SERIAL SEXUAL HOMICIDE & MASS MURDER

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Part 1: Serial Sexual Homicide

Serial Killers: Background, Motives, Examples

THE MATERIAL ON WHICH THE STUDY IS BASED

The material for this study derives from analysis of 142 full-length biographies of men committing serial sexual homicide.

The earliest cases stem from the late 19th century, but the majority of cases stem from the time when serial killing appears to have been very much on the increase; namely, since 1960.

The majority of cases come from the USA, but many countries are represented: Germany, the UK, France, etc.
Serial Sexual Homicide: A Relatively New Phenomenon

Birth Years of the Biographed Serial Killers
(Their criminal activities occurred largely after 1960)

PERSONALITY PATTERNS in the 142 serial killers

Note that 73 (51.4%) showed schizoid P.D. [which is only 1% in gen.pop.]

Behavior toward the Victims was assessed via a “Gradations of Evil” scale, using 22 gradations:

- #16: Psychopaths committing multiple vicious acts
- #17: Sexually perverse serial murderers – rape usually a primary motive, with the killing done to hide evidence; torture not a primary factor
- #18: Murder with some torture; murder the primary aim
- #19: Psychopaths driven to terrorism, subjugation, intimidation and rape – short of murder
- #20: Torture murderers – with torture as primary motive, but committed in persons with psychosis
- #21: Psychopaths preoccupied with torture, but did not murder
- #22: Psychopathic torture-murderers, with torture their primary motive
Examples of Serial Killers at different levels on the Gradations-of-Evil Scale

Gradation #16: Carl Panzram. Misanthropic loner; homosexual serial killer of sailors and young boys. He described himself as “impulsive, vindictive, & unscrupulous.” Brutalized as a boy, he hated the whole human race, and once wrote: “I am a treacherous degenerate, devoid of human feeling, but others made me this way I am…”

Gradation #17: Harvey Glatman. Even from age 4, he did bondage on himself; had a rope fetish, and was a voyeur. Later, he promised pretty women to make photos of them so they could be models - & took them to remote places where he raped and strangled them.

Gradation #17: Ted Bundy. He was not brutalized as a child (as most serial killers have been) - but may have been an incest-child by his mother’s violent father. He was a voyeur and delinquent, but bright and handsome. He wanted to marry an upper-class girl, but when rejected, began his career as a serial killer of perhaps 28 or more women.

Additional examples from the Scale

Gradation #18: Jerry Brudos. Humiliated by his prudish mother, he developed a sex fetish & fetish for women’s underwear. He married, but after his son was born he began to stalk women - whom he would torture briefly, rape, and strangle. He became a sexual sadist, and made autopsies of women’s breasts. Like many serial killers he had paraphilias, which included transvestism and exhibitionism.

Gradation #18: Gary Ridgway. Like many serial killers, he had a nickname: the Green River Killer, since he dumped many of his prostitute-victims in Seattle’s Green River. He was not caught for almost 20 years, and killed more than 70 women. He showed the signs of fire-setting, animal torture & bed-wetting, as a child. He was a polite man, married several times, with children - the “nice guy next door”. He had a love-hate relationship with his mother, to whom he felt both sexual attraction & loathing.

Gradation #20: Joe Kallinger. Adopted by extremely brutal parents, who made fun of his adolescent sexual interests, he grew to hate all mankind. He did marry and had 3 children - but was deeply schizophrenic and delusionally grandiose. He tortured his victims for a while before killing them.

Many of the other serial killers in this slide show: Hodel, Brady, Kemper, DeBardeleben – are also #22’s.

Additional examples from the Scale

Gradation #22: Leonard Lake & his accomplice (pictured below), Charles Ng. Lake was a Californian, abandoned by his mother early on - which led to his hatred of her and of most women. He was institutionalized by his aging Mentally institutionalized by his business and poor school record. He was sent to an asylum in Ireland to “straighten out” (which didn’t work) and then escaped into the wild. He became a miner, as Lake had done. They teamed up and built a shack in a remote area in California, where they kidnapped young couples or single girls, and tortured them for days in a chamber they built for the purpose. They made them into sexual slaves, tossed and tied, and made snuff films - and then burned the bodies in a crematorium they also built for the purpose. Extreme sexual sadists, they were among the most cruel of the serial killers. Lake commited suicide with cyanide when arrested. Ng fled to Canada. It took years before Canada would release him for trial in California, where he was finally sent to prison for life.
Juvenile Delinquency correlates with ASPD and is common in serial killers

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<th>History of Juvenile Delinquency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torture of Victims of Crime</td>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square: 3.85  p < 0.05

The Importance of Paraphilia

A history of paraphilia(s) is very common in any large-N study of men committing serial sexual homicide.

