Christine M. Sarteschi

Mass and Serial Murder in America

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Christine M. Sarteschi

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Christine M. Sarteschi
Chatham University
Pittsburgh, PA
USA

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Chapter 1
Introduction

In a recent edition of the *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Editor-in-chief Matt DeLisi observed that many criminologists have interests in true crime. Although they spend a fair amount of time immersed in the world of true crime, either through books or television, it is not typically the focus of their scholarly work. Perhaps for too many, it remains a hobby instead of an interest worthy of empirical pursuit. In this editorial, cleverly titled *Rape, Murder! It's Just a Shot Away* DeLisi sought to encourage more empirical investigation of extreme types of crime (DeLisi 2015a).

Attitudes toward this type of research may be partly to blame. Delisi (2015b) argues that "too many professional criminologists harbor… petty, dismissive tones… regarding the study of extreme violence" (p. 220). It seems that in the minds of some people these topics are not worthy of empirical study. Maybe that is why the empirical base of extreme violence, such as murder and rape, is rather limited when compared to other more mundane criminological subjects such as delinquency (DeLisi 2015a). Relative to other areas of criminology, the study of extreme violence is in its infancy.

This brief is, therefore, aimed at true crime enthusiasts, practitioners, and scholars alike, and those interested in the biopsychosocial aspects of extreme violence in the context of an empirical review of the extant literature. More specifically, this brief focuses on the phenomenon of mass and serial murder. It is a critical analysis and comprehensive literature review about mass and serial murder including case studies, suggestions, questions for discussion and critical thinking exercises. It examines the theories of mass and serial murder and applies them in the context of real-world examples from throughout the United States. This brief also highlights the literature regarding preventing mass and serial murder and contains suggestions for innovative preventative measures.

Serial murder is a relatively rare crime that involves multiple victims, in different locations, with often no apparent connection to the suspect (Morton et al. 2015). The most recent definition of serial murder requires that a perpetrator kills a minimum of at least two victims with a "cooling off" period between the murders (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2008). Many people are fascinated by these

perpetrators and study them to better understand their motives. Scores of books, television shows, and movies have been written and developed to satiate the interest of the public. Criminologist Scott Bonn believes that people "love" serial killers and need them. His book, titled *Why We Love Serial Killers*: *The Curious Appeal of the World's Most Savage Murderers*, explores the phenomenon from a sociological perspective. These murderers appeal to us for a variety of reasons, Bonn contends, including their rarity, their brutality, the seeming randomness with which perpetrators kill their victims, our morbid interest in violence, and the need to assuage our own primal feelings of lust, fear, and anger (Bonn 2014).

Mass murder involves multiple victims; however, these offenders must kill at least four people, at geographically near locations, within a short timeframe, sometimes hours or even minutes apart (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2008; Hickey 2016). Depending upon how one defines mass murder, in 2015, there were almost as many mass murder events as days in the year (Beckett 2015). Although they have a fan base (more on that later), mass murderers do not garner as much adoration as do serial murderers. Perhaps that is because mass murder is perceived as more of a public health problem or threat, than is serial murder. Because of incidents like those in San Bernardino, California in December, 2015 and Orlando, Florida in June, 2016, where shooters pledge allegiance to terrorist organizations, it may be that mass murder has become synonymous with terrorism.

Historically, serial murder was subsumed under the category of mass murder (Skrapec 2001). Currently, time interval between killings is the main difference between mass and serial murder (Forsyth 2015). Exactly how researchers define mass and serial murder continues to vary, a topic that will be discussed later in this brief.

The remainder of this brief will be organized as follows. Chapter 2 will discuss and analyze the public's fascination with serial and mass murder. Chapter 3 will synthesize the literature regarding concepts of evil including a discussion of the various theorists and their understanding of evil, the concept of malignant narcissism and how it impacts people in society. Chapters 4 and 5 contain a critical analysis of the scholarly literature about mass murder and serial murder, respectively. The final chapter will assess the literature base regarding preventing mass and serial murder.

To demonstrate some of the ideas and concepts expressed in this brief, case studies are included. Such cases include: Herbert Mullins, the 1970s serial killer who killed 13 people because of his delusion that human sacrifice was the only way to protect Californians from earthquakes; John Shick, a severely mentally ill 30-year-old male who attempted a mass shooting at a large psychiatric hospital; a serial killer named Dennis Rader who referred to himself as "BTK," (bind, torture, kill) and who was responsible for killing 10 people; the California Zodiac Killer, one of the largest unsolved serial murder cases in the United States; Andrea Yates, the severely mentally woman who systematically killed her five children and who then immediately turned herself in the police; Theodore Bundy, arguably the most well-known and "popular" serial killer in the United States; and finally Theodore

Kaczynski, a severely mentally ill man also known the "Unabomber," who is responsible for the deaths of three people, and injuring 23 others.

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Chapter 2
Public Interest in Mass and Serial Murder

Abstract This chapter will provide a discussion and analysis of the public's interest in both serial and mass murder and true crime in general. This increase is demonstrated by the increase in the number of criminal television shows and movies being consumed by the public, murderabilia sales, the interest in murder homes, and persons who are attracted to violent perpetrators. Also discussed will be an analysis of the public's growing fascination with these topics and several relevant critical thinking exercises.

If media consumption habits are indicative of personal interests, then it is reasonable to suggest that many Americans are intrigued by murder. There is no shortage of criminological-oriented television shows, documentaries, and books, and now an entire television channel devoted to the subject, the Investigation Discovery (ID) channel. The *New York Times* characterized the ID channel as "one of the fastest growing cable television networks in the country" (Steel 2015, para. 5). Their viewership extends beyond 100 million homes in over 157 countries. Investigation Discovery network executives believe there is room for even more growth and plan to expand to 200 global markets. The *Los Angeles Times* reported in April, 2016, that for the first time ever, Investigation Discovery had its first-ever convention for true crime television "addicts" called IDCon.

Consider the popularity of *Serial*, a podcast that in its first season featured a two decades old murder case of 18-year old Hae Min Lee, and her ex-boyfriend Adnan Syed, who was given a life sentence for her death (Mallenbaum 2015). *Serial* is considered "the most popular broadcast in history," according to *Time* magazine (Dockterman 2015, p. 1). Now its second season, *Serial* explores the case about U.S. soldier Bowe Bergdahl who became a prisoner of the Taliban for five years after some believed that he voluntarily deserted his unit in 2009. Thus far, the podcast has been downloaded at least 80 million times (Mallenbaum 2015).

HBO's 2015 documentary series *The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst* has also generated a great deal of interest. *The Jinx* followed the case of Robert Durst, a wealthy and infamous serial murder suspect. Mr. Durst participated in the

six week documentary series which culminated in his arrest for the suspected December 2000 murder of Susan Berman (Yan and Shoichet 2015). Ms. Berman was a close friend of Mr. Durst's. It is believed that she was killed by Mr. Durst because she "knew too much" about his alleged involvement in the disappearance of his wife Kathleen Durst, who has been missing since 1982. Including the rebroadcast, later in the evening, over one million people watched the finale, a series high for a HBO documentary (Collins 2015).

Another popular documentary includes the Netflix series *Making a Murderer*. The 10 hour, exceptionally detailed documentary features the stories of Steven Avery and his teenage nephew, Brendan Dassey (Shattuck 2015). Steven Avery spent 18 years in prison for a crime for which he was exonerated. Two years after his release from prison, in 2003, he was arrested again and eventually convicted for the murder of 25-year-old Teresa Halbach, a freelance photographer. *Making a Murderer* thoroughly documents what some believe to be yet another case of wrongful conviction. Those convinced of Mr. Avery's innocence asked the President of the United States, Barack Obama, for a pardon to which he responded that he cannot grant state pardons. The documentary has since prompted a national debate about the integrity and inadequacies of the American criminal justice system. Netflix has announced a second season of *Making a Murderer.*

Before the popular *Making a Murderer* documentary, were the original standard-bearers of this genre including: Errol Morris's *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), detailing Randall Dale Adams who was sentenced to death in Texas for killing a policeman; *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (1996) about Damien Echols, James Baldwin, and Jessie Misskelley, known as the *"West Memphis Three,"* who were alleged to have killed three young children during satanic rituals; and *The Staircase* (2005), an eight-episode reality series on the Sundance Channel about the 2001 murder of Kathleen Peterson, by novelist and husband Michael Peterson.

Other crime documentaries of notable interest include: *Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father* (2008), an emotional and dramatic film concerning the murder of Andrew Bagby and their child by Shirley Jane Turner (Horeck 2014); *The Cheshire Murders* (2013), a deep investigation into the lives of Joshua Komisarjevsky and Steven Holmes who burglarized, raped, and murdered the three female members of the Petit family; *Captivated: The Trials of Pamela Smart* (2014), who was convicted of conspiracy to commit murder after prosecutors successfully argued that she convinced several young male lovers to kill her husband; *Tales of the Grim Sleeper* (2014) about Lonnie Franklin Jr., a serial killer who targeted South Central Los Angeles prostitutes over the course of 25 years; and *3 ½ Minutes, Ten Bullets* (2015) which explores the 2012 murder of 17-year-old Jordan Davis by 47-year-old Michael Dunn who claimed to have been threatened by the African American teen outside of a convenience store in Jacksonville, Florida. Referred to by the media as the "loud music" trial, the film explores the events that resulted in the death of Jordan Davis and the conviction of Michael Dunn, who after a second trial was sentenced to life without parole.

Finally, there has been renewed interest in O.J. Simpson, as evidenced by FX's *The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story* (2016) and ESPN's *O.J.: Made in America* (2016), the latter being a nearly eight hour documentary considered by some to be a "masterpiece" (Leitch 2016).

Women and True Crime

Research suggests that women are especially fascinated with true crime. The ID channel was "the most watched ad supported cable network among women ages 24–54" (Battaglio 2016, p. 1). Vicary and Fraley (2010) note the paradoxical fact that men are more likely to be perpetrators and victims of crimes, yet it is women who are more fascinated with the subject matter. It is not a heavily studied phenomenon and there is no clear consensus as to why more women than men are drawn to true crime and murder as a form of entertainment. Some studies suggest that women watch these shows because they want to learn survival skills to prevent their victimization (Vicary and Fraley 2010).

Relatability might be another factor. Women tend to be more interested in true crimes stories about other women (Vicary and Fraley 2010). Sharon Martin produces the real-life crime television series *Snapped* that focuses only on female criminals. She noted that the stories revolve around bad relationships and "that's a theme every women can understand." She noted that these stories might also serve as examples of how not to behave in the world. Some of the anecdotal feedback she receives, through social media, also supports the possibility that like other reality-based television shows, they make people feel better about their own lives (Why women love crime 2015).

The emotional and dramatic nature of true crime stories makes them compelling. They involve real-life stories of individuals who have been affected by extreme violence, something that most people never experience in their own lives. The stories are deeply emotional and visceral. They allow an individual to vicariously experience highly emotional events without having to actually experience them. People fear what they do not know but are also fascinated by it. Likewise, many people are frightened by what they consider to be evil and are drawn into stories that involve villainous characters.

Some experts believe that true crime television is unhealthy. They have likened it to pornography and have dubbed it "murder porn." Cultivation theory suggests watching many hours of television creates a distorted view of reality (Gerbner et al. 2002). One crime and justice media expert suggested that: "Ultimately, these shows are 'infotainment,' morality tales spun with (mis) information about crime and the justice process (Steel 2015, para. 22)." Network executives have increased the drama and number of sex scenes featured in ID channel programming, presumably hoping to attract even more women; but the question remains what impact, if any, does it have upon women. The following critical thinking exercise explores those possibilities.

Critical Thinking Exercise: Women and True Crime

To begin the exercise, ask participants to review the ID channel television series lineup. This information can be found on their website (www. investigationdiscovery.com). Ask participants to review the names of the shows, the show's synopsis and to make a list. What do they observe about the list? Then ask that participants consider the following questions for discussion:

- If these shows are providing misinformation about crime and justice, as has been suggested, what effect might it have upon women, who are the majority of viewers?
- Why are women drawn to these shows more than men?
- What does it mean if women are, in fact, being targeted with misinformation and salaciousness? How might this be corrected?
- What responsibility, if any, do television entertainment companies have in presenting accurate information about crime and punishment? Participants can consider how they would advise television executives to create shows that more accurately represent reality.
- What positive impact, if any, do these shows have upon their viewers?

A variation of this exercise can involve asking participants to view several ID television shows and then compare the information presented to actual research findings concerning crime and punishment. Participants could also review multiple ID channel shows to determine if some are more realistic than others and in what ways. Finally, participants can review the Twitter hashtag #IDAddicts and observe the interactions between the network and its followers. What kind of information is being shared between the two?

Fascination with Serial Murder

The American public seems to have a particular affinity for serial murderers. Consider the following examples, chosen from the thousands of highly popular, mainstream television shows, books, and movies explicitly about murder, most often serial murder. (See Aamodt and Moyse (2003) for a comprehensive bibliography of true crime books about multiple murders.)

- *Helter Skelter* (1974) written by Vincent Bugliosi and Curt Gentry about Charles Manson and his cult-killing "family," considered by some to be possibly the "best-selling American true crime book of all time" (Murley 2008, p. 63).
- *Cruising* (1980): written and directed by William Friedkin (who also made *The Exorcist*) about a real-life serial killer whom he met while filming *The Exorcist* who killed gay men in New York City.

- *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986): A film loosely based on the lives of serial killers Henry Lee Lucas and Ottis Toole.
- *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), a film based on a series of novels by Thomas Harris about a genius and former psychiatrist turned cannibalistic serial killer named Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Harris 1988); and relatedly, *Hannibal* (2013), a popular television show, and *Red Dragon* (2002), the most recent serial killer movie installment, all based on the works of Thomas Harris.
- *Natural Born Killers* (1994), a fiction film written by Quintin Tarantino and directed by Oliver Stone about a serial killing romantically involved couple Mickey and Mallory Knox who become media sensations after embarking on a killing spree (August et al. 1994).
- *Seven* (1995): a fiction film about two detectives attempting to capture a serial killer who chooses his victims based upon the seven deadly sins.
- *Summer of Sam* (1999) a Spike Lee film about 1970s serial murderer David Berkowitz, also known as the ".44 caliber killer."
- *American Psycho* (2000), a movie based upon a book with the same name by Bret Easton Ellis about a Wall Street psychopath named Patrick Bateman who sadistically murders people to fulfill his needs (Ellis 1991).
- *Monster* (2003) a film based on the reallife of Aileen Wuornos, identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as "America's first female serial killer" (Pearson 2007).
- *Zodiac* (2007), a film based on the true story of the "Zodiac Killer," an unidentified serial killer who operated in California during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Graysmith 1976/2007).
- *The Iceman* (2012), a film about Richard Kuklinski, a hit man who was convicted of killing five individuals on behalf of members of organized crime (Carlo 2006).
- *Dexter* (2006–2013), a series based upon the successful novel *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* featured on the Showtime network about a serial killer with a conscious who only kills "the bad guys" (Howard 2010);
- *The Following* (2013–2015), a television drama series shown on the Fox broadcasting network about a serial killer named Joe Carroll who develops a cult-like following of other serial killers.
- *The Killing* (2011–2014), an American Movie Channel (AMC) (and then Netflix) series about two Seattle-based detectives who, during at least one season, chase a serial killer targeting the city's youth.
- *Criminal Minds* (2005), a television series on CBS about criminal profiling based upon the work of the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit; the show has featured more than 100 serial killers.
- *Bates Motel* (2013), an A & E television network series prequel about arguably the most famous killer in pop culture Norman Bates, the subject of Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 movie thriller *Psycho* (Friedlander 2014).

- *True Detective* (2014), an HBO crime drama whose first season featured two homicide detectives attempting to capture a serial killer who was on the loose for 17 years, possibly inspired by the true life case of satanic sex crimes in Louisiana.
- *Mindhunter* (2016), a Netflix series about the pioneering work of FBI criminal profilers based on the book titled, *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit* by John Douglas and Mark Olshakes.
- *The Night Stalker* (2016), a movie about the satanic serial killer Richard Ramirez, who burglarized homes, sexually assaulted and killed his victims during the summer of 1985. What is most noteworthy about the film is that the majority of the writing, photography, directing, and production personnel are women, which is apparently "a rarity in Hollywood."

Part of the fascination with serial murderers might stem from their near mystical status. For instance, it is common for them to be depicted as evil geniuses who can outsmart the investigators trying to catch them. Many of the myths about serial killers stem from how they are portrayed in media. Haggerty and Ellerbrok (2011) find that "serial killers [in particular] have become an inescapable point of reference in movies, television fiction, novels, true crime books and video games" (p. 6). It is no surprise, then, that many criminal justice students often desire a career as an FBI profiler (Walker et al. 2008). They want to be the ones to bring the media-conceived evil geniuses to justice.

