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## Serial Killers

*Do we know enough to catch them?*

**A**s the trials get under way for the two men accused in the 10 Washington-area sniper deaths last October, questions are being raised about our understanding of serial killers, and how many there are. Most research has focused on those who kill for sexual gratification. Far less is known about “spree killers,” as some have described the Washington snipers. Since the 1970s, the FBI has touted its criminal-profiling method for finding serial killers. But critics say profiles have little science behind them and can lead investigators astray. Modern DNA technology holds out promise for linking serial killers to crime scenes — and even stopping killers before they strike again. But civil rights lawyers are challenging the widespread sharing of suspects’ DNA by law enforcement agencies as unconstitutional.



Accused Washington-area sniper John Allen Muhammad.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- THE ISSUES .....919
- BACKGROUND .....926
- CHRONOLOGY .....927
- CURRENT SITUATION .....931
- AT ISSUE .....933
- OUTLOOK .....935
- BIBLIOGRAPHY .....937
- THE NEXT STEP .....938

## THE ISSUES

- 919 • Are serial killings on the rise?  
 • Is criminal profiling a reliable tool for finding serial killers?  
 • Should law enforcers use DNA “dragnets”?

## BACKGROUND

- 926 **‘Jack the Ripper’**  
 The first “profile” was of London’s mysterious killer.
- 928 **Missing-Kids Scare**  
 Twenty-five years ago, experts said thousands of U.S. children disappeared each year.
- 930 **Why They Kill**  
 Many killers were abused as children.

## CURRENT SITUATION

- 931 **Profilers Testify**  
 Judges let profilers testify if they can link several crimes to a single suspect.
- 932 **DNA Databanks**  
 Vast collections of DNA have revolutionized the ability to crack crimes.
- 934 **DNA ‘Dragnets’**  
 Collecting DNA from pools of potential suspects is controversial in the U.S.

## OUTLOOK

- 935 **Nationwide Database?**  
 A national DNA database would be more reliable

than current methods, some experts say.

## SIDEBARS AND GRAPHICS

- 920 **Did the Media Hamper Sniper Investigators?**  
 Critics say the press may have helped the killers elude detection.
- 922 **American Serial Killers Through History**  
 John Wayne Gacy is the most prolific — so far.
- 924 **Serial Killings May Track Homicide Trends**  
 Homicide rates declined sharply in recent years.
- 927 **Chronology**  
 Key events since 1886.
- 928 **Fear of Humiliation Plagued Ted Bundy**  
 Killer may have feared humiliation by women.
- 933 **At Issue**  
 Are criminal profiles a reliable way to find serial killers?
- 934 **International Killers**  
 Romania’s Countess Elizabeth of Bathory killed 600.
- 936 **For More Information**  
 Organizations to contact.
- 937 **Bibliography**  
 Selected sources used.
- 938 **The Next Step**  
 Additional articles from current periodicals.
- 939 **Citing The CQ Researcher**  
 Sample bibliography formats.

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Cover: Washington-area sniper suspect John Allen Muhammad enters a Manassas, Va., courtroom for a hearing on June 30, 2003. Muhammad, 41, and Lee Boyd Malvo, now 18, are charged with murdering 10 people in October 2002. Muhammad’s trial began Oct. 20; Malvo’s trial begins in November. (AFP Photo/Pool/Steve Helber).

# Serial Killers

BY SARAH GLAZER

## THE ISSUES

When a mysterious sniper began shooting people in the Washington area last fall, residents tried to discern a logical pattern in his behavior. To avoid the killer's favorite venues, shoppers stopped walking across parking lots and motorists passed up self-serve gas pumps.

Meanwhile, experts and pseudo-experts crowded the airways with theories about the killer. Many of the predictions, some of them by ex-FBI profilers, mirrored the confidential profile that the FBI had prepared for the task force hunting the killer: A lone shooter, and he would probably be white. As the entire nation now knows, the suspects are two black men, John Allen Muhammad, 41, and 18-year-old Lee Boyd Malvo. \*

The off-base speculation by former FBI profilers led some critics to question the reliability of the FBI's much-vaunted psychological "profiling" technique, which re-creates a suspect's physical and behavioral traits from crime scene evidence. The FBI refuses to discuss its profile, which former Montgomery County, Md., Police Chief Charles A. Moose, who headed the task force, reveals in his new book about the investigation. <sup>1</sup>

There is little doubt, however, that the profilers' guesses reflect the agency's heavy reliance on statistical probabilities. Since most serial killers are lone,

\* The two are accused of 10 murders. Muhammad's trial in Virginia Beach, Va., in the death of Dean H. Meyers at a gas station near Manassas, Va. began Oct. 20. Malvo's trial is set to begin next month in Chesapeake, Va.



AFP Photo/Tim Sloan

*Montgomery County, Md., Police Chief Charles A. Moose holds a press briefing during the Washington-area sniper shootings last October. He says police discounted a confidential FBI profile that depicted the shooter as a lone, white male. Two black men later were charged in the shootings. The FBI says its criminal profiling helps find serial killers, but critics say profiles have little science behind them and can lead investigators astray.*

white males, ex-FBI profilers opined the Washington sniper must be also. Since most serial killers live and work near their crimes, some profilers suggested the sniper must reside in the suburbs of Maryland. Instead, the suspects were apparently living out of their car.

Similar concerns about profiling were raised after an 18-month manhunt for a serial rapist-murderer in Baton Rouge, La., ended last spring. Police had released an FBI profile of a white male who was awkward with women. But Derrick Todd Lee, the suspect finally arrested in May and linked to several of the rapes by DNA, turned out to be black and — by some accounts — charming with women.

In some ways, Malvo and Muhammad defied the stereotypes of serial killers

— lone, white, sexually sadistic killers who specialize in certain types of vulnerable victims, like prostitutes or children. Yet precedents can be found for the alleged Washington snipers as well. There have been black serial killers, team serial killers and those who kill for non-sexual motives. And although the stereotypes represent the statistical probabilities on which most profilers base their predictions, the Washington shootings are a reminder that statistical probabilities provide only educated guesses. <sup>2</sup>

J. Reid Meloy, a forensic psychologist at the University of California, San Diego, says the most salient feature of each serial killer is his or her individual uniqueness. Many people assume serial killers resemble smooth-talking Ted Bundy, whose charm was lethal to 20-30 college coeds. (See sidebar, p. 928.)

But for every Bundy, there are frightening-looking killers like Henry Lee Lucas

of Texas, who had several missing teeth, poor verbal skills and a lower-income background. A killer lacking the social skills of a Bundy has to attack his victims violently from the outset. "People should not assume [serial killers] are all smoothly functioning psychopaths," Meloy cautions.

Nevertheless, in an effort to understand better their motivations and patterns, researchers have attempted to draw some generalizations about serial killers. In the most common form of serial murder, the killer gets sexual gratification from the killing. Unlike the Washington shootings, most serial murder is an intimate experience for the killer in which the torture of the victim and watching the victim die are important parts of the experience. <sup>3</sup>

## Did the Media Hamper Sniper Investigators?

In his new book about the Washington-area sniper investigation, former Montgomery County, Md., Police Chief Charles A. Moose holds the press partially responsible for some of the killings last October.

Moose writes that he is “absolutely certain” press accounts of a tarot card found on Oct. 8 near one of the shootings “was a contributing factor in the five shootings that were still to come.” Media outlets publicized a leak about the card.

According to Moose, press revelations about the card, which read, “Dear Policeman, I am God,” resulted in a flood of crank calls and letters that slowed down the investigation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Moose also had hoped to establish trust with the shooter, whose message on the card specified, “Do not release to the media.”

Moose’s salvo is the latest in a litany of criticisms directed at the press for providing information about the investigation that allegedly helped the killers elude detection, incited them to more violence and led witnesses astray with faulty speculation about the shooters’ identity.

Members of the press, in return, have congratulated themselves for broadcasting the suspects’ license plate number (also leaked to the press), thus leading police — on a truck driver’s tip — to the suspects sleeping in their car at a rest stop.

WUSA-TV, the local station that broke the tarot card story, disagrees with Moose’s conclusion about the damaging effect of the leak and says it “will continue to report the facts throughout the upcoming trials.”<sup>2</sup>

In the view of Louis B. Schlesinger, a forensic psychologist at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, TV

footage of police roadblocks and airplane surveillance could have tipped off the snipers to change their route. “The media coverage made this a very dangerous situation,” he says. “It is very unhelpful to telegraph to the entire world, including the Middle East, how we do criminal investigations.”

Early in the investigation, Montgomery County police told the public they had turned to computerized geographic profiling, which tries to pinpoint the killer’s whereabouts from a tightly concentrated area of shootings. The sniper’s next shootings moved 90 miles away — perhaps in response to the TV stories, Schlesinger suggests.

But police say it’s difficult to balance the twin tasks of informing the public and controlling the information necessary to pursue a criminal. Asked if public disclosure was a mistake, Assistant Montgomery Police Chief Deirdre Walker answers, “I think the community needed to know we were trying everything under the sun, including the non-traditional tools, to solve the crime.”

Some media critics also contend that putting profilers on the air who predicted the killer would be a lone, white male may have misled bystanders. Profiler James Alan Fox, a criminal justice professor at Northeastern University, says he doesn’t think his wrong prediction threw anyone off. “Do you really think that citizens of the D.C. area decided to duck every time they saw a white person?”

Another profiler, former FBI profiler Gregg O. McCrary, thinks the media coverage incited the shooters to more violence — particularly after some TV talking heads referred to the snipers as “cowards.” “If you have people who are so angry they’re out

Sexual murderers often engage in bizarre sexual practices with their victims both before and after death.

Some research suggests that there are higher rates of psychological problems, drug abuse and criminality among parents and siblings of sexual serial murderers, notes Meloy. Often there has been some kind of conditioning early in the murderer’s life that combined extreme violence and sexual arousal.

One serial killer Meloy interviewed vividly recalled a scene at a family party when he was about 9 years old. His father had responded violently to his wife after she put an ice cube down his back. He wrestled her to the ground and forced an ice cube up her vagina. That kind of experience would be both frightening and sexually exciting for a young boy, Meloy says. More im-

portant, it teaches him “if a woman aggresses against you, you completely dominate, degrade and humiliate her publicly using her sex organs,” Meloy observes. The serial killer also “comes to blame the woman for creating this kind of stimulation.”

Researchers have suggested a host of other theories — from head trauma to childhood abuse — to explain how someone becomes a serial killer, but many people suffer from such conditions without becoming serial killers.

“I don’t think any of the explanations are totally adequate at this point to explain serial murder,” says Thomas A. Petee, a criminologist at Auburn University and co-editor of the journal *Homicide Studies*.

If experts understood serial killers better, there might not be so many un-

solved cases. Because of unsolved cases, it’s difficult to estimate the exact number of murders committed by serial killers. For example, until an arrest was made two years ago, the so-called Green River Killer in Washington state was one of the nation’s deadliest and longest-running unsolved serial murder cases. Authorities first started finding bodies near the river in 1982. Over the next two years, 49 bodies were found, many of them prostitutes and runaways.

