The Anonymity of African American Serial Killers: From Slavery to Prisons,

A Continuum of Negative Imagery

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ABSTRACT

The Anonymity of African American Serial Killers: From Slavery to Prisons, A Continuum of Negative Imagery
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Race-based perceptions regarding African American males have created the belief that, although these men are frequently associated with crime, they do not engage in serial murder. That conviction reflects a cultural bias whereby white male serial murderers arguably have been given an iconic status within popular culture, and the “anti-hero” traits accorded them are denied to their African-American counterparts, rendering the latter invisible. A combination of critical discourse analysis, case studies, and quantitative analysis of social artefacts provide support for this thesis. An overview of the significant impact of slavery, the creation of media imagery regarding criminality from the late nineteenth century to the present, and the overrepresentation of African Americans in the penal system provide a framework to examine how racism in the U.S. has evolved, how multiple forms of popular media have shaped perceptions of both blacks and serial murderers, and how the FBI’s criminal profiling matrix developed in accord with these cognitive patterns. All combine to create a dangerous delusion that blinds law enforcement to possible perpetrators of serial murder. Significantly, the case of the D.C. Snipers and other black serial killers are examined to demonstrate the biases inherent in social and cultural attitudes to such crimes and the consequences for the continuing anonymity of black serial murderers.
DEDICATION

To all researchers and law enforcement agents tasked with the investigation of serial murders, may this work enable a new perspective and renewed determination towards apprehension. To the victims of these crimes, your life has value and your deaths have not been in vain. Special thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Yvonne Jewkes and Dr. Sarah Hodgkinson, for recognising the importance of this work and keeping me on the path. I am appreciative too for the support and assistance of all those who have gone before me and saw fit to share their knowledge with me. Lastly, to my mother, Martha Aileen Broady, for rearing me without the all too common social biases related to race in America.
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INTRODUCTION

Why do many Americans believe that there are no black serial killers? If one were to pose the question, “Can you name an African American serial killer?”, most of those in the U.S., black or white, until recently might have answered, “Wayne B. Williams”, the so-called “Atlanta child murderer”, suspected of killing as many as 26 black children in Atlanta, Georgia between 1979 and 1981. If the respondents were more astute, they might suggest, correctly, the more recent D.C. Snipers, John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo.\(^1\) In fact, even though researchers (Jenkins, 1993; Hickey, 2002; Walsh, 2005 et al) have identified black serial killers, individuals like Coral Watts—an African American suspected of committing more murders than Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, and John Wayne Gacy combined—remain virtually unknown to the American public (Mitchell, 2006). The origins of serial killer beliefs in the U.S. shall be explored through an examination of the discourse regarding African Americans from slavery to the present, the FBI’s serial killer research, media portrayals, and case studies.

When African American serial predators John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo (aka the D.C. Snipers or Capitol Beltway Snipers) began their predations in the autumn of 2002, law enforcement failed to identify them, due in part to a race-based profile. Despite existing data regarding the presence of African American serial killers in the U.S., law enforcement’s failure to consider these facts impeded that criminal investigation. Consequently, despite research to the contrary, there is little evidence to

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\(^1\)Though not viewed as traditional serial killers, they were classified as such by FBI criminal profilers (Douglas, Burgess A. W., Burgess A. G., and Ressler, 2006, p. 455).
suggest that the public’s perceptions of Wayne Williams, the D.C. Snipers and other
black serial killers are little more than aberrations and that generally they are, indeed,
non-existent. During a discussion with a black urban street gang, sociologist and author
of *Gang Leader for a Day* Sudhir Venkatesh (2008) posed a question regarding an
episode of the HBO television series *The Wire*. When he asked the gang members why
black serial killers do not exist, he was answered by a telling, joking punch line,
“…because we can’t count that high.”\(^2\) Additionally, a black male acquaintance of this
researcher rationalised, “We can’t be serial killers, we just started being quarterbacks.”\(^3\)
Both statements speak to an important aspect of black serial killer anonymity—a
negative (self) image that is incongruent with existing iconic, dramatic, and
mythological portrayals of the serial killer as a white, highly intelligent male predator
(Holmes and Holmes, 1998). Further illuminating the issue of self-image and media
portrayals is a statement by the African American police chief who headed the Sniper
Task Force, acknowledging this fatal error:

> Our two principal suspects were both African American. In American
criminal history, serial killers are rarely black. The profilers had missed
this entirely. No one expected the sniper suspects not to be white men…

These statements also reveal a lack of portrayals within the media that promotes
the non-existence or anonymity of blacks as perpetrators of serial homicide. In
America, a curious dichotomy exists. The historic negative discourse of black men,
readily depicted by the media as thugs, gang members, and drug dealers, coexists with a
strong reluctance to portray them as serial murderers. This research suggests that the
origins of the negative self-image that blacks possess, as well as their lack of media


\(^3\) A reference to the National Football League’s offensive captain, traditionally the team leader.
portrayals in a serial killer role, can be directly linked to slavery in the U.S. Similarly, it is suggested that these negative images of black males in American society preclude them from being perceived as the iconic predators that serial killers have become in the U.S. Furthermore, the media’s continuum of negative portrayals of blacks in general, coupled with that group’s criminality and criminalisation, have perpetuated race-based perceptions of the group. When elucidating the absence of black serial killers within American popular culture and research literature, it is essential that the reader understand the scope and impact of slavery on black people, as well as on members of the dominant culture. Without this in-depth perspective, the reader cannot begin to comprehend the intergenerational impact of black stereotypes embedded in American culture. An understanding of the prolonged treatment of individuals once legislated as sub-human4 (i.e., chattel slavery), its psychological (e.g., self-image, mental health issues, and criminality) and sociological impact (laws mandating social exclusion), aid in illuminating this particular group’s absence from the serial killer matrix. Dismissing this portion of the research as insignificant would display a failure to comprehend the breadth and scope of slavery’s impact on American culture. Furthermore, such a dismissal would replicate the behaviours that have contributed to black serial killers’ anonymity. “Social exclusion” for black Africans in the U.S. resulted from slavery, initiated by an agrarian culture in need of cheap labour, and continued long after their emancipation.

While this research acknowledges “race” as a social construct, it was primarily determined in the U.S. by one’s skin colour and hair texture. As such, it will be revealed that race and slavery in the U.S. were immutably linked. Furthermore, as will

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4 Prior to the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery, blacks were classified as three-fifths human for purposes of the taxation of states, based on their populations.
be revealed, slavery as an institution in the U.S. was not comparable to that of other New World countries. Laws regarding miscegenation, education, and public access were developed in the U.S. maintained their social exclusion for hundreds of years, including much of the post-emancipation era, leaving an indelible stigma on black Americans. African slaves in America were demonised, depicted, and legislated as sub-human beasts—child-like, yet deserving of fear, loathing, punishment, and worse. They were considered intellectually capable of only the most rudimentary tasks. The consequences of this situation were laws established in the foundling U.S. that required an institutionalised, socially-accepted, dehumanisation of black people in order to maintain the profitable status quo for dominant white society, both during and after slavery. The many lingering pitfalls of these historical actions include a series of social problems, and have culminated in a carceral and penal system that, as a means of social control, lends itself to an overrepresentation of black males among the prison population. The existence of African American serial killers is a fact, yet it appears to have escaped the attention of the American public and law enforcement. This lacuna has been further enhanced by a lack of research, scholarly literature, and media depictions of their predations. The media and law enforcement, especially the FBI, have contributed to the creation of a myth regarding serial murderers that the general public has accepted. Despite their abhorrent behaviour, the iconic representation of serial murderers suggests attributes that, in the U.S., are only afforded a particular segment of its population. Jenkins (2002) notes that serial predators now fulfil the roles of the night stalkers of yore. He suggests that the traits and mythological concepts of vampires and werewolves were reinvented and associated with serial killers by the FBI during their lobbying efforts for research funding, as well as during subsequent media presentations. The FBI’s historic and high profile status as a law enforcement agency, as well as its
alleged expertise in this form of homicide investigation, ensured American media’s promotion of the same. The agency’s early serial killer research (Ressler et al, 1992) implicitly suggested that serial murder was a crime committed solely by white males. White masculinity became the static image of the serial killer in America, and it quickly became embedded in the collective minds of the public. The FBI mythologised these murderers during testimony before the U.S. Congress in the mid-1980s in an effort to secure funds for their newly-established Behavioral Science Unit. Jenkins (2002) commented on the FBI’s actions:

…serial murder enjoyed such an impact because of its mythological connotations. To over-simplify, it was rhetorically and politically necessary during the early 1980s to posit the existence of uniquely dangerous predatory villains, against whom no counter-measures were too extreme (p. 1).

Despite facts to the contrary, the existence of black serial murderers is still beyond the comprehension of many U.S. citizens. The dangers of such race-based perceptions, foisted on the public by law enforcement and the media, became most evident during the D.C. Sniper investigation. The standard profile of the white male serial killer, rendered by the FBI’s joint task force, narrowed the focus of law enforcement and hampered apprehension, despite the unique methodology of those offenders,5 which might have suggested a shift in strategies for their capture. The flawed ethnocentric profile was produced by law enforcement agents who disseminated this information to the media, who, in turn, made it available for public consumption. The main assumption was that the perpetrator(s) were white males. The media, as Surette (1998) suggests, contribute to the formations of public opinions and perceptions—including those of the police. This thesis reveals how the collaborative efforts of law enforcement

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5 This type of high profile murder involving a sniper had not presented itself on a worldwide scale since the mass murderer Charles Whitman shot numerous persons atop the University of Texas clock tower on 1 August, 1966.
and the media, even if unwittingly, created a false image of serial killers in American culture. The perpetrators are seen as intelligent, cunning white males, only apprehendable by extraordinary members of law enforcement. When the media and FBI profiled the perpetrator of the D.C. Sniper attacks as being a white male, they produced a suspect profile familiar to and engrained in the collective psyche of the American public. Despite research data establishing the existence of black serial killers, this false reality remains unquestioned. The D.C. Snipers’ actions and law enforcement’s response demonstrated a crisis of awareness regarding the existence of black serial killers in America. The obvious question in the aftermath of the murders they committed is—how many lives might have been saved had law enforcement been more flexible in their assessment of potential suspects during their investigations? Therefore, it is critical that serial killer research, as conducted by the FBI (via their profiling methodology) and transmitted by the media for public consumption, is examined.

The FBI’s *de facto* status as an agency of experts regarding serial murder was based on self-promotion. However, their inductive approach to criminal profiling received criticism from scholars and social researchers (e.g., Turvey, 1998; Jenkins, 2002; Canter, 2004 et al). Regarding the D.C. Snipers, this research asks why was it not conceivable that black perpetrator(s) might be capable of such an offence? Yet the idea of blacks creating a mobile snipers’ nest, killing in multiple states, and essentially subverting *Locard’s Principle of Exchange* via a “detached crime scene,” was, as we now know, indeed inconceivable. It is the historic racial stereotypes of blacks as beings of low intelligence that contradicts the assumed levels of intelligence needed to engage in this type of predation. If this is inconceivable, what does that say about race-based

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6 The D.C. Snipers created a crime scene without entering it, leaving only a bullet, a victim, and no way to test for trajectory.
perceptions in American society and the implications for law enforcement agents? For “criminal profiling”, aka criminal investigative analysis, to remain a viable tool for law enforcement, an examination of race-based perceptions that have led to black serial murderers’ anonymity is essential. Criminal profiling, much like the field of criminology itself, must evolve (Eskridge, 2005). The data cultivated in this research supports a necessity for change that can most effectively be utilised when those charged to investigate serial murders develop a broader perspective regarding race. A subsequent examination of the media reveals a reinforcement of black serial killers’ absence from the public’s radar. Perpetuating this perception most notably is the lack of sustained news reports about black serial murderers (i.e., news with a shelf-life, books, movies, and other social artefacts, including murderabilia) identified in this research. By contrast, white serial killers such as Ted Bundy (Rule, 1984), John Wayne Gacy (Linedecker, 1980), and Jeffrey Dahmer (Norris, 1992) are well-known in America, due to sustained media coverage at the time of their arrests and convictions, and the proliferation of true-crime books, movies, and documentaries about them. Through the reinforcement of their celebrity status and mystique, a popular industry has emerged that markets books, DVDs, t-shirts, trading cards, and personal items belonging to serial murderers, aka murderabilia. The white serial murderer in America—although engaged in heinous acts—has been marketed for profit.

Numerous studies by social scientists in the U.S. suggest two American societies exist: one white, and the other black. The pervasive historic discourse regarding blacks in America is one of institutionalised racism and criminality. It is unique to that country because of slavery and its impact on African Americans, for whom the majority’s association with low intelligence and criminality is a constant reminder of their historic social exclusion, despite a partially shared ancestry. It is
through an examination of the discourse about African Americans that the depth of the division between the two cultures may be comprehended. Given that history of racism, it is not unreasonable that the characterisation of a serial murderer as an individual requiring intelligence and skill would not be associated with black males.

This research makes a number of contributions to the criminological field. First, it expands the limited literature regarding African Americans’ involvement in serial murder, while illuminating their extensive participation this crime. Furthermore, it questions the Foucauldian concepts of “power,” “knowledge”, and “truth” within the dominant culture in the U.S. and its institutions (i.e., “medico-psychological” [Wilson, 2009, p. 16] researchers, law enforcement, and the media), as they relate to African Americans and serial killers. Prior to this work, no studies were located that linked African Americans’ mental health data and violent crime statistics with behavioural research regarding personality constructs that engage in serial murder. Additionally, no prior studies were located that addressed the issue of celebrity among black and white serial killers and suggest race as a factor. Most significantly, this work challenges the FBI to re-assess their established profiling methodology, and law enforcement agents in general to examine the viability of race-based associations in all criminal investigations. Neither the perpetrators nor the victims of serial homicide or, indeed, any crime, are confined by race, and the impact of death to friends, relatives, and society is incalculable. A broader perspective would ensure a more flexible and effective response by law enforcement engaged in criminal investigations.

The thesis is divided into seven main chapters that are structured as follows:

Chapter One consists of a literature review, revealing the discourse surrounding slavery, black criminality, trauma, criminological theories, and media imagery. As an emergent study, the breadth of literature read was wide, inclusive of popular culture. This, in part, was
due to the fact that specific literature regarding African American serial killers is extremely limited. Therefore, an analysis of the historic and current cultural ethos of this phenomenon was necessary. This chapter also includes definitions of terms vital to the study.

Chapter Two explains the methodological approach of this exploratory research. The research constructs a theory based on the data gleaned from a variety of sources—professional knowledge and law enforcement experience, as well as an examination of the cultural milieu. Therefore, a discursive analysis was deemed appropriate. The findings, while not suggestive of a definitive answer, do contribute to the knowledge and ongoing discourse subject to social, historic, and political conditions.

Chapter Three outlines American history as it pertains to African Americans. The chapter traces the establishment of slavery through post-abolition segregation and the Civil Rights Movement, as well as the consequences of these traumatic events, which range from continued social exclusion to an overrepresentation in the U.S. carceral system. To effectively examine the concept of the African American male as a serial killer, several questions must be addressed, including: what has been the traditional role assigned to the African American male in American society? How has he been viewed within a historical context? What is his role within a criminal context? It is through an examination of the discourse regarding these events that one can begin to understand the African American male’s widespread yet unacknowledged involvement in serial murder. Relevant historical factors and events regarding race relations within the U.S. are considered, for they have moulded the dominant culture’s race-based perceptions—and specifically those of law enforcement—regarding African Americans. This chapter examines criminological analysis, positivism, underclass theory, ghetto crime, and mass imprisonment as they relate to these historical and sociological issues. It also formulates research questions for subsequent chapters.
Chapter Four is structured to examine the history of criminal profiling in the U.S. It focuses on the FBI’s role as the leading proponent of criminal profiling techniques, the seminal work of that law enforcement agency, and its role in the reinforcement of the homogenous serial killer profile. This chapter also illuminates the exclusion of race as a factor within the FBI’s influential research, and includes critiques of their criminal profiling methodology. The chapter further examines U.S. mental health and crime statistics, as well as the research regarding personality constructs and the behavioural antecedents suggested as common to serial murderers. The chapter discusses how these antecedents may relate to urban black males, an area hitherto unexamined within the context of black participation in serial murder.

Chapter Five examines the media’s presentation of serial murderers, black and white, and does so through several routes. One considers news content analysis, focusing on the comparative murder investigations of a black serial murderer and a white multiple murderer, both arrested within the same city within the same time frame. Their cases provide a unique opportunity to examine their divergent media coverage. Media reporting and a case study of the D.C. Snipers are also discussed. In addition, this chapter assesses the media’s role in disseminating (or withholding) information pertaining to serial killers in popular culture through an examination of their commercialisation via books, movies, and other social artefacts. It further considers how the marketing of this genre of criminality has led to an iconic depiction of the white male as a serial murderer, and how the media has propagated the view of white serial killers as celebrities within this framework.

Chapter Six discusses celebrity, and the public’s identification with the same, based on the social artefacts that suggest their awareness and/or the notoriety of serial killers. In addition, an examination of African American serial killers within the
established organised v. disorganised typologies and motivational classifications are also considered as possible contributing factors for celebrity.

Chapter Seven summarises this dissertation’s findings, and also discusses the future of criminal profiling and the implications of a static profile’s continued exclusion of African Americans. This chapter makes recommendations that take into consideration the history of interaction between African Americans and police. The dangers of black serial killers remaining unapprehended due to their invisibility are discussed, as is the need to reassess CODIS\(^7\) for their apprehension. Apropos to that strained history, the incorporation of race as a factor within the interview setting is considered. Avoiding the irony noted by Athens\(^8\) (cited in Rhodes, 1999), that academics often present themselves as experts on criminal violence without ever having had either personal experience or contact with violent criminals, a conversation with a black serial killer is included in the appendix, but this aspect of its relevance is discussed here. Prior to this research, no serial killer studies were located where the interviewer’s race was noted as a factor that was likely to affect both the information obtained and the interpretation of the interview. Lastly, the exploration of motivations for serial murder by African Americans that may be linked to trauma differing from that of their white counterparts is explored.

This research adopts a multi-disciplinary approach to examine the reasons for the anonymity of African American serial killers. It is the goal of the study to contribute to a safer society through a more informed perspective regarding the negative impact of race-based perceptions. As an African American who has been a

\(^7\) The DNA Identification Act of 1994 authorised the FBI to institute CODIS (the Combined DNA Index System), a national DNA database that did not become operational in the U.S. until 1998.

\(^8\) Athens (1992/1997), the author of The Creation of Dangerous Violent Criminals and Violent Criminal Acts and Actors, was a senior research criminologist at Georgetown University Law Center and a lecturer at Seton Hall.
member of law enforcement in a major U.S. city for twenty years, I endeavour to consider this subject from as many angles as possible, in order to promote public safety.
CHAPTER ONE
LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEFINITIONS

This chapter begins by operationalising some of the terms relevant to this research: African Americans/blacks, serial murder, mass murder, spree killings, and criminal profiling, aka profiling or criminal investigative analysis. The substantial literature regarding slavery, African Americans, their criminality and media portrayals, and criminological theories are reviewed to reveal a diversity of perspectives. Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) involvement in serial murder issues, as well as that of social scientists, is illuminated to reveal a dearth of research regarding black serial murderers. Finally, sources relating to the commodification of serial murder in the U.S., based on celebrity, are addressed. All of the aforementioned components, as well as social artefacts, reveal a scholarly and popular discourse regarding serial murder that suggests blacks do not participate in serial killing. The importance of addressing this scarcity became apparent during the D.C. Sniper investigations and, more recently, during “the Grim Sleeper” investigation in Los Angeles in 2010.

_African Americans/Blacks_

Historically, terms referring to black Americans have been negative: “darkies”, “shine”, “porch monkey”, “pickaninny”, “coon”, and “spade”, to name but a few. The use of the word “nigger” is considered so derogatory that it is often called “the ‘N’ word” by those other than African Americans, although it has now been appropriated by contemporary black urban youth. Some slurs against African Americans are
distinctively ethnic (i.e., the Italian dialect term “mulinan” or “muli/moulie”, which refers to the dark colour of an eggplant, or “schvartz”, the Yiddish word for black). These ethnic names’ significance derives from the fact that those groups who use them came to America after the forced Maafa,\(^9\) of Africans to America, indicating an adoption of already entrenched negativity. Some terms, like “colored people”, had legitimacy and remain part of organisations’ names today (i.e., National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the United Negro College Fund), although they are otherwise old-fashioned in usage. The term “Negro” is derived from the Spanish word for black. It was more socially acceptable than the other terms for a time, but it is rarely used in contemporary American society today. In the 1960s, black Americans’ self-awareness and pride produced a will to adopt and transform what was once thought to be a negative name for the descendants of the original slaves, and the terms “black,” “blacks” and/or “black people” were embraced. This was at once both an acceptance of a previously held negative adjective and an oppositional separatist concept that was adopted with enthusiasm by younger members of that group. A phrase heralded during the mid-1960s became a popular song recorded by James Brown—“Say It Loud I’m Black and I’m Proud”\(^10\)—and developed into a positive mantra.

“Afro-American” was a slang term that, although it acknowledged African ancestry, quickly was discarded. The more noble title of “African American(s)” eventually came into being. It was felt to be less oppositional than “black” and more inclusive of a range of skin tones, while at the same time acknowledging ancestry. In addition, its acceptance mirrored similar names for other Americanised ethnic cultures (i.e., Irish

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\(^9\) “Maafa” is a Kiswahili word most associated with the Atlantic crossing of African slaves to the New World, aka the “Middle Passage” or African Diaspora, implying great disaster or unimaginable horror.

Americans, Italian Americans, Polish Americans). For purposes of this research, the term refers to individuals of African descent. Regarding black or African American serial killers in particular, it refers to those same individuals who resided and murdered in the U.S. This definition is constructed due to individuals whose birthplace may have been outside the U.S., but who moved there, such as Lee Boyd Malvo, the younger D.C. Sniper.

Serial Murderer/Killer

Serial killing is not a solely American phenomenon. In his graduate thesis at California State University at Fresno, Brad Gorby examined 300 serial killers representing 43 countries (Ressler et al, 2006). This research, however, does concentrate on the U.S., and particularly on male African American serial murderers. Perhaps in the past, due to the U.S. movie industry, the term became most readily associated with that country, where, as Jarvis (2007) suggests, violent crime is marketed for consumption. The coining of the term “serial murder” has been debated. A former FBI agent assumes credit (Ressler, 1997, pp. 1-46), although Newton (2000) cites British author John Brody as its originator (p. 205). The designation was quickly linked to the German phrase “lust mord” (“lust murder”) as a result of an FBI article by Hazelwood and Douglas (1980), 11 and became synonymous with the description of a multiple murderer who mutilated his victims and whose murders were sexual in nature (Hazelwood and Michaud, 1998). The concept of the serial murderer cast as homicidal addict was noted by early psychopathology researcher Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1902, trans. 1965), as well as the more contemporary Carnes (1992), who suggests that these individuals may be subject to neurological chemical imbalances that occur under

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11 “The lust murderer” was published in The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin by the U.S. Department of Justice: Federal Bureau of Investigation in April, 1980 to aid agents investigating sexual homicides.
stressful conditions. This would explain, for example, Ted Bundy’s uncharacteristic rampage style after escaping prison a second time, as he endured stress and delayed release.\textsuperscript{12} For the purposes of this research, the definition provided by the FBI shall be utilised: an individual who commits three or more murders, often in separate locations, followed by a “cooling off” period between each murder.\textsuperscript{13} This cooling off period is described as an interlude when the perpetrator returns to a state of normalcy or otherwise usual way of life. Such an interval is the most central and distinctive feature that differentiates the serial killer from mass murderers and spree killers (Ressler et al, 1992; Douglas et al, 2006). The number of victims that might qualify an individual as a serial murderer has been debated among academics and law enforcement. Jenkins (1994) suggests that four or more murders constitute a serial killer, while Egger (2002) insists that two or more should meet the criteria. The three or more murders suggested by the FBI remains the most cited number for qualifying a perpetrator as a serial killer (Holmes and Holmes, 1998). By reducing the figure to two murders, the number of individuals who would meet the requirements for serial murderers would increase drastically (Holmes and Holmes, 2002). Though the aforementioned definition is widely accepted, additional qualifications such as varying locations and the victims being unknown to the perpetrator have been considered further criteria for defining the serial murderer.

It should be stated that while the majority of research has concentrated on male serial killers, the participation of females in serial murders is acknowledged, although

\textsuperscript{12} Often characterised as an organised serial killer, Ted Bundy, after escaping prison in 1978, displayed a more disorganised rampage style. Bundy entered the Florida State University’s Chi Omega sorority house and, in atypical fashion, murdered two victims in one episode. This change in his method of predation may be linked to the deprivation brought on by recent incarceration.

\textsuperscript{13} U.S. Title 28 Sec. 540B (see Fig. 1).
their methods and motives appear to be dissimilar from those of male perpetrators (Hickey, 2002; Holmes et al, 1998). Female serial killers are often accomplices to males. When acting alone, their murders may result from Munchausen by proxy syndrome. Many of the so-called “angels of death” are females employed as hospital caregivers. Some kill with partners out of love or loyalty (e.g., “The Sunset Strip Killers,” Douglas Clark and Carol Bundy, 1980). Other female serial killers who kill their lovers for financial gain have been labelled “black widows” (Vronsky, 2004; Fox and Levin, 2005). Reynolds (1992) suggests that Aileen Wournos was a rare female serial killer, because her methodology was violent and her motives overt (i.e., financial gain).

The focus of this study is male serial killers and includes both black and white offenders residing in the U.S., each having three or more victims.

**Mass Murderer**

Similar to the variations defining those who are involved in serial murder, law enforcement and researchers attempt to distinguish individuals who engage in mass murder. The numbers that define serial murder, as previously stated, may appear confusing, and the same holds true regarding those individuals who might be labelled mass murderers. FBI profilers describe mass murder “as the killing of four or more victims at one location or crime scene” (Douglas et al, 2006). Hickey (2002) describes mass murder as an event “in which several victims are killed within a moment or a few hours” (p. 7). Noticeably omitting a geographic reference, he further notes that “mass murderers are generally apprehended or killed by police, commit suicide, or turn themselves in to authorities” (Ibid., pp. 7-15). Ressler et al (1992) further suggest that within this category of killer, there are two types, *classic* and *family*. The 1999 Columbine High School and the 2007 Virginia Polytechnic Institute State University
School shooting, as well as that of Colin Ferguson, who murdered six people in a New York City subway in 1993, are useful as examples of classic mass murderers. Although Colin Ferguson, unlike the other perpetrators (e.g., Columbine shooters Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, or Polytechnic shooter Seung-Hui Cho) remained alive and was apprehended; suicides or police stand-offs are more common. Ronald Gene Simmons, who killed 14 family members in Arkansas in 1987, is an example of a family mass murderer.

The unpredictability of human behaviour contributes to the inability of researchers and law enforcement to create steadfast classifications. Later in this research, this factor will be shown as an argument against race-based perceptions regarding organized v. disorganized offenders. The incidents related to the aforementioned killers did, however, all occur on a single day at one location, and are therefore defined as episodes of mass murder. These events are therefore distinct from serial murders.

Spree Killer

Hickey defines a spree killer as an individual who murders “three or more victims…within a period of days or hours in different locations” (2002, p. 16). Ressler suggests that a spree killer will murder two or more victims with no cooling off period in between the murders (Ressler et al, 1992). Andrew Cunanan, the murderer of fashion designer Gianni Versace, would be classified as a spree killer, as he moved across several states, leaving victims in various locations over an extended time period, but without returning to normalcy between murders (Orth, 1999). Charles Starkweather, who killed eleven people over a period of several days in Missouri, Wyoming, and Nebraska in 1957, is another example of a spree killer. Both perpetrators murdered their victims at various times and locations, burying them at several sites, but did so without
a cooling off period.

_Criminal Profiling, aka Criminal Investigative Analysis_

The purpose of the criminal profile is to establish a psychological sketch of the offender in order to facilitate his apprehension. The FBI’s process of creating an offender psychological profile, Canter (2004) suggests, is more art than science. In the U.S., the FBI is the law enforcement agency most associated with criminal profiling. It is appropriate to say that no other law enforcement agency in the U.S. has done more to promote its use. Therefore, the FBI is inseparable from any study regarding the history and application of criminal profiling in the United States. The methodologies it employs will be discussed later in this work. Within this thesis, a criminal profile shall be considered a psychological sketch created by an investigator, based on the motivation and behavioural tendencies of an individual who engages in serial murder. While the criminal profiler’s psychological profiles are often directed towards serial murderers, this practice can also be employed against any serial criminal offender.

Serial killer research is essentially a study of murders repeated by an offender(s). As such, it is a pathology whose main avenues of research tend to be medical and psychological, as well as involving the gathering of empirical data. The former two approaches attempt to analyse issues such as causation, motivation, and behaviours, while the last requires a compilation of statistics regarding patterns of murder, locations, and other quantifiable data. The combination creates a more comprehensive analysis than either can alone.

While there is no lack of literature regarding serial murderers in general, there is a dearth of research regarding the participation of African Americans in this manner of predation. This relative absence of research, coupled with African Americans’ extensive participation in the crime, requires examination. In order to explain the
conundrum that is the lack of public perception regarding the existence of black serial killers, a systematic examination of blacks, serial murder, and the media is required. Through this examination, it might be determined at what point within the collective psyche of the American public the perceptions of serial murderers and African Americans diverge. If that point could be identified, there might be an accounting for the lack of association. To suggest that race alone is responsible for this disassociation would be a reductionist approach toward the many factors involved in the creation of this myth, so that simplification is avoided by a thorough examination of the historical discourse. This exploratory research additionally requires an assessment of the literature written by social scientists regarding serial murder, as well as that of the FBI, which, in the U.S., has taken on the mantle of an agency of experts regarding criminal profiling and serial murder investigations. Notions of celebrity should also be examined, as well as related social artefacts such as books, films, and murderabilia. This is necessary to determine whether the concept of the serial killer conflicts with notions of black criminality. It should be mentioned that there is some overlap between investigations of celebrity and the discourse about African Americans, crime, law enforcement, and the media. This is necessitated by certain common themes that must be addressed within the context of each chapter, thereby providing continuity and ease of comprehension. What follows is a review of the scholarly and popular contributions to the discourse regarding African Americans and serial murderers.

*Literature Related to Serial Killings and African Americans*

While it was not possible to review all of the extensive literature regarding the psychological aspects of serial murder, theorists who have studied narcissism and psychopathy were consulted to give a reasonable background of psychological thought in this area. In doing so, their studies revealed a great deal about what we do not know,
and the limits of our ability to investigate the motivations and complexities of the human psyche, despite attempts to do so by labelling and postulating. While there are problems and conflicting views within the academic literature relating to these psychological aspects, public perceptions are also affected by the abundance of unreliable journalistic, true crime, and pop literature that concentrate on serial murder. In terms of academic literature, Krafft-Ebing’s (1902, trans. 1965) extensive case studies, contained in *Psychopathia Sexualis*, make it a unique work dealing with sexual pathologies that sometimes incorporate acts of violence. Like Freud (1930), the author revealed underlying reasons for evisceration and picquerism by murderers and a self-centered personality capable of destructive tendencies when needs are not met. Their studies in this realm demonstrated a conflict between sexual needs and societal mores. While both authors’ works may be considered primers for those studying sexual pathologies, their research focused on a single demographic: white European males. It is therefore reasonable to query whether their findings are applicable to African Americans.

While numerous theories exist regarding a perpetrator’s medical and psychological conditions, there is little debate regarding statistical data. Numerous authors in the U.S., such as Holmes and Holmes (1996/2002), Egger (2002), Skrapec (1997) et al, while focusing on the motivations of serial killers, have authored several books, including a collection of journal articles, that have added some statistical data to the body of criminological knowledge. Hickey (2002), however, goes much further than most researchers. He renders numerous forms of statistical analysis including, but not limited to, the frequency of serial murders by states, number of victims killed

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14 Skrapec’s (1997) thesis “Serial Murder: Motive and Meaning” continues on what is now a familiar path of trying to determine, as the title suggests, the “why” of serial murder. All five of the incarcerated offenders studied were Canadian by birth or residence.
within specific time periods, and a victimological analysis based on age and gender. His work is an integral part of any nascent serial killer research in America, and is often invoked by other social scientists. The aforementioned authors are the more prominent names among the plethora of serial killer researchers in the U.S. Although these authors, especially Hickey (2002), appear to be aware of black serial killers, most do not systematically address the reasons for these murderers’ lack of sustained media attention and public awareness.

In the Introduction, it was noted that there have been few studies regarding African American serial killers. This persists despite the conglomeration of crime statistics (especially homicides), mental health statistics regarding blacks in inner cities, and the criminal depictions of African Americans in the media, all of which would seem to contradict what is readily accepted by the public as fact—namely, that blacks do not engage in serial murder. The few studies located during this research regarding African American serial killers were, most notably: Jenkins’ (1993) “African Americans and Serial Homicide”, Walsh’s (2005) “African Americans and Serial Killing in the Media”, and Peterson’s (2006) “The Emergence of a New Phenomenon: African American Serial Killers in the United States, 1935 to 2005.” Additionally, Hickey (2002) reveals that African Americans do engage in serial murder despite the public’s perceptions, and actually do so at a statistically higher percentage than their white counterparts.15 While each American scholar notes the lack of public awareness regarding black serial killers and, in doing so, contributes to that discourse, none attempts to systematically dissect the reasons for their lack of media or public attention. Hickey’s (Ibid.) statistical analysis creates data that could be utilised by other

15 Hickey notes that, statistically, one in five serial murderers apprehended in America is African American (2002, p. 133).
researchers; his work, however, is less focused on psychological motivations. Jenkins’ (1993) sociological analysis of black serial killers is unconcerned with motivations and behavioural antecedents. He does, however, suggest reasons that African American serial killers remain unknown. Jenkins theorises that political correctness may be a media concern for their negative portrayal of black males. He also notes that blacks in general receive little media attention aside from street crime, sports and entertainment. In doing so, he offers a path of enquiry that few have followed. Therefore, his observations regarding black exclusion from the serial killer matrix are significant. They raise questions regarding why this exclusion exists and on what basis. Prior to his research, these questions appear to have been largely ignored. Peterson (2006), who was a student of Hickey, followed her mentor’s path of garnering data regarding black serial killers in the U.S. Her dissertation, which focuses on black serial killers, appears to be the first attempt to examine the behavioural antecedents of African American serial killers and compare them to FBI research. Her study is limited, however, as are most studies regarding African American serial killers, by the lack of available primary data. Furthermore, neither she nor any of the other scholars mentioned throughout this study conducted face-to-face interviews. Her study, however, does note that poor SES, childhood trauma, adolescent criminality, mental health, and drug use are characteristics found among black serial killers. What is not explained is why, as exemplified by her dissertation’s title, she views this phenomenon as “new”, a word that suggests only an emergent participation. This implies a lack of historical perspective regarding African American predations, since such killings by black perpetrators have been documented since the early twentieth century. In 1915, for example, Sydney Jones killed 13 individuals in Alabama, hardly a new involvement. Peterson does not appear to have published any related materials since finishing her
Walsh (2005) examines the media’s participation in the non-portrayal of African Americans as serial killers. His work, however, appears to suggest an imminent onslaught of black serial killers rather than actually addressing the reasons these murderers remain unknown. Notably, Walsh (2004) is also the author of *Race and Crime: A Biosocial Analysis*, an argument for the inherent criminality of black people. Furthermore, his suggestion that political correctness within the media is responsible for their reluctance to negatively portray blacks is contrary to existing research regarding blacks and the media. Walsh and Jenkins both suggest that contemporary media’s desire to be “politically correct” may be a motivation for their reluctance to depict black serial murderers. This explanation, however, contradicts research regarding the U.S. media’s broader depictions of African American males as criminals; they do not appear to have any sensitivity in that regard (Covington, 1995; Entman and Rojecki, 2001; Jefferson, 2008 et al). “Political correctness” therefore seems an unlikely reason for these murderers’ continued media anonymity. Furthermore, the “politically correct” notion suggests a cultural sensitivity additionally undermined by, among other things, a proliferation of demeaning “black collectables” that still exists today. Carby (1998) notes that there is a lucrative market for these antique common household goods—advertising cards, postcards, children’s books, housewares, toys, games, and kitchen decorations—that often depict blacks in demeaning post-slavery servile roles.

While this research does not focus on the motivations of African American serial killers, it would be negligent not to consider some motivational possibilities, since these may, in part, contribute to African Americans’ absence from the public’s collective consciousness. In addition to the aforementioned American scholars, the
following researchers are well-known to both the academic community and the interested public. In the U.K., David Wilson is a leading scholar in serial killer research. David Canter in the U.K. and Elliot Leyton and Kim Rossmo in Canada also add to the international body of knowledge regarding serial murderers. While their work may be restricted to a particular cultural context, sometimes their research and findings can be applicable to serial murder investigations within the U.S. as well.

Scholars David Canter and Kim Rossmo engage in “geographic profiling” of serial killers, for example, while Leyton (2001) and Wilson (2009) note the importance of cultural context when investigating serial murders. While Canter (1993) and Rossmo’s (2000) contributions regarding the geographic tracking of serial murders are beneficial to the field, it is the research focus of Leyton (2001) and Wilson (2009) that aids in the comprehension of serial murder across cultures, implicating sociological reasons.

Leyton (Ibid., pp. 259-284) suggests that historically the serial/mass murderer is associated with a social class and specific time period (i.e., pre-industrial, industrial, and modern eras). During these periods, he notes, the perpetrators of serial murder shifted from members of the aristocracy to the middle class, then to the upper and lower working classes, and so too was a shift in their victims. His work focuses on societal influences that affect motivation. Considering the impact of social exclusion on American blacks from slavery to the present, Leyton’s work is appropriately regarded. Furthermore, while detailing the actions of Mark Essex, an African American who engaged in the spree killing of nine individuals in New Orleans in 1973, Leyton (Ibid.) observes that the killer was acting against what he felt was white racism in the U.S. While not directly related to black serial killer anonymity, his study suggests motivations that may distinguish black serial killers from their white counterparts. Wilson (2009) discusses a situation in WWII Britain that may be applicable for the rise
of African American serial killers addressed in Chapter Seven. His analysis noted the rise of serial murders in a sociological landscape devoid of its usual male deterrents due to participation in the war. Apropos to issues of public perception, Soothill and Wilson’s (2005) examination of the Harold Shipman murders in Great Britain provides a similar paradigm for black serial killer anonymity in the U.S., as well as a different path of sociological enquiry. The authors note the public viewed the possibility of murders at the hands of a GP in the UK as more than an aberration—it was unthinkable. This perception existed despite prior cases suggestive of other doctors’ involvement in homicides. Furthermore, the lackluster willingness of the media to conduct any revelatory investigations beyond what the “experts” rendered resembles the embedded public perceptions regarding black serial killers in the U.S. These scholars also note the difficulty of assessing the perpetrators’ motivations and the “conspiracy of silence” that acted as a defence for the public’s comfort zone. Within the context of this research, the “conspiracy of silence” among academics, the media, and the public that occurred in the Harold Shipman case (Ibid., 2005, p. 687) may also be applicable to the continuing denial or anonymity of African American serial killers. Their existence, if acknowledged, similarly might disturb the American public’s comfort zone. Soothill and Wilson’s (2005) contributions offer new insights regarding the continued absence of black serial killers from societal awareness in the U.S. As will be addressed in Chapter Four, the FBI and the media contribute to this lack of societal awareness.

Further addressing the media’s influence in this regard, an examination of media-focused research reveals that representations of servitude and simpleness have dominated depictions of blacks in popular culture, alongside their images as thugs and criminals. Entman and Rojecki (2001) suggest that blacks are often depicted in popular culture as brutes and lawbreakers engaging in random violence that requires little
intelligence. Harking back to Leyton’s (2001) observations of societal conditions as motivations for multiple murders, little research has addressed the possible links of black anger and resentment resulting from slavery and subsequent social exclusion as a reasonable motivation for their participation in serial murder. Yet, while the breadth, degree, and effects of racism cannot be statistically measured as they apply to African American serial killers, an examination of social artefacts and archival data is attempted in this thesis to suggest its impact. It is, however, the rise of the serial killer’s celebrity status via films, books, and other social artefacts that may offer a quantitative analysis of the impact of race as a factor.

While the previously discussed works of Hickey (2002), Jenkins (1993), Walsh (2005), and Peterson (2006) have demonstrated that black serial killers do, in fact, exist, none of these authors offers an in-depth analysis regarding the paradigm of their persistent anonymity. Jenkins (1993/1994), while acknowledging the presence of black serial killers and the fact that their predations go unnoticed by the public and law enforcement, speculates about, but does not dissect, the reasons for this phenomenon. Walsh (2005) offers a table of African American serial killers, revealing predations dating back to 1945. While his presentation of data is useful, the table mistakenly includes one South African killer and names one African American serial killer twice, while excluding other earlier perpetrators. It should be reiterated that very few researchers address the involvement of African Americans in serial murder at all, so even minimal research takes on significance.

Varied perceptions and perspectives can prove useful to examinations of criminological problems. An examination of the literature regarding female serial murderers, for instance, reveals relatively few male researchers with this specialisation; Vronsky (2007) is an exception. Nonetheless, the established image of the serial killer
remains that of a white male and, within the U.S., research has also traditionally focused on white males as perpetrators of homicide against women (e.g., Caputi and Russell, 1979; Russell, 2008). Additionally, this research has been primarily conducted by white males. This study, for instance, uncovered no participation of African American researchers in this facet of criminology. This limited perspective is similar to the absence of male researchers in studies of female serial killers; in each case, a greater variety of investigators might add a different cultural lens and focus. Judd Ray (Douglas 1995) was the only African American FBI profiler discovered during this research. This FBI agent, however, does not appear to have authored any publications; had he done so, they too might have lent another cultural perspective to serial murderer research.

The Creation of Perceptions and Media Images Regarding African Americans

While perceptions of individuals are difficult to gauge, discourse can act as a barometer for any number of issues. Content and tone reveal sentiments that may avoid quantifiable measures. Therefore, Chapter Three examines the attitudes and perceptions of whites about Africans brought to America as slaves, as well this majority culture’s continued opinions of their descendants. In addition, it addresses the self-perceptions of African Americans, the laws of social exclusion, their perceived criminality, social theories, and media depictions. This is crucial towards an understanding of the anonymity of black serial killers, due to historic and inherent negative associations of race with colour in American society, particularly as it relates to blacks. Alex de Tocqueville (circa 1835-1840) suggested that America’s greatest failing would be its history of slavery, whose potential backlash was not worth its costs. Slavery’s impact on American society is reflected in the perspective of the founding fathers (e.g., Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin), who, through their writings regarding black
Africans, reveal the importance of slavery to the economy of their New World colony (Adams and Sanders, 2003). These views are presented to illuminate the socially accepted beliefs about a group seen as inferiors by the most prestigious members of the newly founded society from the country’s inception. Yet the complexities of race-based perceptions in America and their impact on its citizens require judicious examination. It is not simply that enforcing laws of social exclusion produced inequities that led to negative perceptions about blacks, but, in addition, these inequities had a profound psychological impact on blacks themselves. In *The Souls of Black Folks*, W. E. B. DuBois suggested that the ills of black people in America did not arise solely because of the image that had been thrust upon them by the dominant culture, but rather that these problems were compounded by how that picture affected their self-image. DuBois (1903) termed this phenomenon “double consciousness.” This is significant because, as was shown and alluded to in the Introduction, not only does the general public find it difficult to accept the notion of black serial killers, but blacks themselves also find it difficult to accept this reality. This dynamic adds another layer of sequestration of the facts regarding the existence of black serial killers, as well as a failure to confront factors that may contribute to its causation. The media’s reinforcement of negative images of a particular group is not a phenomenon unique to America (Alia and Bull, 2005); what perhaps might be unique is the length of time that these images have persisted. Therefore, the sociological effect of centuries of negative images concerning any particular ethnicity may be immeasurable, both to members of that group, and to the perceptions held by the dominant society towards them.

It is worth noting that initially not all African slaves were immediately held in bondage and treated as chattel; in fact, some owned property (Smedley, 2007). Significantly, this suggests the ruling white class had a shift in perceptions regarding
blacks. If they were not considered equal during the early colonial period, some were initially entitled to certain of the benefits of the new society, but they were later denied these benefits. This fact stands in opposition to the prevailing view of immediate bondage associated with slavery in the U.S. Furthering the need for labour of individuals suited for hot climates, as opposed to indentured Irish and Scottish servants, a social class based on “race” developed, dependent primarily on skin colour. The distinctly American view of race grew, centered on the need for a controlled labour force (Thompson, 2006). Slaves needed to be watched, any infraction became punishable, and, therefore, negative representations were required to cement these concepts. The negative images of blacks both during the Emancipation period (1863-1865) and afterwards were not limited to postcards of lynchings or films such as D. W. Griffith’s (1915) Birth of a Nation, but included numerous social artefacts. The scholarly study of these images and how they shaped perceptions did not really begin until the 1970s, after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s had produced greater academic and public interest in the place of African Americans within U.S. society. Harris’s (1974) The Black Book explored these portrayals in advertising and general media, while Bogle’s (1978) Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies and Bucks concentrated on the perpetuation of stereotypes in film. Subsequent decades produced more in-depth analyses of varied social artefacts and their impact. Turner’s (1994) notable work Ceramic Uncles and Celluloid Mammies, Black Images and their Influence on Culture illustrates the prolific negative images of blacks in American society, as does Goings’ Mammy and Uncle Mose: Black Collectibles and American Stereotyping (1994). Studies of various aspects of this continuum of negative depictions continue, as do studies of “non-appearance”, such as the periodic evaporation of positive African American characters from network television comedies and
advertising.

While a variety of scholars has examined the roles of social artefacts and the media in constructing general negative perceptions about African Americans, other researchers have begun to consider how associations of criminality with black Americans have developed. The Foucauldian view of the carceral system as one of social control suggests a link between slavery and the mass imprisonment of blacks in contemporary America (Wacquant, 2002). As African slaves were easily identified and were watched for possible infractions, so too are young contemporary African Americans, who are suspected of criminal activity in general and, in conjunction with their dress and demeanour, require identification and surveillance. There is a discernible connection between prison and slavery, one connection being the growing use of a cheap labour force of incarcerated people, which has created a “punishment industry” (Davis, 1998).

Some social scientists offer explanations involving low intelligence and achievement (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994; Murray, 1990 et al). One—*The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994)—includes an argument regarding intelligence testing that is predictive based on averages, but not on any particular individual. Initially touted as a bold empirical study defying political correctness, it has since been reevaluated as a volume calculated to sell, though it remains controversial and flawed in its data collection processes (Goldberger and Manski, 1995). When published, the work was the subject of debates, and it led to a renewed interest in the correlation of race and intelligence, as well as eugenics. Amongst its problems, it does not factor in the significance of family background regarding the probability of high achievement amongst the “underclass”, specifically African Americans. While some argue that familial culture, often discounted, must be taken into account when assessing
possibilities for individual achievement (Gladwell, 2008), others point out that the term “race” is not operationalised in *The Bell Curve*. Muntaner et al (1996), note that:

> Given the increasing skepticism among biologists surrounding the use of race as a biological category, its use in epidemiology and public health as an implicit biological category should be re-examined… (p. 532).

*The Bell Curve*, despite its nascent popularity, has received further criticism that suggests that it was a racist diatribe disguised as scholarship (Muntaner et al, 1996). Lemann (1997) considers that its statistical findings regarding race as a component for low achievement were flawed, as do Goldberger and Manski (1995). While Murray (1990) later proposed more sociological factors to explain anti-social behaviours, that work was also criticised for its essentialist and right-wing political agenda.

Adding to this discourse, yet more focused on individual behaviours and criminality, works regarding “psychopathy” suggest a link to antisocial behaviours (Cleckley,1941/1988; Hare, 1999). The FBI connects this clinical diagnostic category with serial murderers (Ressler et al, 1992), as do other social scientists engaged in serial killer research (Hickey, 2002). Hare (1999) defines the diagnosis of psychopaths as individuals who “…are social predators, who charm, manipulate and ruthlessly plow their way through life…” (p. xi). The image of social predator has, throughout U.S, history, been associated with both black violent criminals and serial killers. Therefore it is significant to note that, despite the overrepresentation of urban blacks in personal violent crimes (especially robberies and homicides), as well as the mental health data suggesting links to the behavioural antecedents found among serial murderers (identified by both social scientists and the FBI), criminological researchers fail to make these connections. Further complicating the issue of anti-social behaviours, some researchers suggest cultural differences may affect measures of psychopathy. McCoy and Eden (2006) studied whether black and white youths differ in levels of
psychopathic traits, arguing that the social construct of race and cultural differences among individuals confounds the universal definitions of psychopathy and sociopathy.

Both terms have been used interchangeably, despite their respective nature v. nurture clinical assignments. Hare’s (1999) early work, based on research in British Columbia prisons, leads to questions regarding cultural bias when suggesting a universal application of psychopathic diagnosis. Yet illuminations regarding cultural differences and clinical diagnosis were revealed by Fanon (1963/1967), who attempted to diagnose the negative effects of French colonisation among native Algerians (i.e., black-on-black crime, colour discrimination, and depression). Seeking to provide an explanation regarding anti-social behaviours among blacks and their overrepresentation within the U.S. carceral system, Anderson (1999) suggests that what might be viewed by social scientists as anti-social behaviour may, for ghetto residents, be more of a cultural survival strategy than a personality construct. Wacquant (2001) supports this view, observing that the same behaviour required and exhibited in the ghetto for survival is conducted in prison as well. This conduct—easily misconstrued as “psychopathic” or antisocial personality disorder (ASPD)—can itself lead to incarceration. A more contemporary view of the “differential association theory”, or the learned anti-social behaviour touted by Sutherland (1947), is a pathology more aptly termed for blacks as “therapeutic alienation” (McWhorter, 2005, pp. 6-9). In short, it is a justification for an unarticulated anger based on poverty and discrimination, whereby efforts to achieve are abandoned in favour of the easier embrace of remaining outside mainstream society. While these authors note sociological conditions that have led to a celebrated criminal culture, they do not dismiss the past of slavery and a continuum of societal biases as contributors to this pervasive cultural and psychological history.

Looking more closely at the coalescence of the sociological and the psychological,
varied authors help illuminate issues of black criminality. Italian criminologist Ferri’s\textsuperscript{16} viewpoint (cited in Grupp, 1968), stated that man’s criminality was the result of three things: his social environment, his telluric environment, and his anthropological history. The last component stated here regarding criminal causation has recently been applied to African Americans.

One author suggests that many of the anti-social behaviours of black Americans can be linked to the traumatic impact of slavery and associated societal inequities across generations. \textit{Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome} (Degruy-Leary, 2005) suggests that, in part, the overrepresentation of blacks in criminal activity, reflected in U.S. crime statistics, is the result of intergenerational trauma. This theoretical perspective is not without support. Some researchers similarly suggest the negative impact of intergenerational trauma for descendants of the Shoah (Grand, 2000; Kellerman, 2001). The noticeable distinctions, however, are the historic stereotypes and specific criminal behaviours associated with each group (i.e., African Americans and Jews) in the U.S. While extensive literature exists regarding African Americans and slavery, few works have focused on that institution’s longitudinal impact as it relates to black anti-social behaviours, therefore Degruy-Leary’s (2005) theory is presented as part of the discourse regarding the causations of black criminality. What has been addressed thus far have been the salient issues regarding how blacks have been historically perceived, portrayed, and associated with criminality in the U.S. The theoretical perspectives regarding black criminality presented here are conflicting, and yet were purposefully presented to garner a diversity of perspectives. The obvious question is, if black males are criminal by nature, and/or sociologically conditioned to commit criminal acts

\textsuperscript{16} The theoretical underpinnings of The Positive School of Criminology were presented by Enrico Ferri during a series of three lectures given in Naples on 22, 23, and 24 April 1901.
(especially homicides) at a higher rate than their white counterparts, why would they not engage in serial murder or be recognised as doing so?

**Defining Serial Murder**

Arguably, Dr. Thomas Bond, who attempted to reveal the psychological components of Jack the Ripper, may have been the first known profiler of an unknown perpetrator. Psychological profiling in the U.S., however, was constructed because of a need to predict Hitler’s actions (Langer, 1973). The subsequent methodology employed by the FBI was based on consultations with Manhattan psychiatrist Dr. James Brussel for crimes other than serial murder (DeNevi and Campbell, 2004). Chapter Four illuminates theories relevant to this research originated by the FBI and social scientists regarding serial murder investigations. It should be stated that there are numerous theoretical perspectives regarding serial killers, most notably from the psychological community, many of whose members are critical of the FBI in this regard. Multiple researchers suggest that the well-established FBI inductive profiling methodology is inadequate (Turvey, 1998; Egger, 2002; Petherick, 2006 et al). They propose that, because of the complexities of individuals, broad generalisations cannot be made regarding motivations and categorisations. The agency is further and more thoroughly criticised by social scientists who question its agents’ academic credentials and the need to label and categorise the actions of individuals based on motivations and an organised v. disorganised dichotomy, despite the complexities of human behaviours (Canter et al, 2004).

Amidst this discourse concerning serial murder and categorisations, blacks continued to commit serial murders with little public attention (Jenkins, 1993). The FBI’s initial serial killer research study included 36 male offenders, only three of whom were listed as non-whites, with no specific ethnicity given (Ressler et al, 1992). An
active FBI agent and researcher assigned to the National Center for the Analysis of
Violent Crime reveals that the FBI’s initial study of serial offenders, completed almost
twenty years ago, still “…provide[s] a basis for behavioral profiles of unknown
offenders” (Beasley 2004, p. 396). Supervisory Special Agent Beasley further revealed
a lack of gender and ethnic diversity among current profilers (personal communication,
2 July 2010). This thesis also suggests that the FBI’s historically homogenous
employee culture also plays a critical role in its continued blindness regarding African
Americans and serial murder. This culture reflects the preferences of that agency’s
founder, J. Edgar Hoover (Bureau of Investigation, 1924-35; agency renamed FBI,
director, 1935-72), and draws from this historically predominant white male culture
(Summers, 1993). Apropos of this view, a study of organisations reveals a tendency for
their cultural structure to remain static (Kalev, 2009). Hannan and Freeman (1989)
identify this state as “organisational inertia” (p. 70), and it becomes germane when
considering the FBI’s ability to change and adopt new methodologies, as well as new
ideas that might spring from a diversity of personnel. By way of example, The
Washington Post notes that the “war on terrorism” reveals a lack of federal agents who
are familiar with Middle Eastern languages, so much so that outside contractors have
been employed,17 further demonstrating their lack of diversity.