Murderabilia

Serial killers are often thought of as being "cool" and "fascinating." That might explain the popularity of "murderabilia" the term used to describe the selling and purchasing of violent crime-related memorabilia linked to notorious killers. Murderabilia can include art produced by the offender, body parts including hair and nail clippings, crime scene materials, manifestos, and other merchandise including T-shirts, trading cards, mugs, board games, and other souvenirs (Jarvis 2007). The Internet has made the buying and selling of these items easy and lucrative. Generally, it is legal to sell these items but states are increasingly attempting to pass laws that would impose fines or jail time for proprietors of these websites. Relatedly, the *Dallas Morning News* reports that prison officials in Texas have established formal policies prohibiting inmates from possessing social media accounts (Knodel 2016). The new policy stems from an incident involving Texas inmate Elmer Wayne Henley who was convicted of killing 28 people in the early 1970s. His account was deactivated after jewelry and art items said to have been produced by the inmate were being sold on his Facebook page. Whether or not prison officials can legally force the deactivation of social media pages has yet to be determined.

"Son of Sam" Laws

"Son of Sam" laws have been enacted in many states to prevent convicted offenders from profiting from his or her crimes. "Son of Sam," also known as the ".44 caliber killer" is the moniker of David Berkowitz, who is responsible for killing six people and injuring 15 others in New York City, in the 1970s. Mr. Berkowitz claimed to have had schizophrenia and believed that he was commanded to kill by his neighbor's dog. Mr. Berkowitz experienced a profound religious conversion while in prison and later self-identified as the "Son of Hope." Those curious about his conversion asked him to write about it. By publishing his story, he would be profiting from his crime. Naturally, the prospect of profiting from murder upsets many people and in response, the New York legislature made it illegal (Chang 2005). Although the New York law was eventually ruled unconstitutional, the majority of states still have "Son of Sam" statues in place (Hammitt 2011).

In many states, it is illegal to profit from one's crimes, but some felons may have found a way to circumvent the law. For example, Jodi Ann Arias was convicted of first-degree murder for killing her ex-lover Travis Alexander in 2013. Ms. Arias shot, stabbed, and nearly decapitated her victim. She was sentenced to life in prison in Arizona. Probably through friends, family, and/or supporters, she has established a website where she sells her artwork and domestic violence "survivor T-shirts." According to her website, she is attempting to raise money for unspecified nonprofit organizations as well as for her appellate fund. Her ability to continue to receive indirect compensation for her artwork has upset the victim's family and members of the public but to date there have been no legal challenges to this practice.

Murder Homes and Hybristophilia

The existence of murderabilia is one example of the ongoing fascination with notorious criminals. There are others, including murder houses and murder groupies. For instance, several companies offer tours of the serial killer Jeffery Dahmer's Milwaukee home. The "murder house" of Lizzie Borden has become a tourist attraction. It is now a popular bed and breakfast. Houses that once were considered stigmatized property are now highly sought after by realtors.

The Washington Post featured a story about the Savopouos family home in Washington DC. Four members of the family were brutally killed in the home before it was set on fire. Not long after the murders, the home was purchased for $3 million.

Living in a "murder home" is not enough for some people. Some people desire close relationships, even sexual relationships, with perpetrators of extreme violence. Hybristophiliacs, also known as "murder groupies," are sexually aroused by dangerous people who have committed heinous crimes. Hybristophilia is a paraphilia commonly associated with more women than men (Gurian 2013). The more

gruesome and heinous the crime is, the greater the sexual attraction. Ted Bundy, a serial killer who claimed to have killed as many as 100 women, attracted many female suitors during his trial. Others perpetrators have also attracted a great deal of sexual interest from female fans including Richard Ramirez, Charles Manson, and the Mendez brothers, among others. More recently, Scott Peterson, who was convicted of killing his wife Lacy Peterson and their unborn child, has had many female admirers. News reports indicate that Mr. Peterson receives money and marriage proposals from people all over the world. Convicted killer Richard Poplawski shot three city of Pittsburgh police officers in April, 2009. Although he is on death row in a penitentiary, he has been able to post ads on two websites seeking female pen pals. In his profile he writes: "For years, I've battled to maintain my identity, to not become unduly impressed upon by my environment on Pennsylvania's Death Row…You can help. I'd like to see my reflection in your eyes. That's partly how we know ourselves. If I write you, it'll be for the right reasons. I don't need your money. Don't try to save my immortal soul. I've lost all faith in true love… take it from me, Richard Andrew, Too late lasts forever" (The Associated Press 2016 para. 10). The mayor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is threatening legal action to remove the ads.

Convicted mass murderer James Holmes seems to have an extensive fan base known as "Holmies." Mr. Holmes killed 12 people and injured 70 others during a mass shooting at an Aurora, Colorado movie theater. According to *The New York Daily News*, Mr. Holmes receives thousands of letters, mostly from women. Some just want to see how he is doing. Others report finding him to be mysterious and intriguing. Many send pictures of themselves, members of their family, including their children, and confide in him about their personal lives. Susan Klebold, in her 2016 book about the aftermath of Columbine, reported receiving letters from women describing their romantic attraction to her son Dylan.

In 2016, *Yahoo! News* published a series of letters written to and by Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski, also known as the "Unabomber." The letters were acquired by Julie Herrada who served as curator of the Labadie Collection, which contains a series of documents representing various radical movements throughout the world (Herrada 2015). The Labadie Collection is housed in the University of Michigan's Special Collections Library. Herrada negotiated the acquisition of the documents with Mr. Kaczynski himself and in doing so learned that hundreds of people from all over the world have been writing to him, including many women wanting to be romantically involved with the killer. He grew close to one woman in particular, Joy Richards. Ms. Richards was terminally ill and died in 2006. Prior to her death she regularly corresponded with Mr. Kaczynski. After her death, her correspondence with Mr. Kaczynski was donated to her alma mater, Smith College, but to date, those letters have not been made public (Baily 2016).

Relatively speaking, there has been little empirical study of what attracts some people to infamous criminals. Several possibilities exist including loneliness, a desire to become famous, a desire for attention, and low self-esteem (Vitello 2006). Some people may find it exciting to know someone who committed a crime or they desire to become vicariously involved in the commission of a crime. Being

involved romantically with someone who is incarcerated offers a certain degree of safety. When you know that an individual is going to be incarcerated, perhaps for the rest of his or her life, the chances of being physically harmed by him or her are virtually nonexistent. Finally, serial killers and mass murderers are often considered celebrities in American popular culture. It is not uncommon for them to be featured on the covers of popular magazines. They are the subjects of many books and movies. Many people desire to have a connection with someone famous. Incarcerated individuals are more easily accessible, when compared to celebrities, and therefore might make for more responsive pen pals (Fox and Levin 2015).

Mass Murder and Public Fascination

Americans seem to have much less of an entertainment appetite for mass murder than they do for serial murder. In 2012, the television network *Lifetime* announced that it was planning to produce a miniseries about the Columbine shootings based on David Cullen's nonfiction book titled, *Columbine*. The series has yet to be made and there is no indication that it will ever come to fruition. Many were upset when a *Sons of Anarchy* episode (an FX series about a violent motorcycle gang) depicted an 11-year-old boy engaging in a mass shooting at his middle school. Generally, films about mass shootings do not fare well at the box office. *We Need To Talk About Kevin* (2011), a movie about a teenager who committed a massacre at his high school, earned less than $2 million. *Beautiful Boy* (2010), shot from the perspective of the parents of the teenager who committed a mass shooting at his university and then committed suicide, only grossed $77,000 (Ge and Donnelly 2015).

Fear might account for the lack of entertainment appeal of mass murder. Many people believe that mass shootings are common occurrences despite their rarity. They are unpredictable and cause the deaths of innocent people; they occur in places that seem like they should be safe, such as schools, churches, malls, movie theaters, and other seemingly innocuous settings. In the aftermath of these events, people often report feeling unsafe in their own communities, fearing that they too could be a victim. Some view it as a type of narcissism. As one criminologist suggested, people are focused on mass shootings at the moment because "they believe it can happen to them" (Roeder 2016).

Public mass shootings generate intense media coverage which heightens fear and anxiety. In the age of 24 hour news cycles, it is common for media outlets to quickly descend upon crime scene, staying for days or weeks and interviewing anyone willing to speak to them. The early news coverage is problematic because it both heightens fear and anxiety and encourages misinformation. Dave Cullen, author of *Columbine,* highlights the problem in his book. Members of the media, interviewed acquaintances of the two shooters and presented information that ultimately turned out not to be true. Despite it being untrue, many people continue to believe the media's narrative.

While the interest may be intense shortly after a massacre, it quickly fades. Some refer to this as the routinization of mass murder (Meyer 2015). When President Barack Obama addressed the nation following a mass shooting he noticed a similar trend. "Somehow this has become routine. The reporting has become routine. My response here, from this podium, has become routine." Although it has not been thoroughly tested empirically, recent analyses of Google Trends data supports the notion that mass killings have become routine and that the American public is becoming desensitized to these violent events (Meyer 2015).

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Chapter 3
Concepts of Evil

Abstract This chapter will summarize some of the literature regarding concepts of evil. It will include a discussion of the works of M. Scott Peck, Erich Fromm, Philip Zimbardo and their contributions to the understanding of evil. Also discussed will be the concept of malignant narcissism and what is clinically known about this disorder and its impact upon individuals and society at large. A critical thinking exercise is also provided.

Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart famously described pornography in this way: "I know it when I see it" (Jacobellis v. Ohio 1964). The same characterization could be applied to evil. Although there is no universally accepted definition of evil, people seem to know it when they see it. Government officials are no exception. In a 147-page report, released by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General (OAG), which investigated the accusations of sexual abuse by clergy members, upon hundreds of children, over the course of decades, the writers did not shy away from the use of the term "evil" or other terms that are meant to express evil. Below is a sample of some of the morality-laden language used throughout the grand jury report (Anon 2016).

- "…while Francis McCaa may have been a devil in disguise…" (p. 80).
- "The men of God were devils in disguise" (p. 132).
- "…the Bishops returned these monsters to ministry" (p. 13).

News reports about this case have indicated that the statute of limitations precludes an indictment of the clergy involved in the abuse and many have since passed away. It is noteworthy that the person considered largely responsible for exposing the abuse was George Foster, a businessman from Altoona, Pennsylvania. He collected 14 years' worth of evidence and accusations from victims alleging abuse (Smydo 2016). Within the grand jury report, Mr. Foster's efforts' are regarded as heroic. "A concerned Catholic businessman had done what so many hadn't; he built cases against monsters to protect children" (p. 118).

Science has a notoriously uncomfortable relationship with the study of evil. Much of what is known about evil comes from philosophy and religion. The serious

study of the psychology of evil has been lacking (Kubarych 2005). That case was made quite convincingly in 1983 by M. Scott Peck, in his book titled, *People of The Lie: The Hope For Healing Human Evil*. He argues that the scientific knowledge base of evil is virtually nonexistent and that our understanding of it largely remains a mystery.

Evil is sometimes exceptionally obvious, as in the case of the abuse of children but often it is less obvious, abstract and subtle. Peck believes that evil people can…" live down the street—on any street. They may be rich or poor, educated or uneducated. There is little that is dramatic about them. They are not designated criminals. More often than not they will be "solid citizens"—Sunday school teachers, policemen, or bankers, and active in the PTA… I've spent a good deal of time working in prisons with designated criminals. Almost never have I experienced them as evil people. Obviously they are destructive, and usually repetitiously so. But there is a kind of randomness to their destructiveness… The truly evil, always reside outside of jail …" (p. 69).

Peck defines evil as the opposition to life, that which kills or suppresses the life force and human spirit. Some of his ideas about evil are derived from the work of Erich Fromm and Ernest Becker whose views are largely psychoanalytic and existential in nature. The primary characteristics of evil might be understood in the context of Erich Fromm's notion of malignant narcissism, a type of personality disorder not recognized by the American Psychological Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*. Malignant narcissism is characterized by pathological narcissism, grandiosity, and scapegoating, the latter of which Peck considers a predominant characteristic of evil. Scapegoating involves externalizing blame and proactively preventing the psychological growth and prospering of others. "… The evil are the people of the lie, deceiving others as they also build layer upon layer of self-deception …" (p. 66). They are also strong-willed, egocentric and "utterly dedicated" to preserving their self-image "to maintain the appearance of moral purity" (p. 75). The notion of evil, described by Peck, corresponds to many of the traits associated with psychopathy (Cleckley 1941; Hare 1993, 2006). Those similarities withstanding, Peck proposed that "evil" be added as a subtype of narcissistic personality disorder in the *DSM*.

Some evil people might, on the surface, appear ordinary, but some people who commit murder, especially serial killers, are anything but ordinary. Knight (2007) argues that sexually motivated serial killers are "not ordinary people who carry out extraordinary acts of evil" (p. 32). No person whose expressed desire is to sadistically make people suffer is ordinary. What makes dangerous people like serial killers so frightening, is that they can hide in plain sight. They can appear normal and well-adjusted to their friends, family and neighbors. However, that is possibly because people tend to judge others based on superficial details such as how they look or dress, political or religious affiliations, facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice (O'Toole and Bowman 2012). This is particularly concerning in light of a specific subtype of dangerous individuals, namely psychopaths, who are adept at impression management and concealing the truth (O'Toole and Bowman 2012).

Zimbardo's book, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (2007) explores the social psychology of evil. It might be considered the most in-depth study of evil since M. Scott Peck's 1983 book. Zimbardo (2007) defines evil as "intentionally behaving in ways that harm, abuse, demean, and dehumanize, or destroy innocent others—or using one's authority and systematic power to encourage or permit others to do so on your behalf… Evil is knowing better and doing worse" (p. 5). Viewed from this perspective, one could argue that the clergyman in the aforementioned Diocese case knew better and did worse. It appears that the Catholic Church was aware of the crimes committed by certain priests. This suggests that they knew about the abuse and did not do enough to stop it. They could have banned the accused clergy but instead they often sent them to different congregations where they allegedly harmed more children. One high-ranking member of the clergy even developed a payment scale to silence the victims of childhood sexual abuse. How much money a victim should receive was to be considered in the context of multiple factors including: number of occurrences; duration of abuse over time; victim's age; use of alcohol or drugs; apparent effect of abuse on the victims (i.e., psychosis); and other aggravating circumstances. The payment scale is as follows (p. 120):

Levels of abuse	Range of payment
I. Above clothing, genital fondling	$10,000–$25,000
II. Fondling underclothes; masturbation	$15,000–$40,000
III. Oral sex	$25,000–$75,000
IV. Sodomy; intercourse	$50,000–$175,000

Zimbardo (2007) explains that people like to think there is a clear line between good and bad people and that only bad people engage in evil. Two central premises of his book are that good people can engage in evil acts under the right circumstances and that no one is incapable of evil. He explores what circumstances lead people to engage in evil acts through the lens of social psychology as opposed to the traditional medical model approach that is geared toward identifying personality and character traits. Zimbardo concludes that people are not inherently good or evil but instead, under certain circumstances or situations, can behave in ways that could be considered good or evil.

Critical Thinking Exercise: The Risk of Paroling David Berkowitz and the Notion of Evil

One cautionary tale about evil might come from David Berkowitz, the "Son of Sam" also known as the ".44 caliber" killer. David Berkowitz is responsible for killing six people and injuring 15 others. He was sentenced to 365 years in prison. He claimed to have been demonically possessed by his neighbor's dog, Harvey, who commanded him to kill. Although he later admitted to lying about being

commanded to kill, he claimed in videotaped interviews that his involvement in Satanism facilitated his killing.

To prepare for this exercise, participants should review information about David Berkowitz. He is eligible for parole. As of the date of this writing, he has twice applied for parole and has twice been denied. Facts about his case can be located at Radford University's Serial Killer Information Center.

Participants should also review YouTube videos about David Berkowitz's transition from the "Son of Sam" to the "Son of Hope" and the official website of David Berkowitz (www.ariseandshine.org), which at the time of this writing, were still available. It would also be helpful to review excerpts from Dr. Scott's Bonn's book titled, *Why We Love Serial Killers: The Curious Appeal of the World's Most Savage Murderers*, about his interactions with David Berkowitz and Dr. Michael Stone's 22-point "Graduation of Evil" scale, inspired by the structure of Dante's circles of hell (On the scale of evil 2010). An agreed-upon definition of evil should also be developed before beginning the exercise. Participants should consider the following scenario and discussion questions:

Everyone participating in the exercise should consider themselves to be members of the parole board. As members of the parole board, they will decide whether or not to grant David Berkowitz parole. The main consideration in their decision, regarding his parole, is risk assessment. Also to be discussed is whether or not Mr. Berkowitz is evil and if evil people can become non-evil people. In answering the questions, consider the nature of the risk to the public if Mr. Berkowitz were to be released from prison. Consider the following questions:

- Do you consider David Berkowitz evil? Why or why not?
- What about forgiveness and his religious conversion? How much do they factor into your decision about whether or not he deserves parole?
- Is it better for the welfare of society to keep Mr. Berkowitz incarcerated until his sentence is completed? Why or why not?
- If he were released, could he effectively reintegrate back into society? What are the challenges he would face?
- What is the likelihood that he would commit another crime? What factors influence your estimation of future violence?
- What would your parole decision be? Weigh the pros and cons and develop your rationale for why you would or would not parole him.