It may be that whatever predisposes to paraphilia – also predisposes (in men who go on to commit crimes of violence) to sexual, as opposed to non-sexual, forms of violence.

It may also be that paraphilia (especially the more bizarre forms: necrophilia, zoophilia, bondage, cannibalism) predisposes to torture of victims.

PARAPHILIA in relation to Torture within the domain of serial sexual homicide

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No history</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Juvenile Delinquency</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Chi square: 5.95  P  < 0.05
Motive: The Evolution of a Serial Killer – as exemplified by the life of Joachim Kroll

1. Poor social skills; school failure; "misfit"
2. Extreme poverty, father at first absent
3. Father returns, is brutal & humiliating to JK, calling him a loser
4. Rape, Mans. Nuns, photos - as compensation for weakness:
5. Antisocial, impotent c. women
6. Motives: Arthur Leigh Allen, the "Zodiac Killer"

Born 1933 to a Navy-man & a mother who was hypercritical, dominating and humiliating toward Arthur. High IQ (136). Dismissed from Navy because of fights. Became a child molester and serial killer; a loner & sexual deviate – was arrested for child molestation & spent 5 years in Atascadero (during which time: no "Zodiac" murders). Suspected, never arrested (lack of evidence), for the killings. Tortured animals. Did bondage; killed a few men but most victims – including those he tortured – were women.

Lived with his mother, yet had tremendous hatred for her & for women in general. Main motive was revenge against her & women.

Motive: Tsutomu Miyazaki

Miyazaki came from a wealthy Japanese family. He was born with a hand deformity for which he was ridiculed in school. He became a loner, misfit, arrogant and friendless, & unable to form intimacies with women. He could be comfortable only with little girls.

Pampered by his parents, he lived in a room with thousands of CD's. He began, during his twenties, to kill children – whose hand bones he then sent to the parents.

The murders expressed his rage at his deformity and inability to relate to adult women. There was thus a sexual motif to the killings, but he did not apparently use his victims sexually.
Motives: Mike DeBardeleben
One of the most sadistic serial killers.

Born 1940. DeBardeleben’s father was a strict, punitive Army colonel. His mother was a violent alcoholic; both parents were sexually promiscuous. DeB became a juvenile delinquent, assaulting his mother with a knife; his father, with a razor. Dishon. discharged from Air Force at 18. 5 marriages to women he intimidated. Began to do serial rapes/torture/murders of about 20 women. Called all women ‘whores’ and ‘sluts.’

Dreamed of building a torture-house. Wrote a manifesto, stating his “philosophy” that the central impulse in sadism is to have complete mastery over another person – to make her the helpless object of our will; there is no greater power than that of inflicting pain on others.”

Motives: Ian Brady
WHERE GENES MAY MATTER MORE THAN ENVIRONMENT

Born 1939: Scotland. Mother, Margaret Stewart; father (Stewart) died before IB was born. He was given to the Sloan family in Glasgow, raised him in a warm & nurturing home. But he was a loner and a leader with a dominant personality.

Absent any abuse history, he nevertheless began to torture cats & rabbits in his adolescence, and to collect Nazi memorabilia. Arrested for burglary at 16, he was paroled on condition he live with his mother, who now had married Brady. He was put in prison again for 2 years, and emerged a hardened person. He teamed up with a secretary Myra Hindley, and used her to lure children to a remote cottage in the Moors, where he strangled the victims, & recorded their screams for use later as a sexual stimulus.

Intensely narcissistic. Bad genes seem to be the main “motive” here, of a sort predisposing to callousness.

The Human Side of Serial Killers

Some serial killers – as intimidating and monstrous as they seem to be while still at large – turn out to have a “human side” when interviewed after their incarceration. Some, that is, can acknowledge what they have done, can talk honestly about the suffering they may have experienced at the hands of caretakers when they were young, and can relate in a personable way that elicits a measure of sympathy in the interviewer. Their evil acts, in other words, have to be weighed in the balance – against the not-so-evil picture of loneliness, despair, sense of humiliation, and inability to manage in the real world. They do not show contempt or hatred toward the person they are communicating with. This is the case of Ian Brady (whom forensic psychiatrist Jeremy Coid in London once called “the most narcissistic man I have ever met”), and with Tommy Lynn Sells.