The investigation continues today. In just the past month, detectives on the Green River Task Force have uncovered three sets of remains and identified one victim. The new discoveries have led some experts to speculate that the suspect, Gary L. Ridgway, a truck painter from Auburn, is cooperating with authorities. Ridgway

murdering people to begin with, what do we gain by calling them names?" he asks. "We know they were reacting to the media — when Chief Moose said the schools are safe, and Monday morning they kill a school kid."

Fox is more dubious. "I'm not sure there's any evidence they killed because of the publicity," he says. "It's usually just a fringe benefit — not necessarily their motive for murder."

Police did not want to release the suspects' license plate number, Moose has said, because, "We were afraid [the perpetrators] were watching and would elude officers if the information was reported at that time."<sup>3</sup>

But some journalists say that was a perfect example of why reporters should sometimes use information against law enforcement's wishes. "In the end, broadcasting the plate number was the act that produced the arrests," argued Barbara Cochran, president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association.<sup>4</sup>

"The media have to be able to decide that information can be released under certain circumstances if it seems to us that law enforcement are being unreasonable," agrees Ted Gest, president of Criminal Justice Journalists in Washington, D.C.

But Christopher Hanson, an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism, argues that the snipers might have heard the report and ditched the car. "If they had killed [more] people, the media would be the goat instead of the hero," he says.

With both the tarot card and license plate leaks, Hanson says reporters should have weighed more carefully why the police wanted them to withhold the information.

Of course, sometimes authorities need the media. Theodore Kaczynski, the so-called Unabomber, was responsible for more than a dozen bombings in the 1990s. The FBI urged newspapers to publish his 35,000-word anti-technology manifesto in hopes of cracking his identity. "Our feeling was a college professor would recognize the writing and the themes," McCrary says." As it turned out, they resonated with Kaczynski's younger brother David. Similarly, Moose used press conferences to broadcast messages to the snipers.

What the public sees in the sniper case is "the tense, messy relationship" between cops — whose job is public safety — and reporters, whose job is information, says Kelly McBride, who teaches ethics at the Poynter Institute for journalists in St. Petersburg, Fla. \* And those two goals, she notes, "often collide with one another."

<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Moose, *Three Weeks in October: The Manhunt for the Serial Sniper* (2003), p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> From a WUSA-TV press release.

<sup>3</sup> *Washington Post* online discussion, "Revisiting the Sniper Shootings," Sept. 15, 2003.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A1667-2003Sep12.html>

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Cochran, "President's Column: DC Sniper Case: Lessons Learned," Dec. 2002 at [www.rtnda.org](http://www.rtnda.org).

\* The nonprofit Poynter Institute owns both the *St. Petersburg Times* and Congressional Quarterly Inc., the parent company of CQ Press, publisher of *The CQ Researcher*.

has been charged with seven of the killings. He has pleaded not guilty and is scheduled to go on trial next July, but many believe he is responsible for more than seven killings.<sup>4</sup>

The United States is not the only country that has experienced unsolved serial killings. Starting in 1993 in Juarez, Mexico, people began finding decomposed bodies of young women and girls in the city's desert outskirts. So far, more than 100 victims have been found — often raped and horribly mutilated. The most recent turned up Sept. 7.<sup>5</sup>

Researchers estimate that, based on news reports, 212 serial murderers have killed more than 2,400 victims worldwide over the last five years. Serial murder is a well-known, though less frequent, phenomenon in Europe, reflecting the generally lower rate of

homicide. In Germany, for example, 61 serial murderers were convicted during the 50-year period between 1945 and 1995.<sup>6</sup>

Overall, however, serial killings are rare. Serial killers probably account for — at most — about 200 victims in the United States each year — or 1 percent of all homicides, estimates James Alan Fox, a professor of criminal justice at Northeastern University in Boston.<sup>7</sup> The FBI investigates serial killings at the request of local police departments. The bureau investigated 43 possible serial killers in 2001, compared to about 18,000 homicides.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the minuscule percentage of homicides committed by multiple murderers, some say that over the past few decades the entertainment industry, the FBI and some members of

Congress have grossly exaggerated the threat posed by serial killers.

Although serial murders are statistically insignificant, they command a huge fascination among the public as evidenced by their lurid presence in the news, TV and movies and on numerous Web sites — as well as the popularity of forensic psychology courses on college campuses. "Serial murderers touch something dark and forbidden in all of us," says Meloy, "the fascination with both sexuality and violence."

The advent of increasingly sophisticated DNA technology promises more definitive methods of linking a serial killer to a crime than ever before.<sup>9</sup> Some police departments have set up DNA dragnets, swabbing saliva from hundreds of men in hopes of finding

*Continued on p. 923*

## American Serial Killers Through History

Media attention makes serial killing seem commonplace, but it is actually rare. The most prolific American serial killer on record is John Wayne Gacy, who murdered 33 men in the 1970s, when most of America's infamous killings occurred. He could be surpassed, however, by Gary L. Ridgway, a truck painter charged with seven of the so-called Green River killings of at least 49 women, mostly prostitutes and runaways, in Washington state. Other infamous U.S. killers include:

### Juan Corona

Convicted of murdering: 25  
Yuba County, Calif., 1971

A labor contractor, Corona hacked his victims to death and buried them in shallow graves along the Feather River in California. He is serving 25 consecutive life sentences.

### John Wayne Gacy

Convicted of murdering: 33  
Suburban Chicago, 1972-1978

The building contractor and part-time clown lured young boys and men to his home, had sex with them before killing them and then buried most of their bodies beneath his house. He was arrested in 1978 and executed in 1994.

### Ted Bundy

Convicted of murdering: 3  
Six Western states and Florida, 1973-1978

The one-time law student from Washington state appeared innocuous and even charming to many people. He would often lure young women to him by feigning injury or distress. Police say the number of young women raped and killed by Bundy — who was electrocuted in Florida in 1989 — could be 20-30. (See story, p. 928.)



### David Berkowitz ("Son of Sam" Killer)

Convicted of murdering: 6 (wounded 7)  
Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx, 1976-1977

The 24 year-old postal worker terrorized New York City for more than a year with random shootings of young people, mostly women. Berkowitz claimed to kill people on orders from a dog. His nickname came from a note left at one shooting that read in part: "I am a monster. I am the Son of Sam." He is serving six life sentences.

### Kenneth Bianchi ("Hillside Strangler")

Convicted of murdering: 5  
Los Angeles and Glendale, Calif., and Washington, 1977-1978

Bianchi pled guilty to five of the "Hillside Strangler" murders in Los Angeles and testified against his cousin and ex-partner, Angelo Buono Jr. He is serving a life sentence in Washington state for killing two women there.

### Angelo Buono Jr. ("Hillside Strangler")

Convicted of murdering: 9  
Los Angeles and Glendale, Calif., 1977-1978

Buono and his cousin Bianchi lured young women into a car by posing as police officers. Police say they then kidnapped, raped, tortured and strangled at least 10 women. In 1983 Buono was sentenced to life in prison, where he died in 2002.



### Jeffrey L. Dahmer

Convicted of murdering: 16  
Milwaukee and Chicago, 1978-1992

The former chocolate-factory worker drugged and killed his victims, all males, then stored their body parts in freezers, kettles and acid vats throughout his one-room apartment. Dahmer cannibalized his victims and had sex with their corpses. He confessed to killing 17, but pleaded insanity at his trial. In 1992, he was sentenced to 16 consecutive life sentences. He was beaten to death by another inmate in 1994.

### Charles Ng

Convicted of murdering: 11  
Rural Northern California, 1984-1985

The former Marine was sentenced to death in 1999 for murdering six men, three women and two babies, but he may have killed 20 more. Ng raped and tortured his victims in a remote cabin with Leonard Lake — who committed suicide after being captured.



### Aileen Wuornos

Convicted of murdering: 6  
Central Florida, 1989-1990

A former prostitute, Wuornos hitchhiked in Florida and shot to death middle-aged men who picked her up. She was executed in 2002.

### Henry Louis Wallace

Convicted of murdering: 9  
Charlotte, N.C., 1992-1994

The fast-food worker kidnapped, raped and killed female friends and co-workers from his restaurant. On death row since 1997, he married a prison nurse in 1998.

Sources: N. R. Kleinfeld, and Erica Goode, "Serial Killing's Squarest Pegs: Not Solo, White, Psychosexual or Picky," The New York Times, Oct. 28, 2002, p. A16; various news reports.

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*Continued from p. 921*

a match between a crime scene and the killer. (See p. 934). State and national DNA databanks of convicted criminals are helping police make matches, according to the FBI and state police. (See p. 932).

But some civil rights lawyers say dragnets and databanks violate the rights of the innocent. Questions about labs' accuracy also make some forensic experts nervous about databanks that keep a suspect's DNA after he has been exonerated. And civil rights lawyers say it's unconstitutional for police to keep the DNA of innocent people or share it with other agencies.

"Under the Constitution, you can't search and seize me and keep my stuff without asking me. DNA is my stuff," says Baton Rouge attorney Jill Craft, who filed a class action suit against state and local authorities in a case involving a serial rapist-murderer.

As the nation's attention turns to what is sure to be one of the most heavily covered trials in the history of serial murderers, here are some of the questions being asked by the public, the press and civil libertarians:

### ***Are serial killings on the rise?***

The FBI popularized the notion of the "serial" murderer and contended the phenomenon was increasing in the 1980s, during a wave of child kidnapping and serial murders. During this period the Justice Department claimed that serial killers were killing thousands of victims each year.<sup>10</sup>

Critics charge, however, that it was a self-serving effort to fund the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit at Quantico, Va. Indeed, Robert Ressler, one of the unit's pioneers in profiling, claims to have coined the term "serial murder."<sup>11</sup>

But Pennsylvania State University historian Philip Jenkins says the figures were inflated by counting all murders with unknown motives or committed by strangers. The impli-

cation at the time was that these were senseless murders with no apparent motive, and thus likely to be the work of a serial killer. In his 1994 book on serial killers, Jenkins writes that the FBI's own internal estimates at the time suggested that the number of annual victims was much lower. Jenkins says current FBI estimates suggest the number is closer to 200 and that serial killers numbered around 50 annually in the 1980s.<sup>12</sup>

Some experts still assert that serial murder has been increasing since at least 1960, and some claim a doubling through the 1980s.<sup>13</sup> The government does not keep national statistics on serial murder, because it is often not clear that unsolved murders have been committed by a single killer until long after they occur — if ever.

Some experts cite a rise in unsolved murders over the past 40 years as evidence that serial murder is rising. Fewer than 70 percent of homicides are solved today, compared to more than 90 percent in 1960.<sup>14</sup>

Ressler and fellow FBI agent John E. Douglas, who helped start the Behavioral Science Unit, further point out that crime-solving techniques have become more sophisticated, and the number of police officers has risen during this period. Those improvements should argue for better — not worse — solution rates. Serial killers are usually strangers to the victim and therefore harder to identify than in the majority of murders, where the victim and killer know one another. Thus, say Ressler and Douglas, the declining rate of solved murders demonstrates an increase in serial murderers.<sup>15</sup>

The proportion of homicides with unknown motives has also increased over the past few decades — from less than 9 percent of murders in 1976 to almost 40 percent today. Since serial killings often appear to be without motive, Ressler and Douglas argue, the rise in motiveless crimes is further evidence that serial killing is on the rise.<sup>16</sup>

However, in a recent review of these arguments, Louis B. Schlesinger, a forensic psychologist at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, concludes there is little support for the idea that serial murder is increasing. Since most serial murders involve men killing women, the proportion of women murder victims should be increasing if serial murders are on the rise, he observes. In fact, the proportion of women victims has decreased since 1960.