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Chapter 4
Mass Murder

Abstract This chapter will provide a critical analysis of scholarly literature regarding mass murder. Case studies will be provided that focus on specific psychological aspects of mass murder, including the more rare aspects of mass murder in which there is clear evidence of serious mental illness. Additional elements of mass murder will also be examined including motivation, the clinical picture of perpetrators, a review of notes and manifestos left behind by perpetrators, pre-warning clues that could have led to understanding the intentions of the perpetrator, and what role the media may have in copycat crimes.

Prevalence of Mass Murder

Accurate prevalence rates of mass murder are difficult to determine. That is because there is no single agreed upon definition of what constitutes a mass murder and as a result prevalence rates can vary by definition. Consider the following different definitions by government entities:

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines "mass murder" as four or more murders occurring during the same incident with no "distinctive" time period between the murders (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2008).
- Congress defines "mass killings" as three or more people killed in a single incident (The Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012 2013).
- The White House, U.S. Department of Justice/FBI, U.S. Department of Education and The Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency define an active shooter as an individual engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area, which also implies that the subject's actions involve firearms (Blair and Schweit 2014).

To complicate matters, news organizations, social media networks, crowd sourcing, advocacy, and private sector entities are actively tracking mass murder events. A January 2016 report by the Department of Homeland Security identified

11 different sources that are tracking mass murders, each with their own definition of what constitutes a mass murder (Kiernan Group Holdings 2016). Those sources are listed below and includes one new addition, Vice News, an international news channel that began collecting data on mass shootings (as opposed to all other types of mass murder) in the United States (and Europe for comparison) in February, 2016, making for a total of 12:

1. Congressional Research Service
2. Federal Bureau of Investigation
3. Gun Violence Archive.org
4. Kiernan Group Holdings
5. *Mother Jones*
6. New York Police Department
7. *The New York Times*
8. Police Executive Research Forum
9. Shooting Tracker.com
10. Stanford University
11. *USA Today*
12. Vice News

What might be considered the most balanced prevalence estimation of mass murder can be found in a 2015 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report by Krouse and Richardson. Utilizing Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) compiled by the FBI for a 15-year period (1999–2010) and a 44-year (1970–2013) data set provided by Grant Duwe, an expert in mass murder, they generated the following data regarding firearm-related mass murders:

- Their prevalence and deadliness increased in the 1970s and 1980s and through the 1990s, 2000s through 2004;
- They were particularly high in 2012;
- More people were killed between 2009 and 2013 than in the previous two five-year periods that were studied, but if data for 2012 were excluded, those averages would be lower than the preceding five-year period (2004–2008);
- Between 1970 and 2013, prevalence rates rose from 1.1 incidents on average in the 1970s to 4.5 incidents per year from 2010 through 2013; and
- Between 1970 and 2013, the mortality rate from firearm homicide and mass public shootings was 1 per 10 million, compared to 355 per 10 million firearm homicide deaths and 670 per 10 million from suicides involving a firearm (Wintemute 2016).

Although the CRS data would suggest that since the 1970s there has been an increase in the prevalence rates of firearm-related mass murders, it is important to acknowledge that: (1) there are many more people who die from firearm-related homicides and suicides, relative to mass murders committed with firearms, and (2) there remains disagreement among scholars about whether mass murder is increasing or decreasing. Different investigators, using different definitions and

measures of mass murder, have led to a lack of uniformity in the reported prevalence rates of mass murder. Future research is being planned to more accurately define the phenomenon (Huff-Corzine et al. 2015).

Myths About Mass Murder

Each highly publicized mass murder seems to spark a common set of mischaracterizations about both the perpetrators and the nature of those events. Because they are highly newsworthy they tend to invoke strong opinions, many of which are inaccurate and difficult to dispel even with facts. Summarized in Table 4.1 are the common myths associated with mass murder and the perpetrators who commit such acts.

Mass Murder Classifications and Typologies

There are overlapping and evolving typologies of mass murder. Most are based upon the psychological and behavioral characteristics of the offenders; some are also based upon motive (Kelleher 1997). Taylor (2016) noted that existing classification systems have several drawbacks. Most notably they fail to consider variables such as mental illness, domestic issues, crime, and employment, as motivating factors.

Dietz first classified mass murderers, in 1986, into three groups: family killings, pseudo-commandos, and set-and-run murderers (Auxemery 2015). Holmes and Holmes (1994) added two additional categories: disciple and disgruntled employees. A few years later, Petee et al. (1997) developed their own set of typologies, for public mass murderers that were based upon offender motivation. Those typologies included: anger/revenge, domestic/romantic situations, interpersonal conflict, crime related, gang related, political, and nonspecific motives. Hickey (2016) combined multiple typologies and created a synthesized list of 10 classifications. Arguably, some individuals could fit into multiple categories. For instance, Andrea Yates killed her five children under the influence of a psychotic disorder. In the following chart, she could be categorized as either a family annihilator or a psychotic killer. Other more recent cases are less easy to categorize. For instance, news reports indicated that Jason Brian Dalton, an Uber driver in Kalamazoo, Michigan, killed six people and injured two others in between picking up fares (Hannah and Sanchez 2016). He claimed that the Uber app turned him into a puppet that took over his whole body. A mental illness motivation was suspected but he did not possess a history of mental health problems and had been deemed competent to stand trial (Stapleton 2016). It is such a unique case that a Washington D.C. based nonprofit

Table 4.1 Common myths about perpetrators and incidence of mass murder

Myth	Fact
1. They snap	There is often a clear pathway to violence, indicating premeditation for days, weeks, months, and in some cases, years
2. Perpetrators can be divided into specific diagnostic category types, including: psychopath, psychotic, and those with depression	The diagnostic histories of many mass murders are complex. Many are mentally ill (although researchers remained divided), but their disorders are not easily categorized or necessarily mutually exclusive
3. Mass murders are increasing	Mass murders are highly newsworthy events and can give people the impression that they occur with regular frequency. Many researchers maintain that relative to other crimes, they are rare occurrences
4. Psychotic people cannot be methodical or planning	People who are psychotic have lost touch with reality and are often paranoid, but it does not diminish their intelligence level. Theodore Kaczynski, the "Unabomber," was diagnosed with schizophrenia yet alluded the authorities for 17 years all while building sophisticated bombs and sending them to dozens of unsuspecting victims. Mr. Kaczynski was apprehended after his brother and his brother's wife Linda Patrik recognized his ideas contained within the published 35,000 word manifesto
5. Perpetrator was using illegal substances at the time of the mass murder incident	Unlike other types of homicide, research has shown that in cases of mass murder, the use of drugs and alcohol is minimal and not typical
6. Mass murder is predictable	Current methods of violence prediction, including profiling and the use of diagnostic checklists, are not very accurate. While there is no apparent evidence to support the idea that mass murder is predictable, many offenders "leak" information that, if provided to law enforcement, could potentially assist in preventing an attack. Elliott Roger killed six people, injured 14 others and then committed suicide, but not before uploading videos to YouTube overtly threatening an attack which he subsequently carried out
7. More recent mass murders involve record-setting body counts	Some of the highest mass murder body counts occurred historically and overseas. Researchers believe that the perception of higher body counts, in more recent times, has more to do with an increase in pervasive news coverage of these events rather than actual higher body counts

Table 4.1 (continued)

Myth	Fact
8. Violent media causes mass murder	It is unclear whether people who are prone to violence are attracted to violent media or if violent media influences their violent behavior. Although research supports a correlation between the consumption of violent media and mass murder, a causal link has not been established
9. People who commit mass murders are insane	Insanity is a legal concept used within court systems; it is not a diagnostic label. People who claim to be insane might plead insanity during a trial, in which case they are attempting to convince the court that they did not know right from wrong at the time of the offense. Although they may or may not be found legally insane by the court, adult mass murderers can be and often are psychotic. Psychosis indicates a break with reality, and is associated with multiple serious mental health disorders, including schizophrenia, among others
10. They are all loners	Mass murderers are often characterized as socially isolated loners. There is mixed evidence as to whether that is true. It is more likely the case that mass murderers externalize blame and in doing so drive away friends and family members

Sources Duwe (2007), Fox and DeLateur (2013), Meloy (2014)

organization, The Police Foundation, will be analyzing the case (Associated Press 2016). Table 4.2 describes Hickey's 10 classifications (2016, pp. 14–15) and presents a brief case example of each type.

School Shooters

Although there may be school shooters who could fit into one of the aforementioned categories, they arguably constitute a category of their own. School shooting incidents typically involve male juveniles who bring weapons to school or school-related events and shoot their classmates and teachers. They are generally not random events. Although there is no profile of a school shooter, and no two school shooting incidents are the same, they share common themes including (Bonanno and Levenson 2014):

Table 4.2 Mass murderer classifications

Type	Definition	Case example
Family slayer or annihilator	An individual who kills their whole family and who typically, but not always, commits suicide	Patricia Bolin killed her husband, daughter (12), and son (9), and attempted (but failed) to kill her 15-year-old daughter before fatally shooting herself (Scott and Fleming 2014)
Murderer for profit	An individual who kills for the purpose of financial gain; may involve killing of one's entire family or groups of people	Joseph Kibwetere, Ugandan cult leader of the Movement For The Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God incinerated an estimated 1000 followers to avoid having to return money and possessions they had given to him
Murderer for sex	An individual whose primary goal is sexual in nature; typically involves sexually torturing, raping, and murdering victims	Richard Speck stabbed, strangled, raped, and tortured eight nursing students from a Southern Chicago hospital after claiming that he would not hurt them
Pseudo-commando	An individual with an obsession for guns, who wants to outdo previous attackers or assassins and who plans to go out in a "blaze of glory"	Seung-Hui Cho, a student at Virginia Tech University shot and killed 33 students and faculty (Knoll 2010)
Set-and-Run killer	An individual who carefully plans to flee the scene following the killings	On April 19, 1995, Timothy McVeigh detonated a truck bomb in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people
Psychotic killer	Individual with acute or chronic psychosis, conditions associated with serious mental illnesses, who has been adjudicated as legally insane	Andrea Yates drowned each of her five children. At her second trial, she was found not guilty by reason of insanity and currently lives in a state psychiatric hospital
Disgruntled employee	An individual who seeks revenge over a real or imagined grievance by his or her coworkers or employers	Jennifer San Marco shot and killed, a neighbor, six former coworkers (at a Postal Service mail sorting plant), and then herself (Katsavdakis et al. 2011)
Discipline-type killer	An individual who commits murder on behalf of the charismatic leader	Charles Manson convinced his followers to murder several people
Ideological mass murderer	An individual who can persuade others to kill themselves or each other	Jim Jones, cult leader of the Peoples Temple, convinced over 900 people to drink deadly Flavor-Aid laced with poison

Table 4.2 (continued)

Type	Definition	Case example
Institutional mass murderer	An individual who commits mass murder by obediently following the commands of his or her leader. Genocide, ethnic cleansing and religious bigotry would fall into this category	Secretary of State John Kerry declared that in 2014, members of the terror group ISIS committed genocide against Yazidis. Over 5000 men, women, and children were tortured and killed by the terror group

Source Hickey (2016)

- Attacks that were typically planned weeks, months or even years in advance.
- The majority of attackers were found to have told at least one other person about their plans (also known as leakage).
- Most attackers did not directly threaten their targets.
- Guns were the most common weapon of choice.
- Most attackers were struggling with significant losses and failures.
- Attackers were commonly depressed and/or suicidal.
- The majority felt bullied, threatened or injured by others.
- The majority held some kind of grievance at the time of the attack.

Motivations of Mass Murder

According to Fox and Levin (1998, 2003) and Fox and DeLateur (2013), individuals who engage in mass murder generally have motives that fall into at least one of five primary motives, or some combination thereof. Motives are not always easy to identify because perpetrators of mass murder often commit suicide. These five motives can include:

1. *Revenge* (e.g., an individual who wants to payback those who are perceived to have contributed to his or her life failures)
2. *Power* (e.g., injustice collectors; pseudocommando type mass murderer who carefully plans targeted violence against society)
3. *Loyalty*: (e.g., a person who kills his or her entire family (and him or herself) to spare them the misery of living)
4. *Terror*: (e.g., an individual kills in an effort to send a message that more harm will be done if he or she does not get their way)
5. *Profit* (e.g., killing witnesses in the course of a burglary-gone-wrong to avoid prosecution)

A motivation-based concept worthy of consideration is that of an overvalued idea. Tahir et al. (2016) suggest that some mass murderers with extremist beliefs are

categorized as being psychotic even when they do not have many of the typical symptoms associated with psychosis, including grossly disorganized behavior, cognitive impairment, or hallucinations. They argue that Anders Breivik, the man who killed 77 young people in Norway, was motivated to violence by the extreme overvalued beliefs that dominated his thinking rather than a psychotic mental illness.

Their definition of an "extreme overvalued belief" is as follows: "…a belief… that is shared by others in a person's cultural, religious, or subcultural group. The belief is often relished, amplified, and defended by the possessors of the belief and should be differentiated from a delusion or obsession. The idea fulminates in the mind of the individual, growing more dominant over time, more refined, and more resistant to challenge. The individual has an intense emotional commitment to the belief and may carry out violent behavior in its service. It is usually associated with abnormal personality" (p. 33). Extremist beliefs tend to be of a political, cultural, religious, or spiritual nature and save for these ideological beliefs, these individuals appear nonpsychotic. Other people who might have been motivated by an extreme overvalued belief include Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols, Dylan Roof, and possibly Ted Kaczynski. The idea of an extreme overvalued belief system provides a useful explanation for why some people, without a psychotic-based mental illness, act out violently.

Biopsychosocial Profiles of Mass Murderers

Charles Whitman, also known as the "Texas Tower Sniper" climbed a 300-foot tower at the University of Texas on August 1, 1966 and shot 14 people and injured many others. He also shot and killed his wife and mother. According to the autopsy, a small brain tumor was found "in the white matter above the brainstem." In the letter, typed by Whitman on the Sunday before the shooting, he describes having "overwhelming violent impulses" and requested that an autopsy be performed to determine if there were "any visible physical disorder." He also was known to have "tremendous headaches" prior to the killings. Whether his brain tumor caused his violent behavior will be forever unknown.

The notion that violent behavior has biological roots has been the subject of a great deal of research, most notably by Adrian Raine. Empirical studies suggest that genetics influence antisocial behavior in both youths and adults (Raine 2002). While genes influence behavior it likely does not cause it. Certain environmental factors increase the likelihood of antisocial behavior in adulthood, including poor nutrition, environmental hazards, such as exposure to lead, exposure to nicotine and alcohol by pregnant mothers, growing up in poverty, child abuse, and poor education (Raine 2014). It is thought that genetic and environmental factors each explain about 50 % of the variance of antisocial behavior (Raine 2014).

Whether the aforementioned biological factors are specifically associated with perpetrators of mass murder has not been empirically established. According to the news site *Popular Science*, University of Connecticut geneticists have been sent a piece of Adam Lanza's brain for examination. Staff at the news site attempted to acquire the results of that testing but were turned down. According to the writers at *Popular Science*, "it was the first time a mass murderer's genome had ever been studied" (Parshley 2016, para. 26).

We know more about the psychological and sociological makeup of mass murderers than we do about their biology. They tend to be mentally ill, over the age of 30, depressed, suicidal, socially isolative, introverts, externalize blame, resentful and grievance oriented, have a history of career and academic failures, have intense interests in war and weaponry, premeditate their attacks, but do not typically communicate direct threats (Collins 2014; Fox and DeLateur 2013; Katsavdakis et al. 2011). With few exceptions, they engage in solo attacks, often in institutional settings and target anonymous people (Collins 2014).

Demographically, mass murderers are mostly male and are generally similar to people who commit more typical murders (Lankford 2015). Public or high-profile mass shooters tend to be Caucasian. A 2015 study by Landford found that Latinos and African Americans were more likely to be involved in what appeared to be robbery or burglary incidents gone wrong. He theorizes that the structural disadvantages that lead Latinos and African Americans to commit robberies and burglaries, at a disproportionate rate, might also explain the occasions when they commit mass murder.