Prior to the FBI’s involvement with “Atlanta Child Murderer” Wayne Williams
from 1979 to 1981 (Douglas, 1995), no investigations of black serial killers by that
agency were noted during this research. Subsequent FBI research regarding black and
white serial sexual offenders suggests some differences between the two groups,
specifically that the former are more prone to offend across racial lines (Hazelwood and

17Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-
dyn/content/article/2006/10/10/AR2006101001388.html>
Michaud, 2001). Despite that observation, the agency’s research remains lacking.

The significance of the FBI’s extensive involvement in serial murder and its impact is reflected in numerous books, television shows, and movies. That agency’s positing of serial murder as a new societal phenomenon during congressional testimony has been considered by some researchers as an act of self-promotion (Jenkins, 2002). Yet it was a significant moment in serial killer history in the U.S., one that defined the FBI as the law enforcement agency most capable of apprehending this new type of killer, which further solidified its stature. The FBI portrayed the serial killer as a new variety of criminal, despite the fact that this type of homicide has existed throughout human history (Ramsland, 2005). Equally important to the FBI’s involvement in serial murders are the limitations of its serial killer research, despite the agency’s rise to prominence due to federal funding. Considering the level of violence in poor urban areas, the overrepresentation among blacks as perpetrators of homicide, mental health data regarding that group, and the FBI’s own research suggestive of behavioural antecedents found among those who might engage in homicides (Ressler et al, 1992), it is surprising that no correlation of these factors appears to have been made before this research. The fact that a minority of chronic offenders account for the majority of crimes would suggest that some may be engaging in multiple homicide. Apropos of the issue of urban violence, about which the FBI renders numerous reports, several recent scientific studies relating to cortisol seem pertinent. The connection between aggression and reduced cortisol production by women living under stressful conditions certainly would be applicable to urban mothers. Research notes that cortisol as an inhibitor for aggression and violence is passed on maternally to children (Popma et al, 2007; Pluess et al, 2009; Lindman et al, 1997). These studies have implications relative to aggression when considering the birth of male children lacking cortisol who are born into violent
urban environments.

The aforementioned literature suggests the significance of the FBI’s involvement in defining serial murder to the American public, as well as criticisms of their serial killer research and its non-linkage to urban violence. The latter issue is significant as it relates to the numerous unsolved inner city murders addressed in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

**The Media and Celebrity**

Chapters Five and Six will discuss the significance of the media’s collaboration with law enforcement in shaping public opinion and creating celebrity. Within the U.S., news reporting is a commercial enterprise, whereby media outlets define what is newsworthy based, more often than not, on crime and violence as commodities. To that end, a close association with law enforcement agencies enables access to details of crimes for reporting. Within the context of reporting, public opinion is shaped by the media’s focus. Several scholars note the significance of the media in shaping the public discourse regarding crime and how often individual random violence is considered more consequential than corporate crime, despite the latter’s broader societal impact (Jewkes, 2004/2011; Jerin and Fields, 2005; Simon, 2007 et al). In doing so, the media aids in the production of the phenomenon of celebrity and its links to the serial killer (Surette, 1994/1998), an understanding of which is the focus of these chapters. A significant 1993 survey of police recruits (Surette, 1994) reveals their adherence to media portrayals of crime, despite evidence to the contrary. While the extensive reporting of crime in general is a theme in the works of the previously cited scholars, Fleming (2007) reveals that reporting of serial crime in general is also widespread, yet the works by Stabile (2006), *White Victims, Black Villains: Gender, Race and Crime News in U.S. Culture* and Entman and Rojecki (2001), *Black Image in the White Mind:*
Media and Race in America, both begin to illuminate the curious nature of black serial killer anonymity in the U.S. Others researchers have noted that the black criminal stereotype and media characterisations have led to a media over-emphasis on the criminality of African Americans (Dreier, 2005; Welch, 2007). This, in turn, has led to “homogenised versions of reality” (Jewkes, 2004/2011, p. 23). These sensationalistic characterisations across competing media outlets draw in viewers along class, gender, and racial lines, thereby revealing a monetary value to the media, whose profits are based on viewship and its relation to advertising rates. Why should media stories regarding black serial killers then be so rare and unsustained? This dichotomy becomes particularly interesting when addressing the commodification of serial killers in the U.S.

Capitalising on crimes for profit is constrained neither by time nor culture. Noted in this research is the fact that tragedy for profit was part of the UK’s early mass market fiction, the “penny dreadfuls,” as well as Britain’s non-fictional Newgate Calendar (1997 ed.). While these elements of discourse have created the serial killer’s mystique and celebrity, it is the audience’s consumption that suggests a measurable degree of the latter. The fact that two lengthy popular books, both titled The Encyclopedia of Serial Killers, exist (Lane and Gregg, 1992; Newton, 2000), underlines the degree of public interest in serial killers and their willingness to consume. Yet, despite these books’ titles, both contain only scant information regarding black serial killers in America. This may be a result of poor research or, possibly, a race-based marketing strategy. Some suggest America’s fascination with tragedies (Seltzer, 1998; Leyton, 2001) and, specifically, serial murder, has led to the point of affording them celebrity status through books, films, and murderabilia (Schmid, 2005). There appears to be no such status accorded black serial killers, however; none holds a degree of
lasting notoriety comparable to that of Bundy, Dahmer, or Gacey. In fact, it is the media’s lack of sustained mention of black serial killers that reveals the exclusivity of the white male serial killer, discoverable when exploring the public iconisation of serial killers as a whole.

Films and books as a measurement of celebrity are closely, but not exclusively, associated with movie stars and other performers. Therefore, a comparison of books and movies about white and black serial killers is deemed a reasonable measurement of their celebrity. If there are paths to celebrity for serial killers, they may not be equally traversed by both offending groups (blacks and whites). Until recently, blacks had few roles as celebrities in American media, save as athletes and entertainers (Jenkins, 2002). Anne Rule, author and friend to white serial killer Ted Bundy, suggests that serial killers are intelligent, street smart, charming, charismatic, and often psychopathic (1985). If these traits typify the serial killer and contribute to his celebrity, it is worth exploring why black serial killers are lesser known and do not “qualify.” Watney (1987) argues that identification is at the core of film star celebrity. Research regarding celebrity culture further illuminates the significance of the public’s identification with an individual as a component of celebrity (Giles, 2000; Penfold, 2004). While not addressing serial killers specifically, the identification the public seeks with celebrities, as well as celebrity “star power”, is worth examining, for it may also be accorded to certain serial killers. The psychological aspects of personal identification further elucidate this process, which can become a pathology (McCutcheon et al, 2002; Maltby et al, 2006).

In Chapter Four, a comparison of a white double murderer to a black serial killer was made possible by a book about the former (Englade, 1988) and a personal interview with the latter, who was not accorded any earmarks of celebrity (i.e., books,
movies, or murderabilia). Relevant to this study is the lack of social artefacts associated with black serial killers. While some researchers do note the disparity of media treatment regarding black serial killer Harrison Graham and white murderer Gary Heidnik (Jenkins, 1993; Walsh, 2005), the latter becoming somewhat of a media sensation, they do not offer any in-depth analysis of the media discourse afforded the two murderers. Simpson’s (2000) *Psycho Paths, Tracking the Serial Killer through Contemporary American Film and Fiction* observes that the quantifiable social artefacts of literature and film are the most popular media leading to celebrity, so factual material in these arenas is consulted for this comparison, and it is on this basis that the measurement of black and white serial killers’ celebrity will be explored. This work’s primary contribution is a critical examination of why black serial killers remain unknown, a research direction that has been hitherto unexplored in the still understudied sub-topic of serial murder. It should be stated that this analysis of the anonymity of black serial killers includes popular culture, personal conversations, interviews, vetted internet sources, media portrayals, as well as scholarly writings. They are all relevant components of the discourse regarding the anonymity of African American serial killers in the U.S.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the methodologies employed in this study. The use of CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) throughout this work examines slavery, criminological theories, the penal system, serial killer news articles, books, films, and images within popular culture related to African Americans. Case studies are employed to reveal behavioural antecedents associated with serial murderers, and also to enable a comparison of the media discourse related to serial killers’ predations. The use of these combined methodologies was required to improve the validity of the study and achieve greater inferences from the results (Morse and Richards, 2002; Flick cited in Denzin et al, 2008). It is suggested that, if replicated within the context of this research, the use of this methodological framework regarding the exclusion of particular groups within a similar societal paradigm might render parallel findings. Alia and Bull’s (2005) studies of media and ethnic minorities note findings that are related to those suggested by this research regarding race-based perceptions. Their research suggests that the media is often complicit in the negative representation of minorities (e.g., Native Americans, the Maori of New Zealand, and the Inuit of Canada), thereby shaping public opinion of those groups. Furthermore, they observe that opinions offered by the media are consistent with the colonial roots of contemporary scholarship, and therefore are limited in scope since they are often written by white “outsiders.”
The reasons for black serial killer anonymity are complex and related to issues of race; they are particularly American in their origin and scope. In an effort to avoid a reductionist approach, researching this phenomenon requires a broad and deep interdisciplinary analysis. No one theoretical approach can untangle this complicated issue. Although the discourses of history, social sciences, media, and other imagery offer invaluable insights, a combined methodological approach is employed. This research does not accept at face value the idea that African Americans are not involved in serial murder or that their involvement is so slight as to not pose a problem for law enforcement. When faced with the historical data regarding this group’s social exclusion, mental health statistics, levels of poverty, and criminal involvement, the issue of black serial killers is of some concern, especially since their anonymity persists.

This researcher acknowledges the need to avoid post hoc fallacy in a qualitative study. The core concept of this research is the historical impact of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and racial oppression in the U.S., and their effect on perceptions of blacks and the types of crimes with which they are associated. It is what Glaser termed (1978) the basic social process (BSP), or the basic social psychological process (BSPP). These terms address the question, “What is going on here?” (Morse and Richards, 2002, p. 55). It is through an understanding of the aforementioned events that one can begin to realise the widespread yet unacknowledged involvement of African Americans in serial murder. This is reflected by a lack of literature (scholarly and fictional) and media portrayals (news, documentary, and film) in American popular culture. To examine this phenomenon, numerous questions have to be addressed. How has the media perceived and publicised these males, in terms of intelligence, behaviour, and criminality? How has law enforcement perceived them? How do these perceptions become a stereotype?
Is such a stereotype merely evidence of a racist legacy, or does it constitute a menace to society’s safety? This thesis examines why the media, law enforcement, and the public persist in viewing African American serial killers as non-existent by exploring these research questions. Additionally, it considers how these questions intersect with issues of criminal celebrity and the serial killer’s place within that matrix to discover why black serial murderers remain in an exclusionary zone, despite their documented and enduring existence.

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

This section explains the methodology employed to critically examine the discourse regarding serial killers in the U.S. Foucault helped establish this approach in the 1970s as an alternative perspective to the examination of psychological dysfunctions. It developed into a means of examining everything, from the criminal justice system to the psychological and medical professions. Discourse analysis has multiple definitions. Beyond the realm of psychology, both research into broad-based historical shifts in ways of speaking about individual pathology (Foucault, 1971) and the micro-examination of conversational exchanges (Stubbs, 1983) have been characterised as discourse analysis (Marshall, 1994 cited in Cassell and Symon, 1994, p. 91). In an effort to comprehend the divergence between the reality of the existence of black serial killers in the U.S. and what this research suggests is their continued anonymity, an examination of the historic experience of black Americans is necessary. Foucault suggests that “discourse” is a social force that has a central role constructing what is “real” (McHoul and Grace, 1993). Furthermore, it is also essential to understand that discourse analysis, as related by Foucault, differs greatly from the process of dissecting text and linguistics. The term “discourse” itself is loaded with various formations and interpretations. It is described as:
a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding the human experience… (Tyson, 1999, p. 281).

Fiske defines “discourse”:

… as a language or system of representation that has developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings, which serve the interests of a section of society (cited in Philo, 2007, p. 101).

These two statements suggest that discourse may not be a factual representation of the subject discussed, and the language and images used are closely linked to power and social interests. Fairclough (2003) notes that the ideologies resulting from discourse:

…are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation (p. 9).

Foucault further describes discourse in his work as a social force with a central role in what is constructed as real (Philo, 2007, p. 105). He additionally suggests that any given society would be infused with competing discourses, that they would change over time, and that they may have sub-categories (e.g., scientific discourse may contain psychiatric discourse). Therefore, within this research, the discourse regarding slavery, the FBI, and media will be critically examined, as these aspects relate to black serial killers in the U.S. The sources of information, images, and the language employed to describe them are important to this research, particularly when examining the nature and perception of African Americans and serial killers. An examination of the FBI’s role in serial murder investigations via its research, as well as criticisms of that agency’s methodology, is thus necessary when examining the discourse of knowledge, power, and those who disseminate and control it. Furthermore, that agency’s Congressional testimony regarding serial killers is worth investigation, for it was aided by the media, resulting in its consumption by a public fueled by an interest in criminal and violent acts. The FBI’s role in the investigation of serial murder is considered, and
includes a brief history of their research in this area. The historical overview of the FBI and the agency’s profiling research is also examined, as well as the institutional structure of that organisation. In pursuit of this goal, in addition to secondary sources, direct access to the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, a branch of the FBI currently tasked with criminal profiling and research, was afforded this researcher. It proved useful as a primary investigatory resource for an exploration of unpublished issues. Access was granted based on an initial phone call explaining the research to a receptionist, who then forwarded the call to FBI Special Agent James O. Beasley II, assigned to that unit. He has provided information throughout this research, beginning with my initial visit to their offices in 2004, and continuing through phone calls and mail whenever requested. A veteran, Special Agent James O. Beasley II has conducted extensive serial killer research and possesses knowledge of the intricate workings of the FBI, its Behavioral Science Unit, the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC), and their assigned tasks. The discourse regarding the psychological factors identified by both the FBI and social researchers as prevalent among serial killers is examined in conjunction with the U.S. Surgeon General’s Mental Health statistics regarding African Americans.

Through these varied avenues of investigation, not only are a variety of competing thoughts introduced, but sub-categories as well: history, trauma, politics, criminality, criminological theory, imagery, commercialisation, and celebrity. What is required and has thus far failed to be acted upon by the FBI and social researchers, are the correlations of the mental health statistics of blacks in the U.S., the aforementioned subcategories, and violence in urban cities as they relate to serial murder. The discourse regarding personality constructs defining narcissism, psychopathy, sociopathy, and anti-social behaviour is also examined in this research. In addition, the behavioural
antecedents found by social scientists that have been suggested as causal factors in the
development of the aforementioned personality constructs are considered. Discourse
analysis can be seen as content analysis or conversational analysis, as it is practised by
the Glasgow University Media Group (Philo, 2007). Whisnant (2010) notes that the
term discourse, “assumes that ideas structure social spaces and therefore ideas can play
a significant role in historical change….“ He further suggests that:

Because these discourses affect multiple areas of life, they cannot be
isolated to a specific type of text, or even a particular genre. Literary
novels often have bits of scientific or legal discourse embedded in
them….\(^{18}\)

There are many theoretical strands in discourse analysis, some more quantitative
than qualitative. This research pursues the latter course. Discourse analysis in this body
of research is an examination of power and social interests (e.g., Foucault, 1972; Van
Dijk, 1993; Fairclough et al, 1997). Foucault (1972) suggests that, because discourses
are so numerous and affect so many aspects of our lives—from the buildings we
construct, to the artwork we create and appreciate, to the social institutions we
institute—they are beyond a universal methodological measurement. Furthermore,
much is revealed about those who create and disseminate their messages, offered as
“knowledge” and “truth.” Furthermore, Foucault (1978) suggests that the so-called
experts, scholars, and professionals act as if they were exclusive professors or
possessors of such “knowledge” and “truth.” As will be illuminated in this research, the
collaboration of law enforcement (i.e., the FBI) and the media is viewed by the public
as a legitimate source of information (i.e., knowledge and truth). This collaboration has,
through its discourse regarding blacks, continued to render a depiction of them as
socially unequal to whites. This inequity, it is further suggested, is directly linked to

\(^{18}\) Source: <http://webs.wofford.edu/whisnantcj/his389/foucault_discourse.pdf>
African Americans’ history as slaves, and aids in the invisibility of those members of
the group who are serial murderers. Art and images presented as evidence of
inferiority/criminality are but another dimension of discourse and, when presented by
the media, underline its power to enforce the social interests (Fiske, 1987) of the
dominant society, both shaping and reinforcing the impressions it provides. It is,
therefore, appropriate to include social artefacts (e.g., varied print media, images,
internet sources) when examining the discourse of any topic, for they reflect and give
voice to the ideas of a particular society and historical period. It is also necessary,
however, to first consider how the image of blacks initiated by slavery and the
subsequent discourse, both internally and externally, has itself shaped that
community.19 A simplistic answer is that, compared to the dominant culture, African
Americans are different simply because they are black and therefore do not represent
the norm. This would indeed be a reductionist approach, for the intersection of images
of self, media, and law enforcement is complex. To a great degree, image is the
overarching research issue of this thesis’s investigation—images of actual criminality,
perceptions of criminality, and elements of media dissemination of images relating to
criminality and intelligence. The intricacy of this aspect alone necessitates varied
considerations and approaches. Actual African American criminality has both a historic
and a contemporary dimension, so a historic overview is needed. Even such an outline
requires a comparative dimension in order to determine if the U.S. experience was
shared by other New World slave-holding societies and the subsequent images afforded
African Americans as a result of chattel slavery in the U.S. (see Appendix A). The
examination of imagery as an element of discourse is required. Mendelson points out

visual imagery’s place within discourse:

…the communicative functions unifying an audience and values transmission are explained in terms of the connotative rather than denotative meaning of the image… (Mendelson cited in Walker, 2006)\(^\text{20}\)

He further suggests that:

In mass media, visual images function across time, as a body of messages sometimes referred to as “iconology,” a linguistic system in which meaning is made in patterns… (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the value of images in communication is considerable:

… the creation of an “iconic” image cannot be predetermined but involves “encoding” (message construction) and “decoding” (message consumption) by a producer and consumer alike. Accordingly, photojournalistic images create cultural frames and provide significant ways for us to perceive and understand our surroundings, values and history… (Spratt, Peterson and Lagos, 2005 cited in Walker, 2006).\(^\text{21}\)

Chapter Three explores those images, significant within the context of African Americans in the U.S., that reflect a historic preponderance of criminal themes and a commercialisation of buffoonery. Yet curiously, amidst the many criminal images that are presented through the media today (news, films, TV dramas), black males remain noticeably absent from the overall iconic presentation and commercialisation of serial killers. This conundrum persists despite their per capita overrepresentation within that criminal group. An examination of discourses regarding African Americans, slavery, crime, the FBI, and the media therefore are critically linked.

Ball (1995) notes the distinction between the analysis of other scholars concerned with the linguistic features of textually oriented discourse analysis (TODA) and purely semiotic analyses (e.g., Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Chilton, 1985 et al), and the philosophical approaches of Foucault. The Foucauldian

\(^{20}\) Source: <http://www.rhetoricalens.info/>

\(^{21}\) Source: <http://www.rhetoricalens.info/index.cfm?fuseaction=category.display&category_id=57>
discourse method is:

…theorizing that rests upon complexity, uncertainty and doubt and upon a reflexivity about its own production and its claims to knowledge (cited in Taylor, 2004, p. 3).

Foucault views discourse as something that should involve greater inclusivity. He notes that:

…the tradition of intellectual history tended to focus on well-formed clear ideas of philosophers, writers and thinkers. The vague thoughts and perceptions of everyday persons were often excluded from study… (Wishnant, 2010, p. 1).

With this view, however, the task of describing Foucault’s methodological model often becomes more of an invocation of Foucault’s thoughts, rather than a reference to a structure (Graham, 2005). In the broader context, however, a body of research, created by multiple scholars challenged to do so, may eventually create an implicit standard. Lacking that standard, there is an acknowledged danger that one’s work might be dismissed as “unFoucauldian” (p. 2). Graham notes the difficulty of ascertaining coherent descriptions of how to go about discourse analysis using Foucault, and reticence on the part of scholars to declare a method for fear of being charged as prescriptive (Ibid.). Foucault’s statement, “I take care not to dictate how things should be,” provocatively continues with “…all those who speak for others or to others, no longer know what to do” (Foucault, 1994 cited in Graham, 2005, p. 2), and reveals that his analyses were more focused on change than prescription. His views regarding change include the methodology of discourse analysis, as well as traditional societal beliefs about knowledge and power. While a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach is not the “traditional” systematic semiotic examination of language or grammar, but rather a critical approach of the body of knowledge presented by scholars, institutions, and laymen (i.e., popular culture), it is, as such, applicable to this research. Consequently, both scholarly works and popular literature are reviewed for a broader
contextual perspective in order to more fully encompass America’s view of serial killers. This “critical approach” of discourse is, in part, an examination of societal determinations of knowledge, truth, and power. McHoul and Grace (1993) state that:

…knowledge is much more a matter of the social, historical and political conditions under which, for example, statements come to count as true or false… (p. 29).

It is a function, as Foucault suggests, that those in power construct their truths through a manipulation of language and imagery. Throughout history, language and imagery have been effective in moulding public opinion and creating false realities (e.g., Nazi Germany). “Discourse” is but one term scholars use to analyse thoughts, speech, concepts, and images (e.g., cartoons, pictures, films, and art)—essentially examining a culture. Wishnant (2010) notes that Foucault’s method of discourse operates in four ways: constructing our social reality, constituting knowledge and truth, revealing as much about the speakers as it does their relationship to the people around them, and generating social and political power within a society. Our social world and realities are constructed through experience, upbringing, and education. “Knowledge” and “truth”, within this context, may be viewed as elements of power derived from their discursive support within a culture (e.g., concepts like “the world is flat” and/or leeching by doctors as an appropriate medical procedure were supported during particular times within a culture). A lawyer, for example, is able to speak with power, based on education, exams, and a set of state controls. Doctor, ministers, law enforcement, and other professionals exercise power in society based on their positions. The construction of a social reality, therefore, is created in part by those who have the power to enforce their particular interests. This power is not necessarily derived, as Marx suggests, from an economically-based privilege, but rather, in Foucault’s (1980) view, may be obtained through historic and socio-political conditions that are fertile for such
actions. The historic discourse regarding the formation of America and slavery are examined as they constructed the social reality of that period. The discourse analysis utilised for this work follows that of Van Dijk (2008), who notes that, while lacking a unitary theoretical framework, the aim of CDA is to “ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance…” (p. 354). The aforementioned subjective interpretation of Foucault’s work as a theme for change is similar to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) or “sociopolitical discourse analysis” touted by Van Dijk (1993) regarding social inequality. It is, by the author’s admission, a yet underdeveloped area of study. Van Dijk argues:

CDA does not primarily aim to contribute to a specific discipline, paradigm, school or discourse theory. It is primarily interested and motivated by pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis… (Ibid., p. 252).

The author states that CDA, unlike other linguistic and semiotic forms of discourse analysis, should take an explicit socio-political stance. Van Dijk (2008) further notes that there are many types of CDA. Some incorporate only news reports, while others might concern lessons in school. He suggests that the conscious role of the researcher, who is meant to expose social inequities, is crucial to this style of analysis. The intent of the analysis is “change through critical understanding” (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 252). CDA examines the intricate relationship between text, talk, social cognition, power, society, and culture. Van Dijk also observes that academic contributions may be marginal in the processes of change, as opposed to those of individuals who are directly involved in a process (e.g., the Civil Rights Movement). He additionally suggests that critical scholars are often concerned with their own interests, attempting to placate those in power. He notes that scholars pursue this route when they despise and discredit

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22 The recent rise of the U.S. political action group, “The Tea Party”, has found a depressed economic climate in America to be fertile ground for anti-government discourse.
partisanship, or ignore, mitigate, and deny inequality, further stating these actions demonstrate how partisan they really are. Therefore, this research seeks to illuminate the dangers of race-based perceptions within any society, but especially within the U.S., given its unique history of strife between white and black Americans, and to elevate the consciousness of law enforcement agents. Furthermore, Van Dijk writes, “Ultimately, its [CDA’s] success is measured by its effectiveness and relevance, that is by its contribution to change…” (Ibid., p. 253).

In an effort to avoid what Foucault saw as the danger of missing broader fissures of thought happening culture-wide, this thesis examines the competing and varying discourses among scholars and laymen alike. From the importation of Africans who were not all used as slaves, to criminological theories suggesting biological links to crime, dissenters in both arenas provide a diversity of thought. Additionally, serial killer research and investigations by the FBI are revealed and critiqued. The media is examined as both a font of information regarding serial murderers, and as manipulators of their commercialisation. Apropos to the discourse regarding blacks in the U.S., Foucault (1978) notes the often incongruous nature of what is deemed as “truth” through socio-political discourse and its factual essence. In what he terms “an ontology of the present,” Foucault suggests his analyses aspire to unearth the particular historical conditions that produced the types of scientific truths peculiar to a society. In his analysis of the discourse engaged in by medical professionals, Foucault notes their use of language in his *The History of Sexuality*:

> Claiming to speak the truth it stirred up fears…it ascribed an imaginary dynasty of evils to be passed on for generations…dangerous for the whole society…their feeble content from the stand point of elementary rationality, not to mention scientificity, earns them a place apart in the history of knowledge. They form a strange muddled zone… (pp. 53-54).

Within this doctoral research, CDA is employed to examine significant factors
suggested as contributors to the anonymity of African American serial killers in America. While the impact of slavery is not quantifiable among the various categories of psychological and sociological maladies, the discourse, from its inceptions to more contemporary voices, is revealing. Greater implications for law enforcement and society regarding race-based perceptions are revealed through this research of black serial killers.

**Case Studies**

Yin (2003) defines a case study as:

...an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p. 13).

Within this context, several case studies are presented. A key case study involves Gary Heidnik, a white multiple murderer, and Harrison “Marty” Graham, a black serial killer. These two individuals murdered in Philadelphia and were both apprehended within six months of one another. As such, they provide a unique opportunity to analyse media portrayals in terms of race—Heidnik was white, Graham is black. Their crimes were equally grisly, a factor which excites news appeal. Heidnik tortured female victims in his basement, Graham stored his victims in his apartment. The number of their victims is unequal, however; Heidnik had only two, while Graham had seven. It is comparatively rare to be able to do a point-by-point comparison regarding media, race, and murder, but because of their chronological and geographical proximity, these killers’ news stories were often reported by the same personnel and news agencies. This limited the variables in relative to their notoriety, making them an ideal comparative pair. The greatest inequity between the two is the number of kills, which would seem to ensure more press and celebrity for black serial killer Harrison Graham. As this research will show, however, this was not the case. The comparison of these murderers
represents both critical and revelatory cases. Yin (2003) suggests that a critical case:

…can be used to determine whether a theory’s propositions are correct or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more relevant…Such a study can even help to refocus future investigations into an entire field…(p. 40).

He further notes that a revelatory case “…exists when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyse a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation” (Ibid., p. 42).

These two cases reveal disparate media treatment of the two murderers. Gary Heidnik, a white male, and Harrison Graham, a black male, both offended and were arrested in Philadelphia, on 24 March 1987 and 16 August 1987 respectively. The killers’ arrests and subsequent media treatment are revelatory because they afford media researchers the opportunity to examine how a white multiple murderer and a black serial killer, arrested in the same city and time period, were depicted by the media. These set of circumstances presented a unique opportunity to compare the media discourse regarding each offender. One significant aspect of media difference is that Heidnik’s background, as well as details of his crimes, were explored in a “true crime” book. Harrison Graham’s case study, in comparison, contained only reporting through daily media coverage that lacked biographical detail. Because of the singular opportunity for comparison these murderers provided, it was deemed necessary to investigate and discover further information about Graham. While the newspapers supplied some data, it was limited.

Harrison Graham became part of a Philadelphia Police investigation on 16 August 1987, regarding the discovery of six bodies in the third floor rear apartment at 1631 N. 19th St. Although Graham had killed seven women, only six bodies were found in his apartment, with a partial skeleton resting on the roof and a partial skeleton stored inside a nearby basement at 1625 N. 19th St. During the preceding winter,
Graham might have been apprehended when a young black female ran from his apartment after he threatened her. She summoned the police, but they initially ignored her. It was at that time that Graham, after admitting to her that he had killed someone, realised that his bravado might cause problems. He moved part of the body from inside his apartment to the roof just below his apartment window, so that upon a police officer’s eventual arrival, no evidence would be visible. The police dismissed the woman’s complaint as the ranting of a poor black, drug-addicted female. Graham later moved part of the body into a nearby basement. This was done after the winter months, when the weather was more conducive to outdoor activity. He might not have moved this portion of his victim’s remains at all, if not for the numerous birds gravitating to feast on them. He told detectives during his interview that it was the sound of the birds that was “driving him nuts.”

Initially, documents on file with the police were consulted to flesh out Harrison’s story. This material is not available to the public or to the media, except at the discretion of investigators. This researcher, due to a law enforcement background as an active twenty-year member of the Philadelphia Police, was afforded access to Harrison Graham’s biographical data for this research. It included a variety of documentation, including arrest files, as well as documents reaching into Graham’s elementary school years. Medical and counseling reports, evaluations of Graham’s childhood behavioural problems, and contemporaneous teachers’ comments comprised some of the pertinent documents. Extracting information about the case and viewing it through the lens of Graham’s personal history was useful, not only for a better understanding of his criminal acts, but also to clarify the preconceptions of the assigned law enforcement investigators. Although the evidence was clear, interviewing homicide detectives wanted Graham’s confession or at least his admission of guilt.
Based on a description by the assigned detective, the police considered “Marty” a “gentle giant” who did not appear to be “the prototype of a serial killer”; he was “just too strong for his own good.” The detective stated that it was “unheard of” that an African American (Harrison Graham) had murdered seven women and stored them in his apartment. Examining Harrison “Marty” Graham’s case through available documents provided a portrait of his early childhood that revealed an intellectually and emotionally challenged poor black urban male operating at a level well below his age of 28 at the time of his arrest.

While these resources afforded a working knowledge about the specifics of the murders, it was deemed useful to obtain a prison interview with Graham, since the files did not afford certain kinds of personal information comparable to that in the published book about Heidnick. Harrison Graham’s arrest file aided in the delineation of fact from any fiction, should Harrison Graham steer the conversation toward the murders, an interview method suggested by Hickey (2002). It was not the intent of this researcher to broach the subject of the murders or probe for details about them, since those matters had been adjudicated. Furthermore, any discussion regarding Graham’s participation in the murders might have induced psychological stress and therefore was avoided for ethical reasons as well. Graham’s initial confession to Philadelphia Homicide Detectives and conversations with the lead investigator, Det. Rodden, revealed sufficient details regarding his murders. Knowledge of the subject’s criminal background, family, childhood, SES, any mental illness, drug use, and homicidal methodology prior to an interview served as a safeguard against extensive fabrication.

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24 The descriptions of Harrison “Marty” Graham rendered by investigators at first glance concluded that he seemed to be a “Lenny”-like character, resembling a character of that name in John Steinbeck’s (1937) *Of Mice and Men*—a man lacking in intellect, too strong for his own good, with an underdeveloped emotionality.
of events and his life’s history (Ibid.). Harrison Graham revealed a childhood of witnessing violence at an early age, sexual abuse, drug usage, and lack of a stable residence. The purpose of this interview was to obtain information regarding the behavioural antecedents that may have led to Graham’s predations.

Correspondence with Harrison Graham began in July, 2006, for the purposes of this research. On 21 August 2006, he agreed to an interview, however, it was not until 9 November 2006 that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections RRC granted permission (See Appendix B). The interview took place on 28 December 2006, almost two decades after his arrest and life sentence conviction. The interview was conducted via a private room at the Coal Township Correctional Facility, located in central Pennsylvania, about a six hour drive from Philadelphia. An assistant accompanied this researcher to Coal Township Correctional Facility, in compliance with FBI safety protocol (Ressler et al, 1992). All individuals in the room were African American males, which was intentional, in order to create a comfort level that might be achieved by a same-race interview setting. African Americans traditionally have been reluctant to reply to surveys and questionnaires that are either government-sponsored or employed by members of the dominant culture in America. Franklin et al (1979) suggest this reticence is due to suspicion derived from a history of social exclusion. Additionally, prior to the face to-face interview with Harrison Graham, this researcher is unaware of any interviews with black serial killers that were conducted by African American researchers. The implications of this, for purposes of eliciting information, are further discussed in this dissertation’s final Chapter Seven.

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25 This protocol consists of having at least two agents present during the interview. It was established for reasons of safety, debriefings, and psychological decompression post-interview. In 1970 Edmund Kemperer, a six-foot-nine, three hundred pound convicted serial killer, threatened a former FBI Special Agent’s life, resulting in the formulation of the protocol (Ressler et al 1992; Hazlewood and Michaud, 1998).
There were no overt acknowledgements by the subject of his crimes during his interview. He revealed that he saw his life as a series of events beyond his control, from his birth to his lack of education, to the neighbourhoods where he grew up, and, eventually, to the seven murdered women. Harrison Graham’s interview uncovered previously unknown behavioural antecedents that may have contributed to his serial murders (i.e., witnessing violence, lack of a stable home, drug use, and molestation), as well as manifestations of the “MacDonald Triad.” J.M. MacDonald’s (1963) research theorised that a pattern of three behavioural antecedents (enuresis, firestarting and cruelty to animals) could be viewed as predictors for later life acts of violence, especially murder. While Graham’s admission to being sexually molested and witnessing violence could not be verified, other events were referred to in the police files relating to his familial history, as well as his medical and arrest reports. While acknowledging the dangers inherent in the self-reporting aspect of interviews, Rosenberg (1988) suggests that even lies are useful, because they reveal how an individual organises his life. They remain meaningful because they are meaningful to the individual. Freeman (1992) argues that “…we are the stories that we tell about ourselves…” (p. 25). The interview was semi-structured, in keeping with the characteristics set forth by Rubin and Rubin for case studies, as referenced in Yin (2003):

The interviews will appear to be guided conversations rather than structured queries. In other words, although you will be pursuing a consistent line of enquiry…satisfying the needs of your line of enquiry while simultaneously putting forth friendly and non-threatening questions in your open-ended interviews… (pp. 89-90).

During the interview, the subject was encouraged to create a narrative of his early life experiences via questions focused on that time, as opposed to his adult period of predation. SSA Beasley (personal communication, 2 July 2010) states that the FBI’s
interviewing technique for serial murderers is to ask “open-ended questions” and allow
the subject to create a personal narrative. Noting that “…case studies need not always
include direct, detailed observations as a source of evidence…” (Yin, 2003, p. 15), all
other case studies in this research work were constructed from news articles, true crime
books, and other social artefacts. Due to the same-race factors among subject and
interviewer, Harrison Graham’s discussion of his life and how he sees himself was
unique, and the primary data he related regarding his behavioural antecedents may have
been rendered due to a less intimidating forum (Rosegrant and McCroskey, 1975). The
interview sought childhood data related to behavioural antecedents that might coincide
with the FBI’s research. Harrison Graham was encouraged to speak about his
childhood, not his crimes. In doing so, it was anticipated his remarks might reveal that
those antecedents are not unique to whites and may be prevalent in poor black urban
communities. Towards the end of the interview, Harrison “Marty” Graham, when
questioned about his unusual penmanship, which was neat and childlike, patted his
chest with pride, and said, “…that’s in me…that’s me….,” In retrospect, my sense was
that, much like his abbreviated mention of his early childhood molestation, there was a
lot more that he could have disclosed or cared to. The interview conducted with
Harrison Graham revealed him to be, at that time, a lucid individual despite extensive
drug use in his youth, and the media’s portrayal of him as having a diminished mental
capacity. Harrison Graham’s incarceration, however, did provide him with an
involuntary detoxification process. His vocabulary may not have been extensive, but he
appeared to understand some sophisticated terms (e.g., my use of the term “invasive”
regarding his animal abuse; “anonymity”, regarding black serial killers, or his use of the
term “emulate” while discussing the D.C. Snipers). Most notably, the interview did
reveal behavioural antecedents identified by the FBI and social scientists (e.g., Ressler
et al, 1992; Douglas, 1995; Holmes et al, 2002; Hickey, 2002 et al) as contributory factors common to the predation of serial murderers: trauma, physical and emotional abuse, witnessing violence, a lack of patriarchal bonding, and other negative social and environmental factors. Harrison Graham appears to have revealed several of these behavioural antecedents for the first time during this interview. Harrison Graham is not representative of every black male, but, based on U.S. Mental Health statistics, his early childhood social experiences are not atypical of many poor urban blacks. Furthermore, it is curious that his statements displayed knowledge of other white serial killers, yet revealed that he was unaware of other black serial killers, reinforcing the anonymity of these murderers, even among their peers. The complete interview is located in Appendix B of this thesis.

A second important case study is included in this work, and focuses on the D.C. Snipers, John Muhammad and John Lee Malvo, whose predations took place in 2002. This examination was vital to this research because the case was a glaring example of how the persistent blindness of law enforcement toward the possibility of black serial killers hampered and delayed their apprehension. Investigators’ initial assumptions about the race of the perpetrator(s) as white were unquestioned until after the apprehension of the killers. It was then also revealed that John Muhammad held feelings of resentment and anger towards what he considered a racist U.S. government, a telling motivational factor. Justified or not, it is the narrative he created about himself and is meaningful to researchers because it was meaningful to him. It also contributes to a theme built around race that, by admission of many of the principals in the case, involved perceptions, self-perceptions, assumptions, and motivation. In this case study, no interviews were deemed necessary. Muhammad, the architect of the murders, was executed in 2009, and extensive publications, including multiple true crime books,
included the details considered relevant.

Lastly, case studies of lesser-known black serial killers are also presented to identify similarities among the behavioural antecedents recognised by social scientists and the FBI that are associated with serial murderers. They serve as illustrative examples, rather than being the focus of in-depth studies, and were chosen according to their clear adherence to aspects of previously published typologies that included no black examples.

Limitations

Within the context of critical discourse analysis, the meanings assigned by the researcher within his or her analysis is an interpretive exercise, and therefore subjective, susceptible to missing the broader fissures of thought happening culture-wide (Foucault, 1970). While it is not possible to include every strain of discourse, Foucault suggests there is no final perspective or hegemony of thought, but rather an enrichment of perspective is provided by challenging the standards of “knowledge and truth” through inclusionary, rather than exclusionary, analysis. It is the exclusion of outside sources by those viewed as traditional censorious suppliers of knowledge and truth that is considered a hindrance. The case studies examined in this research are subject to limitations posed by the amount of information available for both white and black serial killers. Additionally, any self-reported information regarding motivations is not considered to be necessarily truthful.

Goals, Significance, and Questions

This study’s exploration of the continued invisibility of African American serial killers is ultimately meant not only to consider its root causes and the issues that continue to enable this inaccurate perception, but to unmask the realities of this
cognitive blindness in order to prevent its continuation—the D.C. Sniper case and some of the others mentioned in this study have shown the consequence can be a loss of human life. Discoveries germane to the hitherto unremarked correlations between circumstances researchers believe may engender serial killers and those which are common environmental factors in urban black life may prove useful in predicting how inner city neighbourhoods may be breeding grounds for future serial killers or disguise those already in operation.

So little research has been done about black serial murderers that much of the basic information related to them or the stepping stones necessary to address larger issues had to be, by necessity, collected and organised for this work. These include such foundational data as the construction of a substantially revised list of known African American serial murderers with indications of their dates and areas of predation (see Fig. 7), a consideration of whether the FBI and Holmes typologies and serial killer motivational chart can apply to African American serial killers (see Table 4.1 and 4.2), and an exploration of what films and books deal with black serial killers (see Table 5.1 and Fig. 9). This kind of foundational information has not been available, and it is hoped it may provide basic comparative data that other researchers can use. Lastly, harkening back to Alia and Bull’s (2005) previously addressed observations about cultural “outsiders,” the perspective of an African American, who is also a law enforcement agent, adds an additional cultural perspective heretofore not presented in serial killer research. Here such information is not an end unto itself, but a necessary tool for comparative analysis. In order to successfully determine why African American serial killers remain unrecognised, this data and other research provide both fuel and partial answers to the research questions that guide this study. In their broadest form, these questions ask the following:
1) How did the U.S. experience of slavery and its aftermath uniquely create negative images of African Americans? Might these perceptions of and by African Americans influence contemporary media and public assessments and biases, particularly those related to crime?

2) How has law enforcement (particularly the FBI) and criminological research contributed to media and public perceptions about serial killers, and why has this downplayed African American participation?

3) How has the serial killer risen to become a celebrity icon in the United States, and how does the African American serial killer fit within this media-created matrix, as compared to his white counterparts?

4) What factors create celebrity in the world of crime, and how do the image issues that are the legacy of slavery interfere with black serial killers’ access into this particular world of celebrity?

Each of these questions benefits by using CDA as a contextualising approach, and case studies provide evidence to support the hypothesis that a willingness to accept black involvement in violence and crime does not extend to a willingness to “allow” black participation in serial murder. Why? This type of crime has been so elevated in U.S. popular belief that its perpetrators are viewed as possessors of nearly superhuman intelligence, charm, and evasive skills—traits denied African Americans because of a continuum of negative stereotypes originating in slavery.
CHAPTER THREE
SLAVERY, CRIMINALITY, MEDIA, AND NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES

The history of African Americans is replete with negative associations that shaped popular opinion, creating race-based perceptions that have become, as this work suggests, part of America’s collective consciousness. All social aspects of life for blacks in the U.S. are affected by their history of social exclusion and racism, from interpersonal interactions to news media coverage of urban crime, from the depictions of blacks on television and in films to the disparity of their representation within the penal system (e.g., rates of incarceration and the application of the death penalty [Turow, 2003]). In order to begin to explore the anonymity of the black serial killer, this chapter investigates the history of racism and the social exclusion of blacks in the U.S., their subsequent demonisation (required to maintain the institution of chattel slavery), social policies, and laws that ensured a subjugated labour force.26 The role of the media in reinforcing negative stereotypes, and a carceral system that acts as an extension of slavery are also examined. These factors are linked to the portrayal of blacks as perpetrators of crime, the despised and feared “others” and, generally, as a socially excluded group on the periphery of mainstream society. These beliefs extend to all blacks, including serial killers, but these criminals are not afforded the anti-hero celebrity status given numerous criminals, especially white serial killers, allowing them

26 “Slavery is a highly malleable and versatile institution that can be harnessed to a variety of purposes, but in the Americas property-in-person was geared primarily to provision and control of labor” (Drescher and Engerman, cited in Wacquant, 2002, p. 4).
to remain anonymous to the public and law enforcement agents. Wacquant (2002) argues:

…that slavery and mass imprisonment are genealogically linked and that one cannot understand the latter—its timing, composition, and smooth onset as well as the quiet ignorance or acceptance of its deleterious effects on those it affects—without returning to the former as historic starting point… (p. 1).

Slavery, as it was practiced in the U.S., did irrevocable damage to every sociological aspect of life for African Americans and has framed the zeitgeist of that entire nation. Therefore, an examination of slavery and its aftermath illuminates the issue of race regarding blacks as a uniquely American social construct. Furthermore, black criminality as it relates to incarceration, as well as media reinforcement of criminal depictions of African Americans, should be viewed as critical factors that have shaped the perceptions of law enforcement and the American public. As such, these issues are vital contributors to the anonymity of black serial killers, for, over time, they have formed an inexorable cloak of social invisibility that is cast off only in limited—often negative—circumstances. This anonymity poses a danger for the public at large.

The mechanism of forced labour—chattel slavery in America—developed a brand of racism whose sociological impact, some researchers suggest (Davis, 1998; Degruy-Leary, 2005; Wacquant, 2002 et al), still impacts the lives of black people, despite its official end in the 1860s. This combines with a continuum of detrimental imagery regarding black people throughout their history in America to create a “domino effect” that culminates in attitudes and beliefs within and without the African American community, as well as adversarial ideas that have become part of media-induced popular culture. The contemporary negative image of the African American

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27 The Emancipation Proclamations (1862 and 1863), the close of the Civil War (1865), the 13th, 14th and 15th constitutional amendments that addressed the abolition of slavery and citizenship, and the Voting Rights Act (1865-70) can all be viewed as potential dates for slavery’s actual end.
man, or black male, is that of a social predator. This concept is so developed that there exists an almost “knee jerk” reaction of fear associated with young black males from inner city environments, typecasting them as criminal monsters or super predators (Entman and Rojecki, 2001; Levitt and Dubner, 2005; Wacquant, 2002; Young, 2001 et al). This chapter will explore the development of this image over the past centuries. It will argue that, despite this negative portrayal of blacks’ criminality, their participation in serial murder continues to go undetected by law enforcement, counter to the trend of expectations of their criminality. It further suggests that it is precisely because of the proliferation of their narrow criminological associations that serial murder is excluded from the crimes they are thought to commit. The chapter includes a description of chattel slavery in America and reasons why early settlers deemed it necessary, especially in the Jamestown colony. This inclusion sets the stage for this thesis’s contention that slavery and the subsequent laws that ensured the social exclusion of blacks in the post-Abolition era continue to profoundly influence perceptions of the kinds of crimes that black people are predisposed to commit and those they are not.

Due to the continuity of media involvement in the presentation and reinforcement of negative images of blacks throughout their history in the U.S., an analysis of such involvement is continuous throughout this work, in varying degrees. Similarly, when examining the criminal justice system and its relation to slavery, issues of anti-social behaviours will be touched upon, but will be dealt with in greater depth in Chapter Four (i.e. FBI research and criminal profiling). What follows is a description of the beginning of life in America for Africans and their descendants, and its sociological impact on them and the greater society.

**Chattel Slavery**

Even prior to slavery in the U.S., Westerners associated the term “black” with
negativity, evoking notions of darkness, foreboding, and evil. An individual might be a “blackguard”, be said to possess a “black heart” or a “blackened reputation”, or be the “black sheep” of his family. Black magic, black hat—negative connotations both. Westerners often referred to Africa as “the dark continent”, despite the brilliance of its sun. Negative connotations extended to skin colour. Famed Swedish botanist Linnaeus characterised dark-skinned African peoples as slovenly, negligent, slow, and sexually primitive in his widely published work *Systema naturae* (circa 1735). Such a description did little to curtail Western negative perceptions of Africans and reinforced a “natural order” that allowed for enslavement of “lower beings.” Responding to the idea of sub-human categorisation and treatment, W.E.B. DuBois was prompted to note that for whites there existed an “…all pervading desire to inculcate disdain for everything black” (Asim, 2007, p. 2).

Prior to the advent of the chattel slavery system in America, slavery was only vaguely understood by many of the colonists, and that within a mostly Biblical frame of reference. Although slavery had existed in Europe in Greco-Roman times (circa 4th c. BCE to 4th c. CE), its parameters and the identity of those enslaved shifted with the European conquest of the Americas and the expanding European presence there. Slavery in other parts of the New World, though undeniably brutal in many ways, was not truly comparable to the U.S. chattel slavery model—or its aftermath. U.S. slavery was a unique economic enterprise whereby the subjugation of black Africans for hundreds of years, ensured a work force with little concern for its future impact on society. In the U.S., slaves were an integral part of America’s agrarian economic system. Thomas (1997) notes that, contrary to the aforementioned image of African

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28 Source: <http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/Pages/chattelslavery.html>
slaves as lower beings, Africans were utilised as slaves because, in terms of production, they were better suited than other races that were also part of the New World slave/labour trade (e.g., the Irish and Indians): “…black African slavery appeared to be the best kind of labor…with their remarkable reserves of toughness” (pp. 136-137). Historian Leonard Liggio, quoting from a planter’s letter sent to traders, reveals an illuminating message: “Don’t send us any more Irish; send us some Africans, for the Africans are civilised and the Irish are not” (cited in Smedley, 2007, p. 5). Here we find a dichotomy. When necessary, descriptions of slovenliness suited for “the wretched of the earth”29 justified the use of black slaves, but when it suited the need for a continuous labour force, the “civilised nature” of blacks was emphasised.

Both viewpoints were, however, employed for the negative purpose of oppression. Cose (2002) acknowledges this dichotomy in more contemporary stereotypes of black Americans, whereby they are feared as potential criminals, yet glorified for their athleticism and as entertainers. He observes:

Movies, television and film bombard us with images of the black male, images reinforced with endless repetition—of the black man as a streetwise, trash-talking operator, as the polar opposite of the refined, cerebral white male, who coincidentally, may control the world but lacks our style and soul… (p. 42).

Wacquant offers two statements that illuminate the unique and severe impact of chattel slavery on black Africans and their descendants in the U.S.:

The highly particular conception of “race” as “national principle of social vision and division,” (Bourdieu, 1989) that America has invented, virtually matchless in the world for its rigidity and consequentiality, is a direct outcome of the momentous collision between slavery and democracy after bondage had been established as the major form of labor conscription and control in an underpopulated colony home to an agrarian system of commercialized production (Fields, 1982). No other society has combined those two contrary principles of social and political organization… (2005, p. 1).

29 cf. the title of Frantz Fanon’s (1963) seminal work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, detailing the colonisation of the Algerians by the French, their subsequent mistreatment, and its sociological impact.
Secondly, he makes a point that has underpinned the consciousness of black slaves and their descendants in America:

Blacks were not part of this “We the People” that formed a more “perfect Union” to secure the Blessings of Liberty to [them]selves and [their] posterity”, to quote the preamble of the U.S. Constitution. The African American slave, later the Negro sharecropper, and today the heinous member of the inner city “underclass” have been persistently pictured and processed in national discourse and public policy as enemies of the nation—as slaves have been throughout world history… (Ibid., p. 136).

Highlighting this last sentiment, on 5 July 1852, Frederick Douglass was invited to speak at a commemoration of the Declaration of Independence. In this pre-Civil War decade he gave an impassioned speech, the theme of which was one of dissatisfaction and frustration. It would be echoed more than a century later during the 1960s, when similar feelings of discrimination were articulated by the prominent black leader Martin Luther King, Jr. in his Letter from a Birmingham jail. King there framed his plea to end the humiliation and social exclusion of blacks in America through Biblical references and allusions to works of renowned philosophers and contemporary writers. Malcolm X voiced the same concerns regarding the stasis of African Americans’ bid for societal inclusion:

Sitting at the table doesn't make you a diner, unless you eat some of what's on that plate. Being here in America doesn't make you an American. Being born here in America doesn't make you an American (Haley, 1965, p. 26).

Long-lasting inequities derived not only from slavery itself, but from the aftermath of abolition, in terms of laws and social practices. These underscored the

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30 “…I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak today?”

Source: <http://dallaspeacecenter.org/node/4359>
differences between chattel slavery and post-abolition circumstances in the U.S. and those of other regions in the Americas. An examination of slavery in the New World attempts to illuminate the major participating countries and such differences (see Appendix A for a comparison of slavery conditions in New World environments). In contrast to the aftermath of the Atlantic slave trade, the many African slaves taken to the Arabic world seem to have been absorbed fairly seamlessly over time, although their descendants are often still visible through phenotypes.

Unlike legal codes that allowed Brazilian and Cuban slaves to retain cultural, religious, and kin affiliations, U.S. laws led to the systematic disintegration of families, lack of legal recourse regarding individual freedoms, a non-existence of inheritance rights, ethnic dislocations, state-sanctioned terrorism, and forced labour. The forced labour economy was maintained by local, state, and federal laws that sanctioned punishments without trial, such as lynchings (see Fig. 2) and castrations. So brutal was the system of chattel slavery in the U.S., that de Tocqueville declared it “the most formidable of all the ills that threatened America” (Adams and Sanders, 2003, p. 22).

That history of violent oppression solidified the unique status of being black in America. The U.S. policy regarding slavery, which lasted more than two hundred years, was singular in its aim to disrupt cultural continuity, impose segregation, ban interracial marriages, and limit access to education and employment. Chattel slavery was best understood as a system of slavery whereby forced labourers were treated like animals, an image made clear to contemporary Americans during the airing of the 1977 ABC television mini-series *Roots* (Chomsky, 1977), based on author Alex Haley’s

31 The U.S. Supreme Court, with its 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, ensured that Southern schools would become the first battlegrounds. The court ruled that segregated schools stamped black children with a “badge of inferiority,” and that Southern states must integrate their schools “with all deliberate speed.” Source: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-brown-html>
*Roots: The Saga of an American Family.* The made-for-television mini-series included graphic images of slaves being hunted and whipped, among other extreme representations of punishment, including the hobbling of offenders. These punishments were toned down for television, not exaggerated. Within the framework of America’s “democratic” society, slaves had been calculated as 3/5 of a person since 1787, for purposes of assigning Congressional seats and state tax contributions. Again, acknowledging the disparity in representation, de Tocqueville termed this dichotomy of democracy as a “tyranny of the majority.” The treatment of slaves created an identity that followed their descendants after the abolition of slavery. Castells (1996) argues that:

Their [African Americans’] identity was constituted as kidnapped, enslaved people under the freest society of the time. Thus, to conciliate the obvious contradiction between the ideals of freedom, and the highly productive, slavery based economy, America had to deny the humanity of blacks because only nonhumans could be denied freedom in a society constituted on the principle that “all men are born equal.” As Cornel West writes: “This unrelenting assault on black humanity produced the fundamental condition of black culture—that of black invisibility and namelessness…” (p. 59).

The history of slavery in America also reveals that the first Africans to arrive at the Jamestown colony in the 1600s were not uniformly perceived as slaves. Intermarriage existed, as did free black property owners and assimilation into the colony as non-slave labourers. The shift to racial slavery and its justification came as a result of uprisings and rebellions, such as the 1674 Bacon’s Rebellion that united poor whites and blacks, leaving fewer labourers to man the fields. Smedley argues:

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32 The foot of Kunta Kinte, the African slave and central character, based on author Alex Haley’s ancestor, was removed because of his escape attempts; numerous accounts of extreme punishment are documented in historical sources.

