacy was arrested later for picking up a

teenager and attempting to force the youth to engage in sex (Hickey, 1991:165). Gacy is a convicted serial killer who had lived with an alcoholic father and abusive mother.

Sears (1991:37) confirmed that by gathering and studying common characteristics, clear profiles emerge of the typical serial murderer, thereby providing a better understanding of how such an individual appears to the rest of society. In contrast, Capt. Robert Evans of the ongoing Green River Task Force outside Seattle Washington (Calgary Herald 08/31/89,:A5), said

We've looked at everybody from doctors to unemployed thieves. You find people who have killed before, attempted to kill, or are just into some very bizarre things... and these are the people you're rubbing elbows with at the bus stop.

There are people who share commonalities in the characteristics or destabilizing events of serial murderers that have been noted. However, very few ever evolve into murderers and fewer still become serial murderers. The people who share these characteristics may not even be arrested for as much as a traffic offence. Therefore, human behaviour must be considered unpredictable.

Although many of the characteristics presented (ie. neglect, physical and sexual abuse) apply to many serial murderers in various combinations, there is no "empirical data set" that may pinpoint a potential serial murderer, nor identify a current offender. Hickey (1991:65) noted that "serial murderers are influenced by a multitude of factors (i.e. unstable home life, death of parents, corporal punishments) that inevitably lead them to kill."

Leyton (cited in Montreal Gazette, 10/12/89:D3) stated "the problem remains that while many people are subject to the same tainted origins and thwarted ambitions, only a tiny minority of them become killers."

Another commonly regarded hypothesis is that the best way of predicting what someone will do is to examine what they've done in the past. The problem with this hypothesis is that it could apply to many cases of serial murder but usually the hypothesis can only be confirmed after the fact.

The great fear and fascination surrounding serial killers is because the act is random - there is nothing you can do...whereas if something is predictable, psychologically it affects us less. (Globe and Mail, 4/3/89:A14)

The study of man's social construction or socialization has generated many theories of social learning, including theories of instinctual or innate behaviour and theories of aggression, in deciding how powerful the environment is in shaping behaviour and action. These theories and the effects of the family on the individual as he/she develops are intrinsic to social process theories. Such theories may help to examine any number of social phenomena, but can answers be found for a phenomenon about which little is known (Egger, 1985:2)?

Many attempts to dissect the serial killer's mind and social behaviour are rooted in sociological theory. The motivation of the serial murderer at first appears obvious with violent tendencies resulting from uncontrollable learned aggression at the top of the list. Yet, primary and secondary socialization, sexual gratification, psycho/sociopathic personalities, the role of fantasy, and theories of domination and power are receiving much attention in the current literature. The infamous Ted Bundy believed that the serial killer is a complex offender, and that no one may ever know what motivates him to action (cited in Holmes and DeBurger, 1988:99; Michaud and Aynesworth, 1983).

Ted Bundy once stated that he believed that "a good dozen people" were capable of serial murder in King County (Seattle), "right now" (Michaud and Aynesworth, 1983:117). This self-serving conjecture from a convicted serial killer, implied some innate or instinctual aggression factor that may play a role in the make-up of a serial killer.

Sigmund Freud, and later Konrad Lorenz developed theories of instinctual aggression. One theory revolved around the idea that an individual's instinctual aggressive energy is constantly being generated and slowly builds up over time (Brigham and Wrightsman, 1982). This energy builds to a point where it must be released and the building of energy can be triggered by some environmental stimulus. However, the specific amount of aggression is determined by the energy that has been built up, and it may be released spontaneously even if there is no overt stimuli eliciting the aggression. The spontaneous release of aggression may be an important concept in examining serial murderers because of the randomness and often intense violent nature of their crimes.

Theories of instinctual aggression are not widely accepted by sociologists. In contrast to Freud and Lorenz, Baron (cited in Brigham and Wrightsman, 1982) stated that aggression seems to be a learned form of social behaviour, and arises from a variety of conditions that encourage and stimulate its occurrence. Although aggression as a learned response appears to be the predominant view in the literature to date, there are researchers who continue to seek strictly psychological or biological factors.

Brigham and Wrightsman (1977:49) noted that there is some indication that reduction of physiological tension "produced by injuring the anger instigator comes about when the aggressor has learned that aggression is frequently rewarded." In this sense, a reinforcement effect appears to take place. Therefore, people who find aggression rewarding might be more likely to attack someone again in the future. This theory of aggression reinforcement is supported by documented cases of serial murder where the killers themselves claimed that after their initial victim, it became easier to kill again.

Serial killers vary in what they consider to be their rewards for aggressive acts or murders. One offender stated in an interview, "the response of the victim was everything" (i.e., the look of terror in the victim's eyes; cited in Hickey, 1991:150). Another example of what some serial killers deem to

be a reward from a kill is trophy hunting. In trophy hunting, the offender may keep portions of the victim's clothing or even body parts as a reminder or souvenir of his/her deed (Wilson and Seaman, 1992:68).

Trends in serial murder cases reflecting aggression reinforcement have been noted, which include a decrease in the lapse of time between victims, and an increase in the violence of the attacks with each incident. Ann Rule (cited in Globe and Mail, 4/3/89:A14) believed serial murder is an addiction of increasing aggression. She noted that, in the beginning, it is just one killing. After that, it is two or three times per year, and eventually killings every week until it is out of control. The idea of reinforcement also becomes important when examining serial murder motivations, including the role of fantasy as a motivator.

The unpredictable nature of serial murder necessarily provokes explanation in terms of motivational factors. The discovery of motivation(s) would be an important step in promoting explanation, understanding, and would enhance the ability to construct the identity of the elusive offender quicker than is currently possible. The study of the social construction of serial killers and generating new typologies could enable agencies to improve such investigations.

The most common theories of motivation for the serial killer include a constant quest for control (domination, ultimate power), thrill-seeking, and sexual motivation; however, sexual motivation is likely closely associated with power and domination. The question then becomes why would any particular individual go so far as to kill several others to achieve these goals. Falk (1990) believed,

murder is a power trip. There is good reason to believe that many murders, both of the homicide and multicide kind, are an effort to compensate the killer for the belief that he has no power (p91).

The insatiable desire for power includes those offenders who kill certain victim types. Victim types can be described as those people of a particular social status (e.g. prostitutes), race, or gender. In addition to victim types as a motivation, serial killers may just have the urge to kill anybody.

There have been trends noted where the victims of the serial killer are physically similar. For instance, Ted Bundy's victims tended to be young brunette women with their hair parted down the centre which happened to match the appearance of his ex-fiance. O'Reilly-Fleming (1995b) noted, however, that some researchers have suggested that this particular physical similarity was simply the 1970s typical hair style for young women.

John Wayne Gacy killed 33 young athletic-type boys. It has been hypothesized that he targeted such victims because he created an association with his own tortured youth as a loser, through the constant physical and psychological abuse from his father (Cartel, 1985:97). It may also be hypothesized that Gacy simply marginalized this victim type and to him, such victims were "throw-away kids" (O'Reilly-Fleming, 1995b).

Studies have been conducted which examined the sexual aspects of motivation in serial murder. Hickey (1991:70) found that violent fantasy is the most critical common factor to serial killers. A study by Prentky, Burgess, Rokous, et al. (1989), examined the role of fantasy in serial sexual homicide. The sample included 25 serial sexual murderers with three or more known victims. Those offenders were compared with 17 single sexual murderers with only one known victim each.

The first hypothesis in the study by Prentky et al. (1989) identified the drive mechanism as manifested in an intrusive fantasy life dominated by paraphilias. The term "paraphilia" was defined by Money (1990:26), as a "biomedical term" that was officially used to replace perversion on the DSM III



psychological scale. Examples of paraphilias included compulsive masturbation, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and fetishism.

The second hypothesis in this study was the prevalence of documented or self-reported violent fantasies. The third hypothesis was that of fantasies of organized crime scenes by the serial murderers. The three hypotheses were supported by the Prentky et al. (1989) research.

Fantasy was defined by the study as "an elaborated set of cognitions (or thoughts) characterized by preoccupation (or rehearsal), anchored in emotion, and originating in daydreams" (Prentky et al., 1989:887). The researchers found that violent fantasy was present in 86% of the serial murderers and only 23% of the single murderers, suggesting a functional relationship between fantasy and repetitive assaultive behaviour (Prentky et al. 1989:890). Furthermore, it appeared that the more the fantasy was rehearsed, the more power it acquired and the stronger the association between the fantasy content and sexual arousal. The findings of this study strongly supported the previously discussed idea of reinforcement contributing to motivation.

The preceding discussion raises the question, what leads an individual to translate a fantasy into reality? Hickey (1991:54) investigated how often and how close fantasies of non-offenders take them to the brink of killing. Researchers should attempt to uncover what could have induced such fantasies when the majority of people do not have such fantasies. These questions are no doubt difficult to answer. Social construction, through case study analysis, may assist in finding answers.

There is further case study documentation to suggest that serial killers translate their fantasies into reality. It has been noted, for example that Edmund Kemper III used to fantasize about killing his mother and killing his mother's friends. He also fantasized about what his female hitchhiking victims would "look like headless; how it would feel to make love to the corpses" (Cartel, 1985:97). Kemper

did in fact act out many of his fantasies in real life. Hickey (1991:54) noted that the urge to kill is "fuelled by the well-developed fantasies that allow the offender to vicariously gain control of others."

A motivational model of sexual homicide developed by Burgess, Hartman, Ressler, Douglas, and McCormack (1986) provided further insight and paralleled research into the social construction of serial killers. Although the model does not deal directly with the serial murderer, it did cover a number of factors and offered concepts that may provide a good base to help explain the motivation of such offenders.

The study identified five motivational factors that could be identified in the offender's social construction:

1. ineffective social environment
2. formative events (trauma, physical, sexual abuse as a child)
3. critical personal traits and cognitive mapping process
4. action toward others and self
5. feedback filter

Ineffective social environment included the attachments to parents and to other family members that was considered important in how these children relate to and evaluate other members of society (i.e. bonding). The elements of this bonding or the social bond are,

attachment ties of affection and respect towards parents, school and peers; commitment to, and investment in, conventional lines of action, involvement in conventional activities; and the belief in the moral validity of social norms. (Hirschi, 1980:119)

Lack of bonds to primary caregivers may lead to a diminished emotional response, no role models, and the child may become reclusive. Environment, in combination with formative events, underscores the importance of primary socialization.

One assumption surrounding formative events is that the child may have had frightening memories or upsetting life experiences that became part of the developing thought pattern processes. These thought patterns could be a base for daydreams, nightmares, and fantasies in later life. The other assumption was that external life events such as psychological abuse, physical abuse and/or sexual abuse would be influential in the child's social development and in how the child related to others.

Usually, one of the first analyses of the serial killer by academics and law enforcement investigators is to detail his or her past. In particular, social environment and subsequent formative events that may provide possible clues to motivational factors are investigated. Attempts to find patterns in the case studies of serial murderers presumes that there must be some combination of detrimental social experiences or events common to serial killers that could explain this antisocial behaviour. Patterned responses include the tendency for men to portray negative rather than positive social traits (e.g. chronic lying), which may lead to social isolation.

Burgess et al. (1986) addressed chronic lying as an important aspect of offender personality. Their research hypothesized that chronic lying demonstrates a lack of trust and commitment to a "world of rules and negotiation." Hickey (1991b) reviewed case files of numerous serial murderers and stated that most offenders are not known for their honesty. Consequently, the offender relies primarily on fantasy for development of the lies. As noted earlier, fantasy contributes as a source of emotional arousal and that emotion is often a confused mixture of sex and aggression. Patterned response is then structured into controlled thinking patterns that are cognitively mapped.

Cognitive mapping included one's sense of self and beliefs about the world. Most importantly, cognitive mapping constructed meaning and interpretation of others. These structures of cognitive mapping were formed by daydreams, nightmares, fantasies, and "thoughts with strong visual components."

Burgess et al. (1986) reported the most common themes of cognitive structure to have been dominance, revenge, violence, rape, control, torture, mutilation, inflicting pain on self/others, and death. The researchers also recognized that for the serial murderers in the study, the mapping was repetitive. The repetitious pattern was supported by interviews conducted with the offenders and through documented reports.

Many pattern theories exist that attempt to establish commonality in motivation. One example is the identification of other main traits that have been noted with relative consistency in many serial killers. These include bedwetting, arson and cruelty to animals. It has been hypothesized by researchers that cruelty to animals sets the stage for future abuse (Wilson and Seaman, 1992:41; Skrapec, 1992).

Documentation on Edmund Kemper III as a child, for example, reported that he used to kill and mutilate cats as well as symbolically destroy his sister's toy dolls. Kemper's continuing fascination with death appeared to have been structured and reinforced with more animal abuses, until the power of the fantasies became so great that he enacted them in reality with people (Hickey, 1991:141).

The fifth and final motivational factor identified by Burgess et al. (1986), is the feedback filter. The feedback filter was perhaps the most crucial for understanding the repetitive nature of this particular crime. The filter may be described as cyclical, in that it filters patterned thoughts, responses and actions into a continuous way of thinking.

Holmes and DeBurger (1988:51) offered two examples of the feedback hypothesis. They report the case of a serial murderer who turned himself in because he freaked out over the problems he had in disposing of his victims' bodies. During his prison sentence, he had fantasies about how to be more efficient in solving this situation. After his release from prison, he murdered eight women before being caught.

Ted Bundy also believed that fantasy played a great role in behaviour and that his own behaviour in the fantasy stage was fuelled by violent pornography and his collection of True Detective magazines (Holmes and Deburger, 1988:99; Hazelwood, 1992).

The underlying problem in researching the role of fantasy in criminal behaviour is that it is perfectly normal for everyone to have dreams, fantasies, nightmares, and vivid imaginations. Examination of violent fantasy in the serial killer must establish that extra push "over the edge." For example, the potentially harmful effects of violence on television, in pornographic material, in books, and in films have been indicated in studies. Canter (1994:233) related that Jeffrey Dahmer watched the Exorcist 2 over and over again during his last period of systematic killing.

Berkowitz (1981; cited in Aronson:213) believed that emotionally immature individuals could be seriously affected by fighting and brutality in films and in television and that disturbed people may focus their aggressive energy in socially destructive actions. Television has become a major source of information and entertainment in North American society and over the years, programming has developed increasingly violent content. It is estimated that by the time the average person is eighteen, they will have viewed more than 16,000 murders on television (cited in Holmes and DeBurger, 1988:34).

Bandura (1981; cited in Aronson:220) conducted a study of pre-school children, who, after being subjected to "mild frustrations," tended to imitate the hostile behaviour of adults that they had witnessed in films. The results of these studies indicate that realistic visual experiences may be a prime source of secondary socialization. It could be hypothesized that depictions of asocial events are harmful if they are internalized and the proper context of the content is not established by secondary sources, such as parents, friends, teachers and other role models.

A current example of violence on television involves the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. The television show is directed at children and has extensive martial arts content. The show's violence has been objectionable to some parents and teachers. The parents and teachers argue that children have difficulty in separating real life occurrences from what is portrayed on the television screen. In particular, kicks and punches thrown by the Power Rangers are mimicked. There have been many instances of children acting out in real life what they see on the show creating a general increase in violent occurrences as a result (Vancouver Sun, 94/11/10:A1).

In addition to television, pornographic and particularly violent pornographic material, including books and magazines, as regular forms of entertainment have been identified as instruments that enhance fantasy through visual realism. It is widely acknowledged, however, that further study must be conducted before a definitive answer can be reached on the full effects of violent pornography (Holmes and Deburger, 1985:29).

In an interview with one serial killer, the offender revealed that the ritual he enacted by binding a woman with her legs wide open (in this case it was an eleven year old girl), was "something he had in his head since he was a kid" (cited in Hickey, 1991:214). The offender had read about this technique in a book that his uncle had given to him.

Holmes and Deburger (1985:29) agreed that there is a "fertile cultural seedbed" of violent examples of behaviour in society today. Included in this cultural seedbed is the mass media's portrayal of senseless violence as a normal or appropriate response in many life situations. As a result of this widespread problem, a sensitivity-dulling effect takes place that reaches all age groups.

The way that society displays the phenomenon of serial murder is important from a macro-sociological level. This macro approach considers the fact that the social construction of individuals is heavily influenced by behaviour reinforcement through society's changing cultural norms and values. For example, it is ironic that some serial murderers have been "socially accepted" to the point of being portrayed as cultural icons through mass media. Serial murder is being glorified for its shock value with little regard for the more realistic view that it is a horrific criminal activity.

Serial murder is the hot topic of many television talk shows, documentaries, highly successful films such as "The Silence of the Lambs" , and numerous biographical books on such offenders. Serial killers have been referred to as the "Hillside Strangler", the "Vancouver Butcher", the "Killer Clown" and the notorious "Jack the Ripper". These perceptions that make the front page news increase readership for newspapers and magazines which demonstrates society's hunger for this type of material.

Hickey (1991:155) noted that these titles "are designed to evoke our disgust, horror and fascination." This sensationalism, however, should not disillusion the extent or reality of the problem.

Serial murder stories, including the offenders, victims, and the victim's families are not only broadcast in the news but even find their way onto the pages of entertainment and "women's" magazines (People, 90/09/17 on the "Gainesville murders"; McCall's, 92/02 "Serial Murderer as Superstar"). In addition to the stories, pictures are a powerful literary device employed by all mediums,

and childhood pictures of the offender are popular page fillers (i.e., People, 91/08/12 p32-38 on Jeffrey Dahmer). Dahmer has even made the cover page of Newsweek magazine (92/02/03).

### Law Enforcement Response

Serial murder is a growing concern and police networks are moving quickly to meet the challenge. It is clear that a multidisciplinary approach is the most effective method of investigation as shown by the structure of the VICLAS (Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System) computer program recently put into place by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Davidson, 1992:21), and the VICAP (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program) in the United States, implemented by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Wilson & Seaman, 1992:121).

VICLAS and the long running VICAP (approximately ten years) were developed with the skills of psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, criminologists, and biologists to construct profiles of violent offenders and particularly of serial criminals. Both programs took years of research and are specifically aimed at analysing, not investigating, serial violent crime.

There are a tremendous number of obstacles and problems for police when they find themselves faced with a potential serial murder case. One of the most prevalent obstacles is "linkage blindness", a phrase Steven Egger coined in 1984 to recognize the "lack of coordination between investigating agencies in cases involving serial murder" (O'Reilly-Fleming, 1992:227). Essentially, VICLAS and VICAP are valiant attempts to reduce linkage blindness.

Another inevitable hurdle in serial murder investigations is that they are open to tremendous media attention - perhaps getting more attention than any other single crime. As a result, police



agencies are faced with relentless pressure to solve the crime, to protect the public, and to preserve their reputations.

Albert DeSalvo, the Boston Strangler, once gave his insight into why the police could never catch him while he was committing his crimes of strangling women. He stated "I never knew where I was going, I never knew what I was doing - that's why you (police) never nailed me, because you never knew where I was going to strike - and I didn't either" (cited in Leyton, 1986:127).

Ultimately, when law enforcement agencies are searching for what they feel may be a serial killer, they generate lists of suspect names often numbering in the thousands. Through the research of the social construction and social profiling of known killers, potential warning signs could be identified and possible motivational factors recognized. It is expected that through such research, quicker offender identification is a possibility.

### Prediction

The study of the social construction of serial murderers could be important in the realm of prediction. For example, if warning signs (criteria identified by social profiling) are present in a person's life, perhaps a closer look to determine the risk of violent behaviour might be considered. There are current examples in the Canadian justice system in which such prediction aimed at prevention is employed.

When young offenders are found to be recidivistic in nature and their crimes appear to be a veritable threat to society (i.e., assaults, robberies) they can be asked, or ordered by the presiding judge to submit to psychological assessments (Cater, 1995). It is hypothesized that a social profile could be

equally or more important than the psychological profile to the same end, because people are what they are as a result of the social experiences they have undergone in their lives (Athens, 1989:18).

The main criticism of predicting violent behaviour is that prediction itself is empirically impossible (Monahan, 1981:27). No one, however, insists that prediction be perfect (Monahan, 1981:34).

The prediction of violent behaviour is unsatisfactory, because professionals' ability to predict future violence reliably is unproven (Monahan, 1981:27). In the field of criminology, a major problem with prediction from such social experiences is the continued unreliability of the information found in original documents (Farrington and Tarling, 1985:15).

Parole records still consist of opinions, hearsay and haphazardly recorded judgements (Farrington and Tarling, 1985:15). However, prediction would likely be improved if information from several sources was used, similar to the method of corroboratory evidence employed in the current research (Farrington and Tarling, 1985:16).

The key to the discovery of the creation of dangerous violent criminals lies in developing theories from the careful study of their social experiences (Athens, 1989:17). The study of the social construction of the serial killer may strengthen the ability to predict violent behaviour and particularly extreme violent behaviour such as serial murder.

### Chapter III

#### Methodology

Perhaps the most important considerations in the research of serial murder and serial murderers are the typologies, categories and definitions. The primary function of types is to identify, simplify, and order concrete data so that they may be described in terms that make them comparable (McKinney, 1966:217). For example, researchers make distinctions between "lust murderers" (Hazelwood and Douglas, 1980:18), "thrill killers" (Linedecker, 1987:1), and "recreational killers" (Darrach and Norris, 1984:58) based on the evidence of the offender's actions, and often by hypothesizing on his/her motivation(s).