In May, 2016, the *New York Times* reported the sociodemographic characteristics of 358 mass shootings in 2015, which they defined as four or more casualties, including the shooter. Their data were drawn from the gunviolencearchive.org, a nonprofit organization that grew out of social media crowd-sourcing efforts to track mass shootings. Of the 358 shootings, 462 people died and 1330 were injured. Below are some of the main findings from their study (Lafraniere et al. 2016).

- The majority of shootings took place in economically poor neighborhoods and occurred in outdoor settings.
- In about one fourth of the cases, a motive could not be determined. Among cases where a motive could be determined, about one third were gang related; the remaining cases involved drugs and alcohol and petty arguments that grew out of control, and domestic violence.
- The typical victim was male and between the ages of 18 and 30; 10 % of cases involved victims 17 or younger.
- Among the 67 % of cases where race was reported, nearly three-quarters of victims and alleged shooters were African American.
- "Nearly half" of the cases remain unsolved but among those who were arrested or identified as suspects, the average age was 27.
- Domestic violence and high-profile (public) shootings largely involved Caucasian shooters and victims.

Notes and Manifestos

The writings of mass murderers sometimes contain clues about what motivated them to act out violently. These motives commonly includes revenge, alienation, persecution, envy, and vengefulness (Knoll and Meloy 2014). A subset of mass murderers is also paranoid. Dutton et al. (2013) examined the diaries and website of four mass shooters including Eric Harris, Seung-Hui Cho, Anders Breivik, and Kimveer Gill. Personality-wise, they were obsessively anxious about their self-identities and cared deeply about what other people thought of them. They perceived their peers as rejecting and as a result felt immense despair and resentment. These strong emotions fueled their desire for revenge.

Knoll (2010) also analyzed the writing of Seung-Hui Cho, the student who shot and killed 33 students and faculty at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007 and Jiverly Wong, who shot 13 people at the American Civic Association immigration center in Binghamton, New York on April 3, 2009. Mr. Cho left a 1800 word manifesto that he mailed to NBC, along with 43 photographs, some of himself posing with guns. Mr. Wong also sent a letter to a news organization (*News 10 Now*) that was two pages in length, along with a gun permit, his driver's license and like Mr. Cho, pictures of himself with guns. Their communications revealed that both men wanted credit for their murders. They were intensely angry, revengeful, felt persecuted, had severely damaged egos, felt that they had nothing to lose, nothing left to live for, and were willing to die to punish the people they perceived as having caused their pain. In addition, they appeared to be mentally ill (varying expert opinions exist regarding specific diagnoses), Cho with suicidal depression associated with extreme social isolation and Mr. Wong with a major psychotic disorder.

Existing psycholinguistic analyses withstanding, Knoll specifically noted that "to date, the actual communications of "pseudocommando" types of mass murderers have received little analysis," despite it being a potentially powerful approach to understanding the psychological mindset of a killer (Knoll 2010, p. 263). A website that could be explored more thoroughly, is www.schoolshooters. info, maintained by Dr. Peter Langman. Among other information, the website includes original writings by various school shooters, some of whom committed crimes outside the United States. It also includes first-person diaries, manifestos, suicide notes, and other writings. Neuman et al. (2015) compared the texts of six school shooters to a comparison group of male suspects. They found that the language used by the school shooters suggested personality themes of narcissism, humiliation, and revenge. Continued communication analyses can deepen our understanding of what triggers someone to commit mass violence.

John Shick: Attempted Mass Murder Case Study

Sarteschi (2015) analyzed the case of John Shick, who shot five people in a large psychiatric hospital, revealing a grossly paranoid individual with somatic delusions. His communications before the attack evidenced his ever-intensifying delusional belief that the healthcare system, from which he was attempting to receive help, was denying him life-saving medical care. Shick was a highly educated individual with a long history of severe mental illness and problematic behaviors including harassment of his peers and multiple involuntary hospitalizations. Unlike many others, he did communicate a direct threat before the shooting. His final communication, before the attack, demonstrates his paranoid mindset. He wrote to his parents: "You are murderers. I have already reported the doctors refusing to help or treat worms to the police, including Interpol. There will be no one helping other than ruffians employed by [the institution] to shoot me in the head while I am sleeping in my bed at 3:00 a.m. to destroy the evidence of that corporation's accessory to murder. You stole over $3000 from me and I need the money now. Send the money now. You are murderers and liars" (p. 3).

Prewarnings and Leakage

In the aftermath of a mass murder, it is common to ask "why" questions. It is only natural to believe that exploring the mindsets of people who commit extreme violence could lead to the prevention of future tragedies. In the course of exploring an individual's pathway to violence, certain warning signs seem evident in hindsight. These warning signs, also referred to as leakage, involve intentional or unintentional clues that indicate an individual's thoughts and intentions prior to an impending violent act (O'Toole 2000). Researchers have documented compelling cases of leakage (see Meloy and O'Toole 2011). Despite warning signs being present in some cases, not all researchers are convinced that heeding these early clues will prevent violence (Fox and DeLateur 2013).

   Whether or not the recognition of early clues can help to prevent acts of extreme violence is difficult to determine. Part of the problem involves the limited empirical data about these events. Consider the 2014 study by Allely and colleagues, regarding the neurodevelopmental and psychosocial risk factors of serial killers and mass murders. Their "most striking" finding was the lack of rigorous research about this population. The empirical research they found was composed mostly of single subject case studies and only a few retrospective studies containing large samples. The information contained within the case reports was often obtained from non-peer-reviewed sources, including websites like Murderpedia and true crime books. Likewise, other researchers have expressed concerns about the lack of rigorous studies concerning extreme violence (DeLisi 2015).

Meloy et al. (2012) have identified eight warning behaviors that may indicate that a person is planning an attack (p. 265). These eight are paraphrased below:

1. *Pathway warning behavior*: involves the research planning or preparing of an attack.
2. *Fixation warning behavior*: involves pathological preoccupation with a person or cause.
3. *Identification warning behavior*: composed of five main characteristics including "pseudocommando" behavior, evidence of a warrior mentality, an obsession for weapons or other military or law enforcement paraphernalia, wanting to imitate or outdo previous attackers or assassins, or considering oneself to be an important asset in advancing a particular cause or belief system (Meloy et al. 2015).
4. *Novel aggression warning behavior*: a first-time act of violence that appears unrelated to any particular target for the potential forthcoming attack.
5. *Energy burst warning behavior*: an increase in activities associated with a noted target days or weeks before an attack.
6. *Leakage warning behavior*: communication to a third party regarding the intent to commit an act of violence against a specified target.
7. *Last resort warning behavior*: "evidence of a violent" action/time imperative, "increasing desperation or distressed threat declaration in word or deed."
8. *Directly communicated threat warning behavior*: communicating a direct threat regarding an impending act of violence to either the target or law enforcement before the act is carried out.

One form of "leakage" which could be explored more thoroughly, involves the use of social media to aid in crime prevention. Also known as "big data policing," police agencies across the country are increasingly using computer programs to identify future threats (Jon 2016). For example, the Department of Homeland Security uses computer software to identify suspicious Twitter messages (Jon 2016). The Chicago Police Department uses social network analysis software, designed for the military, to track gang violence (Dillow 2014). A 2014 LexisNexis survey of social media use in law enforcement reported that more than half (51 %) monitor social media for potential crime activity (LexisNexis 2014). The extent to which intercepted social media messages, can effectively prevent mass murder or crime in general has yet to be thoroughly assessed.

Media Contagion and Copycat Crimes

Some research suggests that unstable or vulnerable individuals might copy the crimes most publicized by the media, though to date this is an understudied social phenomenon (Surrette 2014). Towers et al. (2015) examined whether contagion played a role in mass killings and school shootings involving firearms, and they found that it did. Both mass killings and school shootings were found to have been "contagious"

for an average of 13 days, with each incident inciting at least 0.30 and 0.22 respective incidents. Although their results were statistically significant, the authors acknowledge the difficulty in knowing who was inspired by which murderous act.

Other researchers also believe that mass shootings are contagious. Gary Slutkin, an epidemiologist and executive director of Cure Violence, explained in a 2015 interview with the *Washington Post*, that …mass shootings are, in his view, "definitely contagious. They become more frequent after each event. That's part of how the brain imprints things—people do the same thing they saw" (Swanson 2015, para. 16). Although he has not outlined a plan for explicitly preventing mass shootings, his public health-oriented approach involves deploying trained healthcare workers in concentrated areas of socially marginalized and disconnected people with mental health problems. Health care workers, in his Cure Violence method, attempt to locate problematic behavior before it develops and redirect the people involved. Thus far, violence interrupter programs have had mixed success (Webster 2015). Researchers have noted that their success is largely dependent upon the individuals implementing the program, how well those programs are managed and the community in which the program is being implemented (Webster 2015).

Gender, Race, and Mass Murder

Comedian Chris Rock once joked about the time he dove off a hotel elevator when two Caucasian high school boys tried to get on with him. He asked his audience "what the hell is wrong with these white kids shooting up…school[s]?" Jokes aside, he may be noticing what seems to be a common belief about perpetrators of mass murder: they are young, Caucasian males. His views about this phenomenon are in line with public sentiment and some researchers.

In his book, *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*, Kimmel (2013) argues that there is an increase in the number of angry white men in America. These men, he explains, experience "aggrieved entitlement," a belief that they are entitled to certain privileges including wealth, power, dominance, and sex. Though they are considered by others in society to be the most privileged, they do not see it that way. Kimmel explains that many of these angry men are raised with the belief that if you work hard you will achieve the American dream. If and when they fail to achieve the American dream, they feel humiliated, demoralized, and angry. Instead of holding themselves accountable, they blame others, often targeting feminists, minorities, gays, lesbians, immigrants, Jews, and others. Violence, in some cases, is considered necessary and, in fact, acceptable in order to regain what they perceive to be rightfully theirs. It may be this anger that fuels some "angry white men" to commit mass murder.

One example of an "angry white man" might be Maverick Dean Bryan, a 55-year-old Arkansas man with an extensive criminal history, including the illegal possession of firearms. The *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported that he was arrested in May 2016 after sending threatening letters to mayors in seven different

cities. He demanded that the mayors replace the Common Core curriculum with religious texts and that they no longer honor the votes of anyone who is homosexual, socialist, communist, atheist, or Muslim. Anyone who does not worship Jesus Christ, he wrote, should be required to "exit." He was also hoping to acquire, through local newspaper ads, a $23 million loan to build a Christian army to overthrow the U.S. government. Should he be convicted, he could spend five years in a federal prison (LaRowe 2016).

Relatedly, Coston and Kimmel (2012) describe a common notion in American society of what a "real man" should be. "Real men" are strong, brave, intelligent, stoic, and powerful. For some men, these abstract ideals operate as a framework for how a man "should" behave in the world. These expectations and attitudes evolve into personal identities that define how a "man" should behave. Among men who subscribe to the "real man" ideology, failure to live up to these abstract standards and expectations can lead to feelings of marginalization and emasculation.

Lankford (2015) extensively reviewed the literature about race and mass murder, and could not uncover "a single empirical study on the race or ethnicity of mass murders" (p. 6). To study these variables, he obtained a comprehensive *USA Today* data set that cross-referenced the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR). His final data set included 308 perpetrators of mass murderers from between 2006 and 2014. He found that the highest percentage of mass murder perpetrators in his sample were African American (37 %); 34 % were Caucasian, 11 % were Latino, 5 % were Asian and the remaining 13 % were either unknown or another race. There were no significant differences between the groups when it came to age or sex. Lankford's findings that African American male offenders, rather than Caucasian male offenders, made up the highest percentage of mass murder perpetrators paralleled the findings of Huff-Corzine et al. (2014), who also found that mass murder perpetrators in the United States (between 2001 and 2010) were slightly more likely to be African American rather than Caucasian men. The May, 2016 *New York Times* review of mass murders in 2015 found similar results.

Lankford then analyzed race in the context of mass murder subtypes, including those who killed entire families, those whose murders seem to have been intended only as robbery or burglary but turned into a mass murder and those who engaged in public killings. He found that:

- Perpetrators involved in robberies or burglaries were more likely to be Latino or African American than Caucasian.
- Perpetrators involved in public shootings were more likely to be Caucasian than African American.
- Offenders who died at a mass murder crime scene, either because they committed suicide or because they were killed by law enforcement, were more likely to be Caucasian than African American and more likely to be Latino than Caucasian.
- Asian offenders tended to kill more people during a mass murder event than Caucasians.

- Caucasians tended to have higher body counts than Latino offenders.
- Public mass shootings were predominately committed by Caucasians (63 %).

Lankford concluded that the racial demographics of mass murders, in his study, were not dissimilar to the racial demographics of perpetrators of most other types of murders. In addition, the public's perception that Caucasian males are the primary perpetrators of *public* mass shootings seems to be consistent with the literature. Public mass shootings receive a disproportionate amount of media coverage when perpetrated by Caucasian males, compared to shootings involving people of other races (Lafraniere et al. 2016). Common motives among public mass shooters included a strong sense of entitlement and a need to exact revenge against people who they perceived to have humiliated them, a theme consistent with Kimmel's notion of "angry white men."

Female Mass Murder

Most mass murders are committed by men. Katsavdakis et al. (2011), defining mass murder as the intentional killing of three or more people within a short period of time, estimated that no more than four to six women have ever single-handedly carried out a civilian mass murder. It is so rare an event that some researchers refer to women who perpetrate mass murders as "black swans," a term used to describe extremely unlikely events (Katsavdakis et al. 2011).

A "black swan-like" event occurred on December 2, 2015 when Syed Rizwan Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, killed 14 people and injured 22 others at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California. The significance of this event is best captured by former FBI agent Dr. Mary Ellen O'Toole, in a press release, "shootings involving mission-oriented females may be a new threshold which should be concerning to all of us, and the incident in San Bernardino might just be a hybrid, a harbinger, of shootings to come… In contrast to more recent shootings … the one that took place in San Bernardino… [is] the first to have involved a female shooter" (Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers 2015).

Given the rarity of mass murder committed by women, documenting them is important. Katsavdakis et al. (2011) describe the case of Jennifer San Marco, a middle-aged woman who killed seven people in Santa Barbara, California. Ms. San Marco had a long history of severe mental illness which included psychosis and erratic behavior in the workplace. She also seemed to be an "injustice collector," a person who "collects" wrongdoings, real or imagined. Injustice collectors never seem to forget or forgive the people they perceive as having personally wronged them and subsequently respond with acts of revenge (O'Toole 2014). Ms. San Marco's victims included a neighbor, who may have called the authorities on her for playing her stereo too loud, and former coworkers at the postal facility where she once worked. Ms. San Marco shot her victims at point blank range and then

committed suicide at the scene. It is unclear how she chose her victims but at least two of them were mentioned in her writings.

Stone (2015) collected data on 228 examples of mass murderers, nine of whom were female. Compared to men, the women in his sample killed fewer people, with the highest number of fatalities being seven, in one mass murder event. Six of the nine were categorized by Stone as mentally ill. Stone defines mental illness as individuals who are psychotic. This includes individuals with schizophrenia, bipolar disorders with accompanying delusions, schizoaffective disorders, delusional disorders, severe forms of autistic-spectrum disorders, and psychoses resulting from head injuries or drug use. Although his sample size of female offenders was small, he found that they were more likely to be mentally ill than were the male offenders.

The majority of women who commit multiple murders, target their family members, particularly their biological children, known as prolicide. The most well-known case of prolicide may be that of Andrea Yates, a Texas woman who killed her five children. As soon as she finished killing her last child, Yates called 911 to report herself to the authorities and spoke to them in a notably unemotional tone. She then called her husband, Rusty, to tell him what she had done. Andrea Yates was severely mentally ill at the time of the murders, suffering from postpartum psychosis. She believed that her children were "not developing correctly" and that she was not being a good mother to them (McLellan 2006). She feared that they were being tormented by Satan and that he had been conveying bad thoughts to them through the televisions and cameras in her home. She was also convinced that Satan was giving her instructions about harming her children and how to drown them. In her psychotic mind, drowning them was saving them from Satan. Dying meant that they would be in heaven, safe with God, and protected from evil influences. During her second trial, Andrea Yates was found not guilty by reason of insanity. She is currently living in a state psychiatric hospital in Texas.

A less well known but equally horrifying case is that of Gail Trait (Richards 2000). According to the *Buffalo Courier-Express* she killed her four children, ages two, four, six, and nine, in July, 1978. Newspaper reports indicate that two of the four children were stabbed while watching television. The other two children were found in the kitchen; one of whom had his hip and right hand cut from his body. His eyes were also removed. The body parts were found on the kitchen table near a blood-soaked anatomy textbook. In a videotaped confession, Ms. Trait said that the children "weren't my children until I killed them" and that "you would probably say this is murder, but it wasn't murder to me… I did that to help save their souls…after I did it I told them to say I was their mother." Ms. Trait was convicted of four counts of second-degree murder despite being diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. She was sentenced to 25 years in prison, but was granted a new trial after serving 10 years, at which she was found not guilty by reason of insanity. After the insanity verdict, she spent two years in a psychiatric facility and was released. Her whereabouts are unknown (Pelonero 2016).