33 cf. Alex de Tocqueville (circa 1835-1840) *On Democracy in America.*

They [land owners] soon recognized the need for a stratagem to prevent such occurrences in the future and ensure that a sufficient number of controlled laborers were made available to plantation owners… (2007, p. 4).

Early laws in the U.S. (especially in Maryland and Virginia) were created to ensure the subjugation of slaves. In effect, the chattel slavery system required blacks to be viewed negatively by the dominant white culture in the U.S. in order to validate and perpetuate the system. Whites saw blacks as lazy, shiftless, prone to steal, and sexually promiscuous. These negative stereotypes did not speak to the reality of diversity that would have been found among African Americans as human beings, as it would be found within any group. The stereotypes did, however, propagate beliefs that African Americans were child-like or brutish, traits that dehumanised them and demanded “protection” and “civilisation”, so that enslavement was practically a “charitable” act. These mental gymnastics and justifications during the slavery period helped formulate race-based perceptions of blacks in America that survive to the present.

Reconstruction and its Aftermath

Once the U.S. Civil War ended and the institution of slavery was abolished in 1865, social change occurred—but it was neither lasting nor complete. The amalgamation of a forced labour economy, stereotypes aided by laws, and negative media presentations ensured the perpetuation of an underclass based on skin colour, the creation of a group unable to assimilate, and one that was worthy of imprisonment. Unlike immigrants, African Americans as a group were permanently identified (or assumed to be so), based on the unchangeable colour of their skin, the texture of their hair, and the legality of the “one drop rule”, which defined blacks as anyone who had

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35 cf. John Howard Griffin’s memoir (1960) *Black Like Me*, chronicles a white journalist’s travails after he used chemicals to colour his skin and treat his hair, then moved to the Deep South in 1950.
one black ancestor, no matter how many white ancestors he also might have. After slavery was abolished, the Black Codes\(^{36}\) (1800-1866) were replaced by “Jim Crow” laws, named after a popular stereotypical buffoon character from minstrel shows. These laws ensured even stricter measures to keep black Americans segregated and relegated to the lower rungs of the U.S. economic system (Adams and Sanders, 2003). Laws and social policies, as well as systematic efforts to restrict access to education, made clear the negatives associated with being black in America (Wacquant, 2002).

Wacquant suggests that blacks were seen as a rootless migratory race during the post-Abolition period. Subsequently, a poll tax\(^{37}\) and other requirements were introduced in the South to restrict blacks from voting:

Negroes were believed to be naturally shiftless and improvident; literacy requirements were well suited to select out members of a community denied access to education… (2005, p. 133).

The aforementioned laws and social policies ensured the disenfranchisement of blacks. From the post-Reconstruction period through World War II, the great migration of blacks from the South to the northern states changed the demography of both regions. Seeking a better life through employment, an upsurge of European emigration continued to “whiten” the U.S., and took job opportunities away from blacks who had been trained more for an agricultural than an industrial environment. Emigration to the North provided the possibility of freedom from the oppressive post-Civil War South.

Fearful of how demographic and legal changes might affect the white way of life, the

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\(^{36}\) cf. Theodore Brantner Wilson’s (2000), The Black Codes of the South.

\(^{37}\) “During and after Reconstruction, however, the poll tax constricted, rather than enlarged the ranks of voters. By 1904, all eleven southern states that had formed the Confederacy during the Civil War made payment of a poll tax a voting prerequisite… The poll tax was effective, too, because southerners, especially black southerners, not only had low incomes,…Contemporary southern experts on disfranchisement thought it the best device to keep people they called ‘the dispossessed’ from voting.” Source: <http://www.hss.caltech.edu/~kousser/dictionary%20entries/poll%20tax.pdf>
American South saw an increase in lynchings of African Americans. Garland, arguing against suggestions that lynchings were merely part of an American tradition of vigilantism devoid of racial overtones, states:

Whatever these lynchings were—aggressive displays of racial control, political theaters of white supremacy, communal rituals of sovereign power—they were not simple vigilantism… (2005, p. 352).

The negative stereotypes about African Americans were created for a purpose. They aided in relieving the cognitive dissonance of their white subjugators, helping them to justify the brutal treatment they subjected blacks to, both before the Civil War and afterwards. Furthermore, the consistent utilisation of language as a tool of oppression, describing these Africans in diaspora as less than human (e.g., “niggers” and “coons”) was reinforced with such vigour by each successive generation that the pejoratives metastasised. Stereotyping creates an obvious narrowing of one’s focus, limiting perspective in the face of facts to the contrary. The resultant dangers will be discussed later, specifically regarding FBI’s research of serial murderers. In tandem with the negative stereotypes about blacks born of slavery are today’s national statistics regarding black criminality and imprisonment. Carby (1998) argues that if the spectacle of lynched black bodies haunts the modern age, then so too does the slow disintegration of black bodies and souls in jail, urban ghettos, and beleaguered schools. It is by necessity then, that this next section examines the more contemporary reasons for the persistence and reinforcement of the historic negative stereotypes regarding criminality of black males in America.

38 After Reconstruction and during the first four decades of the twentieth century, many whites feared that the Negro was “getting out of his place”, threatening the white man’s social status, which thus needed protection. Lynching was seen as the method to defend white domination and keep the Negroes from becoming “uppity.” Therefore, lynching was more the expression of white Americans’ fear of black social and economic advancement than of actual Negro crime. Source: <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1979/2/79.02.04.x.html>

39 See “Media Images and Stereotypes” section of this chapter, referencing the tirade of Seinfeld actor Michael Richards.
In this section it will be shown that black criminality further exacerbates many African Americans’ inability to achieve a legitimate place in society and reinforces historical stereotypes that once were groundless—lies now made true. While not ruling out Beccaria’s Classical “free will” school of thought, this research suggests the history of African Americans and the dynamics of their existence in America require the consideration of additional factors when examining their criminality. Early positivist Enrico Ferri (1901), moving beyond Cesare Lombroso’s\textsuperscript{40} atavistic approach, suggested that man’s criminality was influenced by not only by his anthropological history, but also by his social and telluric environment. While that positivist view may be applicable in this debate, others suggest different reasons for African Americans’ overrepresentation within the U.S. criminal justice system (i.e., courts and prisons). Although there are numerous theories regarding the reasons for black criminality and prison overrepresentation, by necessity a limited number are examined here. They range from Herrnstein and Murray’s defined “underclass,” Walsh’s (2004) genetic theory, and Degruy-Leary’s (2005) more contemporary and much debated intergenerational trauma theory, to Garland (2005) and Wacquant’s (2001; 2002) explanations of ghetto crime and mass imprisonment. Some suggest (Anderson, 1999; McWhorter, 2005; Pettit and Western, 2004 et al) that continuum and widespread negative stereotypes, economic hardship, hundreds of years of subjugation, and laws designed to segregate and generate a separate and inferior group in America, created hopelessness and rage among poor urban blacks. Although more research in this area is required, these suppositions are explored here.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{L’Uomo Delinquente} (1876) suggests a relationship between phenotypes and criminal traits in man.
The central hypothesis of Herrnstein and Murray’s *The Bell Curve* (1994) is an argument that many of society’s most distressing problems are the result of low intelligence. The authors examine the complexities of social phenomena, the issues of race, class, mobility, and family structures, concluding that an individual’s status within society is psychologically determined, with the central variable being an individual’s intellectual capability. Furthermore, these authors argue that intellect may be biologically determined. Wacquant (2001) suggests that Herrnstein and Murray sought to imply that genetic traits were linked to black criminality, and points out that *The Bell Curve* (which he described as an “ultra right wing ideologue” treatise in scholarly racism) failed to view crimes within a historical or cultural context (Ibid., p. 114). This thesis, in agreement, suggests that to ignore these components as significant lenses through which black criminality is examined is a failure to understand the unique history of blacks in the U.S. Furthermore, Herrnstein and Murray’s (1994) work assumes, when comparisons are made to immigrant groups who arrived in the U.S., that blacks have a similar sociological *tabula rasa*-like status. Walsh’s (2004) treatise argues that a genetic link to black criminality exists, and features limited research with gaps in reasoning. While acknowledging the possibility of a direct correlation between the overrepresentation of crime among African Americans and their unique history in the U.S., as well as the traumatic impact of slavery, Walsh still opts to argue genetics as a significant factor for the skewed rate of blacks’ involvement in criminality. His genetic theory carries with it remnants of Benjamin Shockley, who similarly supports the argument of an intelligence deficit as a way of understanding the lower socio-economic status of blacks in the U.S. (Shockley, William, Pearson and Roger, 1992). It is worthy of note that this biologically deterministic view of intelligence, and its
historical association with African Americans, becomes a significant factor within the context of media portrayals of serial murder, and will be examined later in this work.

The arguments that Walsh makes regarding the disparity of African American criminality are based on what he proposes is a genetic predisposition. While acknowledging that there are no meaningless arguments, but rather weakly supported ones, his stalwart defence of the “bio-social analysis” of the criminality of African Americans lacks, as Herrnstein and Murray’s work does, an operationalisation of race and any longitudinal studies (e.g., Christiansen’s study of adopted twins) in an effort to provide evidence for this proposed genetic link to criminality. Further credence to his position might have been established if he had cited or conducted a comparative analysis involving interracial criminals with mixed white and black heritage. Furthermore, his work more appropriately should have included an analysis directed towards the history of a colonised people, specifically those who were removed from their homelands and subjected to a similar sociological paradigm as blacks in America. An examination of the trauma experienced by the displaced Native American population and their resultant criminality might have balanced his arguments.

Murray’s (1990) conceptualisation of the “underclass theory” includes a suggestion that the deterioration of a familial structure and, specifically, the lack of patriarchal bonding are key factors in creating a culture of poverty. Widely influential in the U.S. and U.K., Murray further suggests that a lack of discipline and positive

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41 “A review of studies of criminality among twins” (Christiansen, 1977a/1977b). This study was conducted in an effort to investigate the possibility of a genetic relationship to criminality.

42 cf. In the previously cited Wretched of the Earth and White Skin, Black Mask. Fanon (1967), who examined Algeria under the French rule, revealed how sociological dysfunctions experienced by both the coloniser and the colonised in turn impact interpersonal dynamics and social policies instituted by the dominant group.
patriarchal examples are born from illegitimacy, which, he argues “…is the most worrisome aspect of single parenthood.” He continues:

You can send in social workers and teachers and clergy to tell a young male that when he grows up he should be a good father to his children, but he does not know what that means unless he has seen it.43

Theories about of a lack of patriarchal bonding are, however, but one factor associated with criminality. While in agreement with the issue of responsible parenting this research suggests that black male criminality in America is more complex, requiring an understanding, as Ferri (1901) suggested, of African American’s social, physical environments, and anthropological history. The current overrepresentation of blacks within the U.S. carceral system, for example, was not always a “norm.”

Wacquant states:

Contrary to common perception, the predominance of blacks behind bars is not a long standing pattern but a novel and recent phenomenon, with 1988 as the turning point… (2002, p. 3).

This increase in black prisoner populations can be directly linked to the mandatory drug sentencing laws enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1986. Sentencing under these laws was based on the type of drugs sold, their weight and purity, and the offenders’ prior convictions. Many of these federal and state sentencing laws have been overturned due to criticisms that they were racially biased, targeting black inner city “crack” (cocaine) dealers, as opposed to white suburban (powder) cocaine dealers.

Perceptions of criminality are subject to varied distortions. Welch (2007) adds that, based on the U.S. Department of Justice 2003 and 2004 statistics, whites actually composed the greatest percentage of criminals and the greatest percentage of those incarcerated. McWhorter (2005) also suggests that there was a shift in the behaviours

43 Source: <http://justice4victims.org/Documents/the%20underclass.doc>
of blacks over time, ranging from those who migrated north seeking a better life, good
“God-fearing” people who faced down fire hoses, riot police, and their canines to
achieve equality, to as Anderson (1999) suggests are the “corner boys” who disdain an
honest day’s work and would rather “get paid”\textsuperscript{44} and face the high probability of
incarceration. These matters notwithstanding, the common American perception is that
the majority of crime is perpetrated by blacks. This image is so pervasive that Garland
(2001) notes:

\begin{quote}
For many young males, especially African Americans\textsuperscript{45} and Hispanics, the threat of going to prison or jail is no threat at all but rather an expected or accepted part of life… (p. 2)
\end{quote}

The National Urban League’s \textit{The State of Black America 2007} reports a consistent disparity in income, education, criminality, incarceration statistics, and mental health issues for African Americans that surpass those of other minorities in the U.S. When examining life in contemporary urban ghettos and prisons, Anderson (1999) and Wacquant (2001) describe behaviours that Cleckley (1941/1988) and Hare (1999) define as \textit{psychopathic}. Pettit and Western (2004) note that these same behaviours ensure that blacks become the focus of law enforcement, increasing the likelihood of their arrest. Brunson and Miller observe:

\begin{quote}
People of color living in disadvantaged urban communities have been shown to be disproportionate recipients of both proactive policing strategies and various forms of police misconduct… (2005, p. 1).
\end{quote}

Within the personality construct of psychopathy, both Hare and Cleckley acknowledge traits that are popularly associated with criminality, but are actually not restricted to individuals who engage in crime. The ability to compartmentalise,

\textsuperscript{44} A euphemistic term for engaging in criminal activity for monetary gain, usually robbery.

\textsuperscript{45} Considered by many to be the voice of his “hip-hop” generation, the late singer Tupac Shakur stated, “When I was young I couldn’t wait to go to jail, I thought that was being a man…” (\textit{Tupac: Resurrection} [Lazin, 2003]), also cf. \textit{Holler if You Hear Me, Searching for Tupac Shakur}, Dyson, 2002.
manipulate, and show a lack of remorse can be found among individuals engaged in more socially acceptable pursuits. Describing corporate culture (e.g., Enron executives), Babiak and Hare (2006) suggest that similar personality traits aid business magnates’ rise to success. One might also see how other professions would benefit from an ability to compartmentalise while avoiding cognitive dissonance in order to achieve their goals (e.g., military snipers or special ops soldiers). The utilisation of charm, charisma, lying, and deception could prove to be useful tools of the trade for Central Intelligence Agency or MI-5 field operatives, whose professions can require deception. In keeping with the theme of this work, it should suffice to say that, although serial murderers are readily defined as psychopathic, every psychopath is not a serial murderer. A further examination of these behaviours and their significance will be illuminated in Chapter Four, in the section titled “Psychological Overview: Behavioural Antecedents and Personality Constructs.”

In his article regarding the meshing of ghetto life and prison life, Wacquant (2001) suggests that these same behaviours are mirrored in U.S. penal complexes where African Americans comprise approximately 12-13% of the U.S. population, but account for over 40% of its overall prison population. Current data indicates that African American males continue to be overrepresented in U.S. prisons and in every aspect of personal violent crime (i.e., aggravated assaults and murder), based on their population. Pettit and Western (2004) argue there is evidence that imprisonment is disproportionately widespread among less educated black men, which only strengthens the idea that the penal system is an important new feature of American race and class inequality. They also note that “incarceration rates for blacks are about eight times higher than those for whites” (Ibid., p. 152), and observe a disproportionate involvement by blacks in crime—particularly serious offences such as homicides. A
review of FBI crime statistics compiled from 2005 through 2008 reflects a pattern whereby African Americans are incarcerated at a higher percentage than whites. Based on the size of their respective populations within the U.S., these statistics represent an overrepresentation of blacks within the penal system and are presented here to illustrate that fact. In 2005, FBI statistics titled “Crime in the United States” revealed that, of all persons arrested in the nation's cities during 2005, 67.3 percent were white. White persons made up 55.9 percent of all people arrested for violent crime and 67.4 percent of all people arrested for property crime. Black persons made up 53.9 percent of all people arrested for murder and non-negligent manslaughter, and 57.3 percent of all people arrested for robbery. There was also a significant disparity between black and white juveniles arrested that same year, with whites representing 66.3 percent of overall arrests while black juveniles comprised 57.9 percent of all juveniles arrested for murder and non-negligent manslaughter. Similarly, in 2006, whites represented 67.0 percent of all persons arrested, with 30.5 encompassing blacks and other races. In that year, blacks comprised 56.2 percent of all people arrested for murder and non-negligent manslaughter and 57.5 percent of all persons arrested for robbery. This disparity regarding arrests for murder and violent personal crime by black juveniles and adults continued through 2007, with only a slight statistical variance. In 2008, similar statistics indicated that 69.2 percent of all persons arrested nationwide were white, 28.3 percent were black. The number of adults arrested for murder and non-negligent manslaughter was almost equally divided between black (49.1 percent) and white arrestees (48.8 percent). Black juveniles arrested for violent crimes were at 51.6 percent, while juveniles represented 64.7 percent of the arrests for property crimes. This statistical disparity is worthy of note, as it represents a departure from previous

years regarding the arrests for murder among adult cohorts. Black arrests for the most extreme personal violent crime (murder and non-negligent manslaughter) in 2008 dropped from 56.0 percent to 49.1 percent from the previous year. The statistics for robbery, deemed a personal violent crime, were not available at the time of this writing, yet it can be said that consistently blacks represent the higher percentage of arrests nationwide for homicide and personal violent crimes based on their overall population in the U.S. Why then would they not engage in serial murders?

These crime statistics are buttressed by research associating violent crime in black neighbourhoods with joblessness, family disruption, and neighbourhood poverty (e.g., Crutchfield and Pitchford, 1997; Messner et al, 2001; LaFree and Drass, 1996; Morenoff et al, 2001). Dreier (2005) suggests that the media reinforces an overwhelmingly negative portrait of urban America:

…our perceptions of the magnitude of these [crime and drug] problems, their underlying causes, and most important, the capacity of society to find solutions to these problems is significantly shaped by how the major news media cover our cities… (p. 193).

Some researchers theorise a combination of historic poverty, segregation (see Fig. 3), disenfranchisement, and alienation is expressed by blacks through criminality and, in some instances, is even celebrated. In addition, living within a socio-political system that has historically reinforced negative images of blacks via the media has created a self-defeating ethos that fuels the continuum of negative behaviours and African American social exclusion. Anderson’s (1999) work focuses on Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as a microcosm of urban ghettos, and provides insight into the day-to-day behaviours of the violent life for African Americans there that appears to foster a remorseless criminality. He observed that these same behaviours are often encouraged
and celebrated\textsuperscript{47} as survival strategies in urban environments.

Wacquant (2001) states that fashions, along with behaviour, further heighten the social exclusion of blacks:

Witness the widespread adolescent fashions of baggy pants worn with the crotch down to mid thigh and the resurgent popularity of body art featuring prison themes and icons—more often than not unbeknownst to those who wear them… (p. 116).

Wacquant (Ibid.) further suggests that a violent oppositional stance is once again key to survival in both prison and black urban life. If his thesis is correct, this also represents a reinforcement of psychopathic behaviour. McWhorter (2005) explains this oppositional lifestyle of posturing and violent demeanour as “therapeutic alienation” (pp. 6-9).

Support for this concept can be found in the earlier works of Fanon (1963/1967), who similarly suggested that colonised people (i.e., Algerians) tended to create a “separate reality” in an attempt to shield themselves from the realities of their oppression.

McWhorter’s (2005) focus on black Americans experiencing “therapeutic alienation” (pp. 6-9) argues that there is a need for these young men to be on the outside of society, and they construct this self-imposed separate reality and justify anti-social behaviours in order to express an unacknowledged yet often realised pain. He further suggests that blacks, conditioned by years of social exclusion, engage in self-sabotage by intentionally placing themselves on the periphery of society, their antisocial acts reflecting anger, frustration, and despair.

It is a simplification to suggest that anger alone is responsible for black criminality; however, viewed within the context of a negative history, traumatic events and social exclusion, the idea becomes more cogent. Apropos to McWhorter’s (Ibid.)

\textsuperscript{47} The embracing of anti-social behaviours can be found in numerous current music videos featuring “gangsta rap” songs that promote a decisively violent and misogynistic view (e.g., “Cuz if you lookin’ for me you can find me, On the block disobeyin’ the law, Real G—thoroughbred from the streets, Pants saggin’ with my gun in my draws…” Young Jeezy (2007). \textit{Soul Survivor}, Byefall Productions Inc.
analysis, Young (2001) suggests that social exclusion can be socially imposed or self-imposed, a concept that lends itself to a hypothesis that black criminality may in part be a result of historic social alienation. Anderson’s (1999), McWhorter’s (2000; 2005), and Wacquant’s (2001; 2005) works suggest that a history of economic deprivation, supported by a continuum of racially discriminatory laws and social policies since the abolition of slavery, must be considered when examining black criminality. Others point to a carceral system designed to utilise a predominantly black cheap labour force (Davis, 1998), or used as a “substitutive apparatus for keeping (unskilled) African Americans in their place” (Wacquant, 2001, p. 97). Whatever the causation of black criminality, the result has been the perpetuation of a carceral system that is associated with and negatively impacts those males, promoting and exacerbating their criminal activities. Similarly, Foucault noted that “the great carceral continuum,” beyond its panoptic function of observation and discipline, is a mesh of laws that perpetuate its existence:

Although it is true that prison punishes delinquency, delinquency is for the most part produced in and by an incarceration which, ultimately, prison perpetuates in its turn…the prisoner condemned to hard labour was meticulously produced by a childhood spent in a reformatory, according to the lines of force of the generalized carceral system…But it is not on the fringes of society and through successive exiles that criminality is born, but by means of ever more closed placed insertions, under ever more insistent surveillance by an accumulation of disciplinary coercion… (cited in McLaughlin et al, 2005, p. 419).

Further advancing this point, Wacquant (2001) argues that the overrepresentation of blacks within the U.S. carceral system exists as a result of laws and social policies that effectively control black exclusion from mainstream society, rendering that segment of society dispossessed. He also suggests that the code of

48 “According to the Sentencing Project, even before the passage of the crime bill, black people were 7.8 times more likely to be imprisoned than whites…” (Davis, 1998, p. 265).
behaviours among black urban ghetto residents and those in prison are meshed environments, scrutinised by a justice system designed to ensure their mass imprisonment. Historically, the use of discriminatory laws has had a substantial impact upon blacks and reinforced negative perceptions to such an extent that blacks could not cast off these stereotypes. That laws and social policies in the U.S. were created specifically to deny blacks an equal place in American society is undeniable. Some laws previously mentioned specifically impacted only former slaves and their descendants (i.e., “Black Codes”, “Jim Crow”, “poll tax”); some more contemporary rulings are less overt, but have helped to ensure a separate and unequal group in the U.S. One variety of such laws, previously addressed and since repealed, required longer sentences for dealers of “crack” cocaine than it did for the predominantly white suburban “country club” dealers who sold the powdered version of the same drug.49 Though laws in the U.S. have morphed from the racially explicit anti-voter rights legislation of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century to these more implicit, recently repealed mandatory drug sentencing laws,50 they similarly excluded blacks from the social process. Currently the “criminal disenfranchisement” laws serve that same purpose. Wacquant (2005) notes that, in the U.S.:

49 Maguire and Pastore (2001) noted that, in 1997, 60 % of federal prisoners were serving time for drug crimes.

50 In 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted mandatory minimum sentencing laws that forced judges to deliver fixed sentences to individuals convicted of a crime, regardless of culpability or other mitigating factors. Federal mandatory drug sentences were determined based on three factors: the type of drug, weight of the drug mixture (or alleged weight in conspiracy cases), and the number of prior convictions. Judges were unable to consider other important factors such as the offender's role, motivation, and the likelihood of recidivism. The U.S. Sentencing Commission and the Department of Justice have both concluded that mandatory sentencing fails to deter crime. Furthermore, mandatory minimums have worsened racial and gender disparities, and have contributed greatly toward prison overcrowding. Mandatory minimum sentencing is costly and unjust. It does not eliminate sentencing disparities; instead it shifts decision-making authority from judges to prosecutors, who operate without accountability. Mandatory minimums failed to punish high-level dealers. Finally, these sentences were responsible for sending record numbers of women and people of colour to prison. Source: <http://www.drugpolicy.org/drugwar/mandatorymin/>
Convicts are banned from political participation via “criminal disenfranchisement” practiced on a scale and with a vigor unimagined in any other country… (p. 132).

He further notes that 44 of the 50 states deny prisoners the right to vote, 34 deny this same right to those on probation, while 29 are interdicted from voting booths. Some 14 states deny ex-convicts the right to vote even when they are no longer under criminal justice supervision, and eight states bar them from voting for life. Wacquant states that, at the end of 2000, an estimated 4.7 million individuals were barred from voting. Based on the rate of incarceration and prison population of blacks in the U.S., “…these statutes strike a particularly severe blow at the electoral capacity of blacks…” (Ibid.).

The result of felon disenfranchisement laws is that African Americans comprise 40% of all persons barred from the polls. These laws, he suggests, are intimately tied to the “long pedigree” of racial discrimination in the U.S. Donziger (1996) reports that more than a third of African American males in their twenties are incarcerated, on probation, or in parole status.

Garland (2001) suggests that black mass imprisonment is in part due to politicised policies that utilise images and archetypes, playing on the public’s anxieties by employing inflammatory language (e.g., “superpredators”). He further examines the shaping effect of media biases and the contribution of crime control policies touted by reductionist theorists (i.e., Wilson and Herrnstein’s *Crime and Human Nature*), who suggest offenders are born into a dependency culture, lacking work skills and moral values. Garland (2001) argues that whole communities whose mode of life is alien and threatening are anathematised:

Sometimes explicitly, more often in coded references, the problem is traced to the wanton, amoral behavior of dangerous offenders, who typically belong to racial and cultural groups bearing little resemblance to us… The only practical and rational response to such types, as soon as they offend if not before, is to have them taken out of circulation for the protection of the public... Many of the most politicized policies of
recent years—mandatory sentences, incapacitation, the revived death penalty—are designed to do precisely this and little else… (pp. 135-136).

The issue of causation as it relates to the high rate of incarceration of African American males is too broad in scope to determine in this work and requires further research, but it is important to recognise how historical factors may have contributed to a culture of black criminality, and how these are then reinforced by the dominant culture via law enforcement and media presentations. Pettit and Western (2004) suggest that:

The slim economic opportunities and turbulent living conditions of young disadvantaged and black men may lead them to crime. In addition, elevated rates of offending in poor and minority neighborhoods compound the stigma of social marginality and provoke the scrutiny of criminal justice authorities… (p. 152).

They further note that some researchers (e.g., Western et al, 2000; Hagan and Dinovitzer, 1999; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Uggen et al, 2002) argue that incarceration rates are closely associated with low wages, unemployment, family instability, recidivism, and restrictions on political and social rights (Pettit and Western, 2004).

It is critical to note that these same factors and subsequent behaviours of populations found in prison and urban environments resemble those situations and personality types identified by social researchers and the FBI in their serial murder research. Cleckley (1941/1988) and Hare’s (1999) descriptions of psychopaths, a personality construct of individuals willing to engage in antisocial behaviours, coincides with Anderson’s (1999) description of inner city behaviours. These are the very personality constructs and psychopathic behaviours that FBI profilers and other social researchers attribute to individuals capable of serial murder (Ressler et al, 1992; Hickey, 2002; Holmes and Holmes, 1996/2002; Peterson, 2006). FBI determination of behavioural antecedents that contribute to the development of serial murderers highlight early childhood trauma as a significant factor in their formation. How trauma
creates personality types that might engage in serial murder, and how the trauma of African Americans might represent a high probability portrait of their involvement in serial murder, will be explored in the next section and discussed in-depth later in this work. This matter highlights the curious disinclination of the FBI to alter an apparent exclusion of blacks in their static profile of serial murderers, despite both U.S. Justice Department statistics regarding their involvement in homicides and the FBI’s own research regarding the behavioural antecedents of individuals who engage in serial killing.

**Trauma**

This section further examines what appears to be an inability or unwillingness of social scientists and the FBI to link their own serial killer research regarding early childhood trauma, violence, lack of patriarchal bonding, sexual abuse, and geographical displacement (i.e., “homeless persons”) to similar U.S. mental health statistics regarding urban African Americans. In addition, no consideration has been given by researchers to the unique historical trauma of African Americans as it may relate to serial murder as similar studies have occurred regarding Native Americans’ alcoholism and suicide rates. In neglecting to make these links, researchers and the FBI have also ignored possible “triggers” for anti-social behaviours (esp. serial murders).

While this research does not suggest that intergenerational trauma is the solitary reason for black criminality, it recognises its uniqueness as a relatively new concept

51 Murray (1990) strongly suggests fatherless homes are the key to “The Underclass.”

52 The Surgeon General by the National Institute on Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity Source: <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cre/fact1.asp>

53 The journal Race and Society released a study titled “Being black and feeling blue: The mental health consequences of racial discrimination.” It asserts that “Discriminatory experiences that occur because of race are demeaning, degrading and highly personal,” adding that “There are a growing number of studies linking actual and perceived experiences of racial discrimination to poor mental health among racial and ethnic minority groups” (Brown et al, 2002).
suggested by Degruy-Leary (2005). In a recent study, Degruy-Leary suggests it is a possible factor in black criminality and anti-social behaviours. Early childhood trauma in general has been linked to anti-social behaviours by other researchers (e.g., Krafft-Ebing, 1965; Ressler, 1992; Black, 1999; Hickey, 2002; van der Kolk 2005 et al).

Black (1999) states that:

Though child abuse has been implicated in everything from relationship problems to serial murder, its link to ASP (antisocial personality disorder) makes it one of the more plausible environmental contributors to antisocial behavior…not surprising, since many of them grew up with neglectful and sometimes violent antisocial parents… (p. 21).

Van der Kolk (2005) notes that such individuals often exhibit an “oppositional defiance and distrustful behaviour, and they may be preoccupied with retribution and violence” (p. 11). Previous research regarding trauma might more accurately have been called intergenerational trauma, considering the broad effects of such events within families and communities. Much intergenerational trauma research has focused on Holocaust victims, Native Americans and their descendants, as well as combat veterans and their children. It is trauma’s associations with the descendants of slaves, unaddressed within the context of the urban African American experience, or by the FBI in their serial killer research, that is examined here. There is a dearth of literature regarding the traumatic impact of slavery, lynchings, historical violence, and the continuum of social exclusion for African Americans. Revisiting the issue of slavery in the U.S., Curnow (personal communication, 2009), a Professor of African and African American studies, points out that:

…in terms of trauma, it seems English colonies were usually more likely to create it, whether by design or accident. Tearing individuals from their families was continuous, there were no legal rights to buy one’s freedom or that of others, or to inherit. There was a conscious policy to disrupt any cultural continuity. Initially there was even a blockage from the religious practice of Christianity. A conscious effort to ship out free blacks in the pre-Civil War era and afterwards to Liberia took place…Jim Crow laws, laws against intermarriage, school and
residential segregation that often weren’t related to economics, all these were unique to the United States as a post-slavery American environment. If any place is at all comparable, it does not seem to be any place in the New World—rather the trauma caused by slavery in the U.S. is most comparable to the situation in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, in terms of the nature and severity of abuse, forced movement, splitting of families due to mining and domestic service, legal restrictions, social status, etc.—and there you find comparable crime rates and family problems. But of course the demographics are different—majority finally rules…

While it is true that periodic Jewish persecution began long before the Holocaust, and Native Americans were victimised by white settlers, neither situation was as sustained in one country, nor were the laws against either group comparable with chattel slavery in America for a similar time period. Grand (2000) however, argues that:

Most trauma survivors do not become perpetrators. But most perpetrators have a history of malignant trauma, that is, an experience of psychic or physical torture or both inflicted by another… (p. 3).

Despite the fact that the enslavement of African Americans lasted hundreds of years, and the subsequent oppressive laws of Jim Crow and the Black Codes were enacted, little research has been done that considers how these events may have traumatised later generations of African Americans. To be indifferent to this history of inhumane experience is to deny its sociological impact regarding how blacks have fared in the U.S. Sorscher’s (1994) research indicates generalised worry, concerns regarding abandonment, loss, personal injury, harm to loved ones, paranoia, failure, and rejection as some of the concerns of the children of Holocaust survivors. She concludes that her study has implications for all victims of trauma, indicating that the feelings of trauma must be communicated for healing to take place, and that well-meaning people who suggest one should “put it behind you” only exacerbate the situation, for “when you put it behind you, it comes back to haunt you in your dreams, in your ability to explain events” (Ibid., p. 1).
It is worth noting how trauma might be transmitted from one generation, who experienced it first-hand, to the subsequent ones that lacked the actual experience. Kellerman (2001), the Executive Director of the National Israeli Center for Psychosocial Support of the Holocaust and the Second Generation, suggests in his article “Transmission of Holocaust trauma—An integrative view” that the transmission of trauma can occur in several ways: direct and specific or indirect and general. In this article, he discusses the work of R. M. Prince (1985), who stated:

The mechanism of second generation effects is seen as an extremely complex one in which cumulative trauma of parental communication, the aspect of parental-child relationship determined by the Holocaust context, and the historical imagery provided by the parent and by other cultural processes are mediated by interaction with normative developmental conflicts, family dynamics independent of the Holocaust, variables of social class, culture, Jewish heritage and immigrant status… (cited in Kellerman, 2001, p. 27).

By way of further explanation, Grand (2000) recounts the story of a Holocaust survivor who took his granddaughter shopping. When the child emerged from the dressing room wearing a striped blouse, the man was reduced to tears, struck by its resemblance to a concentration camp garment. Grand (Ibid.) suggests that personal stories, news accounts, and narratives all aid in the transmission of trauma. Analogously, the “oral tradition” of African Americans theoretically could lend itself to the transmission of the trauma endured by their ancestors for centuries by voicing a common experience. Within this section, the continuum of traumatic events affecting blacks in the U.S. suggests the possibility of intergenerational trauma among African Americans as proposed by DeGruy-Leary (2005). Whether first-hand or intergenerational, trauma can be triggered by people, noises, images, smells, tastes, feelings, animals, films, scenes within films, tones of voice, body positions, bodily sensations, weather conditions, time factors, or combinations thereof. Media
presentations offer a unique form of trigger, in part because they are not always anticipated, leaving the individual unable to avoid them.

This media impact was acknowledged by American Broadcasting Company executives in 1977. ABC television network executives feared that the airing of the aforementioned mini-series *Roots* would incite blacks across the U.S. to riot.\(^{54}\) Essentially, they worried that the airing of a “real-life” portrayal of the treatment of African slaves might “trigger” violence from their descendants. Despite its commercial success, which led to *Roots (II): The Second Generation* (1979), and, despite anything more than anecdotal evidence regarding related violence across the U.S.,\(^{55}\) there is no verification that the programme affected the egalitarianism of its viewers (Ball-Rokeach et al, 1981). The ability of media to transmit trauma and impact social change positively or negatively is, in itself, a field of study. The victimisation of blacks on television was atypical; a more common sight consisted of predatory individuals captured during news reporting. As Stabile suggests, “…white supremacy had been built into the very bricks of the institutions of commercial news…” (2006, p. 4).

Media have played a significant role in the negative discourse and reinforcement of stereotypes of black Americans. They have also formulated unique trauma triggers that are intrusive and often unavoidable. Through increasingly realistic portrayals of graphic violence in visual media, trauma survivors encounter trauma triggers while watching movies or television for entertainment or information.

\(^{54}\) “‘We were terrified when we put it on the air,’ says Brandon Stoddard, then the ABC executive most directly involved in the miniseries. Stoddard says some Southern states would not even show the program for fear of inciting riots. ‘Silverman just wanted to get rid of it,’ adds producer David Wolper.” Source: <http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=awardcentral&jump=features&id=emadefor07&articleid=VR1117966618>

\(^{55}\) With no empirical data available as of this writing, the numerous reports of fights between white and black students in U.S. high schools after and during the airing of the television series *Roots* are anecdotal.
Moreover, these trigger scenes can be difficult to anticipate during the course of a film or programme, and therefore are difficult for a trauma survivor to avoid. By the time the viewer is aware of a scene’s content, a traumatic memory may already have been activated. Even if a survivor can anticipate a trigger, having the presence of mind to leave during a film can be difficult, and leaving may cause embarrassment or even stigma. Trauma in film and other visual media represent areas in which cultural sensitisation and support may reduce stigma for trauma survivors and help in the healing process. While more research is required before the intergenerational trauma theory is accepted, the issue of traumatic triggers, as Degruy-Leary suggests, should be explored (see Table 3.1). In Chapter Four trauma will be revisited, as it relates to the behavioural antecedents identified by the FBI and linked to serial murder.

Table 3.1 Events and potential triggers for African American trauma

It is not possible to list every act of violence perpetrated against African Americans that might be deemed traumatic. This table, however, lists likely events based on their newsworthiness and widespread media coverage. Viewed by African Americans within their historic and socio-political context, media presentations of these events can trigger feelings associated with the original trauma. Some of the events are categorised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slavery</th>
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<td>Slavery is the single most critical event known to African Americans as their common history in the U.S. from the Maafa to the auction block, when they were treated as chattel, to subsequent forms of subhuman treatment and actions, especially beatings and murder by lynching. Many well-known movies, television programmes, and books have focused on it or included it. The following consist of just a few examples: Victor Fleming’s (1939) film <em>Gone with the Wind</em>, Richard Fleischer’s (1975) <em>Mandingo</em>, and Steven Spielberg’s (1997) <em>Amistad</em>.</td>
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<th>Riots</th>
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<td><em>New York Draft Riots 1863</em>—An unaccounted for number of African Americans were killed in the streets by blue collar workers. Initially resentful of the military draft, they later directed their anger</td>
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East St. Louis Riots 1917—Based on heightening tensions regarding job security, and taking place after black men and white women were seen fraternising at a labour meeting, as many as 3000 whites rushed through the city attacking blacks. Numerous deaths, extensive injuries and property damage occurred. Artist Jacob Lawrence’s rendering of one of the largest race riots in American history is a well-known image featured at The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City. 56


Rosewood Massacre 1923—A self-sufficient black community in Levy County, Florida was destroyed by whites. Sixty years later, after much national recognition via John Singleton’s (1997) movie Rosewood, descendants successfully sued the state for not protecting their ancestors.

Murder of Emmett Till 1955—A 14-year-old black male was beaten, shot in the head, one eye was gouged out, and he was flung into the river with a 70-pound engine attached to his neck with barbed wire for the crime of “reckless eyeballing” (staring at a white woman). Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison’s play Dreaming Emmett (1986) featured the case, but revised history. Novels, ballads, and poems about Till have also been created.

Medical Experiments 57 In the Tuskegee Experiments, also known as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, the prominent university conducted a 40-year study of syphilis (1932-1972) with poor illiterate black sharecropper subjects, whose treatment was intentionally withheld even after a cure was established. Dr. David Feldshuh wrote the Pulitzer-nominated play Miss Evers’ Boys about the incidents. It was later adapted by HBO for television and won four Emmy Awards.

16th Street Baptist Church Bombing (1963)

Four young black girls attending Sunday school were killed by a bomb blast in Birmingham, Alabama. Members of the Ku Klux Klan committed the act as retribution for Civil Rights demands. The


57 For a compendium of medical experiments involving African Americans in the U.S., cf. Source: <http://www.s193082824.onlinehome.us/>
victims were, Addie Mae Collins (aged 14), Denise McNair (aged 11), Carole Robertson (aged 14), and Cynthia Wesley (aged 14). Spike Lee’s film 4 Little Girls, based on the murders, was nominated as “Best Documentary” during the 1997 Academy Awards.

**Assassinations**

The individuals listed below shared a common goal of socially including African Americans within mainstream society. They were well-known, high-profile leaders and iconic symbols.

- Medgar Evers - 1963
- John F. Kennedy - 1963
- Malcolm X - 1965
- Martin Luther King, Jr. - 1968
- Robert F. Kennedy - 1968

The novels, books, documentaries, films, and songs that commemorate these incidents and may act as triggers are too numerous to list.

It is reasonable to suggest that the continuum of traumatic events experienced by African Americans as a group, cemented by their historical social exclusion and despised “other” status, might trigger frustration, anger, and feelings leading to antisocial behaviours. Additionally, these triggers could result from varied personal incidents, such as being closely watched and followed in a store by security personnel, trailed by a police car, or having a loan application rejected. Rodney King’s 1991 beating in Los Angeles County by police, the sight of black citizens awaiting delayed government assistance after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, or reports of incidents such as James Byrd’s 1998 dragging death are all reminders of historic exclusion. These events constitute stressors that, within the trauma model, are capable of triggering a reaction. Such events have an immeasurable impact on the mental health of African Americans.

In conjunction with U.S. mental health statistics, the violence affecting poor urban black communities, that group’s overrepresentation in personal violent crimes,
and incarceration also reflect a crisis in judgement, decision-making skills, and emotionality alluded to by Sorscher (1994).

The research and debate regarding the causation of black criminality and African American overrepresentation within the U.S. criminal justice system will persist. While this debate continues, the incarceration rates and frequency of death penalty rulings against black males also represent a disproportionate number compared to whites, based on their total population in the U.S. In March 2000, former assistant U.S. Attorney for Chicago and novelist Scott Turow, along with a bi-partisan commission on capital punishment, found that the state of Illinois’ legal system was fraught with errors regarding the death penalty and its uneven application.58

**Media images and stereotypes**

Welch (2007) states that:

The stereotyping of Blacks as criminals is so pervasive throughout [American] society that “criminal predator” is used as a euphemism for young Black males…Subsequently, the familiarity many Americans have with the image of a young Black male as a violent and menacing street thug is fueled and perpetuated by typifications everywhere… (p. 276).

This image exists and persists, despite the fact that there is ample evidence to suggest that the involvement by blacks in criminality is not restricted to low level street crime, but also extends to organised criminal enterprises.59 Furthermore, despite their overrepresentation within the criminal justice system, the majority of black citizens are not engaged in criminal activity. Mining this negative image has revealed false reports

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58 “Killing a white person made a murderer three and a half times more likely to be punished with a death sentence than if he’d killed someone black…. “ Turow further illuminates, “On the face of it, race plays no part in these judgments, but because wealth, power, and status in the United States are still unevenly distributed along racial lines, there would inevitably be a race effect even if we were all color blind…” (Turow, 2003, pp. 72-73).

by white perpetrators who have exploited the black male criminal stereotype. Welch (2007) suggests that these negative stereotypes were so widely accepted that, between 1987 and 1996 in the U.S., 67 racial hoaxes involving alleged black criminal involvement were identified. In these cases, blacks were falsely reported to be the perpetrators of crimes in order to mislead criminal investigations away from their mostly white accusers, who were later arrested as the actual offenders. In July of 1995, for example, Susan Smith of South Carolina received a life sentence for murdering her two toddlers by drowning them in her car in October, 1994. She reported that she had been carjacked by a black male, who drove away with her children. This type of false reporting has not been constrained to the previous decade. In Philadelphia in May 2009, Bonnie Sweeten reported that she and her nine-year-old daughter had been kidnapped by two black males. She was quickly apprehended at Disneyland, with money she had embezzled from a retiree’s money market account.60

It would appear that, aside from serial murder, the American public is poised to believe any other horrid crime is liable to have been committed by black males. Dependence upon the black criminal stereotype is so pervasive it was even injected into a presidential campaign. Vice President George Bush successfully targeted Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis with a campaign advertisement suggesting that Dukakis was soft on crime, based on his gubernatorial decision that allowed early release of a black inmate.61 Surette (1998) suggests that public opinions regarding crime are derived from the media, and concedes the media exercise considerable influence on popular culture and vice versa—including law enforcement. Researchers


61 “Vice President George Bush ran his infamous ‘Willie Horton’ advertisement during the presidential campaign featuring sinister images of the black rapist of a white woman as emblematic of the contemporary ‘crime problem’…” Wacquant (2002, p. 3).
have noted the crucial role that media discourse plays in the social construction of crime, for they are the major sources of public information and perceptions about crime and criminality (Jerin and Fields, 2005). Our biased perceptions of reality, as Baudrillard (1981) suggests, become a false picture, a hyper-reality devoid of any semblance of the original, a \textit{simulacrum}.

Within the context of this thesis, the issue of race-based perceptions is the linchpin that connects all other chapters. The negative stereotypes fostered and foisted upon blacks, during and after slavery (post-Abolition period), aided in the continuing psychological oppression of former slaves and still affects their descendants. The control of a growing media by whites as the dominant group aided in reinforcing negative imagery, and furthered the stigmatisation and social exclusion of blacks. This is not to suggest that this control was exercised in a conspiratorial manner, but rather as a by-product of indifference and entitlement that historically blacks have associated with being white in America. In the post-slavery period, whites, as the dominant race in America, continued to promote negative stereotypes of blacks through the media. Some specific works will be examined, as well as popular trends—especially minstrel shows—and products. A continuum of early negative images would not be possible without prints, photos, and the newest medium of the time, silent film. Prior to \textit{Gone with the Wind} and its influential view of the Civil War South, D.W. Griffiths’ (1915) \textit{Birth of a Nation}, aka \textit{The Clansmen},\footnote{The Ku Klux Klan was conceived of as a fraternal organization, but it quickly became a terrorist group that engaged in intimidation and murder, specifically against blacks. The group’s membership included legislators and law enforcement agents, which, in many instances, made members immune to prosecution. By 1921, the KKK had three million members, including 16 U.S. senators (cf. The History Channel [2005] \textit{Ku Klux Klan: A Secret History} [A & E Home Video]).} was a wildly popular silent film. Blacks were portrayed as sexual beasts preying upon white women, as well as thieves and toe-picking, chicken-eating members of the U.S. Senate. These portrayals were meant to be
public warnings of potential dangers should African Americans gain equal rights. The filmmaker was quoted as saying:

If it is right for historians to write history, then by similar and unanswerable reasons it is right for us to tell the truth of the historic past in motion pictures… (D.W. Griffith cited in Lennig, 2004, p. 1).

President Woodrow Wilson, a history scholar who had also served as president of Princeton University, endorsed D.W. Griffith’s degrading film, further justifying the social exclusion of blacks from the highest elected office in America. He wrote for the silent film:

…the white men were aroused by a mere instinct for self-preservation…at last there had sprung into existence a great Ku Klux Klan, a veritable empire of the South, to protect the Southern country...(Ibid., p. 139).

The U.S. President’s endorsement of the film came in the form of a statement he allegedly made after watching a screening. He also proclaimed, “It is like writing history with lightening, and my only regret is that it is all so terribly true”(Ibid., pg. 122). Despite calls to ban the picture by the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), indicative of the members’ fear of its potential negative impact, the movie premiered in New York on 3 March 1915. The following day, the editor of The New York Age telegraphed the city’s mayor, stating:

…the film appealed to baser passions and seeks to disrupt friendly relations existing between white and colored citizens of New York City (Ibid., p. 124).

Birth of a Nation promoted a racist philosophy towards African Americans based on its content and the assumption that, as a popular art form, it had a mass audience (Gallagher, 1982). Gallagher states:

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63 Calvin Coolidge, Warren Harding, and Harry Truman were alleged to be former members of the Klan before their ascent to the White House. Hugo Black, previously a U.S. senator, denounced his membership when he was appointed a U.S. Supreme Court Justice (cf. The Ku Klux Klan in America, The Fiery Cross [Wade, 1987]).
While the physical motion of whites in the film is characterized by its general purposefulness and economy... the motion of blacks is characterized by general frivolity and wastefulness... [there are] many shots of blacks dancing in place or casting their arms into the air... (Ibid., p. 70).

Images of child-like irresponsibility and dangerous razor-wielding predators were thematic in the post-slavery period. *Harpers Weekly*, a U.S. magazine with worldwide distribution from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, published consistently negative portrayals of blacks through weekly cartoons, as did the American humour journal *Puck*, which published from 1877-1918. These, as well as sheet music covers from the late nineteenth/early twentieth century period, utilised stereotypes that suggested African Americans were a child-like, low-class criminal people64 (see Fig. 4). Many of these print images derived from stage theater stereotypes of the minstrel show, an American mix of music and comedy that began in the 1830s and initially involved white players applying black makeup and using red or white to produce exaggerated lips. These shows emphasised buffoonery, stupidity, and criminal tendencies of a ludicrous sort, such as the theft of watermelons and chickens; their tremendous popularity led blacks to “black up” later in the nineteenth century and create troupes with an identical agenda. Although minstrelsy faded at the turn of the century, vaudeville, movies, and even filmed cartoons perpetuated these stereotypes of lazy, stupid, laughable people with comic habits and illicit impulses.65 Even after minstrel shows ended, images derived from them persisted, and new expansions occurred. Iconographers have documented the historical use of calendars, cookie jars,

64 *Harper's Weekly* was an American magazine based in New York that combined essays, fiction, and a political bent. It had a weekly circulation of 200,000 subscribers. *Puck* was also New York-based, its weekly circulation about 100,000 in 1885.

65 Many academic accounts of minstrelsy are available, as are numerous websites that provide examples of posters and dialogue (e.g., Source: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/minstrl.html> and <http://black-face.com/minstrel-shows.htm>)
children’s toys, postcards, posters, and lunchboxes to negatively depict African Americans in the U.S. into the second half of the twentieth century. Turner (1994) reveals that:

The patterns of stereotyping identified in contemptible collectibles are not limited to material cultures. The ill-kept tattered-clothed children featured on postcards are related to the celluloid “pickaninnies” of “Our Gang” shorts known as The Little Rascals\textsuperscript{66} on TV… (p. 65).

From the popular black jockeys displayed on white suburban lawns to pictures of “Uncle Ben” and “Aunt Jemima”, extolling rice and pancake mix respectively, these images collectively reinforced the notion of blacks as servants. Goings (1994) observed that tens of thousands of such items were produced in the United States, Europe, and Asia from the 1880s to the late 1950s. The production of “black collectables” was a worldwide measurement of what W.E.B. Dubois (1903) coined as “amused contempt and pity” for African Americans. With little or no contact with African Americans in a segregated society, stereotypes tended to go unchallenged. Goings (1994) further suggests that these black collectibles:

…were almost universally derogatory, with exaggerated racial features that helped to prove that, indeed African Americans were not only different but inferior as well…such objects of material culture gave a physical, tangible reality to the idea of racial inferiority…(Ibid., p. xiii).

The promotion of these images (e.g., the black slave, field hand, butler, mammy, and caretakers) were consistent images in Hollywood for decades, far more so than images that promoted the innovations of black Americans during the same time period.\textsuperscript{67} From Birth of a Nation to the subtler racism of the contemporary

\textsuperscript{66} The Little Rascals aka Our Gang was a popular U.S. children’s television comedy. The series was found to be negative and offensive in its stereotypical portrayal of blacks and removed from American airwaves, though edited versions have played on cable television within the last decade.

\textsuperscript{67} e.g., Dr. Charles Drew’s innovations with blood plasma storage techniques and Benjamin Banneker’s, the self-taught mathematician, contributions to designing the U.S. capitol city of Washington D.C. occurred within the aforementioned time period, yet remain relatively unknown.
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (2009), the film industry has contributed to and reinforced the negative images and subsequent public perceptions of black people. Even when historic African individuals whose accomplishments were world-renowned became the subjects of films, early Hollywood directors had white actors portray these individuals. Hollywood’s historic disparaging portrayals and negative depictions of African Americans have been researched more than it is necessary for this work to examine (Noble, 1970; Mapp, 1972; Nesteby, 1982; Guerrero, 1993; Bogle, 2001; Nelson, 2002; Gormley, 2005, et al).

Outside the fictional world, however, media manipulation continued. Even participants in the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, protesting intolerant racist policies in the U.S., were susceptible to being cast in a negative light (see Fig. 5). The images of blacks clashing with white police officers on television in the 1960s depicted law enforcement agents attempting to control those people, the despised “others.” Jewkes (2004/2011) states that:

Implicit in all these forms of intolerance is the notion of a despised ‘other’ as a means to maintaining an idealised self…people are frequently underpinned by powerful psychic notions of otherness which frequently find expression in a tendency to see crime perpetrated by non-white people as a product of their ethnicity… (pp. 110-111).

These media presentations of police attempting to maintain public order and the status quo created a stage on which the protestors would be viewed in a negative light, no matter how justified their cause. Jefferson (2008) suggests that:

…in periods of social change and the growth of social anxiety, threats to the ideology result in the seeking out of scapegoats… (p. 115).

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68 In the movie, “auto-bots” are portrayed as jive-talking, liquor-drinking, lazy simian-featured robots with gold teeth (Bay, 2009), all attributes assigned to African Americans in “comic” portrayals dating back to the nineteenth century.

69 Hannibal and Cleopatra, North Africans both, were portrayed respectively by Victor Mature, a white Southerner, and Elizabeth Taylor, a white London-born actress.
Public scapegoating and stereotyping are not merely past artefacts of racism, as the following incidents indicate. As recently as November 2006, actor Michael Richards, best known for his character “Kramer” from NBC’s popular television sit-com *Seinfeld*, made national news after he was heard onstage at a Los Angeles comedy club. While attempting to subdue some heckling black audience members, he stated:

…50 years ago you’d be hanging from a tree with a fork up your ass…You can talk, you can talk, you're brave now motherfucker. Throw his ass out. He's a nigger! He's a nigger! He's a nigger! A nigger, look, there's a nigger!

Prior to his prolonged later apologies, Richards’ immediate unapologetic response was “that’s what happens when you interrupt a White man.”\(^70\) The popular comedic actor disclosed either deep-seated feelings or, at best, an insensitivity to the historic context of his language. A similar throwback in the entertainment world occurred in 1999, when Eugene O’Neill’s play *The Emperor Jones* was adapted and remade into a 45-minute film. The film was a part of New York City’s Lincoln Center Video Festival, and was conceived of as a retake on minstrel shows. A *New York Times* critic declared:

Like it or loathe it, the Emperor Jones, once seen is unforgettable…the Emperor Jones fits right into a festival that is unabashedly avant-garde in spirit (Holden, 1999).