But there are others in whom hatred, contempt, meanness, and denial are pervasive features of their personalities – giving us the impression that they have no “human side” at all, or at present, so deeply buried that it will remain hidden forever. Such is the case with Ramirez (the Night Stalker) and the pedophile cannibal of young boys – David Paul Brown. Recently Ramirez exposed himself to a 9 yr old girl during visiting day, and got put in a max-security section of the prison. Brown denies his crimes altogether.
From Ian Brady's letter in reference to the Discovery Channel request for interview

Thanks for your letter of Oct 5, 2006... Scheduled to mark the 40th anniversary of my trial in 1966... I'll assume you've read my book on criminal psychology, the Gates of Janus... On the BBC website you can access the chronology of my continuing force-fed by nasal tube hunger strike, now in its 7th year...

(refering to his visit to the US). Ancient criminal history aside, I enjoyed the waterfront & less-tourist-frequented boroughs of New York, after visiting the Empire State, Zabar’s delicatessen, 42nd St., and taking a view from the ferry... Are you familiar with McSorley’s Old Ale House, Katz’ Deli, Shapiro’s winery, or Patsy Grimaldi’s pizza place in Brooklyn? I ate Italian on Leroy Street, kosher in the meat packing district, Spanish in Harlem. Much reminded me of Glasgow’s Gorbals district of the old days, with numerous small bakeries selling hot bread rolls early morning. On a 2nd trip to the US I went down to New Orleans, via Charleston, Atlanta, Birmingham, Mobile, returning via the gulf to meet a contact in Jacksonville. Do you have a detailed map of the territory covered? The names of the small places will trigger memories and people. Having no present or future, I draw on the past.

Best wishes, Ian Brady

Motives: Jesse Pomeroy: from brutalized victim to victimizer

One of the cruellest serial killers on record. Born 1860. Father a brutal alcoholic who would strip JP naked and flog him with a belt or horsewhip him for trivial offenses. JP began to torture cats and also other children, when he was 6. At 11 he would beat boys on the groundsmen and experience would confirm that. He beat children with a whip like his father did and thrust needles into the groins of another boy. He was ridiculed at school because of a milky right eye. He tortured several boys, disfigured others for life. He raped, mutilated and killed a girl - his last victim, and buried her in his cellar. Strong psychopathic traits: no remorse, chronic lying, no empathy, guilt, or compassion. There may have been organicity: headaches & "auras."

Main Motive: Revenge against brutalizing father. Bad genes & brain damage may have added to his psychopathic personality development.

Nature versus Nurture:
Serial Killers who were adopted

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Early Abuse</th>
<th>Head Injury</th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albright</td>
<td>Humiliated by adoptive mother</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Revenge at women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkowitz</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hatred of women like his biological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bianchi</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>(in the thrall of his older cousin, who hated women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brady</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Innate lack of compassion, high novelty seeking, contempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kallinger</td>
<td>Extremely severe abuse by adoptive parents</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Revenge at women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifkin</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Rejection by Kathryn Kelty, a prostitute he lived with, who kicked him out when friendship soured: '87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schmid</td>
<td>Humiliated by adoptive father</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Revenge at women, after rejected by biological mother (he found her at 16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MOTIVES: Serial Killers who had been adopted shortly after birth

All that is known of his birth-parents is that they were 2 students. JR was raised in an affluent Long Island family. Schizoid in personality, he was picked on in school as "weird" and was a poor worker, even at menial jobs. He was shy and ill at ease with girls. In adolescence he began to read about serial killers like Arthur Shawcross and the Green River Killer [later identified as Gary Ridgway].

He was very attached to his father, and when his father died of cancer in 1987, JR moved from going to prostitutes (at age 17) to killing them. Before he was arrested in 1993, he had strangled at least 17 prostitutes (beginning in 1989), and he kept "trophies": panties, bras, jewelry, pocketbooks. JR's offenses were the outgrowth of long-standing sexual maladjustment.

There was no history of head injury, brain disease, or abuse of any kind.

Some Other Factors noted in a sample of Serial Killers

Randy Kraft, a homosexual serial killer with about 67 young male victims during the 1970s/80s in California. Many victims were tortured savagely, some had their genitals cannibalized. He is currently on Death Row in San Quentin. Approx 11% of serial killers are homosexual – about twice the percent in the general population.