Another variation of female mass murder is the family annihilator. As is true with most other types of murder, most family annihilators are men. Male family

annihilators are typically heads of their household, depressed, paranoid, intoxicated, or some combination thereof. They often kill their children, their spouse and then themselves, either by conventional suicide or "suicide by cop," an event where the police are forced to shoot and kill an active perpetrator. Scott and Fleming (2014) describe seven female family annihilators who killed four or more of their family members in a mass murder event. Five out of the seven cases were in the United States. Female family annihilators, in their study, tended to be heads of the household, separated, widowed or divorced, were on average 32 years old, killed their victims in the family home, and were depressed. Unlike the male family annihilators, the females did not try to kill ex-spouses. It is unclear if the afore-mentioned studies by Stone (2015), Scott and Fleming (2014) and Katsavdakis et al. (2011), included overlapping cases.

Family Annihilator Case Study

Michele Anderson and Joe McEnroe, boyfriend and girlfriend, could be charac-terized as family annihilators. Although both of them committed murder, Michele is clearly the "mastermind." Known less formally as "the Carnation Murders," the killings occurred in Washington State in 2007. Court records indicate that when asked by the authorities why she killed her entire family, Michele stated that "she was tired of everybody stepping on her." She was upset with her family and planned to kill them on Christmas Eve if those problems were not resolved.

The family lived in a rural area hundreds of feet away from their closest neighbors. Michele Anderson and her boyfriend lived free of charge in a single-wide mobile home on the outskirts of her parents property. Reportedly, Michele's parents were tired of her living rent-free and had been pressuring her to pay for living in the mobile home and for her car insurance. Michele had also been upset with her brother who she said owed her a lot of money and who refused to pay her back. Armed with a semiautomatic handgun and a revolver, the two loaded their guns and decided to confront Michele's parents.

Michele Anderson attempted to shoot her father, Wayne, but missed. Her boy-friend then shot her father in the head and then killed her mother, Judy. The couple dragged the bodies out of the home so that other family members would not see them upon arriving for the Christmas Eve celebration. When Michele's brother Scott and his family arrived for the party, Joe confronted Scott. Michele claimed that Scott charged at her and she was forced to shoot him. She fired two to four shots, one of which she thought hit her brother Scott in the neck.

Michele then turned her focus on Erika, her sister-in-law. She shot her twice but Erika did not die immediately. Joe had to "finish Erika" because Michele ran out of ammunition. Michele could not bring herself to shoot Scott and Erika's young children, Olivia and Nathan, so Joe shot them. Erika, wounded from being shot but still alive, begged Joe not to kill her to no avail. When the authorities asked Michele about why Erika and the children had to die, she said it was a combination of not

wanting them to have to live with the memories of the murders and not wanting there to be witnesses. When Joe was asked why he shot Erika and her two young children, he responded similarly, "I didn't want them to turn us in." Both perpetrators were found guilty of murder, and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The characteristics of Michele Anderson are consistent with some of the research about female family annihilators. In this case, like other cases profiled previously (see Scott and Fleming 2014), the victims were members of her own family, were killed in the family home, the murders were premeditated, the weapon of choice was a gun, and the "mastermind" perpetrator was 29 years old, slightly younger than the average age of other female family annihilators. This case differed from the extant research in the following ways: the "mastermind" female family annihilator involved a second perpetrator, her boyfriend, she was not divorced, separated or widowed, and she had no children of her own. There was also no evidence of depression or paranoia and there was no plan to commit suicide after the killings. The trigger for the event, and the motive, seemed to be financial, a factor inconsistent with the female family annihilator research, which has shown that more commonly, the motive is psychological.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that other researchers might categorize the Carnation murders as a different type of mass murder. Because Michele was considered the mastermind of the murders, and she did kill some members of her family, she could be characterized as a female family annihilator. Conversely, she did not single-handedly kill her family members; her boyfriend assisted in their murders. Perhaps the most accurate categorization for the Carnation murders, following the guidance of Scott and Fleming (2014), is familicide.

Dylan Klebold, Columbine, and Mass Murder Case Study

A great deal of analysis and reflection has occurred in the aftermath of the Columbine shootings, but the focus of this case study is the book written by Susan Klebold titled, *A Mother's Reckoning: Living in the Aftermath of Tragedy.* Susan Klebold is the mother of Dylan Klebold, who was one of the two perpetrators of the mass murders at Columbine High School, in Denver, Colorado on April 20, 1999. According to official reports, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were two high school seniors who entered Columbine high school armed with multiple guns, knives, and homemade bombs (Columbine Review Commission 2001). They shot at students and teachers. The entirety of the assault lasted approximately 46 minutes. Thirteen people were killed and dozens of others were wounded. Eric and Dylan committed suicide in the cafeteria of the high school. They intended to kill many more but the pipe bombs they planted did not detonate.

It is not generally the norm for the immediate family members of people who commit mass violence to be so open about their experiences. Understandably, they often go into hiding. There are commonly blamed by the public, accused of having

known more than they were willing to share or of not having done enough to prevent the tragedy. Not surprisingly, the most frequently asked question received by Ms. Klebold was, how could you not have known what your son was planning to do? By logical extension, the implication was that she knew and did nothing to stop it.

Not everyone blamed her for Dylan's actions. After the murders, she began receiving letters from people wanting to share their personal struggles with her. They wrote about the many losses and hardships they faced in their own lives. They could relate to her grief and felt that she could understand their emotional pain in a way that perhaps others could not. She also received disturbing love letters from girls who were attracted to her son. There would also be answering machine messages from young men referring to Dylan as a God or a hero. An acquaintance of hers once recounted a time, while working at a youth correctional facility, that some of the imprisoned boys cheered while watching television coverage of the Columbine shootings. Dylan had, and continues to have, many admirers.

The most surprising revelation was her lack of awareness regarding Dylan's struggles. It was only in the aftermath of the tragedy that she began to face his true nature. Her most eye-opening experience involved seeing the infamous "Basement Tapes" (that have since been destroyed). She watched as Eric and Dylan swore, used hateful language, drank alcohol, practiced shooting weapons, and bragged about all the people they were going to kill. Although she had always regarded Dylan as a psychologically healthy individual, the video demonstrated that she was wrong.

Ms. Klebold recounted the following personality traits about her son. He was extremely self-conscious with an "an exaggerated reluctance to risk embarrassment." She thought that he felt embarrassment more acutely than other teenagers. In his journals, he wrote about unrequited love. He loved a girl who apparently did not reciprocate his love and perhaps was not even aware of his romantic interest. He expressed a great deal of anger, grandiosity, depression, and suicidality, traits common among school shooters (Bonanno and Levenson 2014). He wrote about not expecting to live for much longer and feeling deeply frustrated about still being alive. He had been planning his suicide for at least two years before the shootings. Posthumously, mental health professionals, who examined his journals, thought Dylan had depression and schizotypal personality disorder. Another set of researchers, (Allely et al. 2014) believed that Dylan had autism spectrum disorder (ASD), which they estimated was indicative of more than 10 % of the serial and mass killers in their study.

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Chapter 5
Serial Murder

Abstract This chapter will provide a critical analysis of the scholarly literature concerning serial murder. Case studies and relevant critical thinking exercises will be provided. This chapter will also focus upon the prevalence of serial murder, theories and types, aspects of race and gender among offenders, victimology, a description of the biopsychosocial clinical picture of serial murderers, and psychopathy.

Defining Serial Murder

The definition of serial murder has changed over time. Hickey (2016) describes the evolution of the definition in his book *Serial Murderers and their Victims*. In 1984, a global definition was suggested by Stephen Egger. It included the following elements: the killing of one or more victims; there being a second murder; a male perpetrator; a victim and perpetrator who are strangers; the second murder taking place in a "different geographic location" from the first; the perpetrator's motive was driven by gratification of their sexual fantasies; and the victim had to be a member of a vulnerable population (i.e., a sex worker, a homeless person). Although that definition was fairly broad it proved to be inadequate.

In 1986, Hickey refined the definition of serial murder to include "all offenders who through premeditation killed three or more victims over a period of days, weeks, months, or years" (Hickey 2016, p. 35). This change allowed for female offenders to be labeled as serial murderers. In 1998, the United States Congress passed a federal law titled: Protection of Children From Sexual Predators Act of 1998 that included its own definition of "serial killings." The term "serial killings" meant "…a series of three or more killings, not less than one of which was committed within the United States, having common characteristics such as to suggest the reasonable possibility that the crimes were committed by the same actor or actors" (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2008, p. 8).

Another set of influential researchers defined serial murder in the *Crime Classification Manual* (CCM) as "involving three or more separate events with an emotional cooling-off period between homicides" (Douglas et al. 2006, p. 20). The most widely used and most recent iteration decreased the minimum number of people killed from three to two. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines serial murder as the unlawful killing of *two* or more victims by the same offender(s), in separate events, with a cooling-off period in between (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2008). There is no single behavioral profile that represents all cases, yet there are overarching similarities among serial murderers that set them apart from other types of murderers, including how they choose their victims, their methods of killing, and the motives that drive them to engage in such acts of violence.

Serial Murder Victims and Prevalence

Estimates from the FBI indicate that there are between 25 and 50 serial killers operating throughout the U.S. at any given time. Serial murder accounts for less than one percent of all murders committed in the United States. Radford University, in partnership with Florida Gulf Coast University, has created a database of serial killers and their victims. As of November 23, 2015, their database contains information about 4068 serial killers and over 11,000 victims from around the world. The following summarizes their statistics regarding the prevalence of serial killers in the United States:

- They identified 2743 serial killers in United States which represented about 67 % of the serial killers in their sample.
- Between 1950 and the present, 850 separate serial killers (those who killed at least two or more people) had been identified in the United States and had been caught and captured.
- Between 2010 and 2014, 65 separate serial killers were operating in the United States having killed at least two or more people and had been caught and captured.
- Victims were 53 % female, 67 % were Caucasian and were on average 33 years old.

The prevalence of serial murder (or of any crime) should be considered in the broader context of accurately quantifying crime statistics. The "dark figure of crime" is a well-known phenomenon. A certain number of committed crimes are never reported and remain unrecorded. Several such examples were highlighted recently by the Marshall Project, a nonprofit organization that focuses on criminal justice, led by Bill Keller, former *New York Times* executive editor. They identified 13 factors that are not known about the American criminal justice system. A subsample of those include (Meager 2016, para. 7):

- how many shootings there are in America;
- the number of people with a criminal record;
- the number of people who reoffend after being released from prison;
- how many people in America own guns; and
- how many incidents of domestic violence are reported to the police.

Unidentified human remains, adds another layer of uncertainty to crime statistics. Experts refer to this problem as "a mass disaster over time" (Ritter 2007, para. 1). Administrators of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUS) estimate that there are approximately 40,000 unidentified human remains in the offices of medical examiners and coroners across the United States. Another unidentified subset includes those who have been buried or cremated before having been identified. What led to their deaths remains unknown. Compounding the problem is the lack of awareness about databases like NamUs. Even when state and local officials know about the availability of these important databases, few have the time and the resources to enter data into these systems (Ritter 2007).

Another category of crime uncertainty involves unsolved crimes. Homicide clearance rates have dropped since the 1960s from around 90 % having been solved in 1965, to only 64 % in 2013 (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1965, 2013). Since 1980, there are an estimated 211,000 unsolved murders in the United States (Getting Away With Murder 2015). Despite considerable advances in forensic technology these statistics suggest that there are many people who have gotten away with murder, serial killers included.

Accurate statistics about serial murder are particularly difficult to gauge. Allely et al. (2014) tried in earnest to locate cases from both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources and could "make no accurate estimations regarding the prevalence of serial/mass killing" (p. 289). Other factors that make it difficult to accurately gauge prevalence include lack of access to confidential police records, the inaccessibility of incarcerated individuals for research purposes, the fact that serial homicide definitions have changed over time, and that there remains no single accepted definition. Additional factors can involve the difficulty of identifying a serial homicide series (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2008) and the fact that serial killers tend to overstate their number of victims. The "dark figure of crime" looms large in the case of serial murder.

Accuracy estimates of serial murder victims are also problematic. Quinet (2007) noted a lack of reliable data about *the missing missing*—people who go missing but who are not reported as being missing. *The missing missing* include: prostitutes, children in foster care, thrownaways (children forced out of their homes by their parents), unidentified dead (deceased individuals whose bodies were never claimed), and misidentified dead (deceased persons with unknown causes of deaths or whose deaths were incorrectly categorized as not being the result of homicide when in fact they were the result of homicide). Counting *the missing missing*, Quinet (2007) estimates that the number of serial killer victims could be as high as 1800 per year.

Hickey (2016) observed that serial killers tend to target strangers as opposed to family members and avoid individuals who they regard as being physically and

Table 5.1 Myths and facts about serial murder

Myths	Facts
They are raised in abusive families	This remains a source of debate within the academic literature. Some serial murderers do come from abusive and dysfunctional families. For instance, Henry Lee Lucas was physically abused by his mother and forced to observe her having sex with other men. She humiliated and embarrassed him in front of others and he was introduced to bestiality by her live-in lover (Wright and Hensley 2003). More commonly, many serial killers are driven to kill because of rejection and abandonment in childhood
They are dysfunctional loners who are incapable of maintaining long-term relationships	Although some are loners, the majority tend not to be reclusive, social misfits who live alone. Dennis Rader, also known as the BTK strangler, maintained what appeared to be a good relationship with his family, was a former Boy Scout leader, an honorable member of the U.S. Air Force, and was employed as a local government official. He was caught only after sending the police a floppy disk. The "properties" section of the document was searched by the police. They found that the file had last been saved by someone named Dennis, president of a local church. This mistake easily led to his capture
They increase their violence as the series progresses	There is scant evidence to suggest the intensity of violence grows stronger with each murder
They attempt to engage the police with dialogue to learn about the progress of the investigation by frequenting police "hangouts"	There have been cases in which a serial killer (Edmund Kemper) did "hang out" with police in order to gain information but this is not the norm. Most are not suspected by their friends or family and appear normal to members of their community
Once a serial killer starts murdering, he can never stop	Most serial killers are able to control their behavior. They can stop killing if they choose to, but they often choose not to. Ted Bundy acknowledged his interest in violent pornography was growing out control; yet, he continued searching for increasingly violent pornographic materials and eventually graduated to sexually assaulting and murdering at least 33 young women. Had he sought treatment, instead of indulging his violent interests, perhaps he would not have killed
They are all Caucasian	An estimated one in five serial killers is African-American. In recent years, at least 50 % have been African-American. There are also Hispanic and Asian serial killers

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Myths	Facts
None are female	Approximately 17 % are female
They are insane	Only about 2-4 % are adjudicated as being insane
They are all lust murderers	Many are, but several cases do not involve sexual assaults, torture, or sexual mutilations. Richard Kuklinski, nicknamed the "Iceman", worked as a contract killer for organized crime families. He claims to have killed over 200 people. His primary motivation was profit
They are prolific	There are some with high body counts, but most body counts are below eight
They kill alone	Approximately 25 % have one or more partners
They are highly intelligent	Most are of average intelligence
They are highly mobile	Most kill within their local geographic areas. They often have "comfort zones" characterized by where they live, where their friends and family live, and near where they work. Very few travel outside of their respective states to kill
They want to get caught	Generally, when they first begin killing they are inexperienced. As they continue, they make fewer mistakes, gain experience and confidence with each kill. As their confidence grows, they begin to take shortcuts, believing they can outsmart the police. They have no desire to be caught and often believe they will not be caught
They are psychopaths	Some are psychopaths while others have psychopathic traits. Simply being a serial killer does not mean that an individual is a psychopath
They have an identifiable profile	There is no single identifiable profile that encompasses all serial killers. They vary with regard to ethnicity, race, religion, nationality, age, gender, SES, IQ, and education

Sources Federal Bureau of Investigation (2008), pp. 3–6, Hickey (2016), pp. 5–6, Morton et al. (2015), p. 7

intellectually their equal or superior. "Young women alone" (which can include female college students, prostitutes, hitchhikers, or women walking alone on streets) was identified in surveys as being the number one type of victim sought out by serial killers (Hickey 2016). The second most sought-after group was children, both boys and girls (Hickey 2016). In general, serial killers target people they perceive as being weak and helpless, and those they believe they can overpower.