Hickey (1991:7) noted that in order to include all types and categories of serial murder (and individual killers), the definition of serial murder must be as broad as possible. Categories that are too rigid would cause logistical problems, for example they would not account for the overlapping of offender traits and motivations (Dietz, M. L., cited in O'Reilly-Fleming, forthcoming).

#### Definition of Terms

For the purposes of the present study, serial murder will be defined as "killings that are spread over months or years, with a cooling-off period intervening". A serial murderer will be defined as

"an offender associated with the killing of at least four victims, over a period of time. Excluded are cases where the offender acted primarily out of political motives or in quest of financial profit" (Jenkins, 1994:23).

Categories are often employed to describe offenders as organized or disorganized (Ressler et al., 1986:293), nomadic or stationary (Newton, 1991:2), among countless others. The categories of killer to be employed for this research are those outlined by Holmes and DeBurger (1985:31; Holmes,

1990:56), namely the "visionary type", "mission-oriented type", "hedonistic type", and "power/control-oriented type". These categories satisfy a requirement of being "flexible" or general categories.

The "visionary type" is an offender who has heard voices or has seen visions that have impelled him/her to kill some person or some category of person (i.e., elderly females). The offender's actions become justified or legitimized in his mind, by the vision that he/she experienced. This particular type of offender could be considered more of a rarity than the other three types.

The "mission-oriented type" is an offender who appears to have some goal in eliminating a certain identifiable group of people. An example could be an offender's belief that his mission is to rid the world of "evil women" (prostitutes). The mission-oriented offender type does not hear voices or experience visions, rather he/she lives in the real world on a solid interactive basis.

The "hedonistic type" is an offender described as a "thrill-killer", someone who experiences killing as pure enjoyment. Often, the modus operandi of a hedonistic type serial killer involves mutilation, desecration, and forms of sexual aberration to the body of the victim. This type of offender is perhaps the most difficult to investigate from a law enforcement point of view.

The "power/control-oriented type" kills to capture the feeling of having ultimate control over another person. The symbolic notion of controlling life and death appears to be the motivation and what generates the excitement. The capture and control of the victim has the effect of giving the killer a self-inflated sense of importance and power.

### Discussion of Case Study Research

Case study methodology was chosen for the research because it is believed that only through a detailed examination of serial murderers' exploits and lives can there be hope of understanding the

origin and meaning of their activities (Leyton, 1986:281). The case study methodology is believed to be a way of looking at the serial killers as individuals and then presenting them in the larger scheme of the serial murder problem. It is the most effective method of data collection and analysis required for the study of the social construction of the serial killer.

Yin (1989:23), defined the case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources are used."

The case study approach is the best method of research when one wants to obtain a wealth of detail about the subject(s). It is also effective for uncovering clues and ideas for further research, because such intensive work may bring to light the variables, processes, and relationships that deserve further study (Simon, 1969:276; Grosf, & Sardy, 1985:113).

Case studies have been called the preferred strategy when the goal of the research is to study the background, current status and environmental interactions of a particular unit (Grosf and Sardy, 1985:112). Walker (1985:99) noted that the use of case material can add richness to an abstract analysis, and is a facilitator to the presentation of different kinds of data.

Critics of case study research claim it to be an "easy" method. However, Yin (1989:62) suggested that "the demands on a persons's intellect, ego and emotions are far greater than those of any other research strategy." Yin (1989:22), noted that good case studies are very difficult to do.

In spite of the critics of the case study method of research, there are many significant advantages to this method. The most important advantage in light of the proposed research is that it allows research to be conducted on subjects to which the researcher does not have physical access.

The opportunity to access convicted serial murderers for the average researcher is highly limited, and for the most part impractical (Hickey, 1991b). Skrapec (1992b), had to deal with the lengthy bureaucratic problems of obtaining permission for interviews in a federal corrections facility, then deal with the probability of a personal lawsuit in addition to considering her time and financial constraints.

Longitudinal analysis, wherein current serial murder cases are compared with past cases to identify patterns or trends in the phenomena is another advantage. Case study research and documents are also valuable with regard to obtaining high quality information. Newspaper columns, for example, are written by skilled commentators and may be much more valuable than poorly written responses to questionnaires in the survey method (Bailey, 1994:296).

Case study data collection should not be regarded as a matter of recording data in a mechanical fashion, rather the investigator must be able to interpret the information as it is being collected. Tesch (1990:93) referred to this as "dialoguing with the data." The researcher must be aware that if several sources of information contradict one another, there may be a need for additional evidence. In this way, the researcher is interpreting data "much like a good detective" (Yin, 1989:65).

In a classic case study, a case may be an individual in which he/she is the primary unit of analysis (Yin, 1989:33). In the proposed study, three individuals or cases are to be included in a multiple-case study. References to cases of other serial offenders will be employed to draw parallels in the data and to support and enrich the findings. Each separate case will have the necessary data relevant to this study including criminal record history, family history, and reported lifestyles and identified destabilizing events.

The content of the data is expected to support existing theory and could be sufficient towards the further development of sociological theory in understanding the social construction and social profiling of serial killers. Grosf (1985:112) commented that the case study technique has a highly reputable history, so the researcher should have few qualms about using it.

### The Use of Secondary Source Data

The research will analyze all available secondary sources on the cases to be examined. Secondary sources are reports written by someone who received information about an event from a witness or participant, read about the event, or is someone who has made a special effort to understand the event (Adams, 1991:289). Examples of secondary data are journal articles, books, magazines, personal letters and documentation, and newspapers (Yin, 1989:85).

Hyman (1972; cited in Bailey, 1994:299), outlined three main advantages and two important disadvantages to consider in utilizing secondary data. The first advantage is the potential savings of time and money by use of available data when compared to the collection of new data. The second advantage is the minimal invasion of privacy of the individuals under study, and the third advantage is the ease with which the researcher can make comparative analyses. Almost all convicted serial murderers could be researched in a similar case study fashion and the research should be easy to replicate.

One major disadvantage in the use of secondary data is the possibility that some of the data that the researcher requires are not available. Babbie (1979:257) stated that if research is based on existing data, the research is obviously limited by what exists. Adams (1991:304) noted that finding sources of secondary data and obtaining access to sources can pose significant problems in case study research.

A second disadvantage noted by Hyman (1972; cited in Bailey, 1994:299) is that the original data may contain reliability and validity errors that the secondary researcher may not be able to recognize. Adams (1991:304), however, stated that documents tend to be more reliable and valid because "they do not change, they are nonreactive, they were prepared in many cases for research purposes, they typically do not stagnate, and researchers can use them in creative ways." The problem of reliability and validity in the analysis of existing statistics is significantly reduced by the awareness of the researcher in knowing that the problem exists (Babbie, 1979:259).

#### Limitations to Case Study Research

Three basic prejudices against case study research are identified by Yin (1989:21). The first concern is that there is a lack of rigor in this type of research in the sense that the investigator may allow equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. In other words, in the haste to satisfy the initial theoretical propositions, the researcher may choose data that are supportive and ignore data that are conflicting to the theoretical propositions.

A second prejudice is that case studies provide very little basis for scientific generalization (Keppel, 1989:7). However, it should be considered that case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes, thus the investigator's goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalizations).

The results of the current research, for example, are expected to be consistent with current theory. The results may have the potential to expand on various theories, but the results may not be transferable to other individual serial murderers.



The third prejudice is that case studies get too involved or that they ultimately result in a mass of data that is largely unreadable and of little value. The researcher can avoid this happening by paying careful and methodical attention to data collection and procedure.

The small sample of 3 subjects is in itself a limitation, however it is a workable number for the intentions of this research, given time and financial considerations. The research should be considered a pilot project towards further development of a project within a similar framework yet encompassing a broader scope.

### Strategy Outline

The case study procedure for the proposed research will first outline the related theoretical statements. Following the theoretical statements will be the discussion of the selection of the three cases, the presentation of the three case studies, and the writing of the individual case discussion. The final sections will include a cross-case analysis, overall discussion and conclusions (Yin, 1989:57).

### Specific Cases

The subjects of the research are the convicted serial killers Clifford Robert Olson, Arthur J. Shawcross, and Jeffrey Dahmer. Each of these three killers has been categorized as an example of three of the four offender types suggested by Holmes and DeBurger with the deletion of the "visionary type". The visionary type was deleted because of its extreme rarity in the serial offender population (Hazelwood, 1992), and concerns of validity in case study data.

A serious problem in researching a bona fide visionary type, for example, is in identifying and eliminating from the research the number of offenders who claim to have heard voices or have seen

visions in an attempt to construct an argument for their defence in court proceedings against them. Kenneth Bianchi, the "Hillside Strangler" claimed to be the victim of a multiple personality. Bianchi related that an alter-ego actually committed the killings and that he knew nothing of the actions of his alter-ego. Prosecution eventually proved that Bianchi fabricated the entire story (Schwartz, 1982). Hazelwood (1992) added that self-proclamations by serial killers are always suspect in truthfulness.

The case study data for the "hedonistic", "mission-oriented", and "power/control" typologies should prove to be substantially more reliable and valid. In the current study, it is hypothesized that Olson is a hedonistic offender, Arthur Shawcross is a mission-oriented type, and Dahmer is a power/control-oriented type. The results of this study will confirm whether these are the appropriate categorizations or typologies for each offender.

The type of data to be gathered for each offender or case will satisfy the two scans of social profiling outlined by Leyton (1984:20) and described earlier in the literature review. First scan data on Olson, for example, would encompass his family status and background, noting any important relationships, influences and early traumatizations or destabilizing events in his life. The second scan data of Olson would include details of his behavioral and life-style characteristics, for example, his day to day life, any indulgence in drugs or alcohol, and any other identified traumatizations. An examination of Olson's numerous years in prison and a discussion of its potential effects on his personality would also be included in the second scan.

The analysis of Olson's social construction will enable the researcher to make comparisons with Shawcross' and Dahmers' social profiles by conducting a cross-case analysis. It may be found, for example, that something in Olson's social profile made young males and females his targets. Similarly, perhaps there is something in Dahmer's profile which explains why he attacked only non-white males.

### Subject Selection

One of the main considerations in the planning stages of this research was the choice of subjects for the case study approach. Why choose to examine in detail Clifford Olson rather than Ted Bundy or Richard Ramirez? All are equally horrific convicted serial killers. Why was the Jeffrey Dahmer case chosen as representative of the "power/control-oriented" category of serial killer, rather than the Dennis Nilsen case which may also fit into the power/control-oriented type category?

The answer to these questions is entirely pragmatic (Leyton, 1990:255). The most important consideration in selecting these particular three subjects for this research was the amount of high quality material that could be gathered on each. Not all serial killers have been documented with equal rigor and analysis.

The Clifford Olson case was selected for its potential for gathering sufficient reliable data. The case was also selected for another important reason for the purposes of the research. The Olson case is the most publicized case of serial murder in Canada to date, and the writer felt that its inclusion in the study was arguably a necessity in a Canadian written research project. The case also redirects complete attention away from the American experience with serial murder, to include the wider North American experience.

The Arthur Shawcross case did not appear to command the continent-wide media and academic attention of the Dahmer case, and as a result, it is anticipated that the case study method for this case may prove more challenging in the gathering of reliable data. The writer's preliminary reading on various serial killers uncovered the Shawcross case to be a fascinating one. It is a case that should be particularly challenging for social profiling because of the apparent variety of traumatizations in Shawcross' life.

The Jeffrey Dahmer case appears to be one of the most thoroughly documented cases of serial murder in the United States. Subsequently, there is a reasonable amount of reliable data to be accumulated (Jenkins, 1994:75). There could also be inherent problems in such a proliferation of data. The potential for some conflict in the facts could prove problematic, yet conversely, the data could prove to be of higher reliability and enhance the study's internal validity.

In addition to discovering potential motivations of these killers, the results may disclose overlapping social characteristics of all three cases which could help us better understand serial murderers in general, and possibly determine a necessity for more specific typologies. Are the findings consistent with, and do they support, social learning theories? Are there other sociological theories that may be applied toward the understanding of the serial murderer?

The time frame to be examined for each individual will encompass their entire life up to the time that they were identified and their murderous careers came to an end. Research must start at the beginning of life, if there is hope in finding sociological explanations for human behaviour (Sears, 1991:79).

The time period for these particular cases to be examined is considered "contemporary" serial murder, defined by the writer as 1980 to present. In addition, the three serial murder cases selected occurred within North America, to minimize inconsistencies in cultural norms and values, and other similar concerns.

The offenders chosen are all cases of single male killers. The decision to use only single male cases was arrived at because the majority of serial killers are single males (Newton, 1991:1) and virtually all violent crime in general is committed by men (Canter, 1994:239). Statistically, male offenders pose a much greater threat than female offenders.

### Main Objective

Sociological profiles of three different types of serial murderers will further the understanding of serial murderers from a sociological point of view. Unique social characteristics within each of the offender types outlined by Holmes and DeBurger (1988) will test the validity of the typologies and explain what makes them different from each other from a sociological perspective.

## Chapter IV

### Presentation of the Cases

#### Case Number One

##### The Clifford Olson Case

Clifford Robert Olson is the most infamous known convicted serial murderer in Canadian history (Bird, 1991). On January 14, 1982, he was convicted of 11 counts of first-degree murder. Olson's male and female victims ranged in age from nine to eighteen years of age (Farrow, Still, & Brooks, 1982:A1).

The presiding judge at Olson's trial stated,

I don't have the words to describe the enormity of your crimes and the heartbreak and anguish you have caused to so many people. No punishment a civilized country could give you could come close to being adequate.

(cited in Gray, 1982:19; Farrow, Still, & Brooks, 1982:A1).

Clifford Olson is currently a federal prisoner at the maximum security prison in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Technically, he is eligible for parole in 2007 (Newton, 1988:257).

#### First Scan Social Profile

##### Family Demographics

Clifford Robert Olson was born at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, British Columbia at 10:10 p.m. on January 1, 1940 (Linedecker, 1987:189). He was the first of four children to be born to Clifford Sr. and Leona Olson (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:27). The Olson family eventually included two more boys, Richard and Dennis, and a girl, Sharon (Mulgrew, 1990:39).

### Education

In 1946, at the age of 6, Olson first attended school at Bridgeport elementary in Richmond, B.C. (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:28). After Olson had successfully graduated from elementary school, he attended Cambie Junior High in Richmond. Olson never did well in school and he failed his grade 8 year at Cambie several times (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:30). In 1957, Olson dropped out of school for good after finally having completed grade 8 (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:32).

### Relationships

Olson did not have any documented girlfriends or significant others, other than a few friends who were fellow criminals. However, upon his release from one of his many prison stays, he did move in with a 40 year old woman named Joan Hale. Olson and Hale had a son named Clifford Jr. (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:48).

On May 15, 1981, Clifford Olson and Joan Hale were married at the People's Full Gospel Church in Surrey, B.C. (Gray, 1982c:20; Mulgrew, 1990:27). The pastor of the church did not allow the Olsons to hold the ceremony in the chapel, and instead it was held outside in the sanctuary area. It was a very small wedding where only family attended. After the wedding ceremony, the pastor christened Clifford Jr. (Mulgrew, 1990:28).

### Criminal Record

Olson's criminal activities and convictions began in 1957 at the age of 17. His criminal activities continued virtually uninterrupted until the murders of 1981 for which he was convicted on January 14, 1982 (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:174). Prior to the murder charges, Olson had a total

number of 94 criminal convictions (Gray, 1982c). From 1957 to 1981, a total of twenty-four years, he was incarcerated for approximately twenty-one years (Gray, 1982a:13).

A review of Olson's criminal record \* follows:

Unlawfully in a dwelling house; Possession of Firearms; Fraud; Parole Violation; Impaired Driving; Theft; Break, Enter Theft; Armed Robbery and Escape Lawful Custody. Between 1957 and 1968 there were seven escapes from jail and many of his convictions resulted from multiple crimes committed during these escapes. He was paroled twice, in 1959 and 1972, and both times parole was revoked. From December 1975 to August 1976 he had seven transfers between institutions, indicating continued problems within these institutions. Between 1973 and 1980 he had six Mandatory Supervisions, of which five were suspended and then revoked. While on Mandatory Supervision he committed about 20 crimes. (cited in Ferry and Inwood, 1982:174; Mulgrew, 1990:12,13).

In addition to the preceding criminal record, there are numerous other charges that had been stayed or were before the courts at the time of Olson's final arrest. These charges include:

- 1). May, 1978-Kidnapping with Robbery and Violence-Stayed.
- 2). February, 1980-Buggery, 14 year old, male-Stayed.
- 3). January, 1981-Indecent Assault, Gross Indecency, and Buggery, 16 year old, female-Stayed.
- 4). January 1981-Firearms (X2)-Before Courts.
- 5). May, 1981-Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency-Before Courts.
- 6). May, 1981-Indecent Assault, 16 year old, female-Before Courts.
- 7). July, 1981-Impaired Driving (X3)-Before Courts.  
(cited in Ferry and Inwood, 1982:175).

\*Criminal Records in Canada are considered restricted information available only to police, the individual of record and their legal counsel. No one else is allowed to have legal access to any person's criminal record (Cater, 1995). For this reason, this review of Clifford Olson's criminal record may be considered to be the best available and reliable source, but it should not be assumed complete, nor perfectly accurate.



There were many reports throughout Olson's life that he was sexually motivated, or was a sex offender, even though he had no official criminal record for such crimes. In 1974, Olson was accused of repeatedly raping a seventeen year old convict in the penitentiary, but no charges were laid (Ouston, 1982:A11). Then in February, 1980, Olson sexually assaulted a fourteen year old boy in a hotel room. Charges were stayed on this incident for insufficient evidence (Ouston, 1982:A11; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:57; Ouston, 1982d:A10).

Mulgrew (1990:38) also acknowledged that there were numerous unofficial reports and accusations of dozens of sexual assaults and child molestation involving Clifford Olson over the years. These allegations were among those that the police were aware of, but may not have been able to prove in a court of law (Mulgrew, 1990:81).

One example of such allegations was that Olson had sexually abused several children in his church congregation. Olson had been caught during an attack and sodomization of one of the young boys in a home sauna. This incident, among others, was never officially reported because of the church's embarrassment and the misguided conviction by the church that Olson could be saved (Mulgrew, 1990:27).

In light of such documented events, Olson was never officially considered to be a sexual deviant. In fact, the director of the Vancouver Parole Services stated that Olson was a garrulous, extroverted, egotistical kind of person, but had not been viewed as a sexual offender (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:57).

## Second Scan Social Profile

### Birth to Adulthood

As a child<sup>1</sup>, Clifford Olson was described as an adventurous boy who seemed to take off on his own a fair bit, and usually stayed some distance away from his family. When he did play with his brothers and other friends, they built forts and treehouses and played along the banks of the north arm of the Fraser River (Mulgrew, 1990:39; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:27).

When Olson attended his first school he quickly made a name for himself. In fact, by the time he was only ten years old, Olson had gained a reputation for being a cocky little brat. The neighbours around the Olson's residence at 1029 Gilmore Cres. in Richmond had already taken notice that young Clifford was somewhat different from his brothers and sisters (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:27).

Similar reports cited Olson as a young man who constantly craved attention and concocted many crazy ideas on how to get it. One of the Olson's neighbours recalls that the young Olson would go around to the various homes selling raffle tickets, and most often the tickets had long expired and the prizes already won (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:28).

When Olson reached eleven years of age, he became known as somewhat of a neighbourhood bully, revealing a marked cruel streak in his character. However, this bullying and toughness disappeared when he was in a crowd and Olson would always back down if he was outnumbered or disadvantaged. In spite of this aspect of his character, he apparently made a point of demonstrating polite attitudes when confronting the adults in the community (Winnipeg Free Press, 1982/01/16:14; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:29).

<sup>1</sup> There were no sources located that documented Clifford Olson's very early years (i.e. shortly after his birth). The second scan therefore begins with the earliest documented evidence.

There were neighbours of the Olson family who remember numerous visits by the police and juvenile officers at about this time in Olson's life. There was even an incident where R.C.M.P. officers chased little Olson for allegedly holding up a grocery store in the neighbourhood. Many recall the young Olson regularly coming home in the early morning hours with no apparent excuse for having been out all night (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:29).

The neighbours soon came to realize that if anything was missing from their properties, there was a better than average chance that Olson had something to do with the disappearance. It had also been alleged that Olson used to torment dogs and cats in the neighbourhood and was suspected of smothering two pet rabbits (Winnipeg Free Press, 1982/01/16:14; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:29).

Olson attended Cambie Junior High in Richmond, where he earned a reputation as a show-off. He attended a class for slow-learners but it seemed apparent that he was in such a class due to his lack of trying rather than out of academic need, and it was suspected by his teachers that Clifford purposely failed tests (Winnipeg Free Press, 1982/01/16:14).

Olson was known as a practical joker who would attempt to disrupt the class as much as possible. In light of his antics, it remained that he was a loner and did not have any close friends. Perhaps this was largely due to the fact that nobody trusted him and because no one could tell what he might do next (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:30).

