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# Federal Probation

A JOURNAL OF CORRECTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

Published by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts

VOLUME LIII

DECEMBER 1989

NUMBER 4

## This Issue in Brief

**A Proposal for Considering Intoxication at Sentencing Hearings: Part I.**—What sentence should a judge impose on a convicted offender who was intoxicated at the time he committed the crime? The U.S. Sentencing Commission decided that an offender's intoxication is "not ordinarily relevant" to his sentence. Author Charles Felker proposes, instead, that intoxication is a relevant and important factor in determining an appropriate sentence. In Part I of this article, the author surveys current theories about the connection between alcohol and crime, the responsibility of alcohol abusers for their acts, and the way offender intoxication affects the purposes of sentencing. In Part II, the author will develop a specific proposal based on a survey of state laws and cases.

**Alcohol and Crime on the Reservation: A 10-Year Perspective.**— Author Darrell K. Mills examines the relationship between alcohol abuse and crime on the part of Indian felony defendants in the Federal District Court in Wyoming from 1978-88. The author characterizes the types of crime and typical defendant from the reservation and focuses on the history of alcoholism, treatment, and prior arrest of these defendants. The article also discusses the issue of alcoholic denial.

**Practitioners' Views on AIDS in Probation and Detention.**—The question of how to provide humane and effective supervision for HIV-positive offenders or offenders with AIDS is an important issue facing policy-makers in corrections. Author Arthur J. Lurigio reports on a survey of probation and detention personnel in Illinois conducted to examine views regarding AIDS and its impact on policies, procedures, and work behavior. Comparisons were made between probation and detention personnel. Survey results indicated that probation and detention respondents anticipate that the AIDS

health crisis invariably will affect their management of cases. Detention participants were more concerned about occupational risk and precautionary measures. Both groups recommended policy and procedural guidelines governing legal liability, confidentiality, mandatory testing, case contacts, and the education of offenders and staff.

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# Serial Murderers: Four Case Histories

BY FAITH H. LEIBMAN\*

**T**HE INCREASE in homicide in the United States, particularly in terms of serial murders, has raised many questions concerning the socioeconomic factors surrounding such crimes. Both society and those in the criminal justice system have begun to feel the need to answer long-held questions concerning serial murder. This is particularly true in light of the publicity given the family histories of perpetrators of homicide. This article will explore the psychological profiles of a selected group of serial murderers in order to determine the common emotional and environmental backgrounds of these individuals. Through analysis of these findings and further studies, it may be possible to develop criteria for early identification of persons with such tendencies and to develop early treatment programs for such individuals.

In order to view serial murder in perspective, one must first understand the underlying cause of murder generally, excluding felony murders and hired assassins. Additionally, one must consider the application of factors involved in homicides as a whole. Studies in the area of homicide seem to indicate that there are three primary psychological elements contributing to motivation for murder (Abrahamsen, 1973; Holmes, 1988): frustration, fear, and depression. It is frequently the intensity of these feelings, combined with the murderer's interactions with his environment, that bring about the desire—and oftentimes the compulsion—to murder. In brief, homicides occur as a result of an intense conflict emanating from a struggle between an internal need for self-preservation and the stresses pressuring the murderer from the external environment. The roots of this inner conflict are often found in the early childhood of those committing homicide. Studies support the findings that children as early as 1 or 2 years of age may be hurt by the rejection or criticism of others (Langwin, 1983). It is also clear that resentment brought about as a result of such rejection is frequently repressed by those who later commit murder. Repression often becomes a pattern of behavior leaving little need for release of anger. Upon reaching adulthood, the individual

who thus far has adequately repressed rage since childhood may find himself in situations where he is unable to suppress hostile feelings. In these circumstances, the ego-protective mechanisms, previously used successfully, fail, and the individual then acts out in a violent manner. This is particularly true when the person feels threatened or frustrated. Complicating this problem may be situations or people that predispose the murderer to frustrated or angry reactions.