Myths About Serial Murder

For reasons that are not entirely understood, serial murder remains a source of fascination. It is the subject of many books, television shows, and movies. Often the information presented in these public works is inaccurate. These inaccuracies can lead to problems in real-life investigations. One such explanation can be found in a recent monograph by Morton et al. (2015). When high-profile serial murders are discussed in the media, they routinely interview "so-called" experts to comment on ongoing investigations. These individuals are not privy to the facts of the case nor do many of them have investigative experience. Morton et al. explain that these "instant assessments can be very detrimental to investigators" working active cases "because the erroneous information supplied can mislead potential witnesses or deter others from contacting the police with information" about ongoing cases (p. 7). In addition, it is common for a serial murderer to follow media stories about their case. The contradictory information provided by "so-called" experts can interfere with law enforcement strategies.

There are many inaccuracies associated with serial murder. Most myths contain a kernel of truth and the line between myth and fact is blurred. Table 5.1 identifies the most enduring myths and facts about serial murder.

Typologies and Motivations of Serial Murderers

Since the 1970s, there have been numerous classifications of serial murderers often referred to as typologies. These typologies vary according to the characteristics of the offender, the method of killing, and the behavior of the offender before, during, and after the offense. Motivation is also an important factor. The FBI (2008) identified seven categories of motivation that generally encompass all serial murderers: anger, criminal enterprise, financial gain, ideology, power/thrill, psychosis, and sexual. The typologies tend to overlap, not all of them have been empirically validated, and certain typologies are used more widely than others. Derived from the typology summaries of Miller (2014), Morton et al. (2015) and Hickey (2016), the more common typologies are described below.

As described by Hickey (2016), Wille identified 10 different types of murderers (not specifically serial murderers) in 1974 including: *depressive; psychotic; afflicted with organic brain disorder; psychopathic; passive aggressive; alcoholic; hysterical; juvenile; mentally retarded; and sex killers* (p. 37). In 1977, Keppel and Walter developed a typology of murderers based upon a classification of rape perpetrators. The empirical evidence of this typology is limited (Morton et al. 2015). These included the following four types:

Power-assertive rape murder: a planned rape-turned-murder because offender wanted more control and/or power and/or wanted to eliminate the resistance of the victim.

Power-reassurance rape murder: a planned rape-turned-murder after an attempt to seduce the victim failed.

Anger-retaliatory rape murder: a planned rape and murder for the purpose of gaining revenge.

Anger-excitation rape murder: a victim is raped and murdered to satisfy a sadistic urge of the offender whose primarily desire was to torture a live victim.

Lee (1988) described categories of killers based upon motive (Hickey 2016). These included: *profit; passion; hatred; power or domination; revenge; opportunism; fear; contract killings; desperation; compassion; and ritual killers* (Hickey 2016, p. 37). Some of the most well-known classification systems were developed by the special agents of the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit (BSU). In the 1980s, they interviewed 36 serial and sexual murderers who had killed a total of 118 victims (Ressler et al. 1986; as cited in Morton et al. 2015). Their classification system considered an offender's behavior at the murder scene and was meant to reflect a number of characteristics about the offender including his or her: personality, psychosocial development, criminal history, and social interactions. The following categories included:

Organized offender: a perpetrator who has above average intelligence, considers himself to be superior to others, is in control, carefully selects his victim, is highly pre-meditative, often takes souvenirs or trophies from his victims, and commonly uses alcohol and restraints.

Disorganized offender: a perpetrator who has below average intelligence, is ill-prepared, spontaneous in his choice of victims, leaves a muddled and sloppy crime scene, uses weapons of convenience, is considered opportunistic, performs sexual acts on the dead body, often poses the body, and may even keep the body.

Mixed offender: demonstrates a combination of organized and disorganized characteristics; many offenders demonstrate characteristics of both categories, therefore, the use of these broad-based typologies is limited.

Holmes and DeBurger (1985, 1988) and Holmes and Holmes (1996) created typologies that are among the most used to describe serial killers. These six are described below (Miller 2014):

Spatial mobility killer: this typology distinguishes between geographically stable serial killers who live in one area and kill in that same or nearby area and geographically transient murderers who travel outside of their home base to commit their crimes. A third subtype of this category may include Hickey's "play specific killers." These offenders kill where they work or live and can include nurses, housewives, or other individuals who kill at home or at work (Hickey 2016).

Visionary serial killer: perpetrators who kill under the influence of psychosis.

Mission serial killer: perpetrators who may or may not be psychotic but who are driven to kill because of an extreme ideological belief that it is necessary to eliminate certain people. For instance, in a jailhouse interview with a local Virginia news station, Michael Elijah Adams, "The Train Killer" bragged about killing 16

fellow homeless train-riders that disrupted his drug deals. "I'm proud of what I did…I'm a necessary part of society. Some label me as a serial killer. And other people label me as an enforcer…"

Comfort-oriented serial killer: perpetrators who kill for profit or financial gain.

Hedonistic serial killer: perpetrators who kill because they derive sexual pleasure from torture.

Power/control serial killer: similar to the hedonistic subtype, these perpetrators are primarily motivated by a desire for control and domination as opposed to sexual pleasure.

Although the Holmes and Holmes serial murder classification system is among the most widely used, a (2004) study by Canter and Wentick noted multiple drawbacks. These included overlapping characteristics among the categories, lack of reliability and validity, and direct empirical testing. They also found limited support for lust, thrill, and mission styles of killing and suggest a modification that emphasizes offender–victim interaction instead of inferring an offender's motivation.

More recent typologies of sexual homicide offenders have been posited by Sewall et al. (2013). They argue that sexual homicide is not a specific phenomenon, but rather indicative of more general antisocial behavior. They studied the biographies of male serial sexual homicide offenders available on the TruTV website. Three types of offenders emerged from their work (Miller 2014):

Competitively disadvantaged: lifelong criminals who would likely meet the clinical definition of antisocial personality disorder and who are developmentally and cognitively impaired. Their sexual homicides are characterized by anger and impulsivity precipitated by a sexual rejection and possibly a sexual assault gone wrong.

Psychopathic: lifelong criminals whose clinical attributes would likely mirror the prototypical psychopath. They are primarily motivated by a desire for excitement and are not attempting to deliberately murder. If murder does occur, it may have been precipitated by sexual rejection or as the unintended outcome of a sadistic sex act.

Sadistic: absence of a long criminal history but has a fixation with sexual torture and pornography and is motivated to gratify these sadistic sexual urges through murder.

Miller (2014) observed that certain types of serial killers require categories all their own. These "special populations" of serial killers include: sadist-masochist, female, couple/team, homosexual, and professional. These categories, with one additional "special population" of child serial killers, are briefly described below:

Sadist-masochist serial killers derive pleasure from both giving and receiving pain and engage in acts of self-mutilation, genital self-torture, or autoerotic asphyxiation.

Female serial killers represent approximately 17 % of all serial killers (Hickey 2016). They generally kill out of rage and/or predatory lust and are motivated by money or a desire for attention. They tend to be older, remain at large longer, and have a higher body count than male serial killers. Females in general are perceived

as being less dangerous than men and thus fewer people might suspect them of serial killing. This gender bias might explain why they remain at large longer than do men. An intriguing study published in the *Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences* found that hurricanes with feminine-sounding names were more deadly than hurricanes with masculine-sounding names. The researchers believed that people perceived the feminine-named hurricanes as being less risky and thus were less motivated to prepare for the storms (Jung et al. 2014). Female serial killers also target people close to them, including their mothers, stepchildren, husbands, lovers, or people with whom they are caring (Gurian 2011).

Couple/team serial killers involve two people: one to procure victims and a second who perpetrates the killings. Common motives include robbery-murder for profit or a desire for sexual gratification. Hickey (2016) noted that team killers may kill for cult-related reasons and are often motivated by a desire for sexual gratification.

Homosexual serial killers are men who kill men and often have motives of a sexual nature.

Professional serial killers involve individuals retained by various criminal organizations. They tend to enjoy their occupations and often become quite skilled in the "art" of killing.

Juvenile serial killers represent individuals under the age of 18 at the time they committed their crimes. Myers (2004) identified six cases over a 150 year period. The sample included juveniles ages 11 through 16, one of whom was female. Most killed shortly after turning 14 with the exception of Mary Bell whose first kill occurred at age 11. Additional characteristics include: a mean of three victims, 50 % selected female victims, 50 % selected strangers, the method of killing was primarily cutting, stabbing, or asphyxiation, 100 % involved sexual elements (three masturbated at the crime scene), and all six cases demonstrated signs of sexual sadism.

Biopsychosocial Profiles of Serial Murderers

There is no known definitive cause of serial murder. Exactly how someone becomes a serial killer is unknown at present. According to the homicide working group, a committee dedicated to the study of homicide research in the twenty-first century, there are "virtually no biopsychosocial studies…as late as the beginning of the millennium" (Huff-Corzine et al. 2015, p. 49). Biopsychosocial studies of this population are clearly lacking.

Compelling evidence suggests violence has a biological or genetic basis (see Raine 2013). Certain neurotransmitters and hormones have been identified as affecting aggression, impulsivity, and violence including serotonin, norepinephrine, and testosterone. Monoamine oxidase A (MAOA), also known as the warrior gene, is an enzyme that metabolizes neurotransmitters (Raine 2013). Mutations in this gene have been linked with antisocial behavior. Autism spectrum disorders

(ASD) and head injuries were identified in more than 10 % of serial/mass killers in a 2014 study by Alley and colleagues. How precisely neurobiological factors influence the development of a serial murderer remains uncertain.

Psychosocial stressors are also common among serial killers. This was best exemplified in a study by James and Proulx (2014) who analyzed the social characteristics of both serial sexual murderers (SSMs) (also known as lust murderers) and non-serial sexual murderers (NSMs). They found that SSMs (n = 176) had many more sexual problems than NSMs (n = 1660) including compulsive masturbation, sexual dysfunctions, paraphilias, and early-onset coercive sexual behaviors. NSMs had similar childhood abuse profiles to SSMs. They were often raised in violent and chaotic family environments and exhibited psychopathy, and antisocial and borderline personality traits. The main differences between SSMs and NSMs involved sexual dysfunction, sadism, and psychopathy. The lives of SSMs were characterized primarily by sexual dysfunction and sadism whereas NSMs were psychopathic, angry, and vengeful. The study provides a deeper understanding into the underlying motivation of serial murderers and suggests that a disproportional number of serial killers are driven by psychopathy.

Psychopathy

Psychopathy describes a set of 20 distinct personality characteristics including superficial charm, impulsivity, lack of empathy, among others (Hare 1993). It is estimated that one out of every 100 people is psychopathic. Psychopaths can be quite dangerous. They often prey upon people and do not feel guilt or regret for immoral behavior (Hare 1993). They use people for their personal gain and will be violent if they deem it personally beneficial. Cinematically, two examples best portray psychopathy: Anton Chigurh in the film *No Country for Old Men* and Henry from *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* about the real-life serial killer Henry Lee Lucas (Leistedt and Linkowski 2014). Contrary to popular belief, one of the less accurate movie portrayals of psychopathy is Hannibal Lecter from the film *The Silence of the Lambs*. Many of the traits he demonstrated in the film were inconsistent with the traits that are characteristic of psychopathy, including his attachment with and affection for Clarice Starling, his ability to delay gratification, and his high IQ (DeLisi et al. 2009).

The terms psychopath, sociopath, and antisocial personality disorder (ASPD) are often used interchangeably. Many people believe that they essentially mean the same thing. Distinctions between the terms are described within the criminological literature. Psychopaths lack morality and a conscience (Pemment 2013). Sociopaths, conversely, according to some theorists, have a sense of morality and a conscience but their notions of right and wrong are inconsistent with their broader culture (Pemment 2013).

Clinically, psychopathy and sociopathy are not diagnosable conditions. Individuals who present in clinical settings with psychopathy traits would likely receive the diagnosis of ASPD. ASPD is a clinical disorder identified in the

American Psychiatric Association's (APA) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), currently in its fifth edition. The *DSM* is used by clinicians in the United States to diagnose mental health disorders. Although ASPD shares some common traits with psychopathy, the two are conceptually different (Crego and Widiger 2015) and less than one quarter of people diagnosed with ASPD would meet the criteria for psychopathy (Blair et al. as cited in Reidy et al. 2015).

Psychopathy is sometimes confused with psychosis. Psychopathy involves a constellation of personality traits including a lack of morality and conscience whereas psychosis involves a break with reality and is associated with disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. People who are psychotic, experience delusions, hallucinations, and paranoia. They believe in things that are not real and have difficulty distinguishing reality from non-reality. An individual who is psychotic might hear voices commanding them to engage in violent behaviors. Psychopaths have no difficulty distinguishing reality from non-reality. They do not hear voices. They are fully cognizant of their behavior and may engage in violence when it advances their personal causes. It is important to acknowledge the fact that people experiencing psychosis can also demonstrate traits of psychopathy but psychopaths are not psychotic. The following examples highlight the differences between psychosis and psychopathy.

Diana Dial had a long history of schizophrenia with repeated psychotic episodes. Despite being evidently psychotic, Dial did not believe she was ill and refused treatment. She left her Texas family and moved to another state to study library science. She experienced a number of psychotic symptoms including the belief that she was being followed by the CIA and that she was being poisoned with liquid gold. She became convinced that her landlord was poisoning her coffee with a drug that caused Alzheimer's. In an effort to prevent him from continuing to poison her, she preemptively shot and killed him.

Jeffrey Dahmer could be considered a psychopath. He killed 17 young men and engaged in cannibalism. To many people, cannibalism is a sign of insanity or severe mental illness, but Jeffrey Dahmer was neither insane nor severely mentally ill. He did not experience delusions, hallucinations, or paranoia, symptoms commonly associated with severe mental illnesses. He admitted to knowing that what he was doing was wrong. Diana Dial did not seem to know that killing was wrong because psychosis led her to believe that her life was in danger and she needed to act in self-defense. Jeffrey Dahmer, alternatively, never believed he was in danger. Instead of seeking help for his behavior, he continued killing for his own personal sexual pleasure. Diana Dial was psychotic whereas Jeffrey Dahmer was psychopathic.

Cleckley's book (1941, 1976) titled, *The Mask of Sanity*, was highly influential in the study of psychopathy. The book presented in-depth case studies of individuals who manifested psychopathy symptoms. It outlined the traits that made his subjects psychopathic and the factors that distinguished them from other types of mental health disorders and symptoms. Cleckley's work (among others) laid the groundwork for Dr. Robert Hare, who has since deeply expanded the knowledgebase of psychopathy.

Table 5.2 Psychopathy traits based on the PCL-R

PCL-R characteristic	Definition
Interpersonal	
Glib/superficial	Presenting oneself as likable and charming but appearing insincere, detached, and superficial to the astute observer; using technical jargon to appear to be an expert
Grandiose self-worth	Grossly inflated sense of self-worth and sense of entitlement
Pathological lying	Profound ability to lie and even brag about it
Conning and manipulative	Deceptive and unfazed about the possibility of being found out; if caught lying, simply changes the facts to appear consistent with the lie
Affective	
Lack of remorse or guilt	No sense of guilt, not sorry; no regrets for the pain they have caused
Shallow affect	Appear indifferent to the suffering of others; emotional poverty
Callous/lacks empathy	A sense of fearlessness that is distinctly different from that of most people
Fail to accept responsibility	Never perceives anything as their fault; always blaming external factors or other people without recognizing or admitting to their own problematic contributions
Lifestyle	
Stimulation-seeking	Easily bored, living "on the edge," searching for things that are novel for stimulation; inability to tolerate routine and monotony
Impulsivity	Acting without forethought; failing to consider the consequences of any course of action; living "for the moment"
Irresponsible	Not concerned with and/or neglecting their obligations commitments; unreliable
Parasitic orientation	Latching onto and taking from others without positive reciprocation
Lack of realistic goals	Inability to plan for their futures
Antisocial	
Poor behavior controls	Inability to stop themselves from doing what they feel like doing even if it is wrong or might bring them distress
Early behavior problems	Behavioral problems from an early age including lying, cheating, theft, fire setting truancy, substance-abuse, bullying, running away, among others
Juvenile delinquency	In trouble with the law due to their behavioral problems
Revocation of conditional release	Court reversing its decision to release a prisoner after learning that specific release conditions have been violated or unmet
Criminal versatility	Adept in diverse types of crimes
Two additional items that contribute to the total PCL score	
Promiscuous sexual behavior	Indiscriminate and frequent sexual contacts with many partners
Many short-term relationships	Shallow, superficial and time-limited relationships with many partners

Sources Hare (1993) and Hare and Neumann (2008)

The gold standard psychometric measure for psychopathy is the PCL-R. Studies have shown that it can reliably predict recidivism and violence. It is primarily used in forensic settings. A newer variation of the measure is the PCL: SV. It is used in non-forensic settings and serves as a tool for assessing psychopathy in non-forensic community populations. Studies suggest that it is conceptually and empirically similar to the PCL-R (Hare and Neumann 2008).