Olson's former teachers remember him as liar, con artist and thief (Linedecker, 1987:189). One of Olson's former teachers once stated "if there were 200 kids out on a field and a police car arrived, we always knew who they were coming for" (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:30).

The end of Olson's bullying nature coincided with his apparent growth stoppage at five feet seven inches in height. He reportedly had trouble coming to terms with this predicament and got

beaten up many times by larger young men. As a result, Olson decided to take up the sport of boxing, which he worked hard at through his teenage years (Winnipeg Free Press, 1982/01/16:14).

Olson was a member at the Bridgeport Boxing Club, and the club manager there remembered Olson as an average athlete, but also as someone who could talk anybody into anything. The other members took note of Olson's peculiar boxing style and the fact that he would resort to cheap shots if he were in danger of losing a fight (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:31). He clearly lacked the discipline required to become a great boxer (Linedecker, 1987:189).

Even while Olson worked hard at his boxing skills, he still found time to cause trouble by getting kicked out of the club on occasion for causing disruptions with the other young members. Olson's skills of manipulation once convinced a fellow boxing member to accompany him on a number of break-and-enters (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:32).

### The Adult Years

The year 1957 was an important year in Clifford Olson's life. He left school for good after having only completed grade eight. It was also the year that Olson turned eighteen years of age and was convicted of his first adult crime of break-and-enter with intent for which he received a nine month sentence. During this nine month sentence, Olson made his first escape from a correctional facility (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:32).

On November 4, 1957, he and two other inmates escaped from the New Haven Borstal home in Burnaby. The one day of freedom that he gained was supplemented with an additional three months added to his nine month sentence (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:32).

Clifford Olson once more displayed his fleeing capabilities while being questioned at the Surrey R.C.M.P. office in 1962. He became the main suspect in a three hundred dollar theft that had occurred at the Royal Canadian Legion. Olson somehow escaped from police custody and remained on the run for two weeks before being recaptured by police in a south Vancouver home (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:35).

In 1964, when Olson was twenty-four years of age, he had been working at a local lumber mill and had also worked a summer or two at the racetrack at Vancouver's Exhibition Park. Neither job lasted very long due to his criminal nature. Olson was fired from the racetrack for stealing a cheque from his employer, forging the name, and cashing it. At about this time, Olson was also a main suspect in numerous break-and-enters and safe-cracking jobs that had been occurring in Richmond (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:33).

One of the first major police hunts for Clifford Olson was instigated as a result of his being questioned on these break-and-enters. While being questioned, he fled out the washroom window, causing the R.C.M.P. to initiate pursuit, including the use of the police dog which was instrumental in finally tracking him. The police recalled that Olson gave the impression that it was all a game to take on the police and create all the action (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:34).

As a result of Olson's pleading guilty to the crimes, he was sentenced in August 1964, to three years at the B.C. Penitentiary. On April 8, 1965, he managed to get temporarily transferred to the Shaughnessy hospital in downtown Vancouver to get treatment for some undisclosed ailments. He promptly escaped custody by jumping out of an open window (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:35).

Later that day while on the run, Olson committed his first known offence with the use of a weapon. He pulled an armed robbery of a Safeway store using a Beretta handgun and threatened to

shoot to kill anyone who followed him from the scene. Olson remained on the run once again - and was considered armed and dangerous by the police (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:36).

During this particular time that Clifford Olson was on the run, his father, Clifford Sr. appealed to his son through the media to turn himself in "before he does something really bad." Leona Olson, Clifford's mother, made the statement to the media that her son must have had a partner, because he was so cowardly that he never did anything by himself (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:37).

As the incident transpired, it was discovered that Olson had indeed worked with a partner during this crime spree. He had befriended Dave Rayfield, a twenty-three year old neighbour. Eventually Rayfield gave himself up when he and Olson were cornered by police, but Olson continued to flee, until a short time later when the police dog had once again tracked him down (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:37,38).

Olson went back to prison to finish his initial three years but now faced additional charges of escape, being unlawfully at large, armed robbery and break-and-enter and theft. On May 14, 1965, at the age of twenty-five, Olson was going away for another prison term of nine years.

It was at this point in his life that it has been hypothesized that Olson changed, in what has been referred to as his second prison career. During those years, Clifford Olson somehow changed from a smart-alec punk to a man of violent and bestial desires (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:40).

Clifford Olson was paroled from the British Columbia Penitentiary (B.C. Pen) in 1972, but the parole was suspended and he was not released on parole again until March 1973. He was now under mandatory supervision of the National Parole Board of Canada. When he was released he travelled to Toronto, Ontario, where he got into trouble with the Metro Toronto police. The Metro Police sought Olson for two counts of buggery (Ouston, 1982:A11; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:40). However, the

Metro Toronto police were unsuccessful in finding Olson before he had fled back to British Columbia and was behind bars again at that point. The Toronto charges were subsequently dropped (Ouston, 1982:A11; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:40).

In B.C., Olson faced numerous charges of theft, forgery and fraud, in addition to having violated his parole by travelling back east to Toronto. He was sentenced to four years and nine months. Each time the chance for paroled freedom arose, Olson had continually breached conditions of his parole, thus adding extra time to his sentence (Mulgrew, 1990:12,13). It was not until September 7, 1980, that his sentence expired.

In prison, during those seven years from 1973 to 1980, Clifford Olson became known as "Bobo" to some inmates because he used to abuse and bugger other young prisoners (Vancouver Sun, 1982/01/16:A10; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:40; Linedecker, 1987:189). Other inmates referred to Olson as the "Senator", because he was constantly writing to politicians complaining of prison conditions or some other issue.

Olson also became known as a "stoolie", who would inform on anyone for any reason. This trait of being a prison informant necessitated his being locked up in protective custody (Vancouver Sun, 1982/01/16/A10; Mulgrew, 1990:17). When the opportunity presented itself, Olson still managed to get into fights and as a result, officials had to move him from jail to jail for his own protection (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:41).

When Olson was serving time at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary in Prince Albert in 1976, he informed the warden about two inmates who were smuggling drugs. He paid for this passing on of information by getting jumped by a half-dozen inmates during a poker game, and was stabbed seven

times (Mulgrew, 1990:17; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:41). Olson survived, but the inmate, Gordon Lussier, was sentenced to six years for attempted murder (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:41).

Olson was transferred to various prisons in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, before finally ending up back at the B.C. Pen. It was here that he befriended inmate Gary Marcoux. Marcoux eventually became so comfortable with Olson that he described his murder of a young girl to Olson and even provided detailed maps and letters of where he left her body (Linedecker, 1987:190; Mulgrew, 1990:17).

In true form, Olson provided this information to the R.C.M.P., resulting in Marcoux's conviction (Ouston, 1982b:A1) and his being sentenced to 25 years without chance of parole. It has been hypothesized that this intimate contact with Marcoux concerning graphic details of a child murder had a drastic effect on Olson's personality (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:44).

Over the next four years, Olson was moved from jail to jail in British Columbia. As usual, each time he was released on mandatory supervision, it was revoked. Olson's case officer at the Vancouver Parole Services, who monitored him for 1978 and 1979, described Olson as the most difficult man he had supervised in 16 years as a parole officer (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:45).

The parole officer explained that Olson was absolutely unable to tell the truth, and that he would never admit to anything because he felt he was never wrong. He further commented that Olson was a difficult man to keep track of and a difficult man to believe (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:45). These comments were supported by the pastor who married Olson and Joan Hale. He stated that he believed Olson had some emotional and psychological instability and that he might have the potential to be dishonest (Farrow, 1982:A11).



In addition to Olson's stints of paroled freedom between 1977 and 1980, he was constantly in and out of B.C. Pen. The warden of the Pen at the time, stated that Olson was always a bit of a braggart and that he liked to let you know how good he was. He was a little guy, trying to be big (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:46). Indeed, for most of his life Clifford Olson was known as a liar, a braggart and a thief (Winnipeg Free Press, 1982/01/16:14).

One particular incident of interest in the Olson case was during one of his stints of freedom in 1978 when he travelled briefly to the Maritimes. There were complaints in both Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that Olson had picked up young children, taken them to hotels, and had them pose for him (Ouston, 1982:A11; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:46).

In all instances, Olson eluded police. Police later recovered a suitcase belonging to Olson that was full of snap shots of a seven-year old girl in pornographic poses. Charges were dropped because Olson was once again in custody back in B.C. (Ouston, 1982:A11; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:46). In addition to this incident, there is further evidence that Olson indulged in "kiddie porn" (Mulgrew, 1990:13; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:46).

On April 8, 1981, Clifford Olson had completed his last three month sentence and he was released from Oakalla prison in B.C. One of his first accomplishments in freedom was to start a family and marry a forty year old woman named Joan Hale. The Olsons had a son shortly after Olson's release.

Clifford and his wife Joan were described as completely opposite types of people. Olson was a bullish, extroverted egoist and a compulsive talker, and had the uncanny ability to use and victimize people (Gray, 1982:15). Joan Olson, on the other hand was a shy introverted person (Mulgrew,

1990:18). Even with the differences in personality it was reported that Joan had reasonable control over Clifford (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:47).

The new Olson family began their lives together at a rented suite in a family building in Coquitlam, B.C. The neighbours in the building described Olson as a braggart and a man with a bad temper. One person noted "you'd be in a conversation with him and all of a sudden he'd blow up at you - for no reason" (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:49).

Another neighbour reported that Olson was a smooth talker, but if you argued with him, he would get very aggressive (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:50). Concerned neighbours became irate when Olson began openly bragging to the kids about having been everything from a child molester to an armed robber (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:49).

Joan Olson did her best to overlook her husband's many faults. For example, it has been acknowledged that Olson used to administer wicked beatings to his wife in extreme drunkenness (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:47). One time Olson became enraged like an animal and dragged his wife kicking and screaming down the hallway of their apartment complex. Olson had held a knife to her throat and screamed expletives (Mulgrew, 1990:28).

Shortly after Olson had been released from prison for the last time prior to the murders, he was up to his old tricks. Olson was quietly acting on the bragging stories he told the neighbourhood kids, as he looked for young victims in his usual fashion. In fact, by the end of June 1981, Clifford Olson had killed five young children, although the bodies of only two had been located at that time (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:67).

In the apartment complex in Coquitlam, Olson made a point of hanging around the younger girls and offered jobs to them, often paying twice the usual rate for babysitting or washing windows

(Maitland, 1981:33). Olson's habit of hanging around the kids in the complex so much made many of them wary. Allegedly, the kids called him the "creepy bogey man" or the "candy man". It appeared as if Olson had a huge emotional and physical need for young children (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:50).

Clifford and Joan Olson had also become business partners of a sort. The "Hale and Olson Construction Co." seemed to be a huge source of pride for Olson who handed out many business cards to impress people (Ouston, 1982:A11; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:48). Some of Olson's business cards were printed in gold leaf, matching his egotistical personality (Ouston, 1982e:A11; Mulgrew, 1990:11).

Over the years and particularly since his recent release from prison, Olson had been a police informant. At one point he had actually asked to be on the police pay role as payment for the information (Mulgrew, 1990:41). A police officer from the city of Delta, had established a rapport with Olson and would exchange information with him on break-and-enters, armed robberies and other crime (Brooks & Farrow, 1982:A1; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:57; Mulgrew, 1990:42).

It has been documented that Clifford Olson rented cars from agencies around the lower mainland on a frequent basis during his murder spree (Mulgrew, 1990:13). He also put comparatively high mileage on them for the period of time that he rented them. In fact, over a period of twenty-nine days of having rental cars, Olson put a total of 10, 478 kilometres on the cars (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:104). For example, in late June, Olson had rented a Ford Escort from a Ford dealership in Port Coquitlam, B.C. and returned it two weeks later, with some damage and having placed 5,569 kilometres on the car (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:79).

The next car Olson rented was a station wagon from the same dealership on July 23, 1981. It was the same night that he killed a young boy, and he had driven 403 kilometres (Ferry and Inwood,

1982:84). On each of the two occasions that Olson dealt with this dealership, he presented himself in a different light. The first time he arrived as a "smartly dressed business man" and the second time he arrived as a "down to earth construction worker" (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:85).

In the last week of May 1981, Olson was involved in two incidents, one that resulted in formal charges. The first incident occurred when he rolled his car in Agassiz, B.C. and he had a fifteen year old girl in the car. Both Olson and the girl were inebriated and he was charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor and impaired driving (Mulgrew, 1990:30; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:63; Ouston, 1982a:A1).

The second incident occurred the same week. It is reported that he picked up an eighteen year old Surrey female after offering her a ride and a job. Olson had forced the girl into anal sex. However, charges were dropped because near court time, Olson was faced with the murder charges (Ouston, 1982d:A10; Farrow and Sarti, 1982:A1; Maitland, 1982:33).

On July 7, 1981, Olson picked up a sixteen year old girl from a pinball arcade with his usual method of operation (M.O.). While the girl was impaired by alcohol and drugs, Olson began to fondle her, but when she resisted, he stopped and returned her to the arcade. The police charged Olson with indecent assault (Mulgrew, 1990:35; Ouston, 1982:A1; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:74).

Clifford Olson was arrested for the last time while under R.C.M.P. surveillance on August 12, 1981. He had been surveilled constantly since August 6, 1981, and in the hope of catching Olson for murder, the surveillance team had allowed him to commit many crimes during that time (Mulgrew, 1990:56).

Over six days, Olson committed at least four break-and-enters, and at least four thefts. In addition, Olson apparently tried to pick up a young girl and was noted by the surveillance team to have been closely watching several other young girls (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:104).

The final incident that led to Olson's arrest occurred after he had picked up two women hitchhiking on Vancouver Island (Gray, 1982a:19; Winnipeg Free Press, 1982/01/16:14). The two women, aged nineteen and twenty-three years, ended up sitting with Olson in his car parked on a dirt trail, about one half mile off a paved road. When Olson demanded that one of the women get out of the car the surveillance team decided to act. The charge at the time was impaired driving and Olson was arrested (Gray, 1982c:19; Mulgrew, 1990:56,57; Ferry and Inwood, 1982:106).

When Olson was arrested, there was no evidence that could link him to the disappearance of numerous children and the murders of several others in the lower mainland. However, Olson had in his possession an address book that had belonged to one of the deceased girls which was written in her own handwriting (Gray, 1982a:19; Mulgrew, 1990:57).

The major break in the case came when a witness was interviewed who saw Olson with that particular young girl the night that she died. The statement was evidence enough to induce Olson to begin talking and dealing (Ferry and Inwood, 1982:108). Further evidence of Olson's abrasive personality was demonstrated in the "cash for bodies" deal that he made with authorities. The premise of the deal was that Olson would help locate the missing bodies of his victims for \$10 000 per body. Olson's family was paid \$100 000 in the deal (Mulgrew, 1990; Gray, 1982c:19).

Clifford Olson pled guilty to eleven murder counts on January 14, 1982 and was sentenced to life in prison (Farrow, Still, and Brooks, 1982:A1).

### Modus Operandi

The "Modus Operandi" (M.O.) or method of operation for Clifford Olson's homicides could essentially be stated in two specific stages. The first stage would be the lure of the victim (i.e. how he got close to them, gained their confidence), and the second stage could be the specific method of killing, which varied slightly.

The first stage of Olson's M.O. was similar in all 11 homicides wherein he used his alleged charm, cunning and various presentations of self to attract victims. Initially, Olson might drive by and offer a ride to a potential victim, present himself in an unthreatening manner, and offer the prospect of a well-paying job. This combination of enticements seemed to have worked relatively efficiently on the unknowing young people that he targeted.

Another part of the first stage of Olson's M.O. was to have offered alcoholic drinks to victims, often laced with "knockout drops" which were usually chloral hydrate (Linedecker, 1987:195; Ferry and Inwood:63; Mulgrew, 1990:71). The victim was offered a Coke or soda which appeared normal, until they realized that it tasted "funny". At that point, it might have been too late, and Olson had the victim under his control.

Ferry and Inwood (1982:51) offer a typical example of both stages of Clifford Olson's modus operandi, and the outcome. On April 16, 1981, Olson was driving around and stopped at a bus stop in North Delta to speak with a young thirteen year old girl. He asked the young girl if she needed a ride, but when she was hesitant, he gave her a business card and assured her that she was safe because he was a businessman. The girl got into the car and Olson offered her a job with his construction company.

Olson was driving along with the young girl beside him when he offered her a Coke. She drank the Coke, but noted that it tasted funny and made her drowsy. The girl awoke in the middle of a forest where Olson raped her. Olson then struck the girl numerous times in the head with a hammer (Mulgrew, 1990:21), and buried her body underneath some branches. This young girl was Olson's first victim.

It would be unnecessary and somewhat repetitive to describe the first stage of Olson's M.O. in each of the eleven murders due to their similarity. However, there are potentially important differences in the second stage of the M.O. Olson used three known methods of killing his victims, including strangulation, crushing the skull with various objects (i.e. hammer, rocks), and stabbing (Farrow, Still and Brooks, 1982:A1, Ferry and Inwood, 1982:132).

### Uncorroborated Evidence

In the sources analyzed for the Olson case, the main facts and claims of fact were consistent. There were no major discrepancies or refutations of fact uncovered in data analysis. This finding could be due to the fact that the main sources of information were authored by investigative journalists.

### Olson Case Discussion

The Clifford Olson serial murder case was one that introduced Canada to the horrific world of serial killers that had previously been nurtured almost entirely in the United States. The Olson case made Canadians aware that such a criminal type did exist and that anyone could be the target of his/her intent. Perhaps even more unnerving was the lack of an identifiable motive in Olson's crimes. It appeared as if Clifford Olson repeatedly murdered young children for pleasure.

The study of Olson's social construction brought to light many factors that could enhance some understanding of this individual and why he turned to repetitive homicide. There are many facts in the Olson case which are important to consider, particularly his years at school and in numerous correctional institutions.

One glaring aspect of the Clifford Olson case is that his family and his upbringing appear "normal". There was no indication that Olson was subjected to any form of sexual or physical abuse or serious neglect in any way while he was growing up. There was virtually no traumatic event in Olson's early childhood that could be identified as the trigger of his homicidal behaviour (Mulgrew, 1990:40). In the later years of his childhood however, there were some noticeable aspects of Olsons' tendency toward anti-social behaviour.

By the age of ten, Olson had become an intense, attention seeking individual which may indicate that he did not feel he was getting enough attention from his parents and the family. The lack of guidance and neglect can lead to resentful, hostile and angry attitudes towards people in general (Burgess et al, 1986:266). Olson's attention-seeking behaviour set off a string of incidents that were criminal in nature such as playing jokes on the neighbours and ripping them off for money.

It is hypothesized that Olson never received adequate punishment for his relatively harmless actions and thus never internalized the norms and values of proper social behaviour. Athens (1989:8) stated that children become dangerous violent criminals because of their failure to learn from punishment. Unfortunately, there was no documentation available that indicated how the agents of primary socialization (i.e., Olson's parents), or secondary sources of socialization (i.e., school teachers) dealt with Olson's early anti-social behaviour.



This hypothesis is useful in explaining how Olson became the bully of the neighbourhood by the age of eleven. Perhaps Olson began to internalize violence as a way of getting by in the world, and associated violence with power and importance. Sears (1991:81) stated that some individuals find out in childhood that violent responses are successful in obtaining various goals such as achieving self-worth or becoming respected in one's community.

In later years, when his peers were physically bigger than himself, Olson began to realize that physical violence would not get him very far. As a result, he developed a personality to compensate, which included manipulation, lying, and thievery.

These personality traits isolated Olson from the majority of his fellow students at school. Olson became so isolated that there was no evidence that he established any form of meaningful relationship with any significant other (i.e. no evidence of dating). It could be hypothesized that Olson's initial reports of criminal activity prior to adulthood were simply further attention seeking behaviour, yet it could be an indication of him taking out his frustrations on society.

The fact that Olson did poorly in school seems to have been a result of not having applied himself rather than a reflection of his intelligence or academic capabilities. It is possible that the negative reaction to his poor performance from teachers and fellow students was yet another avenue to receive attention.

The only thing that Olson ever applied himself to, other than crime, was the sport of boxing. Although he initially did very well, he was known as unsportsmanlike and a cheater. Olson could not adhere to the rules of the sport, just as he ultimately decided not to play by the rules of society. A life of crime had become the choice for Olson.

Olson's extensive criminal record covered numerous property crimes, fraudulent activity, and levels of assault. There is little doubt that Olson's criminal record prior to the murders was only the tip of the iceberg compared to the number of crimes that he actually committed and got away with. One example is Olson's tendency to beat his wife; however, he was never charged with having assaulted her.

In light of his extensive criminal history, Olson does not appear to have been subjected to the effects of secondary socialization from other dominant criminal personalities in most instances. Documents suggest that Olson was the master of his own destiny. The majority of his criminal actions were conducted on his own.

It may be hypothesized that Olson was subjected to the effects of negative or anti-social secondary socialization during his many years in prison. However, there are hundreds of men who had been institutionalized at a young age yet learned to lead productive lives (Mulgrew, 1990:18). Gabor (1986:5), stated that there is a substantial body of evidence to support the claim that prison does not have demonstrated adverse effects on criminal behaviour after an offender's release from an institution.