Richard Daniel Starrett came from an affluent home in Georgia, never suffering any abuse or neglect. But he did suffer unconsciousness from falls several times in his early days. He underwent a change of personality afterwards (probably owing to Phineas-Gage type frontal lobe damage). He became hypersexual, preoccupied with sex – and after he married, he had a mistress who found out he was married. He killed her and went on to kill 10 other women. 22% of the serial killers in my series had significant head injuries or brain disease in childhood.

Various Motives in Men committing Serial Sexual Homicide [based on N = 131]

- Revenge against women: 38/131 [29%]
- Revenge against/ hatred of—homosexuals: 15 [11%]
- Revenge against brutalizing father: 22 [17%]
- Revenge against (biological) mother: 26 [20%]
- Hatred of (people, a wife, a mistress): 8 [6%]
- Desire for sadistic control in general: 7 [5%]
- Lust murder; pedophilia: 8 [6%]
- To compensate for sexual inadequacy: 9 [7%]
- Unclear: 10 [8%]
- (in some men more than one of the above motives was pertinent; viz., revenge against both parents)
Arthur Shawcross & Revenge against the Mother

A.S.'s mother constantly berated him, offered no affection and beat him regularly. There was also the head-injury factor: he suffered at least four bouts of unconsciousness from head injuries, some inflicted by his mother. He, in turn, beat other children with an iron bar when he was in school.

He had four marriages, one son. He was very sensitive to the effects of alcohol. If criticized by a woman, his demeanor changed quickly to one of rage.

He killed children, was jailed - and when released, set about serial sexual homicide, killing at least 11 more women (primarily prostitutes), whose bodies he may have cannibalized after practicing necrophilia (he was very grandiose and boastful, and told many lies about his "exploits."

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Ed Kemper and Revenge against the Mother

E.K. was raised by a shrill, belittling mother who berated him endlessly for his social failures. He was left with his grandparents whenever his mother divorced and remarried. He hated them and shot them to death when he was 15. Sent to Atascadero Forensic Hosp he was soon released and sent back to his mother.

He killed and decapitated cats before he was 10 and prayed over the skull of a cat he kept in his room. He later killed his mother, decapitated her and had sex with the headless corpse. He then propped the head on a mantle & used it for a dart-board. Earlier, his mother blamed him for her not having had sex in 5 years because men didn't want to date a woman whose son had killed his grandparents. Verbal warfare of this sort kept up until he killed her.

He then embarked on a career of serial sexual homicide, killing and cannibalizing 8 women, keeping some parts & belongings as trophies.

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Ed Kemper (196cm tall/6'5") & some of his victims

His mother, Coed-student Luchessa, his Grandmother, cats.
Problems confronting the treatment of serial killers

The majority of the men meet Hare criteria for psychopathy, and are highly resistant to psychotherapy. Sadistic personality (though no longer in DSM) is present in almost half the men, and this also represents a form of personality pathology that is highly resistant to therapy.

Almost half the men showed Schizoid personality – which is also highly treatment-resistant. Serious head injury with prolonged unconsciousness in about 7% of the men; altogether, 15% of the men showed these kinds of brain injuries – rendering some of them less likely to benefit from therapy – because some of these men had become very impulsive and irritable as a result of the brain dysfunction. Some of these men showed genuine remorse (such as Starrett in Georgia), but once they had killed several victims, they became difficult to treat. The more profound the remorse, for example, the greater the risk of serious depression and suicide in these men (who had so much to atone for).

One cannot neglect the impact of the murders upon the public – since average people would resent severely the release of a man who had destroyed the lives of so many innocent people.

Sensation Seeking in Serial Killers

Besides their quest for absolute dominance, that inspired Colin Wilson to coin the phrase “Roman Emperor Syndrome,” in describing the dynamics of serial killers, another common quality is their intense sensation seeking and hunger for celebrity. Such is the case with Jeremy Jones, currently on Death Row in Alabama for approximate 20 instances of rape & murder in Oklahoma, Georgia, Alabama and elsewhere. Addicted to methamphetamine, Jones enjoyed publicity after his capture and conviction, seeing himself as a “larger-than-life” personality. He boasted he could “talk the panties off a nun,” that he was “very good looking,” and that he would file an appeal, win, and then “I’ll write me a book, and laugh my ass off.” Described at trial as a psychopath, he was noted to be glib, to have superficial charm, and to be totally without remorse, as well as being a consummate con-artist.