Schlesinger suggests an alternative explanation for the growth in unsolved and motiveless killings: hit men. In so-called contract murders, the hit man is usually a stranger to the victim, and the motive is not always obvious. He suggests that the drug trade may have contributed to an increase in contract killings. As for serial murder, "I find no evidence it's increasing," Schlesinger says. Although he doesn't have an estimate of the actual number, he says, "These are very rare events."

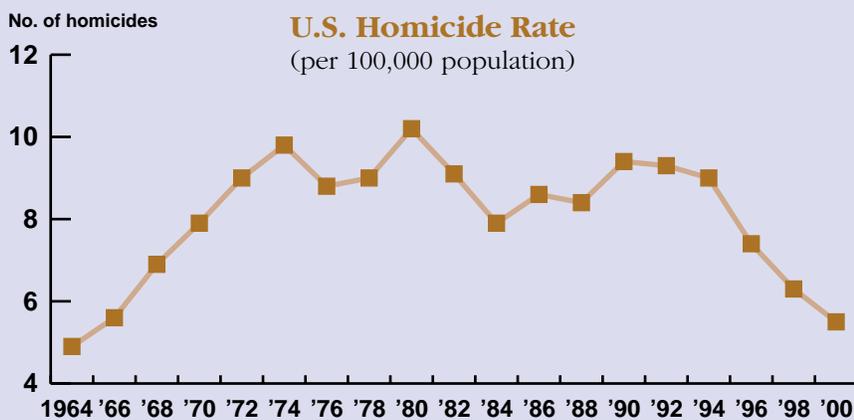
Serial murder's rarity is a notion increasingly accepted by mainstream researchers. Indeed, the FBI no longer claims there are thousands of victims, either. James McNamara, who directs investigations of adult serial killings at Quantico, concurs: "I don't think it's increasing, but it's more recognizable now. Years ago, if there were three murders in New York and then another in Florida how would you link those crimes?"

Northeastern's Fox, author of the 1994 book on serial killers, *Overkill*, says it's difficult to know whether serial murder is increasing because serial killers are so hard to identify. "There are many who stay off the radar screen because they kill victims of different kinds at different places at different times." But he adds, "What little evidence we do have doesn't suggest there's much growth — and it's not an epidemic either."

In fact, Fox suggests that serial killing may have slowed since the 1980s, when there was widespread panic about killers like Bundy and Lucas. In addition, he

## Serial Killings May Track Homicide Trends

No national statistics are collected on serial killers, but some experts believe that serial killer trends probably mirror homicide trends. In recent years, the homicide rate has declined sharply, reaching 5.5 deaths per 100,000 by 2000, a level not seen since 1966.



Sources: FBI "Uniform Crime Reports," 1950-2000; Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Homicide Trends in the U.S.," Nov. 21, 2002; [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/bmrt.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/bmrt.htm)

says, serial homicides tend to track the overall homicide rate, which has been declining over the past decade to far below the peaks reached in the 1980s.

### Is criminal profiling a reliable tool for finding serial killers?

The FBI's interest in creating a psychological "profile" of serial killers first arose in the 1970s among investigators hoping to gain insight into the motivations and behavior patterns of serial killers. FBI profiling was based on the 1988 findings of agents Ressler and Douglas, who interviewed 36 incarcerated serial killers.<sup>17</sup>

Their interviews included "celebrity" killers like David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz, whose murders terrorized New York City in 1977, and Charles Manson, who led female cult followers in several bloody killing sprees, including the 1969 murders of pregnant actress Sharon Tate and four others at her Beverly Hills home. They also interviewed less famous serial

killers like Edmund Kemper, whose victims included his mother and six California college women.

FBI profiler predictions are often based on trends drawn from those and more recent interviews. The entertainment industry has glorified the profiles as having almost psychic accuracy, most notably in the 1991 movie "Silence of the Lambs." The main character, Hannibal "the Cannibal" Lecter, was influenced both by Bundy and Kemper, a killer with a high IQ who had granted Ressler and Douglas some of their most insightful interviews.

But critics say the profiles rely too heavily on statistical trends and may even mislead investigators into chasing the wrong type of suspect — possibly enabling the real killer to take more victims. They cite the Baton Rouge case, in which an FBI profile described the rapist-killer as white. Instead, Lee, who is black, was arrested last May after having been linked by DNA evidence to the deaths of six

south Louisiana women between September 2001 and March 2003.<sup>18</sup>

"Just think how many lives we could have saved if somebody had put these pieces together and gotten this monster years ago," said Lynne Marino, the mother of victim Pam Kinamore, blaming the police for relying too heavily on the FBI profile. She said Lee's extensive criminal record — for stalking, attempted murder and peeping Tom incidents — should have made police check his DNA much earlier. "That's my child. Do you think I'm going to be a good sport about how many mistakes they made?"<sup>19</sup>

Reporters also disparaged the FBI profile for its prediction that the suspect would be awkward around women. Female acquaintances of Lee later described him as a charmer.<sup>20</sup>

But Katherine Ramsland, who teaches forensic psychology at DeSales University in Center Valley, Pa., maintains Lee's profile had more hits than misses. For example, it predicted he would talk about the deceased victims and comment on the investigation. In fact, Lee became a suspect after investigators heard he chatted about a missing woman.<sup>21</sup>

As for the report that Lee was charming around women, Ramsland says, "These are women who live in a motel [where Lee last lived]. How would he be around really polished women? We don't know."

Because people can differ over such subjective character descriptions, FBI profiles are rarely useful, says Robert D. Keppel, a former Washington state criminal investigator and currently associate professor of criminal justice at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.

"How do you expect the public to interpret those characteristics? They mold them into their own little suspect and end up doing a lot of negative things — like calling up and snitching on their neighbor whom they've never liked," Keppel says.

In his latest book, Keppel charges that FBI profiles often lead investiga-

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tors down wrong trails and prolong investigations.<sup>22</sup> For instance, profiles usually miss their target on age and race, Keppel maintains, the most important traits in hunting down a killer.

For example, an FBI profile sent New York State Police on a wild-geese chase in the late 1980s in the Genesee River case, in which 11 female prostitutes were murdered. The FBI predicted the suspect would be a man in his twenties. That enabled the killer, Arthur Shawcross, who was over 40 and graying, to escape suspicion, Keppel charges.<sup>23</sup>

Some academic researchers share Keppel's skepticism. A review of the literature on the subject in *Homicide Studies* in 2000 concluded that there is "almost nothing in the way of scientific studies to support the claims of the profilers." In one of the few studies, researchers gave FBI-trained profilers a series of actual cases and asked them to prepare profiles of the probable killer. The study found that the profilers were not especially accurate on homicide.<sup>24</sup>

In actual practice, profilers are not very successful at leading police to suspects, suggests the little research that exists. "The evaluations that have been done on psychological profiling show limited success," says Northeastern's Fox. "Rarely do they take you to the man."

Past claims by FBI profilers of a success rate as high as 80 percent are hard to verify, some researchers complain, because the FBI won't share its data publicly.<sup>25</sup> The agency's McNamara says the FBI does not track its success rate.

So until the agency's profiles can be scored objectively against actual cases, "their claims to some mystical level of accuracy ought to be regarded more as a form of self-promoting science-fiction than fact," law Professor D. Michael Risinger of Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J., wrote last year.<sup>26</sup>

Profilers may make mistakes because their educated guesses are based on past interviews with serial killers, who are known to lie. In addition, there may be fundamental differences between serial

killers who have been caught and who talk to interviewers and those who evade capture — further skewing profilers' generalizations, writes University of Melbourne researcher Damon Muller, author of the *Homicide Studies* review.

In the end, most FBI profilers acknowledge that profiling is more of an art than a science. "It's an investigative tool like a polygraph. It does not solve cases," McNamara says.

As for its accuracy, McNamara says, profiling is only as good as the profiler. "If you have a skilled profiler, you get a good product," he says. His 25 profilers must have at least 10 years of street experience as an FBI investigator, he says, and two years on his profiling unit. "If you get the wannabees or con men out there who are on TV a lot who claim to be profilers — or even retired [profilers] who don't have access to all the case materials — you get a lot of bum steers."

Former FBI profiler Roy Hazelwood, now a profiler for the Academy Group, a forensics consultancy in Manassas, Va., cautions, "The more behavior you have in a case, the more reliable the profile will be." For example, profilers have linked crimes to a single serial rapist-murderer by noting a similar pattern in the knot with which victims have been strangled or a similar pattern of sexual mutilation.

Some academics agree that such profiles have promise. "It works for certain kinds of crimes, those primarily that have some kind of sexual motivation . . . because those are the kinds of things that manifest themselves at the crime scene," says Auburn's Petee.

### ***Should law enforcers use DNA "dragnets" to find serial killers?***

Until Lee was arrested last May for the Baton Rouge rape-murders, the police had only crime-scene DNA that linked several of the killings. They searched for a suspect whose DNA matched the five known rape-murders by swabbing saliva from more than

1,000 local men in a DNA "dragnet." However, the suspect was eventually found not by the dragnet but by an investigator checking out the DNA of a suspect in two other rape-murders in a neighboring town.<sup>27</sup>

Several men whose DNA was collected as part of the dragnet are suing local and state police on the grounds that police violated their Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable search and seizure. Shannon F. Kohler, a welder in Baton Rouge who refused to give his DNA until he was forced to by court order, is suing local law enforcement authorities. They publicized his name in the newspaper as someone who refused to cooperate, raising suspicion in the community that he was a suspect. He has also sued to get his DNA sample back, arguing it provides too much private information, especially once it is placed in a databank shared among law enforcement authorities.

"It's the principle of the thing," says Kohler. "I don't think it's healthy for the country for such a database to exist, because I feel it would be abused in the future." Kohler says he took legal action because, "it seems to be the only way to get people to understand that I'm not guilty of anything. I have to go through this to repair my reputation."

Other men in Baton Rouge who voluntarily gave their DNA now say they were coerced. Floyd M. Wagster Jr., has charged that he gave his DNA only after police threatened to arrest him on drug charges and put his name in the news. Wagster is the lead plaintiff in a class action suit seeking immediate return of his DNA. His lawyers are also asking for an injunction to prevent the state from disseminating the DNA to databanks shared by law enforcement agencies nationwide.

Louisiana Attorney General Richard Ieyoub has said he believes the DNA swabs should remain in government databases to help police in future investigations.<sup>28</sup>

According to Barry Scheck, one of Wagster's lawyers and a law professor

at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City, Wagster only consented to give his DNA to help the hunt for the serial killer, but authorities seem to think they can use it for any other purpose.