Ferry and Inwood (1982), suggested that Olson's desires and behaviour changed while in prison, particularly after the Marcoux incident, wherein Olson was told by his fellow inmate of the rape and murder of a young girl. This hypothesis is supported by the timing of Olson's apparent change from property criminal offenses to criminal offenses of a sexual nature. The fact that Olson was a collector of "kiddie porn" while in prison may also be considered a facilitator or reinforcer to fantasy and subsequent anti-social behaviour (Wilson, 1987:55).

In prison, Olson was known to be a rapist who attacked younger and weaker prisoners. It is possible that the limitations in prison temporarily forced Olson to focus his sexual energy on males, or

perhaps he did not care. This fact may explain why Olson attacked and killed both females and males during his murderous spree.

A commonly cited facilitator for aggressive behaviour is alcohol (Hickey, 1991:64). Olson was an alcoholic in the time that he was out of prison long enough to indulge in such activity. It is suggested that alcohol was a factor in some of Olson's behaviour such as his tendency to beat his wife. However, there is little evidence that indicated that alcohol was an important facilitator in his hunt for young victims to murder.

Olson's criminal incidents of a sexual nature in Toronto, and in Nova Scotia should have set off the bells and whistles in the criminal justice system. The reports of such behaviour clearly denote a deteriorating personality. However, there was no information that Olson ever received intervention counselling or personality assessments prior to his facing the murder charges.

It was hoped that the study would help generate understanding of Olson's victim selection. Olson's M.O. of having presented himself as non-threatening to his young victims in order to gain their trust is consistent with cases of other child murderers (Hickey, 1991:167). There seems to be no particular reason why Olson preyed on young children of both sexes, a statistical rarity among documented cases of serial murderers (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988:51).

In discussing stranger child murderers, Wilson (1987:53), hypothesized that an appreciation of the background of the offenders, particularly those factors that make such men and women feel alienated, purposeless and destructive is required to understand them. In light of this, the social profile did not offer insight into why Olson killed young children.

The results of the study of Clifford Olson's social construction through social profiling, support the contention that he belongs in the hedonistic offender typology of serial killer. Throughout his life,

Olson initiated trouble for the sake of having fun. Playing jokes on the neighbours and initiating police pursuits for the thrill of the chase are examples. Olson simply continued in this hedonistic mindset, even while searching for children to murder.

Olson did not kill due to some perceived revenge factor such as the mission oriented killer, nor does it seem likely that he killed children for a sense of power or control. Somewhere in his life, he made the vital connection between personal violence and sexual gratification involving young children (Holmes, 1990:57).

### The Hedonistic Serial Killer

It has been stated that Clifford Olson belonged in the category of serial killer referred to as the hedonistic type. This type of offender kills others for pure enjoyment and thrills. A convicted serial killer who has been classified into the hedonistic category is Richard Ramirez (Linedecker, 1991). The Ramirez case shares important characteristics with the Olson case in the examination of the social construction of the hedonistic offender.

Hedonistic serial killers have also been referred to as "thrill killers" (Linedecker, 1987). Hickey (1991:37), cited Clifford Olson and Ted Bundy as examples of "thrill-seeker" serial murderers. This title or typology appears to have been constructed due to the offender's perceived motive.

The case reports and research completed on hedonistic offenders are often marred by the lack of a clear and understandable motive for the crimes. In the Clifford Olson case, the elusive motive is one of the most glaring points of the case. Clear motive remains elusive in the case of another hedonistic offender named Richard Ramirez alias "The Night Stalker" (Linedecker, 1991).

Richard Ramirez was convicted of thirteen murders on September 20, 1989, in Los Angeles, California. Ramirez was also convicted of a series of thirty other crimes including robbery, burglary, rape, and attempted murder (Wilson and Seaman, 1992:116; Linedecker, 1991:273).

Ramirez terrorized Southern California, mostly the greater Los Angeles area in 1984 and 1985 in a horrendous crime spree of property crimes, sex crimes and vicious murders. There are similarities and parallels in the cases of Clifford Olson and Richard Ramirez, and particularly in their social construction.

Ramirez and Olson shared many similarities in their life histories in their younger years. Ramirez was born February 28, 1960, and was raised by his biological parents in El Paso, Texas (Linedecker, 1991:137). Similar to Olson it was reported that when Ramirez was only very young, (nine years old), he was becoming somewhat of a loner, withdrawing from his family and friends.

During the school years, Ramirez was prone to long absences and was constantly cutting classes. In fact, Ramirez would simply sit in class and not make any effort to participate. He finally dropped out of school at age seventeen (Linedecker, 1991:138). Olson's schooling records report similar circumstances, and he also had dropped out of school for good at the age of seventeen.

Ramirez and Olson shared commonalities in the extent of their criminal activity throughout their lives. The main difference between these two offenders was Olson's extensive prison time, while it seems Ramirez rarely got caught. In light of this difference, both offenders have been considered career criminals and their types of offenses are numerous and varied.

Ramirez used to commit break and enters on a regular basis, similar to Olson. Ramirez and Olson were both well known by neighbours to be criminals and as a teenager, Ramirez was known as

"Ricky the Thief" (Linedecker, 1991:138). Ramirez also got involved in other property crimes such as motor vehicle thefts.

Ramirez and Olson committed their offenses in a central area (i.e., they did not travel far outside a relatively small area). In addition, Ramirez and Olson preyed on both sexes, however Ramirez' victims ranged from children to the elderly (Stengel, 1985:43; Linedecker, 1991:50). There are major differences in the M.O. of these particular two offenders.

Ramirez M.O. was to break and enter a house through an unlocked door or window, attack the occupants, sexually assault females and children of either sex, and finally to steal anything he could carry (Linedecker, 1991:8; Stengel, 1985:43). Police believed that robbery was an obvious motive, however it seemed obvious that Ramirez liked to instill fear, pain and agony to his victims. Terrorizing the victims for fun appeared to be the most important vehicle to get his thrills (Linedecker, 1991:8), and all of Ramirez' attacks were marked by extreme cruelty (Wilson and Seaman, 1992:116).

Olson's M.O. seems more intricate than Ramirez, because of the lure of the victims through clever presentations of self and offers of financial gain. Olson was more involved one on one and carefully chose his victims, whereas Ramirez apparently did not know who or what may be in any particular house. Ramirez killed the males in the house whom he perceived to be a threat and then sexually assaulted and sometimes killed the women and children.

There are known facilitators in the form of substance abuse in the cases of both offenders. Clifford Olson was known to be a heavy drinker of alcohol and Ramirez was known to be a heavy drug user from a very early age (Linedecker, 1991).

In both cases however, neither type of potential facilitator was acknowledged by either offender to be a direct cause for their actions (i.e. Olson did not ever blame his actions on having been

so drunk that he did not know what he was doing, nor did Ramirez blame his murderous actions on the effects of drugs). Based on their self-proclamations, it is unknown whether these identified facilitators had any effect on their repetitive homicidal behaviour.

The end results of both Ramirez and Olson's actions were equally horrific, and it is hypothesized that Olson found his thrills both in the hunt, and similar to Ramirez, in the attack and disposal of the victims. There did not seem to be any particular reason why either of them killed others, except for pure enjoyment. In this way, it is believed both killers fit into the category of hedonistic serial killers or thrill-seekers.

## Case Number Two

### The Arthur Shawcross Case

Arthur John Shawcross was convicted on November 14, 1991, of having killed eleven women, nine of them prostitutes, in the Rochester, New York area (New York Times, 1990/12/14:B2). He began his murderous rampage in February 1988, almost immediately after his release from prison where he had served almost fifteen years for manslaughter (Hanley, 1990:1; Mills and Sopko, 1990a:1A).

### First Scan Social Profile

#### Family Demographics

Arthur John Shawcross was born at 4:14 a.m. on June 6, 1945, in a United States Naval Hospital in Kittery, Maine (Olsen, 1993:181; Norris, 1992:98). He was the first child born to Arthur Roy and Betty Shawcross (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A). The Shawcross family would eventually

include another boy and two girls. A few weeks after Arthur's birth, the Shawcross family moved to Watertown, New York (Olsen, 1993:181; Norris, 1992:183). The family was considered lower-middle class (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A).

### Education

Shawcross began kindergarten when he was six years old. The school year went by without incident except that Arthur had missed thirty-three days of school, an unusual amount of time for a young student (Olsen, 1993:184). In grades 1 and 2, Shawcross managed to score As and Bs, in spite of being tested by educators as subnormal or low-normal intelligence (Olsen, 1993:184).

In the third grade, Shawcross' grades began to drop and his teachers noticed an increasingly poor attitude. He was promoted conditionally to the fourth grade where he spent the next two years (Olsen, 1993:188). Finally succeeding in the fourth grade, Shawcross failed the fifth grade, placing him two years behind his original class (Olsen, 1993:193).

The patient tutelage of his parents saw him barely succeed in the sixth grade. Shawcross failed his first attempt at grade seven (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A), and then conditionally passed his second attempt at seventh grade at the General Brown Junior-Senior High School. In grade 8, Shawcross failed his first attempt which increased his social isolation. Shawcross was now three years behind his age appropriate grade level (Olsen, 1993:193).

At the age of seventeen, Shawcross was still in the eighth grade for a second year. At the end of the school year, school officials reluctantly passed Shawcross in to the ninth grade, mostly because of his size and age (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A). Arthur Shawcross dropped out of school in grade 9 and never returned to formal school (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:11A; Olsen, 1993:201).



## Relationships

Arthur Shawcross married his first wife, Sarah Chatterton, right out of high school in September 1964 (Norris, 1992:199; Mills and Sopko, 1990b:1A; Olsen, 1993:55). On October 2, 1965, they had a baby boy named Michael (Olsen, 1993:207; Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A). The marriage did not last long and they were divorced in April 1967. One of the divorce agreements was that Shawcross sign over custody of Michael to Sarah. He never saw his son again (Olsen, 1993:55; Norris, 1992:200).

Shawcross' second wife was Linda Neary whom he married in September 1967 (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A; Norris, 1992:202; Olsen, 1993:59). As a result of a severe beating from Shawcross in April 1969, Linda miscarried a little boy while she was four months pregnant. She asked for and got a divorce immediately thereafter (Olsen, 1993:71).

Shawcross married his third wife, Penny Sherbino on April 22, 1972 (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A). He had met Penny Nichol Sherbino in the late 1950s at the General Brown Central Junior-Senior high school (Olsen, 1993:46). Three or four years later, while in prison on manslaughter charges, Shawcross asked Penny for a divorce. Penny Shawcross signed the papers and the marriage was over (Olsen, 1993:155).

The most significant relationship that Arthur Shawcross had was with a woman named Rose Marie Walley, with whom he became acquainted through letters of correspondence, while he was serving his manslaughter sentence (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A; Olsen, 1993:245). It was Rose who finally settled down with Shawcross in Rochester, N.Y.

While Shawcross and Rose were living together, he began to date a woman named Clara Neal (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A; Olsen, 1993:267). Both women in his life were aware of the other, but it seemed that each woman was determined to have him to herself eventually.

Shawcross made his choice of the two women in August 1989, when he and Rose were married in a small ceremony in front of the courthouse (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A; Olsen, 1993:313).

Rose Shawcross appeared to have been the woman who meant the most in his life, and it was Rose whom he asked for during his confession to the murder spree (Norris, 1992:136; Olsen, 1993:456).

### Criminal Record

Arthur Shawcross' criminal record officially started when he was eighteen years of age, although there had been much documented evidence to indicate that he was quite an accomplished thief for many years prior (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A). In late 1963, Shawcross smashed the front window of a Sears store (Norris, 1992:297; Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A) and was found by police hiding in the basement of the store. He was sentenced to eighteen months probation as a youthful offender (Olsen, 1993:205).

In 1965, Shawcross was arrested for assaulting a thirteen year old boy during a snowball fight (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A). For this offence, he received a further six months of probation (Olsen, 1993:208).

In September 1969, Shawcross was arrested for the arson fires of the building of a former employer, and later, a paper mill (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A). He was also stopped by police for having stolen property in his vehicle that had been stolen from a gas station. Shawcross denied any role in the gas station robbery but was convicted. He received five years at Attica State prison for

these offenses (Norris, 1992:229; Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A), but was paroled on October 18, 1971, after only twenty-two months (Olsen, 1993:214).

On October 17, 1972, Arthur Shawcross pled guilty to a manslaughter charge, the result of a plea bargain. Shawcross had killed a young girl, but the evidence was not strong enough to support a murder charge (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A). In addition to the young girl, he had already killed a young boy named Jack Blake, but the only evidence in that case was Shawcross' admission (Hanley, 1990b:1; Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A).

There were no charges laid in the Blake murder, but it was publicly acknowledged that Shawcross did it (Winnipeg Free Press, 1990/01/06:62). At that time, he was sentenced to an indeterminate sentence of up to twenty-five years (Olsen, 1993:139; Mills and Sopko, 1990:5A).

Arthur Shawcross served his time at the Green Haven maximum-security prison in New York state and on April 28, 1987, he gained paroled freedom. He had only served fourteen years and six months of the potential twenty-five year sentence (Hanley, 1990b:1; Olsen, 1993:231). Shawcross had made a total of six parole applications before he was successful. The previous five applications had been denied due to the serious nature of the crimes (Hanley, 1990:30).

There had been much dissent among mental health and corrections professionals about whether Shawcross was ready to be reintroduced into society. The senior parole officer at the time had written in a report, "At the risk of being dramatic, the writer considers this man to be possibly the most dangerous individual to have been released into the community in many years" (Olsen, 1993:232; Norris, 1992:266). Another officer believed that Shawcross' poor impulse control might resurface and he would reoffend (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A).

Shawcross' early release was prompted in part because of his good behaviour in prison. A spokeswoman for the Correctional Services Department stated that Shawcross was "a very good prisoner". It was also noted that Shawcross had obtained his high school equivalency diploma in 1982 (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A) and took a non-credit correspondence course in horticulture through Pennsylvania State University (cited in Hanley, 1990:30). Shawcross later admitted that his greatest fear prior to preparation for this parole board hearing was that he would get out and kill another child (Olsen, 1993:228).

## Second Scan Social Profile

### Birth to Adulthood

Arthur Shawcross was described as a good-looking infant and seemed to be a normal healthy young boy. However, it was not long before relatives and family members began to notice that the young Shawcross appeared somewhat different. One relative described Arthur as often having a blank look on his face and as one who rarely cried (Olsen, 1993:182). Another relative stated that Arthur Shawcross had been a weird little bastard from the time he walked (Olsen, 1993:181; Mills and Sopko, 1990a:1A).

Shawcross seemed to have had a normal early childhood, unmarred by any incidents of interest, or defined traumatic events. He was breast-fed until two months of age, spoke his first word at nine-months, and walked six months later. Betty Shawcross, his mother, noted in a school interview that Arthur had no problems as a baby (Olsen, 1993:182). However, years later in a personal interview, Arthur Shawcross stated that he had a very unhappy childhood because he felt lonely and that his parents always fought (Olsen, 1993:65).

In regard to these early years, Shawcross later stated that he found it difficult to embrace his masculinity because of his mother's "extremely abusive control over his father" (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A). This conflict in Shawcross' primary socialization may have been the beginning of Shawcross' confusion in finding an appropriate identity.

About the time that Shawcross was in kindergarten, it was reported that he was haunted by nightmares which caused him to wet the bed frequently. It was perhaps due to these problems that Shawcross missed thirty-three days of the kindergarten school year (Olsen, 1993:184).

The next school year, Shawcross began running away from home which is considered a rare problem in younger children and especially among those who are noted to be "clingy" to their parents (Norris, 1992:293). A relative remarked that the young Shawcross did such things because he craved attention (Olsen, 1993:184; Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A). In fact, as early as six years old, Shawcross was reported to be an extremely disturbed child, and unable to function appropriately at home or at school (Norris, 1992:292).

Even at such a young age, Shawcross was seen to have a tremendous temper and he would engage in fits of pure rage where he would scream uncontrollably and shake his fists. He would lash out at any other children who ridiculed him, or angered him during a game (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A).

When Arthur was seven, he created imaginary friends, because he said that he wanted someone to play with (Norris, 1992:295). When he spoke to his "friends", it appeared to others that he was talking to himself. A personality problem was clearly recognizable by those around him. It was noted, for example, that Shawcross seemed to resent younger children and he used to make them cry (Olsen, 1993:184).

At school, Shawcross was increasingly isolated by the other children and he had extreme difficulty making any friends at all (Norris, 1992:292;). When Shawcross faced trouble at school, he would go home and take out his frustrations on his brothers and sisters (Olsen, 1993:185). In those early school years, school officials described Arthur as a troubled youth who would often roam from class to class and he could often be located daydreaming in an empty classroom (Olsen, 1993:185).

A school nurse reported that Shawcross used to bring an iron bar on the school bus and swing at the other children with it. As a result of this report and similar incidents, the nurse concluded that Shawcross had problems originating from his mother, and that he showed some confusion and resentment toward his mother (Olsen, 1993:186).

Arthur Shawcross was administered his first mental health evaluation in May 1953, at the age of eight years old. The highlights of the evaluation included Betty Shawcross' claim that Arthur had trouble telling the truth and that he obeyed only when punished by some other means than a spanking (Olsen, 1993:186).

It was also noted in the evaluation that the young Shawcross had internalized a fair amount of hostility towards his mother and that he often took out his frustration on defenceless subjects (possibly other young children) (Olsen, 1993:187). Concluding notes in the evaluation cited Shawcross as having had confused hostilities, an inability to develop moral standards, and one who often indulged in fantasy (Norris, 1992:178).

In such fantasy, Shawcross recalled that he envisioned himself to be a new person who commanded respect and dignity. Perhaps such fantasy may have been generated by Shawcross' perceptions of major conflict with his parents. For example, in later interviews, Shawcross said that

when he was around eight or nine years old, he felt shut out of his parents lives altogether (Norris, 1992:180).

In the third grade, Shawcross' grades began to drop and his teachers noticed an increasingly poor attitude toward school and toward his peers. When he was in the fourth grade, Shawcross was getting bullied continually by the other boys and in response he would regress to baby talk and crying (Norris, 1992:293).

Over the next few years, Arthur Shawcross became quite a bully with a brutal temper (Taylor, 1993:B1), and yet he continued to seek attention and approval from others. For example, he would angrily beat up on other kids, but would not stop the beatings until someone pulled him off the victim (Olsen, 1993:191).

Shawcross once hit another youth in the face with his books and broke the youth's glasses. Another time he broke his cousin's nose by hitting him with a toy rifle (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A). Shawcross apparently didn't need a reason for a sudden burst of intense anger (Olsen, 1993:192).

At this time, Shawcross initiated some petty thefts from local retailers (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A), stealing ice cream from the corner store to share with other kids, and stealing a portable radio from a neighbour's house (Olsen, 1993:191). There were also a number of break and enters and small robberies that Shawcross claimed he did, but was never officially caught by police (Norris, 1992:196).

When Shawcross was in his mid-teens, he continued to wet the bed and had frequent nightmares (Olsen, 1993:194). He was also noted to walk long distances (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A), and light fires when he saw something of interest to burn. During Shawcross' mid-teen years at school, he was known by others as being simply an odd individual to being an "outright

violent" individual (Olsen, 1993:195). Shawcross had a volatile temper, was completely unpredictable, and as a result, he was a person with few friends (Olsen, 1993:193; Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A).

It had also been reported that when Arthur Shawcross was not fighting the other kids in the neighbourhood, he was out tormenting animals (Taylor, 1993:B1). It is alleged that he committed offenses such as tying cats together, pounding squirrels and chipmunks flat, and throwing darts at frogs who were nailed to his dartboard (Olsen, 1993:197).

At the age of sixteen, Shawcross was in eighth grade for the second time. He took up wrestling, but eventually failed at it because he would resort to pure strength and anger, forgetting his techniques and holds (Olsen, 1993:198). The coach noted that Shawcross fought with some internal rage and would simply go crazy, continuing to hurt the loser even after the match had been called (Olsen, 1993:199; Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A).

There were other incidents where Shawcross demonstrated his tendency toward quick anger. On one occasion, he got mad at a fellow student and threw a twelve pound shot-put at him, striking him in the chest. Another time, Shawcross decided to challenge the authority of one of his teachers. The incident triggered a very angry reaction and they actually came to blows, throwing punches and desks at each other (Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A).

After dropping out of school at the age of seventeen, Shawcross continued and increased his small time thievery habits. Shawcross stole from relatives, committed break and enters on neighbours homes, and stole money from a gas station where he had a brief part-time job. Neighbourhood boys remember Shawcross at this time in his life as a guy most interested in stealing, fire and sex (Olsen, 1993:202).



## The Adult Years

There appears to have been many warning signs and incidents during Arthur Shawcross' adult life that indicated he was not a well-adjusted individual. Numerous incidents involved some violence or socially inappropriate behaviour but were not acted upon officially by police because they were not reported. These particular incidents do not include life events in which the sole evidence is Shawcross' own accounts. Such evidence is stated in the section "Uncorroborated evidence".

One year after dropping out of high school in 1964, Shawcross married his first wife, Sarah Chatterton. They had a baby named Michael. Shawcross never paid much attention to his son, preferring to keep much to himself. There was never any documented reason as to why the relationship ended in divorce only three years later (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A).