The literature described three distinct types of murderers: ego disharmonious (or ego-dystonic), psychotic murderers, and ego-harmonious (ego-syntonic) (Abrahamsen; 1973, Holmes, 1988). Ego disharmonious murderers are those who experience a conflict between their ego and their super-ego or their conscience. This conflict leads to an altered state of consciousness or a dissociative reaction. The individual is then unable to control his aggressive behavior or feelings of hostility and comes to react violently or explosively.

The psychotic murderer is an individual who suffers from a mental illness such that he has had a complete break with reality.

The ego harmonious type of killing is carried out with little, if any, disruption of the functioning of the ego. The murder that takes place is rational and acceptable to the perpetrator on a conscious level.

In general, the primary characteristics of a murderer are as follows: "Helplessness, impotence, a nagging feeling of revenge (all carried over from childhood), an irrational hatred of others, suspiciousness, hypersensitivity to injustices or rejection, self-centeredness, an inability to withstand frustration, an overpowering feeling of frequent uncontrollable emotional outbursts, a need to retaliate, destroy or tear down by killing" (Abrahamsen, 1973).

Serial murder is best characterized as an ego-dystonic act, since the murderer frequently has, at least on a conscious level, disassociated himself from the killings. In fact, when confronted with evidence of their crimes, many serial murderers have difficulty believing that they are capable of such acts. A serial murder, unlike a mass murder, involves the killing of several people (usually) within the same area, during a fairly short period of time, at the hands of a single assailant. This type of murder is distinguished from a mass murder wherein a number of victims are killed at

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\*Ms. Leibman is a forensic psychologist with the Atlantic County Jail, as well as a professor, Department of Criminal Justice, Temple University. She wishes to thank her friend and mentor, Donald Fisor, for his help and support.

one time, frequently in a "murder spree."

A review of the case histories of four serial murderers presented in the appendix indicates a certain commonality in their social and emotional development prior to commission of the act of murder:

- Cruel and extremely violent parenting.
- A rejection in childhood by the parents.
- A rejection by a member of the opposite sex in adulthood.
- Contact with the criminal justice system—adult and/or juvenile.
- Commitment to a mental health facility.
- Aberrant sexual patterns.
- A loner.

There is also a style and pattern to killings by serial murderers. The victims chosen are frequently similar physically. Additionally, the relationship between the perpetrator and victim is usually that of mere acquaintances, sometimes even strangers. Rarely are the victim and perpetrator closely related. At times the serial murderer is motivated to kill in an almost obsessive manner.

Serial murders have a number of characteristics in common. Firstly, most of the killers are between 25-35 years old. The victims of these homicides, however, may fall into any age bracket. Secondly, serial murderers' victims are almost always female, and their killers are almost always male. Thirdly, serial killings are generally intraracial, and victim and killer are Caucasian. Finally, as noted earlier, serial murderers usually exhibit an obsessive-compulsive pattern in their killings which tends to be repetitive in nature.

The profiles presented in the appendix show that the childhoods of the four serial murderers were marked by cruel and violent parenting in three of the four cases, with the fourth showing a pattern of extensive verbal abuse. Additionally, all four of the murderers discussed were significantly rejected in their childhood. Parental abuse and rejection were major themes in the lives of these serial murders. Bundy was rejected by his natural father who effectively "abandoned" him before he was born. His mother, though present throughout his childhood, did not offer the emotional support he needed. De Salvo was physically abused by his father, and his mother was unable to supply enough love and attention to make up for this abuse. Kemper's mother continuously belittled him and punished him with physical restraints (in the cellar, locked in his room, etc.) Brudos was the

product of a hostile, angry, sometimes violent father and a mother who did not really want him.

All of the men discussed were not only abused or rejected but also were loners, unable to openly express anger towards those who caused them emotional pain. Bundy felt embarrassed and angry over his illegitimacy. De Salvo was unable to express his anger in a home where his father would have beaten him for such a display. Later he was unable to express his anger over his wife's denial of sex to him for fear of losing her. Kemper knew that a showing of anger in his home would cause even further rejection and punishment from his already caustic mother. Brudos feared that his wife would leave him if he continued to pressure her to perform unusual sexual acts.