Another Example of Sensation Seeking

Dennis Rader, the Kansas City church-leader, who used the sobriquet BTK (for bind-torture-kill) taunted the police for 18 years with notes and hints they were unable to decipher. He is one of the few serial killers to come from a normal home, to have suffered no head injury nor to have abused drugs. In his double life as an upstanding man, married with 2 children, he was regarded by some as nice, friendly, clean-cut; by others, as rude, arrogant, and a control freak. When finally captured and put on trial, he said “I feel like a star right now,” what with all the media attention. He had many paraphilias including asphyxiophilia. Rader spoke in court of his stalking women, & his crimes as coolly as though talking about shopping for groceries.
**Schema relating to the Evolution of Serial Sexual Homicide**

- Genetic tendency to psychosis
- Maternal neglect, parental brutality, sexual misuse, humiliation, inability to relate to peers
- Genes for schizoidia
- Predisposition to hypersexual-ity
- Frontal lobe damage: head injury, CNS disease
- Compensatory need to assert total dominion over others

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**Tommy Lynn Sells**

*A Serial Killer with Unusual Candor*

Born in California in 1964 to Nina Woodall, Sells never knew his father. Nina put William Sells on the birth certificate, because William had health insurance to cover the kids’ medical bills. He had a twin sister, Tammy Jean. Nina moved with them & her 2 sons to Missouri when Tommy was 18 mos. old. Shortly after, Tammy & he developed spinal meningitis, from which his sister died. Nina couldn’t cope with all the children (another set of twins was born at this time), and put Tommy in the care of an aunt and later of her daughter, Sandy. Aunt Bonnie asked Nina if she could adopt Tommy – which enraged Nina, who then took him back – to her highly dysfunctional family. Her father had Tommy drinking alcohol at 7; he was regularly truant at 8. His mother was always drunk, and Tommy was left to his own devices. All of this he related with great candor to his frequent visitor, Vicky Zubcic, after he was put on Death Row in Texas in 2000. He calls Vicky “Mom.”

In his early teens Tommy was a Peeping Tom. He had already been given over to live with a male friend – who fed and clothed him, but was a pedophile who molested Tommy on a regular basis.

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**Tommy Lynn Sells**

*additional material from Vicky Zubcic*

TLS revealed to Vicky Z that when he was little, “Mom had me lapping at her [genitals] like a dog.”

- His maternal grandmother also violated Tommy sexually
- In addition his 2 brothers forced sex on Tommy over and over
- At age 8 he would do oral sex on truckers in the Missouri cotton area.
- He’d already been with Willis – the pedophile friend of his mother who “took care” of Tommy, but at the price of making him do oral sex on him
- Tommy had an IQ that showed “60” in school (he quit in 8th grade), which is probably artificially low because of his truancy & lack of real schooling
- He was considered bipolar in prison & treated with mood stabilizers

Each female victim he equated with “mother” & would say “this one’s for you, Tammy” – referring to his twin who died of meningitis.
Tommy Lynn Sells' Story, cont’d

As Tommy said: “I spent a lot of time sneaking up to the sides of homes standing on boxes & staring thru open windows hoping to catch something good….Electricity coursed up my spine as I stroked myself to these always nameless women, my hungry eyes burning holes into their naked flesh; I felt a rush of power and lust as they revealed their secret places just to me without even knowing they were doing it.” But one night Tommy “got more than I bargained for.” He saw an older man fellating his own little son. This enraged him, reminding him of how he had been molested by his “guardian.” Tommy then snatched a pistol from the trailer he lived in with his mother, ran across to the house where the man & his family lived – sneaked into the house and shot the sleeping man to death, then running back to his place. This was his first murder. It set him on the road to committing about 70 murders, mostly of young women and adolescent girls. He was caught only after he sneaked into the mobile home where 2 young girls were sleeping, slitting their throats. The 10 yr old survived and later identified him – leading to his arrest and conviction.

Tommy Lynn Sells’ comment on remorse & suicide

I have often speculated that if – by some miracle of psychotherapy – a psychopathic serial killer could begin to experience genuine remorse (even though “absence of remorse” is a key feature or psychopathy), he would be driven to commit suicide, in contemplation of all the suffering & loss he inflicted on the community. When I interviewed Sells in ’06 and touched on the topic of remorse, he told me: “Well, I do feel a touch of remorse for what I done, but – if I ever felt remorse to the full, I reckon I’d have to kill myself.”
Definition & Some Statistics

By “Mass Murder” is meant the murder of several people at one time: some US authorities consider 4 victims the minimum; others, three.