Shawcross' entry into the Vietnam war coincided with his marriage to his second wife, Linda Neary. They got married on September 17, 1967, only one week prior to his leaving for Vietnam. Shawcross used to write many letters to Linda outlining all of the horrible things that he saw and the killing that he was forced to do, while he was in Vietnam. The incidents that he relayed to her of his activities in Vietnam have never been corroborated and were almost certainly fabricated (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A).

When Shawcross returned to his wife, she noted him to be often withdrawn and moody (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A). He would have terrific changes of mood, being hyper one minute and calm the next (Olsen, 1993:65). She believed that such behaviour was directly related to the trauma that he had experienced during the war. An example of his extreme rage was displayed when he once got mad at their dog, threw it against the wall, and broke its neck (Olsen, 1993:67).

Shawcross sought counselling from an army psychiatrist at the urging of his wife. However, the counselling ended prematurely, and was deemed "unsuccessful" (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A). One thing that the counselling did tell Shawcross' wife was to keep her husband away from fire because fire was one way that Shawcross got his sexual enjoyment (Olsen, 1993:66). It had been further documented by police that Shawcross had a penchant for arson (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A).

In April 1969, the Shawcross' discovered that Linda was pregnant. When Linda was four months pregnant, Shawcross beat her severely in a fit of rage (Olsen, 1993:70), and she miscarried (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A).

Shortly after this incident, Shawcross was arrested on arson charges. He admitted to police that he had been responsible for a string of fires, telling them that "something had told him to start the fires" (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A). At the time he was arrested, Linda Shawcross had initiated divorce proceedings. Shawcross had begun his "up to five year sentence" at Attica State prison, when the divorce went through.

Six months after Shawcross had been released from Attica in October 1971 (Olsen, 1993:214), he married his third wife, Penny Sherbino. They married in April 1972, after they learned that she was pregnant. The pregnancy was relatively short lived and Penny Shawcross miscarried in her fifth month (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A). Penny Shawcross quickly became aware of her husband's tendency towards unprovoked incidents of rage, but they stopped short of violence toward her (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A).

At the Shawcross residence in Watertown, New York, Arthur often played or roughoused with the children in the neighbourhood. He was noted to often forget how much bigger he was than the kids and they would run from him in fright. Once the police investigated a neighbour's complaint

that Shawcross had grabbed her six-year old son by the neck, but no formal charges were laid (Olsen, 1993:44; Norris, 1992:243).

On another occasion, only days following the preceding event, Shawcross was reported to have dumped a small child into a barrel of burning trash. The child was unharmed. Shawcross later grabbed a six-year old, stuffed grass down his shirt and pants, pushed him on the ground, and spanked him when he resisted (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A; Olsen, 1993:47; Norris, 1992:242).

In September of 1972, Shawcross became a main suspect in the death of a young girl, because he had been the last person seen in her company. During police interrogations, Shawcross did admit reluctantly to the crime. While he was in custody, the body of a missing boy was discovered and Shawcross was also linked to that death. A plea bargain was struck wherein Shawcross admitted to both killings, but he was only charged with first degree manslaughter in the death of the young girl (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A).

On October 17, 1972, Shawcross began his "up to twenty-five year sentence for manslaughter", at Attica State prison (Olsen, 1993:139). For most of the next fifteen years, Shawcross exhibited exemplary behaviour (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:1A). One incident of note occurred on August 22, 1973, which happened to be the day of his first parole hearing. Shawcross refused to leave his cell, set fire to his mattress, and it took ten prison officers to subdue him and get him to the prison infirmary to sedate him (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:1A).

After Shawcross was paroled on April 28, 1987 (Olsen, 1993:231; Hanley, 1990b:1), it became a difficult task for the Parole Services to find him a place to live. Shawcross was placed in three different towns in New York State, before finally ending up in Rochester (Hanley, 1990b:28; Norris, 1992:14; Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A). The major issue later became the fact that the Parole

Services never notified anyone that Shawcross had been placed there, including the police (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A).

The first town Shawcross went to was called Binghamton and it only took a few weeks before the local police figured out who he was. Shawcross' parole conditions included an 11 p.m. curfew, not to consume alcoholic beverages, and not to go near parks or places where children might gather (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A). One police officer warned Shawcross, and let him know that he was being carefully watched by the townspeople and the police. Shortly thereafter, the media got hold of the story and the public outcry forced Shawcross out of the town (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A; Olsen, 1993:237).

Shawcross was placed in the town of Delhi, about fifty miles away from Binghamton. Life was quiet until, once again, the police had contact with him, and similar to Binghamton, the media closed in, and alarmed the public (Olsen, 1993:243). In fact, the media had been trying hard to find Shawcross ever since he was ostracized from Binghamton. Again, public pressure forced Shawcross to move on (Olsen, 1993:245; Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A).

Fleischmanns became the next parole designated spot for Shawcross, only twenty-one miles from Delhi. The stay in this small village was markedly brief after the mayor was alerted to Shawcross' presence and he subsequently led a group of citizens to Shawcross' house (Olsen, 1993:248; Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A). Finally, the parole service placed Arthur Shawcross and his girlfriend Rose in the city of Rochester. They felt that Rochester, with its population of 241, 000, would be just large enough for Shawcross to carry on a life without attracting much attention (Hanley, 1990b:28; Mills and Sopko, 1990c:6A).

In October 1987, while the Shawcross' began their new lives in Rochester, Arthur had found employment as a salad maker at a wholesale fruit and vegetable business (Norris, 1992:37; Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A). Weeks into his job, it was reported that he had a temper problem. On one occasion, Shawcross grabbed a part-time worker by the neck and ran him into the wall. Once again, no formal charges were launched because neither the police nor Shawcross' parole officer ever knew about the incident (Olsen, 1993:261).

In August 1989, Shawcross and Rose Walley were married and seemed to be adapting to life in Rochester quite well. Shawcross appeared to be conforming to the conditions of his parole and there were no "telltale signs" to indicate otherwise (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A). The parole officials had been wrong because Shawcross had been very busy by this time picking up and murdering prostitutes.

When the bodies of numerous prostitutes were discovered in and around the Genesee river area, and it was believed that the murders were part of a series, the frantic search for the killer began. By November 1989, the Rochester police believed that they had a serial killer loose on the streets (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A).

On January 2, 1990, Shawcross was spotted by a police helicopter directly over the area where the body of a prostitute had been found (Olsen, 1993:422). The following lengthy interrogations of Shawcross induced him to confess to the murders of eleven women, including nine prostitutes, in a 143 page statement (Mills and Sopko, 1990b:5A)

Arthur Shawcross' final prison sentence was for his convictions in the murders of nine Rochester, New York area prostitutes, and two other women. He was sentenced on February 1, 1991, to a minimum of 250 years in prison (New York Times, 1991/02/02:26).

### Modus Operandi

Arthur Shawcross preyed on prostitutes as the victims for his murderous tendencies. (The fact that he murdered two young children in the years prior to his serial killing spree will not be included in the M.O. portion). Shawcross employed a specific presentation of self and for the most part appeared as a regular "john" to the girls that he hunted (Winnipeg Free Press, 1990/01/06:62).

In fact, Arthur Shawcross' ability to blend into a crowd was the most likely reason that he killed for so long without raising suspicion. Fox (cited in Hanley, 1990a:29) stated that many serial killers are extremely ordinary people and blend in very well.

Shawcross used to drive around the district in Rochester where the prostitutes plied their trade. He would call himself "Mitch" or "Joe" and get right to the point about wanting to buy sex (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A; Norris, 1992:32; Olsen, 1993:311). "Mitch" was also known to the girls who worked the area as a customer who used to be very rude and verbally impolite (Olsen, 1993:312).

According to Shawcross' claims in his confessions, his method of killing was consistently strangulation (Hanley, 1990a:30). Although the bodies of most of the victims were recovered, it was impossible to determine the cause of death for many, due to decomposition of the bodies (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A).

Consistent with Shawcross' confessions about his M.O., the Rochester medical examiner who testified at the trial confirmed that Shawcross employed a "soft strangulation" technique to kill. The method was applied by administering a controlled squeeze around the windpipe that did not shatter the hyoid bone (Olsen, 1993:477).

One example of Shawcross' M.O. (cited in Olsen, 1993:353-362) that nearly resulted in a murder was reported by a prostitute named Jo Ann Van Nostrand who, for some unknown reason,

Shawcross did not kill. This incident is very similar to the accounts that Shawcross gave in his written confessions of his killings of the other prostitutes.

It was around three or four in the morning and Shawcross noted Van Nostrand walking along the street. He presented himself as "Mitch" and went straight into conversation about the price for sex and about what he wanted. Shawcross drove to a secluded spot and engaged Van Nostrand in meaningless conversation along the way. Van Nostrand admitted to getting "bad vibes" about "Mitch" when he began talking in an angry tone about other prostitutes who had ripped him off (Olsen, 1993:355).

They engaged in straight sex. Shawcross began to get violent until Van Nostrand indicated that she had a knife and was willing to use it. She also noted that Shawcross was interested in her neck. Shawcross then asked her to play dead which she complied with, and the sex act was finished. He made no other move or attempt any further violent act. The incident ended with the prostitute actually suspecting that Shawcross was the "strangler" who was preying on prostitutes, but she never reported it (Olsen, 1993:362).

In each of Shawcross' murders, it is reported that he justified his actions to himself. He firmly believed that the prostitutes had left him no other choice. By his own accounts, one prostitute had tried to scratch his eyes out, one bit his penis, one shoved him in the river, one broke the gearshift in the car, one wouldn't keep quiet when children wandered by, one stole his wallet, one questioned his manhood, and another threatened to expose him as the killer (Taylor, 1993:B1; Olsen, 1993:460). Norris (1992:44) noted that in each case, something "came over" Shawcross that simply made him kill without thinking.

Another important part of the Shawcross M.O. was his attempts to hide the bodies of his victims to conceal or eliminate any evidence that could connect him to the crime. For example, he threw some bodies into the Genessee river to hide them and to eliminate any physical evidence (Mills and Sopko, 1990c:7A).

### Uncorroborated Evidence

There is uncorroborated evidence stated by the researchers who had investigated Shawcross' life. Most of the information that was uncorroborated was garnished from Shawcross' own accounts and there is further evidence to indicate that a number of Shawcross' claims were untrue.

One example is Shawcross' claims about numerous sexual encounters with various people including his sister and an aunt. Shawcross claimed that he often engaged in "abnormal sex" (i.e. oral sex) with them (Olsen, 1993:166; Mills and Sopko, 1990a:10A). The sister, the aunt, and all others implicated by Shawcross have denied that such incidents ever occurred (Norris, 1992:15:301).

Another alleged incident involved Shawcross being forced into homosexual sex with another boy his age (Norris, 1992:190). Shawcross also related a story about being raped by a strange older man when he was a teenager (Norris, 1992:192). If these incidents had been corroborated, they would have been included in the study and may have been important considerations in Shawcross' early socialization.

Shawcross' claims of what he saw and did in Vietnam, during his army service, is another major life event that is disputed by a number of sources. Shawcross claimed to have been both a witness and a participant to a number of gruesome war crimes and killing (Norris, 1992:201). In fact, the army and



other sources stated that Arthur Shawcross never saw any of the type of action that he claimed to have been a part of (Olsen, 1993:496; Mills and Sopko, 1990b:4A).

In the documentation of Shawcross' own accounts, he admitted at various times to indulging in necrophilia and cannibalism with some victims. He also admitted to having conversations with a dead body. There is no independent evidence that supported Shawcross' claims.

### Shawcross Case Discussion

The Shawcross case highlighted combinations of traumas and incidents that included social isolation, unpredictable fits of rage, and a criminal record for serious offenses. Shawcross' murders seemed to indicate that he was on a mission to get rid of prostitutes, as if he were acting out some internal anger against this victim type.

Shawcross' family life in his early years of development appear unblemished by abuses of any kind. In fact, his family life appeared to be relatively normal. It was not until the age of six, when he first attended school, where it was becoming apparent that Shawcross was somewhat different from most other children his age.

One of the most commonly cited factors in Shawcross' younger years, and indeed throughout his life, was his tendency to break into a rage and engage in violent behaviour. It may be hypothesized that he learned such behaviour due to feelings of having to protect himself which was caused by his documented low self-esteem and alienation from significant others. This is particularly evident as Shawcross fell years behind his classmates at school.

Shawcross' desire to have some self-perceived stability in his life may have been initiated by his underdeveloped personality. The personality was controlled by childish rage, which was the only thing

that Shawcross knew that could assist him in getting by in the world. This rage was generated by Shawcross himself, who repressed his negative feelings about the isolation and lack of nurturing from his family and significant others.

Leibman (1985:41) stated that repression becomes a pattern of behaviour. If a child continued to repress feelings of anger, he/she may find themselves in future situations where they are unable to suppress hostile feelings, and may engage in explosive episodes of violence.

There is evidence that Shawcross became further isolated or withdrawn as he got older. He often went out for long walks or rides on his bicycle and rarely made attempts to associate with other people. In light of this, Shawcross did have the social skills to start potentially normal relationships. This is evident from his four marriages and his affair during the fourth marriage. However, the women in each of Shawcross' relationships cited Shawcross' temper and moodiness as the main downfall of their relationships.

The research did not disclose any commonly cited or "obvious" facilitators which could provide an explanation for Shawcross' murderous actions. Shawcross did not use drugs or alcohol, and there is little evidence that he indulged in violent fantasies that he wished to enact in real life.

The M.O. employed by Shawcross is both simple and complex. He engaged in behaviour that was acceptable to his victims (i.e. just another customer driving by), yet he utilized a presentation of self that was so disarming that he was able to trick even the most streetwise prostitute into letting down her guard. It is interesting that an apparently reclusive and non-social personality had accumulated such social skills.

Shawcross carefully disposed of the bodies of his victims, demonstrating that he knew exactly what he was doing (Norris, 1992:155). He even considered the ways that he could destroy physical

evidence that could possibly link him to the crimes. Shawcross was so careful, that many bodies remained undiscovered until Shawcross pointed out his dumpsites to the police after his confession (Norris, 1992:148). These facts are the evidence that Shawcross lived in the real world on a solid interactive basis, as defined in the mission-oriented typology.

Shawcross' choice of victims remained unclear. The social profile offered no insight as to what provoked him to attack prostitutes. However, prostitutes are considered easier targets for potential killers due to their vulnerability through the nature of their work (Kingsley, 1989:1A). They constantly associate with strange men in strange cars and leave themselves open to potential trouble. In addition, prostitutes are not often reported missing right away, and it has been suggested that the police may not treat such cases as important (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994:273).

It was documented that Shawcross used to "date" many prostitutes. The reason for his dating prostitutes may be that these were the types of people with whom he felt the most comfortable in establishing short-term social relationships. When some of his dates did not go as he anticipated (i.e. a few tried to rip him off for money), Shawcross felt a loss of respect and control, so he killed them. He then engaged on a mission to avenge his feelings of incompetency by murdering other prostitutes.

The initial assertion was that Shawcross belonged to the mission-oriented typology of serial murderer. The social profile offered some supportive evidence that he belonged to that typology.

### The Mission-Oriented Serial Killer

It has been stated that Arthur Shawcross fit into the mission-oriented category of serial killer. Another convicted serial killer who had been classified into the mission-oriented category of serial killer

was Joel Rifkin (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994). The Rifkin case was very similar to the Shawcross case as demonstrated in his social profile.

Joel Rifkin confessed to killing seventeen prostitutes in the Long Island, New York area between 1990 and 1993 (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994; Province, 93/07/02:A20). Rifkin was similar to Shawcross in many ways including early life history, victim selection, and modus operandi. In fact, it had been documented that Rifkin avidly kept track of the Shawcross case. There were numerous newspaper clippings of the Shawcross case found in Rifkin's residence. (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994:146).

Rifkin was an adopted child. His adoptive parents took good care of him and offered him many opportunities for a productive life. Rifkin felt he could never live up to his father's expectations and stated that he felt completely misunderstood by him. Rifkin felt that this belief had a drastic and life long effect on his personality.

In spite of being raised by a reportedly stable family, by the time Rifkin was six years of age, he was described as an awkward, distracted child, exactly as Shawcross had been described. Rifkin, like Shawcross, became isolated, had no friends, and was the target of the neighbourhood children who constantly taunted him and beat him up (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994:2).

As Rifkin grew up, this loneliness and isolation continued in school and in all facets of his life. He wished to have the feeling of being accepted, but this remained elusive. Even as a teenager, Rifkin was subjected to verbal and physical abuse by others, and he had few close friends, (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994:4). Again, the life of Rifkin is eerily parallel to Shawcross' life.

In the search for possible facilitators in the Rifkin murders, substance abuse was eliminated because Joel Rifkin, like Arthur Shawcross never indulged in drugs or alcohol (Pulitzer and Swirsky,

1994:6). There were, however, two other possible facilitators in the Rifkin case which were both visual stimulants, and possibly contributors to fantasy and increasingly violent fantasy.

The first reported potential facilitator was Rifkin's taste for pornographic or "girlie magazines" (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994:146). Another possible facilitator was his favourite movie "Frenzy" which featured graphic strangulation scenes. Rifkin first became interested in strangulation when he was only seven years old. At that time, an old black and white movie with a strangulation scene piqued Rifkin's interest, and he would act out the scene (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994:36).

The analysis of the M.O. in the Rifkin case strongly indicated that Rifkin clearly followed the details of the Shawcross case. Rifkin cruised the areas that prostitutes frequented, used pseudonyms, and appeared to the girls to be just another "john". His method of killing was strangulation. Rifkin also took great pains to hide the bodies of his victims and later outlined his dumpsites to the police in full detail (Province, 93/07/02:A20).

Rifkin had been described as the mission-oriented type of serial killer. There are facts in both the social profile and in the M.O. that show the Shawcross case to be similar to the Rifkin case. Both offenders had numerous sexual encounters with prostitutes prior to their murdering of such victims. In light of this additional evidence, it appears that Shawcross also belongs in the mission-oriented typology of serial killer.

### Case Number Three

#### The Jeffrey Dahmer Case

Jeffrey Dahmer was convicted on February 15, 1992 of having killed fifteen young men in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area. He was sentenced to a total of nine hundred and thirty-six years in prison

on February 18, 1992 (New York Times, 92/02/18:A14). Jeffrey Dahmer was a murder victim himself while in prison, where he was beaten to death by a fellow inmate on Monday, November 28, 1994 (Toronto Star, 94/11/30:A20; Gleick, et al, 1994:128).

### First Scan Social Profile

#### Family Demographics

Jeffrey Lionel Dahmer was the first son of parents Lionel and Joyce Dahmer. He was born on May 21, 1960 at the Deaconess Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Schwartz, 1992:37; Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:33; Baumann, 1991:216; Dahmer, 1994:31). Dahmer was a healthy young baby with the exception that he left the hospital with a small orthopaedic cast on one leg to correct a minor deformity (Dahmer, 1994:37).

When Dahmer was only four months old, the family made their first of many moves to Van Buren St. on the east side of Milwaukee. They lived in a modest one bedroom apartment. Lionel Dahmer worked to support the family, while Joyce Dahmer remained at home to care for Jeffrey (Dahmer, 1994:42).

#### Education

Dahmer began first grade in September 1966, at Hazel Harvey Elementary School in Doylestown, Ohio (Barron and Tabor, 1991:30; Schwartz, 1992:38; Dahmer, 1994:62). There was little documentation of Dahmer's early years in school other than the fact that he only did what he had to do to get by in school and not much else (Dahmer, 1994:81).

Dahmer successfully earned his way to high school with no failing years in between. After high school, it appeared that he initiated a complete reversal of his past scholarly success. In September 1978, Dahmer reluctantly enrolled at the Ohio State University - Columbus campus (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:252; Dahmer, 1994:99). His father paid his tuition and got him organized. By the end of the first quarter, however, Jeffrey had not progressed well in some courses and had dropped the rest (Dahmer, 1994:99).

In 1987, Dahmer enrolled in two courses at the Milwaukee Area Technical College, also paid for in full by his father. He never attended any classes at all, stating to his father that he had decided to work part-time instead (Dahmer, 1994:122).

### Relationships

Dahmer was such a reclusive and strange individual that there are no documented instances of his having any sort of meaningful relationship prior to his cruising for victims (Masters, 1991/11:185; People, 91/08/12:34; Dahmer, 1994:80; Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991; Baumann, 1991; Schwartz, 1992).

### Criminal Record

Dahmers' criminal record began later in his adult life, and there is no evidence to suggest that he was anything other than a law-abiding person while he was growing up. Dahmer did not spend much time in prison for any of his relatively minor offenses, nor did he receive counselling while in the justice system (Dahmer, 1994:142).

In the fall of 1981, at the age of twenty-one, Dahmer was arrested for the first time. He had been drinking in the bar at a Ramada hotel when he got asked to leave for drinking out of the bottle. Dahmer was in the hotel lobby and continued his drinking efforts. Finally when police arrived, Dahmer became violent and fought with three officers. He was charged with drunk and disorderly conduct (Dahmer, 1994:114; Schwartz, 1992:49), fined sixty dollars, and received a ten day jail sentence which was later suspended (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:68).