Avant-garde art it may have been to some, with its exaggerated black dialect imitated by white people. Critics who compared it to the masks of Kabuki theater attempted to make it palatable, but the end result was a reaffirmation of days gone by, showing a disregard for those few blacks who may have been in the audience, as well as an indifference for the sensibilities of the vast majority who did not attend. On 4 April 2007, nationally-known radio personality Don Imus, who commands over two million listeners, commented on a predominately African American Rutgers University female

\(^{70}\) cf. “Richards says anger not racism, sparked tirade.”
Source: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15816126/>
basketball team, describing them as “Nappy headed ho’s [sic].”71 His producer, Bernard McGurk, chimed in, saying that the game against a Tennessee University female basketball team should have been called “the Jigaboos against the Wannabees.” The phrase was a derogatory reference to characters in Spike Lee’s film School Daze (Sony Pictures, 1988). These casual insensitivities by white Americans onstage or on the public airwaves are a result of the legacy of slavery and the associated discourse regarding black people in America, the historical context of the terms and images they use, and the continuing visceral impact they have on a people.

**Analysis of a Continuum of Contemporary Perceptions**

The use of media in promoting negative images of a specific group has been studied extensively (Alia and Bull, 2005; Entman and Rojecki, 2001; Greer and Jewkes, 2005; Monteith and Spicer, 2003 et al). Surette’s (1994) suggestion that opinions are formed from media presentations was tested through his survey in an effort to gauge their sociological impact among police recruits. While there is no foolproof way to gauge prejudice via surveys due to the self-reporting aspects inherent in that methodology, this type of research is still worthy of consideration. An ongoing Harvard study, initiated in 1998, attempts to evaluate the implicit biases of sampled Americans by gauging their response times in reaction to matching words and pictures. The Greenwald and Banaji Implicit Association Project (2007) seeks to measure positive and negative traits associated with race, based on a variety of factors. This study’s results support the concept of racial bias in the U.S., whereby black Americans’ images are associated with negative attributes, and white Americans’ images with positive ones. Project Implicit, the Harvard University Implicit Association Test (IAT),

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71 “The decisions and discussions inside NBC News during the Imus firestorm.”
Source: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18126093>
has rendered over 4.5 million demonstration tests, averaging 15,000 a week, for more
than a seven-year period. Findings observed in seven years of operation of the Project
Implicit72 website support four concepts. First, that implicit biases among Americans
are pervasive. For example over 80% of the web respondents showed implicit
negativity toward the elderly compared to the young, and 75-80% of self-identified
whites and Asians showed an implicit preference for racial whites as opposed to blacks.
Secondly, the research suggests that people are seldom aware of their implicit biases.
This includes respondents and the researchers themselves, who were found to harbour
negative associations in relation to various social groups, even while reporting that they
believed themselves to be free of these biases. The third finding suggests that these
implicit biases predict behaviour, whether simple acts of friendliness and inclusion, or
more consequential acts, such as the evaluation of work quality. Individuals who were
shown to have a higher implicit bias were shown to display a greater degree of
discrimination. Lastly, the fourth finding suggests that people differ in levels of implicit
bias. Implicit biases vary from person to person. They may act as a function or result of
the person’s group memberships and/or the dominance of a person’s membership group
in society, consciously held attitudes, and/or the level of bias existing in the immediate
environment. The authors propose that this last observation makes clear that implicit
attitudes are modified by experience, and that published scientific evidence is
accumulating. At the time of this writing, there have been over 200 published scientific
investigations that have made use of one or another version of the IAT.

Other significant research indicative of race-based perceptions and bias between
whites and blacks concerns decision-making strategies and addresses the success and
failure rate of white victims to correctly identify black perpetrators (Ng and Lindsay,

72 Source: <http://www.projectimplicit.net/generalinfo.php>
1994 cited in Smith, Stinson and Prosser, 2004, p. 147). This study suggests that data collected from 161 Caucasian subjects engaged in either a cross-race or same-race facial recognition task, similar to that used in a criminal investigation, shows that the race of the perpetrator had an impact regarding the clarity of memory and pre- and post-decision confidence. Smith et al, suggest:

More innocent citizens are wrongfully tried and convicted on the basis of eyewitness evidence in Great Britain and North America than by any other factor within the legal system… (Ibid., p. 146).

These studies indicate that our personal biases are, in part, created because of a lack of interpersonal contact and direct encounters with individuals of other races that would afford us factual or experiential knowledge. Other race-based studies, such as those exploring proxemic behaviours in an interview setting, are also significant to an understanding of U.S. culture. Their observations regarding the subtleties of body language and subsequent decision-making further illuminate the dichotomous nature of American society based on skin colour (Rosegrant and McCroskey, 1975; McFarland, Ryan, Sacco and Kriska, 2004). Of the many ethnic combinations observed in Rosegrant and McCroskey’s (1975) investigation of the impact of race and sex on interpersonal distance preferences, they state, “White interviewees established greater interpersonal distance from black interviewers than any other racial combination”(p. 1). They further suggest:

It is also reasonable to believe that when an individual learns more about that stranger the individual’s attitude toward the stranger may be less influenced by sex or race and based more on the new information… (Ibid., p. 2).

McFarland et al’s (2004) study regarding the racial composition of structured rating interview panels suggests that more favourable ratings are given to an applicant who is of the same race as the majority of the panel members. These studies reveal racial-
based perceptions that can be viewed within the context of the history of social exclusion experienced by blacks in America.

Discussion

Some white Americans still wonder how African Americans can harbour what might be thought of as un-American sentiments. They also seem surprised by subsequent outrage regarding events either personal or national viewed within a racial context. This predisposition is not difficult to comprehend, considering their history in America. There is a continuum of negative discourse and actions—some deadly, others merely contemptuous—meant to keep African Americans “in their place,” or at least constantly aware of their painful past. These actions will always reinforce a “separate and apart” sentiment that restricts African Americans from embracing mainstream white society. The use of symbols and words are powerful; the flying of the rebel flag or t-shirts displaying the same may be interpreted by blacks as endorsing the nineteenth century Confederacy and hence slavery, even when the wearer thinks they are promoting Southern pride or country music. Furthermore, much of the current resurgence of negativity towards blacks may be interpreted as a backlash against years of what many whites, particularly males, consider to be African Americans bemoaning their lot, especially in the wake of “affirmative action.”

Some of that backlash is currently evident on the national stage. While the media did influence public opinion regarding the election of the first African American President in 2009, an election year media blitz cannot and did not negate years of

73 First Lady Michelle Obama drew criticism for her comment that, based on her husband’s diversity of support to become the first black President, she was for the first time in her life proud of her country. Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,331288,00.html>

74 The term introduced in 1961 by President Kennedy—“affirmative action”—and other government programmes aimed at blacks were put in place to level the playing field and give the downtrodden a fair start (Califano, 1999).
negative imagery and dysfunctional behaviours on the part of both blacks and whites. During and in the aftermath of the 2008 campaign of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States, the candidate and president was disparaged in a manner heretofore not experienced. The U.S. Secret Service, charged with protecting presidential nominees, as well as the president and his family, note several unique events surrounding Obama’s bid for the presidency and subsequent election. The first African American president has received more death threats, prior to his election and afterwards, than any other in American history. These facts are significant because they reveal that hundreds of years after slavery, there remain in the U.S. deeply embedded race-based perceptions of black males, regardless of their achievements. Despite the president’s call for “change” in America, racist discourse is still part of its political landscape (e.g., images of the White House with watermelon patches on the front lawn harken back to nineteenth century stereotypes about blacks). On 15 September 2009, former president Jimmy Carter gave his opinion that “the intensely demonstrated animosity” directed at President Barack Obama is fueled by racism, based on the fact that he is a black man. It is not unreasonable to conclude that the “otherness” of blacks in American society remains a prominent fixture within its cultural landscape, despite President Obama’s momentous victory (Wolfe, 2009).

This chapter sets forth an extensive history of African Americans to aid in the comprehension of how and why their historic negative portrayals, as well as their criminality, aid in the public and law enforcement’s delusion that they do not engage in serial murder. A description of chattel slavery was offered to demonstrate how that unique brand of subjugation impacted the image blacks had of themselves, as well as images the dominant white society needed to keep them as a labour force. While examining theoretical explanations for the overrepresentation of African Americans
within the U.S. criminal justice system, it is suggested that their unique history in the
U.S. should not be dismissed as trivial, nor can the issues of trauma produced by such
conditions be seen as inconsequential. Alia and Bull (2005) note the importance of
media presentations and the potential for positive influence:

…the media serve not only the public but various political agendas and
play an important, though not exclusive role in shaping public opinion.
Mass media present particular dangers to the well-being of ethnic
minorities but also opportunities for empowerment… (p. viii).

While some of these opportunities are being utilised, a long and very public succession
of negative images—the minstrel shows’ big-lipped buffoons, cartoons’ razor-wielding
scoundrels, mindless brutes in films and novels—have been visible and disseminated
by the mass media for nearly two centuries. Forthcoming chapters will examine
whether the reinforced negative imagery of the African American male suggested in
this chapter and throughout this work can be reconciled with the media-created,
celebrity-like status of the white male serial killer in America. An understanding of the
collaboration between media and law enforcement, as well as the historically racist
treatment of African American males, is required to understand why black involvement
in serial murder is rarely depicted. This research suggests that the sociological impact
of deeply embedded racial perceptions, based on an image of African Americans as
second class citizens, directly results from their former roles as slaves in America. This
continued impact on all facets of life is not always obvious, and it is worthy of
continuous study, in which this work is partially engaged.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE ROLE OF THE FBI: DEFINING SERIAL MURDER
AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

No one in the U.S. is immune to the deeply embedded cultural stereotypes and negative media representations described in the previous chapter, least of all individuals and agencies responsible for law enforcement. It is significant to note that the culture of policing in the U.S. has historically been dominated by white males. A “cop culture” of conservative thought, isolationism, and racism was similarly noted in the U.K. (Wilson, 2009, p.180). This chapter will examine the criminal profiling in the U.S. as practiced by the FBI, and how that premier law enforcement agency was tasked with advising and investigating serial murders. As described in the Introduction, the FBI defines the serial murder as three or more homicides committed in separate locations, followed by a “cooling off” period distinguishing this type of murder from mass murder and spree killings (Ressler, 1992; Douglas et al, 2006). The unique psycho-sexual aspects of serial murders are motivations that distinguish them from those of organised crime contract killers75 or homicides committed solely for financial gain.

An examination of the serial killer research conducted by the FBI and social scientists, including taxonomies and definitions, is appropriate to an understanding of

75 cf. The Iceman: Confessions of a Mafia Contract Killer (Carlo, 2006). Richard Kuklinski, aka the Iceman, claims responsibility for more than 100 murders for organised crime. It appears that Kuklinski was involved in serial predation before he ever became a contract killer. His ability to kill without remorse was not initially motivated by money, but he capitalised on his ability to do so.
serial murderers and their causation. The advent of the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit (BSU) and its seminal research will also be addressed in this chapter, including some personal communications with a supervisory special agent (SSA) assigned to the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC). Information regarding the organisational structure of the NCAVC, now tasked with criminal profiling research, was obtained based on an interview conducted at their location in 2004. Research initially handled by their Behavioral Science Unit (BSU) has been transferred to the NCAVC (National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime), leaving the former element to act within a pedagogical framework. Currently, profiling (or criminal investigative analysis) is handled by the Behavioral Analysis Unit within the FBI’s NCAVC. There are four components within the NCAVC, each with different assignments: BAU-1, Terrorism/Threat assessment; BAU-2, Crimes against Adults; BAU-3, Crimes against Children (serial murder/abduction/paedophiles); and VICAP, Violent Criminal Apprehension Program. These units are not to be confused with the original birthplace of FBI profilers, the Behavioral Science Unit at the Quantico, Virginia training facility.\(^{76}\) The role of the FBI as advisors and its inductive methodological approach to criminal profiling, has garnered some criticism from social scientists and will be discussed here as well. This chapter will also reveal that some of the behavioural antecedents associated with the personality constructs (i.e., psychopathy, sociopathy, anti-social personality disorder, and narcissism\(^{77}\)) linked to serial murderers are pervasive in urban African American communities. It is suggested,

\(^{76}\) The organisational structure of the NCAVC is subject to change; however, the units and responsibilities described will essentially remain intact.

\(^{77}\) Lowen (1985) suggests that: “Narcissism describes both a psychological and cultural condition. On the individual level, it denotes a personality disturbance characterised by an exaggerated investment in one’s image at the expense of the self. Narcissists are more concerned with how they appear than what they feel. Indeed they deny feelings that contradict the image they seek. Acting without feeling, they tend to be seductive, manipulative, striving for power and control…” (p. ix).
however, that there is a historic race-based explanation for the inability of law enforcement to link these antecedents to African American serial murderers. The FBI now acknowledges that the widespread belief that “all serial killers are white males” is a myth. However, this research suggests that, despite the behavioural antecedents identified by that agency and social scientists (e.g., U.S. mental health statistics and criminal overrepresentation of African Americans in penal institutions\(^7\)), the FBI’s criminal profiling matrix generally fails to identify black serial killers in the U.S., as exemplified by the D.C. Sniper investigation. This work addresses how the FBI created a disconnect regarding the overrepresentation of African American serial killers in the U.S. and the ethnocentric profile of white males as perpetrators of serial homicide, and how the media fostered and promoted this belief.

The FBI in its advisory capacity has assisted, by request, numerous law enforcement agencies in their investigations of serial killers. Douglas (1995) notes their involvement in the Wayne Williams (aka the Atlanta child murderer) case, and Stanley (2006) discusses the agency’s behavioural profile of the black Louisiana serial killer Derrick Todd Lee in 2002. The FBI’s involvement with the D.C. Sniper Task Force is well documented (Horwitz and Ruane, 2003; Moose and Fleming, 2003 et al). Additionally, SSA Beasley’s (2004) post-incarceration interview of Chester Elroy is also indicative of the agency’s awareness of black serial killers. This work proposes, however, that the FBI, despite such awareness, nonetheless suffers from the same deep-seated biases that have become embedded in the collective American psyche, and were discussed in Chapter Three. It should be noted that the FBI’s behavioural profile of Derrick Todd Lee, the African American convicted of the Louisiana serial murders, was devoid of the perpetrator’s race (Stanley, 2006), and its D.C. Sniper profile,

\(^7\) See Chapter Three, “From Slavery to Prison: A Continuum of Negative Images” for crime statistics.
reported by the media, suggested white male(s) were likely responsible for the murders.

The agency also endures what Hannan and Freeman (1989) term a kind of organizational inertia. These authors state that:

> organizational structures are subject to strong inertial forces [but it] is not the same as claiming that organizations never change. Rather it means that organizations respond relatively slowly to the occurrences of threats and opportunities in their environments (p. 70).

While an exploration of this concept regarding the FBI’s organisational structure is more suitable to an in-depth analysis than is feasible within this research, it is worthy of consideration. Although criminal profiling techniques can be utilised in most types of criminal investigations, their employment by the FBI in aiding the apprehension of serial killers is now widely known, due to media representations. Profiling techniques can be applied in order to capture the perpetrator(s) of serial and singular crimes, but this work’s focus is the FBI’s creation of the profiling matrix designed to apprehend serial killers, as defined by that agency. Serial criminals are those individuals whose crimes, such as arson, paedophilia, rape, and/or murder, are committed with such frequency as to display a pattern of behaviour. It is this pattern by the perpetrator, or UNSUB (unknown subject), that creates the psychological “signature” identifiable at the crime scene and required by criminal profilers (Porter et al, 2001). The manner of death and the method employed against the victim aid in the creation of the UNSUB’s profile. The predatory nature of the crime, as well as methods and motives that might account for discrimination among possible suspects, requires examination. In doing so, this chapter illustrates a need for an understanding of how and why a bias against the existence of black serial murder suspects has occurred. In the wake of this bias, this chapter establishes the importance of this research and its implications for law enforcement agencies. The impact of preconceptions by law enforcement agents engaged in the investigation of crimes, especially serial murder, is inestimable.
The Inception of the Behavioral Science Unit

Criminal profiling, or the suggestion of an individual criminal type, has a history that long predates the FBI. The early work of Lombroso (1880) suggested phenotypes were indicative of individuals who might engage in criminal activities. Historian and author Caleb Carr (1995), as the title of his best-selling novel *The Alienist* suggests, refers to early psychiatrists who were sometimes called upon for expert testimony regarding an individual’s mental state. They were referred to as “alienists” in the late nineteenth century, but he portrayed them as criminal profilers.

The more contemporary approach to criminal profiling utilises psychology and crime scene forensics as a basis for determining suspected perpetrators. The purpose of criminal profiling is to attain a psychological assessment of the perpetrator of a crime and, when possible, a physical profile. Dr. Thomas Bond in London (1888) constructed an early example of a profile for “Jack the Ripper” (Canter, 2004) and, in the U.S., offender profiles were established by Captain Ellis M. Zacharias (1946) for the commander of the Japanese Navy during WWII. Zacharias (1946) wrote:

> To know what others think and how their actions are stimulated by their thinking processes; to know what they have and what they intend to do...to know our opponents...lends immediate strength to ourselves and should save us from an unpleasant surprise… (p. 22).

One of the earliest assessments of profiling was the analysis of Adolph Hitler requested by Gen. William “Wild Bill” Donovan, the founder and director of the OSS (Office for Strategic Services), the precursor to the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). Director Donovan requested that Dr. Henry Murray of the Harvard Psychological Clinic in Cambridge, Massachusetts have a psycho-historian create a profile of “der Führer” for military purposes. Dr. Murray's team of psychologists examined documents, biographical information, speeches, notes, *Mein Kempf*, sexual pathologies, family background, and information about Hitler’s fears, as well as his eating habits—all of
which aided them in the creation of his profile. Armed with this knowledge, in conjunction with a body of clinical work already at hand from individuals with similar traits, a 135-page top secret document was created. Later declassified, this report foretold with accuracy the future actions of Adolph Hitler (DeNevi and Campbell, 2004). This profile was a part of psychoanalyst W.C. Langer's 1943 report, later published in *The Mind of Adolph Hitler: The Secret Wartime Report* (1973). One statement from the profile accurately predicted, “He will probably try to compensate for his vulnerability by stressing his brutality and ruthlessness...” (DeNevi and Campbell, 2004, p. 56), a calculation that considered how feelings of being cornered might cause irrational acts. In 1957, psychologist Dr. James Brussel employed a similar profiling technique for the apprehension of New York City’s "Mad Bomber," George Metesky. FBI agent Howard Teten, a founding member of the BSU, asked to meet with Dr. Brussel for the purposes of learning his technique of criminal profiling. He later wrote, “During that first meeting with him, I was so impressed I asked if he would teach me his technique” (DeNevi and Campbell, 2004, p. 118).

As profiling within the FBI evolved, many profilers began to specialise, focusing their investigations on a particular set of crimes such as arson, paedophilia, and sexual murders (e.g., former FBI Special Agent Roy Hazlewood's area of expertise was the latter). Such specialisations are indicative of the continuously evolving body of knowledge regarding serial predators. It was a culmination of these techniques that became the model for the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit. A core concept of the FBI’s profiling technique and simplistic approach was posted by Special Agent Lawrence Monroe, an early profiler at the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit. His succinct comment on the agency’s “Quote for the Day” board was: “Murderers kill the way they live” (Ibid., p. 221). The techniques of profiling have been incorporated into the curriculum
at the FBI’s National Academy classes, which include representatives from law
enforcement agencies worldwide. Turvey (1998) notes that the FBI’s approach is most
commonly used in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and other European countries.
The Behavioral Science Unit has been the subject of numerous books and movies,
which this work suggests have created a mystique that continues to surround the
profilers and their abilities. This chapter proposes that the FBI unit created to
investigate their crimes, as well as subsequent media involvement, have influenced the
public’s perception of serial murderers. Therefore, a further examination of the
Behavioral Science Unit is necessary to gain an understanding of its place within
popular culture.

In 1984, the FBI testified before the U.S. Congress, suggesting that multiple
murders by a single individual—termed “serial murder”—was a relatively new
phenomenon that was increasing in frequency. The term’s origins have been debated.
Former FBI profiler Ressler (1997) assumes credit, stating that he used the phrase
“serial murder” because the first portion of that label referred to the Saturday afternoon
films (“serials”) repeatedly shown in theatres during his childhood. This claim contrasts
with that of British author John Brody, who first used the term in 1966 (previously
cited in Newton, 2000). The specific data presented at the 1984 hearings are not
known, but discussions of an increased number of serial killers was included. Stote and
Standing (1995) indicate a continuing trend of reports dramatising serial murder. They
suggest that data indicating the rate of serial murder, when corrected for population, is
questionable, unreliable, and easily manipulated, because of a limited sample size.
These researchers further point out that the general lack of reliability regarding crime
statistics is well-known, and this is particularly acute in the case of serial murders.
Criminologist Jonathan Simon suggests that U.S. government officials, in their
presentation of gang crime statistics, similarly created a culture of fear through an exaggeration of that problem.79 Multiple murderers existed long before the term serial murder found its place in the lexicon of contemporary law enforcement. Ramsland (2005) traces human predation and serial murder from ancient to contemporary times. The FBI, however, stressed during its 1984 hearings that this type of crime was relatively new and expanding at a frightening rate. They employed this tactic to advance their political agenda during their congressional testimony, after gathering serial murder data between 1979 and 1983 (Ressler et al, 1992). The agency depicted serial killers as extraordinary marauders who were almost supernatural beings. Jenkins (2002) stressed the impact of the FBI’s rhetoric, as well as its associations with mythological villainy—“uniquely dangerous predatory villains, against whom no counter-measures were too extreme”—as a political effort designed to create a fear of powerful and uncontrolled monsters. Perhaps unintentionally, the FBI’s portrayal accorded serial murderers an almost iconic status. After the 1984 congressional testimony, the concept of highly-organised, intelligent predators, stoppable only by extraordinary law enforcement means, emerged, creating the image of a new breed of criminal. Simultaneously, the agency promoted itself as the only law enforcement agency capable of apprehending these killers, making it the de facto reigning authority regarding serial murder investigations. Jenkins (Ibid.) maintains that the purpose of the FBI’s testimony was an act of self-promotion, intended to increase funding for their Behavioral Science Unit by suggesting that serial murder was an alarming and relatively new phenomenon that only they could combat.

In conjunction with congressional funding, this testimony legitimised the FBI agents’ involvement in the majority of serial murder investigations as advisors.

79 Personal communication, 16 December 2009.
(Douglas et al, 1992), which furthered their influence over other law enforcement agencies’ profiling methods. The FBI’s concept of the serial murderer—as individuals whose actions constituted a high level of criminality worthy of frequent media attention—was supported by the media. Based on the FBI’s historical status as the most effective law enforcement agency in the U.S., it is reasonable that the media would support the idea that their agents were the most competent to solve serial murder cases; they had similarly promoted the FBI as effectively combating gangsterism in the 1930s and Mafia activity in subsequent decades. Over time, their supreme position vis-à-vis serial killers also became an entrenched concept. Jenkins (2002) notes the gap that exists between the mythologised global fame of the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit and reality, pointing out that, despite their “vaunted methods of profiling”, which have been less than effective in criminal investigations, they have yet to apprehend an actual serial killer (p. 4).

While the media was historically inclined to vilify African Americans and associate them with violent crime, they decline to associate them with this particular societal nemesis. While serial predation is all too newsworthy, its FBI-created associations with seemingly—and frighteningly—highly intelligent individuals (whether accurate or not) negate African American involvement as far as the media (and perhaps the agency itself) are concerned. Touxfexis (1994) suggests that the public’s fascination with serial killers has created a lucrative market of published works and collectable souvenirs. Negative perceptions of African Americans—despite their participation in violent crime—automatically exclude them from this category of “superintelligence,” as will be further examined via the commercialisation of serial killers in Chapter Five. While FBI methodology was questionable regarding issues of data integrity (Canter, 2004) inter-agency training by the FBI continued to provide
opportunities for numerous law enforcement agencies to become further entrenched in their profiling matrix, spreading the new legend of nearly-unstoppable evil geniuses, and further spreading disregard for non-white perpetrators.

The FBI’s testimony before Congress and the media’s frequent repetition of the phrase “serial murder” created a moral panic, as defined by Cohen (1980). Jenkins (1994) notes that, between 1983 and 1985, serial murder became an intensely debated issue in the media, news outlets, and popular culture, to the extent that the nation experienced a growing sense of terror. With congressional funding, in addition to a grant received in 1982 from the National Institute of Justice, the FBI began to publish the data it had collected regarding predatory crime between 1979 and 1983 (Ressler et al, 1992). This created what would be the agency’s seminal work—a study of 36 murderers. Agents also began to publish individual research studies, which further added an air of legitimacy to their profiling methodology. In 1980, Dick Ault and Jim Reese co-authored “Profiling: A Psychological Assessment of Crime”, published in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. This work legitimised the research of all BSU agents. Robert L. Depue, Ph.D., the chief of the BSU, wrote:

The fact that the FBI brass gave permission to publish it at all represented the first internal acknowledgement of the significance of the work we were doing… (Depue and Schindehette, 2005, p. 118).

The body of knowledge ascertained through the FBI’s early research was amassed by a few special agents who coordinated their efforts with academics who believed in their work (e.g., Douglas et al, 1992/2006; Ressler et al, 1992). The seminal research conducted by the FBI through their interviews created the basis for their serial killer profiling matrix, and warrants further examination. Current criminal profilers increasingly work with a larger database of information than previously available. The contemporary profiler is as much a researcher as an investigator, utilising software such
as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to measure, compare, and collapse data. Data is gathered from research, as well as from VICAP (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program). Participating law enforcement agencies complete VICAP questionnaire forms, and that information is stored in a criminal information database used by other law enforcement agencies for crime comparisons.

The FBI’s Inductive Methodology and Ethnocentric Profiling Research

The FBI’s early research into serial murders did not include African Americans or examine the cultural implications of race as a component in its investigations (Burgess et al, 1986; Ressler et al, 1992). Instead, its model for serial murder investigations excluded African Americans, despite black involvement in that type of predation since at least 1915. The FBI’s initial study of 36 male murderers included 25 serial murderers, only three of whom were classified as “non-white” (Ressler et al, 1992). It is not clear that the “non-whites” were African Americans; even so, Ressler notes that cultural issues specific to these individuals were not addressed (Ibid.). The agency’s data was gathered based on criminal reports and interviews. That study was the origin of what this research suggests is a static ethnocentric serial killer profile whose overall purpose was to identify the behavioural antecedents related to individuals who engage in serial murder.

The FBI divides serial killers into two broad groups, organised and disorganised. Ressler et al (1992) note:

Qualitative objectives were to describe the characteristics of the study population of murderers, the manner in which they committed their crimes, and the crime scenes. The descriptive data obtained would make an important contribution to the documentation of the sexual killer…Quantitative objectives were more complex. Because the organized/disorganized classification was the only law-enforcement

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80 See Fig. 7, “Known African American Serial Killers.”
developed classification to aid in the apprehension of sexual killers, its viability and potential for expanded use in criminal profiling was important to determine...it would identify variables, or specific characteristics, that may be useful in profiling sexual murderers and for which organized and disorganized sexual murders differ statistically (p. x).

It is important to note that Ressler et al (1992) mentions that the organised/disorganised approach created by “law enforcement” (essentially the FBI) was the only classification utilised. Subsequent publications included data derived from that seminal work. The task of the FBI profiler was to “…establish a relationship between a victim, the characteristics of the crime scene, and the perpetrator's personality…” (DeNevi and Campbell, 2004, p. 111). The FBI methodology for the profiler is inductive. He or she works backwards from the crime scene to determine not only how an individual killer may function in the world, but also to assess his personality type. If enough clues can be garnered from the crime scene, a psychological and physical profile may be possible through a series of analytical enquiries: How heavy was the victim? What would be the physical build of the UNSUB, if the corpse had been carried? Was the body hidden in a secluded space or left by the side of the road? Was the manner of attack a sudden blitz or one that required more social interaction? If the victim knew the perpetrator, was anger expressed, indicated by savagery? Was it personal (often indicated by facial beatings)? These details might indicate whether the UNSUB was confident, which might relate to intelligence, or whether he was unsure of himself, relating to a poor self-image. Was a vehicle used? What kind? This could relate to the murderer’s financial means. The manner of the killing as well as what is done to the body will also determine if the UNSUB is organised or disorganised.

The FBI’s method of profiling requires the investigator(s) to view either a single act or patterns of behaviours in relation to the criminal act perpetrated. The repetitive behaviours gleaned from a crime scene are labelled a signature (Douglas et
al, 1992; Hickey, 2002; Holmes et al, 2002), and aid criminal profilers to categorise the perpetrator's behaviours according to the aforementioned categories of disorganised vs. organised. Ressler et al, (1992) suggest that:

an organized murderer is one who appears to plan his murders in a conscious manner and who displays control of the victim at the crime scene. The disorganized murderer is less consciously aware of a plan, and his crime scenes display haphazard behavior. Sometimes an offender has elements from both categories and can be called mixed (p. ix).

Organised serial killers include individuals such as Ted Bundy, a well-dressed, articulate white law student who operated in the U.S. during the 1970s. At times Bundy utilised fake casts and crutches to gain the sympathy of unsuspecting females. He eventually represented himself at one of his trials, suggesting narcissism. Gary Ridgeway, “The Green River Killer,” arranged children's toys on his dashboard or placed a child seat in his truck to lower the defences of his victims. These techniques are considered trademarks of the organised personality, whom law enforcement members tend to find more elusive and who is capable of committing murders for a longer period of time than his disorganised counterparts.

Besides the organised/disorganised model, there are several other serial murderer typologies, the most prominent among them created by Holmes and Holmes (2002, p. 71). Canter and Wentink (2004) note that the FBI’s typology “…is claimed as the foundation on which personality characteristics of offenders can be determined from crime scene information…” (p. 490). The “Holmes typology” further delineates the serial killers’ classification into a motivational model that includes the visionary killer, the mission-oriented type, the hedonistic type (which is divided into two sub-categories, the lust and thrill killers), and the power/control-oriented type (Holmes and DeBurger, 1985). The “Holmes Typology” offers a generally accepted overview of the organised vs. disorganised offender (see Table 4.1 Holmes typology).
### HOLMES TYPOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISORGANISED AND ORGANISED OFFENDERS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IQ below average, 80-95 range</td>
<td>IQ above average, 105-120 range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socially inadequate</td>
<td>socially adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lives alone, usually does not date</td>
<td>lives with partner or dates frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absent or unstable father</td>
<td>stable father figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family emotional abuse, inconsistent</td>
<td>family physical abuse, harsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lives and/or works near crime scene</td>
<td>geographically/occupationally mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minimal interest in news media</td>
<td>follows the news media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually a high school dropout</td>
<td>may be college educated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor hygiene/housekeeping skills</td>
<td>good hygiene/housekeeping skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keeps a secret hiding place in the home</td>
<td>does not usually keep a hiding place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nocturnal (nighttime) habits</td>
<td>diurnal (daytime) habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drives a clunky car or pickup truck</td>
<td>drives a flashy car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needs to return to crime scene to relive memories</td>
<td>needs to return to crime scene to see what police have done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may contact victim's family to play games</td>
<td>usually contacts police to play games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no interest in police work</td>
<td>a police groupie or wannabe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiments with self-help programmes</td>
<td>doesn't experiment with self-help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kills at one site, considers mission over</td>
<td>kills at one site, disposes at another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaves body intact</td>
<td>may dismember body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attacks in a &quot;blitz&quot; pattern</td>
<td>attacks using seduction into restraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depersonalises victim to a thing or “it”</td>
<td>keeps personal, holds a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaves a chaotic crime scene</td>
<td>leaves a controlled crime scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaves physical evidence</td>
<td>leaves little physical evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responds best to counselling interview</td>
<td>responds best to direct interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://faculty.ncwc.edu/TOConnor/428/428lect06.htm](http://faculty.ncwc.edu/TOConnor/428/428lect06.htm)

The "Holmes Typology" was created by Ronald M. Holmes, former coroner and Professor Emeritus of Justice Administration at the University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky, and Stephen T. Holmes, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at the
University of Central Florida and Social Science analyst for the National Institute of Justice. This typology is based on case material relating to 110 serial murders and interviews with selected offenders (Canter et al, 2004). The descriptions suggest that an organised offender is one who is not haphazard in the planning or carrying out of his act of predation, whether rape, arson, robbery, or murder. The disorganised offender is not detail-oriented, and his crime scene may appear to be chaotic. Although the investigator creates a psychological profile based on the motivation and behavioural tendencies of an individual who engages in serial murder, there can be considerable overlap when defining the type of serial killer. Often, there will be signs of both sets of traits. Some killers start off disorganised because they are at the early stages of their development, and move on to a more organised method, avoiding detection, becoming more adept, feeling more secure, powerful, immune from apprehension, or omnipotent. Sometimes organised killers implode due to stressors in their lives, and become disorganised. Most notable in the “Holmes Typology” are the positive traits attributed to the organised serial killers: high I.Q., social adequacy, and autonomy. How the organised v. disorganised taxonomy relates to perceptions of intelligence regarding white and black murderers will be examined in Chapter Five’s comparative analysis of Harrison Graham and Gary Heidnik, as further considered for the exclusion of blacks as celebrities among serial killers, discussed in Chapter Six. It should be noted that both the FBI and Holmes typologies have been criticised, the former for its simplicity, and the latter for its lack of empirical testing (Ibid.). Due to the similarities between the Holmes and FBI typologies, the former is presented here as a general overview of disorganised/organised typology, often cited by researchers. The typology is further delineated by similar motivational charts created by Holmes et al and the FBI. These classifications are offered here in table 4.2 as a comparison.
Table (4.2) SERIAL KILLER MOTIVATIONAL CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holmes and Holmes serial murder classification*</th>
<th>FBI’s serial offender classification **</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedonistic Killers</strong>—contains two subtypes. They are process focused, generally taking time to complete their acts of torture and dismemberment.</td>
<td><strong>Anger</strong> is a motivation in which an offender displays rage or hostility towards a certain subgroup of the population, or with society as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organised Crime Members</strong> (i.e., contract killers)—though serial offenders, they are not considered serial murderers within the historic psycho-sexual context, and therefore are not included in this classification.</td>
<td><strong>Criminal Enterprise</strong> is a motivation in which the offender benefits in status or monetary compensation by committing murder that is drug, gang, or organised crime-related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comfort-Oriented Killer</strong>—a sub-type of the Hedonistic Killer, motivated by profit and the attainment of property.</td>
<td><strong>Financial gain</strong> is a motivation in which the offender benefits monetarily from killing. Examples of these types of crimes are “Black Widow” killings, robbery homicides, or multiple killings involving insurance or welfare fraud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lust or Thrill Killer</strong>—a sub-type of the Hedonistic Killer with a firmly established connection between personal violence and sex. They derive pleasure from the act; killing is an eroticised experience.</td>
<td><strong>Sexually-based</strong> is a motivation driven by the sexual needs/desires of the offender. There may or may not be overt sexual contact reflected by the crime scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visionary Killer</strong>—propelled to murder by voices they hear or visions. They are outer-directed and psychotic.</td>
<td><strong>Psychosis</strong> is a situation in which the offender is suffering from a severe mental illness and is killing because of that illness. This may include auditory and/or visual hallucinations and paranoid, grandiose, or bizarre delusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power/Control Killer</strong>—receives sexual gratification from the complete domination of his victim.</td>
<td><strong>Power/thrill</strong> is a motivation in which the offender feels empowered and/or excited when he kills his victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission Killer</strong>—feels the need to eradicate a certain group of people. They are not psychotic and act on a self-imposed duty to rid the world of a particular group.</td>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong> is a motivation to commit murders in order to further the goals and ideas of a specific individual or group. Examples of these include terrorist groups or an individual(s) who attacks members of a specific race, gender, or ethnic group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: *Profiling violent crimes* (Holmes and Holmes, 2002, pp. 111-114)

**Source: *Serial murder: Multi-disciplinary perspectives for investigators* (Behavioral Analysis Unit-2, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, FBI). This document is the outcome of a 2005 symposium in San Antonio, Texas. Source: <http://www.fbi.gov>
Law enforcement agents seeking to narrow a pool of suspects utilise the above FBI categories of motivations as guidelines for investigation. These categories are general, and cannot be a complete measure of serial offenders or their motivations. Serial murder can include rape, consequently the FBI’s classification of rapists reveals a similar typology (Ressler et al, 1992). The term “serial murder” was quickly linked to the German words “lust mord” (“lust murder”) as a result of an FBI article by Hazelwood and Douglas (1980). This term became synonymous with the description of a serial killer who mutilated his victims, and whose murders were sexual in nature81 (Hazelwood and Michaud, 1998), although the serial killer essentially seeks to control and manipulate. Even in the case of a rape/murder, the crime, although an overt sexual act, is one of power and control. Despite Vronsky’s (2004) statement regarding serial murders—“Their killings are often highly sexual-oriented and rarely offer any financial gain” (p. 11)—it should be noted that the assumption that a serial killer is a sexual killer is not always evident. It is not, however, necessary that the crime scene reveals overt signs of sexual activity for the murder to be sexual in nature. Additionally, it should be considered that sex within the context of serial murder, although seen as an aspect of psycho-sexual gratification, remains a tool of power and control. When it involves African Americans, it may include a historic aspect that will be addressed in the upcoming section, “Serial Murder and African Americans.” Motives and methods are not the primary focus of this work, however, this study points out the fact that the established categories describe black serial killers, as well as their white counterparts, as Chapter Six section, “Typologies and Celebrity” will demonstrate. Based on the length of time of their individual predation, avoidance of capture, number of victims,

81 von Krafft-Ebing’s Psychopathia sexualis (1902, trans. 1965) was instrumental in the formation of a guide to sexual pathologies.
and areas of predation, there appears to be no discernible or significant difference between black serial killers and their white counterparts. The next section examines theoretical rebuttals by several social scientists that suggest the FBI’s methodology in profiling serial killers is lacking.

**Criticisms of the FBI’s Methodology**

Few U.S. law enforcement agencies have contributed more to the image of serial murderers and criminal profiling than the FBI, resulting in an aura of their mastery throughout U.S. popular culture. Examples of the latter include television shows such as *Criminal Minds* or *Profiler*, as well as books and films such as *Silence of the Lambs*, which was popular in both formats. In conjunction with these popular culture portrayals, FBI personnel are considered the foremost practitioners of the type of criminal profiling associated with serial murder (Jenkins, 2002). Beasley (2004) suggests that, since the FBI’s initial study of 25 serial murderers conducted from 1979 to 1983:

> the phenomenon of serial murder has been mythologized in popular culture, sensationalized by the media, and increasingly scrutinized by academia. The results have been confounding, with fiction blurring with fact, and assumptions and guesses often treated as certainty (p. 395).

Social researchers have questioned other aspects of the FBI’s profiling methods and their expertise in the area of serial murder investigations as well. Canter (2004) notes that the FBI’s initial approach was based on intuition rather than research. It has also been argued that many agents lack the rigorous academic training needed to create accurate psychological profiles of offenders (Coupe, 2003). Turvey (1998) questions the FBI’s inductive approach. Profiling, like contemporary criminology, is a multidisciplinary endeavour. In *The State of the Field of Criminology*, Eskridge (2005) notes:
…it is not unusual to see criminal justice faculty members’ degrees in history, psychology, sociology, public administration, law, political science, urban studies, and criminology and criminal justice…There is in fact a need to break down the walls of disciplinary sterility (p. 302).

The backlash that the FBI faced from the psychological and academic communities resulted from what social scientists viewed as that agency’s delving into the realm of behavioural sciences minus the traditional academic prerequisites. At the time of the BSU’s creation, few of its members had the academic background or bona fides to qualify as behavioural scientists. These criticisms forced agents to attain academic standing, conduct research, and gather empirical data to legitimise their work.

Additional criticisms have been directed toward methodology that has fossilised and depends on old data. Coupe (2003) points out that:

> Unfortunately, little peer-reviewed, published research has been done by the FBI in terms of advancing the field of offender profiling since the 1980’s…The FBI’s approach to profiling is based in large part on the research of the 36 convicted sexual murderers in 1982… (p. 28).

He also stated, “…critics have noted that the FBI has made few changes to its approach in 20 years” (Ibid., p. 36). FBI researcher Beasley (2004), assigned to the NCAVC, supports this statement, noting:

> The original findings of the FBI’s BSU were based on a small sample size—36 subjects, of whom 25 were classified as serial killers. To this day, early insights into the behavior of those sexual murderers provide a basis for behavioral profiles of unknown offenders. They remain a key element of the expanded criminal investigative analysis offered by the FBI’s National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (p. 396).

Beasley also notes in his own case study of seven serial murderers—five white, two black—that the FBI’s initial study occurred “nearly 20 years ago” (Ibid., p. 395).

Within the agent’s statements, there are implications concerning data that is outdated and a methodology that has remained static. It is also worthy to note, as this research suggests, that the lack of diversity in the 36 subjects studied mirrored the culture of the FBI itself during the inception of the BSU. For many decades, the FBI operated under a
culture of social exclusion created by its founder and head, J. Edgar Hoover. Summers (1993), in his Hoover biography, noted that the life-long Director of the FBI “…had no interest however in hiring blacks, Hispanics or women—and he discriminated against Jews” (p. 59). Overall, the FBI was and still is a conservative white male-dominated law enforcement agency (DeNevi and Campbell, 2004).

Despite these criticisms, the FBI has garnered attention and praise for its application of behavioural science and forensic psychology to criminal investigations. FBI profilers utilise these two disciplines with additional training in criminological theory, sexual disorders, repressed memories, mental disabilities, and their own experience in law enforcement investigations. They are often called upon to advise about pretrial publicity, consult and train law enforcement personnel, and develop training programmes in the psychology/law arena. Profiling is not, however, their exclusive preserve. Canter (1995), a British professor of psychology, has developed independent profiling techniques. Having studied this aspect of human behaviour, he has consulted with law enforcement agencies around the world. It was through behavioural analysis that Canter focused on geographic locations as a way to direct investigations to include offender locales. Canter’s initial geographic profiling methodology, unlike that of later researchers like Rossmo (2000), was created without the use of contemporary computer software. Comparing Canter’s profile model to that of the FBI, Egger (2002) notes that a primary difference between the two is that Canter continually builds an empirical base from which to operate, whereas the FBI model is based totally on the intuition of the profiler and his or her experience in profiling previous crimes. Egger’s statement again suggests the FBI still employs a rote methodology. Turvey (1998 cited in Petherick, 2006) has argued that a deductive approach to criminal profiling, aka behaviour evidence analysis, is more appropriate
than the FBI’s inductive methodology, since it focuses on a specific individual(s) and crime scenes, as opposed to a preconceived theory. Turvey (1998)\textsuperscript{82} argues that the FBI’s inductive methods utilise limited samples unrelated to specific cases, and are thus inapplicable to the profile of an individual. He underlines how these over-generalisations are derived only from those criminals who are caught—presumably the less-skilled perpetrators. Finally, Turvey points out that the resultant inaccuracies of the inductive criminal profile often indict or implicate the innocent. Liebert (1985), like Turvey, recognises the significant failing of law enforcement investigators such as FBI profilers to utilise a more comprehensive approach when profiling individual serial murderers. In addition to a questionable methodology the FBI’s research appears to be disconnected from the findings of researchers such as Walsh, 2005; Hickey, 2002; Jenkins, 1993 et al, regarding black serial killers. Most significantly, the FBI’s research has not made the connection between U.S. mental health data addressed in Chapter Three related to urban blacks. This data reveals similar behavioural antecedents that that agency and social scientists suggest are causal factors for serial murder.

Nonetheless, in the U.S., FBI methods are self-and media-promoted, consequently remaining paramount in the public’s mind, and further confirming that agency as the most knowledgeable source of information about all aspects of serial murder. Turvey (1998) notes that numerous American law enforcement agencies have been trained by FBI profilers. U.S. police departments often require the inclusion of criminal profiling, as taught by the FBI, as part of their yearly police officer certification testing.\textsuperscript{83}


\textsuperscript{83} e.g., from 2003 to 2004, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania included an FBI course on Criminal Investigative Analysis (aka Criminal Profiling), as the Municipal Police Officers’ Education and Training Commission’s lesson plan course # 04-414.
While social researchers have questioned the FBI’s profiling methods and their expertise in the area of serial murder, Egger (2002) further notes the “linkage blindness” among law enforcement agencies. Defined as a law enforcement agency’s unwillingness to communicate serial killer data with other agencies during their respective investigations, “linkage blindness” is often an ego-induced territorial issue, which limits law enforcement’s ability to share information identifying serial killers and respond effectively. Liebert (1985) additionally recognises the significant failing of law enforcement investigators involved in serial killer investigations to communicate with the psychological community.

While these general flaws would certainly affect investigations of black serial killers, other factors interfere even more clearly. Canter (1993/2000) suggests that racial stereotypes exist today that create prejudicial assumptions regarding actions deemed typical of people with a particular skin color. He further notes, however, that contemporary research in the fields of biology, medicine, and psychology have challenged the superficial views that a person's appearance could be correlated in any way with their expected behaviours. Canter’s statement supports the idea suggested by this research, that the FBI’s initial limited research of serial killers may have contributed to their ethnocentric profile and overall public perception of serial murderers. In stark contrast to the FBI’s initial study in which no blacks were specifically identified, Hickey (2002) noted that black males represented 22% of all known serial killers in the U.S. Based on the overall number of African Americans—approximately 12.8% of the U.S. population in 2008—this statistic is indicative of their overrepresentation among American serial killers. Furthermore, Walsh (2005)

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84 Source: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>
identifies 90 individuals as black serial murderers in the U.S., beginning in 1945—which predates the FBI’s initial gathering of data in 1979. Walsh’s table (see Fig. 6) is problematic. It does not make a consistent distinction among multiple murderers (e.g., spree killers, mass murderers, and serial killers). It also lists one serial killer, Michael Player, twice and includes a South African whose predations were confined to his own country. Nonetheless, it is useful to the extent that it identifies numerous black serial killers and illuminates their participation in serial murder for decades prior to FBI research, in contrast to their media non-portrayal. Utilising only those in Walsh’s table who were appropriate, this researcher updated and further expanded Walsh’s list to produce a much more comprehensive chronological list of 153 African American serial killers who have been operating since 1915 (see Fig. 7). This list not only draws further attention to the representation of African Americans among serial killers, but suggests, based on the numbers of some of the murderers’ victims, the extended dates of their murders, and their continued lack of notoriety, how invisible their predations often remain. Vaughn Greenwood, for example, killed eleven victims over a twelve-year period, while John Floyd Thomas, Jr. murdered more than 30 victims over a seventeen-year period, Eddie Lee Mosley killed more than sixteen victims over fourteen years, and Vincent Groves killed fourteen victims over a ten-year period, to name only a few long-operating perpetrators. Such figures suggest that the delay in their apprehension was due to their invisibility.

85 Based on the FBI’s definition of serial murder, the following individuals were removed from Walsh’s list, for their predations are more appropriately categorised as mass murders—James Pough, Calvin Perry, Richard Grissom—or spree killings—Craig Price, Horace Kelly, Ben Chaney, Jr., Martin Rutrell, L. L. Thompson, Robert E. Williams, and James William Stuard. The South African serial killer David Selepe was removed because his predations occurred in Cleveland, South Africa, not Cleveland, Ohio in the U.S.
It is worth noting that the FBI advised the D.C. Sniper Task Force in 2002, and it remains unclear how the agency applied its organised v. disorganised taxonomy regarding the intelligence of the perpetrators, or a lack thereof. Equally unclear is how those categorisations might be related to law enforcement’s overall perceptions of white and black criminality and race-based perceptions regarding those who commit serial murder. If these factors were involved, they may have contributed to the delayed apprehension of the snipers John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo, and the media’s lengthy assumption that white male killers were responsible. This issue is further discussed in Chapter Five’s section, “The Significance of the D.C. Snipers.”

**Psychological Overview: Behavioural Antecedents and Personality Constructs**

The debate regarding nurture v. nature, and research associated with criminal behaviours, continue to provide insight and a basis for further study regarding serial murder. There are no definitive conclusions. The theories regarding the causation of serial murders are too numerous to review in this work, therefore this section is intentionally limited in its scope. It focuses primarily on the behavioural antecedents identified by the FBI and researchers that are common to serial murderers, as well as the closely associated personality constructs. Some incorporate head trauma, chemical imbalance, anthropological history, and social environment. Walsh (1998), cites several studies suggestive of a biological link to violent crime, including Wilson and Herrnstein’s (1985) meta analysis of Christiansen’s (1977) study of twins and Cloninger et al’s (1982) study regarding the high probability that the offspring of

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87 A significant number of serial and multiple murderers, black and white, have suffered documented head injuries (Coral Watts, Ted Bundy, Gary Heidnik, Fred West et al).
criminal offenders will also become criminal offenders. Addressing the concept of chemical imbalance, some studies imply that cortisol, an aggression inhibitor (Popma et al, 2007; Lindman et al, 1997), may be underproduced in violent criminals. Additional studies suggest a suppression of cortisol production occurs among pregnant woman who are depressed and/or reside in highly stressful environments (Pluess et al, 2009; Shively et al, 1997). Apropos to this study of African American serial killers, the aforementioned theory has implications for pregnant African American woman who reside in stressful urban environments. It is worth consideration, for giving birth to male children who are less biologically equipped to suppress aggression, due to the mother’s prenatal deprivation of cortisol, might provide a feasible explanation for inner city violence. Walsh (1998) suggests that the principal cause of violent crime appears to be a biochemical predisposition, triggered by environmental stresses. This is a reasonable conclusion, incorporating both sides of the nature versus nurture debate of causation. Ressler et al’s (1992) research in part supports this theoretical viewpoint, for they note that serial murderers often cite certain precipitating stresses as the causes for their behaviours. They are not necessarily aware of the issues behind these stress factors that may play a powerful role in motivation, yet in the mind of the murderer, such incidents (such as a disagreement with parents) are, to them, sufficient to justify aggression towards others, and sometimes even towards strangers. Within a psychological context, Myers et al (1993); Prentky et al (1989), and Ressler et al (1992) suggest that aggressive fantasies are a component of the compulsion to murder, and fuel the serial killer. Schlesinger (1998) adds, “Compulsive homicides are frequently repetitive (serial) and ritualistic. Fantasies may precede the murder by many years” (p. 184). Such fantasies can induce feelings within the killer that are akin to addiction or
enslavement, and produce a limited euphoria, post-murder. Supporting this theoretical view, Jenkins (2002) notes:

As in the case of multiple homicide, “serial” deviant behavior is attributed to slavish compulsion, despite a good deal of evidence indicating that both types of offenders are well able to exercise restraint when they choose (p. 8).

Early research regarding motivation, attempting to explain this addictive, psychosexual component, the need for power and control lacking financial gain for the perpetrator, constituted segments of extensive case studies by Krafft-Ebing (1902, trans. 1965). Though not all serial murders appear at first glance to have a sexual component, Krafft-Ebing laid the groundwork for sexual psychopathology—fetishes, picquerism, and sexual murders—in his noted work *Psychopathia Sexualis* (Ibid.). Within this volume, the author further aided an understanding of behavioural antecedents and the violent nature of acts via his numerous case studies. This tome also serves to relate the sadistic cruelty tied to the offender's sexuality and *imago*, which is often projected upon the victim while the violence is perpetrated. Carnes’ (1992) research on sexual addiction indicates that these addictions under stressful conditions create neurological chemical imbalances. If the serial killer may be viewed as an individual addicted to his predation, it is murder that relieves his stress. Barring murders committed by individuals with a psychotic personality, the concept of a stress-based trigger has been generally accepted by researchers and the FBI regarding the activation of serial predation. This is not to suggest that the clinically diagnosed psychotic individuals may not be triggered when they commit murder, but rather that those triggers are less readily identified due to their psychosis. The suggestion of stress as a trigger, as previously discussed in Chapter Three, might have implications for

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*imago*—an idealised mental image of another person or the self.
African American violence in urban cities based on their history, social environment, and mental health issues.

When assessing social environment and early childhood trauma, both the FBI and other researchers point to factors common to studies of both serial killers and multiple murderers. There appears to be less debate among social scientists and the FBI as to the behavioural antecedents common among serial murderers than profiling methodologies. Hickey (2002) suggests that serial murders’ commonality crosses racial lines and geographic borders, and that they are: early childhood trauma (physical and emotional), a lack of patriarchal bonding, the witnessing of violence, abuse and neglect, enuresis (bedwetting), cruelty to animals, and a sense of inadequacy. Though there is no certainty regarding predictability, further research regarding these traits is desirable. MacDonald (1963) suggested a triad of childhood characteristics that could possibly indicate future anti-social behaviours, aggression, and homicide. The “MacDonald triad” consists of firestarting, enuresis, and animal cruelty. Each behaviour alone, MacDonald advised, might be cause for concern among the guardians or parents. The triad is suggested as a possible early warning regarding aggressive behaviour later in life (Hickey, 2002). The MacDonald triad—or at least aspects of it—while heavily critiqued and seen as problematic, has not been completely discounted in the near fifty years that have followed its publication. The Diagnostic Statistical Manual-IV-TR (text revision) includes animal cruelty as a link to physical violence and harm to humans. MacDonald (1963) linked childhood enuresis to trauma as a causal factor, resulting in humiliation; arson (or firestarting) was linked to childhood destructive “acting out”

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90 As of this writing, the fifth edition of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual is awaiting publication. Similar to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) published by the World Health Organisation, it provides a standardisation for mental disorders.
behaviours that, like animal cruelty, may play into the early developmental fantasy life of the later serial offender. In June, July, and August of 1980, the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin released a series of three articles that were derived from a 193-page document entitled “The Firesetter: A Psychological Profile” (Rider, 1980). Their investigation of arsonists’ firestarting continues to link this behaviour to serial predators. Wright and Hensley (2003), Merz-Perez et al (2001), and Arluke et al (1999), on the other hand, suggest animal cruelty is tied to anti-social behaviour, but not necessarily to violent crimes. Although the validity of this matrix is debated, it is still employed in post-arrest interviews by some researchers who adhere to a graduation hypothesis, whereby the individual moves from negative childhood behaviours to more destructive adult ones. The aforementioned predictability component is disputed, however, because humans are complex beings, and it becomes readily clear that while indicators may be present, there are no absolutes.