Dr. Robert Hare's 1993 book titled, *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us*, is considered to be one of the most authoritative books written on the subject of psychopathy. In the book, Hare describes the 20 characteristics of his PCL-R in great detail. These characteristics are common in psychopaths. Utilizing the PCL-R, in addition to acquiring a case history and conducting a semi-structured interview, individuals who score 30 and above could be characterized as having psychopathy (Hare and Neumann 2008). These 20 characteristics are described below (Table 5.2).

Psychopathy and Its Causes

The root cause of psychopathy is unknown. It is generally believed to be a combination of biological and environmental causes. Brain imaging studies suggest that the structure and function of psychopaths' brains differ from nonpsychopaths (see Kiehl 2006) but a cause and effect relationship has yet to be established. Dr. Robert Hare shared his latest thinking about psychopathy in a June, 2016 issue of *Discover Magazine.* Reflecting on 50 years of his work, he has come to think of psychopathy as an "adaptive lifestyle strategy… [Psychopaths are] properly designed for engagement in predatory behaviors…My view is that psychopaths have the intellectual capacity to know the rules of society and the difference between right and wrong—and they choose which rules to follow and to ignore…" (Egan 2016, para. 35). Psychopaths, therefore, choose immoral behavior if it suits them, irrespective of the suffering it may inflict upon his or her fellow human beings.

Case Study of Ted Bundy

In the annals of serial killer history, Ted Bundy is among the most infamous. People are endlessly fascinated by him and his crimes. According to Radford University, which maintains the Serial Killer Information Center, where students and researchers track data about this type of perpetrator, Ted Bundy killed 36 victims across six states including Washington, Oregon, Utah, Colorado, Idaho, and

Florida. He claimed to have killed up to 100 victims but only a subset has been confirmed. His victims aged in range between 12 and their later 20s. He targeted young, upper class women with brown hair. He raped them, sometimes before and sometimes after their deaths. His victims were bludgeoned, strangled, and mutilated.

On January 23, 1989, the day before Ted Bundy was going to be executed, he granted an interview to Dr. James Dobson, founder of the conservative evangelical Christian organization Focus on the Family. That interview, which as of this writing can be viewed on YouTube (in parts) and on various other websites, is the subject of this case study. In all likelihood, Ted Bundy conducted this interview to make himself look good, a characteristic consistent with psychopaths who are often deeply concerned about their image (Hare 1993). He speaks slowly and deliberately, carefully choosing his words. It appears as though he wants to control the interview and is doing everything in his power to make that happen.

Also noteworthy is his lack of empathy. When asked if he was feeling remorse for his crime, he stumbled to answer the question and eventually said that he had steadfastly and diligently dealt with his feelings, with the help of God. In other words, those feelings no longer existed for him and in all likelihood, they never did. His answer is emotionally void of any feeling. Like other psychopaths, he appears to "know the words but not the music" (Hare 1993, p. 53). Later in the interview, he was asked directly about the murder of 12-year-old Kimberly Leach. Looking down and no longer at the interviewer, he responded, "I can't really talk about that…I'd like to be able to…I would like to be able to convey to you what that…that ah, that experience is like but I can't, I won't be able to talk about that." It is unclear what "experience" he is referencing to. The "experience" of feeling guilt or the "experience" of killing a 12-year-old girl?

There are also instances, throughout the interview, where he grows frustrated with his inability to find the right words to make his point. These mistakes are infringing upon his ability to control the interview and his agitation is evident. Also clinically relevant is his speaking about himself in the third person, a trait noted by other researchers, including Elliott Leyton. Mr. Bundy referring to himself and his crimes, in the third person, is a psychologically convenient way to deflect responsibility for his actions.

Although he claims responsibility for his crimes, he clearly sees himself as a victim. He characterizes his exposure to violent pornography as being out of his control. Yet, he repeatedly described, throughout the interview, how he sought out materials of a more sexually explicit and violent nature. He likened his use of pornography to an addiction; it was all around him and he could not avoid it. A responsible person would have sought professional help for his or her uncontrollable compulsions; instead he moved toward the very behavior that he admittedly knew was leading him to violence. After a night of self-proclaimed weeping and praying, Ted Bundy was executed the following day in a Florida prison. It was clear that he did not want to die.

Case Study of Herbert Mullins

For reasons that are not entirely evident, some serial killers are better known than others. Many laypersons know of Jeffery Dahmer or Ted Bundy or Edmund Kemper. Those serial killers have garnered a fair amount of infamy and notoriety, enough to be considered household names. One lesser known but prolific serial killer is Herbert Mullins. Herbert Mullins was operating at approximately the same time period as was Edmund Kemper and in the same state. Mullins killed 13 people, ranging in age from 4–72, in Santa Cruz, California between 1972 and 1973. He shot, stabbed, and bludgeoned his victims to death. In that same time frame, Kemper killed six college coeds, his mother, and his mother's close friend.

Mullins and Kemper knew each other, but were not friends. They lived in adjoining jail cells. According to the court-appointed psychiatrist who they shared, Dr. Donald Lunde, Kemper tormented Mullins, referring to him as a "creep with no class" (Lunde and Morgan 1980, p. 254). Kemper even offered to snitch on Mullins to prison officials. Mullins was equally not fond of Kemper. Mullins perceived his own reasons for killing as legitimate and defensible whereas he considered Kemper an animal, driven by an inability to control his sexual urges.

Mullins was raised in a strict Christian family. He had one older sister. He was athletic, popular, and smart in high school. He attended Cabrillo College where he earned an associate's degree in road engineering. He later transferred to San Jose State College where he changed his major to philosophy and became interested in eastern religions. It was also around this time that he broke off his engagement with Loretta, a woman whom he had dated for several years and with whom he shared a deep connection. He eventually dropped out of college and became involved in the military service as a conscientious objector. As part of his alternative military service, he worked for Goodwill Industries for a short time, before being arrested for possessing marijuana. He later tried to enter several active branches of the military, but was turned away just months before his arrest for multiple murders at the age of 25.

By all accounts, Herbert Mullins was profoundly mentally ill. His life was relatively ordinary until the death of his close friend Dean Richardson at the age of 17. Dean's death is thought to have triggered Herb's first psychotic episode. From that point on, he had intermittent psychotic episodes where he experienced grandiosity, paranoia, and delusional thinking. He also sometimes used marijuana and LSD. He wrote letters to public figures and government organizations detailing his religious beliefs. He was obsessed with the number 13, his sexual identity, and the sexual identity of other people. He thought that this mother and sister were lesbians who conspired to keep him from developing and maturing into a normal human being. His also blamed his father for these problems. He was convinced that his father was telepathically telling people to shame and belittle him, and on occasions, was commanding him to kill people.

Friends and relatives recounted his odd and bizarre behavior. During one family dinner, for instance, Herb began to imitate the behavior of his brother-in-law. Lunde

and Morgan (1980) recount the following example about that incident in their book titled, *The Die Song: A Journey Into the Mind of a Mass Murderer.*

When [his brother-in-law] Al Bocca picked up his fork, so did Herb. When Al ate a mouthful, Herb aped him. He seemed to be in a trance, unable to communicate. This behavior, the parroting of the actions of another person, is known as echopraxia… (pp. 139–140). Herb's mother recollected her memories of that same event. He was "… just sitting there with a blank stare on his face and almost baring his teeth … kind of like an animal does when an animal is vicious (p. 158)." Herb saw it differently. He thought he was doing what his brother-in-law was telepathically telling him to do.

Soon after that incident Herb was hospitalized and diagnosed with schizophrenia. More hospitalizations, arrests, and odd behavior followed. He often refused psychiatric treatments. His parents tried to get him help but it was difficult. They were told, on at least one occasion, that unless their son committed a crime, he could not be forced into psychiatric treatment. At this point in history, many of the psychiatric hospitals were being shut down. Herb strayed in and out of the lives of his parents. He had trouble maintaining a stable home, steady work, and lived a transient lifestyle.

After his arrest for the murders, Herb told doctors that he heard voices telling him to kill. He described seeing his victims on the street and feeling as though they were telepathically asking to be killed. He detailed his rationale for killing. In his view, he was trying to prevent or protect people against earthquakes. He explains:

> … we human beings, through the history of the world, have protected our continents from cataclysmic earthquakes by murder. In other words, a minor natural disaster avoids a major natural disaster…People like to sing the die song, you know, people like to sing the die song…If I am president of my class when I graduate from high school, I can tell two, possibly three young male Homo sapiens to die. I can sing that song to them and they'll have to kill themselves or be killed—an automatic accident, a knifing, a gunshot wound. You ask me why this is? And I say, well, they have to do that in order to protect the ground from an earthquake, because all of the other people in the community had been dying all year long, and my class, we have to chip in so to speak to the darkness, we have to die also. And people would rather sing the die song than murder…I'm telling you to kill yourself, or be killed so that my continent will not fall off into the ocean…see, it's all based on reincarnation, this dies to protect my strata (p. 207).

Herb, on some occasions, demonstrated insight into his illness of schizophrenia, known historically as dementia praecox. In what seemed like a moment of clarify and remorse, he told Dr. Lunde:

> I wish I had the self-control to say, "We'll I'll play the role of the masochist, rather than the role of the sadist. A sadist gets revenge. A masochist doesn't. Well, I see you guys took me for a ride, you put me through dementia praecox…I wish I could would have said, "We'll I'll just get a job, and a wife and children, and barbecues on the weekend" (p. 209). He described his belief that at least one of his victims, Mr. Gianera, had "laid" dementia praecox on him, by selling him marijuana instead of Benzedrine [amphetamine] which Herb considered an antidote to schizophrenia. "Yeah, he'd rather have that picture of me for five years in dementia praecox" (p. 210).

Herb maintained other elaborate and religiously themed delusions. He believed in what he called "the Jonas philosophy," which meant that when someone died, coastal areas were spared from earthquakes. The connection between death and earthquakes can be traced back to his beloved high school friend Dean who died in an automobile accident. Herb wrote extensively and prolifically, even after his arrest, about a wide variety of topics including art, religion, philosophy, engineering, homosexuality, among others. He blamed his parents, and his use of illegal drugs, for his psychological problems.

At his trial, Herb pled insanity. During his testimony, he admitted to knowing that murder was against the law. His psychiatrist believed that he had little to no chance of winning an insanity verdict especially because of Ed Kemper. At the time, the public was aware of the fact that Kemper, who had been in a state mental hospital after killing his grandparents, was deemed cured, released, and then killed again. They were not going to allow another legally insane serial killer to be treated at a mental hospital with the possibility of future release. Herb Mullins was found guilty and is currently incarcerated in a state prison in California. He will be eligible for parole in the year 2020.

Case Study of Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski, "The Unabomber"

Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski is a highly intelligent, Ph.D., ivy league-educated mathematician, nicknamed "the Unabomber." For almost two decades, he created homemade bombs that killed three people and injured 23 others. He sent the bombs through the mail from his cabin in the woods of Lincoln, Montana. He promised to stop his mail bomb attacks if newspaper editors published his 35,000 word manifesto and multiple follow-up documents. His manifesto, titled *Industrial Society and Its Future*, was meant to warn society about the dangers of technology. Many regard his manifesto as a window into the mind of a madman.

The publishing of his manifesto led to his downfall. Kaczynski's sister-in-law, Linda and his brother, David Kaczynski, read the lengthy treatise and recognized Ted as the author. Ted Kaczynski was soon arrested. At trial, he was diagnosed with schizophrenia, but deemed competent to stand trial. His lawyers were planning an insanity plea which outraged Ted. He was convinced that he was not mentally ill, a trait commonly associated with schizophrenia called anosognosia (Amador and Paul-Odouard 2000), and ultimately agreed to a plea deal (of four life sentences) to prevent his attorneys from discussing his mental state in open court. Years after his case has been settled, he continues to believe he is not mentally ill. *CBS News* reported that in a letter to *New Yorker* author Lawrence Write, dated April 4, 2016, Ted wrote that he is "ready to speak to someone from the media regarding my brother's recent comments…[that are being] used to torment me…I am only granting <u>one</u> interview to <u>one</u> person…affirming you understand that I am <u>NOT</u>

mentally ill…" As of May, 2016, he is incarcerated at the Penitentiary Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX) in Florence, Colorado. Categorically, he meets the definition of a serial murderer but many might also consider him a domestic or a "lone wolf" terrorist. His has never expressed remorse for his crimes and actively corresponds with people from all over the world (see Chap. 2).

Critical Thinking Exercise: "The Unabomber"

At the time of this writing, a video titled, "The Hunt for the Unabomber" was available on YouTube. Use the key words "Ted Kaczynski and Unabomber" to locate this video or similar documentary videos about Ted Kaczynski. The following exercise has been adapted from a media literacy exercise for students of journalism that accompanied The Newseum's FBI November, 2015 exhibit of the Unabomber's cabin (Unabomber Case Study 2015). Participants should review the video and consider the following scenario and questions for discussion.

Large multimedia publishers of a major daily newspaper in the United States have contacted you about an urgent problem. A man known as "the Unabomber" has promised to stop sending mail bomb attacks if they agree to publish his manifesto. Over the course of two decades, his bombs had killed three people and had injured 23 others. As the behavioral expert consulted on this case, you are asked your opinion regarding the publishing of his manifesto. The Unabomber has given you three months to publish his manifesto or else he will continue mailing bombs. Consider that the Internet has changed things considerably, since the Unabomber's reign of terror (1978–1996) and that now there are many alternative outlets for him to publish his manifesto. Limit your thinking to the time period of his reign of terror. What do you recommend that the media publishers do?

A. Publish the entire document.
B. Publish excerpts of the manifesto as a part of a news story.
C. Do not publish the entire document. It is the work of a killer and it could encourage other terrorists to make similar demands.
D. Negotiate with the Unabomber to buy time or to seek other solutions.

- What option did you choose and why?
- How important, in your decision-making process, is reading and analyzing the manifesto?
- Who will be affected by your decision?
- What do you see as your role/responsibility in this task?
- Is this a public-safety issue and, if so, what role does it play in your decision-making?
- Who, if anyone, would you consult in your decision-making process and how much influence would they have on your decision?
- Can you trust the Unabomber to end his attacks?

- What role does his mental illness play in your decision-making process?
- How do you explain his ability to build sophisticated bombs and methodically plan complex murder schemes in the context of his severe mental illness?
- What are the dangers of agreeing to the demands of a terrorist?

Case Study of Dennis Rader, "The BTK Strangler"

Dennis Rader is known as "the BTK strangler." BTK stands for bind, torture, and kill. He killed 10 people in the Wichita, Kansas area beginning in the 1970s and lasting until 1991. His method of killing involved tying victims with pieces of rope that he retrieved from his self-created "hit kit." After they were bound, he would suffocate and strangle them. He was captured after he sent a floppy disk to a local television station. The disk was traced to Rader through a computer at his church. Utilizing a DNA sample from his daughter, the police identified Dennis Rader as the BTK strangler. He was sentenced to 10 consecutive life sentences and is incarcerated at El Dorado Correctional Facility in Kansas.

Unlike many other serial killers, the case of Dennis Rader has received some scholarly attention. Lynes and Wilson (2015) reviewed case biographies, YouTube videos, court transcripts, and visited the crime scenes and the neighborhood where Rader lived. They believe that the transient and unsupervised nature of his occupation facilitated his murders. Dennis Rader installed fire alarms for ADT security services and later worked as a code compliance officer in a suburb of Wichita which meant much driving alone in his truck. His occupation afforded him the freedom to troll for victims and provided him with the means to transport his victims' bodies. The vehicle itself, Lynes and Wilson argue, was also psychologically important to his crimes. It "served as a hub in which he could indulge in his most private fantasies," (p. 275) which eventually evolved into concrete plans that he carried out. Their case study highlights the connection between offender occupation, transience, and serial murder.

Critical Thinking Exercise: Dennis Rader, "The BTK Stranger"

Dennis Rader provided a detailed confession in court about his murdering 10 people. At the time of this writing, that video was available on YouTube, and on various other websites. Use the key words "Dennis Rader, BTK and confession" to locate this video on YouTube or on the Internet. The video provides a rich opportunity to study various aspects of a sadistic killer describing the conceptualization of his crimes. Ask participants to review the video and to consider the following questions for discussion:

1. How would you describe BTK's demeanor in court? Why do you think he behaves in this way?
2. Modus operandi (M.O.) involves the manner in which a criminal carries out his or her crimes. Describe BTK's modus operandi. Was it the same for all of his killings?
3. Were there any instances of psychological distancing or unusual use of language when he explained how he killed 10 people? What is the behavioral significance of this behavior?
4. Based on what you heard in court from BTK, describe his motive for the killings.
5. How did his desire to control other people factor into his killings?
6. Based on your review of the video, would you consider BTK a psychopath? Why or why not? If yes, list the traits that best support your answer.
7. The way BTK speaks about women differs from how he speaks about men. Describe those differences. Does he view either of them as objects?