On August 8, 1986, Dahmer was noted masturbating by a river bank near where kids often played. He was reported by two twelve year old boys to police who subsequently charged him with "lewd and lascivious behaviour" (Baumann, 1991:57; Schwartz, 1992:50). Six months passed, and the sentence was reduced to disorderly conduct and Dahmer was placed on a year's probation (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:72).

The next incident of a criminal nature was much more serious and is an indication of Dahmer's deteriorating personality. The incident occurred when Dahmer approached a young thirteen-year old boy and offered him fifty dollars to pose nude for some photographs. Dahmer drugged the young victim with a mixture of Bailey's Irish Cream and sleeping pills, and sexually molested the young boy. He was subsequently arrested and charged (Masters, 1991:188; Dahmer, 1994:133; Schwartz, 1992:62).

Dahmer was convicted and on May 23, 1989, he was sentenced to five years of probation and one year in a work release program at the Milwaukee House of Correction in downtown Milwaukee (Newsweek, 1992/02/03:47; Dahmer, 1994:138). In March 1990, Dahmer was released from the correctional facility (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:30,96; Dahmer, 1994:143).



On August 8, 1992, Dahmer dropped his pants in front of numerous people, including children at the Wisconsin State Fair Park. As a result, he was charged with disorderly conduct and fined fifty dollars (Baumann, 1991:57; Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:71; Schwartz, 1992:50).

## Second Scan Social Profile

### Birth to Adulthood

In the fall of 1962, when Jeffrey Dahmer was only two years old, the family moved to the University of Iowa's Ames Campus, in Ames, Iowa. It was during these next few years that Jeffrey succumbed to numerous, almost weekly infections that required injections at the university clinic to help control them. Nothing apparently serious ever came about as a result of these sicknesses (Dahmer, 1994:45).

During this time period, Lionel and Joyce Dahmer argued frequently (Goleman, 1991:A8), sometimes to the point of physical violence (Dahmer, 1994:45). Their marriage was reported to have many such highs and lows. They were described as incompatible and spent so much energy arguing that they had little time to spend with Jeffrey (Masters, 1991:185; Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:28). Jeffrey, although aware of the fighting, was leading a generally happy and healthy childhood.

In the late fall of 1964, Lionel Dahmer noticed a particularly strong odour emanating from beneath the family residence. Investigation revealed that civets (skunk-like rodents) had stashed the remains of many other rodents which had become their food. The large pile of bones was extracted by Lionel Dahmer. He was in the process of disposing of them when he noticed Jeffrey was quite fascinated with the bones and began playing with them (Dahmer, 1994:53; Schwartz, 1992:39).

As a young boy, Dahmer seemed to get into the sort of trouble that most other young boys do. At six years old he was caught throwing rocks through the windows of an abandoned warehouse. He also enjoyed going fishing, although Jeffrey used to have a curious tendency to pay unusual attention to the gutted fish, sometimes cutting them up into little pieces, and staring at their entrails (Schwartz, 1992:39; Dahmer, 1994:54).

In the winter of 1964, Lionel Dahmer took his son down to the University chemistry laboratory and showed him a few simple chemical reaction tests. Jeffrey did not seem all that interested in the experience and never really talked much about it after that (Dahmer, 1994:56).

Dahmer did not enjoy games of competition and avoided any situation or game that involved physical contact. Rather, young Jeffrey preferred games such as "hide and seek" or "kick the can" (Dahmer, 1994:57). Dahmer's father was concentrating on finishing his Ph.D. and as a result, his time with Jeffrey became even more limited.

In the spring of 1964, Dahmer had surgery on a double hernia that had appeared in the form of a small bulge in his scrotum. The hernia was the result of a birth defect. Lionel Dahmer noted that as Jeffrey was recovering, he seemed to take on a "certain flattening of mood", which seemed to "take on a sense of something permanent" (Dahmer, 1994:58). At about this time, Jeffrey Dahmer seemed to be more withdrawn.

In December 1966, Jeffrey's brother David was born (Schwartz, 1992:38; Dahmer, 1994:61; Baumann, 1991:216). It was also at this time that Jeffrey had begun to display signs of a general lack of self-confidence and shyness in his personality, possibly brought on by the birth of his brother. Dahmer's father noted that it seemed as if Jeffrey felt that others might harm him in some way (Dahmer, 1994:61).

Dahmer's first grade teacher described her student as a shy and reclusive young boy. She noted that Dahmer did not interact with the other children nor attempt to engage in conversation with them. Dahmer also isolated himself on the playground at school by keeping much to himself (Dahmer, 1994:63). As a result, Dahmer had few friends (Barron and Tabor, 1991:30).

The family moved when Jeffrey was seven years old to a house in Barberton, Ohio (Baumann, 1991:216; Schwartz, 1992:38; Dahmer, 1994:69). Lionel and Joyce Dahmer were still fighting on and off, and trying to look after Jeffrey and his young brother David, only months old at this time (Dahmer, 1994:69).

As Dahmer grew older, particularly between the ages of ten and fifteen years, he had become a more "rigid and inflexible figure" in the way that he physically carried himself. It was also noted that Jeffrey became increasingly shy. He would spend time watching television or spending time in his room (Dahmer, 1994:76).

The sports that Lionel tried to get his son into included soccer, tennis, and archery but Jeffrey quickly lost interest in them all (Dahmer, 1994:78). Dahmer did play intramural tennis at highschool and he played the clarinet in the high school band (Baumann, 1991:217; Schwartz, 1992:40).

In his teenage years at school, Dahmer remained a very isolated individual with no male or female friends, and used to act in a bizarre manner to gain attention (Schwartz, 1992:41; Masters, 1991/11:185; People, 91/08/12:34). For example, Dahmer included himself in the class photo of the National Honour Society in the 1978 Revere High School yearbook, even though he was not a member. His face was blacked out by a teacher when he realized Dahmer's prank (Schwartz, 1992:41; Baumann, 1991:218).

During his high school years, Dahmer's father described his son as completely "unmotivated, almost inert". He noted that even their father-son conversations were increasingly limited to "question and answer" type ordeals. It was as if nothing mattered to Jeffrey (Dahmer, 1994:81).

Joyce Dahmer had been having a number of emotional troubles in addition to her marriage troubles. In July 1970, she was admitted to a psychiatric ward to be treated for severe anxiety (Dahmer, 1994:89). This was the first such incident. She recovered, but allegedly many similar problems persisted and grew (Schwartz, 1992:42; Dahmer, 1994:89). As a result, the family suffered from her personal problems.

### The Adult Years

In the summer of 1978, Lionel and Joyce Dahmer divorced (Schwartz, 1992:42; Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:36). As a result, David was in the custody of his mother, but Jeffrey, who was eighteen was on his own (Masters, 1991/11:188; Dahmer, 1994:93; Goleman, 1991:A8). Jeffrey lived on his own in the family house when his mother and his brother David moved out (Baumann, 1991:220; Schwartz, 1992:42). He kept the house in a state of disrepair and uncleanliness, and maintained a serious drinking problem (Baumann, 1991:220; Schwartz, 1992:42; Dahmer, 1994:94).

In September 1978, Dahmer tried enrolling at Ohio State University but his efforts, or lack thereof, did not last very long. There was no apparent reason for the failure given by Dahmer himself except that he couldn't get up for his classes, and the others "just slipped away". In reality, his fellow students exposed that Jeffrey Dahmer drank constantly and generally was a complete mess (Dahmer, 1994:105; Schwartz, 1992:46).

In fact, Dahmer had been described as a full-fledged alcoholic by the time he had finished high school (Goleman, 1991:A8; People, 1991/08/12:34; Baumann, 1991:220; Dahmer, 1994:83). Dahmer stated that he drank out of boredom, that there was nothing else to do (Dahmer, 1994:96).

On December 29, 1978, Dahmer enrolled in the United States Army (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:62). At the end of that month, he began basic training (Dahmer, 1994:107). Several months later he was posted in Germany. Dahmer spent around two years in Germany, but three months before his military service was complete, on March 26, 1981, he was honourably discharged for alcoholism (Newsweek, 1992/02/03:46; Barron and Tabor, 1991:30; Dahmer, 1994:111; Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:66).

There were numerous reports of Dahmers' drinking problems while in the army. Dahmer listened to heavy metal music and drank martinis until he passed out. He was also noted to have been a violent individual and unpredictable when he drank (Baumann, 1991:220:124; Celis, 1991:14; Barron and Tabor, 1991:30; Schwartz, 1992:48).

Later in the winter of 1981, Dahmer left his father's house to live with his paternal grandmother in West Allis, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:29; Dahmer, 1994:115; Baumann, 1991:222). He adjusted well to this situation because his grandmother took good care of him. Dahmer got a job as a phlebotomist at the Milwaukee Blood Plasma Centre (Howlett, 1992:3A; Schwartz, 1992:50) and attended counselling at the local Alcoholics Anonymous (Schwartz, 1992:83; Dahmer, 1994:118).

It was approximately six years after Dahmer began living with his grandmother that his behaviour began to change. One example was when Dahmer's grandmother reported to his father that she had found a fully dressed male mannequin in Jeffrey's closet. Dahmer later admitted to having

stolen it from a department store, but never admitted to any significance other than it being a joke (Dahmer, 1994:120). At this time, Dahmer was described as an "artful deceiver" and one who "mixed falsehood with a pinch of truth" (Dahmer, 1994:122).

On another occasion, Dahmer's grandmother complained of a horrible odour emanating from her basement. Jeffrey explained to his father that he had found a dead racoon, brought it home and began experimenting with its carcass using bleach and various chemicals (Dahmer, 1994:126; Schwartz, 1992:60). Jeffrey Dahmer moved out of his grandmother's house in late September, 1988 (Dahmer, 1994:132; Schwartz, 1992:61).

There is evidence that Dahmer used to frequent gay bath houses. At one bath house that Dahmer frequented, it was discovered that he had been drugging the other guests in private rooms (Schwartz, 1992:51; Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:73). The police were never involved in any of these instances.

When Dahmer had served the prison sentence for his March 1989 conviction for molesting a thirteen year old boy, he was free to begin a new life on his own. Dahmer was released in March, 1990 (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:30,96; Dahmer, 1994:143). Shortly after gaining his freedom, he secured unit #213 of an apartment at the Oxford Apartments on North Twenty-fifth street in Milwaukee (Terry, 1991a:A1; Baumann, 1991:40; Schwartz, 1992:4; People, 1991/08/12:32).

Dahmer kept a simple apartment with the exception that he had numerous security devices installed. For example, a locked sliding door between the bedroom and the living room, a video camera mounted above the main entrance and numerous alarms (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:3; Schwartz, 1992:8; Dahmer, 1994:144; Baumann, 1991:49:50).

The Dahmer residence on North Twenty-fifth street had been visited by police at least once before the final incident which led to his arrest. On May 27, 1991, police were investigating a complaint of a bleeding, naked boy running down the street. It was the result of a 9-1-1 call from a concerned citizen (Terry, 1991b:A10; Barron, 1991b:6).

Dahmer was nearby and explained to the police that the man was his houseguest and that he was simply drunk and acting crazy. The boy was not able to communicate with police in his drugged state. Dahmer showed the police his I.D. and told them that the "boy" was nineteen years old (Schwartz, 1992:93).

The police escorted Dahmer and the boy back to the apartment, just to be sure. The police saw nothing amiss, and the boy did not show any signs of wanting to leave, nor did he try to communicate any signs of distress to the officers. Dahmer even showed the police a picture that he had taken of the boy in his black bikini briefs to prove that they knew each other (Schwartz, 1992:90). In fact, it was those pictures and Dahmer's "reassuring manner" that allowed police to believe Dahmer's story (New York Times, 1992/02/13:B15).

The police left the apartment and thought no more about it until it turned out that Dahmer had killed the boy (Celis, 1991a:14; Baumann, 1991:117; Schwartz, 1992:92). Dahmer had the cunning and poise to outwit three street police officers, in what should have been a stressful time for him (Goleman, 1991:A8).

The events leading up to this incident fit Dahmer's typical M.O. perfectly. Dahmer had met the young boy (he turned out to be 14), at a mall in downtown Milwaukee. Dahmer offered the boy money to pose for pictures and they went back to his apartment. The boy drank a drugged beverage, passed out, and Dahmer had sex with him. While Dahmer went out to get more beer, the boy

recovered enough to get himself outside, which led to the public incident (Schwartz, 1992:90; Baumann, 1991:117). Dahmer stated later that after police had left, he strangled the boy, had sex with the corpse, took more photographs, dismembered the body and kept the skull (Schwartz, 1992:92; Baumann, 1991:117).

The final incident at Dahmer's apartment involved a similar situation but one with a drastically different outcome. On July 22, 1991, Jeffrey Dahmer met a 32 year old man at a downtown Milwaukee mall (Baumann, 1991:196). Dahmer offered the man money in exchange for photographs at his apartment, and invited him in for drinks.

It is reported that Dahmer took the male into his bedroom and handcuffed him. Dahmer then held a knife to the male's chest (Baumann, 1991:45). By physical force the man was able to get away from Dahmer and get safely out of the apartment. Police were notified of the incident and went with the still handcuffed man up to the apartment (Barron & Tabor, 1991:A4; Schwartz, 1992:4).

Dahmer answered the door in the same presentation of self that had disarmed many victims and even police in the past. He was calm and cool, as he was asked to explain the man's allegations and his side of the story. While in the bedroom, one of the officer's peered into a dresser drawer and noted photographs of males in various stages of dismemberment (Schwartz, 1992:4; New York Times, 1991b:A12).

The pictures showed skulls in kitchen cabinets and freezers among other gory details. At that point, Dahmer was arrested after a brief but violent attempt to resist. The same officer then opened the refrigerator door and saw a human head inside (Schwartz, 1992:5). Jeffrey Dahmer's facade and his killings were finally over.



### Modus Operandi

Dahmer's M.O. was similar in all of his seventeen murders (he confessed to seventeen, but was convicted of fifteen counts of murder). Dahmer's M.O. consists of certain elements of presentation of self, but also involved offers of money and sex. He was also known to offer alcohol to his victims and administer various drugs (New York Times, 1991/07/26:A12; Barron, 1991:6).

It is important to note that the information about Dahmer's M.O. is self-reported and might be suspect in reliability. Dvorchak and Holewa (1991:77) state that "the deeds of Jeffrey Dahmer come from his own mouth. There are no known witnesses, and in some cases there is no physical evidence to verify the statements written down by police." In light of this, all sources consistently cited Dahmer's typical M.O. including the method of killing based on his revelations.

Dahmer most often lured his male victims to his apartment with the offer of money to pose for photographs, or to watch male homosexual videos. In the apartment, Dahmer would serve a drink to his guest, which had been laced with sedatives (he tried various types) (New York Times, 1991/07/26:A12; Schwartz, 1991:74). Once the drink took effect, Dahmer strangled the victim with his hands (Johnson, 1991:A11) or with a leather strap (Schwartz, 1991:74).

At this point, Dahmer would cut open the body and take polaroids in various poses. In fact, he kept many such photos in an album (Baumann, 1991:56). On some occasions, Dahmer boiled the victim's heads and stripped the flesh to the bone (New York Times, 1991/01/25:B7; Barron, 1991b:6; Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:12). He then made a point of painting some of the skulls, and keeping them as trophies (Barron & Tabor, 1991:1). There were seven such skulls found in Dahmer's apartment (Baumann, 1991:51; Schwartz, 1991:10).

The disposal of the body was initiated by dismemberment with the use of a saw and knives (Baumann, 1991:56). The body parts were then mixed with chemicals such as hydrochloric acid, which allowed such parts to be flushed down the toilet (Dvorchak and Holewa, 1991:11). Dahmer kept some body parts as trophies in jars of formaldehyde or in the refrigerator (Wilkerson, 1991:A14).

A specific example of Dahmer's M.O. was reported by Dvorchak and Holewa (1991:80). Dahmer had been cruising an area of Milwaukee close to a favourite gay night club of his. The young teenagers who generally congregated around this area were reported to be young prostitutes. Dahmer noted a young boy at a nearby bus stop and asked if he wanted to come over for a drink, and watch some videos. Dahmer also offered to pay money to let him take nude photos of the boy.

Dahmer and his young victim went back to his apartment and had sex. After the sex act, Dahmer reported that he drugged the young boy, then strangled him and dismembered his body. He then proceeded to use acid to clean the flesh off the bones of the young boy and crushed the rest of the bones with a sledgehammer.

#### Uncorroborated evidence

There are numerous reports that Jeffrey Dahmer incorporated cannibalism and necrophilia into his murderous acts. While there is some evidence to support such claims of fact, most reports are largely unsubstantiated, or rely solely on the self-proclamations of the killer himself.

In light of the lack of reliable evidence, it would not be useful for the purposes of the current study to investigate theories of cannibalism and necrophilia related to the documented acts of other serial murderers.

### Dahmer Case Discussion

The Dahmer case was a highly sensationalized case, wherein the media put extra emphasis on the reports of torture, dismemberment, and alleged cannibalism. The more important, and more numerous facts in the case, are those that point to how an offender like Dahmer was socially constructed.

Dahmer was an isolated and lonely child during the very early years of his life. His parents, the agents of primary socialization, seemed too preoccupied with their own problems and did not spend much quality time with their son. As a result, Dahmer engaged in attention-seeking behaviour and explored the world on his own.

Exploring the world without guidance inhibited Dahmer's ability to secure an appropriate identity and internalize commonly accepted social values and norms. These values and norms are part of the normative system of society which guide the proper way to behave (Holmes, 1989:35).

When Dahmer alienated himself from the family and from his peers at school by acting out, it only made the situation worse. It may have been these factors that initiated his drinking problems which began in high school. The drinking problem may have been the first visible sign that Dahmer was removing himself from the real world, and engaging in some kind of world of his own.

Dahmer never had any ambition or drive to accomplish anything at school or in the work world. The lack of motivation may have been influenced to some degree by the confusion and alienation Dahmer felt through his parents' troubled relationship and with their divorce. The lack of motivation may also have started Dahmer along the path to criminally deviant behaviour.

When Dahmer received his first sentence for molesting the young boy, the circumstances were similar to the M.O. of his future murders. It could be hypothesized that this may have been the first

documented time that Dahmer acted out in real life any fantasies that he may have been harbouring. This initial incident could also have provided the necessary excitement for him to continue acting on such fantasies and elaborating on them (i.e. following through with murder).

The warning signs that Dahmer was becoming increasingly anti-social and criminally deviant are not difficult to see in hindsight. Greenaway (1991:A17) stated that people were stunned that so many warning signs were ignored about Dahmer. Justice system officials have admitted that it appeared that Jeffrey Dahmer slipped through several layers of the system, with sometimes only scant attention having been paid to him (Celis, 1991b:A10).

The hypothesis that Dahmer killed out of loneliness is supported by the data. There is little or no evidence that may refute the hypothesis. In light of this, the assertion that Dahmer belonged in the power/control oriented typology, then becomes a rival theory of explanation that is also supported by the data in this study.

There was no documentation uncovered that offered any hypothesis of how Dahmer came to choose mostly homosexual men as his victims. In fact, Dahmer had denied that homosexuality had anything to do with his victim selection (Ullman, 1992:28). Jenkins (1994:21) however, believed that Dahmer fit into the image of the sexually motivated murderer. The police at the scene also hypothesized that Dahmer's actions were acts of sexual deviancy (Wilkerson, 1991:A14). It is hypothesized that Dahmer chose victims based on his sexual orientation and for their vulnerability as easy prey. Most victims were young, transient street people in need of money.

Dahmer's victim selection may also have been guided by his documented low self-esteem, and his sense of isolation from the world. By killing others, Dahmer perceived that he was able to control something in his life and to have the ultimate feeling of power from controlling another human being.

The power/control typology asserts that Dahmer achieved a self-inflated sense of peak control and power from the killing of another human. He controlled whether the victim lived or died. Strangulation as Dahmer's method of killing was also consistent with the common method of the power/control type of serial killer (Holmes, 1990:59) The trophies that Dahmer kept were simply reminders of the sense of power and control that he felt at the time of his offenses (Pulitzer and Swirsky, 1994:269).

#### The Power/Control Oriented Serial Killer

It was stated that Jeffrey Dahmer would fall under the category of serial murderer referred to as the power/control oriented type. Another convicted serial killer who had been classified into the power/control oriented category is John Wayne Gacy (Cahill, 1986; Sullivan and Maiken, 1983). The Gacy case also shared important characteristics with the Dahmer case.

John Wayne Gacy was convicted on March 11, 1980 of having killed 33 young males in the Chicago, Illinois area (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:370). The victim type was consistently young men who were either homosexual or bisexual "hustlers" or male prostitutes (Wilson and Seaman, 1992:273).

Gacy was born to his biological parents and it is documented that his father was a violent person and a drunk (Cahill, 1986:34; Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:255). Gacy always felt alienated from his father because he was not up to his father's expectations (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:257). Dahmer also felt alienated by his father, who was either too busy to spend time with him, or was fighting with his mother.

It had been theorized that such a relationship with his father drastically affected Gacy and due to his "defective self-image", and his rage at his feelings of powerlessness, he began "to merge with sadistic elements in a slowly unfolding homosexual orientation" (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:255).

Jeffrey Dahmer did not admit to his homosexuality and neither did Gacy. In fact, Gacy had very strong fears of being considered a homosexual and constantly denied that he was homosexual (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:179).