One needs to consider that certain offenders meant to kill that many or more, but their guns misfired, the fire they set didn’t kill as many as they hoped to kill, or their attempt was otherwise thwarted. These are the “mass murderers-manque.”

If one looks at the mass murderers listed on Internet sites, it appears that there has been an increase in the occurrence of mass murder starting in 1980. But I believe this is not accurate, since many of these crimes in the earlier part of the last century are not easily documented in routine sources.

In the 160 cases reviewed, method was known in 152: guns (including semiautomatics) were used in all but 31 instances. The others involved knives, arson, bombs, and (rarely) explosives or blunt instruments.

Number of Victims per Mass Murderer

The usual number of victims in cases of mass murder is five; the range of 4 to 9 victims accounts for over 2/3 of all such victims.

Of the 9 cases involving >20 victims, pistols or rifles were used in 4; in the others: bombs & arson accounted for the others. The arson at the Happy Land dance hall in the Bronx resulted in 87 deaths. The largest toll with a gun was 57 (in Korea, 1982).

Female Mass Murderers

Female mass murderers are quite rare and kill comparatively small numbers of victims; mental illness and paranoid traits are usually background elements:

- Priscilla Ford [USA 1980] a paranoid schizophrenic ex-teacher of 53 in Nevada mowed down 6 people with her car.
- Jillian Robbins [USA 1996] mentally disturbed student killed one and wounded one on the Penn State campus, though shot at a larger number of students.
- Phan Thi Ai [Vietnam 1997] jealous lover of a married man, set fire to his house, killing five.
- Jennifer Sammarco [USA 2006] postal worker, a flop at everything, kills 6 co-workers and then her self in a Calif post office.
- Laurie Wasserman Dann [USA 1988] divorced, bipolar manic – shot up a Chicago area kindergarten, killing one of the half dozen children she fired at; then herself...
Males Mass Murderers: Typical Motives

- Disgruntled Workers, Sore Losers, Grudge Holders and Accused Priests
- Jilted Lovers are a large subgroup here
- Men Committing Fanticide
- Marked Paranoid Traits in Men with Mental Illnesses

Less Common Motives

- To get rid of someone (usually a mother), staged to make the murder(s) appear accidental: Jack Gilbert timed a bomb on a plane in 1995 so mom (+43) died
- To “accelerate” an inheritance or an insurance policy. Robert Coulson, an adoptee who worried he’d get cheated out of an inheritance, killed his whole family; Leo Morina, Calif electrician 1995, kills family so as to cash insurance policies
- Avoid detection after a violent crime. Dale Pierre (1974) & an Air Force buddy rob a Utah hi-fi store, then shoot the 5 staff & customers, after forcing them to drink Drano (3 die; 2 are gravely wounded). The Wendy’s robbery in Queens (7 dead)
- Avoid extreme embarrassment & public shame. Marcus Wesson (2004) kills 9 daughters & sisters with whom he had incest (and babies); as police closed in; Jean Romand (1993) after 20 yrs of imposture in France, pretending to be a big executive (he never worked)

Mass Murder prompted by uncommon motives

- Charles Carl Roberts, milk-truck driver living near the Amish area, lined up 10 girls in an Amish school, with idea of molesting them, killed 5 with a shotgun before turning the gun on himself as the police close in. He did not actually molest the girls, and had earlier written a suicide note to his wife.
- Richard Speck, alcoholic psychopath & drifter, sneaked into the residence of a nursing school in Illinois in 1966, and stabbed 8 nurses to death, as one survivor, Corazon Amurao, hid underneath a bed. He could never hold a job, had stabbed before, tried to rob the nurses; robbery was ostensibly his motive, but this lay atop pure viciousness.
- “This is the actress, Olivia Newton John, whom the schizophrenic Michael O Perry from Louisiana went all the way to California to stalk; later went back home and, at age 28, killed all five in his family in a paranoid rage.”