“That’s a very dangerous idea and a big battle-line that’s being drawn between people who care about civil liberties and police authorities. I think it’s unconstitutional,” says Scheck who co-directs the Innocence Project, which has used DNA to exonerate several dozen wrongfully convicted people.<sup>29</sup> “[The government] can examine [your DNA] to see if you have mental or physical diseases, sexually transmitted diseases — that’s far beyond the scope of anyone’s consent.”

According to Scheck, “We have hundreds of people that have come forward now claiming they had no idea” the government would retain their DNA after the search for the killer ended. “They want their DNA back.”

Law enforcement authorities say DNA dragnets can be the key to finding a killer, especially in limited geographic areas. For example, a dragnet identified the killer in the rape-murder of a 2-year-old girl found at an American military base in Germany, according to ex-FBI profiler Greg O. McCrary, who consulted on the case. McCrary advised swabbing all the male GIs on the base. The crime scene DNA was eventually matched to one of the men in the dragnet.

But McCrary concedes “the military is different than free society; this is an example of the constant balance between the right of the public to be safe and our freedom as individuals.”

Some civil libertarians say dragnets in any form constitute a constitutional infringement on personal liberties. “We don’t think of ourselves as a nation of suspects — that’s the nature of totalitarian regimes,” says Eric Sterling, president of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation, a liberal think tank in Silver Spring, Md.

Many legal experts agree that racial bias is another major danger posed by

dragnets, since suspects are disproportionately black. Uploading a dragnet participant’s DNA information onto a law enforcement database could give rise to obvious abuses — such as releasing information to health insurance companies or employers about someone’s propensity to genetic diseases. Or it might lead to more Orwellian schemes — like trying to predict someone’s genetic propensity to aggression or criminality, Scheck suggests.

Yet other legal experts are skeptical that a constitutional case can be made against the right of police to keep DNA information gathered during a dragnet. University of Wisconsin law Professor Michael E. Smith argues the situation is similar to the fingerprints that police keep on file even after a suspect has been exonerated of a crime. “Is the government obliged to destroy your fingerprints or may they keep them on file in case those fingerprints show up somewhere else? I think as a constitutional matter they may keep them,” he says.

The issue is taking on more urgency because more and more states are compiling DNA databanks of anyone convicted — and in some cases anyone arrested — for serious crimes. (See *Current Situation*, p. 932.)

Another concern: Some labs that analyze DNA produce shoddy results, which could lead to faulty matches. “Everything is dependent on the quality of the scientific work that’s done — and that’s quite variable at present,” says William Thompson, a professor in the department of criminology, law and society at the University of California, Irvine.

Thompson cited the wrongful rape conviction of Houston teenager Josiah Sutton based on faulty DNA evidence by the Houston Police Department crime lab.<sup>30</sup>

Thompson, who has been examining additional questionable cases from the Houston lab, says, “I’d be appalled to think of that lab doing dragnets. Already, one person has been freed, and there will possibly be a few more.” ■

## BACKGROUND

### ‘Jack the Ripper’

Serial murderers have probably existed throughout human history but have been known by different names. In 16th-century Europe, when a badly mutilated body of a woman was discovered, it was often assumed that only some supernatural force — such as a man who turned into a wolf — could have been so savage. Stories about werewolves and vampires dating from the Middle Ages may have emerged to describe such crimes because they were considered too horrible to be committed by humans, according to forensic psychologist Schlesinger.<sup>31</sup>

Victorian London’s “Jack the Ripper” was perhaps the most famous serial murderer. In the late 1880s he killed between five and nine prostitutes by cutting open their abdomens and sometimes removing their intestines and genitals. He was never apprehended.

Numerous theories have been proposed in recent years as to Jack the Ripper’s identity. The most recent hypothesis, put forward by best-selling novelist Patricia Cornwell in a book published last year, points to the English artist Walter Sickert, famed for his paintings of London’s music halls.<sup>32</sup>

The first recorded “profile” is believed to be the description of Jack the Ripper prepared by Dr. Thomas Bond in a report to the London police investigation. Bond drew inferences about the killer’s job, income, habits and motives. During the same period, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was writing stories about his fictional detective Sherlock Holmes’ brilliant use of deductive reasoning to solve crimes.

The first modern criminal profile was developed for police searching

*Continued on p. 928*

# Chronology

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**1880s** *First modern-age serial killer terrorizes London; dawn of psychology and deductive reasoning.*

**1886**

German professor of psychiatry publishes first modern scientific account of sexual serial murder.

**1887**

Arthur Conan Doyle publishes “Sherlock Holmes” story, foreshadowing modern profilers.

**1888**

At least five grisly killings of London prostitutes attributed to “Jack the Ripper.” Despite profile, killer is never found.

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**1950s** *“Mad Bomber” terrorizes New York City over 16-year period.*

**1957**

First modern profile prepared by psychiatrist James Brussel of bomber suspect George Metesky.

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**1970s** *FBI popularizes the term “serial killer” amid high-profile multiple murders.*

**1972**

Behavioral Science Unit, home of FBI profiling, is founded.

**1973**

Dean Corll found responsible for 27 deaths in Houston.

**July 1976-August 1977**

David “Son of Sam” Berkowitz kills six women in New York City.

**October-December 1977**

“Hillside Stranglers” kill 10 women in Los Angeles. Cousins Kenneth A. Bianchi and Angelo Buono Jr. are eventually convicted for some of the murders.

**February 1978**

Ted Bundy is arrested after allegedly murdering 20-30 victims. He is eventually convicted of murdering three.

**December 1978**

John Wayne Gacy is implicated in 33 murders in Chicago.

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**1980s** *Public concern about serial killers reaches new peak amid missing-children scare; FBI receives new funding to hunt serial killers.*

**1981**

“Atlanta Child Murders” case leads to arrest of Wayne Williams.

**1983**

Hearings before a Senate subcommittee allege thousands of serial killer victims — exaggerated figures that are widely disseminated.

**1984**

FBI establishes National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime to help police hunt serial killers.

**1987**

First use of DNA “dragnet” in Britain.

**1988**

*Sexual Homicide*, by FBI agents Robert Ressler and John Douglas, is published.

**Jan. 24, 1989**

Ted Bundy is executed in Florida.

**1990s** *New DNA technology leads to expanding databases of criminals, suspects.*

**1990**

FBI starts pilot DNA databank of serious criminals in 14 states.

**1991**

“Silence of the Lambs” movie, based on FBI profiling unit, is released.

**1994**

DNA Identification Act formalizes FBI’s authority to establish national DNA index of convicted criminals.

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**2000s** *Accuracy of FBI profiles is questioned; constitutionality of DNA databanks is challenged.*

**2000**

In *State v. Fortin*, New Jersey Supreme Court bars profiling testimony but admits related “linkage analysis” by profiler Roy Hazelwood.

**December 2001**

Three Chicago men are freed after being wrongfully convicted in Lori Roscetti’s 1998 murder case featuring profiling.

**October 2002**

Two men are arrested in the Washington-area sniper case, ending weeks-long shooting spree.

**May 2003**

Derrick Todd Lee is arrested in Baton Rouge rape-killing; men participating in DNA dragnet challenge its constitutionality.

**October 2003**

Trial begins for sniper suspect John Allen Muhammad.

## Fear of Humiliation Plagued Ted Bundy

A favorite ploy of serial killer Ted Bundy was to wear a fake cast on his arm or leg to appear helpless, then ask a pretty girl to help him start his car or carry his books. His clean-cut good looks and charm convincingly lured many young women to their deaths. Before his final arrest in Florida on Feb. 15, 1978, 20-30 women in at least five states probably died at his hands.

To this day, experts and crime fans alike remain fascinated with Theodore Robert “Ted” Bundy because he seemed such an unlikely killer. After studying psychology at the University of Washington, he won a scholarship to Stanford University. Later, he was admitted to the University of Utah to study law. He appeared to have political ambitions and at one point was assistant director of the Seattle Crime Commission.<sup>1</sup>

Researchers have searched his childhood for clues. Born Nov. 24, 1946, in an unwed mothers’ home in Vermont, Bundy was not told until his twenties, according to some accounts, that he was illegitimate — a possibly devastating event.<sup>2</sup> Some researchers believe he suffered sexual abuse as a child, raised first by his grandparents then by his mother and stepfather.<sup>3</sup> He was a shy adolescent and recalled being frequently bullied. He was obsessed with pornography and suspected of petty thievery and dishonesty through high school and college.

A turning point in his life, and a major humiliation, was his rejection in college by a beautiful girl from a wealthy family — a woman he later rejected in 1974 after a reconciliation.<sup>4</sup>

Bundy committed his first known murder that same year, when he killed University of Washington senior Lynda Ann Healy, 21. Healy had vanished from the house she shared with four

other women, apparently carried off by an intruder at night. That spring and summer, nine other women students suddenly vanished. All were white, single and slender. All had long hair parted in the middle and all disappeared at night — a pattern that would be repeated through many of his other killings.

In August 1974, the remains of two young women who had disappeared July 14 were found in a local park. Witnesses there had heard a man with a cast telling one of the women, Janice Ott, 23, that he was having trouble loading a boat onto a car because of a broken arm.

Two months later, Bundy struck in Utah. The bodies of two 17-year-olds were found sodomized and raped. On Nov. 8, 1974, Bundy, posing as a policeman, persuaded Carol DaRonch, 18, to get into his car at a shopping mall, but she broke free after he put handcuffs on her and threatened her with a crowbar. In 1975, another woman, Caryn Campbell, disappeared from a Colorado hotel while on vacation. On Aug. 15, 1975, Bundy was arrested in Utah on suspicion of burglary. He was found guilty of the kidnapping of DaRonch in 1976 and sentenced to 1 to 15 years.

Prison psychologists found Bundy to be neither psychotic nor neurotic but plagued by fear of being humiliated in his relationships with women.<sup>5</sup> His girlfriend, Elizabeth Kendall, who had contacted Washington state police in the fall of 1974 after she recognized Ted from a composite sketch, had told authorities that Bundy seemed uninterested in sex unless it involved bondage. Her report was filed and forgotten until much later.<sup>6</sup>

Charged by Colorado police in 1976 with the murder of Campbell, Bundy was transferred to a Colorado jail. Since he was plan-

*Continued from p. 926*

for New York City’s “Mad Bomber,” who was responsible for three-dozen explosions over a 16-year period in the 1940s and ’50s. Psychiatrist James Brussel told New York authorities the bomber was a disgruntled present or former employee of the city’s utility company, Consolidated Edison, who lived in Connecticut with an aunt or sister. He would be polite and unusually neat in appearance.

When authorities arrested former Con Ed employee George Metesky, he fit Brussel’s description to an amazing degree: He was even wearing a neatly buttoned double-breasted suit.<sup>33</sup>

In preparing the profile, Brussel simply reversed the usual process in which psychiatrists predict a person’s

future behavior based on a psychological evaluation, writes psychologist Schlesinger. For example, Brussel noted the extensive planning that went into the bombing and concluded the bomber must be highly organized and rigid; an extremely neat appearance would be consistent with this type of personality.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1970s, FBI agents began using Brussel’s techniques at Quantico. Begun in 1972 as a teaching program for agents and police, the Behavioral Science Unit gained fame as word spread about its work. Police departments began asking the unit for help on local cases. By 1977, it had a clear identity as a unit that was prepared to make predictions helpful to catching violent repeat killers and rapists.