Another similarity in these serial murder cases was that both Gacy and Dahmer were convicted earlier in their lives for offenses of a sexual nature. In addition to the convictions, both offenders had continued to offend immediately after their sentences had been served, until they were convicted of their crimes of murder.

Gacy had been convicted in 1968 in Iowa for the attack and sodomy of a young boy. The incident involved Gacy handcuffing the victim, however no excessive violence was used (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:25). He was sentenced to ten years but only served 21 months and was out on probation (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:272). Police reports indicated that within the next year, Gacy had engaged in two further encounters of homosexual activity, thus violating his parole (Cahill, 1986:95; Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:277).

Similar to Dahmer, John Gacy prowled a section of the city known for its proliferation of his particular victim types to search for victims. All of Gacy's victims came to his house, and all of them were killed there, similar to Dahmer (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:175).

Gacy's most common M.O. was somewhat different than Dahmer's in the effort to lure victims. Gacy would cruise an area known as "Bughouse square" where all the male hustlers hung out, and

present himself as a police officer. He also had a phony badge and often used the name "Jack Hanley" which Gacy later stated was his alter ego (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:253).

Dahmer and Gacy were consistent in their methods of killing. The method of killing that Gacy used on his victims was strangulation. He killed by looping a rope around the victims neck, knotted it twice, and then tightened it like a tourniquet with a stick (Cahill, 1986:185). Gacy also employed handcuffs and sexual toys such as dildos with which he tortured his victims.

Similar to Dahmer, Gacy sexually assaulted all victims, and used homosexual pornographic videos as facilitators for arousal. On at least one occasion, Gacy slept with the corpse of one of his victims (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:176) as Dahmer was reported to have done. Gacy disposed of the bodies by soaking them in acid or putting lime on them and burying them in the dirt in his crawlspace (Cahill, 1986:186).

It is known that Dahmer kept body parts such as skulls for "souvenirs". Gacy on the other hand, kept the entire bodies of most of his victims under his house (Wilson and Seaman, 1992:273). Other trophies that Gacy collected, included his victims' jewellery, trinkets, and keys (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:229). It may be hypothesized that trophy hunting, could be a unique feature of the power/control oriented type of serial killer.

The search for motive in the Gacy case elicited two main hypotheses. The first is that Gacy regarded his victims as trash and that the murder of such victim types was socially acceptable (i.e. he was doing society a favour) (O'Reilly-Fleming, 1995b; Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:255). The other hypothesis is that Gacy's sadistic homosexual conquests were more gratifications through the exercise of power (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983:255).

The second hypothesis is consistent with the assertion that Gacy belongs in the power/control oriented category of serial killer. The similarities in the Dahmer case and in the Gacy case indicate that Dahmer belongs in the power/control typology of serial killer along with Gacy.

The social profiles of both offenders are somewhat different. In contrast to Dahmer, Gacy outwardly appeared to be secure, successful, and have a strong personality. In fact, he had constructed a powerful personality to mask his feelings of insecurity and lack of power and control.

Dahmer was unable to construct such a powerful outgoing personality to mask his weaknesses. Instead, he remained quiet and withdrawn. However, Dahmer was skilled enough to have perfected a clever presentation of self, that enabled him to fool streetwise victims. In this way, the social profile of Dahmer shows a lack of power and control, in his personal life and highlights the murderous methods that he used to gain power and control in his life.

The differences in the M.O.'s of Dahmer and Gacy do not support the notion that they cannot be part of the same typology. Holmes (1989:39) stated that no two offenders are exactly alike. There are differences among types because people possessing similar motivation behave differently (Holmes, 1989:55).

### Cross Case Analysis

The creation of social profiles for the three cases of convicted serial murderers offered insight into the social construction of a serial murderer. There were similarities among the offenders in terms of lifestyle and personality traits. There were also a number of important differences. The cross case analysis will discuss the main issues and social profile criteria that were identified within the three case studies on a comparative basis.



There are social profile criteria that are important to consider in the attempt to distinguish between types of serial killers. There are facts in each case study that independently support the hedonistic, mission-oriented, and power-control typologies. The evidence in the case studies suggest that the typologies are reliable and valid. The criteria of the social profiles were consistent with the criteria which defined each typology. There are also overlapping characteristics and contradictions within the typologies that need to be addressed.

Olson, Shawcross, and Dahmer were born and raised by their biological parents and there were no documented forms of early life physical or sexual abuse in any of the three cases. This fact is contrary to much of the majority of the literature on serial killers which suggests such incidents were common in their lives, and are often cited as causal factors for their future behaviour (Hickey, 1991:54; Maiken, 1982:A1).

The case studies share similarities and in particular, during the subject's early life socialization. There are similarities in the lifestyles that the three offenders encountered and endured. Further similarities in each case indicate alienation from others, intense attention seeking, and anti-social behaviour that developed over time.

Olson, Shawcross, and Dahmer appeared to have internalized and repressed anger from real or perceived incidents from childhood (i.e. they felt socially isolated, or neglected). The escalating anti-social behaviours that these three offenders experienced throughout adolescence and adulthood created the circumstances that were ripe for murder (Liebman, 1989:42). The above examples demonstrate how these serial killers were socially constructed.

The three cases demonstrated that each subject had a penchant for attention-seeking behaviour, particularly during their years in school. This attention-seeking behaviour may have been a direct result

of poor self-esteem due to the feelings of social isolation. Ressler (cited in Hickey, 1991:54) noted that people who feel good about themselves do not go around killing others.

Another main factor that all three subjects shared was the sense of social isolation and their perceived rejection by family members and the rest of society. This factor is common in nearly all cases of serial murder and is well-documented (Leibman, 1989:42; Sears, 1991:83; DeHart and Mahoney, 1994:38; Keppel, 1995). It has been suggested that an early history characterized by a lack of empathic bonding and attachment between the child and the caregiver, with the child becoming aloof and cold, is the basis of multiple homicide (Burgess et al., 1986:266).

Family backgrounds providing little control are conducive to aggressive behaviour and childhood aggression is often an indication of future anti-social behaviour (McCord, cited in Van Dusen and Mednick, 1983:274). This explanation may help to understand Olson's rebellious and criminal nature, Shawcross' sudden fits of rage, and Dahmer's experiments with dead creatures.

Olson, Shawcross, and Dahmer were not scholars, and their poor academic performances, combined with being shunned by most other students at school inevitably increased their social isolation. Both Olson and Shawcross were high school drop-outs and although Dahmer made it through high school, he dropped out after two attempts at higher education. It is likely more than a coincidence that after Olson and Shawcross dropped out of school their criminal activity increased. In Dahmer's case, his criminal activity coincided with his having dropped out of school.

Researchers have hypothesized that social isolation may inhibit socialization and prevent the development of internal buffers that control social behaviour (DeHart and Mahoney, 1994:38).

Burgess et al. (1986:267) suggested that the offender filtered out constructive social feedback.

Hickey (1991:66) recognized that there may be some triggering mechanism based on traumatization(s) which may be a main facilitator that drives the serial killer. The triggering mechanism within any particular trauma could be an individual's inability to deal with the stress of a situation. The triggering mechanism for Shawcross appeared to have been his inability to deal with the real world once he got out of prison. The label of child killer and the stress of trying to reintegrate himself back into the everyday world was too much for him to cope with. Shawcross then engaged in a vengeful mission which included targeting female prostitutes as his murder victims.

Jeffrey Dahmer's triggering mechanism appeared to have been his feeling of a severe loss of power or intense loneliness when one of his guests would prepare to leave him. This self-perceived trauma was relieved in the act of murdering and "keeping" the victim. The trauma was relieved, and he regained his sense of perceived power and control.

In addition to a possible triggering mechanism, traumatizations may also be internalized by the individual over time. A common characteristic of most, if not all serial offenders is having feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt and worthlessness (Hickey, 1991:67). It has been documented within the case studies that Dahmer and Shawcross shared such feelings.

Olson, on the other hand, did not outwardly express that he ever felt any sense of worthlessness or self-doubt. This does not necessarily indicate that Olson was unaffected by any perceived traumatizations. Hickey (1991:67) acknowledged that the serial killer may construct a mask to hide his/her feelings from those around him/her. The mask has also been referred to as a "mask of normalcy" (Barron and Tabor, 1991:A4).

It may be hypothesized that Olson is an example of an offender who was able to construct a mask of normalcy. Olson had to disguise his purely hedonistic personality which induced him to

engage in anti-social behaviour. A cycle of trauma and a quest for maintaining control can be generated at a very early age. It is also believed that low self-esteem can also be conducive to fantasy development (Hickey, 1991:68).

It has been well documented that fantasy is often an intricate factor in the actions of serial killers (Dietz, 1992; Holmes and DeBurger, 1988:50; Holmes, 1989:60; Prentky et al., 1989:887; Burgess et al., 1986). Their violent fantasies reach a stage of vividness wherein the offender desperately wants to act the fantasy out in reality (Ressler and Shachtman; cited in Blair, 1993:294), or confuses the fantasy with reality (Hickey, 1991:69).

The three cases did not support the presence of fantasy as a facilitator in the minds of the offenders. The Olson case offered no indication that Olson ever indulged in fantasy. Shawcross and Dahmer disclosed some of their fantasies during their self-proclamations, yet there was no corroborative evidence to support such claims. Shawcross' most compelling fantasies centred around the fighting he saw in Vietnam. Further documentation proved that Shawcross never saw any of the action that he bragged about.

The validity of information related to fantasy may be suspect because it was largely accumulated from the self-proclamations of the killers. In spite of this concern, the corroborated documentation of fantasy should be included wherever possible in the future research into the social construction of the serial killer.

Identified facilitators in the profiles of serial murderers must not be considered causal factors (Hickey, 1991:69). In the Olson case and the Dahmer case for example, alcohol and pornography were found to be factors in their lives, but it would be impossible to prove that such factors were instrumental in facilitating either of them to have become involved in repetitive homicide. Hickey

(1991:69) stated that in all likelihood, the serial offender would have killed without such facilitators, and the facilitators are merely a vehicle used to express his/her internal rage.

The results of the study indicated that the killings for each offender began when they felt that they were unable to control their environment. Olson began killing after having served the longest consecutive prison sentence of his life. He had become so used to living in a structured and rigid environment, that he could not adapt to the outside world. Olson was unable to control his hedonistic personality and acted solely on what gave him the most pleasure. Unfortunately, his desires turned to the sadistic murder of young children.

Shawcross completed a lengthy prison sentence and had adjusted well to everyday prison life. Shawcross had been convicted and labelled a child killer long before he initiated the series of murders in Rochester, N.Y. The uncontrollable rages that had been a focal point of Shawcross' personality were likely facilitated by this label.

Shawcross' years in prison inhibited his ability to survive in the real world and, upon his release he found that the real world rejected him. Shawcross regressed to his rage-filled personality in learning to deal with people. Leibman (1989:43), believed that serial murderers begin to kill as a result of increasing feelings of rejection, frustration, anger, and powerlessness.

The life long sense of social isolation that Shawcross felt, was compounded and controlled by the townspeople who forced him away. When Shawcross was buying sex from prostitutes (women he could purchase and control), and he perceived himself not to be in control, he killed them. Shawcross then embarked upon a mission of sorts to relieve his rage by continuing his murder spree.

Dahmer lost control of his environment and made drastic attempts to regain control. He was a loner and one who was unable to come to terms with his own sexuality. Amidst this confusion, the

feeling of Dahmer's lack of power and control was heightened. In the quest to satisfy his sexual appetite and to regain the sense of power and control, Dahmer murdered the partners with whom he was unable to develop lasting relationships.

Shortly after his parent's divorce, Dahmer began to follow a path of deteriorating anti-social and criminal behaviour. The divorce of his parents appears to have been a triggering mechanism or facilitator that pushed him over the edge. After this event, Dahmer committed a series of criminal offenses of a sexual nature. One dramatic example was the attack on the young male whom Dahmer incapacitated with the use of drugs prior to sexually assaulting him. Dahmer was losing control.

The sense of control is integral to the serial killer (Egger, cited in Greenaway, 1991:A17). Hickey (1991:52) stated that the offender, through violent acts, attempts to regain the control he or she has sought since his or her childhood experiences. The sense of power and control that his/her life otherwise lacks, is achieved by killing others (Sears, 1991:87).

The three offenders had been convicted of serious criminal offenses prior to their murder convictions. Dahmer and Shawcross were both convicted of offenses that could be viewed now as predictors of their future behaviour. Dahmer's arrest for drugging and sexually assaulting the young boy was similar to the M.O. that he employed in the murders he committed. Shawcross' strangulation murders of two young children were also similar to his later actions during the killing spree.

Clifford Olson, by contrast, was a career criminal and his criminal record stated that he specialized in property crimes. However, there were numerous documented accounts in prison, parole, and police files that noted Olson's tendency to commit offenses of a sexual nature against young people. The nature of these offenses should have directed attention to authorities that this individual fit the profile of a very dangerous and high risk offender.

Jeffrey Dahmer suited the typical profile of a serial killer, yet both Shawcross and Olson were substantially older when they began their careers of serial murder. The commonly cited profile of the majority of serial murderers is white male, 25-35 years, street smart, charming and charismatic (Holmes, 1990:59; Leibman, 1989:42; Gresswell and Hollin, 1994:10). The age factor in the Shawcross and Olson cases was important to note for investigators and profilers in serial murder cases. Information that does not fit into a profile could induce an investigator to improperly eliminate a suspect.

Another similarity between the three cases was that all three subjects killed within a short distance from where they lived. Holmes (1990:55) defined such offenders as "geographically stable". The opposite to the geographically stable offender is the "geographically transient" offender, which Olson, Shawcross and Dahmer were not.

All three subjects displayed a form of behaviour that has been documented as common among serial killers. After their first few murders, Olson, Shawcross, and Dahmer intensified their murderous acts as if in a frenzy. Near the end of his murderous spree, Shawcross killed four women in a span of three weeks (Williams, 1989:1A).

Holmes (1989:60) noted that as a serial killer progresses in his/her crimes, there appears to be a general tendency toward personality degeneration. There is less and less planning, and the time between the killings decreases. Fox (cited in Edwards, 1994:A1) stated that it is common for serial killers to get more violent and become more frequent in their attacks.

One other striking similarity in the three social profiles was that these offenders all confessed to their crimes. In each case, without their confessions, many murders might yet be unsolved. In the Olson case, the police would not have had enough evidence for any murder charge without Olson's

confession and famous cash for bodies deal (Wilson, 1987:50; Mulgrew, 1990). The Dahmer and Shawcross cases were solved mostly by luck, rather than through police investigating.

In the Shawcross case, the police were alerted to the fact that a serial killer was active, and they were able to direct their investigation accordingly. However, if Shawcross had not confessed, the police did not have sufficient evidence to charge him with anything, nor link him to the series of murders.

In the Dahmer case, there was no indication that anyone suspected that a serial killer was at work in Milwaukee. It was a fortunate break that a potential victim of Dahmer's had escaped and was able to convince two police officers to investigate Dahmer and his apartment.

The research examined the widely quoted and accepted typologies of Holmes and DeBurger (1988; Holmes, 1990; Egger, 1990; Hickey, 1991; Gresswell and Hollin, 1994; DeHart and Mahoney, 1994). The results indicated that these typologies are useful as a way of making basic differentiations based on the serial killer's perceived motivation. Hickey (1991:15) referred to such typologies as general in nature.

The three typologies were supported in each case. However, the typologies are not mutually exclusive due to some overlap and problems of interpretation. The subjective nature of the data could result in multiple interpretations. Multiple interpretations may offer alternative or rival hypotheses about the subjects and the typologies.

One might interpret the data from the social profile on Olson, for example, to mean that he believed that he was on a mission to kill children in an effort to make society pay for incarcerating him. Therefore, Olson struck at society's most valuable future assets.



Which typologies are the most appropriate depends on who is making the determination. What is important to remember is that the limited research done so far on serial murder leaves considerable room for new ideas (Hickey, 1991:17).

The results of the social profiles of the three case studies failed to uncover unique social characteristics within each typology that would be capable of making the typologies mutually exclusive, and thus make them more valuable in terms of explanation. It is hypothesized that through continued study in social construction research and social profiling, the typologies may be modified to be more specific and thus increase their explanatory value.

### Discussion and Practical Implications

Serial murder is a rare but important social problem. This fact is emphasized by the increasing proliferation of scholarly literature on the subject and law enforcements development of new computer systems such as VICLAS. Some authors believe that serial murder constitutes a consistent and growing phenomenon with widespread repercussions for society (Gresswell and Hollin, 1994:2). In spite of the intensified research in the field, the etiology of serial murder remains mysterious.

"Few would question that serial murder represents an extreme form of dangerous and pathological predatory behaviour; It is almost inconceivable to imagine even the most libertarian thinker claiming it as an acceptable or tolerable form of deviancy" (Jenkins, 1994:7).

In practical experience, law enforcement agencies around North America continue to find cases of serial crimes and particularly serial murder one of their greatest challenges (Keppel, 1995b). From the theoretical perspective, academics of the social sciences continue to expand current theory or offer rival theories to explain this deviant behaviour. However, academic theories will never take the place of street police work (Leyton, 1984:21). Academic theories are merely another tool in the total investigative process (Holmes, 1990:33).

The present research was based upon an idea offered by Leyton (1984). In his study of the sexual mass murderer (serial killer), Leyton determined that what remained largely undeveloped was a truly sociological profile of different types of murderers. Leyton (1984) stated that the creation of social profiles would be an immensely useful tool in terms of practical law enforcement, and toward a greater understanding of the serial killer in general.

The present research was also centred on the premise that the serial murderer is a product of our society (Leyton, 1986:281; Wilson and Seaman, 1992:307). There are no biological predispositions, nor psychologically defined illnesses that in themselves create a serial murderer. The individual labelled as a serial killer has been constructed within the personality of the offender and through the filter of society (Holmes, 1990:32). The serial murderer is socially constructed and social profiling is an important method of research to help investigate and understand such social deviants.

The present research contributed to the knowledge of the serial killer within the concept of social construction as it was defined in the research. The result of the social profiles of the three convicted serial killers was a truly sociological examination of different types of murderers.

Sociological theory has made important contributions toward the study and understanding of serial murder. Sociological theories in one form or another are employed in nearly every document on the topic. The most common social theories pertaining to serial murder and the understanding of the offenders remain theories of socialization, and this fact is supported by the results of this study.

Athens (1989:12) stated that the external social environment is the area where the causative key to aggression must be found. Leyton (1986:281) stated that the motives of the serial killer are neither insane nor random, but entrenched in the social order of the socialization process and are therefore part of a continually evolving process.

The study of the social construction of the serial killer attempted to isolate portions of this continually evolving process (i.e., to identify specific criteria) and search for commonalities in the social processes of the life of the serial killer (Leibman, 1989:43). The specific criteria employed the hedonistic, power/control and mission-oriented typologies as guidelines. The search for commonalities in the lives of the serial killer is imperative if we are to comprehend this social phenomenon (Leyton, 1986:88). Blair (1993:294) noted that if there are such commonalities, it is only through the careful study of these individuals and the details of their crimes that we will find them.

Social construction and social profiling rely heavily on theories of socialization for guidance and explanation. Socialization of the individual and life events are arguably the most important influences on how any person develops. The main goal in investigating the social construction of the serial killer is to find out what happens between the time the diapers get changed and the moment that a person kills (Yaffe, 1995:B1). What makes people become dangerous, violent criminals (Athens, 1989:5)?

Inadequate socialization in early childhood and continuing into the school years appeared to have had the most detrimental effects on these offenders. Researchers have attributed much of the serial killer's behaviour to poor nurturing in childhood (Rule, cited in Makin, 1982:A14). Inner conflict is often found in the early childhood of those committing homicide (Leibman, 1989:41). Jenkins (1994:128) stated that by maltreating children, society is creating the monsters of the next generation.

The examination of the lives of Clifford Olson, Arthur Shawcross and Jeffrey Dahmer indicated that there may be social differences that distinguish them as distinct individuals from the general population in society. Such differences appeared early in the lives of the offenders and then compounded over time.

Holmes (1990:37) believed that those people who commit the crimes that are suitable for profiling (i.e. serial murderers) are structurally different, as are their personalities. If serial killers are structurally different, creating their social profiles would isolate and identify such differences in comparison to a more socially well-adjusted individual.

Social profiles would enable researchers to discover potential warning signs which either alone, or in some combination, may be identified as having a higher probability that a particular individual may be more capable of homicidal behaviour, and perhaps repetitive homicidal behaviour.

Behaviour is difficult to measure and to examine empirically. However, in Canadian society, most people have incidents of anti-social and attention-seeking behaviour recorded in some official form. School records and probation files, for example, indicate such behaviours and tendencies and these documents may be accumulated and assessed from an objective standpoint. There is little doubt, for instance, that Olson's recidivistic nature and the police information about his numerous sexual offenses should have made him a target of interest in the hunt for a potential serial killer.

Once factors have been identified in a particular person's repertoire it becomes a question of what is to be done with this information. Ideally, social profiles should be generated from a greater number of multiple murderers in future research. The goal of such research would be to discover more specific and unique factors or patterns in the lives of such offenders. Fox (cited in MacLeod, 1989:1) stated that after studying hundreds of mass murderers, a common profile of the killer begins to emerge.