<< This is the actress, Olivia Newton John, whom the schizophrenic Michael O Perry from Louisiana went all the way to California to stalk; later went back home and, at age 28, killed all five in his family in a paranoid rage.
Dr Frederick Wertham & the concept of “catathymic crisis”

Relevant to the phenomenon of Mass Murder is the concept elaborated in 1912 by the German psychologist, Frederick Wertham. By “catathymic crisis” he meant - an emotionally charged idea that temporarily overwhelms a person, leading him to lose emotional balance and burst into uncharacteristic violent behavior. He outlined several “stages” building up to the crisis:

1. A trauma that creates an unsolvable internal state of tension
2. Blame is projected onto other(s). 3. Thoughts become egocentric and self-protective. 4. Violence is seen as the only way out. 5. The violence is then carried out. 6. The tension is relieved. 7. Superficial normality is regained, along with 8. Inner equilibrium. Reid Meloy, forensic psychologist in San Diego, likewise speaks of the anger & frustration that threaten one’s fragile sense of self.

Jack Katz & the concept of “Righteous Slaughter”

In his 1988 book, The Seductions of Crime, UCLA sociology professor, Jack Katz, speaks of “Righteous Slaughter.” This refers to the murders committed by certain persons on the spur of the moment, when in a fiercely impassioned state, and when the person is indifferent to the legal consequences. The killer is living in an eternal “present” – where there is no past, no future – just the moment of rage, that feels totally justified. The killer imagines that he is making a “last stand” in defense of the Good, in which a prior humiliation is transformed into a rage, which then serves as the emotional fuel energizing the murderous act which will (in the killer’s view) right the wrong that was done to him. He develops dominance over a situation where he had been rendered inferior. [Think of Don Jose killing Carmen when she deserts him for Escamillo, the matador!]

Jilted Lovers

36 year old Cuban immigrant, jobless, jealous, was rejected by his girlfriend – who worked at the Happy Land Club in the Bronx. He filled a container with gasoline and spread the contents along the stairs of the dance club, aiming at killing her. Instead, she escaped, but 87 people at the club died in the fire.

Korea: 1982. A drunken police officer, after being rejected by his girlfriend, went on a rampage with rifles and grenades, killing at least 52 villagers before killing himself. Some papers reported a death toll of 63 or even 79 – the largest mass murder ever committed with weapons rather than with arson.
Bigotry as underlying motive in mass murderers with hatred and grudges

Patrick Purdy hated Asians; killed 5 kids from Cambodia in a California school.

Gamil Gharbi, aka Marc Lepine: an Algerian Muslim living in Canada, brought up to hate women who were not subservient, killed 14 college coeds [1996].


Buford Furrow, Calif white supremacist, '99, hated Jews & other "non-Aryans," shot 9 Jews at a school (nonfatally) & killed one (Filipino) postman.

Colin Ferguson '93 hated whites, killed 6 in Long Island train massacre.

Edgar Killer, leader in Ku Klux Klan, killed 3 civil rights workers in '66; hated Blacks & Liberals.


Mass Murder: The “Sore Loser”

1996. Dunblane, Scotland. Born Thomas Watt, he was adopted by the Hamiltons (who were the parents of his own adopted mother: he was told his mother was his "sister"). A homosexual paedophile, he was obsessed with boys of 7 to 11; also with guns, of which he had a large collection. He organized some "boys' clubs" and it was learned that he was molesting the boys. This cost him his job, and he grew rageful and paranoid, hating the parents of the local school for interfering with his life. He purchased two (additional) pistols in January of 1996, and in March – avenged himself against the parents in the cruelest way possible; namely, by entering the school and killing 16 schoolchildren plus their teacher. He then shot himself to death with one of the pistols.

Mass Murder: The Sore Loser

Byran Uyesugi had been working for Xerox in Hawaii for 15 yrs as a copy-machine repairman when, in 1999, he feared he would be fired. Uyesugi did the firing; 24 shots killing 7 fellow employees in what was Hawaii’s worst mass murder. He had a collection of 17 guns at home. He was described as a quiet loner, vengeful, and paranoid, imagining that his co-workers were spying on him, sabotaging his copy-machines, and mutilating his pet fish at home. He had been in trouble with the company before, for damaging machinery. He escaped after going on his rampage, but was caught soon after, and sentenced to life in prison without parole.
“Going Postal”

Disgruntled postal employee, Patrick Sherrill, in Oklahoma, 1986, shot 14 coworkers to death in the post office where he had been working. This gave rise to the expression “going postal,” referring to me who, faced with job loss or reprimands at work, suddenly explode with rage and gun down bosses or fellow workers. He was a loner, paranoid, a Peeping Tom, called “Crazy Pat” by his neighbors. He was about to be fired from his job when the massacre took place.