Since all four men were loners, not only were they unable to vent their anger at the person who caused this hurt, they had no one else to whom they could express their feelings. Additionally, all four saw the expression of anger towards their mothers as being of life-threatening proportion since the blood bond of mother and child was the only bond that was permanent in their lives. Consequently, Bundy, De Salvo, Brudos, and Kemper repressed their rage from childhood until adulthood. In adulthood, however, the stresses of the outside environment, combined with their repressed rage, created a highly volatile situation. Essentially, the anger at their mothers repressed from childhood (which they were unable to vent directly) was displaced onto their victims.

Bundy's attacks on women began after his initial rejection by his girlfriend Marjorie, his failure to complete college, and then his later inability to be accepted to law school. De Salvo's murders began after the birth of a handicapped daughter and the total refusal of his wife to engage in sexual relations with him as well as her constant belittling of him. Kemper began killing women after he was sent against his will to his grandparents' home and at a time when he was unsuccessful in his attempts to make friends with anyone at school or near the isolated farm where his grandparents lived. Brudos started to commit acts of violence after he felt that he was "losing control" over his wife and upon her refusal to care for him both sexually and emotionally in the way he desired.

All four men began their killings when they felt that they were unable to control their environment. This feeling of lack of power, combined with

repressed range from childhood and stoked by the seeds of rejection throughout adolescence (and, in some cases, young adulthood), created the circumstances that were ripe for murders.

It is clear that serial murderers begin to kill as a result of increasing feelings of rejection, frustration, anger, and powerlessness. The lack of friends to confide in and share hurt feelings with was a common element in the lives of Bundy, De Salvo, Kemper, and Brudos. Another feature they shared was a feeling of significant rejection by a woman emotionally close to them directly prior to the first homicide. This rejection was the propelling motive for the initial violent behavior. It also was the spark for Bundy, De Salvo, Kemper, and Brudos' future acts of violence. It appears, therefore, that the rejection by a woman in adulthood was the catalytic factor that returned them to the rejection in childhood (by their mother) and caused the pent-up emotions of a lifetime to be projected onto their victims.

In conclusion, there emerges a pattern of emotional history and behavior that is common to all of those in the group under study in this article.

It is extremely important for the protection of society that criminal justice researchers conduct further studies into the factors that make up the emotional history of serial killings, in an attempt to refine the criteria to be evaluated. Having such criteria will allow identification of potential serial killers and, hopefully, lead to their treatment before they emerge in deadly destruction.

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## APPENDIX

### Case History I — Theodore Bundy

Theodore Bundy was born in 1946 to a prim department store clerk and a sailor who disappeared as soon as Bundy's mother told him she was pregnant. Her shame over her situation caused her to travel in her seventh month to a home for unwed mothers in Burlington, Vermont. Bundy's mother returned to Philadelphia after his birth and remained there until he was 4 years old. At that time, Bundy and his mother went to Tacoma, Washington, to join a great uncle. Bundy was angry and confused over having to leave his grandfather who had cared for him during the first few years of his life. Bundy also was upset about his mother's decision to change his last name which she had done in order to deter strangers from asking embarrassing questions.

Within a short time, Bundy's mother married Johnnie Bundy. Ted Bundy saw his new stepfather as an interloper and was jealous of the time he spent with Bundy's mother. When Ted Bundy was 6 years old his mother had another child. Bundy began to feel deprived, initially because of the relation-

ship between his great uncle Jack and his son John and also because of the attention shown by his parents to his new baby sister. Additionally, at some point in his early adolescence, Bundy found out that he was illegitimate. This caused Bundy to become furious at his mother for failing to tell him and angry at his stepfather whom he had never liked. His stepfather had a bad temper which escalated as Bundy became more openly defiant towards him.