This study was able to isolate and identify some factors in each offenders life that are uncommon to most people. The extent and content of Olson, Shawcross and Dahmer's criminal records and probation files is one example. Many people have criminal records and have been on probation. However, significantly fewer have criminal records and probation files that, are extensive

as in the Olson case, include manslaughter charges as in the Shawcross case and include sexually-oriented offenses as in the Dahmer case.

After Jeffrey Dahmer was convicted of his first sex offence and at two other known incidents following it, some follow-up should have been initiated by at least one facet of the justice system. The creation of a social profile on someone like Dahmer (i.e., a person of interest to the police) at that time, may have provided valuable information. The information would have identified Dahmer to be an individual in need of some form of intervention (i.e., counselling, police interview, stricter conditions of probation/parole) which would be in society's best interest. In this way, the practicality of social profiling may be applicable to both the proactive and reactive side of the justice system.

The major critique of such insight is that hindsight is golden. However, in the cases of Olson, Shawcross and Dahmer, important signs in the form of objective and public criteria were not difficult to note throughout much of their lives. The data elicited in each case indicated that there were clear signs of increasing anti-social behaviour, prior to the murder sprees. If such indications had been addressed by the justice system (i.e. intervention), such a person may have turned out differently. Douglas (1992) stated that past history is the best predictor of future behaviour.

There are moral and ethical issues that would need to be addressed, if such research and investigation were ever to be strictly implemented. The invasion of privacy and potential damage to innocent persons sharing first scan characteristics is one example. The impact of this seemingly inevitable occurrence would be lessened with social legislation and judicious police practise (Leyton, 1984:21). Athens (1989:6) stated, that if society fails to take any significant steps to stop the process behind the creation of dangerous violent criminals, it tacitly becomes an accomplice in creating them.

A further example in which moral and ethical issues would need to be addressed is in regard to those individuals who have served the sentence for their crimes. If Olson had truly paid for his crimes upon his release from custody or supervision, it would arguably be morally invalid to hunt him down as a prime suspect. Whether or not private information should be made more readily available and consequently acted upon in this manner, could be the subject of much further debate.

The social profiles of the three case studies satisfied a requirement of objectivity because the majority of the data were public and objective data. Holmes (1990:25), agreed that objectivity is important in profiling. The major benefit of utilizing this type of data, is that it is not strictly dependent on interviewing an offender and trying to assimilate the truth, or guess the meaning of a statement. The objective nature of this type of data is also conducive to the objectivity of a computer program which would be optimal in accumulating and sorting such data.

Social profiles of serial killers are already employed to some extent as cursory evidence in what have been referred to as "psychological profiles". In actual fact, such profiles include many social and objective criteria of what the social profile of an offender uncovers.

The art of profiling is one of the more recent developments in the history of serial murder investigation (Monahan, 1981; Holmes, 1990; Hickey, 1991). Profiling may be defined as a process of logical reasoning that draws on experience, insight and judgement at each step of the process (Dietz; cited in Ben-Aron et al., 1985:218).

Family background, schooling, behaviour, and lifestyle (i.e., obsessions, addictions) are always sought out to strengthen the profile. They are an "aid" to the profiler in an understanding of the network of personal, social, occupational, and support relationships within which a personality will develop (Holmes, 1990:33). These criteria should actually be considered the key points of the profile.

One practical result of a social profile of the serial killer would be to isolate the killer's name from a list of potential suspects (Douglas, 1992). Initially, suspect lists could number in the hundreds including all sorts of bizarre people (Ford, 1989:A5).

Leyton (1984:20) estimated that a suspect list for a serial murder case could be reduced by as much as one-fifth, by isolating the higher probability suspects, thus accelerating the police investigation, and putting a quicker end to a serial killers career. This goal is accomplished by limiting or better directing the investigation based on the specific information (Hickey, 1991:229). It is still not easy to draw up a quick profile of the average serial killer (cited in Edwards, 1994:A1).

The social profiles of Olson, Shawcross, and Dahmer indicated that linkage blindness was a major problem with the law enforcement agencies investigating each case. Much information went undetected by investigators simply due to a lack of information sharing. This study supports the intentions of current police efforts to reduce linkage blindness by more efficient information processing, record keeping and education, and particularly in designing better computer programs.

The understanding of the serial murderer is avidly sought to prevent future incidents of serial murder and to solve more quickly ongoing investigations of a suspected series of murders (Gabor, 1986:4; Leibman, 1989:43; Leyton, 1984:20). The study of the social construction of the serial killer through the generation of social profiles of convicted serial killers is an important tool with which to accomplish this goal.

The present research indicates that the future of the study of the social construction of the serial murderer should be to undertake the functional analyses of the social profiles of a larger number of serial murderers. This continuing effort would increase the validity and value of social profiling and may ultimately provide the best explanation of how society produces the serial killer.

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### Appendix

The bulk of the data accumulated for this research was in the form of documents (i.e. books, newspapers, magazines, and journals). The documents were examined in a rigorous and consistent fashion, yet it was crucial to remember to read "between the lines". In doing so, any inferences made by the writer had to be corroborated with additional evidence (Yin, 1989:63).

Inferences were necessary at various points in the study during the gathering of data, the data analysis and subsequent overall discussion. Yin (1989:42) points out that case study research involves an inference any time that an event cannot be directly observed. For example, the researcher may "infer" that an event resulted from some earlier experience based on documentary evidence (i.e. Clifford Olson's rampage began after he was subjected to secondary socialization traumatizations while serving time in prisons).

The inferences need not be a particularly harsh threat to the study's internal validity so long as the researcher was able to address some basic questions about the inferences. Firstly, was the inference correct? This question is best answered by having ensured that all rival explanations and possibilities were explored as thoroughly as possible having found converging evidence (Yin, 1989:42).

### Methodology

The most important consideration in case study research was the documentation of data collection and analysis. The step by step procedures were detailed and recorded frequently on paper and later transferred into the computer. Rigid documentation should ensure that future replication of the study would be as efficient and easy as possible.

One of the inherent dangers of case study research is a "shift" (Yin, 1989:64). A shift may involve the uncovering of a certain event or theme that draws the researchers attention away from the initial theoretical propositions. The researchers acknowledgement of such a potential shift, and remaining unbiased go a long way to working through any threatening shift. Redocumentation to reduce or eliminate other gaps and biases is the final safeguard.

A potential shift in the current research arose in the temptation to go into detail and include theories on everything that the case studies uncovered. For example, a major consideration with regard to the social construction of Clifford Olson was to investigate the years that he spent in prison.

There are specific theories that evaluate the consequences of a person having been so incarcerated for great lengths of time, however such theories were not the main focus of the research. It became important to remember to stick to the theoretical propositions set out in the research proposal.

### Data Collection

Initial data collection on serial murder and the specific three case studies began with a search at random numerous new and used bookstores in the lower mainland (Vancouver area) of British Columbia.

The bookstores generated four biographical books on Jeffrey Dahmer, two biographical books on Arthur Shawcross and two biographical books on Clifford Olson. Additionally, books on Richard Ramirez (1), John Wayne Gacy (3), Joel Rifkin (1), Peter Sutcliffe (1), and Dennis Nilsen (1) were located and purchased. Many of these books could also be found at major public and university libraries.

The non-fiction books on serial murderers are usually located in the "true crime" sections of nearly any bookstore. Leyton (1991:255) stated that the time has come that criminologists take such true crime novels seriously. Leyton further added that to neglect these works is to commit a tactical misjudgement, since they contain so many of the words and rationalizations of the killers themselves. Katz (1988; cited in Leyton, 1991:255) noted that through true crime accounts "we can get the necessary methodological angle by examining comparatively different books and different parts of the same book."

The data was gathered with as much rigor and consistency as possible and from as many sources as possible for each of the three case studies. In some instances, reliable data was simply not available on one subject that was available on one or both of the others. When this problem arose, it was clearly noted.

For example, none of the sources investigated on the Jeffrey Dahmer case had any information on his schooling years from kindergarten until he reached high school. It may only be assumed that there was really nothing of interest to report, and that no investigators saw fit to include these years of Dahmer's life.

The data elicited on each case was gathered and analyzed following a corroboratory mode. For example, if numerous sources could confirm an event, each of those sources were documented, not to be repetitive, but to make the findings more convincing and accurate (Yin, 1989:97).

The specific method chosen by the writer for each of the three cases was to concentrate on uncovering rival data or to falsify the facts of the source. The reason in choosing this method was to reduce the presentation of a one-sided case, and to seek the alternatives that most seriously challenge the design of the case study as suggested by Yin (1989:148).

Another limitation in the research was noted in the data collection process. In both the Shawcross case and the Olson case, it was possible to gain the insight of the local newspapers in the city of their offenses (i.e. Rochester, New York and Vancouver, B.C.). In the Dahmer case however, it was not possible for the researcher to investigate the Milwaukee newspapers.

In spite of this, the Dahmer case was extensively covered in the New York Times, which proved to be a strong source of information. This is due in part to the nature of the story and the fact that historically, police oriented events have been a prime locus of news coverage (Ericson, 1989:8).

#### Computer data base searches

Computer data base searches are instrumental to any researcher as the most efficient and effective method to obtain data on nearly any topic. Information on "online" computer information services and "CD-ROM" disks can be easily accessed and the information retrieved. In this research, the writer used the facilities available at Simon Fraser University, in Burnaby, British Columbia, however all data bases that were utilized are readily available at most major universities in Canada.

The computer data bases accessed for data gathering for the research include INFOTRAC, Sociofile, National Criminal Justice Reference Centre (NCJRS), Criminal Justice Abstracts (CJA), and the Canadian Business and Current Affairs (CBCA).

These data bases were chosen for what each could offer as potential sources of data for the research.

The search process for each of the five databases was consistent. The user employed the same fifteen "subject words" for each database to begin a search. For example, the subject "social profiling" was entered into each database and the corresponding citations and abstracts were read and selected on that subject. The fifteen specific subject words were identified by the writer as those that would elicit

data specific to the study. See Chart "A" for the complete information generated from the list of fifteen subject words used.

INFOTRAC index is on CD-ROM and is divided into "general magazine" and "business" modules. The magazines on INFOTRAC include TIME, Newsweek, People and Maclean's, among others. The user searched the INFOTRAC data base by using "subject words" to find related and specific articles to that subject. The individual articles are identified numerically. The user then recorded the corresponding numbers of the articles and manually selected each from the micro-cassette collection. The micro-cassette readers are capable of making photocopies and data collection is complete.

INFOTRAC covered two time periods. The first spanned 1980-1991, and the second spanned 1991-May 1995. One search was completed for each time period.

The Sociofile data base contained a subset of sociological abstracts (sa) and the Social Planning/Policy & Development Abstracts (SOPODA), and provides access to the world's literature in sociology, both theoretical and applied, with serial coverage from 1974, and relevant dissertations from 1986 onward (Simon Fraser University Reference Pamphlet, 1995). The articles selected were then written down and the manual search began. The majority of articles were found in sociological journals.

The Sociofile database employed for the research covered the time period from 1974-April 1995.

The NCJRS or National Criminal Justice Reference Centre database contains more than 125,000 citations with abstracts (which are detailed and extensive). The citations include print and non-print information on all aspects of law enforcement, crime prevention and security, criminal justice

and juvenile justice. The NCJRS database corresponds to the online NCJRS database and is comprised of data from the National Institute of Justice in the United States (cited from abstract of NCJRS database).

The NCJRS database employed for the research covered the time period from 1972-present.

The CJA or Criminal Justice Abstracts data base contains citations, with abstracts to journals, books, reports, dissertations, magazines and newspapers covering criminal justice topics. The database corresponds to the Criminal Justice Abstracts (formerly Crime and Delinquency) and the online CJA database (cited from abstract of CJA database).

The CBCA or Canadian Business and Current Affairs data base contains citations and abstracts from major Canadian newspapers and magazines. For example, newspapers included are Montreal Gazette, Toronto Star, Winnipeg Free Press, Calgary Herald and the Vancouver Sun, among others.

### Manual Searches

In addition to books, journals, and other documents located by the research through conventional methods, two other important manual searches were completed by the researcher. Each search was specifically comprised of only the subjects of the case studies, Clifford Olson, Arthur Shawcross and Jeffrey Dahmer. Each search spanned one year prior to each subjects arrest and included the following three years. For example, Clifford Olson was arrested in 1981, so the years 1980-1983 were searched.

The first search was the Canadian Periodical Index. The index includes major Canadian newspapers and magazines, with most corresponding articles located on microfilm.

The searches for Clifford Olson included (0) articles in 1980, (2) articles in 1981, (7) in 1982, and (3) in 1983.

The searches for Arthur Shawcross did not locate even one article from 1989 to 1992.

The searches for Jeffrey Dahmer included (0) articles in 1990, (4) in both 1991 and 1992, and (0) in 1993.

The second search was the New York Times Index. The index spans the years from the New York Times inception to the most recent available (fall 1994). The New York Times was selected for two main reasons. The first reason is that the New York Times is available on microfilm at Simon Fraser University and most major Canadian Universities. Second, the New York Times is perhaps the most widely read, respected and quoted news source in the United States.

The New York Times published a total of (46) articles on Jeffrey Dahmer between 1990 to 1993. Specifically, (0) articles in 1990, (24) in 1991, (21) in 1992, and (1) in 1993.

The New York Times published a total of 14 articles on Arthur Shawcross between 1989 and 1992. Specifically, (0) articles in 1989, (12) in 1990, (2) in 1991, and (0) in 1992.

The New York Times published a total of 2 articles on Clifford Olson between 1980 to 1983. Specifically, (0) articles in 1980, (1) in 1981, (1) in 1982, and (0) in 1983.

### Additional Cases of Serial Killers

The selection of or reference to other serial murder cases that were used as a parallel to data uncovered in the three main cases was the result of additional research and analysis. The selection was made on the fact that each offender had been previously categorized. For example, Richard Ramirez had been categorized as belonging in the hedonistic category of serial killer.



The purpose of including these other cases in the study was to note similarities or differences between the cases within each category. It was hoped that such comparison would help to support and enrich the findings within each of the three main cases. Yin (1989:52) stated that the more compelling case study evidence that is presented, the more robust the overall study will be.

The inclusion of the additional cases would also enhance the external validity of the theoretical propositions of the research. For example, the findings could be transferable to a broader (i.e. more cases) theoretical argument (Yin, 1989:44). It is important to note however, that the additional case studies were examined as more of a basic overview of the case rather than having been researched with the rigor and methodological consistency that was employed in the three main cases. As a result, the additional cases are very general and their facts are not corroborated with nearly as many sources and documentation that accompanies the Olson, Shawcross and Dahmer cases.

In light of this fact, it is still believed that the inclusion of the additional cases was valuable to the point of having offered information that supported or refuted the findings of the three cases. The inferences drawn and hypotheses considered through the use of this method offered additional evidence that the social construction of serial killers should be more vigorously investigated, through case study research.

### Discussion of Data Sources

As anticipated prior to data gathering for the three cases, the writer found that many sources of information (documentation) were not as reliable as others. For example, the Olson case initially relied heavily on a biographical account of his life that was written shortly after his convictions (Ferry and

Inwood, 1982). The book was written by two journalists from the Province, one of the two major newspapers in the Vancouver, B.C. area.

The book was the richest source of data on Olson's life and particularly on his early years. In fact, this source is believed to be the only truly biographical account written on Olson. The researcher's main concern then became the reliability and validity of the author's facts of the case. The task was to seek out all available data, analyze it, and record information that would corroborate or refute as many claims of fact as possible.

The initial data gathering for the Shawcross case resulted in locating the two biographies written shortly after his convictions. Alternate sources of data apart from these two sources were subsequently sought to support or refute the established claims of fact in the case.

In the interest of replication, the Dahmer case was approached in a similar fashion. Data was initially garnered from the four biographies that the researcher found on the subject. Analysis of each book allowed for independent comparisons of the claims of fact, and consequent refutive evidence in many instances. This method resulted in obtaining the most reliable statements of fact in the Dahmer case to that point in the data gathering.

The method was then continued with intensive data-gathering from all available sources to support or refute the facts believed reliable from the results of the analysis of the five primary sources.

#### Points of Interest in Each Case

In addition to general limitations on the data gathering for the three cases, there were specific limitations or points of interest for each case study that should be addressed. The Clifford Olson case had one main point of interest in the data gathering process. The initial sources of information were in

one of the two biographies of the Olson case, the first source written by Ferry and Inwood (1982) was the culmination of two journalists of one of the two major newspapers in British Columbia.

The fact that the book was written by journalists made it no surprise that extensive microfilm newspaper searches for the study confirmed much of their claims of fact. It is obvious that Ferry and Inwood's information was based on their journalistic investigating and newspaper accounts. There was virtually no evidence uncovered from other sources to refute any of their claims to fact in the Olson case.

The main knowledge base for the Shawcross case were the two biographies by Olsen (1993) and Norris (1992). The first source was very detailed and contained numerous accounts of Shawcross' life from numerous sources. The second source was not nearly as specific in terms of sources for its claims of fact, and was quick to offer the author's "expert" opinion on numerous occasions without citing any other works to support such opinion.

The Olsen (1993) book made a point of specifically indicating sources of information in the form of sub-chapters within the major parts of the book. For example, part V, subchapter 3, entitled "Penny Sherbino" was all narrative written in the first person. This method throughout the book was effective to help the reader understand Shawcross from the point of view of those who knew him.

The method also helped to uncover certain incidents that only such a person knew about, other than Shawcross himself. The reliability of such information however is suspect in some instances where it was difficult to corroborate these self-proclaimed claims of fact.

Similarly, the Olsen book used many sub-chapters throughout the book entitled "Arthur Shawcross (Handwritten account)", or "Arthur Shawcross (Psychiatric interview)." For the purpose of the research, the information written within these sub-chapters was largely avoided unless it could be

substantiated by another source. In the event that this information was used, it was specifically noted that this was its source.

One reason for this decision to avoid Shawcross' claims was the point brought out in the Review of the Literature that "self-proclamations by serial killers are always suspect in truthfulness (Hazelwood, 1992). In addition, the Norris book consistently acknowledged Shawcross' self-proclamations even if they could not be corroborated or were doubtful in authenticity. For example Norris added the line "if true..." prior to his analysis of certain events.

A specific example in Norris (1992), is chapter 11 entitled "Ghost of the Jungle", the account of Shawcross' Vietnam experiences wherein he noted the number of kills he made including graphic descriptions (Norris, 1992:201-215). In contrast, Olsen (1993:496) reported that the army confirmed that Shawcross saw no combat and never made a jungle patrol.

The Dahmer case was initially structured around the four biographies and then with subsequent data gathered from other sources. Similar to the Olson case, three of the four Dahmer biographies were written by journalists for the major newspapers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Similar to the Olson case, there was much corroboration of the main facts and issues surrounding the case in the news sources.

The information from these sources was based on interviews with police, parole officers, neighbours and Dahmer's family, which had been conducted by journalists. Other information was based on first hand experience, for example Schwartz (1992:8), who described Dahmer's apartment in detail, shortly after his final arrest. The fact that there were very few discrepancies among the news sources claims of fact, indicates that such sources are of a high reliability.

Other

The researcher became familiar with serial murder as a social problem after having attended the Serial and Mass Murder international conference hosted by Dr. Thomas O'Reilly-Fleming at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario in April, 1992. As a direct result of this conference, the researcher began reviewing books at random for pleasure, paying attention to newspaper and magazine stories on the subject, watching televised documentaries for both education and interest.

The information gathered in this way familiarized the writer with current literature and serial murder issues in addition to improving knowledge of specific cases. This fact made the effort somewhat easier when it came time to construct the actual research proposal for the thesis.

One important challenge in data gathering was the need to identify reliable data from reliable and valid sources. For example, one has to pay close and careful attention to who has written the source of the material and how they documented their claims of fact in cases. In the interest of reliability and validity, consideration was also given to the author's background (i.e. academic source, journalist, true crime author). These issues were addressed earlier in the review of the literature.

CHART "A"Number of citations per database

<u>SUBJECT WORDS</u>	<u>DATABASE</u>				
	<u>INFOTRAC</u>	<u>Sociofile</u>	<u>NCJRS</u>	<u>CJA</u>	<u>CBCA</u>
Arthur Shawcross	2	0	0	0	2
Clifford Olson	9	0	0	1	239
Jeffrey Dahmer	38(10sub)	2	4	3	10
murder*	3009	463	2882	1313	512
serial murder	11(17sub)	7	71	28	25
serial murders	11(17sub)	1	97	10	25
multiple murder	7	3	91	6	0
multiple homicide	0	1	135	5	2
socialization*	43(10sub)	20388	1116	423	0
socialization & crime	0	0	396	127	0
socialization & murder	0	39	19	10	0
social profiling	0	1	19	0	3
social construction	99	797	391	47	23
criminal profiling	0	0	96	3	2
criminal socialization	0	0	396	3	0

All citations located in each database were individually scanned for their potential for inclusion in the study with the exception of those marked with "\*" . These subject words were considered too broad for practical purposes. The (sub) notation refers to subcategories of the subject word, which were also researched.