The phenomenon is not the exclusive preserve of the post office: men in other companies also “snap” when fired or criticized. Quite a few of these incidents do involve postal workers, but perhaps not more than would be expected statistically, given their percent in the work-force.

Mass Murder: The Mentally Ill

In April 2007 a student at the Virginia Tech College, who had come to the US from Korea when he was nine, shot to death 32 persons (a professor & 31 students) before turning one of his pistols on himself. He had been diagnosed autistic when he arrived in the US, because of his inability to relate to others, his near-total uncommunicativeness & inability to sustain conversations with anyone, mannerisms & lack of social reciprocity. He was mocked by some of the students because of his weirdness (“why don’t you go back to China?”). Teachers picked up his hostility and weirdness and suggested he get psychiatric help. Nothing was done except a cursory consultation. He did freakish and inappropriate things in class (taking photos of girls without their permission). He grew increasingly paranoid, and began to buy pistols a few months before the planned massacre.

Mass Murder: The Mentally Ill

In April 28, 1996 Martin Bryant suddenly put Tasmania “on the map.” On that day he did something “that will make everybody remember me”: he took a repeating high capacity shotgun and shot to death 35 people.

He had a low IQ [66] and was found to be unemotional, detached from reality, inappropriate in the expressions of what emotions he did have, disruptive, and violent. He was befriended by a wealthy woman who, when she died, left him her estate. He had otherwise no friends apart from a girl who left him because of his weirdness and preoccupation with a certain movie. He is now housed in a special unit for the mentally ill, in solitary confinement lest he be killed by the other inmates.
Mass Murder: Familicide

Many discuss Familicide as a separate crime category, especially when only 2 or 3 are killed in the one's own family. When large numbers are involved, the crime is often conflated with Mass Murder.

Mass Murder: Familicide
[to avoid public humiliation]

Master Sergeant Ronald Gene Simmons, born 1940 in rural Arkansas, married Becky Ulibarri and had 7 children. He had an incestuous relationship with his eldest daughter Sheila (born '63). He rationalized this as a way of "protecting her from all those perverts." He became increasingly abusive (and alcoholic). Sheila became pregnant and becomes a "2nd wife" to her father. The neighbors began to realize he'd been carrying on an incestuous relationship with her, and they now avoided him. It was when Sheila married McNulty in 1986 that shattered Gene's sense of absolute control over his family. On Christmas 1987 he shot, strangled, and bludgeoned to death 14 members of his family. When convicted, he demanded the death penalty, and was executed in 1990.

Mass Murder: Familicide
[to solve thorny family problems]

John List was born in 1925. He was cold, aloof, rigid – raised in a very pious Lutheran Michigan family, where his father was considered the neighborhood "crank." His mother was overprotective, not allowing him to play with other boys, as the world was a "dangerous place." He became an accountant, married and had 3 children. He had ambitions to live in a grand mansion, and moved to New Jersey in an 18 room mansion he could not afford. As debts mounted, he decided that one mouth was cheaper to feed than six, whereupon he shot to death his mother, wife, daughter, and two sons. He then fled to Colorado, later to Virginia, where he lived as a fugitive for 18 yrs, & remarried. He was identified thanks to a forensic anthropologist who made a clay model of how List would look at 62. He was identified & arrested when the image was shown on TV. He remains without remorse.
Difficulties in the Path of Understanding Motives in Mass Murder

We know less about the motives and contributing factors in men (and the few women) committing mass murder, because they often end up being killed by the police or else committing suicide as the police close in. This occurs in at least half the cases.

Charles Whitman was the Marine who mounted the tower in Univ of Texas in 1966 – after first killing his wife and mother, and proceeded to shoot to death 13 students on the lawn below, before police snipers finally were able to shoot him to death. His father was physically abusive. Whitman also was found to have a brain tumor at autopsy, which may have been an aggravating factor.

1987: Michael Ryan in Hungerford, UK, went on a shooting rampage and killed 16 people, after which the police killed him. He had been a quiet loner, bullied at school because of his sullenness, poor grades, & short stature. He dropped out of school and took various menial jobs. His father died when he was 25; he was under his mother’s thumb. He joined a gun club before the shooting – which had the effect of “proving he was a man” & avenging his psychic wounds.