### Missing-Kids Scare

The unit soon popularized the terms “serial” crimes and “serial murder,” and agents Ressler and Douglas began interviewing 36 sexual serial murderers. Their work, published in 1988 and entitled *Sexual Homicide*, was the first systematic modern study of serial killers. From this research, the unit put together a crime-classification manual, which it hoped would help investigators construct the characteristics of offenders from a crime scene.

But in the view of some critics, the term serial murder was a “bureaucratic invention” aimed at gaining more funding for the FBI. The concept also

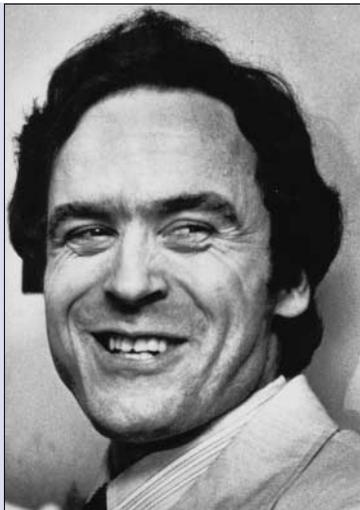
ning his own defense, he was allowed out to research his case at the library. On June 7, during one of his trips to the library he jumped out through an open window and escaped. He was quickly recaptured trying to flee Aspen in a stolen car. But seven months later he was more successful in escaping from a county jail and eluded capture until 1978.

Bundy's final rampage in Florida suggests he had lost control over his compulsion to kill, writes forensic psychologist Louis B. Schlesinger.<sup>7</sup> On Jan. 14, 1978, two girls were found dead at the Chi Omega sorority house at Florida State University, one sexually assaulted.

Two others had been attacked while asleep but survived, their heads covered with blood. The same night, he attacked another woman in her sleep less than a mile away, who also survived with wounds to her head. His final victim was a 12-year-old girl.

A month later, on Feb. 15, a West Pensacola police officer arrested Bundy during a traffic stop for using stolen license plates. Bundy faced three trials within three years. He was sentenced to death for the third time in 1980. Appeals kept Bundy on death row for the next nine years. He was executed on Jan. 24, 1989.

In his numerous interviews with researchers and investigators, Bundy was often contradictory — especially about the



AFP Photo

Serial killer Ted Bundy

number of murders he had committed. Robert D. Keppel, a detective on Bundy's 1974 case, has said Bundy may be responsible for cases dating back to 1968. According to Keppel, Bundy preferred having sex with his victims after they were dead. "I think his prime motivation was control and possession," Keppel has said.<sup>8</sup>

Bundy would often distance himself from the murders to the point of denying them, sometimes adopting the third-person voice of an expert: "The initial sexual encounter would be more or less voluntary, one that did not wholly satisfy the spectrum of desires," he told biographer Stephen G. Michaud.

"And so, his sexual desire builds back up

and joins . . . this other need to totally possess her. As she lay there, somewhere between coma and sleep, he strangled her to death."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brian Lane and Wilfred Gregg, *The Encyclopedia of Serial Killers* (1995).

<sup>2</sup> Rachel Bell, "Ted Bundy," [www.crimelibrary.com](http://www.crimelibrary.com).

<sup>3</sup> Louis B. Schlesinger, *Sexual Murder* (2004), p. 219.

<sup>4</sup> Bell, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick Bellamy, "Robert O. Keppel: An Interview" at [crimelibrary.com](http://crimelibrary.com).

<sup>9</sup> Stephen G. Michaud, "Hollow Men: Why Serial Killers Must Kill to Feel," at [crimelibrary.com](http://crimelibrary.com).

helped gain better access to information across local and state jurisdictions, where local law enforcement authorities often resented FBI interference.<sup>35</sup>

The notion of serial killers gained prominence beginning in the early 1970s and continued in the early 1980s, as several high-profile cases received intense media coverage. The unit achieved its most visible public success in 1981 when it assisted in both the arrest and prosecution of Wayne Williams in connection with the Atlanta murders of more than 20 African-American children and teens.

Another prominent case involved the "Son of Sam" attacks in 1976-77 in New York City, in which six women were killed and seven wounded, by a gunman who seemed to favor young

women with long dark hair. The killer got his moniker from the *New York Daily News* after he left a letter near one of the crime scenes declaring, "I am the Son of Sam. . . . I love to hunt. . . . Prowling the streets looking for fair game — tasty meat."<sup>36</sup> David Berkowitz, a postal worker who claimed membership in a Satanic cult, eventually was sentenced to 365 years in prison for the killings.

In 1977, the same year Berkowitz was convicted, nearly a dozen women were found strangled in the hills surrounding Los Angeles. Cousins Kenneth A. Bianchi and Angelo Buono Jr. were eventually sentenced to life in prison for the so-called Hillside Stranglings following a yearlong trial, one of the longest in U.S. history.

In 1978, 28 victims were discovered buried beneath the Chicago home of well-respected building contractor John Wayne Gacy. His final tally of 33 known victims exceeded the previous American record — 27 killed by Dean Arnold Corll in Houston in 1973. Many of Gacy's victims were teenage boys with whom he had had homosexual relations before killing them.

But perhaps the best-known murders were those by Bundy, whose handsome, clean-cut appearance at his trial and prior attendance at law school seemed to defy the "monster" image of a serial killer. The affair first came to public attention in 1974 with a series of widely reported unsolved murders of women in Washington state and Utah. Over the next two years further murders followed

in Utah and Colorado, and Bundy was arrested in 1977. But he became something of an anti-hero after his escape from prison in 1977. He was arrested again in February 1978 after a final killing in a Florida State University sorority house and executed in 1989.

Between 1977 and 1982, multiple homicides became a popular theme of books and films. According to Penn State historian Jenkins, it was the theme of more American movies in 1980 and 1981 than in the previous two decades combined.<sup>37</sup>

John Carpenter's 1978 film "Halloween" — the story of a fictional serial killer who, like Bundy, kills several young women in one night— spawned a wave of similar "slasher" films including "Friday the Thirteenth" in 1980 and "Nightmare on Elm Street" in 1984. Both were so popular that sequels followed them into the 1990s. Stephen King used a campus serial killer as the subject for his 1978 novella *Strawberry Spring*. Shane Stevens' best-selling *By Reason of Insanity*, about a killer's planned rampage on a women's hostel, was published the following year.

Thomas Harris' 1981 novel *Red Dragon* was influenced by several real cases Harris had studied at the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit. Many of the ideas, such as telling the story from the killer's point of view, were revived in "Silence of the Lambs."<sup>38</sup>

But what really drove the serial murderer theme to a position of iconic dread was its association with missing children, Jenkins says. During the late 1970s and early '80s controversial claims placed the number of missing children in the tens of thousands annually, with the suggestion that most were sexually abused and many murdered.<sup>39</sup> The picture of a compulsive serial killer emerged at a time of widespread hysteria about dangers to children from pornographers, satanic cults, sexual abuse at day-care centers and kidnapers. That picture was further fueled by the Atlanta child murders and by

reports that serial killers Gacy and Corll had preyed on children.

The popular notion of predatory serial killers wandering the country was given prominent play between 1982 and 1984 in Sen. Arlen Specter's hearings before the Senate Juvenile Justice Subcommittee on missing children, child kidnapping and serial kidnapping. Specter's panel estimated that there had been as many as 3,600 "random and senseless murders" in 1981 — or about one-fifth of U.S. homicides.<sup>40</sup> The Justice Department lent credibility to these exaggerated claims with a news conference in October 1983 confirming the number of victims might be in the thousands.<sup>41</sup>

## Why They Kill

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While Jack the Ripper was terrorizing London, a German professor of psychiatry, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, was studying the connection between cruelty and sexual arousal. Krafft-Ebing, who coined the word sadism, published *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1886, the first organized scientific account of sexual murder.

"A great deal of what we know today about the compulsive, repetitive murderer was first described by him," writes psychologist Schlesinger. Krafft-Ebing reported that sexual murderers typically lied and manipulated, took souvenirs like underwear or jewelry from the crime scene, strangled victims with bindings, engaged in torture and reported greater sexual satisfaction in their torture and killings than in actual intercourse with their wives and girlfriends. Serial killers in Krafft-Ebing's account, like many killers today, targeted prostitutes, revisited the crime scene, increased the degree of sadism over time and engaged in repetitive ritualistic behavior. They frequently planned their killings in detail. Many showed no outward signs of abnormality.

To understand why people become serial killers, modern researchers have looked closely at the killers' childhoods. Killers often tortured animals — cats, in particular, perhaps because they are culturally associated with females. Researchers also have observed a relationship between adult sadistic behavior and a childhood history of bedwetting and fire setting.

Ressler and Douglas found that many of their interview subjects were psychologically or physically abused as children. Some researchers have suggested that brain trauma early in life from beatings or falls could be a contributing factor. Still others blame adoption or rejection by a parent. Pornography and the American culture's glorification of violence have also been blamed. But for almost every serial killer who fits one of these descriptors there is another that does not. And many people suffer these kinds of childhoods without turning into killers.<sup>42</sup>

People who have had contact with serial offenders sometimes are amazed at how ordinary the perpetrators appear; indeed, serial killers are often described as being just like "the guy next door." Chicago businessman Gacy, for example, managed to lead a life as an outwardly model citizen in the same house where he killed and murdered his victims.

"Basically, you find people in many ways who are extraordinarily ordinary who, through murder, try to achieve distinction," Fox says.

In fact, serial killers must appear normal to the outside world so they can keep killing while escaping detection. "Most of the people who are successful serial killers don't look particularly psychotic," says Howard Zonana, director of the Law and Psychiatry Division at Yale University. "If they're so disorganized or psychotic, the odds of being able to pull it off are not very good."

Most serial killers are not insane in the legal sense or psychotic in the medical sense.<sup>43</sup> Most are diagnosed

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as having anti-social personality disorder — a disorder of character rather than of mind. This disorder involves a lack of feelings of remorse, an inability to empathize with others, pathological lying, manipulation and a focus on one's own pleasure.<sup>44</sup> There also appear to be higher rates of criminality, psychiatric problems and drug abuse in the families of serial killers, suggesting that both biology and environment play a role, according to forensic psychologist Meloy.

Sexual killers also usually must engage in certain rituals. "He has to position the body, mutilate the body; shove something up the rear end in order to get gratified — some serial killers do this repetitively because it's part of their psychology," says forensic psychologist Schlesinger.

On one point, Meloy is emphatic. By the time they have already killed several times, serial killers are not treatable. "They need to be segregated from the rest of the community," he says. Whether they could have been treated before they started killing is unknown, according to Meloy, because serial killing is such a rare phenomenon.

By contrast, so-called spree killers, who kill numerous people in a short time, are motivated by anger, Schlesinger says, although far less research has been done on spree killers. Schlesinger places the Washington snipers in the "spree" category.

Yet none of these explanations seem to satisfactorily explain the causes of serial murder, observes Petee, co-editor of the journal *Homicide Studies*. "The state of research on serial homicide is not very good," he says.