The psychological designations apropos to serial murderers are also prone to contestation. In the U.S., the terms “psychopath” and “sociopath” are used interchangeably to refer to serial killers, terrorists, and criminals alike. Popular literature continues to utilise the terms sociopath and psychopath interchangeably. Wright’s (2006) New York Times bestseller, The Looming Tower, which chronicles the violent behaviour of Al-Qaeda recruits, describes them as “sociopaths.” In that same year Class 11, the first CIA class after 9/11 by Waters (2006), reports that one of the intelligence operatives described the shootings of the D.C. Snipers as the work of “psychopaths.” To add further confusion, a Science News’ (2006) on-line cover story titled “No mercy, exploring the psychopath”, rendered a description of these

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91 Source: <http://www.sciencenews.org/view/issue/id/8022>
individuals that parallels that of the sociopath. It is fair to say that the term sociopath is quite specific to the U.S., as opposed to other countries (e.g., the United Kingdom). The perpetrators of serial murder—within popular culture and among psychological professionals—have been labelled at various times with both these classifications, and a third as well. Operationalising the terms psychopathy and sociopathy, Hare (1999), Cleckley (1941), and Stoudt (2005) et al have rendered descriptions of individuals who appear capable of engaging in remorseless criminality. Psychopathy implies a mental disorder whose roots may be biological in origin and therefore possibly genetic, while sociopathy implies environmental causation. The DSM IV-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-4th edition text revised) no longer lists sociopathy or psychopathy as pathologies, opting instead for the diagnosis “anti-social personality disorder” (ASPD). The term “anti-social personality disorder”, as used by Black (1999), draws no conclusions as to the origins of its criminal psychological component.

The differences between the psychopath and sociopath appear to lay in the debate of nature versus nurture respectively. Though the model of psychopathy, as advanced by Cleckley (1941/1988) and Hare (1999), has been largely supported in North America, some researchers suggest that it is better viewed in terms of personality traits, while others propose it be viewed in terms of antisocial behaviour. Outside the U.S., the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10; World Health Organisation, 1992) terms it dissocial personality disorder. Semantic variations, including the term sociopathy, are attempts by the psychiatric community to describe what appear to be overlapping diagnoses relating to criminality (Guze, et al, 1967; Moran, 1999; Stout,

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92 “In the late 1980s, the agents from the Investigative Support Unit at the FBI Academy joined with the Behavioral Science Unit to begin working on a crime classification manual, using as a guide the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR, 2006) of the American Psychiatric Association. Work groups were assigned to major crime categories of murder, arson and sexual assault” (Douglas et al, 2006, p. 98).
Murphy and Vess (2003) further categorise the psychopathic personality into four possible sub-types: narcissistic, borderline, sadistic, and antisocial. Ansevics and Doweiko’s (1991) research of serial murderers concluded that “the serial murderer reflects a variation of the borderline personality disorder and should be treated as such rather than as an antisocial personality disorder” (p. 115). Regarding these various personality constructs, specifically psychopathy, Moran (1999) recommends that:

> even if we accept the notion of a unitary clinical construct termed psychopathy, there exists no agreement within psychiatry as to how this construct should best be conceptualized… the concept remains most elusive… (p. xv).

Further research is needed to gain insight into the root causes of these personality types and their close association with serial homicide for the purposes of predictability, prevention, and treatment. At the core of the psychopathic personality construct are the narcissistic traits developed by individual as a response to destabilising interpersonal relationships and life events. This is a major aspect necessary to understanding the serial murderer (Pollock, 1995). Serial killer research conducted both by social scientists and the FBI reveals perpetrators who use their predations to gain a sense of control and power over their victims. The need to gain power and recognition might be seen as important to those individuals who feel socially excluded. Describing rage and aggression as part of the narcissistic pathology and its relationship to low self-esteem, Kohut (1972) proposes:

> The most violent form of narcissistic rage arises in those individuals for whom a sense of absolute control over an archaic environment is indispensable because the maintenance of self-esteem and indeed of the self depends on the unconditional availability of the approving function of an admiring self object or on the ever present opportunity for a merger with an idealized one… (p. 386).

Their narcissism may also manifest in the behaviours of the perpetrators who seek attention, demonstrate their cleverness, evade capture, and, in some cases, taunt law
enforcement. The narcissistic traits found among some serial killers appear to be especially true of organised killers. It is important to note that, among organised serial predators, narcissism can encompass delusions of grandeur. Each successful murder can further develop feelings of omnipotence, causing these individuals to continue to kill unless they are captured or burnt out due to ageing. Narcissism has also been a significant factor that ironically has led to the capture of many serial killers, due to their desire for recognition (Wilson, 2009). There are numerous cases where narcissistic serial murderers have injected themselves into the crime scene by acting as witnesses or writing letters to the media and police (e.g., David Berkowitz, aka New York City’s "Son of Sam” or Dennis Rader, the “BTK Killer” in Wichita, Kansas). In conjunction with the need for power and control, attention from law enforcement and the media may feed the narcissism of some serial murderers, to the extent that they are willing to risk capture. The Canadian serial killer Clifford Robert Olsen, for example, stopped into a local police station immediately after murdering 17-year-old Louise Marie Chartrand. Mr. Olsen had left some personal belongings at the police station where he had been transported months before and taken for questioning. After his apprehension, he requested payment from the police for revealing the location of his victims’ bodies. In another instance, Jeffery Dahmer left his house to converse with two police officers while his naked victim, bleeding from the anus, was running in the streets seeking help from these same officers. The responding police officers physically helped Jeffrey Dahmer return the victim to his apartment after being told the incident was just a lover's quarrel (Norris, 1992). John Wayne Gacy, while being followed and surveilled by police, stopped at a gas station where he propositioned a young male attendant. Despite having thirty bodies buried in his home, he gave the gas attendant a bag of
marijuana. The attendant promptly flagged down the surveilling officers, giving them the further probable cause needed for their search warrant (Sullivan and Maiken, 1983).

All of these acts may be viewed within the context of the narcissistic personality construct, and eventually led to the arrest of each perpetrator. A number of organised black serial killers also displayed narcissistic tendencies. Douglas (1990) notes that the serial murderer’s narcissistic personality can be utilised to the advantage of law enforcement. Regarding Wayne Williams, convicted “Atlanta child murderer”, who left victims’ bodies where the police had previously searched, he writes:

What it means is, he's closely following the press...he's showing how superior he is how he can manipulate the press and the police. He's showing his arrogance and contempt...so let's see if we can use that to manipulate his behavior... (Ibid., pp. 209-210).

The D.C. Snipers also engaged law enforcement through a phone conversation with investigators; during this call, mention was made of an unsolved murder in “Montgomery.” The killers assumed law enforcement investigators would think they were referring to Montgomery County in nearby Maryland. Instead, investigators thought more broadly, correctly considering other places named “Montgomery.” Fingerprint analysis linked the snipers to a killing in Montgomery, Alabama, which aided in their capture. Likewise, Derek Todd Lee, the black Louisiana serial killer, after having murdered several women, was arrested on an unrelated burglary charge. Narcissism led him to demand to take the stand, against the advice of his attorneys. Stanley (2006) notes that Derrick Todd Lee’s conviction was obtained after he:

detailed an elaborate story about looking for his friend Monroe, he looked straight at the jurors, projecting a sincere face—something he'd been practicing his whole life… (p. 126).

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93 The assessments, “FBI serial killer behavioral profile released September 3, 2002” and “FBI serial killer behavioral profile released January 17, 2003” of Derrick Todd Lee did not suggest the race of the perpetrator (Stanley, 2006, pp. 367-370).
As a manifestation of psychopathy, narcissism can be telling, and is often shaped by childhood events. This research references the Cleckley/Hare model that is utilised by the FBI and many serial murder researchers in the U.S. This point is made to acknowledge that there is no unilateral agreement among social scientists as to how the term psychopathy should be conceptualised. For ease of comprehension and its recent resurgence in popularity, the term psychopathy is utilised here. Hare (1993) describes psychopaths as “social predators who harm, manipulate and ruthlessly, plow their way through life…” He further observes, “Psychopaths show a stunning lack of concern for the devastating effects their actions have on others…” (pp. xi - 40). It should be stated that the creation of the PCL-R (Psychopathic Checklist, Revised) by Hare gained popularity as a psycho-diagnostic tool that attempts to measure the lack of empathy, remorse, and guilt frequently associated with the psychopathic personality construct. FBI researcher Beasley’s (2004) study of seven male serial murderers (five white, two black) utilises Hare’s PCL-R with a racially diverse, albeit small, sample. Hare’s PCL-R is used by both mental health professionals and law enforcement to identify behaviours that appear to be common among serial murderers. In the field of psychology, numerous tests are employed to measure a variety of personality traits (e.g., Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory [MMPI] test; several empathy scales, such as Joliffe’s Basic Empathy Scale, Hogan’s Emotional Empathy Scale, the HCR-20 Assessment Risk violence test, as well as the Myers-Briggs typology test) created for the purpose of making personality assessments.

Although Hare’s Psychopathic Checklist has gained popularity in recent years, it is only one of numerous psychological assessment tools that may also have some predictive value. It is necessary at this point to reiterate that the assumption that all serial killers are psychopaths has been debated among researchers. Psychopathy alone
does not lend itself to an explanation regarding the motivations of serial murderers. The killer may possess some but not all of the traits identified as psychopathic in varying degrees, yet the use of the term by the FBI to define serial killers appears to be a foregone conclusion. Hare’s (1999) initial exploration into the behavioural antecedents found among psychopaths lacked the diversity of sampling (i.e., the inclusion of African Americans) that would firmly establish psychopathy as an all-encompassing psychological malady, rather than a behavioural mechanism adapted for surviving particular environments, such as violent urban neighbourhoods. Criticism of Hare’s initial research, prior to wide distribution of the PCL-R, is that it was conducted among the prison population in Canada’s British Columbia, where the population’s diversity includes different demographic percentages than those found in the U.S., and where history and culture might render different findings. Furthermore, in terms of validity, there have been limited related studies conducted among African Americans. This research suggests that, although race may be a social construct, it is important in terms of how it is defined and perceived by the dominant group within a society. It is the historical and sociological impact that affects that group within the context of perceived personality constructs, racial bias, and social interaction. It is reasonable to assert that the African American experience differs from those of black Canadian inmates who were part of Hare’s initial study, given historical and sociological dissimilarities between the two nations. Hare’s psychopathic checklist does focus on criminality; however, it fails to address in-depth issues of sexuality, which are often a component in serial murder, implicit or explicit. Questions within the PCL-R address the participants’ prior criminal history. Anderson (1999) suggests that both sexual conquest and criminality are often critical issues in the lives of young African American males. In an oppositional culture, engaging in both, rather than avoiding them, is sometimes
tantamount to a rite of passage. The question remains, does the psychopathic personality, at times associated with those who commit serial murder, have genetic markers, or is it a by-product of socialisation (environment)?

While there has been no definitive answer, several studies were conducted utilising Hare’s PCL, PCL-R, and PCL:YV (e.g., Forth et al, 1990, Gretton et al, 2001, and Salekin et al, 2004). Lynn’s (2002) study suggested that individuals of African descent were more likely to exhibit psychopathic traits than those of European ancestry. Criticisms of Lynn’s theory range from those who equate psychopathy with general social deviance and those who assume that genetic factors are responsible for social deviance, dismissing sociological factors, such as individuals residing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods or the accepted norms of such environments (McCoy and Edens, 2006; Skeem et al, 2003). Therefore, this research suggests that what might be measured as psychopathic traits via Hare’s aforementioned scales, may actually be behaviours adopted as survival mechanisms within the lower social strata of urban black America, a concept explored in Chapter Three. Skeem et al (2004) note the popularity of Hare’s PCL-R, yet question its limited research. These researchers particularly emphasise that studies of non-white and female perpetrators are few in number, and because:

psychopathy increasingly is being used to influence treatment, judicial, correctional, and public policy decisions in the United States and other countries, the extent to which the primarily White male research based on psychopathy generalizes to other populations is of considerable practical significance. To the degree that this construct and its measurements work differently in these populations extreme caution is warranted when making generalizations from the existing data. This is particularly true of the African American or Black population. . . (Ibid., p. 506).

This concern for the PCL-R’s reliability regarding the variance of psychopathic traits along racial lines is also addressed by McCoy and Edens (2006). Acknowledging the
psychopathic checklist’s popularity and its various versions in their meta-analysis of the psychopathic checklist, Youth Version (PCL:YV), the researchers state that “…it seems highly likely that ‘youth psychopathy’ will be adopted widely by clinicians in juvenile settings.” They further caution that:

Acculturation, ethnic identity, socioeconomic status, and neighborhood characteristics are but a few common examples of dimensions where there is considerable heterogeneity within racial categories. Therefore, even if significant differences were to exist across these groups, this would only be the first step in ascertaining exactly what etiological factors are responsible for these differences…The vast majority of research has continued to rely on simplistic racial or ethnic categories with essentially no consideration of the biological, psychological, or variability reflected in these labels… (Ibid., pp. 387-338).

What registers in whites as psychopathy might be a false reading among urban blacks, due to behaviours that, as Goffman (1959) suggested, involve the presentation of the self needed for survival. The psychopathy measured in urban black Americans may be a form of mimicry. The eighteenth-century naturalist Lamarck, among other noteworthy discoveries, suggested that “mimicry” is often utilised as tool for survival. For poor urban blacks subject to contributing factors that include historical, economic, environmental, and, in some cases, biological (i.e., prenatal trauma) issues, in a culture where violence is a readily acceptable response to stress, adaptation is essential. If it were merely a question of social learning, the most probable solution would be early childhood intervention (Hare, 1993; Douglas, 1995).

While there has been research utilising Hare’s PCL-R among African American subjects (e.g., Skeem et al 2004; Jackson et al 2007; Walsh et al 2007), a further complication is the self-reporting checklist. It has been suggested that African

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95 Bandura (1977) suggested that behaviours were a matter of socialisation and modeling, and therefore learned.
Americans either do not respond to surveys or tend to respond to researchers based on levels of comfort which may be race-based (Priest, 1992). During his 2003 interview with Elroy Chester, a black serial killer and Death Row inmate in Texas, SSA Beasley\(^\text{96}\) noted an interesting dynamic. Beasley had concerns regarding how much information he could gather from Chester, who had initially stated that the reason he killed his victims was that he hated white people. Cautiously optimistic and hoping for the best, Special Agent Beasley eventually asked Mr. Chester about the issue of race: “In a nutshell, Elroy Chester said he fabricated his motive for murder because he felt that’s what people wanted to hear” (Ibid.). The interview process within the context of serial killer research will be revisited in Chapter Seven. A further examination of the African American male as a serial killer shall be examined in the next section, in conjunction with U.S. mental health statistics. This data is significant due to its correlation with behavioural antecedents identified by the FBI and personality constructs social researchers have linked to serial murderers. In addition, it suggests possible causal factors unique to the history of blacks in the U.S.

*Serial Murder and African Americans*

There is no lack of literature regarding serial murderers in general, but a dearth of information regarding the involvement of African Americans in this type of predation certainly exists. The works of Hickey, Jenkins, Walsh et al have sought to illuminate this issue, but their direction has primarily been documentation rather than an exploration of causation or issues that might be specific to these murderers. Hickey (2002, p. 133) notes that statistically one in five serial murderers is black, a critical observation. Jenkins (1993) observes that these perpetrators go unnoticed by the public.

\(^{96}\) Personal communication, FBI Supervisory Special Agent James O. Beasley II, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. 19 April 2004.
and law enforcement. Walsh’s (2005) identification of African American serial killers
dates back to 1945, while Jenkins (1993) believes the earliest involvement of an
African American in serial murder occurred in 1935, when Jarvis Catoe, a black male,
was implicated in eight sex-m Murders between 1935-1941, mainly committed in New
York City and Washington, D.C.97 Jenkins’ (1994) and Walsh’s (2005) observation
that the African American serial killer is not a new phenomenon is correct. This is a
fact, and in keeping with the U.S. criminal justice data regarding the overrepresentation
of blacks as perpetrators of personal violent crime. It is also in accord with mental
health data presented in this chapter. Jenkins’ (1993) truism that these murders go
unrecognised remains true, demonstrating the distorted view held by law enforcement
and the general public alike. African American psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint, Professor
of Psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School, is aware of similar data. He
addresses student disbelief that the D.C. Snipers were black, observing:

A lot of students around here were saying, “Oh no he can’t be black.”
This is the crazy thing we get hung up on, the nature of racism…I don’t
know why, if we’re shooting up people in ghettos at astronomical rates,
we can’t do this? (Washington Post, 26 October, 2002).

The nature of racism is to make general assumptions about an individual or
group without an examination of the facts. Walsh (2005) acknowledges race as a factor
in what he sees as the media’s reluctance to acknowledge the existence of African
American serial killers. He believes this is based on a desire to not appear racist or
politically incorrect: “There does appear to be a reluctance to cast African Americans
in negative roles” (p. 282). This explanation, if true, is completely contrary to a history
of negative media portrayals of black criminality in America. This research suggests
that any such media reluctance is further aided by the FBI’s silence on the subject, or

97 Fig. 7, the “Known African American Serial Killers” chart, reveals that black serial killers existed as
early as 1915.
its seeming inability to connect mental health data regarding urban blacks and their engagement in serial murder. Walsh (2005) assumes that, because the ninety black serial killers included in his table have been captured, that law enforcement agents in general are aware that African American serial killers exist. He further presumes such captures indicate law enforcement is therefore not hindered by race-based perceptions. This would contradict the traditional role of law enforcement throughout American history as an agency whose overall function has been to maintain the status quo. In actuality, substantial evidence suggests that some of these captures were, in fact, delayed because of race-based assumptions. Black serial killers Derrick Todd Lee in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Coral Watts98 in Michigan and Texas, for example, killed for many years before their apprehensions. Both serial murderers, based on their methodology, were organised killers. Although the study by Walsh further solidifies the existence of African American serial killers, he makes erroneous claims regarding easily verifiable facts. He states, for instance, that “Kendall Francois and Derrick Todd Lee are recent examples of African American solo killers who targeted only white victims” (Ibid., p. 276), although one of Derrick Todd Lee’s victims, was, in fact, an African American woman.99 Walsh’s errors are significant not only because of his lack of fact-checking, but also because they demonstrate the susceptibility of even social researchers towards generalisations.

As these and other incidents indicate, it has been incorrectly accepted as true that serial killers’ victims are usually the same race as the perpetrator (Walsh, 2005; 


99 Dene’ Colomb’s picture is prominently displayed on the State of Louisiana’s Multi-Agency Task Force website. Stanley (2006) writes about her ability to date interracially: “In Lafayette, Louisiana, despite her glowing good looks, she sometimes found that difficult due to lingering racial prejudice” (p. 238).
Fox and Levin, 2005; Egger, 2002). These generalisations seem to be based on the individual scholars’ limited data and perceptions about black serial killers, but it is also due to the dearth of primary research regarding black serial murderers. In fact, numerous black offenders have chosen primarily white victims (e.g., Derek Todd Lee, Coral Watts, Kendall Francois), while the converse is also true regarding white serial murderers (e.g., Gary Ridgeway and Jeffrey Dahmer, among others, who killed non-whites). As of this writing few studies regarding specific black serial killers exist in general, and there is no research based on interviews or a study of their victimology; such research might illuminate specific aspects of these murderers’ psychologies and personal histories. Hickey’s (2002) study of serial murderers from 1800 to 1995 reveals that, among several categories, including strangers, acquaintances, co-workers, hitchhikers, nurses, models, waitresses et al, “…young woman were the most frequent victims identified” (p. 145). Caputi et al (1979) and Russell (2008) suggest that femicide is a continuation of the historic brutality against woman. Schlesinger (1998) notes that hostility towards woman in adult serial murders is their outstanding characteristic, while Leyton (2001) offers a theory of serial murder as a social balance of power. Both theoretical viewpoints might provide a cogent argument for the existence and motivations of black serial killers based on the African American experience. Groth et al (1979) argues that rape utilises sex to gain power, while Simms (2006) offers this perspective:

Historically, race, gender and class have played a significant role in defining the penalty of sexual assault and abuse. For example, slave owners raped African American women and it was not considered a

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crime. Meanwhile, African American male slaves having consensual sex with white woman were often beaten, if not hung (p. 17).

The theme of power through the utilisation of sex is historically significant for African Americans. Fear and legislation against miscegenation by the dominant culture were manifestations of sex as an instrument of power and control. Revitch and Schlesinger (1981/1989) suggest that the majority of compulsive serial murderers have an underlying basis of sexual conflict. The issue of sexual dysfunction among African Americans historically and within contemporary society, however, lacks extensive research. It is interesting to note that many such sexual dysfunctions appear to have been addressed mostly in works of fiction (books and film), rather than through research. African American authors Ralph Ellison, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison have tackled these issues within their novels Invisible Man (1952), The Color Purple (1982), and The Bluest Eye (1970), respectively. Regarding the issue of a lack of empirical evidence regarding African American child molestation, Priest (1992) observes:

Respondents to research questionnaires on its prevalence, however, have usually been members of the majority population. Most research has not contained a representative sample of African Americans. Consequently there is a dearth of information regarding the prevalence of child sexual victimization in African American communities (p. 475).

Priest’s research included a self-reporting questionnaire given to 1500 African American students who attended twelve African American colleges in 1990. The mean age of the respondents was 19.92 years, the youngest participant being 18 and the oldest 56. The returned questionnaires numbered 1040, 684 (66%) from females, and 356 (34%) from males. One hundred and sixty-eight (25%) of the females and forty-

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101 The character “Jim Trueblood” in Ellison’s novel impregnates his own daughter. Similarly, the films “Slaughterhouse Rules” (2002) and “Precious” (2009) both dramatically depict sexual dysfunction via incestuous relationships between African American fathers and their daughters.
four (12%) of the males stated that they were sexually victimised before the age of 17. None of the victimised males had received counselling, and only three of the females had done so (Ibid.). Some studies suggest a reticence to report sexual abuse within the African American community. Regarding reports of sexual abuse, Wyatt et al, 1999 observe that, as opposed to their European American counterparts, African American women and their families are less likely to report these incidents to police and social service agencies. A study by Fontes et al (2001) reveals:

within the various African American groups, almost no stories of abuse within the family were shared. African American participants appeared most comfortable talking about child sexual abuse happening to strangers whom they heard about in the media. In the rare instances where African American men and women revealed their own abuse or abuse in their family, these disclosures were virtually ignored by the group (p. 107).

For a group socially excluded for hundreds of years and sexualised by the dominant culture, sex as power is a familiar theme, and one that permeates the urban African American environment. Fathering children and having multiple sexual partners are processes viewed as conquests, signs of manhood, virility, and power (Anderson, 1999). This occurs even in what might seem to be some unexpected circumstances. Traditionally, socio-political power in the urban black community has been achieved through the solidarity of black churches (e.g., Southern Christian Leadership Conference). Although no empirical data exists, anecdotal evidence suggests that the use of the churches by some black pastors satisfied more personal reasons than socio-political gain. Further enquiry might reveal sexual scandals within these churches similar to those besetting the Catholic churches, albeit for different reasons. Are the

102 It is worthy of note that The State of Black America, 2007, Portrait of the Black Male, an official publication of the National Urban League, which “is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to economic empowerment in order to elevate the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities” assesses aspects of the African American community that need improvement, but makes no mention of “sexual abuse” or “sexual dysfunction” in this publication. Source: <www.nul.org>
descendants of former slaves whose forefathers’ sexuality was marketed for breeding and controlled by power (e.g., castrations) predisposed to psycho/sexual dysfunctions manifested in serial predation or perceived as a social equaliser? The aforementioned chemical imbalances proposed as a causal factor for acts of violence—especially serial murder—due to lowered prenatal cortisol production in mothers whose pregnancies are stressful suggest one of several productive research directions regarding African American urban violence. Although the results of these studies are inconclusive, the implications of sexual dysfunctions, offspring biologically predisposed to violent crime, involvement with the U.S. penal system, psychopathy, and perhaps serial murder, are certainly worthy of further study.

The mental health data regarding urban blacks in the U.S. glaringly exposes the disconnect between the FBI’s seminal study of serial murderers and the social and environmental factors that the agency suggests are common to serial murderers. A review of Mental Health: Culture, Race and Ethnicity (2001), from the U.S. Surgeon General’s Report, reveals aspects among the lives of many urban African Americans that coincide with such traits. The Surgeon General’s Report regarding High Need Populations states:

Owing to a long history of oppression and the cumulative impact of economic hardship, African-Americans are significantly overrepresented in the most vulnerable segments of the population. More African-Americans than whites or members of other racial and ethnic minority groups are homeless, incarcerated, or are children in foster care or otherwise supervised by the child welfare system. African-Americans are especially likely to be exposed to violence-related trauma (Kessler et al, cited in Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity, 2001, p. 61).

The report continues:

103 Studies similar to Popma et al (2007) and Lindman et al (1997) might offer a meaningful understanding for the overrepresentation of blacks within the U.S. criminal justice system.

104 Source: <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cre/default.asp>
Blacks of all ages are more likely to be the victims of serious violent crime than are whites...African-Americans were not only at a greater risk of being victims of violence but also at greater risk of knowing someone who had suffered physical violence...

Furthermore, the report maintains:

African-American children make up about 45 percent of the children in public foster care...they are suspected victims of abuse or neglect. Often they are removed from their homes and placed elsewhere...The link between violence and psychiatric symptoms is clear (Ibid., p. 62).

Based on the 2001 U.S. Surgeon General’s *Mental Health; Culture, Race and Ethnicity* report, the antecedents associated with individuals who kill serially are more pervasive among African-Americans than they are in the population as a whole. Likewise, the psychological data regarding this group corresponds with behavioural antecedents that the FBI suggests are related to individuals who commit serial murder.\textsuperscript{105} Therefore, to assume that African-Americans would not participate in serial murder is contrary to the conclusions of both mental health data and the FBI’s own findings. This researcher is unaware of any other study that links and notes the significance of this particular correlation. Its import could be an underpinning for future serial murder investigations and implications regarding black criminality.

**Discussion**

This research suggests that, if the FBI’s profiling matrix continues to fail to connect its own data regarding behavioural antecedents with those suggested by U.S. mental health statistics and crime data regarding African Americans, the investigation and apprehension of black serial killers will remain elusive. Furthermore, the FBI’s advisory role to numerous law enforcement agencies regarding serial murder suggests a possible increase in the failure of those agencies’ ability to detect black serial killers as

\textsuperscript{105} It is interesting to note that the research by Gail Bradshaw into PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome) suffered by elephants traumatised in childhood reveals acts of unprovoked violence on villages by juvenile elephants who lacked adult male models (Shaik, 2006).
well. This research also proposes that, for African Americans, the historic socio-economic system in the U.S. has contributed to an environment of resentment and humiliation, not dissimilar to that of personalities that engage in serial murders. It additionally considers that the lingering psycho-sexual component of that history, as it may exist within familiar or familial structures, has been neglected in terms of research by both the FBI and social scientists. Yet another observation relevant to black serial killer anonymity is that law enforcement’s motivation to act in serial murder investigations is often selective, which suggests they are prone to social biases related to the historical issues discussed in Chapter Three. Examples of the impact of social biases on the investigation of serial killers were addressed in this chapter regarding Jeffrey Dahmer, and John Wayne Gacey. Likewise, Albert Fish continued to kill multiple black children and was not pursued with vigor until pubescent white female Grace Budd was reported missing (Jenkins, 1993). While these biases favouring whites delayed apprehension of white serial killers, biases regarding blacks may have equal impact on the apprehension of black serial killers. The issue is one of perceptions. During serial killer investigations, the impact of law enforcement agents’ perceptions and how they shape their response to incidents and investigations significantly affects the public. Law enforcement agents are not immune to the same social biases that affect all aspects of our lives, for such preconceptions dictate how we respond and what we believe. Therefore, the dismissal of the existence of black serial killers by U.S. law enforcement agents also poses the danger of delayed apprehension of suspects, enhanced fear in communities, and the likelihood of additional victims. It will take more than law enforcement symposia and diversity training to address this issue. Chapter Five examines the myth building that has resulted from media depictions of serial killers as exclusively white male iconic figures, as well as its impact. It further
supports how the continuous propagation of negative imagery about blacks ensures an almost irreconcilable disassociation of blacks with serial murder. This issue will be examined through limited, books, films, murderabilia, and media portrayals.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE MEDIA’S ROLE IN CREATING FICTIONAL MONSTERS: TELEVISION, NEWSPAPERS, BOOKS, AND FILMS

The American media produce monsters for public consumption. They do so in multiple ways, with monsters that vary in type and character. Monsters are meant to be feared, whether they are terrorists, criminals, health hazards, wife beaters, or serial killers, but the degree and type of fear they inspire differs, as does its longevity. Some are amorphous and faceless threats, while others are individualised and have personalities, standing out as cultural touchstones. This chapter further examines one of this work’s consistent themes—that, historically, the U.S. media has portrayed urban African American males as individuals with a propensity to engage in crime. However, concurrent with their portrayals of blacks as predisposed towards a wide range of crimes—excluding serial killing which is considered to require cunning, guile, and intelligence—the U.S. media have developed a fascination for white serial murderers. Therefore, this chapter looks further at the phenomenon of serial killers in general, and how the media has established them as celebrities through television and print news, as well as their actual and fictional appearances in books and films. It then considers the disconnect that results—the media is willing to stamp urban black men as criminals, yet remains reluctant to iconicise them as serial killers. Comparisons of black and white serial murderers packaged for entertainment consumption reflect the general disparate media treatment of blacks and whites (see Fig. 8). Finally, two particular examples are considered in detail, in order to demonstrate the specifics of media discrepancies. The
first compares and contrasts media coverage of two murderers, one black and one white, who operated during similar times within the same city, while the second is a case study of how the investigation of the best-known recent black serial killers, the D.C. Snipers, was affected by the shortsightedness of media-established stereotypes. This thesis suggests that the divergent perceptions regarding whites and blacks are a byproduct of the history of discrimination in the U.S. These representations distort our understanding and limit our scope regarding the serial murderer in America, and the media’s role in their creation requires examination.

**Media and Law Enforcement’s Depictions of Blacks**

The persistent anonymity of black serial killers begins with the news media’s establishment of the “fact” that urban black males are criminals—but criminals of a certain type. Researchers suggest that public perceptions regarding crime are derived from the media, noting the crucial role that mass media play in the social construction of crime. Fleming (2007) observes, “Media coverage of serial murder is both sensational and exhaustive…” (p. 277). Most people’s knowledge of many social phenomena, including matters concerning crime and criminality, are learned through the media rather than through direct experience. Mass media are the major sources of public information and perceptions about law breakers and their transgressions (Jerin and Fields, 2005). As previously mentioned, Surette (1998) concedes that the media exercise considerable influence on popular culture and vice versa, including law enforcement. Advancing this point, Morrissey (2003) argues that there is a close relationship between the media and law enforcement, such that “the two function together and their representations…mostly lend themselves to a single analysis…” (p. 4). This relationship has created a singular portrayal of African American males, a perspective that lacks diversity. It focuses on violence, yet avoids the category of serial
killer. The criminalisation of African Americans has its roots in justifications of slavery, as Chapter Three demonstrates. Colonial, early American, antebellum, and immediate post-Civil War American media that addressed blacks were predominantly written news media, though some novelistic accounts also had wide distribution, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852). While Northern court records do not show unusual rates of black convictions, and Southern blacks under slavery were usually punished outside the legal system, public perceptions regarding black criminality began to form patterns, whether borne out by fact or not. Slotkin (1973), discussing the American crime narrative formulated during colonial times, states:

…the Puritans took seriously the conventional image of the “black” and blackening character of all unvirtuous behavior. The demons who possessed young white girls during the witchcraft hysteria of 1692 were described as Black and the devil himself called the Black Man (p. 9).

In late eighteenth century Philadelphia, slavery’s gradual abolition created a reaction in its opponents, who, as Rowe (1989) states, “… assumed criminal behavior by blacks, and pressed for close surveillance of the black community” (p. 687)—this despite a record that shows the preponderance of black crime in the city was, like white crime, overwhelmingly that of theft because of need. Stabile (2006) notes that the nineteenth century American “penny press” instigated mass media designations of black criminality, heavily sensationalising rapes of white women. This particularly accelerated after the Civil War in the Reconstruction period and during the late nineteenth century adoption of the previously-mentioned Jim Crow laws, when lynchings became common methods of punishing “criminals.” Even much less inflammatory means of disseminating criminal stereotyping became prevalent during this era, perhaps to a more lasting effect. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, references to black crime were frequent in mainstream comic sources, even far
from the South and its historic fallout. Cartoons in journals such as *Puck*, *Life*, or 
*Harper's Weekly* (cited in Chapter Three), as well as caricatures on popular sheet music 
covers, consistently portrayed black men engaged in gambling, petty property theft of 
chickens and watermelons, and razor attacks on one another. With the advent of new 
visual media such as film and television in the twentieth century, additional non-verbal 
cues drew associations between African Americans and crime, and expansion of more 
visible drug and violent crime exacerbated matters. The research conducted by 
Welch (2007), regarding news coverage via national and local television reporting and 
magazines, reveals this same typecasting of the black male as a criminal. Dreier (2005) 
additionally notes:

> Major news media coverage of cities reinforces an overwhelmingly 
> negative and misleading view of urban America…It comes as no 
> surprise that even people who live in communities with little crime or 
> drug problems think that they are in the middle of a crime wave 
> perpetuated primarily by black males… (pp. 193-194).

In the twentieth century, with its expanded media outlets, the historic portrayal 
of blacks as social predators has been chronicled from the “Scottsboro Boys” case in 
the 1930s to the 1989 Central Park Jogger case in New York City and the O. J. 
Simpson murder trial of 1994. In these instances, the media used public fear and racial 
prejudice to portray African Americans as brutes (Chancer, 2005). The distorted 
contemporaneous interpretations of photos of Civil Rights supporters, mentioned in 
Chapter Three, also made these individuals seems as if they were being restrained 

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106 Popular turn-of-the-century sheet music titles included “Dar’s a lock on de chicken coop door” 
(1884), “The coon’s trade-mark: a watermelon, a razor, a chicken and a coon” (1898), and “Razors in 
the Air” (1880). Source: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/sheetmusic/brown/index.html>

107 The case focused on the supposed gang rape of two white females by nine black males, an accusation 
that was an admitted fabrication but caused a media sensation. 
Source: <http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/scottsboro.html>
righteously by the police. Researchers Monteith and Spicer (2000) found that whites expressed negative attitudes towards blacks seeking equality, while blacks’ negative reactions to whites were based on perceived racism. Such incidents paralleled events of the previous century, when the press exacerbated white fears of individuals who led anti-slave rebellions or sponsored rebellious acts in the South, such as John Brown, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth.\textsuperscript{108}

It is the \textit{otherness}\textsuperscript{109} of black people that has been used historically to segregate them from mainstream, predominantly white, American society—in all but a few areas such as sports, entertainment, and penal institutions (Wacquant, 2001). U.S. segregation laws (1876-1965) prohibited interpersonal contact between blacks and whites, other than in work situations. For example, laws were enacted regarding miscegenation and racial interaction in the public sphere. Young (2001) explains social exclusion as a social problem rather than an individual one:

Firstly, it is multi-dimensional: social exclusion can involve not only social but economic, political, and spatial exclusion, as well as lack of access to specific desiderata such as information, medical provision, housing, policing, security, etc. . . . [It has also been noted that] These dimensions are seen to interrelate and reinforce each other: overall they involve exclusion in what are seen as the “normal” areas of participation of full citizenship….\textsuperscript{110}

The concept that limited interpersonal associations, as well as negative media images, contribute to the perceptions of a member of one particular racial group towards the

\textsuperscript{108} Harriet Tubman, a freed slave most notably associated with clandestine service (aka “the Underground Railroad”), helped escaped slaves move into free territories. She also recruited volunteers for white abolitionist John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry. Sojourner Truth, a former slave, recruited black men for the Union Army.

\textsuperscript{109} “Implicit in all these forms of intolerance is the notion of a despised ‘other’ as a means to maintaining an idealised self…media representations of immigrants, political refugees and British-born black and Asian people are frequently underpinned by powerful psychic notions of otherness which frequently find expression in a tendency to see crime perpetrated by non-white people as a product of their ethnicity” (Jewkes, 2004/2011, pp. 110-111).

\textsuperscript{110} Source: <http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/0199249377/resources/synopses/ch14.doc>
other is supported by several studies (e.g., Ng and Lindsay, 1994; Dasgupta and Greenwald, 2001; Smith et al, 2004). Continued semi-segregation through exclusionary neighbourhood housing and schools still perpetuates opinions shaped through the media. Current images of African Americans as drug dealers, junkies, thugs, street hoodlums, and predatory violent males abound on American television, in the cinema, and within hip hop culture, especially music and fashion. The popular television series The Wire (HBO), the movie Get Rich or Die Trying (Sheridan, 2005), and the lyrics to the song Deep Cover are just a few examples of extensive media reinforcement and depictions of black male criminality, antisocial behaviour, and involvement in low-level street crime. Limited opportunities for black actors have forced African Americans to be complicit in some of these representations. It is reasonable to assume that if such films were targeted to black audiences rather than the general public, black actors might resist criminal typecasting in favour of more popular roles. The general acceptance of this perception requires further enquiry as to why news reporting of African American involvement in serial murder appears to be limited, even by an industry whose credo has often been “if it bleeds it leads”, as Dreier (2005) observes. Haggerty (2009) suggests:

At their worst, the mass media feed public appetites for the sensational, cynically capitalize on the horrific, and institutionalize a culture of celebrity… (p. 173)

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111 cf. Wacquant’s previously-noted association of mainstream fashions, whose wearers are often unaware that their baggy pants are worn low in imitation of ill-fitting prison garb and that some of their tattoos are prison-themed (Wacquant, 2001, p. 116).

112 “Creep with me as I crawl through the hood, maniac, lunatic, call me Snoop Eastwood, kickin dust as I bust, fuck peace and the motherfuckin punk police…you already know I gives a fuck about a cop…cause it’s 1-8-7 on an undercover cop….” (1-8-7 is the California penal code for murder). Andre’ Young, Calvin Broadus, Jr., Colin Wolfe (1992) Epic Records.
The impact of the media on the consuming public and their lack of diversity in portraits of individuals and events has been the subject of numerous studies. Jewkes (2004/2011) notes:

Critics argue that the media continue to provide homogenised versions of reality that avoid controversy and preserve the status quo. Consequently ignorance among audiences is perpetuated, and the labeling, stereotyping and criminalisation of certain groups (often along lines of class, race and gender) persists… (p. 23)

Fiddler’s (2007) examination of the film *The Shawshank Redemption* is helpful in illustrating how the media’s use of imagery can create dramatic yet false representations. In this instance, it is the “reel” depiction of prisons versus the reality that unfolds. Fiddler (Ibid.) suggests that a media portrayal, however false it may be, impacts the public’s understanding of the carceral system. He details how the very physical structure of a prison fits the public’s accepted image of what prisons must be like: gothic, dark places with cathedral-like exteriors and coffin-like cells. These are places where men dream of tunneling their way to freedom and older prisoners, where individuals like the film’s character “Red” might be congenial to a prisoner like “Andy”, a fresh fish innocent of his crime. Media portrayals of guiltless men tunneling their way to freedom are thematic stereotypes common to numerous prison movies (e.g., *The Great Escape* (1963); *Papillon* (1973); *The Escapist* (2008), et al),113 reinforcing the limited public perception of real prison life. The theme of the wrongly convicted inmate echoes calls for social reform dating back to Beccaria’s *On Crimes and Punishments* (ca. 1764).

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113 Based on U.S. Justice Department statistics, about 2% of prisoners escape, Source: <http://www.slate.com/id/1007001/>. 

The social construction of the twentieth century serial killer began in 1984, as Walsh, Jenkins, Hickey et al suggest, with the FBI’s testimony before the U.S. Congress. Jenkins (1994) states:

There now emerged an influential stereotype of the serial killer, who was seen as a white male in his thirties or forties, a sexually motivated murderer who preyed on either men or women depending on his sexual orientation. Jeffrey Dahmer, Ted Bundy, and John Wayne Gacy would all fit this image perfectly…. (p. 21)

The FBI’s testimony, though an act of self-promotion, helped to define serial murder, as Chapter Four explains. The FBI’s advisory role in the majority of serial murder investigations both extends the agency’s influence and reinforces its image as the home of criminal profiling experts. The agency’s media exposure and influence are considerable, and the FBI’s 1984 Congressional testimony, in which the agency depicted serial killers as extraordinary predators who were almost supernatural in their ability to evade capture (Toufexis, 1994), had a significant impact upon the media. This extended to law enforcement and members of the public. In this testimony, the FBI inspired fear, not just by citing “super predators”, but by suggesting this criminal phenomenon was relatively new, as well as U.S.-based. These claims, as Jenkins notes (2002), were immediately believed by the media without investigation. History reveals, however, that the serial murders of possibly hundreds of people can be traced back to individuals like French nobleman Gilles De Rais in 1404 or Erzsebet Bathory, a Hungarian noblewoman, in 1575 (Ramsland, 2005). Their predations may have inspired tales of lycanthropes wandering the countryside in the mid-fourteenth and late fifteenth centuries respectively. It has been suggested that the phenomenon of society’s fascination with serial murder may be linked to folklore regarding vampires and werewolves (Touxefis, 1994), folklore that had already been the focus of many
bestsellers and popular movies. Those involved were not unaware of what they were creating. Jenkins (2002) observes that the use of the word “serial” created a sense of monstrousness, of “uncontrollable repetition” and “absolute lack of self-control.”

Noting that science had tamped beliefs in the supernatural, he further states that:

…the newly re-imagined serial killer could be cited quite freely, as an undoubtedly authentic being whose existence was vouchsafed by social and behavioral science, yet who fulfilled all the mythical roles of the supernatural night-prowlers of old (pp. 1-2).

As the FBI created these formidable monsters, it positioned itself as the herculean agency most capable of apprehending them, making its agents the de facto reigning authorities regarding serial murder investigations. Jenkins (1993) suggests that the purpose of the FBI’s testimony was to increase funding for their fledgling Behavioral Science Unit, by insinuating that only this agency was equipped with the training and intelligence required to combat the terrifying perpetrators of serial murder. He (2002) further contends the agency positioned itself to remain in the forefront of serial murder investigations, acquiring funding, legitimacy, and power as the ultimate authority in any jurisdiction. The FBI’s testimony before Congress and its use of the term “serial murder” was then proliferated by the media. Jenkins (1994) observes that intense public debates about serial murder, both in serious news outlets and in conversations among citizens, creating what he suggests was a general national panic. These debates were due to the infusion of the FBI’s concept of serial murder as a new and terrifying phenomenon. The media and the FBI’s promotion of the horrific “birth” and proliferation of serial murder amplified this phenomenon. It concurrently supplied its perpetrators with an iconic status, reinforcing the concept that they were highly organised killers, extremely clever, and stoppable only by extraordinary law enforcement means. The media supported this image of a new breed of criminal, for news outlets, as commercial enterprises, were and are motivated to air or publish
newsworthy stories. Serial murders constituted a high level criminality worthy of frequent media attention, and public awareness of the phenomenon was quickly established because of its marketability.

Schmid (2005) and Selzter’s (1998) works suggest that the serial killer has become an iconic figure within popular culture, his criminality somehow converting him to a level demanding celebrity—albeit from a safe distance. Acenbach (1991) suggests that, “The serial killer has become an American original, a romantic icon, like the cowboy…” (cited in Jenkins, 1994, p. 3). The media had already accorded gangsters such as Bonnie and Clyde, or mobsters such as Lucky Luciano and other Mafia members, similar star treatment. While these violent archetypes may be monstrous in their actions, their idiosyncrasies demand a kind of attention, awe, and respect not accorded “common” murderers. It is worth noting that the luminary status afforded serial killers has created an industry that reinforces this cult star status. Marketing commercialisation has developed, and includes movies, books, and television shows, as well as trading cards, murderabilia, and thanatourism. All these commodities have emerged as viable and enduring economic enterprises. Murderauction.com, for example, bills itself as “the world’s most reputable true crime auction house”, and features serial killer items such as John Wayne Gacy “skull clown” paintings or the sweater worn by Richard “Night Stalker” Ramirez on Death Row. Starting bids for both items approach $2000. In addition to numerous serial killer trading cards (e.g., “True Life Murderers”, “Bloody Visions II”, “Cold Blooded Killers”), murderabilia includes newly-manufactured barbecue aprons emblazoned with cannibalistic Jeffrey Dahmer’s image, as well as items associated with these killers, [114 The persistence of this kind of elevation was illustrated by HBO’s popular weekly Mafia fictional series The Sopranos (1999-2007).]
such as a brick from the Oxford Apartments where Dahmer lived, or Ted Bundy’s childhood Bible. Jarvis (2007) suggests that:

Although it might be tempting to dismiss this phenomenon as the sick hobby of a deviant minority, murderabilia is merely the hardcore version of a mainstream obsession with the serial killer…The engine which drives this process is primarily economic… (pp. 327-328)

“Pilgrimages” to the sites of serial killers’ former homes or to their graves are aided by numerous Internet websites, a type of thanatourism that began even before serial murder was identified by that term.115 The serial killer mystique permeates American popular culture, from t-shirts to fan clubs, all derived from the positioning of this category of killer as a celebrity. Schmid (2005) states:

In a culture defined by celebrity, serial killers like Bundy, Dahmer, and Gacy are among the biggest stars of all, instantly recognized by the vast majority of Americans… (p. 1)

Serial murder is a way for would-be perpetrators, who feel powerless or inconsequential, to gain fame and notoriety. Egger (2002) notes that many serial killers seek and enjoy their celebrity status, reporting that John Wayne Gacy kept a scrapbook of newspaper clippings about his case. Gacy also bragged that he had been the subject of 11 hardback books, 31 paperbacks, two screenplays, a movie, one off- Broadway play, five songs, and over 5000 articles (Schechter, 2003, p. 235). White serial killer Dennis Rader, the BTK Wichita serial murderer, wrote a letter to the Wichita police asking, “How many do I have to kill before I get my name in the paper or some national attention…” (Gibson, 2006, p. 1). Just as the serial killer phenomenon is not restricted to the U.S., neither is the existence of their celebrity status, even when their image as an unstoppable predator differs. The serial murderer in the UK, for example, is sometimes viewed as a pathetic, dysfunctional, lone offender, yet, even so, his

115 An enterprising businessman planned to turn the Wisconsin home of serial killer Ed Gein, who committed his predations between 1947 and 1957, into a “House of Horrors” tourist attraction as early as 1957, but it was burnt down before development could take place.
reputation garners more attention than many other kinds of serious criminals (Wilson, 2009). Jewkes (2004/2011) suggests that Peter Sutcliffe, known as the “Yorkshire Ripper” and responsible for the murders of 13 women in northern England, even after two decades of confinement in a high security hospital:

…remains something of a media celebrity, with endless newspaper column inches and frequent television documentaries devoted to his crimes and his life since arrest… (p. 50).

While examining the American phenomenon that characterises white serial killers as celebrities, it becomes clear that media language contributes to their notoriety. Notoriety is celebrity. Descriptions of some of America’s best-known serial killers often include monikers: Richard Ramirez was the *Night Stalker* (later the title of a popular ABC television series about a paranormal investigator), John Wayne Gacy was the *Killer Clown* (most notably a haunting archetypal character in Stephen King’s movie *It* [1987]), and Danny Rolling, a Florida serial killer, became “the Gainesville Ripper” (in homage to Britain’s “Jack the Ripper”). These names evoke images of supernatural individuals, recall horror films, and are at times even reminiscent of a reincarnated predator. On 26 October 2006, in a story about the execution of Danny Rolling, the opening newspaper line read:

Florida’s most notorious serial killer since Ted Bundy was executed by injection Wednesday for butchering five college students in a ghastly string of slayings that terrorized Gainesville in 1990…

The words used to describe this white serial killer and his actions—“notorious”, “ghastly”, and “terrorized”—take a circuitous route of association. Dramatic terms regarding serial killers’ predations may be suitable, but these terms appear to be limited primarily to white males, reinforcing a particular racial association to the “supernatural

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116 Source: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15417276/>
predator” within the minds of the public. Additional adjectives such as “mastermind” or “fiendish” further underline the media association of superior intelligence with the white serial killer who evades justice, and may be captured only because of his own acts of hubris. The language the media use to describe black serial killers rarely contains such adjectives. Instead, “low IQ”, references to drug use, and dismissive terms tend to be employed. *Newsweek* magazine, for instance, characterised Coral Watts as a “homicidal bungler” with an “IQ of 75”, although he was accepted into college, murdered what is estimated to be dozens of women, and eluded apprehension for over eight years. In Schmid’s (2005) work about the iconic status of serial killers, the issue of race is not fully addressed. Though he briefly mentions black serial murderers Derek Todd Lee from Louisiana, as well as D.C. Snipers John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo, he includes them only within the context of the FBI’s lackluster investigation efforts in each case.

**The Black Serial Killer as Anti-Icon**

Black serial killers exist and are identified, arrested, and tried. This, of course, is not totally ignored by the media, but it is downplayed. Greer (2007) argues that:

…violence endures as a core news value, its newsworthiness can be intensified considerably when focused through the lenses of celebrity, childhood, sex and race… (p. 28)

Accepting this view, it is then reasonable to query, why would coverage of African American serial killers not logically meet the criteria of newsworthiness? The majority of U.S. media outlets are commercial enterprises, and increased revenue and audience ratings sustain their existence (Jewkes, 2004/2011). Why is so little reported regarding the activities of African American serial killers when it would seem that the violence...

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that accompanies serial murder would meet the required media *threshold*? Jewkes notes, “Events have to meet a certain level of perceived importance or drama in order to be considered newsworthy…” (Ibid., p. 41). Walsh (2005) suggests the lack of in-depth coverage of black serial killers is a pervasive media orientation, noting that the print and electronic news media have largely ignored these murderers. He proposes this is due to the media’s need to adhere to a doctrine of “political correctness”, which would avoid tainting African Americans with such heinous crimes. If this were accurate, it certainly only applies to the lack of coverage afforded black serial killers, for the media’s criminal portrayals of the black male continue to proliferate without regard to a politically correct agenda. While news media coverage of black serial killers certainly exists at the point of apprehension or trial, it does not appear to have a sustained impact, since many Americans, black and white, continue to repeat the canard that there are no black serial killers. What occurs is a limited distribution, density, and longevity of newsworthiness. Why then, despite the propensity of the media to portray African American males in a criminal light, does the media treatment and celebrity afforded the white serial killer eludes his black counterpart? Prolific crime author Ann Rule, an intimate of white serial killer Ted Bundy, shared her perceptions of serial murderers, stating most are:

…in the age group of 25 to 34 years of age. They are intelligent or at least street smart. They are charming and charismatic; and many of them are psychopathic… (cited in Holmes and Holmes, 1998, p. 14).

African Americans do not meet Rule’s “standard”, for her portrayal of serial killers counters the historic depiction of those black males engaged in criminality. Fox and Levin (2005) argue that, although the highly organised predations of white serial killer Ted Bundy are representative of how many Americans view serial killers, he is actually atypical and should not have become an archetype. Nonetheless, he remains a
household name despite his execution in 1989; his celebrity status is sustained. Box (1983) argues that the socially privileged and economically powerful fashion representations of crime in the media to suit their interests. Accepting that argument, it becomes evident why the historical portrayal and negative images of African American males have excluded them from the media’s serial killer depictions. There can be no iconisation of African American males because they have often been historically portrayed as folk devils, as defined by Cohen (1980).\textsuperscript{118} In American society, blacks are and have often been depicted within the media and popular culture as “symbols of threat”, thugs and criminals engaged in drug sales, violent random street crime, and looting, all anti-social acts that require little intelligence (Entman and Rojecki, 2001). Media-invented versions of serial killers are contrary to these “traditional” criminal roles assigned to African Americans. There is a strong public perception that African Americans within the criminal context only engage in primitive, random, and disorganised crime, although this depiction is false and unsupported by facts (Welch, 2007). Why and how this myth persists requires examination. Jewkes (2004/2011), in \textit{Media and Crime}, is direct in her query:

> Why do only certain criminal events become thrust into the public sphere with sufficient emotional intensity to shape public fears of victimisation? Why do some crimes invoke a public reaction so forceful that they become embedded in the cultural fabric of society, while other almost identical, incidents fail almost to register on the media radar, still less capture the collective imagination? Why do some very serious crimes cast a much longer shadow than others, and some offenders become iconic representations of pure evil while others fade into quiet obscurity? (p. 200)

Law enforcement officials also appear to be reluctant to acknowledge the existence of African American serial killers and afford them qualities readily attributed

\textsuperscript{118} “…individual or group defined as a threat to society, its values and interests, who become the subjects of a media-orchestrated moral panic. Folk devils are frequently young people who are stereotyped and scapegoated in such a way as to epitomise them as the problem in society… (Jewkes, 2004/2011, p. 225).
to their white counterparts. Despite the historical status of blacks as folk devils and their overrepresentation in homicides, which would seem to warrant both media and police focus, this reticence persists. In what Seltzer (1998) suggests is a “wound culture”, where murder and death are spellbinding to the general public, and the violence and unpredictability of serial murder is especially newsworthy, this reticence is not easily comprehended. If the FBI/media creation of a societal nemesis of high calibre and frighteningly high intelligence is all too newsworthy, negative perceptions of African Americans—despite their participation in violent crime—continue to automatically exclude them from this category of serial killer “superstardom.” How can they participate in high level criminality when their historically developed stereotype links them only to brutish, brainless violence? When “charming” and “charismatic” are replaced by “low IQ” and “drug-fueled rage”? The combination of a historic media bias and assignment of what might be termed “crude” crime to African Americans, as well as law enforcement’s inclination to perceive potential black involvement, continue to work against celebrity status for black serial killers.