Bundy remained a loner throughout his high school and early college years. He started college at his uncle's school, University of Puget Sound, and then transferred to the University of Washington in his sophomore year. While there he began to date a California socialite who was everything Ted Bundy was not. The summer after they started dating he enrolled at Stanford University, but was unable to keep up academically. He began to fail in his coursework, the only area in which he had consistently been successful. Eventually, his girlfriend, Marjorie, broke up with him. Bundy felt rejected and lonely. He tried transferring from the Chinese language pro-

gram to the University of Washington's urban planning program but failed at that too.

He traveled over the country for a while and then settled into working as a busboy in a hotel dining room. He felt uncertain of himself and somewhat angry over the way things had turned out with both school and Marjorie. He made a friend at this point who was a thief and drug user, and the two of them began to break into houses and steal things. Shortly, after these burglaries took place, Bundy began to become involved in politics. He then started going to a college tavern in the neighborhood and one evening met a woman he could not get out of his mind. He dated this woman, Liz, for a few months but continually lied to her, building up a false reputation as a writer and law student. After 3 months passed, Bundy and Liz took out a marriage license and made plans for a ceremony. At the last minute Bundy tore up the marriage license, telling Liz that it was too soon to marry. The reality was that he felt that he could not tell her the truth about his status in life. He later confessed to his girlfriend, and she forgave him. They continued to date but Bundy began to threaten her and press her to have sex in unusual ways, including tying her up with pantyhose before they had sex. Academically, by this time Bundy had completed college at the University of Washington and had applied to the law school of the University of Puget Sound for acceptance. In July 1973 Bundy flew to California to see Marjorie, with whom he had kept in touch since their breakup. He maintained a facade with Liz and managed to keep up his relationship with Marjorie from Seattle. Marjorie flew to Seattle to see him at Christmas while Liz flew home to Utah. Bundy proposed to Marjorie, and she then flew back to California assuming they were to be married in the near future. When she did not hear from him for a month she called him, and he neither apologized nor explained. She then told him never to call her again. Shortly thereafter, Bundy's first victim was abducted. Other victims followed the January 1974 one, many sexually molested and brutally slain.

### Case History II — Albert De Salvo

Albert De Salvo was raised in the Boston slums by an alcoholic and violent father. His father would often come home drunk with prostitutes and would hit his mother in front of these women. De Salvo's father would beat the children for no reason at all. On one occasion De Salvo's father smashed De Salvo across the back with a pipe. At some point in his youth, De Salvo was sold to a farmer in Maine for \$9. The family lived in poverty and was constantly on welfare; the children frequently went without food. De Salvo's father began De Salvo's "criminal career" by teaching him how to steal at the age of 5. By the time De Salvo was 12 years old he had two arrests for breaking and entering and larceny. At that time he was convicted and sent to Lyman School for Delinquent Boys. Sexually, De Salvo began to experiment with neighborhood girls at the age of 10, and when he was 15 years old he was seduced by a married woman.

Upon his release from the Lyman School, he continued to commit property crimes, though on a wider scale. He particularly enjoyed breaking and entering homes where women were sleeping. Eventually De Salvo joined the Army and was sent to Germany. There he married a German girl who was quite innocent and scared of sex. De Salvo, on the other hand, apparently had an uncontrollable sex drive and pressured his wife constantly for sex. He was in love with his wife and her denial of sex caused him to feel rejected and degraded. At other times she would insult him in front of friends, causing him to feel hurt and betrayed. While in Germany he began to seduce and assault women though he was never charged with these crimes. Upon his return to America he continued to molest and rape women and was finally arrested and sent to a state hospital. In 1961, after his release from the state hospital, his

wife rejected him totally, calling him "an animal" and refusing to have sex with him except when she desired it. It was then that he began his killings. In total, he was convicted of murdering 13 women, all of whose corpses he violated with an object or an obscene decoration or arranged as a dead body. In discussing his case with the police, De Salvo noted that if his wife had given him the sex he wanted and had not degraded him, he would not have had to prove he was a man through acts of violence.