As Professors Fox and Levin point out, "[T]here are thousands of white males in their late twenties or thirties who are sadistic, thirst for power, lack strong internal controls and tortured animals as children and may have been adopted or abused — but the vast majority will never kill anyone."<sup>45</sup> ■

## CURRENT SITUATION

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### Profilers Testify

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Courts have generally refused to admit profiling testimony in criminal trials, because profiles do not meet legal standards for scientific reliability.<sup>46</sup> But judges have admitted testimony by profilers based on their expertise in linking several crimes to a single suspect — a method known as "linkage analysis."

In the most recent case, the New Jersey Supreme Court did not permit ex-FBI profiler Hazelwood to testify as to whether the same defendant had committed two crimes.<sup>47</sup> However, the court did allow him to testify about the similarities between the two crimes. One was a 1995 sexual assault on a female state trooper in Maine to which Steve Fortin, a 30-year-old laborer for a paving contractor, had confessed. The other was a 1994 rape-murder in New Jersey for which Fortin was on trial. In 1994, Fortin had been living with his girlfriend in a Woodbridge, N.J., motel on U.S. 1 where the murder victim was found.

Hazelwood listed five behaviors that he said constituted a distinctive "signature" common to both crimes — bites on the chin and on the left breast, brutal facial beating, injurious anal penetration and manual strangulation. Hazelwood likens the signature to a human fingerprint in its "uniqueness" and cites this case as an example of how such analysis "can help inform the decision-making of the courts."<sup>48</sup>

But Seton Hall's Risinger calls such testimony extremely dangerous because it is unreliable. "It would be horrible if this kind of thing were admitted in

most cases," he says. "In closer cases, it would convict the innocent."

Hazelwood's testimony in the Fortin case was nothing more than a "parlor trick," designed to support the prosecution by cherry-picking a list of similarities he already knew existed between the two crimes, Risinger maintains. Hazelwood ignored several important differences between the two crimes, such as the theft of jewelry in one crime and not the other, Risinger writes in a highly critical review of cases in which profilers have testified.<sup>49</sup> Rather than objective analysis by an outside expert, Risinger argues, so-called "linkage" testimony is designed after-the-fact to fit the needs of the prosecution.<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, some critics say profiling could be used to convict the innocent, as a Chicago murder case illustrated last year. It's no coincidence, Risinger says, since profiles are not produced by an objective, third party but usually by former cops for cops or prosecutors. The profile, drawn by famed FBI profiler Ressler in the 1986 murder of medical student Lori Roscetti, was used by Chicago cops as a script to create false confessions and false testimony, convicting four innocent men in 1988, according to a defense lawyer who appeared on a National Public Radio program about the case.<sup>51</sup>

In his 1992 book *Whoever Fights Monsters*, Ressler congratulated himself for his astoundingly accurate profile in the Roscetti case. "In terms of profiling, the case was easy," he wrote. The victim had probably stopped her car at a light in a run-down district of Chicago near the campus where she had been studying, Ressler told local police, and some local youths had carjacked the vehicle and driven her to an isolated area to rape, kill and rob her.

Ressler continued, "I told the police to look for a group of black youths, somewhere between three and six males, ranging in age from 15 to 20."<sup>52</sup>

In keeping with the profile, the police arrested four teenagers from whom they coerced confessions tracking Ressler's scenario. Three of them served 15 years in prison before DNA evidence exonerated them last year and tied two other men to the crime. Ressler's scenario had been wrong in more than one crucial detail. There were only two killers. Neither was a teenager. They had attacked Roscetti not at a stoplight in a poor neighborhood but in an alley near her house.<sup>53</sup>

Profiling is not yet a science, and such cases suggest it still has a long way to go. Profilers "need to start being accountable," says Ramsland of DeSales University.<sup>54</sup> "If they're going to say this is science, they have to start showing that it is."



*Underwear is examined for semen at the Louisiana State Crime Lab. DNA evidence uncovered by forensic scientists led police last spring to Derrick Todd Lee, the suspected serial rapist-killer of several women in southern Louisiana. The FBI had profiled the suspect as a white male; Lee turned out to be black.*

Getty Images/Mario Villafuerte

requiring the maintenance of a DNA databank.

CODIS and most of the states maintain DNA files only on convicted felons and specifically bar keeping DNA records from arrestees or suspects. Louisiana and Virginia, however, collect DNA from arrestees as well, raising the hackles of privacy advocates, who say keeping the genetic information of innocent citizens violates their rights.

In Louisiana, a class action suit filed on behalf of men who gave DNA to police hunting a serial rapist-murderer challenges the constitutionality of a Louisiana law that allows police to keep DNA from someone arrested but never convicted of a sexual or violent crime.

Unlike Louisiana, Virginia removes the DNA profiles of arrestees from its databank once they have been exonerated — something that all states should be required to do, according to law Professor Scheck.

Craft, the Baton Rouge attorney representing Wagster, the lead plaintiff, objects to Louisiana's inclusion of people who've been arrested, noting, "I've represented hundreds of people arrested for crimes they never committed." A federal court needs to establish standards and parameters for the nation's DNA databases, she says.

DNA laws in other states are unclear regarding those merely suspected of a crime. And they, too, are being tested. New York City, for example maintains a citywide database of DNA obtained from crime scenes and from suspects in major crimes. But last November, a defendant in a Brooklyn rape case who

*Continued on p. 934*

### DNA Databanks

Increasingly sophisticated DNA technology offers hope for finding serial killers before they claim more victims. Virginia has the nation's largest DNA databank, with genetic material from 300,000 individuals. The ability to run DNA found at a murder scene through the state's databank has revolutionized investigators' ability to crack unsolved crimes and even older "cold" cases, says Special Agent Jon Perry, a criminal investigative analyst with the Virginia State Police. "We're averaging over a hit a day" matching crime scene DNA to offenders in the databank.

If investigators don't find a DNA match in Virginia's database, they can try their luck with the national databank, known as the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), which links state databases. Begun as a pilot project serving 14 states in 1990, CODIS now contains DNA profiles of 1.4 million convicted offenders. According to the FBI, which runs CODIS, as of last July it had produced 9,000 successful "hits."<sup>55</sup>

But controversy and legal challenges have dogged the databanks, which have rapidly expanded in recent years. All but two states — Rhode Island and Mississippi — participate in the CODIS database, and all 50 states have enacted some form of legislation

# At Issue:

## *Are criminal profiles a reliable way to find serial killers?*

**GREGG O. MCCRARY**

**FORMER FBI CRIMINAL PROFILER;  
AUTHOR, THE UNKNOWN DARKNESS:  
PROFILING THE PREDATORS AMONG US**

WRITTEN FOR THE CQ RESEARCHER, OCTOBER 2003

**a** skilled profiler analyzing reliable data can be a distinct asset in a serial murder investigation. If either the profiler or the data are compromised, so is the potential for a successful outcome. Obviously, a poorly trained and unskilled profiler is a disaster waiting to happen. But if a plan of action is based on flawed, incomplete or unreliable data, even a highly skilled operative cannot create or execute that plan successfully.

The type of data to be meticulously analyzed in serial murder cases includes detailed information regarding each victim (victimology), witness statements, accurate crime and crime-scene data, expert reports and all investigative reports. Careful consideration is given to all offender behavior, including the choice of victim, method and manner of death, indications of abduction or transportation and any suggestion of staging.

If the data are reliable, an experienced profiler can draw accurate inferences about the offender and assist investigators in identifying the offender and collecting evidence.

But if the information is flawed, the conclusions will also be flawed. For example, in a recent serial murder case in Baton Rouge, witnesses described seeing a suspicious white male at some of the crime scenes. With no contraindicating data, the profiler would naturally deduce a greater probability for a white offender.

When the offender turned out to be a black male, some critics attacked the profile, rather than recognizing the erroneous witness information. The media often compound the problem by allowing "pseudo-profilers" to opine on crimes even though they may be unqualified and uninformed. No one should be surprised when these "profiles" are wrong, as occurred in the Washington, D.C.-area sniper shootings, but one should not confuse these "pseudo-profiles" with legitimate profiling practice.

Qualified profilers, analyzing reliable data, have helped crack many serial murder cases. In one Canadian case involving the murders of two teenage girls, I correctly profiled the offender as a white male in his late twenties with a history of violent sexual and domestic assaults. I predicted he would have videotaped his assaults against the two teenage victims and helped authorities prepare a search warrant for those tapes. The videotapes were found and provided compelling evidence of the guilt of the offender, who is serving a life sentence.

**JOHN PHILPIN**

**RETIRED PSYCHOLOGIST, INDEPENDENT PROFILER;  
CO-AUTHOR, BEYOND MURDER: THE INSIDE  
ACCOUNT OF THE GAINESVILLE STUDENT MURDERS**

WRITTEN FOR THE CQ RESEARCHER, OCTOBER 2003

**t**ed Bundy struggled to explain his propensity to kill. If one so intimate with the nuances of murder cannot articulate his own madness, how can those who never venture into the wild expect to do so?

Obviously, they can't — which is why profiling is so fundamentally flawed. The imposition of a profiler's personal brand of logic, and the relegation of evidence to the back seat, behind theory, are the offending agents.

Each crime scene offers the factual information from which the crime can be reconstructed. Appreciating this choreography of murder is the initial step in a profiling effort.

Implicit in the act of homicide is the killer's reasoning. The moments of a murder are intimate and intense, even for the most distanced, emotionless psychopath. In the remains of the act are the hints of thought processes, attitudes and personality. No amount of linear thinking, brainstorming or computer-assisted sorting will elaborate this enactment of intrapsychic scripting. To think and feel with a killer, profilers must abandon the familiar and accept that anything is possible.

No training is necessary to develop a theory. If relatives commit 90 percent of domestic homicides of children, the theory of a crime presents itself, and a profile from an earlier case can be easily adjusted to accommodate the current one. Think JonBenet Ramsey, the murdered 6-year-old Colorado beauty queen, whose parents saw a profile created in their likeness. Then take another look at the murders of Damon and Devon Routier. A profiler who entered that case after the arrest of Darlie Routier, the boys' mother, testified that the children knew their killer well. One can only guess what evidence supports this conclusion, but Mrs. Routier nonetheless awaits execution on Texas' death row.

We humans leave physical and psychological traces of ourselves wherever we go. A violent act typically offers enough information to reconstruct the event, to identify some of the assailant's characteristics and to suggest avenues of investigation. Nothing more.

Beware the profile that is created after a suspect is identified. Beware the profile that relies on linear thinking and statistics. Beware the profile that ignores the physical and psychological clues that litter the crime scene.

And, above all, beware the profile that is created by someone unwilling or unable to enter a killer's mind. If the profiler is unwilling to go there, the profile will lead nowhere.

## A Rogues' Gallery of International Killers

Some of the world's deadliest killers lived overseas and reportedly murdered hundreds, according to news reports.

### Countess Elizabeth of Bathory

600 victims  
Romania, 1560-1615

The most prolific female murderer in history reportedly killed 600 girls and women and drank their blood and bathed in it to try to preserve her youth. She was locked in solitary confinement in a tower, where she died two years later.

