

Chapter 4

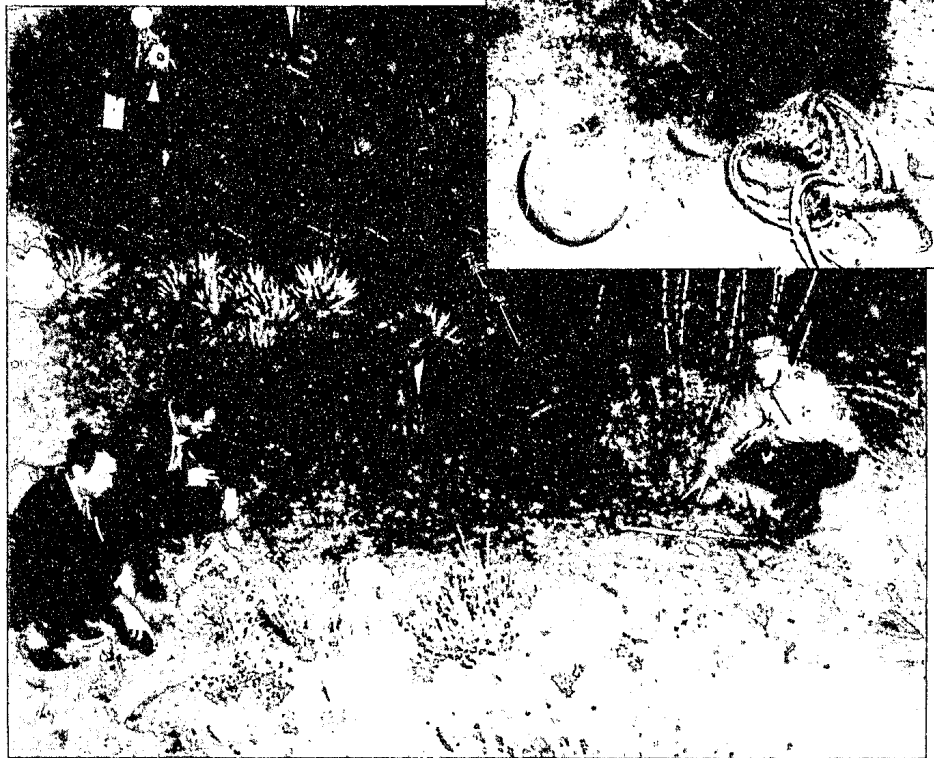
Crime Scene and Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murderers

“ . . . there were significant differences in the crime scenes of organized and disorganized offenders. . . . ”

When requested by a law enforcement agency to assist in a violent crime investigation, the Agents at the Behavioral Science Unit (BSU) of the FBI Academy provide a behaviorally based suspect profile. Using information received from law enforcement about the crime and crime scene, the Agents have developed a technique for classifying murderers into one of two categories—organized or disorganized, a classification method evolving from years of experience and knowledge. In the service of advancing the art of profiling, the Agents were anxious to know if this classification system could be scientifically tested. This article describes the research study and statistical tests performed by a health services research staff on data collected.

Objectives of the Study

Thirty-six convicted sexual murderers were interviewed by FBI Agents for a study on sexual homicide crime scenes and patterns of criminal behavior. These study subjects represented 25 serial murderers (the murder of separate victims, with time breaks between victims ranging from 2 days to weeks or months) and 11 sexual murderers who had committed either a single homicide, double homicide, or spree murder.



The major objectives of this study were to test, using statistical inferential procedures, whether there are significant behavioral differences at the crime scenes between crimes committed by organized and disorganized murderers and to identify variables that may be useful in profiling orga-

Crime scene of an organized offender investigated by Pierce Brooks in 1958 while a homicide detective sergeant with the Los Angeles Police Department.

“Victims of serial murderers have been noted to share common characteristics.”

nized and disorganized murderers. In order for the study to achieve its objectives, the Agents first had to classify the 36 murderers into the organized or disorganized group, the breakdown being 24 organized murderers and 12 disorganized murderers.