Indeed, not only are black serial killers not household names, artefacts relating to them rarely turn up on murderabilia sites. As of 5 January 2009, the offerings of murderauction.com included only a handful of black serial killer items. Amongst them were a handwritten envelope belonging to Paul Durousseau (starting bid $14.99), and a similar handwritten envelope from Kendall Francois (starting bid $4.00); in 2007, another such envelope written by Coral Watts was selling for over $55.00. In contrast, a like envelope displaying the penmanship of Ted Bundy sells at the same site for $275.00, while one of his signed documents is currently offered there for just under

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119 On 30 July 2007, National Public Radio (NPR) reported this in a feature story about Texas’ legal attempts to stop murderabilia sales.
$3000.00. A handwritten letter and envelope belonging to Danny Rolling, “The Gainesville Ripper”, is on offer for $99.99, and a signed Christmas card and envelope sent by Britain’s “Yorkshire Ripper” Peter Sutcliffe has a starting bid of $349.99.

Jenkins (1994), who examines the images of the serial killer in popular culture, argues:

Constructionist studies often place major emphasis on the interpretation and dissemination of problems through the news media, but fictional and popular works also play a decisive role in determining cultural attitudes in an area like serial murder and relevant works include novels, films, comics, true crime books, and even trading cards… (p. 15).

Continuing commercialisation effectively ensures the celebrity status of serial killers and provides a gauge for assessing relative celebrity through the phenomenon’s very presence (i.e., items deemed to have a market) and the associated items’ assessed market value. Far fewer items related to black serial killers are part of the murderabilia stock, and their prices are far lower than those of most of their white counterparts. In Chapter Three, Goings (1994) revealed the proliferation of “black collectables”, items negatively depicting African Americans—housewares, games, postcards, toys, and figurines. These historic items currently fetch large fees. It is reasonable to ask why, if such items negatively depicting black Americans are currently bought, sold, and collected, why does there appear to be no real market for the murderabilia of black serial killers? The racism factor appears to devalue the inverted/perverted “worth” of these criminals, denying them both full notoriety and the status of celebrity. The celebrity treatment of the American serial killer as a white male is not restricted to the news media or the world of commercialised crime. It has become, as Schmid (2005) observed, a consistent theme in literature and film. The next section examines representations of the serial killer in these forms of popular culture, where, once again,

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120 As of July 2011, for example, a 1930s banjo-playing doll sells for $245.00 (Source: <http://www.trocadero.com/stores/stonegate/items/1068538/item1068538.html>), while a “Mammy” string holder from the 1950s sells for $295.00 (Source: <http://www.trocadero.com/stores/stonegate/items/1065633/item1065633.html>
African Americans are rarely seen in the serial killer role, further contributing to the stereotype of white males as the sole perpetrators of these “extraordinary” crimes.

**The Serial Killer in Popular Culture, Literature, and Film**

An examination of popular U.S. books and films reveals numerous works within the serial killer genre, but, as Jenkins (2002) notes, African American cases are not featured extensively in criminological literature, fiction, or films:

…the absence of black offenders in popular culture representations of the serial murder phenomenon can partly be explained by the general neglect of blacks and black themes in most American media. African Americans were not portrayed as serial killers in mainstream movies, but it could equally be argued that until recently they have but rarely received serious treatment in any role whatever… (p. 171)

The mythical version of serial killers referred to earlier is certainly present, featuring conventional portraits of white males, and remains popular. Hinch (1998) suggests:

…accounts of serial murder, some fictional, some about real killers, fuel an insatiable public appetite for tales of gruesome murder. In the process the media often creates a distorted image of serial murder and serial murderers… (p. 2).

The media’s role regarding the image of serial murderers as white males is also documented by Jenkins (1993), who suggests that this stereotype:

…was reinforced by frequent repetition in fictional depictions in print or in movies such as *Silence of the Lambs*. The serial killer, it was usually stated, was commonly a White male in his thirties or forties… (p. 48)

Author Thomas Harris (1988), who wrote the popular *Silence of the Lambs* and related novels, created the serial killer character of Hannibal Lecter, a brilliant white psychiatrist whose genius allows him to perform plastic surgery on himself and aid the FBI in tracking other serial killers, while also happening to be an expert in Japanese martial arts, a gourmet, and a general connoisseur of the finer things in life—as well as a cannibal. His popularity with the public in written and cinematic versions became so great that, in 2003, The American Film Institute voted this fictional serial killer the
number one villain of all time. Other fictional white serial murderers also often display
traits underlining their superiority, as they elude and taunt police. Patricia Highsmith’s
five novels about Tom Ripley, several of which have been made into films,\textsuperscript{121} portray a
killer who is able to parlay social climbing and serial murder into a successful life as a
gentleman of wealth and taste, eluding law enforcement’s pursuit through his
cleverness. His growing charm and sophistication mark him; film reviewer Roger Ebert
referred to the books’ character as “…a criminal of intelligence and cunning who gets
away with murder. He's charming and literate, and a monster.”\textsuperscript{122} The protagonist of
Bret Ellis’s novel \textit{American Psycho} is likewise a member of the élite, an intelligent,
well-schooled investment banker with “yuppie” tastes who discusses his brutal crimes
as he enumerates his daily activities. Numerous other white serial killers with
astonishing abilities have become fixtures of American thriller fiction since the 1970s,
from James Patterson’s Soneji, a master of escape and psychological torture, featured
in the bestsellers (1992) \textit{Along Came a Spider} and (1997) \textit{Cat and Mouse} to Dan
Brown’s (2009) Mal’akh, the wealthy, technologically savvy, and iconographically-
obsessed villain, who stars in \textit{The Lost Symbol}. These kinds of portraits of almost
supernatural predators, present in both books and films, may not accurately reflect real
serial killers who are white, but, based on their popularity, they appear to have grasped
the public imagination. In addition, these are character types not readily associated with
African Americans, who are not only rarely portrayed as serial killers, despite their
existence and extensive history of predation, but are seldom represented in films and

\textsuperscript{121} The novels consist of \textit{The Talented Mr. Ripley} (1955), \textit{Ripley Under Ground} (1970), \textit{Ripley’s Game}
was made into the film \textit{Purple Noon} (1960) and remade as \textit{The Talented Mr. Ripley} in 1999; the second
novel was made into a film of the same name (2005), and the third into first an adaptation named \textit{The
American Friend} (1977), and then as an eponymous film (2002). Like Hannibal Lecter, Ripley is a killer
of sustained longevity in the fictional world.

\textsuperscript{122} Source: <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com>
novels as rich, educated, or individuals of taste and intelligence—this despite the documented presence of many successful authors, doctors, artists, professors, inventors, lawyers, businessmen, and politicians, who emerged even during times of overt oppression.

The popularity of “true crime” books is well-established in the U.S., and books about specific serial murders proliferate each year (Jenkins, 1994). Ann Rule’s (1980) *The Stranger Beside Me* (updated in 2008, 20th anniversary edition), written about Ted Bundy, is currently the longest selling serial killer title, and remains one of the top 14 popular books on serial killers in print. Compendia are also popular. Authors Lane and Gregg (1992) and Newton (2000), in identically titled works—*The Encyclopedia of Serial Killers*—both add to the misrepresentation of serial murderers, for each lacks a true representation of African American participation. Within the category of fiction, a substantial number of works about serial killers have also become bestsellers, including the following: Carr's *The Alienist* (1995) and Harris’s *Silence of the Lambs* (1988), *Hannibal* (1999), *Red Dragon* (2000), and *Hannibal Rising* (2006). *Shadow Man*, a novel by McFayden (2006), was lauded by noted FBI profiler John Douglas, whose own non-fiction work *Mindhunter* (1995) was also a bestseller. Other novels ranging from the sensational to the literary continue to be published. Books such as these, both fiction and non-fiction, are consumed by an American public fascinated with dangerous serial murderers. A utilisation of combined sources—Google.com, *Books in Print* (a literature database), Barnes and Noble (barnesandnoble.com), Amazon.com, and *Bowker’s Global Books in Print* reveals over a thousand serial killer books in print as of the 23rd of December, 2009.

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123 Based on *Bowker’s Global Books in Print*, there are 14,447 books on serial killers still in print in English-speaking nations as of 23 December, 2009.
However, this research located very few works that depict African Americans as serial murderers. From the plethora of true crime literature and fiction devoted to the serial killer genre, only eight books were discovered that specifically feature black serial murderers. Sterling’s (1999) *The Cookie Cutter* is a fictional account of a bi-racial serial killer, motivated by his mixed white and black heritage. Mosley’s (2004) *Little Scarlet*, also a work of fiction, features a black serial killer whom the public and law enforcement assume to be white.

The non-fiction list includes Olsen’s (1994) *Charmer: The True Story of a Ladies’ Man*, which traces the crimes of George Russell, Jr. in Washington State, while Mitchell’s (2006) *Evil Eyes* chronicles the murders of Coral Watts in Houston and Michigan. Two books about Derek Todd Lee exist—Stanley’s (2006) *An Invisible Man*, and Mustafa’s (2006) *I’ve Been Watching You: The South Louisiana Serial Killer*. Rosen’s (2002) *Body Dump* is the story of Kendall Francois, while Kaye’s (2009) *Beware of the Cable Guy* tells the tale of former police officer David Middleton. Three of these works were published in 2006. Prior to Sterling’s 1999 novel, there were no novels discovered during this research that featured a black serial killer, and only one non-fiction work (*Charmer*). Table 5.1 reveals these books sales rankings as indicated by their Amazon.com standings. The table compares the sales rankings of the two fictional accounts of black serial killers with two fictional accounts of white serial killers, and the six non-fictional accounts of black serial killers with six non-fictional accounts of white serial killers, in terms of Amazon sales.

124 Mitrione’s (1995) *Suddenly Gone*, a book about Richard Grissom, was not included in the popularity rankings here, because his predation debatably may fit more appropriately in the mass murderer category, since he claimed more than one victim at a time. Weeber’s (2007) *In Search of Derek Todd Lee* is more concerned with the creation of an investigative methodology and therefore also not included in table 5.1.
Total sales figures for books are not readily available in the U.S., unless a publisher happens to use them as a sales strategy. Otherwise, this data can only be obtained by payment to media analysts such as Nielsen and Company, and are closely guarded by publishers. Relative sales rankings, however, provide reliable comparative data on any given date, though they may shift over time.

Table 5.1  Amazon.com popularity rankings as of 2^nd^ October 2010

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What is worthy of note is that, despite the more recent publication dates of non-fictional accounts of black serial murderers, older non-fiction works about similar white serial murderers generally maintain a significantly higher ranking in popularity, indicating a longer “shelf-life.” Jenkins (1994) argues that serial killer celebrity and popularity do not appear to be based on the savagery of the attack, nor the number of victims. The question then remains, on what is their popularity and celebrity based?

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125 The books about white serial killers in Table 5.1 reveal a range of popularity rankings about serial killers of varied fame, by authors of diverse standing. They were not chosen to reflect close matches; matched comparisons will, however, be included in an article currently under review — Branson, A.L. “Serial Killers, Celebrity and Race.”
Regarding black serial killer Coral Watts, whose murders were chronicled in *Evil Eyes*, Jenkins suggests that he posed a far greater social threat than the vast majority of white serial killers written about in true-crime books (Ibid.). *Evil Eyes*, however, has the least popular rating of the six non-fictional accounts of black serial killers. Walter Mosley, an extremely popular African American bestselling author, had far greater success with the other novels in his “Easy Rawlins” detective series than he had with *Little Scarlet*, despite its excellent reviews.126 *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1990), though written twenty years ago, is still in print and ranks 42,698th in Amazon’s rankings, demonstrating it is 2.5 times more popular than Little Scarlet, despite being two decades older.127 His *Long Haul* (2009), a more recent publication in a different series featuring a new African American investigator, already has reached 26,295th in Amazon’s rankings, demonstrating four times *Little Scarlet*’s popularity. Such figures suggest that the general American public is more than ready to read well-constructed novels about African Americans by an African American author, but even an established, popular series detective character cannot sell the idea of a black serial killer.

Although a significant number of non-fiction books has been published about the D.C. Snipers (e.g., Cannon, 2003; Moose and Fleming, 2003; Horwitz and Ruane, 2003 et al.), who murdered ten people and injured numerous others over a three-week period in 2002, none of these titles are included here for multiple reasons. Despite the FBI designation of the D.C. Snipers as serial killers (Douglas et al, 2006), they have not been consistently portrayed as such by the media. They appear to have been placed

126 Critical review of *Little Scarlet* in newspapers and periodicals such as *USA Today*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Kirkus Review*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post* and more were very positive, garnering “outstanding” ratings. Source: <http://apps.metacritic.com/books/authors/mosleywalter/littlescarlet>

127 These rankings are based on relative sales figures and fluctuate daily.
within a phenomenological category yet to be universally defined as serial killers.

Schmid’s (2005) assessment of the D.C. Snipers includes possible reasons for the media’s reticence to portray them as serial killers:

…the problem seems to be that Muhammad and Malvo disturb the logic that organizes the pantheon of celebrity serial killers by refusing kinship with any of the notorious killers of yesteryear. To use a literary analogy, the D.C. Sniper case seems to be a canonical text that explodes the idea of the canon… (p. 253).

Likewise, Wayne Williams has been excluded because he was the first and still possibly the best-known of the black serial murderers. This study certainly considers the D.C. Snipers and Wayne Williams to be serial killers, but excludes the books about them due primarily to another factor—they remain the only black serial murderers who have been the focus of numerous authors, and the representative numbers of related books would be distorted. Since the media in general exclude the D.C. Snipers from serial murder classifications, this skewing would not only be misleading, it would prove ambiguous.

Due to the extensive number of films and books concerning serial murders, what follows is only a brief comparison of black and white serial killers, indicative of the disparity in their numbers (see Fig. 9). A comprehensive list of all serial killer


129 It should be noted that this chart is not meant to be a complete list all of the books and movies representing white serial killers. It does, however, include all known films and books that feature black serial killers discovered during this research. The chart is presented as an abbreviated visual aid intended to highlight the disparity in numbers of film and book representations.
films would not only be far too extensive to present here, there would be too few films on black serial killers to warrant a comparison. Jarvis (2007) notes that the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com) lists over 1000 films featuring serial killers that have been made since 1990 alone. What is more critical to this research is relative representation; despite the participation of African Americans in serial murder since 1915, only one fictional film (eight decades later) and one docudrama (about the D.C. Snipers) featuring such killers were located. Only one fictional movie was discovered depicting an African American serial killer (as opposed to horror films such as Candyman)—Switchback,\textsuperscript{130} starring black actor Danny Glover (1997). It is worth noting that while the serial killer character “Hannibal Lecter” of the 1991 Oscar-winning movie The Silence of the Lambs is portrayed as an intellectual, suave gourmet, “Bob Goodall” (Danny Glover’s character in Switchback) is a pornography-obsessed drifter, more an impulsive madman than mastermind. While not all white serial killers in film are portrayed in the same vein as Sir Anthony Hopkins’ upper-class character “Hannibal,” or Christian Bale’s wealthy protagonist in the film version of (1991) American Psycho, there are no such depictions of black serial killers in film.

To date there have been no major film studio productions chronicling the D.C. Sniper shootings, though a made-for-television movie, 23 Days of Fear (2003),\textsuperscript{131} was produced. Although books about the D.C. Snipers were excluded from Fig. 9 for the reasons outlined above, this film was included on the chart because films about black serial killers are so few in number that no statistical skewing was likely. Television drama reflects a complete absence of black serial killers, even though numerous

\textsuperscript{130} Efros, M., Samples, K. (Producers), and Stuart, J. (Producer/Director), (1997). Switchback [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

fictional white serial killers are regularly featured on two long-running shows. The current Showtime series *Dexter* (SHO, 2006-to date) features the eponymous character (Michael C. Hall), who is both a white male serial killer and a forensic expert employed by a Florida police department. He hunts only other serial killers in this series, based on the book *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* (Lindsay, 2004) and its sequels. A second weekly drama series, *Criminal Minds* (CBS, 2005-to date), depicts FBI profilers as they investigate serial murders. Neither popular show as of this research has featured an African American in the role of a serial murderer. Regarding the lack of books depicting African American serial murderers, Jenkins (1994) suggests that a determining factor might be the publisher, who decides what is newsworthy, and may feel that African American offenders do not have mass appeal. Despite the serial killer’s unique place within the American landscape, this reasoning would appear to underestimate the importance and effectiveness of marketing.\(^{132}\) Jenkins (Ibid.) further infers, like Walsh (2005) that the lack of film portrayals of African American serial killers is likely due to a desire to avoid being accused of depicting crude or controversial racial stereotypes. Both statements, while suggesting the lack of salability and “politically correct” sensitivities as factors regarding the dearth of material culture related to black serial murderers, fail as explanations. The historic salability of “black collectables”, wholly negative images of African Americans, continues on a worldwide market (Goings, 1994; Turner, 1994), without regard to fear of political incorrectness.

In an effort to further reveal the disparity of news coverage and media portrayals of black versus white serial killers, the next section will examine two

\(^{132}\) Certainly numerous books and films featuring African Americans (whether written by African Americans or not) have had major crossover appeal, including fiction by Walter Mosley, James Patterson, Alice Walker, Stephen Carter, and Richard Price. Many bankable African American film stars have emerged in the last several decades, including Denzel Washington, Will Smith, Morgan Freeman, Jamie Foxx, Danny Glover, Samuel L. Jackson, and others.
Philadelphia multiple murderers, one black and one white, arrested in the same city within six months of each other. The significant differences between their media portrayals may not be solely based on race. This factor, however, combined with the unique timing of their predations and arrests, affords an opportunity to examine their treatment comparatively in a way not normally possible. As suggested in Chapter Three and further dissected in this section, it is postulated that the historic negative imagery and media portrayals of African Americans as buffoon-like individuals of low intelligence, such as “Sambo”, “Steppin Fetchit”, or “Buckwheat”, has created an indelible impression. This image is difficult to reconcile with the widely-accepted notion of the white, intelligent, charming psychopath that Ann Rule describes. The disparate media coverage of Harrison Graham and Gary Heidnik provides, through its juxtapositions, insights into the construction of each characterisation, and exemplifies the ways in which myth building and public perceptions are reinforced.

**Harrison Graham and Gary Heidnik: A Comparison of Media Portrayals**

The inequality in media treatment afforded black and white serial killers is reflected by the news coverage afforded to perpetrators of each race and, to some degree, those stories’ “shelf life.” The critical and revelatory aspects of the Harrison Graham\(^{133}\) serial killing and Gary Heidnik multiple murder investigations are discussed, based on the media discourse regarding each offender. Jenkins (1993) and Walsh (2005) note this media disparity regarding Graham and Heidnik, but do not compare the two in terms of their methodologies, biographical histories, or the language used to describe each. Gary Heidnik was responsible for only two murders,

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\(^{133}\) Harrison Graham’s interview (see Appendix B) reveals behavioural antecedents (e.g., the *MacDonald triad*) that coincide with FBI and psychological research associated with individuals who tend to engage in serial murder.
failing to meet the FBI’s definition of a serial murderer, yet attained that status through media portrayals, taking a shortcut to celebrity.

Gary Michael Heidnik, born 22 November 1943, was two years old when his parents divorced. His mother was an alcoholic, contributing to his unstable environment. This eventually led him to live with his emotionally abusive father. Heidnik suffered a head injury in his childhood that his father may have inflicted. He dropped out of high school in 1961 and joined the U.S. Army, receiving medical training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Although honorably discharged in 1963, and the recipient of full disability benefits, he was subsequently committed to three months of psychiatric therapy, due to a diagnosis of schizophrenia. For the next 25 years he would be committed periodically to mental institutions at Morristown, Coatesville, and Honesdale, Pennsylvania. As a testament to his functionality, however, in 1964 he completed a 12-month practical nursing programme at Philadelphia General Hospital, as well as an internship. Heidnik began to date African American female inmates from the Elwyn Institute for the mentally challenged, usually culminating with sex at his home, located at 3520 North Marshall St. in Philadelphia. In 1971, he established a church, the “United Church of the Ministries of God”, with members of the Elwyn Institute as his parishioners. His criminal record after his army discharge revealed charges ranging from kidnapping, aggravated assault with a gun, and deviant sexual intercourse, among others. Heidnik alternated between incarceration and being committed to mental institutions on three separate occasions as a result of suicide attempts. From 1977 until the time of his arrest, he managed to invest $35,000 dollars of his savings in the stock market, netting an approximately half a million dollar fortune. His home on North Marshall St. was purchased with his investment money.

After the escape of 26-year-old Josephine Riviera, one of the prisoners he kept in his
basement, Heidnik was arrested 24 March 1987. It was alleged that Riviera was both an accomplice and a victim of Heidnik. He was charged with rape, torture, and the murders of two black women, 25-year-old Sandra Lindsay and 23-year-old Deborah Dudley. Based in part on a statement given by survivor and alleged accomplice Riviera, Heidnik wanted to create a harem, forcibly impregnating as many women as possible before he died. He was executed by lethal injection on 6 July 1999 (Englade, 1988; Newton, 2000). Heidnik’s life was chronicled in Englade’s book *Cellar of Horror* (Ibid.). Jenkins (2002) notes that Gary Heidnik also became the archetype for Thomas Harris’ infamous fictional serial killer, “Buffalo Bill”, in both the book and movie versions of *The Silence of the Lambs*. It has been further suggested that in future there may be a movie based on Heidnik’s life story.\(^{134}\)

Harrison (“Marty”) Graham\(^{135}\) was born on 19 September 1959. He was a foster child, placed in the home of Wilhemina Williams at the age of two. In the first grade, based on a request for a psychological service report (14 March 1966), his behaviour was listed as erratic and he was evaluated as having a need for special placement. Graham was further described as “stubborn and immature.” It was stated that he “stare[d] intently at people” and did not listen, spending his time under his desk playing with his pencil or tearing up papers. It was also documented that his foster mother showed antagonism toward him, and may have had difficulty coping with his behaviour. Teachers expressed concerns that he had limited learning abilities and written skills, as well as poor health habits and social behaviours. By the age of nine, “Marty” continued to exhibit erratic social adjustment. He was described by his teacher as “very affectionate” with very poor listening skills. Improvements in his social habits

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\(^{135}\) Harrison Graham’s biographical information, as well as data about his crimes, was gathered from a variety of sources, including but not limited to his arrest reports, medical/psychological records, and a personal interview (28 December 2006). To date there are no books about him.
were observed, although his final grade in this area was poor. In addition, at age nine he still had not learned the alphabet. Upon evaluation at age 11, he was in the second grade, normally meant for seven-year-olds. Marty performed at the borderline intelligence level. It was suggested that he needed “a firm hand” and would “take advantage of a permissive approach.” It was also stated he would possibly need counseling during adolescence to help him with appropriate social adjustment. At age 13, his report card indicated his health habits continued to be very poor. Marty underwent a psychological examination at age 16, because he had not been examined “for a long period of time” and was to attend high school the following September. Intelligence test scores were stable in comparison to his earlier tests. He still could not read or write with independence at age 16, and could only add and subtract one digit. He was described as insecure, and “felt inadequate in relation to environmental influences.” Evaluators commented that his “behavior might be compensatory for recognized inadequacies.” He was also exhibiting other problematic behaviours, although these were not articulated. It was stated his judgement was “ineffectual”; he was a “follower” and would be negatively influence if disciplined. A placement of “retarded educable” was recommended, since it was determined he performed at the level of a 4 ½ year old child. He failed, at age 16, to do tasks a seven-year-old would be expected to accomplish, and still could not identify the alphabet and numbers. He was reported by his school to exhibit emotional disturbance and further described as extremely immature. Marty, by age 16, had not developed past the age of a four or six-year-old in any capacity, other than physically. Intellectually, emotionally, morally, he remained child-like. As Marty grew physically and sexually matured, he did not progress in the areas of his life which might humanise him.

Graham had no record of prior criminal activity until his arrest on 9 August
1987. Despite several complaints to police regarding odours emanating from his
apartment, as well as complaints by his landlord, his arrest was precipitated by a
woman who informed police of his attempts to strangle her. Upon police arrival at his
two-room apartment at 1631 N. 19th St. in Philadelphia, the remains of seven female
bodies were discovered. Some of the bodies found had been skeletonised. The partial
remains of one were found in the basement of a nearby building. Some corpses were
left decomposing in his closet and under a mattress. Harrison Graham turned himself in
to Philadelphia police (Lane and Gregg, 1992). While being interrogated, he spoke of
his inability to “sleep alone” and admitted to the murders of seven women by
strangulation. While it might be argued that the depiction of a mentally retarded black
murderer is less newsworthy than that of a white schizophrenic murderer, it is unlikely
the public would differentiate between the two on this basis. Furthermore, the murder
of seven women whose bodies were left under mattresses in the living room, compared
to two in a torture cellar, is arguably just as gruesome.

During an interview conducted for this research in 2006, Harrison Graham
stated that he had been the victim of sexual abuse during his youth. This had not
been previously revealed within his investigative case file. Like Heidnik’s victims,
Harrison Graham’s victims were all low-income black females, some with previous
petty arrests and many with a history of drug usage. Harrison Graham murdered seven
women between the ages of 25 and 35. An examination of the scope and longevity of
media interest in Graham, as well as the language the media used in discussing him, is
revealing. Despite the greater seriousness of Graham’s crimes (at least in terms of the

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137 “Cookie” Mary Louise Mathis 28, Sandra Louise Garvin 32, Valerie Jamieson 25, Barbara Mahoney 35, Patricia Ann Franklin 24, Cynthia Brooks 28, Robin Lorraine Deshazor 33 b/f.
number of victims), newspaper articles published by the two most prominent local newspapers, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Philadelphia Daily News*, explored via *Proquest’s* database, demonstrate disparate coverage. These sources reveal no less than 229 articles regarding Gary Heidnik, and only 33 regarding Harrison Graham. Media reports describing Harrison Graham and Gary Heidnik show that the negative and positive word associations ascribed to each appear to follow a historic pattern of race-based media representations. The media portrayed Heidnik as organised and intelligent, and presented Graham as brutish and disorganised. A Lexis/Nexis database check of international newspaper coverage shows that Gary Heidnik received 190 references compared to Harrison Graham, who received only 44. Heidnik’s media depictions match many of the characteristics most associated with the organised serial killer, while Graham’s fit those of the disorganised model. Harrison Graham is often described as “a low-level dealer” with “the mind of a child”, as a “drifter” and “like a rat”. Heidnik, on the other hand, is characterised as “cool but a little weird”, “an investment whiz” with “strong talents in the fields of art and

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138 Those Proquest database articles reviewed were published between March 1987 and December 2003.


music”, and as having “a gift for extra-sensory perception.”

The serial killer methodology of organised versus disorganised may be an attractive element when depicting serial murders on television and film (e.g., Ted Bundy), but, as noted in the previous chapter, some researchers question the accuracy of characterising a serial murderer by this dichotomy (Canter et al, 2004).

Canter et al (Ibid.), commenting on the organised v. disorganised typology state:

This circular reasoning involving reification of a concept rather than an empirical validation of it, has the weaknesses of a self fulfilling prophecy…

and

…the concept of organized and disorganized offenders is not a genuine psychologically based distinction but, rather, is a commonsensical day-to-day speculation about the differences between people. Perhaps this relationship to lay beliefs explains the enduring, often unquestioned, acceptance of those psychological profiles that are based on an organized or disorganized framework… (pp. 296-297).

If the newsworthiness of serial murders is linked to the organised/disorganised typology, associating the former with intelligence and the later with a lack thereof, any automatic association of white serial killers with organised predation and blacks with disorganised attacks requires scrutiny. For example, the prosecutor in Harrison Graham’s murder trial suggested “that Graham's ability to commit multiple crimes and then conceal them suggests he was more mentally functional than his lawyers have maintained.” The statement implies that Harrison Graham was more intelligent than


the media—who characterised him as “retarded”148—portrayed him. Graham met the FBI definition of serial killer, having committing three or more murders. Heidnik failed to meet that standard, yet was elevated to serial killer status through film and books, and became the subject of far more local and international newspaper articles than Graham, who has not, to date, been the sole subject of any books or movies, despite his actions and the number of his victims. Both killers utilised a similar methodology, luring low income black women into their homes via money and drugs, yet the disparate portrayals of the two reinforce the stereotype of the black male as a brute, reducing his extensive and systematic murders to a lower level of crime, while the white male is viewed as employing sophisticated methods. This view suggests a sort of perverted social hierarchy of crime. In terms of behavioural antecedents, both men were found to have been subjected to childhood traumas often linked to individuals who engage in serial predation. The following comparison, Table 5.2, reveals similarities regarding methodology and medical history. It should be stated that due to no previous arrest record, little published biographical information was known concerning Harrison Graham prior to his capture. To date, there has been very little written about him, save for brief mentions in published compilations (e.g., The

148 The following statements reveal the media discourse regarding Harrison Graham: “... Graham could not read or write or tell time. After testing Graham, Levitt determined that his IQ was 63, meaning that Graham is mildly retarded.” In “Judge Rejects Bid to Drop Charges Against Graham in Five Slayings.” Henry Goldman, Philadelphia Inquirer. Philadelphia, PA: Oct. 7, 1987.

“At the close of the explanation, Latrone asked whether Graham had any questions. Graham said, ‘Can I have my Cookie Monster back?’ He was referring to a hand puppet he kept in his apartment and sometimes played with. It had been taken as evidence.”

“Judge mulls sentence for Graham,” Maida Odom, Philadelphia Inquirer. Philadelphia, PA: Apr. 29, 1988. “...it was clear to anyone sitting in the courtroom that the defendant, a husky, quick-to-smile young man, who walked into court nearly every day with a bouncy gait, is not normal.”


The sources utilised for this case study of Graham were police reports, associated criminal case file materials and a face-to-face interview located in Appendix B.

Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gary Heidnik</th>
<th>Harrison “Marty” Graham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian American/white male</td>
<td>African American/black male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrested on 3-24-87 in Philadelphia</td>
<td>arrested on 8-16-87 in Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 victims murdered in Philadelphia</td>
<td>7 victims murdered in Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doesn’t meet FBI serial killer definition</td>
<td>meets FBI serial killer definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methodology—luring women with drugs for torture and rape</td>
<td>methodology—luring women with drugs for sex and strangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cannibalism</td>
<td>possible necrophilia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>early developmental issues—physical abuse</td>
<td>early developmental issues—sexual abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above average income</td>
<td>below average income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abusive father</td>
<td>foster homes—lack of patriarchal bonding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siblings</td>
<td>siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>executed July 6, 1999</td>
<td>life imprisonment December 20th, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ high; one estimate 148149</td>
<td>IQ low; 70 or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>house</td>
<td>apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married, later divorced</td>
<td>single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td>no children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history of mental illness—extensive</td>
<td>history of mental illness—slight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of commercialisation/murderabilia, as of 5 January 2010, Graham had a lone handwritten envelope listed on murderauction.com for $15.00, while Heidnik’s five-page illustrated letter had an asking price of just under $5000.00. The elevation of Heidnik to the Hollywood prototype of a serial killer and Graham’s rapid fall into relative obscurity displays a certain general commercial appeal and marketability of one individual over the other. Jenkins (1993) suggests race and stereotyping are the reasons:

Part of Heidnik’s story was popularized in the book and film of *Silence of the Lambs*, where the fictional killer “Buffalo Bill” similarly imprisons young women in a basement. In contrast, Graham’s case received little attention outside the Philadelphia area, although he was convicted of no less than seven murders….There appears to be no reason for the disparity of treatment, except that Heidnik is White, and therefore fits the accepted stereotypes of the multiple killer; while Graham is Black… (p. 56).

The media descriptions of these two multiple murderers appear to reflect a bias in terms of the amount of exposure and the characterisation assigned to each. This bias suggests the possibility of mitigating the predations of a black offender in favour of a white offender, despite a similarity in victims. Even though Heidnik does not meet the FBI’s definition of a serial killer, his portrayal as such by the media indicates more research is required to delineate any “real” differences between black and white serial killers.

Neither individual was arrested due to law enforcement agents’ profiling techniques—both were apprehended due to the escape of potential victims. This chapter
purposefully does not address the motivations for murder by either offender. Although they appear to have employed similar methodologies, the lack of extensive research regarding black serial murderers leaves one to speculate about varying motives among white and black offenders. It may be useful, however, to do so when suggesting typologies as a prerequisite for celebrity among serial killers, as will be explored in Chapter Six. Environmental factors and trauma occurred in the childhoods of both Gary Heidnik and Harrison Graham, and may have contributed to their predations. Gary Heidnik’s schizophrenic diagnosis, unstable home environment, and physically abusive father may have provided a causal effect. Similarly, Harrison Graham’s environmental factors included an unstable home life, sexual abuse, and the trauma of witnessing violence. The upcoming section examines the D.C. Sniper investigation as an example of how law enforcement and the media’s collaboration led to the promotion of a historic race-based criminal profile that proved to be incorrect, resulting in public endangerment.

**The Significance of the D.C. Snipers**

Despite research data indicative of African American involvement in serial murder, the D.C. Sniper investigation illustrates how blacks can initially be disregarded as suspects and remain undetected by law enforcement, even in a very high profile case. The D.C. Sniper case involved two black males, John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo, who perpetrated seemingly random murders in October 2002 (see Appendix B for a chronology of the Snipers’ murders). That fact, coupled with their multiple state predation, suggests a revelatory case for law enforcement, illuminating the dangers of

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150 John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo fit a subgroup of serial killers termed “Team Killers.” This, plus their methodology, as opposed to their race, sets them apart from most other serial killers. Hickey notes that, out of 47 cases comprising 110 offenders, 74% of team killers were white and 25% were African American (2002, p. 183).
race-based perceptions. As serial killers, they were organised, intelligent, and dramatically violent, all newsworthy attributes. Few murder investigations in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries involving African Americans, save the O. J. Simpson murder trial, have garnered as much worldwide attention as the D.C. Sniper serial murders. The media could certainly not ignore them, though their coverage seemed most intensive before their apprehension and the discovery of their race. During the investigation in September and October 2002, the informal partnership of law enforcement and the media’s race-based portrayals led to the wide dissemination of an incorrect profile of a white male suspect(s). The investigation failed for months to identify two organised, mobile, African American serial murderers. The D.C. Sniper case was eventually classified by the FBI as serial murder (Douglas et al, 2006). Although the FBI’s constructed profile suggested that a sniper was acting alone, it did note that, if more than one sniper existed and they were acting as a team, one participant would be subservient to the primary offender,\textsuperscript{151} which did turn out to be an accurate assessment. The task force profile assumed, however, that the offender(s) were white males, as noted by Chief Moose, head of the sniper task force, and Washington D.C. Police Chief Charles Ramsey,\textsuperscript{152} both African American males.

The apprehension of the D.C. Snipers yielded some biographical information about the perpetrators. John Allen Williams, aka John Muhammad, was born in New Orleans on 31 December 1960. He changed his name to John Allen Muhammad after converting to Islam in October, 2001. His mother died when he was young, and his


\textsuperscript{152} Washington, D.C. Police Chief Charles Ramsey noted, “…We were looking for a white car with white people, and we ended up with a blue car with black people.”—“Arrest in Sniper case; Sniper suspect defies profile” Mary Leonard, Boston Globe, October 27, 2002.
father abandoned him. He was raised by his grandfather and his aunt, and became a role model for Edward Holiday, his younger cousin. Based on court testimony, “…Muhammad's brain was damaged by childhood beatings…They say an MRI of his brain showed abnormalities and two experts said he likely was schizophrenic….” This description is dissimilar to that of the Associated Press, which referred to him as a “mastermind.” He enlisted in the U.S. Army National Guard where he received military training and achieved “expert” marksman status. By many accounts he appeared to be a disgruntled individual who was disciplined for assaulting a fellow officer and dropping an incendiary device near soldiers during his enlistment. He was divorced twice and became homeless. He moved out of the U.S. for a time in 1999, spending time in Antigua where he eventually met Lee Malvo.

Lee Boyd Malvo, born in Jamaica on February 18, 1985, was often separated from his mother Una during his early childhood. His parents never married and parted early in his life. During his youth, Malvo stayed at numerous homes on the island where he sought residence, ultimately gravitating toward homeless shelters. Malvo and his mother eventually left Jamaica and moved to Antigua when he was 14. There he met John Muhammad. In 2001, Malvo left Jamaica for the United States to join his mother, who had sought employment there as a domestic worker, a move that was facilitated via a forged passport arranged by Muhammad. After reuniting with Malvo in the U.S., Muhammad posed as the youth’s father. Prior to their apprehension on October 24, 2002, both men had resided in a homeless shelter in Bellingham, Washington (Cannon, 2003; Horwitz and Ruane, 2003; Moose and Fleming, 2003). Based on court testimony, their end-game appeared to be retribution against the U.S.

government for its racist treatment of black people via a ransom that would finance a continuum of murders carried out by orphaned youths enlisted and trained by Muhammad.

The impact of the behavioural antecedents and sociological factors that relate to the predations of John Muhammad and Lee Malvo are beyond the scope of this work. The repeated themes, however, of childhood trauma, lack of patriarchal bonding, and narcissistic tendencies are common traits that the FBI and social scientists associate with serial murderers (Douglas et al, 2006; Egger, 2002; Hickey, 2002; Holmes and Holmes, 2002; Knight, 2006; Ressler et al, 1992). It is not unreasonable to suggest that numerous psychological and sociological factors, when viewed within the context of their antisocial behaviours, may have created a bond resulting in their joint dysfunction. Was there a need for John Lee Malvo to please his disgruntled pseudo-father based on a similar deprivation of a familial structure and a need to belong? Furthermore, how did John Muhammad’s mental state influence Malvo? These questions, specific to the D.C. Sniper case, appear to be worthy of further analysis. If not for the narcissistic traits common to many serial killers (Knight, 2006; Black, 1999) and addressed in Chapter Four, the D.C. Snipers may have avoided apprehension They exhibited the need to engage the attention of law enforcement through notes and phone calls, which aided in their arrest.154

The criminal profile of the D.C. Snipers, in part based on assumptions of the perpetrator(s)’ race, raises valid questions as to possible failings by law enforcement agencies in other criminal investigations. In Surette’s 1993 (previously cited) survey of police recruits, he documents a significant relationship between their beliefs about

154 e.g., a tarot card left by Muhammad on which he wrote in part, “…call me God….”
crime and police work as presented by the media (especially television), even when those beliefs are not factually based. Law enforcement agents are not immune to cultural stereotypes, and negative race-based perceptions enter the collective psyche to become common currency.

John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo were not identified in part because of the scope of their predation, and perhaps because of their careful planning and evasive movements. It was apparently inconceivable that these perpetrators were black. After their identity was revealed, their organised methodology particularly surprised the task force investigators, including the African American police chief. The police chief, who headed the Sniper Task Force, stated:

Our two principal suspects were both African American. In American criminal history, serial killers are rarely black. The profilers had missed this entirely. No one expected the sniper suspects not to be white men… (Moose and Fleming, 2003, p. 292).

The D.C. Snipers’ actions and law enforcement’s responses demonstrate the crisis of awareness regarding the existence of black serial killers in America. When the media and task force members advised by the FBI disseminated the profile of a white male perpetrator, it was not unfamiliar to the American public. It is reasonable to ask, in the aftermath of these murders, how many lives might have been saved had law enforcement been more flexible in their assessment of potential suspects during their investigations? This thesis suggests that the D.C. Sniper case should be viewed as a “shot over the bow” of American law enforcement, and an indictment of a static criminal profile regarding serial killers and media stereotypes.

While no paradigm shift appears to have occurred regarding African Americans’ involvement with serial murder, the D.C. Snipers’ predations suggest the need for a change of perspective by law enforcement and the public. Dr. Jack Levin, Director of the Brudnick Center on Violence at Northeastern University in Boston,
continues to promote the commonly held concept of the serial killer. During a radio broadcast interview on 18 November 2003, only a year after the Snipers’ apprehension, he stated that the typical serial killer was:

…a white middle-aged male who uses physical contact. …He loves using his hands. The last thing he would do would be to use a firearm and distance himself from his victims….” (NPR, 2003)

In 2006, two white male snipers in Arizona used a methodology similar to that of Muhammad and Malvo, further demonstrating that serial murder was no longer confined to up-close interactions between perpetrator and victim. In August 2006, the investigation of these murders led to the arrest of Samuel John Dieteman and Dale S. Hausner, two white males who shot 24 people, killing six (CBS, 2006; Newsweek, 2006; MSNBC, 2006). Additionally perplexing in both cases is that the perpetrators created a crime scene without entering it, in effect creating a “detached crime scene.” It is too early to judge whether the D.C. Sniper case will change the way the FBI defines serial murder (Douglas et al, 2006), but it does not seem to have impacted serial killer race-based stereotypes in any sustained manner. On 11 November 2009, John Muhammad was executed by lethal injection at Greensville Correctional Facility in Jarratt, Virginia. It is interesting to note the statement made by his defence attorney, Jonathan Sheldon, who said Muhammad remained “…obsessed in his belief that the government was conspiring against him because of his race….” In defence of his actions, this statement is of little consequence. However, within the overall framework of the “social exclusion” experienced by blacks in America, it addresses the killer’s clear awareness of that history. In doing so, it may speak to the issue of causations addressed in Chapter Three regarding intergenerational trauma. Saul Kassin, professor

of psychology at Williams College, suggests that serial killer profiling is an “inexact science.” Regarding Muhammad’s murders, he offers:

> It sounds like we have one very, very angry individual...there must have been something in his social interaction—in his marriage or his military career—that pulled the trigger...”

**Discussion**

The D.C. Sniper case, much like the Graham versus Heidnik comparison, is revelatory because it exposes the continued inaccuracy of law enforcement agents and the public’s stereotypical characterisation of serial murderers. Due to their mobile and organised methodology, as well as the organised nature of the D.C. Snipers and their ability to go undetected for several months, they were assumed to be white males. Heidnik’s portrayal was that of a serial murderer via the movie and book *Silence of the Lambs*, despite having only killed two, because his gruesome predations were those of the organized killer. The implications of what it means to be a serial murderer are further revealed through their extensive media portrayals. This chapter suggests that the issues of race (the interactions between black and white people) are often used as a socio-political lightening rod, affecting everything from corporate downsizing to a presentation of crime statistics (Simon, 2007) to serial murder (Branson, 2010).

Although there is currently more information regarding African American serial killers than previously available—largely due to the Internet—there is still more research needed in this area. Equally, it needs to be disseminated and absorbed, since

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157 Kalev (2009) notes that corporations often downsize by a formulaic rationale, with the least experienced purged from the payroll first. This procedure is protected by law in the majority of states, but disproportionately affects blacks and woman, mitigated only by civil rights accountability and an attorney’s review (cf. “Diversity, R.I.F? An organizational analysis of gender and racial gaps in downsizing.” *Downsizing and diversity* draft [permission granted to cite] presented at University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School of Business, 14 December 2009).
there is an apparent reticence on the part of the media to bring these killers into public awareness. A compendium of case studies regarding black serial killers chosen for similar behavioural antecedents and methodologies as those of their white counterparts might constitute productive research that could change assumptions, but is unavailable due to the dearth of existing research. This chapter further illuminates the disparity among media portrayals between white and black serial killers, as reflected in films, books, and television, which highlights a lack of attention and/or complete dismissal of the black serial killers’ crimes.

This is not, however, to suggest that serial murders committed by African Americans are not reported as news. Rather, it is meant to indicate that their news stories appear to have no sustained “shelf-life”, and that they are removed from public consciousness fairly rapidly. This process disables the iconisation of those black serial killers who engage in murders comparable to their white counterparts (e.g., Dahmer, Gacy, Bundy, et al). This facet of the serial killer—presentation or “shelf life”—may be the most significant single feature that has influenced the invisibility of black serial killers. This thesis argues its significance, remains profoundly dependent on the historic race-based assumptions that underlie it. Furthermore, the results of these race-based perceptions and the reinforced archetypes of the serial killer hinder law enforcement agents’ ability to make investigative decisions that are predicated upon an individual’s psychological condition. The issues of celebrity and anti-heroes are addressed in the following chapter as another facet regarding the anonymity of African American serial killers.

158 As of this writing, despite the two black serial killers recently apprehended in 2009—Anthony Sowell, accused of 11 murders dating from 2007 to 2009 in Cleveland, Ohio, and John Floyd Thomas, Jr. in Los Angeles, who may have murdered 30 or more women since 1972—news reports regarding their predations diminished rapidly outside their local area. Even locally, investigative pursuit of biographical and other salient information has been relatively minimal.
CHAPTER SIX
SERIAL KILLERS, CELEBRITY, AND RACE

This chapter focuses on the issue of celebrity as it applies to serial murderers, and how this contributes to this thesis’s overarching theme of the continued anonymity of African American serial killers. It begins with an examination of the discourse regarding celebrity within a criminal context, while its second section notes that celebrity remains a somewhat elusive concept by examining black and white serial killers in comparative fashion. Earlier chapters considered racist preconceptions linked to supposed issues of intelligence by exploring the historic parameters and discourse of racism and their effect on perceptions. They also examined other aspects of anonymity—how the definition of serial killers and their psychological makeup was itself limited by the FBI’s shortsighted research, institutionalised racism, and research methods, as well as how the media, in conjunction with that agency, created and perpetuated a myth of white, all-powerful super predators via news, books, and films. Black serial killers have been operating in the U.S. since 1915, yet their existence is ignored or rapidly vanishes from public consciousness. If history and racism have combined to put blinders on the FBI and other members of law enforcement, if the “superhuman intelligence” of the media-created serial killer is at odds with the created and perpetuated image of African Americans as less intelligent than their white counterparts, what other related factors come into play that allow black serial murderers to remain in the shadows? The brevity of a news story (shelf-life), the reading public’s
disinterest, the lack of filmmakers’ greenlighting are related not only to expectations, but to issues of celebrity and its absence.

“Media Attractive” Serial Killers and Celebrity

Celebrity, in the traditional sense, has been associated with iconic figures (e.g., Lindbergh, Kennedy, Churchill et al). As such, Giles (2000) suggests four requirements for celebrity: becoming an ideal, a role model, an inspiration, and an escape. This last requirement suggests a means of psychological freedom and mental escape from one’s ordinary life. Penfold (2004) more concisely asserts that celebrities are publicised versions of what we would like to be. This desire to be the celebrity suggests an unfettered identification process. In terms of crime, celebrity and notoriety are interrelated concepts. As has been shown previously, some serial killers court personal celebrity, though it may be counter-intuitive, since it exposes them to greater likelihood of capture. As a criminal’s activities become known to law enforcement, media, and the public, he becomes notorious. While this term has negative connotations, at the same time it denotes fame. In the United States, this “notorious” phase historically has often transformed into a public phase of celebrity. In the nineteenth century, for example, the crimes of Jesse James, Billy the Kid, or the Dalton Gang, as well as many other Old West outlaws, were commemorated in contemporaneous “dime novels,” lurid fiction that was turned out quickly. It transformed them into not just more notorious characters, but popular figures. Similarly, early twentieth century gangsters such as Al Capone, “Pretty Boy” Floyd, and John Dillinger quickly became the subject of films and pulp fiction, more the focus of attention and popularity than their captors. Outlaws and gangsters became some of America’s favourite anti-heroes, frequently dominating the movie and television screens, and remaining popular true-crime and fictionalised characters, often decades or even a century after their deaths. The 1972 Mafia film The
Godfather not only won three Academy awards, in 2007 it was named the second most important American film ever by the American Film Institute. Scholarly works such as Messenger’s (2002) book *The Godfather and American Culture* or Ray’s (2009) oft-anthologised semiotics essay on film, “The Thematic Paradigm,” explore the particularly American preoccupation with anti-heroes, real, fictional, and fictionalised. It is worth noting that no black criminal of any type has been accorded the long term fame and celebrity of a Clyde Barrow (of Bonnie and Clyde fame) or a Lucky Luciano (notorious mobster) by the dominant culture. Only recently have Frank Lucas and Nicky Barnes, who were black New York City organised crime drug dealers, become better known via one movie, *American Gangster* (2007). The film was a major studio release starring Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe. It is reasonable to say that both actors have a cross-over fan base, which might account for some of the longevity and anti-hero popularity of the former actor as “Alonzo Harris” in the movie, *Training Day* (2001).

As previously noted, the serial killer has been recognised and has had some degree of notoriety for centuries, long before a special name was given to this type of murderer. Figures like Elizabeth Bathory, Gilles de Rais, and Jack the Ripper captured popular imagination, but the first two held aristocratic celebrity independent of their crimes, while the precise identity of the last remains unidentified, though he is popularly believed by some to have been an upper-class citizen (perhaps with ties to royalty). Chapter Five reveals that a shift in American perceptions regarding serial killers occurred in the 1980s, when films and books on serial killers began to proliferate; the timing was subsequent to the FBI’s 1984 hearings, and appears to be related. This outpouring changed the nature of the public’s perception of serial killers.

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159 Source: <http://www.afi.com/100years/movies10.aspx>
The FBI’s hearings suggested serial murder was proliferating, its perpetrators becoming super predators. The agency fixed the public’s attention on “masterminds” whose crimes, though horrific, displayed a superior degree of intelligence. Books and films like the extremely popular *Silence of the Lambs* (Harris, 1988) —the book won the 1988 Bram Stoker award for best novel, while the movie (in 1991) won five Academy Awards—encouraged this viewpoint. In this film, in order to catch a serial killer, FBI agents were forced to consult an incarcerated serial killer and operate according to his insights. Though this was fictional, it was paralleled by an actual event, for investigators did consult the incarcerated Ted Bundy regarding Gary Ridgway, “The Green River Killer”, in order to predict his likely behaviour (Keppler, 1995).

The FBI has acknowledged, as part of the outcome of a symposium on serial killers held in 2005, that celebrity has become part of the serial murderer’s persona:

Serial murder cases are inherently newsworthy. Some investigations last for years. Many attract attention because of the type of victims involved, and in others the serial killers themselves are media-attractive. Media attention is exacerbated by the insatiable demands of the twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week news reporting industry.160

It may seem uncomfortable to consider a serial killer “media attractive.” The FBI, in its use of this term in the published symposium findings regarding serial killers, did not define it. By inference, however, the agency was not primarily referring to appearance or what we generally think of as good looks and charisma. Contextualising celebrity for serial killers, this term seems to refer to a combination of traits that attract readers, traits that are out of the common way of murder. These may range from the identity of the killers to their methodology, to evidence of extreme intelligence or bizarre behaviours. Three media-linked factors were noted from the FBI symposium as

possible contributors to serial killer celebrity: lengthy investigations, which build on the public’s fears and result in an inherently long shelf-life for a story, public interest in the type of victims, and the vaguely defined trait of the killer being “media-attractive.” It is necessary to examine whether or not these three factors apply equally to black and white serial killers.

Length of Investigation and News Article Shelf-Life

Based on the FBI’s symposium statement, a predator whose murders are discovered nearly or completely in coincidence with his arrest might be assumed to garner less media attention than one whose period of operation is lengthier and whose lack of apprehension raises public anxiety with each kill. Certainly white serial killer Dennis Rader, the so-called “BTK [bind, torture, kill] Killer” of Wichita, Kansas, was in the media eye from 1974 to 1991, killing ten people without apprehension. He resurfaced in 2004 and was apprehended the following year. His lengthy period of predation within one state, Kansas, not only resulted in extensive news coverage, but in the publication of at least six true crime books (two of which were written before his capture), at least three documentaries, and a fictional story by well-known author Stephen King that was based on his life.\(^{161}\)

Rader killed ten people over a 17-year period, and can be paralleled by the African American serial murderer Lonnie David Franklin, Jr. (aka “The Grim Sleeper”), who operated in Los Angeles, CA. Franklin also had ten victims and operated over an extended period—from 1985 to 1988, with a hiatus of about 13 years, then resumed from 2002 to 2007. He was apprehended in 2010. Franklin’s span from first murder to capture was 25 years, while Rader’s was 31, though Franklin had a

longer break from killing. Since Franklin’s arrest was recent, and he has not yet been brought to trial, it is perhaps not surprising that he has not been the subject of documentaries or books, though two books were written about Rader before his resurface, identification, and capture. The database Lexis/Nexis, however, shows a startling difference in the number of stories written about these two murderers, particularly since Franklin was operating in one of the largest cities in the U.S. Under the search term “The Grim Sleeper,” there were about 100 relevant Lexis/Nexis newspaper listings. U.S. newspapers printed 51 of the stories, and 49—about half—were published in foreign newspapers, mostly from Britain, Australia, and Canada. In contrast, the search term “BTK Killer” produced 152 relevant articles, 45 of which were in foreign newspapers and 107 in U.S. newspapers. In short, there were about twice as many articles in U.S. papers about the BTK Killer than there were about his black counterpart, Lonnie Franklin. Apropos to Chapter Seven’s discussion of CODIS, black serial killer Lonnie Franklin’s cases relied on DNA evidence gathered from relatives to connect him to his victims, a feature of some controversy, which might be considered to have a degree of newsworthiness in and of itself. The differences in news coverage, their shelf life, and the amount of related films and books about white and black serial killers are noted. One would, however, need to examine additional factors to determine if race was a factor. Were the victims of equal news interest? Were the killers equally “media-attractive”, and why? Many of Rader’s victims were known to him; some were members of the same families, and seemed to be middle class whites, while Franklin’s victims were mostly black prostitutes. This is worthy of note, since the predominant victims of all six black serial killers who are the sole subject of true crime books were white women. Rader communicated extensively with the police and the media, while Franklin did not. Both murderers engaged in explicit sexual acts with their
victims. Rader ejaculated on his post mortem, while Franklin was a rapist. The news stories in both cases would require greater examination to consider whether they showed equal depth and length, and whether early stories, before any nickname was assigned either killer, would somehow affect the figures.

Cleveland-based black serial killer Anthony Sowell, many of whose victims were missing but not assumed murdered, had no press build-up. He, like Harrison “Marty” Graham, killed black prostitutes and/or drug addicts, and was arrested close to the time the corpses were discovered, a circumstance that stands in opposition to multi-year coverage as a known body count increases. That kind of extended coverage has a fictional parallel—“building suspense.” Interest created by the length of an investigation is also exacerbated by a broad geographic spread of victims. The latter not only raises additional fears of attack from a greater pool of readers/listeners, it generates stories in more than one media market.