### Case History III — Edmund Kemper

Edmund Kemper III was born in 1948. By the time he was a year old his parents had separated. In 1957 his mother moved Kemper and his two sisters to Montana where she later remarried. A year and a half later her second husband left her. Two years later, Mrs. Kemper again remarried.

Mrs. Kemper's treatment of her son bordered on cruelty. She constantly punished and ridiculed him, trying to "make a man out of him." She often locked him in the cellar and berated him for failing to live up to her social ambitions. As early as age 10, Kemper began to kill family pets and had thoughts of killing family members, particularly an older sister whom his mother favored. He also began to follow women down the street fantasizing that they would love him. At the age of 13 he killed a family cat who appeared to favor his sister, decapitating the cat. As a result of this behavior his mother decided to send him (against his wishes) to live with his paternal grandparents. He remained angry at being forced to live on an isolated California ranch with his grandparents, particularly his grandmother who treated him in similar ways as his mother did. At the age of 14 he killed his grandmother by shooting her and then his grandfather when he returned from an errand. He was convicted on homicide charges and spent the next 4 years in a maximum-security mental hospital.

In 1969 he was released to his mother at the age of 21. His mother continued to engage in frequent verbal battles with him, belittling him for failing to reach the social level to which she had aspired for him. Kemper, nevertheless, went to great efforts to try to please his mother, struggling for her love, but always without success. He continued to feel inadequate particularly because of his inability to meet his mother's demands. Within a year of his release from the mental hospital he began murdering young female hitchhikers.

### Case History IV — Jerome Brudos

Jerome Brudos was born on January 31, 1939. His mother had one other child, a boy who was a few years older than Brudos. Her real desire was for her second child to be a girl. As a result of this she never became attached to her younger son, favoring his older brother instead. Brudos' father was a man who was easily offended and became hostile if he thought he was being taken advantage of. He frequently was verbally abusive to Brudos.

Brudos first exhibited fetishist behavior when he was 5 years old. At that time, he found a pair of women's high-heeled shoes which he brought home and tried on. His mother became angry with him over the act and punished him by confining him to his room. Eventually, he was let out and ran to be consoled by a neighbor. This neighbor woman and another little girl in the neighborhood were Brudos' only "friends." Both were sickly. Eventually his little playmate died, and the neighbor woman became too sick to spend time with him. He felt that he could not trust women and wavered between depression and frustration. As he grew older he became more obsessed with women's shoes and tried to steal them whenever he could. These episodes caused his mother to become increasingly punitive and to offer more love and attention to his older brother. Mrs. Brudos was rigid, strong, and controlling, and Brudos could never seem to win her affection.

At the age of 16, Brudos broke into a neighbor's house and stole her underwear. He later offered to help her find it. Instead of doing so, when she arrived at his house he made her undress at knifepoint. He then took pictures of her and left. Following this incident, Brudos attempted to date normally but had no success due to his appearance and his awkwardness with girls. In 1956, however, he lured a 17-year-old girl into his car, beat her, and ordered her to strip off her clothes. As a result of this event, Brudos was committed to the Oregon State Hospital. Upon his release, he finished high school and joined the armed services.

Brudos had trouble meeting women and distrusted women generally. Eventually, he married a woman 6 years younger than he after she had become pregnant by him. Following the

birth of their daughter, Brudos insisted his wife allow him to take nude pictures of her and requested other more sexually bizarre acts from her. In the beginning his wife acquiesced, but eventually she rebelled. Brudos began to think that his wife did not love him, and to relieve his depression over this he started to steal underwear and shoes again. Brudos became more frustrated when his wife refused to pose for him or have sex with him. Brudos' assaults on women then increased and eventually he began to rape and finally killed one woman in 1968. Brudos continued to murder three other women before being caught by the police in 1969. Brudos not only killed his victims, he frequently amputated their breasts and took pictures of their nude bodies once they were dead.