Case Study: The "Zodiac Killer"

There is very little written about the Zodiac killer in the scholarly literature. Most of what is known about the case comes from true crime books, documentaries, and the long-running website www.zodiac killer.com, maintained by Tom Voigt. The FBI has also investigated the case, but to date it remains unsolved. In fact, the "Zodiac Killer" remains the oldest unsolved serial murder case in the United States.

The "Zodiac Killer" was active in California during the 1960s and 1970s. Although he claimed to have killed 37 people, only seven have been identified. He targeted couples in secluded areas, except on one occasion when he murdered a cab driver in San Francisco. He would shoot and stab his victims. Rarely did any of the murders involve sexual elements. After killing, he would make cryptic phone calls and write letters to local newspapers demanding that they be published or he would kill more people. He wrote at least 18 letters, mostly to newspapers and occasionally to private citizens. In his letters, he would often taunt the police and brag about his killings. Some of the letters contained physical evidence and cryptograms. One cryptogram read:

> I like killing people because it is so much fun. It is more fun than killing wild game in the forest because man is the most dangerous animal of all. To kill something gives me the most thrilling experience. It is even better than getting your rocks off with a girl. The best part of it is that when I die I will be reborn in paradise and all of the (word missing) I have killed will become my slaves. I will not give you my name because you will try to slow down or stop my collecting of slaves for my afterlife (remainder of the message garbled).

Critical Thinking Exercise: The "Zodiac Killer"

The case of the Zodiac Killer provides rich opportunities for multiple types of critical thinking exercises. Basic facts of the case could be derived from documentaries, Tom Voigt's website or by reviewing the FBI's case files (see the FBI Vault) about the Zodiac Killer, all of which, at the time of this writing, are available on the Internet. After gathering information and facts about the case, participants could attempt to behaviorally profile the killer by studying the characteristics of his crimes. A linguistic analysis of his messages could involve searching for deliberately misspelled words, odd patterns of speech, or evidence of his intent to disguise his identity. Participants could also attempt to decipher his cryptograms, some of which have yet to be solved. A geographic profiling approach to this exercise would involve mapping the known locations of his crimes to gain insight into the characteristics of the types of places that he chose for his killings. Mapping the crime locations might lead to information about the offender including where he may have lived and worked and more. This method of analysis was developed by Dr. Kim Rossmo.

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Chapter 6
Preventing Homicide

Abstract This chapter will briefly assess the literature base regarding the prevention of mass and serial murder. Also discussed will be homicidal ideation, unanswered scholarly questions regarding homicide prevention, how mental health courts might be averting tragedies and future directions for the field. Conclusion and suggestions for action are included.

Why People Kill

The psychology of why people kill is poorly understood. As noted by Duntley and Buss (2011), despite the problems associated with homicide, "we have only the most rudimentary scientific understanding of who is likely to kill and why" (Daly and Wilson 1988, p. ix, as cited in Buss 2011). A controversial theory about why people kill has been proposed by Duntley and Buss (2011) called homicide adaptation theory (HAT). In its most simplistic form, the theory suggests that the benefits of killing outweigh the costs of killing. These killing adaptations benefited our ancestors, and we continue this adaptive process in current times. This theory is not without its critics.

Homicidal Ideation

Relative to suicidal ideation, there is much less known about homicidal ideation, defined herein as a serious, realistic, planned, thought process where a murder attempt is the intended and likely but not inevitable outcome, not to be confused with homicidal fantasy, herein defined as a thought pattern which is, improbable, unrestrained, a product of the imagination, similar to a daydream and having no basis in reality. Buss (2005) surveyed college students about whether they had ever had homicidal fantasies. He found that 91 % of the men and 84 % of the women reported having at least one homicidal fantasy. Murder fantasies, Buss speculates,

provide an opportunity for contemplation, weighing the pros and cons of one's actions and might even serve as a mechanism for murder prevention. Fear of punishment was cited as a common reason for not carrying out the murder fantasy. What remains unresolved is why a small portion of the population chooses to kill.

Other Possible Theories to Explain Homicidal Ideation

Some people with homicidal ideation might not have the problem solving skills necessary to deal with their life problems. It may be that they are frustrated and stressed and have never developed good problem solving or coping skills. Another possible explanation is that people who express thoughts about killing might not recognize the full consequences of their thoughts should these thoughts reach fruition. They may not really mean what they say and instead are expressing frustration and strong emotions associated with homicidal fantasy. Homicidal ideation might also stem from suicidal thoughts, possibly caused by depression. Some studies suggest homicidal people or people who have committed mass homicide are sometimes depressed (Murray 2015). Suicidal ideation and depression are particularly prevalent among school shooters (O'Toole 2000).

Homicidal thoughts often express the desire to gain or regain power over others. Homicidal ideation and fantasy may develop as psychological compensation for feelings of powerlessness. More research is needed to understand the nature and meaning of both homicidal ideation and fantasies.

Lack of Help for People Experiencing Homicidal Ideation

There is a great deal of research and assistance for individuals with suicidal ideation but not for individuals who are experiencing homicidal ideation. There are no homicide hotlines or services explicitly dedicated to people with homicidal ideation. Even more alarming is that research indicates that the majority of mental health professionals receive little training concerning suicidal individuals (Schmitz et al. 2012). It would seem reasonable to suggest that even less training is given in homicide prevention. If more help was available for people experiencing homicidal ideation, perhaps fewer people would be killed.

Mental Health Courts and Averting Tragedy

Mental health courts are specialized treatment programs designed for individuals who have committed a crime and who have been deemed mentally ill. Though mental health court models vary across United States, most courts accept

individuals into the program who meet the following criteria: have been diagnosed with a severe mental illness; have committed a crime that has not been deemed too serious for the court, which would likely exclude sex offenses and murder; have voluntarily agreed to participate in the court; and agrees to plead guilty.

Generally speaking, if the aforementioned criteria are met, an individual will be permitted to participate in the mental health court program. Their case is rerouted through the mental health court instead of a traditional court. Mental health courts are staffed with judges and other criminal justice professionals who receive specialized training for working with mentally ill offenders. Instead of being sentenced to punishment, mental health court participants are sentenced to treatment. The treatment is mandated through the mental health court. If a participant does not carry out their agreed-upon treatment, they can be removed from mental health court and returned to a traditional court.

Typically, mental health court participants are heavily monitored by treatment staff. The primary advantage of mental health courts is their ability to connect participants, who might not otherwise receive treatment, with mental health treatment. Outcome studies indicate that people who participate in these treatment-oriented courts commit fewer crimes when compared to people in traditional courts (Sarteschi et al. 2011). In this way, mental health courts act as a form of future crime prevention. The main drawback, however, is that they are only available to mentally ill individuals and only after a crime has been committed. Research shows that mental health courts do reduce future criminal activity. Though this is a major gain to society, it would be far better to treat the individual before the crime, and its consequent damage to society has occurred.

It is evident from research that the mental health treatment provided by the mental health courts does reduce future crime, and it would seem reasonable to conclude that the ultimate crime of murder would likewise also be reduced. Access to mental health treatment could help to reduce homicides but the amount of reduction is unknown.

There are many examples of murderers with confirmed mental illness diagnoses. Very often these diagnoses preceded the act of murder. Some of these murderers suffered from severe mental illness, with delusions and paranoia which left them unable to identify the real from the unreal. In general, people with mental illnesses are not more violent than people without mental illnesses. Severe mental illness, with its accompanying delusions, hallucinations and paranoia can cause an individual to kill, in what they believe to be an act of self-defense or an attempt to protect others from imagined acts of horror.

One example is Jared Loughner, the mentally ill individual who killed six people and wounded 13 others in Tucson, Arizona on January 8, 2011. News reports indicate that before the shooting, Mr. Loughner evidenced symptoms of a severe mental illness including nihilistic delusions and the belief that U.S. currency and the U.S. government were not real. He was suspended from Pima Community College for disruptive behavior and he also wrote concerning letters to Representative Giffords prior to the shooting. He was depressed as early as 2006, started experiencing psychosis symptoms in high school and was formally diagnosed with

schizophrenia in 2011, after the shooting and while in custody. Mr. Loughner was forcibly medicated before his trial. Mr. Loughner's forensic psychiatrist testified that after receiving treatment, he was able to express remorse and had insight into what he had done. Years before the massacre, he had clearly demonstrated signs of mental illness. He told his psychiatrist he wished that he had taken medication and had he done so, things might have turned out differently (Martinez and Lah 2012). Had he received treatment at that time, perhaps the murders would have been averted.

The case of 19-year-old David Kellen Grow is another example of how mental health treatment might have prevented a tragedy. Mr. Grow brutally killed his mother by slashing open her body and removing her intestines. Kellen's father came home to find his wife's body on the kitchen floor and his 19-year-old son sitting in the bathtub, with his mother's intestines wrapped around his neck. Weeks before the murder, Mr. Grow had been experiencing command hallucinations, ordering him to kill his mother. He believed himself to be capable of shape-shifting and thought that the year 2013 marked the end of days. Prior to the murder, he had been involuntarily hospitalized in a virtual catatonic state but deemed appropriate for release after approximately 10 days (Salisbury 2013). All those associated with the case considered it one of the most gruesome killings they had ever seen. Mr. Grow was adjudicated as not guilty by reason of insanity, a ruling the prosecuting attorneys did not dispute. Had Mr. Grow been provided extended mental health treatment, he might not have killed his mother.

An older case involves Herb Mullins, a 1980s California serial killer who killed 13 people because of a delusion concerning earthquakes (see Chap. 5). His parents tried to get him psychological help, but were turned away. The jury foreman in the case wrote an open letter to Ronald Reagan blaming both he and the defendant for the murders. He saw the main problem as the closing of mental hospitals by the Reagan administration…"I cannot wait longer to impart to anyone who may read this my convictions that the laws surrounding mental illness in the state of California are wrong, wrong, wrong" (Lunde and Morgan 1980, p. 313). His court-appointed psychiatrist ultimately believed that had Herb been given long term, consistent treatment, he probably would have never committed the murders. Dr. Lunde acknowledged the difficult problem of protecting an individuals' liberties while protecting society at large—a problem that remains unresolved today. He concluded his book about Herbert Mullins with the following line, which some might find applicable to our current fractured mental health system: "we must understand that without adequate, competently staffed mental hospitals, none of us will ever be safe" (p. 315). A more modern portrayal of the public mental health system might be less focused on competent hospital staff and more on the availability of psychiatric hospital care. For instance, according to the Organization For Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United States only has 25 beds per 100,000 people, significantly lower than the OECD average of 68 beds per 100,000 (OECD 2014). A 2016 survey of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, reported an even lower number of 11.7 beds per 100,000 people, and that an estimated 50 % of those beds were occupied by forensic patients charged with or convicted of crimes (Fuller et al. 2016).

Conclusion and Future Directions

Corey Dolgon ([2016](#)) wrote a short synopsis about his upcoming book, titled *Kill It to Save It: How America Is Killing Itself*. In it, he expressed his frustration with the lack of meaningful changes in public policy designed to curb violence in America. He indicated that "the day after sending this piece to the journal, the United States's largest mass shooting this year took place in San Bernardino California. Enough said" (p. 4). Lack of action may stem from disagreements about the cause of the problem. Gun regulations, a mental health system in shambles, and poverty, for instance, are factors that may contribute to violence but as it stands, the causes are poorly understood.

An undeniable element of multiple homicide particularly mass shootings, is the ease at which high-powered weapons are acquired by perpetrators. "Grudges, status resentment, racism, lust for land or profit, political ideologies—none of these is sufficient to produce mass murder, unless murderers have the techniques to carry it through" (Newman et al. [2007](#), p. 31). Some researchers believe that mass murder is the price we pay to live in a free society. Fixing the mental health system, say some, will do nothing to stop the next killing spree. Research about prevention is also lacking. For instance, a Congressional Research Service study about mass shootings in the United States noted that with regard to prevention "…potential perpetrators [of public mass shootings] cannot be identified accurately, and no systematic means of intervening are known to be effective (Bjelopera et al. [2013](#), p. 21)." Change has been slow and there are no easy ways to prevent homicides of every kind. Nevertheless, we should continue to try.

Finally, based on the review of the literature, recommendations for future actions include the following:

1. *Improve the mental health system*. Multiple homicide may not always be the direct result of mental illness but the American mental health system has many deficits that make it difficult to use and many people fall through the cracks. An example of this was highlighted in the 2016 documentary titled, *God Knows Where I Am*. Linda Bishop had schizophrenia, but did not think she was ill. Still actively symptomatic and believing the Chinese Mafia was after her, she was released from a New Hampshire mental hospital without her family's knowledge. She took refuge in an abandoned farmhouse where she died from starvation after four months (NBC News [2016](#)).

   Even when treatment is available, some people do not seek help because of shame and stigma. They worry about being perceived as weak or feel embarrassed about having to ask for help, believing they should be able to help themselves. Changing the culture's view of mental health treatment might help more people perceive it as a positive asset to improving their mental health rather than a sign of personal failure. In addition, there are virtually no services for people who explicitly have homicidal ideation. The availability of specifically designed services for people considering murder might help to reduce the number of people who decide to commit murder.

2. *Empirical study of foiled or thwarted mass violence attacks*. To date, only a handful of studies have examined failed mass violence attacks. A foiled or thwarted mass violence database would assist in documenting these important cases. Documenting what or who led to the prevention of those attacks could assist in the development of new interventions.

3. *Establish an international, accessible, transparent, and frequently updated repository of mass and serial murder cases that serves as the central resource for researchers of multiple homicide*. Currently these cases are largely scattered and haphazardly tracked across nonpeer reviewed resources. Allely et al. (2014) suggest using the model used by the World Health Organization and European Union to study rare diseases. Another idea worthy of exploration is "crowd-sleuthing," a prevention-oriented threat detection method that organizes and facilitates communication among many different sources (Spiegel 2013). The StreetCred® Police in Killings Context (PKIC) dataset in another potential model to follow for data collection. According to Selby et al. (2016), PKIC is a database of incidents from various sources, including existing datasets gathered by *The Washington Post* and *The Guardian*, is freely available on the internet, (http://www.streetcredsoftware.com/pkic/) and is regularly updated.

4. *Clarify the definitions of mass and serial murder and their categorizations*. In addition, clarify how best to classify *attempted* mass or serial murder. For instance, if an individual shoots five people but only two of them die, is it still considered mass murder? If so, another category of consideration could be *attempted mass murder*, an event in which an attempt was made to kill multiple persons but no deaths occurred.

5. *Consider novel approaches to predicting potential multiple homicide violence*. Bedi et al. (2015) utilized automated speech analysis to predict the development of psychosis among clinically high risk youths with 100 % accuracy. Relatedly, the speech of psychopaths is characteristically different than nonpsychopaths (Hare 1993). Brites (2016) summarized the literature regarding psychopaths' use of language and reported a number of findings. Their language is less emotionally complex and intense and more shallow than nonpsychopaths. They use more past tense verbs. They manipulate language to appear more intelligent and they tend to use language in an unusual manner, often inputting words into sentences that do not quite make sense. The work of Bedi et al. (2015) showed that speech differences could be used to accurately predict the development of psychosis in those tested. Speech differences are also apparent in psychopaths, a group that is disproportionately violent (Kiehl and Hoffman 2011). Automated speech analysis provides an opportunity to explore the possibility of predicting future violence among psychopaths and others who potentially pose a higher risk of violence.

At the commencement of this monograph, the worst mass shooting in the U.S. history had been Virginia Tech in 2007, where 32 people were killed and 30 others were injured. Upon near completion of this work, another more deadly mass shooting had taken place. On June 12, 2016, 49 victims were killed and another 53

were injured at a night club in Orlando, Florida in what is now the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history. The incident is considered an act of domestic terrorism and has been linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The shooter, 29-year-old Saddiqui Mateen was able to legally purchase high-powered weapons, despite having been investigated multiple times by the FBI for ties to terrorists groups. As one *New York Times* columnist succinctly put it, "this, by any reasonable standard, is madness" (Cohen 2016, para. 11).

Mass shootings, with increasing numbers of victims, seem to be a reality in our culture. Only cultural change can reverse this trend. The present balance between civil liberties and safety has resulted in our current level of mass shootings, which as previously mentioned is on the rise. Americans must decide on the proper balance. Which is most important: the safety of ourselves, of our children, of the others we love or our unbridled civil liberties? Make no mistake, we cannot have both. When the second amendment was written, there were no weapons of mass destruction, no assault rifles, no nuclear weapons, but this is not simply a second amendment issue. We must also debate whether or not our civil liberties allow for those with serious mental illness, those with severe paranoia and delusions, to choose not to undergo treatment. These are interesting questions and not easily answered but the answers will at least, in part, determine the future safety or lack thereof, of every man, woman, and child in America.

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