### Behram ("The Indian Thug")

931 victims  
Uttar Pradesh, India, 1790-1840

The *Guinness Book of Records* lists Behram as the world's most prolific murderer. As a member of the "thugz" cult — professional assassins and thieves active in northern India who offered their victims to the goddess Kali — Behram reportedly strangled his victims with a ceremonial cloth strip.

### Jack The Ripper

5-9 victims  
Whitechapel, England, 1888

Despite a massive investigation, no one was ever convicted of five gruesome murders in the poor Whitechapel section of London. Victims were prostitutes, and the killings often involved evisceration and dissection.

### Pedro Armando Lopez ("The Monster of the Andes")

110 victims  
Ecuador, Colombia and Peru, 1970-1980

The Colombian drifter was accused of kidnapping, raping and killing poor and indigent girls and women throughout South America. He was suspected of killing hundreds more, possibly as many as 300. Captured and convicted in Ecuador in 1980, he was sentenced to life in prison.



### Andrei Chikatilo

53 victims  
Russia, 1978-1990

The former Ukrainian schoolteacher kidnapped boys, girls and young women from train stations and sexually assaulted, mutilated and cannibalized his victims. Chikatilo blamed his killings on a deprived childhood and said at his trial: "I am a freak of nature, a mad beast." He was executed in 1994.



### Dr. Harold Shipman

215 victims  
England, 1975-1998

A suburban family doctor, Shipman administered lethal injections to hundreds of elderly people, mostly women. An official investigation suggested Shipman was addicted to killing, and that the total number of people killed might number in the hundreds. He was convicted in 1998 of killing 15 people, and sentenced to life in prison.

### Moses Sithole

38 victims  
Johannesburg, South Africa, 1994-1995

The 32-year-old South African lured many of his victims — mostly young women — to remote fields where he raped and strangled them with their underwear. He was sentenced in 1997 to 2,410 years in prison for 38 murders and 40 rapes.

### Anatoly Onoprienko

52 victims  
Ukraine, 1989-1999

A former forestry student who said he wanted to hold the world record for killing, Onoprienko killed entire families, including 10 children. "I have no regrets, no remorse and I would do it again if I could," he later said. He was sentenced to life in prison in 1999.

### Luis Alfredo Gavarito

189 victims  
Colombia and Ecuador, 1994-1999

Gavarito befriended street children — mostly boys ages 8 to 16 — whom he molested and killed, keeping a record of his victims in a notebook. He was arrested in 1999 in Colombia, where he was sentenced to 835 years in prison.

### Javed Iqbal

100 victims  
Lahore, Pakistan, 2000

The Pakistani chemical engineer lured 100 young teens — mostly beggars and runaways — to his apartment, strangled them and dissolved their bodies in acid. He kept a detailed record of his victims, including photos and personal effects. He died in jail in 2001 under mysterious circumstances.

Continued from p. 932

was compelled to give a DNA blood sample won a court order barring the medical examiner from placing it in the citywide DNA database.<sup>56</sup>

## DNA 'Dragnets'

Are DNA dragnets effective? The roots for the DNA dragnet lie in

Britain. In 1987, police tested 4,000 men in Leicestershire in search of a man who raped and murdered two teenage girls. The testing eventually led to a local baker, Colin Pitchfork, who wasn't caught

in the dragnet but was reported by a co-worker to have paid another man to be tested in his place.<sup>57</sup>

Police have conducted dragnets since 1990 in the United States, where they have attracted far more controversy than in Britain. In 1998, the police in Prince George's County, Md., asked for DNA samples from 400 male workers at a hospital where an administrator had been raped and strangled. Union members complained that the police were coercing employees into agreeing and were singling out maintenance workers. No match was made, and the killing remains unsolved.

Dragnets have also raised issues of racial prejudice. After 13 women in a largely white community in Ann Arbor, Mich., were raped by a black man in 1994, investigators took 160 DNA samples from black men. The approach raised charges from blacks that they were being randomly singled out, often based on unreliable tips. One participant in the dragnet who said he was threatened into giving his DNA in 1995, sued and retrieved his DNA.<sup>58</sup> The rapist was caught only after a cab driver saw him fleeing a crime scene. ■

## OUTLOOK

### Nationwide Database?

In the future, some experts say, a national database that would include everyone's DNA — not just criminals' — would be a far more reliable way to find serial killers than current methods.

"It's important when someone is a multiple rapist or killer to take them off the streets, and we can do a better job of that if we have their [DNA] identification on hand before they commit their first murder or rape," says Wisconsin law Professor Smith, who favors a national databank. "There are a lot of stories out

there now about people who committed lots of rapes after we first had custody of them — but we had custody of them for crimes where we don't collect DNA."

Smith believes concerns about privacy can be eliminated if police record only the DNA information that identifies an individual — not extraneous genetic information about illnesses, for example — and then destroy the sample. Moreover, having a national database would relieve concerns about racial bias, he argues, and deter criminal behavior if everyone knew their DNA was on file.

Some civil libertarians object that a national database smacks of a totalitarian state. Moreover, mistakes by labs making DNA identifications could lead to wrongful convictions. "I've seen so much bad DNA work that I'm really concerned that expanding the suspect population will create unacceptable consequences," says UC-Irvine's Thompson.

### Copycat Killers?

Is the kind of domestic terrorism produced by the Washington sniper killings something we are likely to see more of in the future? As recently as August, authorities feared that three sniper attacks, which left three people dead in West Virginia in a week, might be a case of copycat serial murder.<sup>59</sup>

As the nation has discovered with school shootings in recent years, certain kinds of crimes can be contagious. "We've seen other cases where people like Muhammed and Malvo can become role models for others," Fox says. "I've heard killers talk about Bundy in a very complimentary way. Some say, 'He slipped up; I'm going to do better.'" ■

On the other hand, a sniper's motivation is far different from that of most serial killers, because a sniper seeks revenge "against all mankind," Professors Fox and Levin have noted.<sup>60</sup>

The snipers, Fox says, "may have enjoyed terrorizing a community but it's different from the intimate enjoyment of inflicting pain that many serial killers get."

For now, more serial killers are likely to follow the well-known but still mysterious pattern of sexual gratification described by William Shakespeare four centuries ago:

"One sin, I know, another doth provoke; Murder's as near to lust as flame to smoke."<sup>61</sup> ■

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Moose, *Three Weeks in October: The Manhunt for the Serial Sniper* (2003), p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> According to a study of 400 serial murderers, 84 percent were male and 20 percent were black. Another study found 95 percent were males and 16 percent were black. As many as 20 percent of serial killers operate in teams. See James Alan Fox and Jack Levin, *The Will to Kill* (2001), pp. 106-107.

<sup>3</sup> Some experts limit their definition of serial murder to sexual murders, classifying the Washington sniper killings as "spree killing."

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Kershaw, "New Discoveries Move Green River Case to Fore Again," *The New York Times*, Sept. 22, 2003, p. A10.

<sup>5</sup> Alma Guillermoprieto, "Letter from Mexico: A Hundred Women," *The New Yorker*, September 2003, pp. 83-93.

<sup>6</sup> Stephan Harbort and Andreas Mokros, "Serial Murderer in Germany from 1945 to 1995," *Homicide Studies*, November 2001, pp. 311-

### About the Author

**Sarah Glazer** is a New York freelancer who specializes in health, education and social-policy issues. Her articles have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Glamour*, *The Public Interest* and *Gender and Work*, a book of essays. Her recent *CQ Researcher* reports include "Increase in Autism" and "Mothers' Movement." She graduated from the University of Chicago with a B.A. in American history.

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<sup>7</sup> Fox and Levin, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> See Mark Caro, "Too Evil to be True-and That's a Good Thing," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 9, 2002, Calendar, Part 6, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> For background, see Kenneth Jost, "DNA Databases," *The CQ Researcher*, May 28, 1999, pp. 449-472.

<sup>10</sup> Philip Jenkins, *Using Murder: The Social Construction of Serial Homicide* (1994), p. 63.

<sup>11</sup> There is some debate about who first coined the term. See D. Michael Risinger and Jeffrey L. Loop, "Three Card Monte, Monty Hall, Modus Operandi and 'Offender Profiling': Some Lessons of Modern Cognitive Science for the Law of Evidence," *Cardozo Law Review*, November 2002, pp. 193-285, 231.

<sup>12</sup> Jenkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 64.

<sup>13</sup> Louis B. Schlesinger, "Is Serial Homicide Really Increasing?" *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2001, pp. 294-297.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Also see John Douglas, *Mind Hunter* (1995), pp. 17-18.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Robert K. Ressler, Ann W. Burgess and John E. Douglas, *Sexual Homicide: Patterns and Motives* (1988).

<sup>18</sup> Melinda DeSlatte, "Lawyer for Louisiana Serial Killing Suspect Derrick Todd Lee Renews Plea for More Money," *The Associated Press*, Aug. 14, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> CBSnews.com, "Serial Killings a Capital Case," May 29, 2003; at [www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com).

<sup>20</sup> See Katherine Ramsland, "The Profile Evaluated" at the Crime Library Web site.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Robert D. Keppel, *The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations* (2003), p. 130.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139. Shawcross was sentenced to 250 years on 10 counts in 1991.

<sup>24</sup> Damon A. Muller, "Criminal Profiling: Real Science or Just Wishful Thinking?" *Homicide Studies*, August 2000, pp. 234-264.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Risinger, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>27</sup> "Serial Killings A Capital Case," May 29, 2003, [cbsnews.com](http://cbsnews.com).

<sup>28</sup> Penny Brown Roberts, "DNA Suit Attorneys, Judge Talk," *2theadvocate news*, Aug. 22, 2003 at [www.2theadvocate.com](http://www.2theadvocate.com).

<sup>29</sup> See [www.innocenceproject.org](http://www.innocenceproject.org). As of Oct. 23, 138 convicted persons had been exonerated.

<sup>30</sup> Roma Khanna and Steve McVicker, "Sutton Freed Because of Faulty DNA Evidence in Rape Case," *Houston Chronicle*, March 15, 2003.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**American Society of Criminology**, 1314 Kinnear Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43212-1156; (614) 292-9207; [www.asc41.com](http://www.asc41.com). Studies the causes of crime and ways to prevent it.

**Combined DNA Index System (CODIS)**, [www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/codis/index1.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/codis/index1.htm). The FBI's national DNA database of serious criminals.

**Crime and Justice News**; <http://cjj.mn-8.net>. A Web site maintained by Criminal Justice Journalists; posts new and archived articles.

**Crime Library**; [www.crimelibrary.com](http://www.crimelibrary.com). A Court TV Web site that posts biographies of past and present serial killers and interviews with investigators.

**Homicide Research Working Group**, University of Central Florida, Phillips Hall, 403P, 4000 Central Florida Blvd., P.O. Box 160000, Orlando, FL 32816-1360; (407) 823-2227; [www.icpsr.umich.edu/HRWG/brief.html](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/HRWG/brief.html). This interdisciplinary group publishes the scholarly journal *Homicide Studies*.

**National Commission on the Future of DNA Evidence**. This Justice Department panel posts its publications at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/dna/welcome.html>.