Results of Analyses

The study determined that there were significant differences in the crime scenes of organized and disorganized offenders, and that certain background differences were also found between them. There were four aspects of the crime where differences between organized and disorganized murderers were analyzed: (1) The murderer’s action during the offense, (2) victim characteristics, (3) use of vehicles in the crime, and (4) types of evidence left at the crime scene. Table 1 provides the profile characteristics that achieved levels of significance between the organized and disorganized murderers, while table 2 shows the crime scene characteristics for the two groups.

Table 1

Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murders

ORGANIZED	DISORGANIZED
Average to above-average intelligence	Below-average intelligence
Socially competent	Socially inadequate
Skilled work preferred	Unskilled work
Sexually competent	Sexually incompetent
High birth order status	Low birth order status
Father’s work stable	Father’s work unstable
Inconsistent childhood discipline	Harsh discipline as child
Controlled mood during crime	Anxious mood during crime
Use of alcohol with crime	Minimal use of alcohol
Precipitating situational stress	Minimal situational stress
Living with partner	Living alone
Mobility with car in good condition	Lives/works near crime scene
Follows crime in news media	Minimal interest in news media
May change jobs or leave town	Significant behavior change (drug/alcohol abuse, religiosity, etc.)

Organized Offender: Profile Characteristics

Organized offenders have a high birth order, often being the first born son in a family. The father’s work history is generally stable, and parental discipline is perceived as inconsistent.

Although the organized offender has an average or better than average IQ, he often works at occupations below his abilities, yet prefers a skilled occupation. His work history is also sporadic.

age IQ, he often works at occupations below his abilities, yet prefers a skilled occupation. His work history is also sporadic.

Precipitating situational stress, such as problems with finances, marriages, employment, and relationships with females, is often present prior to the murder. The organized offender is socially adept and is usually living with a partner.

The organized offender may report an angry frame of mind at the time of the murder or state he was depressed. However, while committing the crime, he admits being calm and relaxed. Alcohol may have been consumed prior to the crime.

The organized offender is likely to have a car that is in good condition. Evidence of continued fantasy is present in terms of taking remembrances of the victim or crime scene. Newspaper clippings of the crimes are

Table 2

Crime Scene Differences Between Organized and Disorganized Murderers

ORGANIZED	DISORGANIZED
Planned offense	Spontaneous offense
Victim a targeted stranger	Victim/location known
Personalizes victim	Depersonalizes victim
Controlled conversation	Minimal conversation
Crime scene reflects overall control	Crime scene random and sloppy
Demands submissive victim	Sudden violence to victim
Restraints used	Minimal use of restraints
Aggressive acts prior to death	Sexual acts after death
Body hidden	Body left in view
Weapon/evidence absent	Evidence/weapon often present
Transports victim or body	Body left at death scene

“Fantasy and ritual dominate with the organized offender. . . .”

often found during searches of the subject's residence, indicating the offender followed the criminal investigation in the newspaper.

Crime Scene

The initial observation at the crime scene of an organized offender is that some semblance of order existed prior, during, and after the offense. This scene of methodical organization suggests a carefully planned crime that is aimed at deterring detection.

Although the crime may be planned, the victim is frequently a stranger and is targeted because he or she is in a particular location staked out by the offender. In this sense, the victim becomes a victim of opportunity. Victims of serial murderers have been noted to share common characteristics. The offender often has a preference for a particular type of victim, and thus, may spend considerable time searching for the “right” victim. As one offender said: “I’m a night person. Plenty of times that I went out looking, but never came across nothing and just went back home. I’d sit waiting, and as I was waiting, I was reliving all the others.”

Common characteristics of victims selected by an individual murderer may include age, appearance, occupation, hairstyle, or lifestyle. Targeted victims in this sample included adolescent male youths, hitchhiking college coeds, nurses, women frequenting bars, women sitting in automobiles with male companions, and solitary women driving two-door cars.