Yet similar circumstances alone did not guarantee the relative anonymity of these two African American serial killers. One of the most famous serial killers in U.S. history also was arrested as his crimes were discovered, operated only in a restricted geographic setting, and preyed on victims who were marginalised blacks and Asians—Jeffrey Dahmer. Dahmer, a white serial killer, is the subject of at least five films, eleven true crime books, a novel by noted writer Joyce Carol Oates, four comic books, and several songs. Whether or not that is only anecdotal disparity, it is worth looking at the issue of news stories more carefully. If public awareness is, in part, driven and prolonged by media mention, then the length of time that serial killer-related stories remain in the press may indeed, as the FBI suggested, contribute to the killers’ celebrity. The time frames in which publications continue to release articles about serial killers also speak to public awareness via their longevity, or shelf-life. Jenkins (1994)
notes that, “…even death could not prevent Bundy from achieving a high degree of postmortem celebrity…” (p. 55).

**Victimology and Celebrity**

Certain types of victims attract greater degrees and different types of media attention, as well as varying rates of public involvement (Jewkes, 2004/2011). Serial killers rarely target high-profile victims. With a victim such as fashion designer Gianni Versace, however, international media attention was assured for “spree killer” Andrew Cunanan, celebrity being a cardinal news value (Jewkes, 2004/2011). When the victims constitute a novel element, the newsworthiness of related stories increases. Female prostitutes are hardly considered victims at all, as they do not necessarily evoke public sympathy. Wilson (2009) suggests that one reason many serial killers go unapprehended is because their victims are vulnerable, very young, or old, viewed by society as “runaways and throwaways” (p. 137). Despite the lasting celebrity of Britain’s “Jack the Ripper” and his killing of prostitutes, this victim type seems to garner less press attention generally. Canadian criminologist Neil Boyd has suggested the killing of prostitutes can be “a crime of opportunity as well as a symbolic crime,” due to both their public vulnerability and the “perpetrators’ attitude towards women.”¹⁶² Lesser-known white and black serial killers have targeted prostitutes, and police attention seems less focused on these killers. Many of their deaths go unsolved for lengthy periods. When considering lesser-known victims, murders of children and the elderly may elicit horror and sympathy, but in the U.S., serial killer victims who are attractive, middle-class, young white females seem to capture public imagination most thoroughly. It should be noted that the majority of victims for both black and white

serial killers fall into the white female category (famous exceptions are fairly limited in number; Gacy and Dahmer constitute two such, and have both been the subjects of books and films). This direction of public interest is not restricted to serial murders; U.S. pulp fiction “true crime” magazines, whose heyday was the 1920s to 1940s, capitalised on such victimhood on their covers, which frequently showed provocative images of wholesome but pretty white women being terrorised by various types of criminals. A review of the Brooklyn Museum of Art’s 2003 exhibition of such covers noted their combination of sex and misogyny (Baker, 2003), the latter expressed through torturous situations. This same potent combination still seems to hold an attraction for American audiences currently, as well as for many serial killers themselves.

As scholars in many fields have noted, the media’s interest in sex-related stories grew rapidly in the latter half of the twentieth century, whether related to crime or not, helping to create further attention or preoccupation among readers and viewers (Streitmatter, 2004). This research suggests that a similar identification between the public/consumer and serial killer is required for the latter to achieve celebrity status. Jenkins (1994) notes that the public’s identification with the serial killers’ manner of predation (e.g., the presence of a sexual element) may create appeal. He remarks:

The sexual component of both fact and fiction about serial murder has given rise to considerable public debate and concern, and it has been charged that the obvious focus on sexually oriented violence appeals to the prurient interests in bizarre sexuality, and perhaps even reflects a concealed or sublimated desire to participate in such activities (p. 102).

Jewkes (2004/2011) similarly notes sex as being another salient news value. If the aforementioned views are true, the public’s identification with the offender, in either factual or fictional depictions, might translate to celebrity. Watney (1987) reveals that the process of identification is at the heart of the film star celebrity phenomenon, and
this theme of identification will be revisited in the final chapter of this thesis. Schmid (2005) further notes the public’s ambiguous feelings of revulsion, entrancement, and admiration are based on their media portrayal. Public reaction to serial killers appears to be mixed. The media’s portrayals of serial murderers reveal the dichotomy that Seltzer (1998) suggests consist of at once both their negative associations and fascination with multiple murders. This fascination may be affected by an individual’s proximity to the events and/or personal knowledge related to it. The issue of celebrity for serial killers may also be a result of outrage expressed by one community as opposed to the level of comfort and security experienced by another. These feelings may be afforded by their distance and time from the event (Fisher, 1997), which may increase the publication and marketability of one serial killer story as opposed to another. This may result in victims whom the public has little identification with, or whose deaths (if no corpse is found) are not even noticed.\textsuperscript{163} Limited information did not afford this study an accurate victimology appraisal (i.e., assessment of the domestic and socio-economic status of each serial killer’s victims) with any degree of accuracy, and therefore was not utilised as a measure, though this could constitute a useful direction of future research. Some victims fall into specialised sub-categories, whose “appeal” as story fodder might be less mainstream. Such victims have brought extensive media coverage to white perpetrators, though not to their black counterparts. These include those who target the elderly, such as Albert DeSalvo, aka “The Boston Strangler” (operated circa 1962-1964), who was charged with thirteen deaths, most of whom were elderly women he first raped. Black serial killer Carlton Gary (1970) also targeted elderly white women, with seven victims who resided in Georgia and New York. He also raped many of them before strangling them with stockings, yet he is

virtually unknown. In the UK, Delroy Grant, a black serial rapist who may have had as many as a thousand victims, received virtually no media coverage of his crimes until his 2009 arrest. Much of the focus of news reports were on police blunders over his 20 years of offending. Perhaps law enforcement’s failure to apprehend this serial rapist was due to police race-based perceptions of the offender type. Some killers who have targeted male or gay male victims have become very well-known indeed (previously noted Jeffrey Dahmer and John Wayne Gacy). Black serial killer Elton M. Jackson, known as the “Hampton Roads Killer,” is certainly not a household name, yet he preyed on males during the mid-1980s in the Chesapeake/Portsmouth area of Virginia, killing twelve men over a nine-year period. His victims were fewer in number than either Dahmer or Gacy, but his predations lasted longer than the latter. Two types of victims that appear to be targeted by white serial killers are not included here. They consist of patients in hospital or nursing care facilities, who are often the prey of HCSK’s (health care serial killers), and husbands, the usual prey of “black widows”, females who marry or form other attachments, kill their partner, and repeat the formula. No black male health care serial killers were discovered during this research, nor were any African American “black widows.”

It remains an error to accept the popular maxim that serial killers primarily kill within their race; some serial murderers may even be motivated by race, such as white murderer Joseph Christopher, “the .22 Caliber Killer”, who targeted black victims (Ramsland, 2005). Because cross-race serial murders occur in significant numbers, any argument suggesting that black serial killers are unknown simply because their victims are black is questionable. What does appear to be clear is that those African American serial killers examined during this research whose murders have been chronicled in true crime books (i.e., Coral Watts, Derek Todd Lee, Kendall Francois, George Russell,
David Middleton, and Richard Grissom) all claimed whites as a majority of their victims, possibly suggesting their celebrity factor was higher because white women were their primary targets. If so, this is likely tied to an old and deep fear in U.S. society, one with racist origins, that is particularly traceable from the post-Civil War Reconstruction Period through the first half of the twentieth century—with some reverberations to the present. Sociologist David Pilgrim, in his discussion of the black “brute” in films, notes:

The "terrible crime" most often mentioned in connection with the Black brute was rape, more specifically, the rape of a White woman. At the beginning of the twentieth century, much of the virulent, anti-Black propaganda that found its way into scientific journals, local newspapers, and best-selling novels focused on the stereotype of the Black rapist. The claim that Black brutes were, in epidemic numbers, raping White women became the public rationalization for the lynching of Blacks.164

Similarly, this concept of black brutes on a rampage by Chancer (2005), cited in the previous chapter regarding the “Central Park jogger” investigation, resurrects old fears. In 1989 a group of black youths was erroneously charged and later acquitted of a gang rape involving a white female in New York City. Little stress has to be placed on the white female demographic for old negative images to be conjured; they apparently dwell just below the surface, having been reinforced for over a century. While the number of victims could also be considered a factor regarding media attention, there is little evidence that this is the case when one considers the possible 80 murders by still relatively unknown black serial killer Coral Watts (Mitchell, 2006).

**Serial Killer Identity**

If the truism that serial killers are all white males were valid, then those who differ from the preconception might seem to stand out. This may be true of female

164 Source: <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/brute/>
serial killers, whose statistical minority has nonetheless made them the subject of great attention and publication, but, even though black males are erroneously not included in the serial killer matrix, they still do not garner attention as “stand-outs” when captured. Another aspect of serial killer identity is the murdering team. White team killers Ottis Toole and Henry Lee Lucas murdered in the Midwestern states of the U.S. from 1976 to 1983; in acknowledgement of their unusual cooperation (and high number of victims), they have been the subject of numerous full or partial episodes of U.S. true crime television series. Similarly, white team killers and cousins Angelo Buono and Kenneth Bianchi, the “Hillside Stranglers”, acted together in Los Angeles from 1977 to 1978. Their crimes were featured in two theatrical films, one made-for-television film, and numerous episodes of U.S. true crime television series. Comparable black serial killers Devernon and Steven LeGrand murdered from 1963 to 1970; Anthony and Nathaniel Cook from 1973 to 1981; and Kevin and Reginald Haley from 1983 to 1984. The only books about black team killers discovered during this research, however, were those detailing the D.C. Snipers. Male and female teams appear to be statistically rare, but also include blacks. While the white Canadian couple Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo (the Scarborough Rapist) engaged in serial murders and rape from 1987 to 1990, similarly, the African American couple Alton Coleman and Debra Brown was linked to nine murders in the Midwestern states during 1984 (Ramsland, 2005). Popular culture has focused on Homolka and Bernardo, who have been the subjects of a film, a documentary, a fictionalised book, a memoir, and several episodes of true-crime television shows. Coleman and Brown have received no such media attention beyond news reports.
The pull of the horrific has a hold on U.S. audiences. In other realms, it is evident in horror films, videogames, and fiction. What increases the popularity of the villains in so-called “slasher films” such as *Halloween* (1978) or *Friday the 13th* (1980) (both of which became multi-film franchises) is their degree of distinctive gore and frightfulness. Analysts such as Dixon (2010) dissect the genre, pointing to these traits and their horrifying appeal to the public. Serial killers are real, yet the kind of draw generated by fictional horror films seems to cross over. Some of the best-known U.S. serial killers, for example, are those who cannibalised their victims, such as Ed Gein (with predations in the 1950s) and Jeffrey Dahmer (predations from 1978 to 1991). They have a black counterpart, Lester Harrison. This virtually-unknown African American serial killer engaged in cannibalism of at least one victim in Chicago on the 3rd of August, 1973. His anonymity could, of course, be linked to a much smaller number of victims and less lurid methods of practice generally.

Horrific practices by other black serial killers, however, are harder to ignore. Maury Travis’s story, for example, seems to have many of the ingredients that would create a celebrity serial killer. Although his years of predation were limited (2000 to 2002), and his victims were mostly drug-addicted prostitutes, he operated in two states (Missouri and Georgia) and killed numerous women. His methods might have appealed to the prurient, for his eroticised killings displayed a firmly established connection between personal violence and sex. In acts that outstrip those committed by Gary Heidnik and chronicled in Englade’s (1988) *Cellar of Horror*, Travis videotaped some of his crimes, including one labelled “Your Wedding Day.” The tape reveals his binding of women, as well as their torture, rape, and murder in his suburban Missouri home. The tapes demonstrate that sometimes Travis solicited women to engage in
bizarre rituals, such as dancing in white clothes or wearing blackened sunglasses so they could not see, before he murdered them.\textsuperscript{165} The scenes on the tapes were considered so disturbing that psychological counseling was ordered for the officers who viewed them. Blood splatters on the walls of his killing ground in the basement had been painted over several times. These are the kind of horrifying details that have made household names out of many of the best-known white serial killers, such as Ed Gein, Gary Ridgway, or Arthur Shawcross (aka the “Genesee River Killer”), yet Travis, like many other African American serial killers, remains virtually unknown. This seems curious—what makes him “media-unattractive”?

Occult associations have also made some serial killers, such as Californian Richard Ramirez (aka “The Night Stalker”), stand out. Ramirez’s membership in “The Church of Satan” gained considerable press coverage after his arrest for thirteen murders (1984-85). Ramirez drew a pentagram on one victim and another on her surroundings; he also placed a pentagram on the bedroom wall of an additional victim. These and other Satanic references were emphasised by both the press and true crime writers, perhaps because they resonated with the Los Angeles murders by Charles Manson and his “family” in 1969. No such overt associations between black serial killers and Satanism or other arcane cults are known. The D.C. Snipers’ placement of a “Death” tarot card with the handwritten phrase, “Dear policeman, I am God” in the woods near one of the murder sites created considerable publicity, but that occurred before the ethnicity of the killers was known and appears unconnected to their motivations; they may have intended it as a taunting red herring.

\textsuperscript{165} Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/story?id=132006&page=1>
**Typologies and Celebrity**

The FBI itself seems to suggest that they find certain serial killers of greater interest than others, perhaps because they are more “worthy” adversaries. In considering the broad serial killer classifications of organised v. disorganised (Holmes and Deburger, 1985), the organised killers are said to possess traits that may be more attractive to both law enforcement and the media, due to their supposed intelligence, social skills, and media awareness (see Chapter Four). Any assumptions about intelligence as it relates to the organised v. disorganised typology is specious at best (Canter et al, 2004). Successful predation is an adaptive skill based on the killer’s environment (e.g., urban ghettos or middle class neighbourhoods), whatever the methodology employed. Canter et al (Ibid.) question the validity of the organised v. disorganised typologies, noting that they are subject to the individual researcher’s interpretation. They also noted that typologies and classifications are not all-encompassing or absolute. Ted Bundy, for example, in his last rampage at Chi Omega sorority house, committed an impulsive disorganised rampage, the antithesis of his previous image of the organised killer (Rule, 1980). Serial killers may exhibit signs of both organised and disorganised traits, fluctuating at times between both, and becoming more skilful as they claim more victims, or less so, based on internal or external pressures. The validity of the typology for serial killers is further questioned, based on its application. A “serial killer”, by FBI definition, must commit three or more successful murders. Whichever the classification, the completion of a series of murders and avoidance of apprehension would suggest some organisational skills. Those who fall into the defined “organised” category might be said to attract greater media attention, and certainly some African American killers are part of this grouping. White

serial killers are represented among all serial killer typologies and motivational classifications. It is fair to say that these sets of typologies and classifications are primarily based on studies where white males were overwhelmingly the subjects. Four African Americans previously identified as the subjects of books (see Chapter Five) followed patterns of predations that represent the four primary motivational classifications: *lust* or *thrill killers, visionary killers, power and control killers, and mission killers* (Holmes and Deburger, 1985 and the FBI *Crimes Classification Manual* [Douglas et al, 1992]). There appears to be no discernable difference among black and white serial killers based on these categorisations and the behavioural antecedents culled from researchers (Ressler et al, 1992; Hickey, 2002 et al).

Douglas (1995) argues that, based in part on FBI offender interviews:

> Our research has shown that virtually all serial killers [my emphasis] come from dysfunctional backgrounds of sexual or physical abuse, drugs, alcoholism, or any of the related problems... (p. 364).

The themes of familial dysfunctions, early childhood trauma, and victimisation are common to both black and white serial killers. Holmes and Deburger (1985) note:

> As is true of any specific type of human behavior, different people may have the same basic motive. This variation in behavior may stem from many factors... (p. 30)

Prior to this research, no systematic analysis was discovered that discussed African American serial killers within the Holmes and Deburger (1985) or FBI motivational classifications. It is not known to what extent—if any—the aforementioned perpetrators, all of whom are the subjects of the few true crime books published about black serial killers, have been included in serial killer studies linking causation to their behavioural antecedents. It also cannot be stated with any certainty whether their causations may be related to historic race discrimination and socio-economic environments common to many African Americans (e.g., lack of patriarchal bonding,
physical abuse, and witnessing violence at a young age). While this is beyond the scope of this work, it is a subject worthy of future enquiry.

It is acknowledged that what is offered here is an analysis based on a small sampling. The choice of the black serial killers examined here was made for two reasons: 1) the availability of information regarding the behavioural antecedents of black serial killers is, at this point, only accessible through true-crime books about them, though, when possible, additional information regarding the details of their lives and predations were culled from several sources, and 2) as the only black serial killers who were the subject of true crime books, they were at least deemed by publishers as having some “celebrity.” Based on what is known about them, some of these killers appear to fit within the motivational classifications proposed by the FBI. It is significant to state that, in lieu of conclusively determining the factors that contribute to celebrity among black serial killers, the question as to whether they congregate in certain categories is addressed here. The subsequent examination illuminates the fact that their manner of predations spans the aforementioned typologies and motivational classifications. The following four serial killers illustrate adherence to the motivational classifications, constructed on the basis of research focused on predominantly white serial killers. It should be noted that neither the organised v. disorganised, nor the motivational categories, are always precise. Any given killer may display considerable overlap, yet, despite these ambiguities, these divisions nonetheless

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167 Sources for the “Motivational Classification of Black Serial Killers” included true crime books about them, as well as internet sources (e.g., <http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/serial_killers/index.html>). Contributors to this website include former FBI profilers and noted researchers (e.g., Greg McCrary and Katherine Ramsland, Ph.D.). Details were cross-referenced for accuracy with published works, including Google and Lexis/Nexis searches, when possible.

168 cf. Table 4.2. “Serial Killer Motivational Chart.”
have been utilised by researchers attempting to label and define murderers’ motivations.

Coral Watts was a black *visionary killer*, one who is propelled to murder by imagined voices or visions. They are outer-directed and psychotic. At the same time, he could also be considered a *mission killer*, one who feels the need to eradicate a certain group of people. These killers are not psychotic, but act on a self-imposed duty to rid the world of a particular group. Watts, whose predations covered the period 1974-1982, operated over a fairly large territory that included Michigan, Texas, and, it is suspected, parts of Canada. He was first arrested at 16 for sexual assault, and eventually killed a minimum of thirteen women by varied methods, such as stabbing, strangulation, bludgeoning, and hanging. He grew up with an unstable home life that included domestic violence, and was the victim of bullying at school; his youth included a bout with meningitis as well as head trauma. An alcohol abuser, he was single. The “visionary” classification of Coral Watts’ motivations is usually associated with a psychotic, disorganised personality. His ability, however, to avoid apprehension for nearly a decade, and, like Ted Bundy, murder in several states, reveals that he was an *organised* killer.

Kendall Francois was a *power/control killer* who received sexual gratification from his complete domination of his victim. Operating from 1996 to 1998 in Poughkeepsie, New York, he strangled eight women; he did not have a diverse group of victims. Prior to his apprehension for serial murder, he was imprisoned for several days for assault. Francois grew up in a two-parent home where there was no known domestic violence; he was single. He was not diagnosed with any medical or psychiatric problems. Kendall Francois had mobility and was able to drive to his victims’ location. This ability to travel, and his surreptitious disposal of his victims’
bodies in his family home are behaviours that might be seen as functioning at a mentally higher level and are associated with an organised killer.

Derek Todd Lee was also a black power/control killer who received sexual gratification from the complete domination of his victims and can also be considered a lust or thrill killer, a sub-category of the hedonistic killer who demonstrates a firmly established connection between personal violence and sex. Such murderers derive pleasure from the act; killing is an eroticised experience. He operated in the Baton Rouge, Louisiana area from 2002-03, and had prior arrests for burglary and a charge of attempted murder at 17 years of age. Lee killed seven women, first stalking them, then raping, strangling, or stabbing them. He grew up in an unstable home with domestic violence, abused alcohol, and had a sexual history that included fetishes and voyeuristic (“peeping tom”) behaviour. No relevant medical diagnoses or psychiatric histories existed. He was married at the time of his predations. Derek Todd Lee’s short time frame of predations, number of victims, and lack of a designated dump site to hide the bodies reveals a more compulsive, less planning personality construct interpreted as the actions of a disorganised offender.

George Russell, Jr. was a power/control killer who received sexual gratification from the complete domination of his victims, and was also a lust or thrill killer, a sub-category of the hedonistic killer who has a firmly established connection between personal violence and sex, deriving pleasure from the act and viewing killing as an eroticised experience. Russell operated in 1990 in the Seattle, Washington metropolitan area and killed three women after torturing and raping them; he was also a necrophiliac. Russell’s murders were preceded only by petty robberies. He was the product of an unstable childhood and was abandoned at an early age. Single, he abused alcohol, but his medical and psychiatric histories are unknown. The factors that led to his capture—
leaving his victims discoverable, expelling ejaculate in one victim, and failing to dispose of items that linked him to the murders—are actions associated with a disorganised offender. What this reveals is that, based on autobiographical information, it appears that black serial killers fit within the same accepted standard of typologies as their white counterparts. The causal factors associated with serial murders can be internal and external. While individual motivations are not readily known with any certainty, due to their internal psychological nature, an individual’s external environment is more visible and identifiable, and the ability to associate its influence on anti-social behaviours is less daunting. If an individual’s psyche and/or interaction with his environment (e.g., head injuries or chemical imbalance) have led to psychosis, the task of ascertaining motivations is more difficult. White psychotic serial killers such as Ed Gein (Schechter, 1989) and black serial killers like Coral Watts (Mitchell, 2006) are considered rare, due to the need to maintain a semblance of mental organisation required to commit multiple murders and avoid detection (Hickey, 2002). Douglas (1995) cautions:

...for a killer to avoid detection and get away with ten murders he has to be pretty good at it. Don’t make the mistake of confusing a psychopath with a psychotic (p. 352).

It is more accurate to state that these killers do not operate in a consistent state of psychosis but rather experience psychotic breaks during their predation. What is worthy of note is that, despite the similarities of classifications among white and black serial killers, the latter group remains relatively unknown to the American public. As of this writing, no data was available suggesting that either news organisations or the public base serial killer celebrity on the organised/disorganised typology or motivational classifications, although, as noted in Chapter Five, the type of serial killer beloved in films and books is presented as organised.
Discussion

There are similarities among black and white serial killers within the aforementioned taxonomies, but, based on an examination of social artefacts, there is no definitive answer as to why black serial murderers do not achieve levels of celebrity, though this does seem linked to the persistence of their anonymity. While the race of the serial killer cannot, with absolute certainty, be said to be a determinant regarding the amount and degree of their media exposure, the data strongly hints that race as a social construct for African Americans (i.e., skin colour and hair texture) is a critical factor. This research also reveals an ambiguity whereby some black serial killers’ news stories are not sustained in the media for extended news cycles (i.e., “shelf life”), nor do these killers appear in published works, television, or films. It does, however, seem worthwhile to note that there seems to be less ambiguity and/or reticence concerning race as a factor for exclusion when the media in the U.S. report the involvement of black males in other personal violent crimes. It has been further suggested that the more organised the predator, the more media attention he receives, and the more notoriety he will garner. This, at first glance, appears to be reflected in the initial and continuing fascination with white serial killers like Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, and John Wayne Gacy. Yet this work suggests that the media coverage of black and white serial killers is not comparable, despite similarities regarding the scope and manner of their predations, including varying geographic locations and number of victims. Individuals such as Coral Eugene Watts and Maury Travis engaged in numerous multi-state homicides but remain relatively unknown. It is further noted that the D.C. Snipers, classified by the FBI as serial killers, are considered as an aberration, and this is reflected in their lack of media shelf life. An in-depth longitudinal study of black and white serial killer news stories would add to the body of knowledge regarding media and race-based focus on
crime. The issue of organised v. disorganised serial killers should also be viewed within the context of a media study. Despite being the subject of popular true-crime books, none of the six black serial killers researched can be considered “well known” outside this field of criminological research.

This research does not suggest that all white serial killers achieve a notoriety worthy of publication; indeed, they do not. It does, however, show that those whose celebrity warrants publication—even those who are not household names—far outstrip those black serial killers whose deeds are published. The commercialisation of the former, via the publication of books, outweighs that of the latter group as does, in general, the popularity of such books. The chapter is intended as a preemptive rebuttal against two probable arguments. The first is that the media coverage afforded white serial murderers is based on their unique manner of predation (i.e., typologies and motivational classification). The second argument might be that the number of victims killed by white serial murderers could account for a more newsworthy story than that of their black counterparts. The examination of serial killers in this chapter reveals that neither the typology, classification, number of victims, nor manner of attacks are sufficient factors to account for the lack of celebrity and continuing anonymity of black serial killers.

The media’s determination of which serial killer stories are newsworthy, have commercial viability, and remain part of the public’s consciousness traditionally appears to trump black serial murderers, based on race alone, no matter the degree or depth of their predations. Therefore, newsworthiness, extensive media coverage, and the longevity (or “shelf life”) of serial killer stories have merited exploration. The publishing (or non-publication) of books regarding black serial killers may be based on race, or on factors such as the author’s access to information and/or their proximity to
the criminal’s area of predations. For example, George Russell, Jr., the black serial killer who murdered in Seattle, was the subject of Olsen’s (1994) *Charmer, The True Story of a Ladies’ Man and His Victims*. The author lived for a time on an island in the Puget Sound, 40.23 km north of Seattle, which may have facilitated his research. The lack of literature regarding black serial killers did not permit an extensive examination of individual behavioural factors for the 153 black offenders identified in “Known African American Serial Killers” chart (Fig.7). It is hoped that many more questions will be raised by this research, posing a challenge for law enforcement and social researchers alike.

Although it may appear a *fait accompli* that celebrity afforded serial killers in the U.S. is solely a byproduct of race, there is not enough empirical data to render that conclusion. The basis for publication and the sales of books, films, and murderabilia may be more of a factor of the public’s focus on the race of the victims, than that of the perpetrators. Future research might query whether the majority of African American serial killer victims were “throw-aways”, that is, individuals of a lower socio-economic status (previously cited Wilson, 2009, p. 137).

Historically, there has been little identification by the dominant culture with African Americans in the U.S., based in part on the latter’s enslavement and subsequent social exclusion.\(^{169}\) Acknowledgement of black serial killers to the degree that they are afforded celebrity, as previously addressed, would require not only an acknowledgement of their predations but—foremost—the public’s identification with them. Within the context of their historic depiction as sub-human and sexual beasts, the reluctance to embrace the concept of black serial killers—imbued with “positive”

\(^{169}\) cf. Chapter Three, “From Slavery to Prison: A Continuum of Negative Images.”
qualities generally attributed (albeit falsely) to their white counterparts (i.e., cunning, intelligence, relentlessness, and methodical action)—might be indicative of an unconscious fear within American society. To accept the existence of the black serial killer might be tantamount to acknowledging the existence of the ultimate Other (i.e., “the bogeyman”). Members of the dominant culture might view a serial killer like Ted Bundy worthy of media consumption for his “like me” representation of the dominant society, but the same might not be said for individuals who have traditionally been excluded. The foreword to Of Men and Monsters (Tithecott, 1997) notes that white serial killer Dahmer is most disturbing because mainstream society identified with him. He was:

…the nice boy, the son of everybody in Ohio…Did he come from a bad family, an abusive one? Were they poor, sexually twisted, lack, non-Christian? Nope. Dahmer is a challenge to us partly because if we look closely, he seems so little a product of a particular family… (p. xi).

Despite the similarities between black and white serial killers, which extend even to extremes in numbers of victims and horrific manners of predation, both police and media remain reluctant to accord these murderers equivalent attention, a fact that at least one such murderer has himself noted. Harrison Graham was repeatedly referred to by the media as “retarded”—a designation frequently applied to black serial killers by the press—but in his interview with this researcher he demonstrated sophisticated perceptions regarding serial killers and their media depictions. Asked if he recognised a difference in the degree of publicity he and Gary Heidnik, the white rapist and murderer arrested at nearly the same time in the same city, had generated, Graham replied positively, “. . . even though the cases in some ways were similar, but in other

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170 A legendary ghost-like monster that American children often believe in (cf. Stephen King’s 1978 short story in Night Shift).

171 See Appendix B.
levels it wasn’t. I’m a black man, he’s a white guy. . .” Graham was aware other black serial killers existed, but even he was more familiar with the names of white serial killers, such as Bundy and Dahmer. When asked why there was no book written about him, Graham replied that:

Basically because it goes back to “he’s a black man”, and many people don’t care much about blacks anyway. They think we are ignorant, don’t know nothing, and uneducated. And as far as the Europeans, white, they’re like saying they’re an upper class, like saying, Oh they [blacks] couldn’t do that . . .we are like the bottom of the trash can or the crust on somebody’s shoe, we don’t really mean nothing to them and the same thing is still going on (see interview Appendix B).

Graham’s observations are mirrored, albeit independently, by two interesting media choices. Mitchell, the author of the true crime book Evil Eyes (2006), based on black serial killer Coral Watts, raises several questions in the book’s epilogue. He asks why Watts, as a serial killer, could not be a popular icon, noting that, despite Watts’ numerous murders during an age when mass media proliferates news stories, Watts is far less known than Bundy or “Son of Sam.” More critically, he further points out that Watt’s story was co-opted for two television shows, NBC’s Crossing Jordan and CBS’s Cold Case. Ironically, both male actors who portrayed the pseudo, Watts-like character in the two programmes were transformed by the producers’ script and casting choices—both became white, rather than African American.

This chapter has sought to determine whether the differences between black and white serial killers are based solely on perceptions deeply rooted in the social construct of race in the U.S., as well as the media’s resultant interest, rather than any substantive variations in motivations or actions. Its examination of the place of African Americans within the serial killer celebrity matrix may not yet offer definitive conclusions why these murderers elude celebrity, but strongly suggests the social construct of race in the
U.S. as an important factor. In addition, it reveals several avenues worthy of further enquiry.
CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS

This section provides a unified understanding of each previous chapter’s contribution to black serial killer anonymity through a brief review. This is intended to aid the reader’s comprehension of the significance of the factors that have converged to place black serial killers outside the general purview of law enforcement and public scrutiny. Additionally, this concluding chapter suggests practical applications for law enforcement agencies and fruitful areas of future research. While this thesis is a study of the anonymity of African American serial murderers in the U.S., at its core it is an examination of race-based perceptions. Consequently, during the formulation of this research, it was reasonably assumed, due to U.S. history, that prosecuting the concept of black males as targets of racism in the U.S. would not be difficult. The examination of black serial killers within this study functions as a lens through which race, media, and law enforcement in the U.S. can be explored. While the overall significance of this exploration for law enforcement is beyond the limited scope of this research, this work focuses on law enforcement’s continued lack of awareness, which poses the danger that serial predators will remain unapprehended and victimisation will continue. The dearth of information regarding black serial killers in the U.S. exacerbates this danger, as do misconceptions about them. These two factors correspond with a continuum of media depictions promoting white males as the primary offenders of serial murder. This simulacrum blinds law enforcement agencies to the existence of black killers, and excludes them from the collective consciousness of the general public, thereby perpetuating African American serial killers as an unrecognised threat.
Chapter Three details the history of slavery and its intergenerational impact on blacks, their self-image, laws, and its social influences (i.e., crime and social theories). In an effort towards unraveling this Gordian knot of media newsworthiness, violent criminality, participation in serial murder, and the lack of media representation for African American serial killers, an understanding of slavery and a history of social exclusion was thought to be essential. The chapter sought to illuminate the bifurcated existence of whites and blacks, revealing two societies with distinctly different histories. Legislation (e.g., Jim Crow laws, Black Codes, and mandatory drug sentencing) has created long-term systemic problems that permeate many aspects of African American life. These laws, some (including Davis, Garland, Wacquant et al) argue, were designed to maintain social exclusion, and their enforcement became the domain of agencies, such as the FBI and state and local police, that mirror the ethos of the dominant society. The historic relationship between law enforcement agencies and blacks has been strained. The participation of blacks in personal violent crimes and homicides, and their rates of incarceration have done little to change the public or law enforcement’s perceptions of this group. It is these perceptions, reinforced by print imagery, films, newspapers, books, and television, that have been instrumental in creating a mindset that resists recognition that serial murder, associated (albeit falsely) with “positive” traits, could be committed by African Americans. The social incubator that is slavery and its aftermath should also be considered in future research as a possible source for black serial killers’ motivation.

Chapter Four reveals that America’s premier law enforcement agency, the FBI, was not immune to and often reflected the biases of the dominant culture in its serial killer research. It is therefore not surprising that the agency’s seminal studies regarding serial killers did not include blacks. Despite social scientists’ criticisms of its
Behavioral Science Unit’s methodologies, the FBI’s involvement in serial killer analysis has become synonymous with the word “profilers.” The media’s depiction of the FBI’s crime-solving expertise has been a collaborative and sometimes exaggerated venture (Surette, 1998; Morrisey, 2003; Jerin and Fields, 2005). The history of blacks’ social exclusion in the U.S., as was shown, is reflected among FBI personnel and especially visible among their “profilers.” This research has critiqued the FBI’s seminal serial killer research for its lack of racial diversity among the serial killers interviewed. Similarly, it was revealed that, despite studies suggesting its significance, race as an interview protocol is not a consideration for the FBI in their current serial killer investigations. Because of the agency’s internal history of social exclusion and research methodology, this should be a concern for future research, since it limits perceptions and reinforces the false perspectives already in place.

Chapters Five and Six highlight the disparity of media treatment of black and white serial murderers, yet it remains unclear why, in a culture where violence is considered newsworthy and where blacks are overrepresented among the incarcerated and often depicted as violent offenders, the media has not capitalised on their overrepresentation and involvement in serial murders. Consideration was given to the organised v. disorganised typology as an explanation for the disparity of media coverage regarding white versus black serial killers. At first glance, this might seem to be reasonable, given the public’s continuing fascination with serial killers like Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, and John Wayne Gacy, all of whom have been be categorised as organised offenders. However, black serial killers like Coral Eugene Watts, who engaged in multi-state homicides and may have killed more victims than Ted Bundy, appear to have been just as organised. Similarly, Maury Travis, who also engaged in

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172 cf. Chapter Four, “Criticisms of the FBI’s Methodology.”
multi-state homicides and videotaped his victims, could be considered an organised offender, so this simplistic explanation fails to explain why the exploits of white serial killers fascinate the reading and viewing public, while those of black serial killers do not. Because of the severely limited visibility of African American serial murderers among the social artefacts of news articles, books, films, television, murderabilia, and thanatourism, their invisibility is reinforced. The “knowledge” produced by popular culture is absorbed not only by the general public, but by those who produce the media, as well as by law enforcement itself.

Chapter Six particularly concerns itself with the elusive concept of serial killer “celebrity,” and its part in cloaking black participation in this crime. The accounting for celebrity among black serial killers was limited not only by a lack of social artefacts (i.e., true-crime books, films, news stories, and murderabilia), but by clearly disparate media coverage concerning the amount and geographic distribution of news stories, the shelf-life of news regarding African American serial killers, and the very language and ways black and white serial killers are portrayed, despite similarities regarding their predations. Attempting to rule out the manner of predation of blacks v. whites, which might suggest one is more appealing or media-attractive than the other, this research found that, although limited case studies were available for African American serial killers, similar cases still resulted in highly dissimilar coverage. These results suggest several areas worthy of future research, including the collection of more empirical data about black serial killers and explorations of victimology and its association with media coverage.

The following sections will further examine these and other issues and discuss their relevance in an effort to aid law enforcement agencies investigating serial
homicides, since the U.S. history of slavery and its aftermath have created and reinforced racial stereotypes that act as blinders and pose serious challenges.

**PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Police and African Americans**

One practical application for law enforcement agents (i.e., police) is to comprehend their historic role in the U.S. *vis-à-vis* its black citizens, and to understand how that affects their ability to effectively investigate crimes. Within Faulkner’s 1929 novel *The Sound and the Fury*, \(^{173}\) the statement “The past is not dead it’s not even the past…” is, within this work, suggestive of the constant presence of our history. In the same source, more graphically phrased, one of Faulkner’s characters states, “…when people act like niggers, no matter who they are the only thing to do is treat them like a nigger…” (p. 1016). This lauded American author’s quotes are indicative of stereotyped perceptions regarding behaviours and conditioned responses to them. Like Faulkner’s character, U.S. police have preconceptions about African Americans and instinctive reactions are triggered during encounters. The police have historically and predominantly been white males who when encountering blacks view them as perpetrators of civil unrest (even when they were its victims) and have stereotyped them as a group lacking intelligence and engaging only in low level crime. Jenkins (1994) notes that a black serial killer could stalk inner cities participating in “Son of Sam” type murders that would appear to be the results of all-too-common drive-by shootings, often relegated to drug turf wars. He further suggests that it is doubtful that law enforcement would care or perceive such a trend for what it was—multiple or serial

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murders—for killings like these occur frequently in lower socio-economic African American communities and receive little analysis.

Racism, as revealed in Chapter Three, is deeply embedded in the process of American culturalisation. Generations of individuals far removed from slavery, and even those with no ancestral or ethnic ties to slave owners, continue to latch onto historic racist ideas and practices. Law enforcement is not immune.\textsuperscript{174} Wilson (2009) elaborates this point:

\begin{quote}
…the police are trained to be suspicious, but that can lead to stereotyping potential offenders, which in turn can skew crime figures. For example a disproportionate number of black men are stopped and searched in the street, which means a disproportionate number of young black men are arrested, which confirms the stereotype that young black men are more likely to be offenders than young white men… (p. 158).
\end{quote}

These behaviours may also be viewed as a part of a racist “cop culture” (Ibid., p. 157) Research regarding race and prejudice\textsuperscript{175} suggests that personal relationships matter, and they can dispel previously baseless beliefs and fears regarding a particular group. It is suggested that educating police about their historic roles, from the Civil Rights movement to present-day encounters, might also render them better prepared to tactically deal with African Americans within violent urban settings.

Historically, white law enforcement agents’ strained relationship with African Americans is, in part, due to those agencies being charged with maintaining the status quo. Taken to the extreme, there was even police participation in 1964 murders of “Freedom Riders” Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman, which became a rallying point

\textsuperscript{174} The recent concept of a “post-racial America”, after the election of the first African American president, suggests a reconciliation period has attempted to resolve issues of hate and bias, incorporating as well a healing period for those who have been historically socially excluded. There has been no formal process or period of reconciliation for either the descendants of slaves or slave owners in the U.S., as there has been in South Africa, for example.

\textsuperscript{175} Banaji and Greenwald, 1998; Dasgupta and Greenwald, 2001; Smith et al, 2004, previously cited.
for the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. Numerous subsequent incidents, from the beatings of Rodney King in Los Angeles and Abner Louima in New York City, to the death at police hands of Amadou Diallo in New York City, as well as many less-publicised incidents, affirm that the role of police (whose forces still consist predominantly of white males) in the U.S. is one that has adopted a mindset of “cop culture.” In the greater historical context of slavery, law enforcement members consider themselves to be taming savages.

Reiner (1992) identifies the main characteristics of British “cop culture” as: mission-action-cynicism-pessimism; suspicion; isolation/solidarity; conservatism; machismo; prejudice; and pragmatism. It is not unreasonable to conclude that, given that U.S. law enforcement was based on a Peelian model (i.e., Sir Robert Peel), that these same characteristics are manifested. Wilson and Rees (eds., 2006) study of young black men’s experience in the UK’s youth justice system is mirrored in the U.S., suggesting that police officers are often socially isolated, and that there is little likelihood that they would share similar values or interests with the black men they encounter. The beating of Rodney King and the sodomising of Abner Louima are also the results of a history of social exclusion, whereby the despised “others” are viewed with antipathy. By way of illustration, the Amadou Diallo case of excessive force

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176 A landmark murder investigation (1964) of three Civil Rights workers—James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman—in Mississippi, was chronicled in the 1988 movie *Mississippi Burning*. The film portrays members of the FBI as zealous investigators, even as it reveals the truthful aspect that some local members of law enforcement engaged in the murders.

177 Rodney King’s infamous 1991 video shows him being struck repeatedly by four Los Angeles police officers and being shot with several tasers.

178 In 1997, Haitian-born Abner Louima was beaten and sodomised with a broom handle by several New York City police officers after a disturbance call in a Brooklyn nightclub.

179 In 1999, Amadou Diallo was shot 19 times after New York City police officers fired 41 shots at the unarmed Guinean immigrant. The incident garnered more public attention after it was memorialised in the Bruce Springsteen (2000) song, “American Skin (41 shots).”
against an unarmed subject is rationalised by Gladwell (2005)\(^{180}\) as an accident that occurred as a result of unforeseeable circumstances. The author and social commentator fails to consider the history of social antagonism and fear between the two groups—predominantly white male law enforcement agents and blacks in the U.S. Because of this history, police have not always been viewed by black communities with respect. It is suggested that the causal link regarding the officers’ reactions and that of the unarmed suspect, Mr. Diallo, is a by-product of historic social exclusion, unfamiliarity, and mutual fear translated into unfounded aggression and over-reactions.

Assumptions about blacks and what type of criminality they engage in has been termed “racialisation.” It is the practice of utilising racial typologies towards an understanding of cultural responses, temperaments, or motives of a particular group. Covington (1995) notes that:

> Even today physical characteristics, classified as racial, continue to be the basis for inferring major (i.e., racial) differences in culture, cultural achievements, histories and behaviors of persons who possess them (p. 548).

Covington further suggests that social scientists and criminologists, who do not operate in a vacuum, transform their beliefs into “facts” when met with agreement from their cohorts. The adherence to these racial typologies is done so frequently and with such ease, as to suggest that they are not seen as problematic (Ibid.). The dangers posed by these race-based perceptions form a compelling argument for enlightenment when homicides are a potential danger. History (e.g., actions committed by Afrikaaners, Rwandans, Germans, et al when in power)\(^{181}\) has revealed that racial bias is so simply achievable that those perpetrating it may not realise they are creating images that will

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\(^{180}\) Malcolm Gladwell (2005) is the author of *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, as well as other books and essays.

\(^{181}\) cf. Chapter Three, Harvard University’s *Implicit Association Test* Discussion.
become culturally embedded, a part of the subconscious of both the despised “others” and the perpetrators themselves. The law enforcement maxim regarding “mistakes of the head and mistakes of the heart” suggests that procedural mistakes can be remedied through education. “Mistakes of the heart” are part of an individual’s judgement based on their socialisation and training that is internalised and not easily prevented.

Serial murder is first and foremost a crime, and, as such, law enforcement’s ability to detect and prevent it is vital, and the most important goal of this work. Widespread education regarding the existence of black serial killers might result not only in more open minds during current investigations, but it might also produce solutions to cold cases. Major U.S. cities have numerous unsolved homicides. As the Harrison Graham and Anthony Sowell serial murder cases have shown, such homicides are not always random, and such predations can be extended as a result of unrecognised serial murderers. Multiple homicides within the inner cities are common, although committed by a minority of the black populace. Victimology, as Chapter Six notes, may account for the lack of impetus among homicide investigators to investigate such cases, due to a lack of awareness surrounding black serial killers and their predations. Delving further, how many unsolved murders may have been perpetrated by this group? Furthermore, the level of violence in urban areas since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s has increasingly been directed inward (i.e., “black-on-black crime”).\footnote{The origins of the term “black-on-black crime” are unknown, but it became a popular phrase during the 1980s, used by politicians to describe the violence of the inner cities perpetrated by blacks against blacks.} It is a fact that the majority of the victims of this increasing violence have been black. Rationalising such deaths as the result of turf wars over drugs does not explain the readiness or psychological construct of individuals so willing to murder.

Any sincere effort to address the violence (especially homicides) in the inner cities
necessitates a proactive approach that requires a deeper analysis by law enforcement and social scientists. An engagement of the existing mental health data would certainly entail the intervention of social service agencies to address perpetrators, victims, and their offspring. Although the feasibility of such a multi-level intervention is subject to the winds of politics, that does not supersede the need for a blueprint of action. The overrepresentation of African Americans within the U.S. carceral system and their engagement in personal violent crime are not in dispute. It remains ironic that for a group whose participation in interpersonal violence is statistically significant, their involvement in serial murder still lacks recognition.

As Chapter Three outlines, law enforcement in the U.S. has played a historic role in maintaining the status quo and enforcing laws mandating social exclusion. Police have incorporated and helped to create stereotypes that impact everyday encounters with African Americans (especially in inner cities), from vehicle and pedestrian investigations to homicide cases. Until such time that law enforcement agents recognise their historical role and realise its impact on African Americans, the adversarial tone of the relationship between the two is likely to remain static.

**DNA, CODIS, and Cold Case Files**

Based on the detailed existence of black serial killers and law enforcement’s continued lack of awareness of these criminals, revisiting unsolved homicide investigations in U.S. cities might prove to be an appropriate and fruitful course of action. Blacks are disproportionately both the perpetrators and victims of such

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183 Police should be mindful of what Anderson (1999) termed code-switching, best described as a survival tactic, when conducting pedestrian and vehicle investigations. It may be viewed within the context of Leaerckian mimicry, whereby predators and non-predators alike assume the same posture, the latter for safety from the other. On the street it can manifests in fashion, swagger, and behaviours exemplifying Sutherland’s differential association principles, in order to avoid being preyed upon.
Certainly, the identification and apprehension of murderers can be complex, particularly, as in serial murder cases, when they seemingly operate without a motive. Further complicating the capture of the serial murderer in general, and the African American serial killer in particular, was the absence of DNA fingerprinting, not introduced in the U.S. until 1986 (Saferstein, 2004). Francis Crick and James Watson’s discovery of the double helix DNA molecule (Wilkins, 2003) paved the way for Sir Alec Jeffries of the University of Leicester to establish genetic fingerprinting methodology. This revolutionary and invaluable tool changed law enforcement’s image and procedures worldwide, for it became possible to establish a direct biological link between the perpetrator and the crime. Walsh (2005) has argued that, by virtue of their apprehension, law enforcement agencies must be aware of black serial killers. As has been mentioned, his argument is specious, for, despite the long history of black serial killers’ predations and number of victims, they continue to lack media attention, which affects law enforcement, as well as public perceptions. Properly applied, science can override investigative resistance to the recognition of black serial killers. African American Lonnie David Franklin Jr. (aka “The Grim Sleeper”), for instance, is allegedly responsible for the murder of 12 women over a 25-year period. Only after a “familial search” regarding his son’s DNA, however, was he arrested.

DNA matched at crime scenes must be linked to suspects; the latter part of that formula is based on the primary human element of the investigator’s motivation and evidence, combined with their assessment of potential suspects and witnesses. A 1989
Kansas City police study of homicides\textsuperscript{186} noted the unsolved murders of nine black women and the public’s perception of a lack of vigilance by law enforcement agents. The public and relatives of the victims alleged that the police had less than the necessary motivation to investigate these crimes, based on the race of the victims. Failure to properly investigate homicides can result in civil suits against police and city governments. In December 2010, the families of five of black serial killer Anthony Sowell’s murder victims in Cleveland, Ohio initiated lawsuits against that city and its police department. The lawsuits are based on what they allege was a failure to investigate and “deliberate indifference” by sex crimes detectives.\textsuperscript{187} A sixth family has since joined the suit. The process of “filtering”, or deciding what cases are investigated, is subject to the political and/or monetary concerns of state and local officials. An illumination of this vetting process, primarily for homicide cases that have gone unsolved, is addressed in “Cold case squads; leaving no stone unturned” (Turner and Kosa, 2003). The U.S. Justice Department has enabled continued investigation of these often forgotten cases by their Cold Case Block Grants, as well as the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000. In the same way that cold case files were given a new tool with the advent of DNA fingerprinting, so too might a new, less race-based perspective permit a re-evaluation of potential suspects. The CODIS database indexes the DNA profiles of convicted offenders, missing persons, voluntary samples contributed by relatives of missing persons, arrestees (where state law permits), and profiles gathered from crime scenes, such as blood, semen, and unidentified human remains.

\textsuperscript{186} Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1580140/>

There are presently 170 U.S. public law enforcement laboratories that participate in sharing information via CODIS. Zetter (2010) notes that most DNA profiles in the CODIS database belong to African Americans. The numerous homicides committed by blacks against blacks in U.S. inner cities suggest that these investigations might dissipate before this type of criminal activity does. Mitchell and Daniels (1989) observe that blacks were disproportionately represented as victims of homicides and that 94% of black murder victims in the U.S. were killed by other blacks, a statistic confirmed by the Bureau of Justice Crime Statistics for that year. If law enforcement agents do not perceive murders as an overall societal problem, as opposed to a cultural standard relegated to a particular group, they may not act. What may have been missed by the FBI and law enforcement agencies attempting to solve these crimes? The importance of a re-assessment of CODIS cannot be underestimated.

The existence and participation of African Americans in serial murder has been overlooked for decades. Poor blacks inhabit violent urban neighbourhoods and the significance of numerous homicides in the black community, combined with the FBI and researchers’ failure to recognise the presence of behavioural antecedents like those linked to serial homicides, cannot be understated. To imply that racial bias among law enforcement agents in the U.S. might be a factor in the homicide investigation process is not without reason. Based on previous chapters documenting racial bias and its history as a culturalisation component in the U.S., the predominance of a conservative white male culture in law enforcement would not be immune. Certain murders only gain attention when the perpetrators cross the racial divide (e.g., black-on-white crime). Van Patten and Delhauer (2007) report that in Los Angeles blacks are overrepresented

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188 cf. Chapter Three, “Black Criminality and Incarceration.”
among perpetrators of sexual homicides, and, in the same report, noted that blacks are also overrepresented among the victim pool. How many unsolved urban murders might be solved with a less stereotyped perspective and the utilisation of CODIS?

Furthermore, unsolved murders of blacks in U.S. cities are also disproportionately represented within CODIS (Ibid.). Following Jenkins’ reasoning that the numerous murders within urban black communities would go unnoticed if the perpetrators were black serial killers, the race of the victim might also account for the many unsolved cases. Jenkins (1993) noted that the white serial killer Albert Fish (executed 1936), who victimised numerous black children, remarked in his confession that his victims were chosen because “… the police simply didn’t care about colored children…” (p. 57).

The actual number of black children murdered by Albert Fish is not known.

Van Patten and Delhauer (Ibid.) suggest that the longer a case goes unsolved, the more likely it will remain in that status. The newspaper *USA Today* in 2006 stated that numerous “cold case” murder cases were not pursued:

> The unpursued matches had this in common: All were recorded as "hits" by the CODIS system and added to the list of CODIS-aided investigations that the FBI makes public. Through September, the FBI counted 39,291 such matches since 1990. No one is certain how many of those matches resulted in arrests or convictions (Willing, 2006).

The term “hits”, in the context of CODIS, means that there are suspects associated with the crime. In 2010, *Wired* magazine reported that approximately 40% of the FBI’s backlog of processing 3200 DNA samples stems from their missing persons cases (Kravets, 2010). Unresolved “cold case” investigations are subject to numerous factors, including staffing, funding, and the size of the investigator’s caseload. The investigation of black serial killer Anthony Sowell (2009) in Cleveland, Ohio, has led to the reopening of unsolved homicide cases for possible links to his DNA. The recent (2011) arrest of the “Kensington Strangler” in Philadelphia, an alleged black serial
killer\textsuperscript{189} named Antonio Rodriguez, was delayed for three months because the offender’s DNA match remained untouched in a police lab due to a backlog of DNA data and budget cuts.\textsuperscript{190} The aforementioned relevant factors should not additionally be hampered by an investigator’s lack of motivation or the filtering out of potential suspects due to race-based perceptions related to murder investigation of the homeless, prostitutes, missing persons, runaways, or individuals existing on the lower socioeconomic rungs of society.

Therefore, it is not a reasonable, ethical, nor strategic approach for law enforcement to ignore the behavioural antecedents noted by the FBI and social scientists (a lack of patriarchal bonding, unstable home life, witnessing of violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and drug use), all factors that are a part of the early developmental family dynamics of many inner city African Americans. This research located few studies that have analysed the history of blacks in the U.S. and linked the mental health statistics with their potential for criminality. Current serial killer research inclusive of black perpetrators lacks extensive studies advancing this avenue of investigation, and the failure to do so has provided a cloak of invisibility. The level of violence and numerous unsolved murders within urban environments warrants a reassessment of the use of CODIS. The feasibility of its implementation regarding the numerous unsolved urban homicides seems warranted in light of law enforcement’s blind spot regarding the existence of black serial murderers.

\textsuperscript{189} Antonio Rodriguez, an African American whose Latino surname comes from his adoptive parents, was not included in the previously referenced “Known African American Serial Killers” (Fig. 7) because he has not, as of this writing, been convicted.

Race as a factor within the interview setting

An examination of the FBI research in Chapter Four suggested that the agency has not linked behavioural antecedents and sociological data regarding African Americans with their own research regarding antecedents found among serial murderers. Considering the percentages of homicides committed by blacks in U.S. cities, this failure is perplexing. As of this writing, no known research by that agency exists that examines what might be considered a serial killer matrix within black urban environments. While Canter et al, 2004; Egger, 2002; Turvey, 1998 et al, note that there are inadequacies within the agency’s profiling methods (i.e., the inductive v. deductive approach), one major failure yet to be addressed by FBI research and the social scientists engaged in serial killer research is race as a component within the interview setting. Careful considerations to such matters must be given when conducting serial killer research, and the absence of literature on about the subject directs a route of enquiry for future investigation. When conducting research within an interview setting, numerous studies exist that deal with race as a factor (Banks, 1971; Rosegrant and McCroskey, 1975; McFarland et al, 2004), so there seems to be no reason to exclude it as a consideration when conducting serial killer interviews. It should be noted that ignoring the subjects’ and interviewers’ race may further affect the former or latter’s comfort levels. Failure to acknowledge this may render responses to questions regarding motivations—a key component sought by this process—not credible. The FBI’s seminal serial killer research (Ressler et al, 1992), in part was based on interviewing the offenders, and did not include race as a factor. The general, negative perceptions of black males as lacking intelligence are suggested as a rationale for the failure of the FBI to identify and include black interviewers in their studies. Their current serial killer studies still have no set protocol regarding race as a factor,
Despite the existing research regarding its impact, additionally, the majority of published FBI and social scientists’ serial killer research reviewed for this work revealed that the race of both the interviewers and interviewees were consistently white (e.g., Keppel and Birnes, 1995; Skrapec, 1997; Hickey, 2002; Beasley, 2004; Morrison, 2004 et al).