**Scientific Testimony: An Online Journal**; [www.scientific.org](http://www.scientific.org). This Web site containing information about faulty DNA evidence used in criminal trials is edited by Professor William C. Thompson, University of California, Irvine.

<sup>31</sup> Louis B. Schlesinger, *Sexual Murder* (2004), p. 199.

<sup>32</sup> Patricia Cornwell, *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper, Case Closed* (2002).

<sup>33</sup> This story may be apocryphal. According to one account he was actually in his pajamas.

<sup>34</sup> Schlesinger, *Sexual Murder*, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Richard Rhodes, *Why They Kill* (1999), p. 212.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Michael Newton, *The Encyclopedia of Serial Killers* (2000), p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>39</sup> For background, see Charles S. Clark, "Child Sexual Abuse," *The CQ Researcher*, Jan. 15, 1993, pp. 25-48.

<sup>40</sup> Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>42</sup> Fox and Levin, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-115.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>46</sup> Risinger and Loop, *op. cit.*, p. 253. Two landmark cases have provided standards for courts to judge whether testimony can be considered scientific: *Frye v. United States* (1923) and the Supreme Court's 1993 decision in *Daubert v. Merrel Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc.* which set heightened standards for testability and error rates. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>47</sup> The case is *State v. Fortin*, 2000.

<sup>48</sup> Robert R. Hazelwood and Janet I. Warren, "Linkage Analysis: Modus Operandi,

Ritual, and Signature in Serial Sexual Crime," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* (2003, forthcoming).

<sup>49</sup> Risinger and Loop, *op. cit.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>51</sup> See WBEZ Chicago, "This American Life," April 19, 2002, "Perfect Evidence; Act One," at [www.thisamericanlife.org](http://www.thisamericanlife.org).

<sup>52</sup> Robert K. Ressler and Tom Shachtman, *Whoever Fights Monsters: My Twenty Years Hunting Serial Killers for the FBI* (1992), p. 145.

<sup>53</sup> Maurice Possley, *et al.*, "Police Arrest 2 in Roscetti Case," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 8, 2002, at [chicagotribune.com](http://chicagotribune.com).

<sup>54</sup> See Katherine Ramsland, "Too Easy to Criticize a Difficult Manhunt," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 3, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov).

<sup>56</sup> David M. Halbfinger, "Police Dragnets for DNA Tests Draw Criticism," *The New York Times*, Jan. 4, 2003.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Willing, "La. Case Triggers Battle Over DNA," *USA Today*, May 29, 2003.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Peter T. Kilborn, "Investigators in Sniper Case Join Inquiry in W. Virginia," *The New York Times*, Aug. 19, 2003, p. A14.

<sup>60</sup> Jack Levin and James Alan Fox, "Terrorism Has Many Faces, Causes," *Newsday.com*, Oct. 24, 2002.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted by J. Reid Meloy from *Pericles* in the Forward to Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. vii.

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# The Next Step:

## *Additional Articles from Current Periodicals*

### **DNA Evidence**

**Booth, William, "A Long-Sought Break in Green River Killings,"** *The Washington Post*, Dec. 2, 2001, p. A3.

New tests run on a decades-old DNA sample may be the break that investigators are looking for in the gruesome, and unsolved, Green River murders.

**Gold, Scott, and Ken Ellingwood, "Serial Killings Suspect Arrested,"** *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 2003, p. A12.

A tip led authorities in Atlanta to the Louisiana trucker whose DNA matches samples taken from the bodies of five women.

**Halfbinger, David M., "Police Dragnets For DNA Tests Draw Criticism,"** *The New York Times*, Jan. 4, 2003, p. A1.

Experts around the country say the growing use of DNA dragnets, like the massive effort recently carried out in Louisiana, is troubling.

**Halfbinger, David M., "Search for Killer's DNA in a 'Haystack' of 27,000 Pickup Trucks,"** *The New York Times*, Jan. 2, 2003, p. A10.

For all the thousands of tips that have been called into a hotline, investigators on the Louisiana serial killer case are still looking for a genetic needle in a haystack.

**McMahon, Patrick, "Green River Questions Persist,"** *USA Today*, Feb. 21, 2002, p. A3.

The Washington state crime laboratory used emerging DNA technology to re-examine old evidence and find a suspect in the unsolved Green River killings.

**Stack, Megan K., "Fear Over Killings Grips Baton Rouge,"** *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 3, 2002, p. A8.

DNA evidence indicates the same man has killed at least three women in Baton Rouge in the last 10 months.

**Willing, Richard, "La. Case Triggers Battle Over DNA,"** *USA Today*, May 29, 2003, p. A3.

In an attempt to catch a Louisiana serial killer, police conducted a "DNA dragnet" — one of nearly a dozen such sweeps performed by American police since the early 1990s.

### **Media Fascination**

**Caro, Mark, "Stop Me Before I Film Again,"** *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 6, 2002, p. C1.

Serial killers certainly exist in our society, but they're not the raging epidemic that media coverage and entertainment portrayals might have you believe.

**Hibbs, Thomas, "The Hannibal Industry,"** *National Review Online*, Oct. 7, 2002.

Some media critics think "Silence of the Lambs" serial-killer spin-off films will, like a pop-up serial killer, return yet again.

**Jones, Chris, "Gay Serial Killer Fails to Fascinate,"** *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 2003, p. C3.

A Chicago theater reviewer says a new play about a gay serial killer is unnecessary, given Hollywood's ongoing fascination with mass murderers and their grisly modus operandi.

**Levin, Jack, and James Alan Fox, "Making Celebrities of Serial Killers Elevates Threat,"** *USA Today*, Oct. 23, 2002, p. A13.

Criminologists say that turning dangerous serial killers into quasi-celebrities can encourage them to fulfill our expectations of murder and mayhem.

**Pike, Laurie, "Killer Obsession,"** *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 4, 1999, p. E1.

Popular culture is embracing serial murderers, and some critics are questioning whether it is fair to the families and friends of victims.

**Ryan, Joan, "Media Feeding the Fear,"** *The San Francisco Chronicle*, Oct. 15, 2002, p. A23.

The national climate of fear surrounding the Washington-area snipers demands that the media examine its coverage decisions more critically than ever.

### **Profiling Techniques**

**Anderson, Lisa, "Experts Baffled by Suspect Who Didn't Fit Profile,"** *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 27, 2002, p. C1.

While many serial killers are alienated, the Washington-area sniper broke the "rules" of the murderous genre in ways that surprised and baffled many experts.

**Holmes, Steven A., "Many Voice Surprise Arrested Men Are Black,"** *The New York Times*, Oct. 25, 2002, p. A26.

Experts say that the image of a white man as serial killer persists, in part, because there have been so few studies on the race and ethnicity of serial killers.

**Kleinfeld, N. R., and Erica Goode, "Serial Killing's Squarest Pegs: Not Solo, White, Psychosexual or Picky,"** *The New York Times*, Oct. 28, 2002, p. A16.

If the Washington-area snipers are convicted, they will add a highly peculiar chapter to the already saturated history of multiple killers.

**Page, Clarence, "The Bearing of Arms in America,"** *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 27, 2002, p. A9.

The public should be wary of what profilers say, if only because they can have us chasing a stereotype while the real culprit slips away.

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**Parker, Laura, “Profiling: Art of the Educated Hunch,”** *USA Today*, Nov. 1, 2002, p. A3.

The largest manhunt in the Washington area since Abraham Lincoln’s assassination reminds us that criminal profiling is more art than science.

**Parker, Laura, and Larry Copeland, “Md. Sniper’s Profile Puzzles Investigators,”** *USA Today*, Oct. 9, 2002, p. A1.

The modus operandi of the Washington-area sniper has left many police investigators baffled, because little about his actions fit known serial killer profiles.

### **Washington-Area Snipers**

**Cannon, Angie, “Terror Revisited,”** *U.S. News & World Report*, Oct. 20, 2003, p. 33.

Victims and Washington-area residents are hoping the Beltway snipers’ trial answers the unsettling question of why they did it.

**Ruane, Michael E., and Sari Horwitz, “In the End, Caprice Lost Its Invisibility,”** *The Washington Post*, Oct. 8, 2003, p. A1.

When the two Washington-area sniper suspects were arrested, the arresting officers said they looked totally unremarkable — “just street thugs.”

**White, Josh, “At Heart, Sniper Case Purely Circumstantial,”** *The Washington Post*, Oct. 14, 2003, p. A15.

The lawyers prosecuting John Allen Muhammad and those defending him agree on one thing — there is no direct evidence linking Muhammad to any of last fall’s sniper shootings.

**White, Josh, “Trial Puts Crucial Focus on Pr. William Slaying,”** *The Washington Post*, Oct. 19, 2003, p. A1.

Although jurors are likely to hear evidence from about a dozen other shootings, they must first decide whether John Allen Muhammad killed the first shooting victim.

### **Notorious Cases**

**Cannon, Angie, and Kate V. Forsyth, “Crime Stories of the Century,”** *U.S. News & World Report*, Dec. 6, 1999, p. 22.

A long feature article explores some of the more notorious criminal acts of the 20th century, including serial killers like the “Son of Sam” and Ted Bundy.

**Davis, Patricia, “Sniper Book Taints Case, Defense Says,”** *The Washington Post*, Oct. 4, 2003, p. B1.

Attorneys asked a judge to dismiss the murder charges against John Allen Muhammad, saying a book about the investigation violates a confidentiality order.

**McCarthy, Terry, “River Of Death,”** *Time*, June 3, 2002, p. 56.

The Green River killer may be the worst serial murderer in U.S. history, and it’s one cop’s mission to stop him.

**Morrison, Blake, “Suspect Had Links to 9 Who Vanished,”** *USA Today*, June 9, 2000, p. A3.

A recently apprehended Kansas man may prove to be the first documented serial killer in the nation to use the Internet to recruit victims.

**Rohter, Larry, “Behind a Grisly Confession, the Torn Lives of Colombian Children,”** *The New York Times*, Nov. 1, 1999, p. A11.

Luis Alfredo Garavito confessed to killing at least 140 boys between ages 8 and 16 over a five-year period that ended when he was jailed in April on an unrelated rape charge.

**Tizon, Tomas Alex, “More Remains Found in Green River Case,”** *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 15, 2003, p. A12.

A burst of activity in the 20-year-old investigation of the Green River killings suggests that suspect Gary Ridgway may be cooperating to avoid a death sentence.

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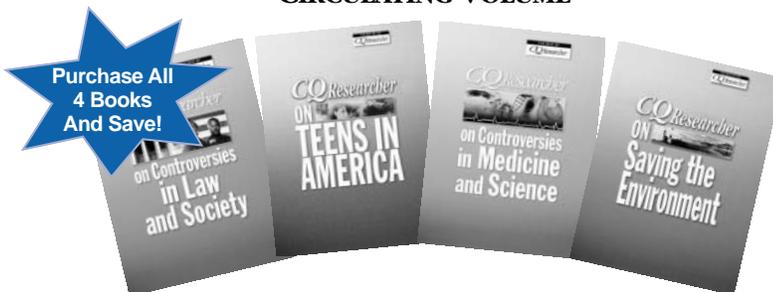
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