The organized offender is socially adept and may engage in conversation or a pseudo-relationship with the

victim as a prelude to the attack. Offenders may use impersonation as a method to gain access to a victim. The offender's demeanor is not usually suspicious. He may be average or above average in appearance, height, and weight; he may be dressed in a business suit, uniform, or neat, casual attire. In the organized style of attack, aimed at gaining the confidence of the victim, there is first the effort to use verbal means to capture the victim rather than physical force. The organized offender frequently uses his or the victim's vehicle in the offense.

Rape, as well as murder, may be the planned crime. Murder is always a possibility following rape; the assailant threatens the victim's life and brandishes a weapon. Sexual control is continued past conversation to demands for specific types of reactions (fear, passivity) during the sexual assault. When the victim's behavior stops being passive and compliant, aggression may be increased by the offender.

Control over the victim is also noted in the use of restraints, such as a rope, chain, tape, belt, clothing, chemical, handcuffs, gag, and blindfold. The way weapons are used may suggest a sadistic element in the offender's plan. The killing is eroticized, as in torture where death comes in a slow, deliberate manner. The power over another person's life is seen in one example in which a murderer described tightening and loosening the rope around the victim's neck as he watched the victim slip in and out of a conscious state.

Fantasy and ritual dominate with the organized offender; obsessive, compulsive traits surface in the behavior and/or crime scene patterns. The offender often brings a weapon with him to the crime, taking it with him upon departure. He carefully

avoids leaving evidence behind and often moves the body from the death scene.

While sexual acts are part of the fantasy planning of the crime, murder may not be a conscious motive until there is a triggering cue. This is illustrated by one murderer's following statement:

“I had thought about killing her . . . saying what am I going to do when this is over. Am I going to let her go so she can call the cops and get me busted again? So when she took off running—that decided it in my mind that killing her was what I was going to do.”

Case Example of an Organized Offender

The following case involves the rapes and murders of five women by one juvenile offender:

Victim 1: A woman in her late 20's was found about 150 yards into a wooded culvert area outside her apartment. Her car was found in the parking lot.

Recreating the scene, police speculated that the victim was approached after she parked her car. It was known she arrived home late at night from work. She was found in a stream after being assaulted, drowned, and strangled. Her head had been held under water while she was being strangled. There was no evidence of severe beating to the body; although some defense wounds were present, mutilation did not occur.

The only item taken from the victim was a ring of little value. The victim was found partially clothed. Her shoes, found further down the trail, suggested the location of the sexual

assault. Footprints were present at this site; tire tracks were not. The victim lived in a highrise building with many apartments, parking lots, and cars.

Victim 2: A woman in her mid-20's was found fully dressed in a wooded area less than a quarter mile from the location of the first victim. She was not near water. She had been stabbed to death repeatedly in the chest. Although there was evidence of sexual assault, there was no overkill to the body, no mutilation. Again, the victim was coming home late at night. Apparently she parked her car and was abducted prior to reaching her apartment.

Victim 3: This victim was similar in physical appearance, age, and manner killed to the second victim. There was evidence of sexual assault; underclothing in disarray suggested she was re-dressed after death. A stocking was missing, although her shoes were on.

Victim 4: Several months later, a similar crime occurred in the same general vicinity. A black woman, in her early 30's, was found dead. She usually worked late and arrived home between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. Her car was also parked where she would have entered the apartment building. Although discovered further away than the other victims, she was still not more than a half mile from where she lived. There was evidence of sexual assault, and she too had been strangled and drowned. The method and location were similar to the first crime scene and was consistent with the work schedule of the victim.

Victim 5: The fifth victim, a woman in her mid-20's, was last seen at a party at 1:30 or 2:30 a.m. She left the party with several people and was later found dead in the same wooded culvert area as previous victims. She was found stabbed several times in the chest and had been partially buried in the culvert. There was evidence of sexual assault.