The circumstances regarding first-person information gained from serial killers requires consideration. Interview research (Banks, 1971; Rosegrant and McCroskey, 1975; McFarland et al, 2004; Monteith and Spicer, 2000 et al) suggests that an interview with an African American by a member of the same race, owing to the unique and shared history of slavery and subsequent attitudes based on race in the U.S., might elicit a level of ease for the subject not previously considered or afforded, as well as greater awareness of verbal references and shortcuts. Banks (1971) states:

Through all the areas of the interview literature a basic theme exists. It is that the black man, because of over three hundred years of destructive experience with the white man, enters the interview situation with a set of attitudes and behaviors which, if not considered, will negatively affect rapport and the outcome of the relationship (p. 137).

FBI Special Supervisory Agent James O. Beasley II, (assigned to the NCAVC), a white male, notes that his interview of black serial killer Chester Elroy revealed conflicting answers regarding his motivation for murder. Elroy informed Beasley that the initial answers he provided were the answers he thought “they” (law enforcement) wanted to hear. Hickey (2002) observes that such behaviour is termed “gaming” (p. 273).

The FBI and social researchers have both conducted interviews of African American serial killers, yet it is uncertain how much race was factored into their data.

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191 Personal communication, FBI Supervisory Special Agent James O. Beasley II, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, 2 July 2010.

192 The Appendix B interview of black serial killer Harrison “Marty” Graham was conducted by this black researcher, offering a unique perspective in this regard.
mining and analysis processes. As a microcosm of society, the FBI historically was and is a predominantly white male law enforcement agency. As per SSA James Beasley II, currently there are no African American profilers working for the FBI. In conjunction with the agency’s criticised static profiling procedures, the implications for misinformation and faulty data relating to serial murderers may be further affected by the omission of race as a consideration within the interview setting. An examination of the FBI as an organisation reveals it to be an agency slow to change.  

From its inception, “the Bureau” was conceived by J. Edgar Hoover, its founder, as a white male law enforcement agency tasked to investigate crimes that the public saw as daring, including perpetrators of bank robbery (e.g., Dillinger, “Pretty Boy Floyd” et al), kidnappers, and spies. These crimes were seen as requiring more intelligence than would be expected from blacks. Further proof of the homogenous nature of the agency is their current ranks of minority agents. The history of the FBI reveals an organisation that, until relatively recently, lacked diversity.  

In 1965, the FBI employed 25 black agents; in 1981, out of a total of 7760 agents, only 237 were black; in 1988, out of a total of 9600 agents, 400 were black; in 2003, less than 17% of its agents were minorities; and in 2008, out of 33,165 agents, 4405 were black. The agency’s atmosphere was conducive to generalisations about its minority members and
subsequent discrimination lawsuits.\textsuperscript{196} It is reasonable to assume that high profile positions within the Behavioral Science Unit would not have included minority members during the FBI’s initial serial killer research in the early\textsuperscript{1970s}. These positions would be based upon, among other factors, seniority—which would have tended to exclude African Americans. More significantly, on 2 July 2010, FBI SSA James O. Beasley II, revealed that current personnel assigned to the BSU and NCAVC were comprised of “… no blacks, Latins or Asian agents” as criminal profilers.\textsuperscript{197} He further stated that there were several women working in that capacity, but no minority women. As previously stated in the literature review, Beasley noted that the last black FBI profiler he was aware of was SA Judd Ray,\textsuperscript{198} referred to in \textit{Mindhunter} (Douglas, 1995), to whom no publications have been attributed.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that experienced police homicide detectives are aware of the influences of race during the questioning of suspects and their resultant ability to elicit confessions.\textsuperscript{199} The psychological gamesmanship of employing “good cop/bad cop” interviews, using female officers in certain situations, and so on, are instinctive (and sometimes taught), traditional methods of obtaining information. The police, however, are in the business of extracting evidence and confessions that will close cases and lead to convictions. Their use of like-race interviews and other tactics are not employed for research purposes. Serial killer research focuses on a deeper probing of individuals, usually those who have already been convicted and


\textsuperscript{197} Personal communication, FBI Supervisory Special Agent James O. Beasley II, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, 2 July 2010.

\textsuperscript{198} Judd Ray, an African American Special Agent of the FBI, was discussed in \textit{Mindhunter}, but the story relating to him in that book was of a personal domestic nature; it did not refer to him in his capacity as a criminal profiler.

\textsuperscript{199} e.g., Lamont Anderson is an African American Philadelphia Police homicide detective to whom Harrison Graham readily confessed to the murders of seven women on 16 August 1987.
incarcerated. It is this deeper probing regarding the subject’s personal history that should require a methodology that considers the research regarding the effects of race in an interview setting, and the usefulness of such techniques as employed by the police might provide an expandable path.

**Future Research Regarding African American Serial Murderers**

Chapter Five’s examination of the commercialisation of white serial killers illuminates the public’s lack of awareness regarding the existence of black serial killers. Previously held beliefs and perceptions regarding black criminality and participation in serial murder were questioned in the aftermath of the D.C. Sniper murders, but with few apparent paradigm shifts resulting. To highlight the existence of African American serial killers without addressing the suggested antecedents of black criminality would be a fundamental failing of this research’s desire to make a contribution to law enforcement and the public good. The history associated with African Americans might suggest motivations unique to their history and social experience as an explanation for their predations. Admittedly, the determination of any individual’s motivation is a daunting task. Despite this, Kluckhohn and Murray’s (1953) dictum, “Every man is in certain respects (a) like all other men, (b) like some other men, [and] (c) like no other man” (p. 53), is indicative of the complex nature of all psychological research. Therefore, the difficulties of assessing with any certainty what motivates serial killers, black or white, are acknowledged. Individuals who have spent a good portion of their lives manipulating and controlling are adept at defying psychoanalysis, and this is often purposeful. Their skills of manipulation have been honed, their minds are not likely to be easily explored, or their statements readily believed (Douglas, 1995; Hickey, 2002; Wilson, 2009 et al). Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that the distinct and unique history of African Americans may suggest a possible motivation for some African
American serial predations, even if it is in addition to other motivations. The comparative study of black and white serial killers in Chapter Six did not address the more psychological aspects of their predations, and there are many avenues for future research relating to this area, such as considerations of the questions: Are white serial killers more fantasy-driven than their black counterparts? Are blacks more likely to commit more peripheral crimes prior to, and in conjunction with, serial murders? Are black serial killers’ motivations different from those of their white counterparts? Are they steeped in, as Leyton suggests (2001) in his argument that the U.S. includes a disproportionate number of serial killers, an American culture of “misdirected violence and revenge”? In a culture that glorifies violence, might some be led towards misdirected violence and revenge, particularly those individuals who were enslaved or their descendents, who continue to feel mistreated? Are their murders actually retributory acts, related to a history of oppression in the U.S.?

Leyton further elaborates that American culture embodies a unique sense of justice achieved by retribution and vigilantism, dating back to its colonial origins (Ibid.). Related to the aforementioned characterisation, considering the history of slavery in the U.S., which was replete with acts of violence committed by whites against blacks, serial murder could be construed, within a socio-political context, to be

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200 Ricky Gray and Ray Dandridge, yet to be identified as serial killers, operated as a black killing team in 2005 and 2006 and engaged in multiple murders in Pennsylvania and Virginia, as well as numerous robberies. Black murderer Mark Goudeau, dubbed “the Base Line Killer”, committed numerous crimes in Phoenix, Arizona in 2005, while engaging in nine serial murders.

201 This American culture of violence may be a product of its pioneer beginnings and a lack of a regulated judicial system. In such an environment, the actions of individuals who sought to employ violence to avenge or take revenge against a perceived wrong might still be viewed as acceptable, thereby contributing to a culture of violence. By way of example, Garland (2005) notes that, from the 1890s to the 1930s, lynchings in the U.S. were considered to be acceptable actions, and were attended by respectable people.
a form of retribution. An argument could be constructed regarding any seemingly criminal act against whites by blacks in the U.S. as retributory. Jenkins (1994) suggests:

> When an offender of one race regularly targets victims of another, it is not difficult to understand why this should be interpreted as part of a generalized or systematic hostility, especially if there is a long previous record of hatred and violence between the two races…. (p. 160).

In 1831, Nat Turner led a slave revolt in Virginia that lasted several days until his capture, during which time he visited plantations and murdered slave owners. Turner revealed that he was on a mission from God to avenge the captivity of slaves. He, along with accomplices, is believed to have killed approximately 55-65 whites in two days (Styron, 1967). Though more of a spree than a serial killer, Nat Turner’s actions would appear to be directly aimed at retribution through his murder of whites. Carlton Gary’s strangulation murders of elderly white women were viewed as racially motivated (Jenkins, 1994), and, more recently, John Allen Muhammad suggested that the U.S. government conspired against him because of his race, a scenario he chose to frame his own narrative. Taking into account Muhammad’s statement, as well as the self-reporting aspect of serial killer interviews in general, Rosenberg (1998) suggests that even lies are useful to serial killer research because they reveal how an individual organises his life. Lies are meaningful because they are meaningful to the individual. John Muhammad’s supposed conversion to Islam motivated him to change his name from John Allen Williams. Interestingly enough, among Nation of Islam followers, the American last name is referred to as the “slave name” and should be dropped (e.g.,

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202 cf. *Confessions of Nat Turner* (Styron, 1967). The book has been criticised by notable black authors (e.g., James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison) for its portrayal of Nat Turner.


204 cf. Chapter Five, “The significance of the D.C. Snipers.”
“Malcolm X”, nee Little. It would appear then, that if Muhammad’s actions were retributory in nature against what he felt was a racist government. In order to make his point, anyone would suffice as a victim.

Embracing the concept of two separate societies in the U.S., one white, the other black, might warrant further analysis regarding the impact of societal influences on the African American community, and might account, at least in part, for some black serial killers. Apropos to Wilson’s (2009) suggestion of serial murder as a sort of barometer of societal fragmentation in the UK, it is reasonable to query, when have black Americans not felt fragmented and disenfranchised? Their migration north, post Civil War travails, and competition for jobs with white immigrants led to additional discrimination based on skills. Criminal activity among unskilled blacks seemed inevitable, yet the rates of incarceration suggested more of an effort toward social control than the careful adjudication of criminal proceedings. McWhorter (2005) notes the shift in mores and an increasing lack of respect for anyone in authority among descendants of African Americans who migrated north, post-Emancipation Proclamation.

A cursory review of Fig. 7, the “Known African American Serial Killers” chart, reveals a chronological accounting of black serial killers. An examination of three decades reveals that, from 1964 to 1974, nineteen black serial killers were identified; from 1975 to 1984, twenty-six were identified, and from 1985 to 1994, fifty-five were

205 Based on a pervasive theme of violence and revenge, it is worthy of note that American blacks who have supposedly converted to Islam have traditionally been viewed by Arab Muslims as half-baked “ghetto-Islamists.” This, in part, was due to what is viewed as their vague knowledge of the religion, as transmitted through the American movement, the Nation of Islam. Furthermore, black convicts formed so-called Muslim groups in U.S. prisons for self-protection. Even the Nation of Islam (generally respected in U.S. African American communities) was considered an extremist radical group when formed in the 1960s. They frequently equated “the white man” with the devil, due to slavery, continued repression, and social injustices. The resurgence of a radical Islam by Al Qaeda, seeking revenge against the U.S., provides another venue for poor urban blacks disenfranchised from mainstream America, who utilise their anger to seek vengeance against the dominant group’s ideals and symbols of power.
noted. This last number represents more black serial killers than those found in the two previous decades combined. Wilson’s (2009) investigation of serial murders in Britain, focusing on victimology and Britain’s shifting patriarchal culture, offers a model for investigation. He suggests that WWII assisted serial murderers in that nation by placing able-bodied men in the armed forces, while woman were essentially left to fend for themselves. An obvious question is, what social influences, legislation, or events might account for the increase of black serial killers? One explanation might be found in the mandatory drug sentencing laws instituted during the aforementioned time period.206

Within the context of RAT (routine activity theory), potential deterrents to these serial murders, males, acting as fathers in the home or role models elsewhere were being incarcerated in record numbers. This, too, is another area worthy of study, particularly when one considers the large percentage of African Americans in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Hazelwood and Michaud (2001) suggests that, as social boundaries diminish, assimilation within a society might increase the likelihood of an individual’s adherence to similar personality constructs and the psychological dysfunctions of the dominant group. Serial killers are certainly aware of their peers. Ramsland (2005) notes that serial killers communicate with one another, swapping ideas, viewing themselves as members of a “…special sort of club…” (p. 217). She further concludes that, as social roles erode and class distinctions blur, serial killers have emerged from all walks of life, from businessmen to law students to the unemployed (Ibid.). Further advancing this view, Hazlewood and Michaud (2001) suggest that there is a link between the

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206 cf. Chapter Three, section “Black criminality and incarceration.”
organisational skills of the perpetrators and their socio-economic status. They notice a pattern that shows a similarity among black ritualistic sexual criminals:\footnote{207}:

I [Hazlewood] noted that these offenders also tended to come from middle-class or higher families. I realized that it isn’t race but socioeconomic and cultural influences that determine behavior….” (p. 99)

He further states:

I believe that as more Blacks and Hispanics move into the middle class, they will begin to display more of the ritualistic behaviors currently associated with White offenders… (Ibid.).

This issue was also addressed during a meeting at the NCAVC with SSA James O Beasley II,\footnote{208} whereupon he suggested that America’s “melting pot” of multiple cultures results in the sharing of both positive and negative influences. It is not unreasonable to suggest that a minority group within a larger dominant one might adopt behaviours of that dominant group over time. Leyton’s (2001) suggestion that American culture embodies a unique sense of retributory justice implies that all acts of violence committed by blacks against whites, including serial murder, could be construed, within a socio-political context, as a form of vengeance. Retributory violence solely directed at whites by blacks, based on relatively new legislation regarding whites against blacks, should be categorised as a “hate crime.”\footnote{209} Blacks’ participation in hate crimes also shows an overrepresentation based on their overall population in the U.S. as noted by the Southern Poverty Law Center.\footnote{210} An argument

\footnote{207} The researchers identified Malcolm Malone as a “charming”, “middle class” black serial rapist and an “organised” sexual predator by 2001 in \textit{Dark Dreams, Sexual Homicide and the Criminal Mind}.  
\footnote{208} Personal communication, 19 April 2004.  
\footnote{209} cf. The 1964 Federal Civil Rights Act, 18 U.S.C. § 245 permits the prosecution of anyone who, “…willingly injures, intimidates or interferes with another person, or attempts to do so, by force because of the person’s race, color, religion or national origin….“  
\footnote{210} The Southern Poverty Law Center was created by noted Southern civil rights attorney Morris Dees to monitor hate crimes. Source: <www.splcenter.org>
refuting black serial killings as retributory acts, however, would be what appears to be their frequent same-race victimisation. Once again, a study focused on victimology\textsuperscript{211} within this context would be useful.

**Discussion**

This research regarding black serial killers suggests that the history of racism in the U.S. directed at African Americans and the continuum of resultant biases, including those expressed through imagery, have afforded these murderers an anonymity from the public and from law enforcement. Perhaps the concept of the African American serial killer, although newsworthy, is too unnerving, with a potential for a deleterious effect on the public or, as Wilson (2009) suggested regarding the possibility of GP’s murdering in the U.K., it is an invasion of the American public’s “comfort zone.” It is, however, through an analysis of the duality of these killers’ existence and anonymity, that race-based perceptions in the U.S. can gain a new perspective as they relate to law enforcement and the media. While no measurable explanation has been reached and further exploration is required, suggested roads for enquiry have been proposed in this thesis. A further analysis of law enforcement agents’ knowledge of and investigative practices regarding serial murders is suggested. Their contribution to media portrayals of crime and perpetrators has been noted by researchers, yet these contributions are borne out of a “cop culture”, which in the U.S. has been predominantly white, male, and conservative. Therefore, it is suggested that future research might entail a survey of U.S. law enforcement agencies from the four major geographic/cultural regions (Northeast, South, Midwest and the West). Such a survey would target local police

\textsuperscript{211} In David Wilson’s (2009) *A History of British Serial Killing*, he examines the societal setting as opposed to perpetrators, revealing the political climate in the UK, as an entrenched patriarchal culture.
agencies to measure their knowledge of serial murderers among three specific units within those agencies: homicide investigators, sex-crime (special victims) unit, and academy/training unit personnel. The aforementioned units are generally tasked with investigating serial homicides and/or training their agents’ investigative techniques and the history of serial predation. Such a study would also seek to obtain biographical data and demographics of individual agents that might be suggestive of interpersonal perceptions and relationships with African Americans. As previously noted, social exclusion can create biases and these may be overcome through personal relationships.

The data gathered from these agencies would be useful regarding race-based perceptions of law enforcement of black serial killers, and how they may impact investigations of the same.

The issue of race has been suggested in this research to be a prominent influence on the disparate treatment of serial killers by the media. This is most visible in the lack of media portrayals regarding black serial killers, as has been noted by several researchers, despite the lack of reluctance to portray or report blacks engaged in other forms of homicide and criminal behaviour. Furthermore, this research revealed that, among the limited number of true crime books regarding black serial killers, the predominant victims of those that were published were white females. Although these black serial murderers remain relatively unknown to the public, their limited media mention, if based on the race of their victims, requires further study. Among those serial killers who might be viewed as receiving more media attention (i.e., subjects of true-crime books), black serial killer news stories were still not sustained for extended news cycles (i.e., they had a brief “shelf life”). In general, only one black serial killer

212 Chapter Five noted Surette’s (1994) survey of police recruits whose beliefs were impacted by media presentations.
feature film was discovered, paralleled by a similar dearth of portrayals on fictional television. During this research, one rare suggestion of a black serial killer on television was discovered on HBO’s series *True Blood* (2008-to date). Only the cable network’s economically-proprietary audience viewed the character “Eggs”, whose predations were only hinted at through flashbacks, never fully portrayed for the audience, and orchestrated by a white female who utilised him as a puppet. These factors ensured his brief role and predictably will have limited impact.

The reluctance to portray black serial killers in a manner similar to their white counterparts reveals the perversity of unequal criminality. The current disinclination to do so impedes law enforcement’s mission to protect and serve. It is not suggested that race is the sole factor for the exclusion of African Americans from the serial killer mystique and public consciousness, but rather that it is the most pervasive. Factors such as the organised v. disorganised methodology of black and white serial murderers also requires further in-depth study. Other issues regarding the “medico-psychological” aspects of personality constructs (e.g., psychopathy, narcissism et al) of individuals who engage in serial murders may lend itself to varying media coverage, law enforcement attention, and public perceptions, and therefore should be addressed in future research. Accepting the central theme of this thesis is to acknowledge that the historical images of blacks as they have been portrayed in the U.S. by the media are negative ones. Furthermore, it is an acknowledgement that there has been a glamorisation of crime, to the extent that serial murderers are viewed as almost supernatural and iconic beings. These are incongruent themes.

The benefits of addressing the issues of black criminality suggested by this research, while a daunting task, outweigh the impact of failing to do so. What Ferri (1901) describes in his work *The Positive School of Criminology* as the three factors
leading an individual to criminal actions—anthropological history, the telluric environment in which one lives, and the social environment into which one is born—are significant. These factors, it can be reasonably assumed, contribute to the violent lower socio-economic urban environments inhabited by many African Americans. The separate, unequal treatment of blacks in the U.S. is well-documented, and, though less overt, bias born from their history of exclusion continues to permeate many aspects of U.S. society. It would constitute social and historical blindness to fail to comprehend this possible link to the statistical status that African Americans hold within the criminal justice system. This is not an easily surmountable problem. The “white picket fence” of the American dream that is sought by so many can never be realised by African Americans without an acknowledgement and acceptance of the trauma of slavery. In conjunction, there cannot be a disconnect, a disavowal by the descendants of slave owners, or an insensitivity from fellow citizens who also buy into the American dream. Without an acceptance of equality in the U.S., the country will remain two separate and distinct societies with a myriad of associated social and legal issues.

The FBI must be given credit as the law enforcement agency that opened the door, metaphorically speaking, regarding serial homicide investigations in the U.S., yet the public’s and law enforcement’s lack of awareness regarding black serial killers will ensure the continued difficulty of its agents to apprehend such murderers. It is the intent of this work to encourage further research in this area which will aid law enforcement in the capture of serial murderers of all races. If African Americans do not fit the standard serial killer profile, then they operate under the radar of law enforcement. Harrison Graham and numerous other blacks do not fit neatly into the accepted static profile of serial killers. A re-assessment of criminal profiling methodologies is therefore necessary, through a careful study of those individuals who are discovered to
be serial killers, specifically individuals who are perceived to be outside the existing matrix, in order for it to evolve. For law enforcement, the challenge is to train their personnel with facts acquired through research, in an effort to encourage them to forego racial biases.

This thesis has contributed to the limited study of African American serial killers in the U.S. While there have been some other studies regarding black serial killers in the U.S., few have taken this multiple methodological approach that relies on critical discourse analysis and case studies. It is hoped that this work aids law enforcement and social scientists who might continue to advance this area of research.
Fig. 1

U.S. Title 28 Sec. 540B.

From the U.S. Code Online via GPO Access
[wais.access.gpo.gov]
[Document in effect as of January 24, 2002]
[Document not affected by Public Laws enacted between January 24, 2002 and December 19, 2002]
[CITE: 28USC540B]

TITLE 28--JUDICIARY AND JUDICIAL PROCEDURE

PART I--DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

CHAPTER 33--FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Sec. 540B. Investigation of serial killings

(a) In General.--The Attorney General and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation may investigate serial killings in violation of the laws of a State or political subdivision, if such investigation is requested by the head of a law enforcement agency with investigative or prosecutorial jurisdiction over the offense.

(b) Definitions.--In this section:
   (1) Killing.--The term “killing” means conduct that would constitute an offense under section 1111 of title 18, United States Code, if Federal jurisdiction existed.
   (2) Serial killings.--The term “serial killings” means a series of three or more killings, not less than one of which was committed within the United States, having common characteristics such as to suggest the reasonable possibility that the crimes were committed by the same actor or actors.
   (3) State.--The term “State” means a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States.


Images of lynching

‘A man lynched from a tree. Face partially concealed by angle and headgear’, Library of Congress (http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/nppc.12928), 1925, National Photo Company – no known restrictions
Fig. 3

Images of segregation

‘Negro drinking at "Colored" water cooler in streetcar terminal, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma’, Library of Congress (http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8a26761/), 1939, Russell Lee – image in the public domain - no known restrictions
Fig. 4 Sheet music covers and cartoons showing African Americans using razors

1898 Sheet Music Cover, Reproduced with permission from Dr. K. Curnow
‘De coon dat had de razor’ Sheet Music Cover, Library of Congress (Music Division), 1885, White Smith & Co.
(http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rpbaasm&fileName=0700/0756/rpbaasm0756page.db&recNum=0)
A TIMELY WORD.

MISS COONBY (at "the party").—Why, Mr. Mokeby, yo’s jus’ dressed up to kill.

MR. MOKEBY (feeling his pocket).—Golly! Dat juis’ reminds me, Miss Juliet; I se done lef my razzer to home!
Fig. 5

Birmingham Fire Department using power hoses to disperse black protester. Picture secured from below site

http://www.addictinginfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/civil-rights-hoses.jpg- This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License
**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>1945 to 1979</th>
<th>1980 to 1989</th>
<th>1990 to May 2004</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Number of Victims</td>
<td>State(s)</td>
<td>Number of Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlton Gary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaughn Greenwood</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent Groves</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>5+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Cook</td>
<td>8+</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Cook</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lester Harrison</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Henry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin Jackson</td>
<td>9+</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deveron LeGrand</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leskey Postrel</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby Joe Maxwell</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston Moseley</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Roberts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winford Stokes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MO</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Walker</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>TN, OH, MI</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Watts</td>
<td>13+</td>
<td>TX, MI</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Williams</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne Williams</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Cheney</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FL, SC</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Ruttell, L. L. Thompson</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fig. 7  Known African American Serial Killers (by date) as of July 15, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>Known Predation Dates</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Other Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Jones, Jr.</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1933-1935</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John M. Reid, 1920-1927</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td></td>
<td>WA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Hill, 1934-1936</td>
<td>1934-1936</td>
<td></td>
<td>SC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorrain Watson Smith, 1930</td>
<td>1930-1931</td>
<td></td>
<td>KY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Leonidas Snead</td>
<td>1930-1940</td>
<td></td>
<td>NY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Wesley Lee, 1934-1943</td>
<td>1934-1943</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violette Greenwood</td>
<td>1936-1941</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Walker, 1936</td>
<td>1936-1940</td>
<td></td>
<td>OH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Clay, 1940-1945</td>
<td>1940-1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>NY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Armstrong Jones</td>
<td>1942-1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>SC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles V. Head, 1942-1945</td>
<td>1942-1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>FL</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaac Jones, 1946-1948</td>
<td>1946-1948</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander Young Watson, Jr.</td>
<td>1944-1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>MO</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>William Howard Smith, 1950</td>
<td>1950-1952</td>
<td></td>
<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Elmer Childs, 1950-1952</td>
<td>1950-1952</td>
<td></td>
<td>FL</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry A. Blair, 1954-1956</td>
<td>1954-1956</td>
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<td>MO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Louis Burns, 1956</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td></td>
<td>MO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Arthur Allen, 1957-1962</td>
<td>1957-1962</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassius Green, 1959-1964</td>
<td>1959-1964</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violette Greenwood</td>
<td>1960-1961</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tommie Lee Williams, 1960-1961</td>
<td>1960-1961</td>
<td></td>
<td>MO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Franklin, 1960-1963</td>
<td>1960-1963</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Brown, 1960-1964</td>
<td>1960-1964</td>
<td></td>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It should be noted that a table such as this cannot have completely accurate figures. The information has been gathered from multiple sources (e.g., Google News for print articles and other internet sites such as [www.citizenlane.org](http://www.citizenlane.org)), and verified by court documents when accessible, because no comprehensive crime database can be accessed to include only African Americans. In addition, as noted in this chapter, the definitions of serial, spree, and multiple murderers vary. This chart utilizes the FBI definition of serial murder (3 or more deaths with cooling off periods).*
**Fig. 8. Disparity in news coverage of Hurricane Katrina**

Due to copyright constraints this photo was removed but accessible through this link

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/van-jones/black-people-loot-food-wh_b_6614.html
**Fig. 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Films about black serial killers</th>
<th>Films about white serial killers</th>
<th>Books about black serial killers</th>
<th>Books about white serial killers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*23 Days in October 2003</td>
<td>Red Dragon 1986</td>
<td>*Suddenly Gone 1995</td>
<td>*Son of Sam 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rampage 1987</td>
<td>*An Invisible Man 2006</td>
<td>*The Confessions of Son of Sam 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relentless 1989</td>
<td>*Evil Eyes 2006</td>
<td>*Two of a Kind…The Hillside Stranglers 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smooth Talker 1991</td>
<td>*Beware the Cable Guy</td>
<td>*Deviant 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*To Catch a Killer 1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Deranged 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When the Bough Breaks 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>*The Search for the Green River Killer 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural Born Killers 1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Dead Ends 1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

276
| *Citizen-X 1995 | *Kill and Kill Again 1992 |
| Seven 1995 | *The Milwaukee Murders 1992 |
| CopyCat 1995 | *The Misbegotten Son 1993 |
| Virtuosity 1995 | *Hunting for the Devil 1993 |
| Turbulence 1997 | *Defending the Devil 1993 |
| Kiss the Girls 1997 | *The Riverman 1995 |
| *Summer of Sam 1999 | The Alienist 1995 |
| American Psycho 2000 | *Bestial 1998 |
| Ted Bundy 2002 | *Devil in the White City 2003 |
| *Monster 2003 | Darkly Dreaming Dexter 2004 |
| Mr. Brooks 2007 | Shadowman 2006 |
| Hannibal Rising 2007 | *A Death in Belmont |
| Righteous Kill 2008 | *The Strangler 2007 |

* Identifies non-fictional killers, all others are fictional, documentaries were not included.

The chart above represents selective media portrayals of some white and all known black serial murderers discovered during this research in popular films and books (fiction and nonfiction) from 1979 to the present. The statistical depictions of blacks as serial killers in books and film constitute less than 1% of the existing works discovered during this research. Some of the sources utilised were Google.com and Books in Print (a literature database), which listed 605 true crime serial killer books in print as of 27 January 2009. The Internet Movie Database (imdb.com) constitutes a comparable database for film, and lists over 1000 serial killer movies made since 1990 alone. The visual comparison of white v. black serial killers featured in publications and film begins with Albert DeSalvo, “The Boston Strangler”, America’s first widely-known twentieth century serial killer.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Comparative New World Slavery

The U.S. was the destination of only about 4.5% of the African slave trade to the New World (Curtin, 1969). Other countries (e.g., Peru and Mexico) not often associated with slavery were participants as well, in significant numbers. The “disappearance” of their descendants had to do with intermarriage—no “one drop of blood” rule or laws preventing socially sanctioned legal marriages were applicable.

The most prominent destinations for the importation of slaves were Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, and Surinam. Brazil was the single largest destination of African slaves, with the longest importation period, as well as the latest emancipation date (1888). Slavery was brutal here, as it was elsewhere in the Americas. The rainforest geography allowed for the hidden formation of some runaway communities, called quilombos. Perceived as threats to the institution of slavery, these were hunted down and crushed when possible. The biggest of these was Palmares, destroyed in the 17th century; its population is estimated at somewhere between ten and twenty thousand, considerably larger than any contemporaneous U.S. city. Much of Brazilian slavery was urban, despite the sugar plantations, and it was far less supervised than in North America—many slaves were hired out to work as stevedores, for example. As a Catholic country, Brazil encouraged newly-baptised slaves to meet regularly in religious brotherhoods/confraternities, organised in the town by nations (ethnicities).


214 “In the South it became known as the ‘one-drop rule,’ meaning that a single drop of ‘black blood’ makes a person a black. It is also known as the ‘one black ancestor rule.’ Some courts have called it the ‘traceable amount rule,’ and anthropologists call it the ‘hypo-descent rule,’ meaning that racially mixed persons are assigned the status of the subordinate group. This definition emerged from the American South to become the nation's definition, generally accepted by whites and blacks. Blacks had no other choice…” Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/mixed/onedrop.html>
The ability to meet with townsmen and continue to speak an African tongue reinforced culture. So too did the ability to marry, which in Brazil meant that slaves could not be separated from their spouses and children. These factors ensured less cultural displacement, particularly in the cities.

In the U.S., there was a deliberate policy of divide and conquer, whereby people from the same part of Africa were intentionally separated in an effort to thwart revolts, since multiple ethnicities meant mutually unintelligible languages. Legally recognised slave marriages did not exist in the United States, and familial separation was extremely common. Also unlike the U.S., Brazilian slaves had the right to buy their own freedom at published prices, work for themselves on Sundays and holy days, own property, and have their children inherit—although these laws were not always honoured. While certainly traumatic, the cultural ripping was far less than in the U.S. Traditional religions secretly continued, as did some art forms, language, and customs. Post-slavery, the inequities that existed were not supported by laws; intermarriage was commonplace, but color sometimes had social effects. A civil rights movement took place in the 1970s that increased Afro-Brazilian visibility in universities, government, police, and other societal institutions. Disparity today in Brazil appears to be related more to social values than legislation; wealth and class are great levellers. The Brazilian author Jorge Amado (1969) states that when a man is poor, he is called preto (black), but when he becomes rich, he is a moreno (brunette). The degree of racial prejudice appears to vary in different parts of the country.

Haiti was once the richest New World country because of its sugar crop. During independence struggles, the retreating French colonists salted the soil and Haiti appears never to have recovered. Individuals born of a slave mother who were the offspring of a Frenchman were automatically free, unlike U.S. practices. Audubon of the famed bird
watching society may have been Afro-Haitian; he was certainly Haitian, one of many illegitimate children of his French father. Slavery ended early in Haiti, because of independence (1800-1804), and importation ended here earliest of all the New World states. Under the French, slaves were also able to meet by nation, inherit property, etc., much like the Brazilians. Often brutal, Haiti’s post-independence trauma was internally imposed, much as it is in parts of Africa. There was virtually no foreign presence after independence in the nineteenth century, but the descendants of French fathers became an élite class that still exists today, usually distinguished by education, wealth, and power.

Cuba’s slave emancipation took place in 1886, nearly as late as that of Brazil. As a Catholic country, it also had religious brotherhoods organised by “nation”, and, like Brazil, this facilitated cultural retentions, including language and even religion, disguised by associations of deities with Catholic saints. Both Yoruba (santeria) and Kongo (palo monte) religions, as well as the abakua social organisation from what is now southeastern Nigeria persisted. Interracial marriages were not at all unusual in the post-slavery era. Although economic disparity persists, Fidel Castro’s policies allowed Afro-Cubans greater access to education, health, and jobs. There is also a rural/urban disparity, whereby today rural individuals, black and white, are disadvantaged compared to their urban counterparts.

Jamaica was a major slave destination, home to many brutal incidents not unlike those of the U.S. and other slave-holding nations. For most of its existence it was Protestant, and thus had no Catholic confraternities that also allowed ethnicities to remain alive. Jamaica was a “breeding area”, a staging arena for the transshipment of slaves to the U.S. The British colonial government persisted there until 1962, so it was similar to Africa in its timeline for independence, though colonisation took place much
earlier in Jamaica. Like most of the major slavery destinations, with the exception of Brazil and the U.S. for most of their histories, there were more blacks than whites in the population, which greatly impacted independence legislation and social practices. Post-slavery laws of the “Jim Crow”215 type did not exist—access to schools and government positions was open, and intermarriage was legal.

Surinam was initially a British colony, but was traded to the Dutch in the seventeenth century for Manhattan. Its plantations were on the coast, and from the very beginning, many runaway slaves made for the interior where peoples of many different ethnicities (e.g., varied groups straight from Africa, Surinam-born plantation residents) created new ethnicities (“tribes”) with new languages and cultures. They successfully raided coastal settlements until the Dutch made separate peace treaties with each group and were forced to pay the so-called “Maroons” tribute. Treatment of slaves along the coast was brutal, but emancipation took place in the 1870s.

It should be noted that Argentina was involved in slavery, although to a lesser degree than the aforementioned countries. It consciously “whitened” itself by shipping many Afro-Argentinians to Brazil after emancipation, then actively seeking immigrants from Europe to achieve an acknowledged lightening of the general population’s skin colour.216

The lasting effects of slavery in the U.S. are discussed at length in Chapter Three, however it is illuminating to note that Martinique and Guadeloupe are still

215 “From the 1880’s into the 1960’s, a majority of American states enforced segregation through ‘Jim Crow’ laws. From Delaware to California, and from North Dakota to Texas, many states (and cities, too) could impose legal punishments on people for consorting with members of another race. The most common types of laws forbade intermarriage and ordered business owners and public institutions to keep their Black and White clientele separated….“
Source: http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/jim_crow_laws.htm

216 cf. “Reconstruction and its aftermath” section in Chapter Three.
official states of France, and subject to that country’s laws. Recent riots in 2009, however, appear to reveal a belief on the part of Guadeloupeans that they are still not considered equal citizens217 (personal communication with Curnow, 2009).

APPENDIX B

Harrison Graham approval letters and interview
November 09, 2006

Mr. Allen L. Branson
6948 Weatham Street
Philadelphia, PA 19119

Dear Mr. Branson:

I am pleased to inform you that the Department’s Research Review Committee (RRC) has approved your proposal entitled “The Anonymity of Serial Killers.” Please note that approval for your proposal is contingent upon the following conditions:

1. Prior to proceeding with your study, please sign and return the attached “Research Ethics and Policy Guidelines and Conditions.” Your signature will imply your acceptance of the terms and conditions of the Department’s Research Policy. This signed form will be maintained in our files for the duration of your project.
2. Prior to proceeding with your study, please submit written documentation of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.
3. Project approval is contingent on inmate Harrison Graham (AS 0978) putting you on his visiting list and conducting the interview in the visiting room.
4. We are unable to allow you to examine inmate records, as access to these records is limited by the Criminal History Records Information Act (CHRIA).

I wish you the best in your research. If you would be so kind, please forward a copy of your final report to my attention upon completion. Also, please feel free to give me a call at (717) 214-8959 if you wish to further discuss your project.

Sincerely,

Kristoffer Brat Bucklen
Senior Research and Evaluation Analyst
Chairman, Research Review Committee
Office of Planning, Research, Statistics, and Grants

Enclosure
Cc: File 017-2000
Superintendent Piazza
The Interview

The impetus to interview a black serial killer in 2006 was, in part, based on the lack of existing information regarding their predations. Harrison “Marty” Graham was interviewed at Pennsylvania’s Coal Township Correctional Facility, monitored via glass windows on one side of the room. The subject was unencumbered by handcuffs. Three chairs were provided, as well as a simple wooden and metal table. One recording device was permitted, along with a legal pad and two ball point pens. Graham is serving a life sentence for the murders of seven women with no possibility of parole, and all of his appeals have been exhausted. He is assigned #AS0978 at the State Correctional Institute at Coal Township. What follows is his interview on 28 December 2006:

AB: I wanted to ask you some questions regarding your childhood and memories you had while growing up.

HG: Childhood? I don’t remember no childhood.

AB: Do you remember going to school?

HG: The school across the street where I grew up at 57th and Spruce if that’s what you talking about, the grammar school, uh-uh [negative response].

AB: Did you enjoy school, did it annoy you? Get on your nerves?

HG: At that age I don’t really remember, it wasn’t fun. The only thing I remember is that I did not have any fun at school, at all, period.

AB: Do you remember how long you went to [attended] school?

HG: I went to school from there until the eleventh grade, I really didn’t learn much so they took me out of the public school and put me in a special education school for those
who were diagnosed with mental retardation or were “slow” so that’s where I went. So I then went back to school, tried to adjust, and I never did, so I ended up dropping out.

AB: Now you were in foster homes?

HG: I was in one that I can remember.

AB: And do you remember your mom?

HG: Wilamina Williams

AB: And you recall how long you were with her?

HG: From the age of two-and-a-half to seven.

AB: How was she to you?

HG: She was nice.

AB: She always treated you nice?

HG: Oh yeah.

AB: How were you treated when you were in the foster home?

HG: I really don’t remember I just remember the one I stayed at from the age of two.

AB: So you initially were with your biological mom, went into a foster home, and then went back with your biological mom?

HG: Yes, after I reached a certain age.

AB: How many brothers and sisters?

HG: At that time two, one brother and one sister.

AB: You said that your mom was affectionate to you. Do you remember when you were in the foster home if you were ever physically punished?

HG: Nah, not really.

AB: Do you remember experiencing bedwetting?

HG: [smiles] Yeah.

AB: Did you experience it a lot?
HG: Yes [laughs].

AB: Do you remember the age?

HG: I was young. I don’t remember.

AB: Well, when you went into the foster home, how old were you?

HG: About two.

AB: And when you came out, how old were you?

HG: Around seven, I guess.

AB: But you do remember experiencing bedwetting?

HG: Yes, and it continued for a long time.

AB: Did it continue when you got out?

HG: Yes, because I went to a summer camp and I went [bed wet] there as well.

AB: Do you remember how old you were when you stopped?

HG: About twelve…twelve or thirteen.

[This admission was not found in previous psychological reports.]

AB: Do you ever remember setting fires when you were young?

HG: Yeah [laughs and eyes widen].

AB: Did you like setting fires?

HG: Yeah.

AB: Did you set a lot of fires?

HG: Yeah.

AB: What age?

HG: I was in my teens when I did that and I remember one when I hit [became] 12, around 12 or 13.

AB: Why do you remember this one particular one?

HG: [smiles] I enjoyed it. I liked it.
AB: Tell me, as much as you can, the details about that fire particularly?
HG: I liked the flames, the colours of the flames.
AB: Do you remember where it was, where you set it, how big it was, what you set?
HG: What was it…one was a closet, in a dark closet playing with matches?
AB: In a house?
HG: Mmmm hmmm [affirmation]. I just happen to like the flames, the colours, like with my little jewelry I do [make], I like colours. And it kind of relax [sic] you, you know, like, ya know, okay, cool.

[This admission was not found in previous psychological reports]
AB: Were you exposed to animals, dogs or cats when you were young?
HG: Mmmm hmmm [affirmation].
AB: Did you like dogs and cats?
HG: Yeah.
AB: Did you ever hurt small dogs or animals?
HG: Yeah [laughs].
AB: Do you remember any particular incident of [interrupted by HG]...?
HG: Dropping a cat out the window, yeah.
AB: What window and how high?
HG: It was a house with a downstairs and an upstairs and I wanted to see if he would land on his feet.
AB: What about dogs?
AB: So you wouldn’t hurt a dog?
HG: No, just the cats, dropping out the window.
AB: Nothing more invasive than that?
HG: No.

[This admission was not found in previous psychological reports.]

AB: Do you remember when you started dating, did you date when you were a teenager?

HG: Noooooo [long drawn out response and hesitant]. I was too busy making money

AB: What were you doing?

HG: From ‘bout [sic] thirteen to seventeen, I was working in a supermarket, you know, as a bag boy…then I had got like summer jobs working in the school, cleaning schools and a volunteer worker.

AB: What oriented you to making money?

HG: My thing was if you got the money you can do whatever you want. It makes things a little bit more easier.

AB: Was there anybody that influenced you to do that or was it just something you came up with on your own?

HG: [shakes his head negatively at the question and answers] Yes [to the follow-up question]. Well, it was like when I was sixteen, there were guys that liked to beat up old ladies and take their money. I said to myself instead of me doing some crazy stuff like that, let me make my money the honest way….there was a market up the street there was another one there around the street over the hill through the woods so I said I might as well go there and make money instead of hanging with these guys who don’t have my best interest at heart…I did that till eighteen.

[This response is contrary to the psychological reports that indicated Harrison Graham would be easily influenced by others.]

AB: When was the first time you remember dating, at what age?

HG: I never dated
Note that Harrison Graham murdered seven women by luring them to his apartment with the promise of using drugs. One might assume this response is indicative of his view that his victims were not “dates” in the romantic sense.

AB: When did you become interested in girls?
HG: Ahhh, I was always…. I was always interested, but didn’t know how to approach them and tell them how I really felt about them, and so on and so forth. I was kind of shy in a sense because I never had no, my oldest brother never told me how you pick up a girl. I didn’t know, so my thing was, the more I got into making the money….and when I hooked up [got together] with a girl, she would like me, but her mother didn’t, so I was like cool…whatever her problem is.

[This response appeared to trigger an emotional memory. The line of questioning is pursued further.]

AB: Is this any particular girl that you are talking about?
HG: Ah, yeah, there’s a girl by the name of Tracey.

AB: Was there any particular reason that the mother didn’t like you?
HG: Maybe because I was a little bit more older than her daughter. You know how some people say, I see something in him that you don’t see, and I don’t like what I see. Maybe something of that nature.

AB: There was Tracey, but you didn’t date a lot?
HG: No, but I had a lot of female friends, but I did no dating.

[Harrison Graham appears to have enjoyed female company but did not “date”, suggesting an acknowledged inadequacy on his part.]

AB: So they wanted you, but it didn’t bother you one way or the other?
HG: At that time no, not at that time, no.

AB: Tell me one of the happiest memories of your childhood?
HG: The only thing I can remember from my childhood is picnics with the family.

AB: Do you remember where the picnics were?

HG: In Fairmount Park with my foster family and Huntingdon Park with my biological family, mother, brother and sister and my mother’s boyfriend, that was it.

AB: And those were the happiest memories?

HG: Those were.

AB: Was there anything that particularly bored you when you were a child? [HG looks puzzled, as if he doesn’t understand the question, so I rephrase it] Do you think in retrospect, looking back, that you might have been hyperactive?

HG: That’s what everybody was telling me, that I was very hyperactive, but at the time I couldn’t understand what y’all [you all] meant, and even if I asked them to get their clear understanding of what they were saying.

AB: Were you ever molested as a child?

HG: [long pause] Yeah.

[This admission was not found in previous psychological reports].

AB: Do you remember who it was?

HG: The only thing I remember it was a male, but I don’t know who

AB: Do you remember what time that was?

HG: Nope.

AB: By time, I mean age?

HG: Nope.

AB: But you do remember it?

HG: Mmmmm [affirmative]

[The question elicits a physical response from HG, he does not make eye contact and lowers his head.]
AB: Growing up, did you witness a lot of violence?

HG: Mmm hmmm [affirmative]

AB: What kind of violence did you witness?

HG: One was at home, when my mother’s exes [ex-boyfriends] would beat up on her. Then, there was a lot of that going on. Then when we moved from Parrish Street to Erie Avenue, there were fights again up there, from Erie Avenue to Franklin Street. Seeing somebody get stabbed in front of a drugstore at a young age at about like twelve [years old]. Then I seen somebody get ran over by a trolley, but later on when I moved to my last area before my incarceration, that’s when I seen a whole lot of violence on Columbia Avenue.

[All the areas HG mentions as places of residence are located in the most violent areas of Philadelphia’s inner city. They are poor, economically-depressed, high crime neighbourhoods.]

AB: Do you know how you are viewed here in the prison, how you are viewed by fellow inmates?

HG: Awww, Man [laughing]. Yes, I know, yes, I know, basically like he’s not the type of guy to fuck with, period.

AB: And why is that?

HG: Because of what I was accused of.

[HG does not say “for the crimes I committed” but rather what he “was accused of”, as if his guilt were in question].

AB: Do you remember at the time you were arrested, Gary Heidnik? [discussed in Chapter Five]

HG: Mmmm hmmm [affirmative].
AB: Do you remember the picture of you, Gary Heidnik, and [Phil aka “Crazy Phil”] Leonetti [Mafia hit man]?
HG: Yeah me, Gary Heidnik and Leonetti, however you pronounce it.
AB: Do you think that there was a difference in the publicity that Gary Heidnik received and the publicity that you received?
HG: Yeah, number one, what was going on at the time had a lot to do with politics. Our cases kicked out [went to trial] at roughly the same time, but what they did was push his in the back, all manners of false statements against me. So even though the cases in some ways were similar, but in other levels it wasn’t. I’m a black man, he’s a white guy. That was the only difference, so it was like, oh, the first mass murderer, a black man in Philadelphia. Everyone wanted to put their two cents in [give their opinions], and that would have made it difficult to go in front of a judge. I mean, go with a jury, because I would have automatically been found guilty at that time, the minds of the people had already been tainted.

[The question was focused on media publicity, HG attempts to direct his answers towards his trial proceedings]
AB: Do you think he got more publicity or less publicity?
HG: [pause]. I would say it was somewhat equal. I can’t really say who got the most and who got the less.
AB: You know the term “serial killer”?
HG: Yeah.
AB: You may or may not know that there are more than a few African American serial killers.
HG: Mmmm hmmm [affirmative], that people know of.
AB: Why did you say that, “that people know of”?
HG: That is reported….you can find out anything you want if you look at the proper channels.

AB: So basically what’s reported is what you know?

HG: Yeah, that is the general idea of what people get when they cut their TVs [turn their televisions] on.

AB: There are numerous books out, are you familiar with Ted Bundy?

HG: Yeah, Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer.

AB: So you are familiar with these people?

HG: Mmm hmmm?

AB: Why do you think that there is a certain anonymity about African American serial killers? They obviously exist, for whatever reasons, so why is it, in your opinion, that the American public is either unaware or chooses not to look at them?

HG: [long pause]

AB: Think about it, take your time, if you have people that are doing the same deeds as their white counterparts, why aren’t they looked at, why isn’t there a book out about you?

HG: I’d like to see the book [laughter]. Basically because it goes back to he’s a black man, and many people don’t care much about blacks anyway. They think we are ignorant, don’t know nothing, and uneducated. And as far as the Europeans, white, they’re like saying they’re an upper class, like saying, Oh they [blacks] couldn’t do that…we are like the bottom of the trash can or the crust on somebody’s shoe, we don’t really mean nothing to them and the same thing is still going on.

[Interesting that during an earlier part of the interview, HG mentions that he was “accused”, then he suggested that he couldn’t get a fair trial. In the preceding response, there appears to be resentment over the injustice and/or over the lack of his public]
recognition as a serial killer. HG was familiar with white serial killers, so he was then questioned about black serial killers.]

AB: Did you ever hear of Derek Todd Lee?

HG: No.

AB: Derek Todd Lee, Coral Watts. Derek Todd Lee is in Louisiana, he was arrested for multiple murders. Why aren’t they known, why does the American public choose not to look at them?

HG: They don’t want to, that’s why they don’t look at it at all.

AB: The D.C. Snipers? Any comments on that?

HG: Well, from what I heard, the young boy was following an older individual who could have been like a father figure of sorts, and he had no father to look up to, anybody to emulate or whatever, so he followed behind the older individual. The older individual, they may have had a relationship maybe, so this is why he stuck to him as close as he did. [This was a rather sophisticated response from an individual who, reports indicated, possesses a limited intellect.]

AB: Did you have any father figures growing up?

HG: No, I never consider no one my father, but my father, whom I have met at the age of sixteen.

AB: That’s one thing, but did you ever have any father figure, a male you looked up to? Was your brother older than you? Did you look up to your brother?

HG: No, because I was never real close to him. Me, my brother and sister were all placed in separate homes, so when we came together it was like who dis [is this]? Oh, that’s your brother, it’s just a label, period. Unless you can show it, do what brothers are supposed to do. Until I was in junior high and he stuck up for me, then it was like, that’s my brother.
AB: When did you start getting involved in drugs and what drugs?
HG: “Rits and T’s” [Ritalin and Tuinals], at the age of twenty.
AB: Did that start out as a prescription [legally prescribed by a doctor]?
HG: No, illegal street drugs, a poor man’s high from twenty to twenty-eight, I indulged in that.
AB: Marijuana?
HG: Aww, man, shoot [smiles]. I was in and out of that from the age of sixteen, coke [cocaine], I was into that [laughing]. Any other thing that I could get my hands on that would get me buzzed [high], even airplane glue.
AB: How old were you when you were doing glue?
HG: I was about eleven when I started huffing [snorting fumes], just to try it out. I didn’t like it. It was nice, till I had a premonition of seeing myself fall in the water, went to the swimming pool, and fell right into the water as I seen it. So I stopped messing with that [laughter].
AB: Do you think that at the time you were arrested you were as clear [cogent] then as you are now?
HG: I was never clear until the day I was arrested, never, never was I ever clear. I am more clear now because I am no longer around that, involved in or indulge in illegal substances what so ever, but back then [smiles and laughs].
AB: Do you think the use of drugs lowered your inhibitions, I mean it almost goes without saying, but do you think they did?
HG: It’s the story of my life, yes, yes it did greatly, any hopes and dreams I may have had vanished in the wind.
AB: Do you remember how you felt the day you were arrested?
HG: Numb, confused, lost.
APPENDIX C

D.C. Sniper Chronology

7:00 PM, February 16, 2002. Keenya Cook, age 21, shot in the home of her aunt, Tacoma, Washington.


10:00 PM, September 15, 2002. Muhammed Rashid, age 32, shot and wounded outside a liquor store in Brandywine, Maryland.

12:16 AM, September 21, 2002. Million A. Woldemariam, age 41, shot and killed in front of a liquor store in Atlanta, Georgia.

7:20 PM, September 21, 2002. Claudine Lee Parker, age 52, shot and killed in front of a liquor store in Montgomery Alabama.

7:20 PM, September 21, 2002. Kellie Adams, age 24, shot and wounded outside a liquor store in Montgomery Alabama.

6:40 PM, September 23, 2002. Hong Im Ballenger, age 45, shot and killed in the parking lot of Beauty Depot in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.


6:04 PM October 2, 2002. James D. Martin, age 55, was shot and killed in the parking lot of Shoppers Food Warehouse in Wheaton, Maryland.

7:41 A.M. October 3, 2002. James L. “Sonny” Buchannan Jr., age 39, was shot and killed while pushing a lawnmower in Rockville, Maryland.

8:12 AM, October 3, 2002. Premkumar A. Walekar, age 54, killed at a Mobil station in Aspen Hill, Maryland.

8:37 AM, October 3, 2002. Sarah Ramos, age 34, killed on a bench near a retirement community in Silver Spring, Maryland.

9:58 AM, October 3, 2002. Lori-Lewis-Rivera, age 25, killed while vacuuming her minivan at a Shell gas station, Kensington, Maryland.
9:15 PM, October 3, 2002. Pascal Charlot, age 72, killed while crossing the street at Georgia Avenue and Kalmia Road, NW, Washington, D.C.

2:30 PM October 4, 2002. Caroline Seawell, mother of two, age 43, wounded in the parking lot of Michael’s Craft Store in Spotsylvania County, Virginia.

8:09 AM, October 7, 2002. Iran Brown, age 13, wounded as he arrived at his middle school in Bowie, Maryland.

8:18 PM, October 9, 2002. Dean Harold Meyers, age 53, killed at the Battlefield Sunoco gas station, Manassas, Virginia.

9:30 AM, October 11, 2002. Kenneth Bridges, age 53, killed at the Four-Mile Fork Exxon gas station, Route 1, Spotsylvania County, Virginia.

9:15 PM, October 14, 2002. Linda Franklin, age 47, killed in the parking garage at Home Depot in Seven Corners Shopping Center, Fairfax County, Virginia.

7:59 PM, October 19, 2002. Jeffrey Hopper, age 35, wounded while walking to his car from the Ponderosa restaurant in Ashland, Virginia.

5:56 AM, October 22, 2002. Conrad Johnson, age 35, killed while standing on the top step of his bus in the Aspen Hill area near Silver Spring, Maryland.

3:19 AM, October 24, 2002. Sniper suspects John Muhammad and Lee Malvo arrested at a rest stop near Frederick, Maryland.

Court testimony revealed that the D.C. Snipers may have been responsible for more shooting victims who remain unidentified (e.g., Jerry Ray Taylor) (Cannon, 2003, pp. xi-xii; Horwitz and Ruane, 2003).
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