Considering the dynamics and pattern of the aforementioned case, the following crime scene assessment and subsequent criminal personality profiling would be possible.

The offender selects victims who are returning home during the late evening or early morning hours. The assaults generally take place near the victims' homes, as they are walking from their parked cars. The offender is watching the parking areas for single women returning during these times. He takes the victims from the apartment complex to wooded areas close by for the assaults. He chooses the time and place of assault. Since no scream or resistance is evident, one must assume the assailant carries a weapon and instructs the victims to accompany him to the secluded area. This indicates a persuasive, articulate person who convinces them no harm will come to them if they "do as he instructs." He would be manipulative and have a history of anti-social traits and behavior. He is youthful and aggressive, probably macho.

Since he uses the same MO in each assault, one must assume he knows the territory well, both the traveled built-up areas and the surrounding woods. He probably lives in the area, is youthful, and has grown up and played in the woods as a child. He is a long-term resident.

Medical examination and crime scene assessment show rape prior to death, and death is sudden with minimal mutilation, again indicating the well-planned crime by the organized antisocial criminal. The victims are "sized up" prior to the approach, and the killer knows they will not resist if he promises release after rape. He has raped before the killing started, but some life trauma has triggered the taking of the life of victim #1. The offender has had past problems with law enforcement, and once he has killed, he feels he must continue to kill to avoid victims testifying against him. He does not value the life of a victim over the chance that she may identify him to the police.

In summary, the assailant in the five homicides is an organized, anti-social personality. He is a youthful white male, has good intelligence, is articulate and manipulative. He fits into the community and has lived there for many years. He lives in close proximity to all victims. He precipitates his crimes with alcohol and/or drugs, possibly is first born in his family, and is sexually competent. He probably has a girlfriend; yet had a recent problem with her prior to the first killing. Considering his age, he would live with a single parent and would have no car since he selects victims on foot, sometimes using their cars in the assault. He probably would follow the media reports of the crime and may be in a crowd of onlookers when the police locate the bodies.

The police investigation in this case of multiple rape-murder led to a 17-year-old white male living very close to all victims who lived within a



1-mile radius in a large city suburb. He was bright, yet a marginal achiever in school, lived with his mother, and did not own a car. He was known as a macho ladies' man and a "con artist" among his peers. He used beer and marijuana to precipitate his offense and selected victims in an area he grew up in. He had a girlfriend he called "his fiancée" who jilted him shortly before murder #1, when she went away to college. He followed the crime in the paper, and on one occasion, watched the police investigator from his window. He had a lengthy juvenile record, including sexual assault and rape.

Disorganized Offender: Profile Characteristics

The disorganized offender is likely to be of below-average intelli-

gence or of low birth status in the family. Also, harsh parental discipline is sometimes reported as a child. The father's work history is unstable, and the disorganized offender seems to mirror this pattern with his own inconsistent and poor work history. Typically, this offender is preoccupied with recurring obsessional and/or primitive thoughts and is in a confused and distressed frame of mind at the time of the crime.

The disorganized offender is socially inadequate. Often, he has never married, lives alone or with a parental figure, and lives in close proximity to the crime scene. This offender is fear-

ful of people and may have developed a well-defined delusional system. He acts impulsively under stress, finding a victim usually within his own geographic area.

The disorganized offender is also sexually incompetent, often never having achieved any level of sexual intimacy with a peer. Although the offenders in this sample claimed to be heterosexual, there is a clear suggestion that the disorganized offender is ignorant of sex and often may have sexual aversions.

Crime Scene

The overall imprint of the disorganized crime scene is that the crime is committed suddenly and with no set plan of action for deterring detection.

Pictured below is a crime scene of a disorganized offender who, as a result of his paranoid psychotic delusions, killed an entire family and left their bodies floating in the pool. His residence, pictured left, reflects his paranoid state of mind in that the plank bridge leading to the shack was drawn each night to protect him from his "enemies."

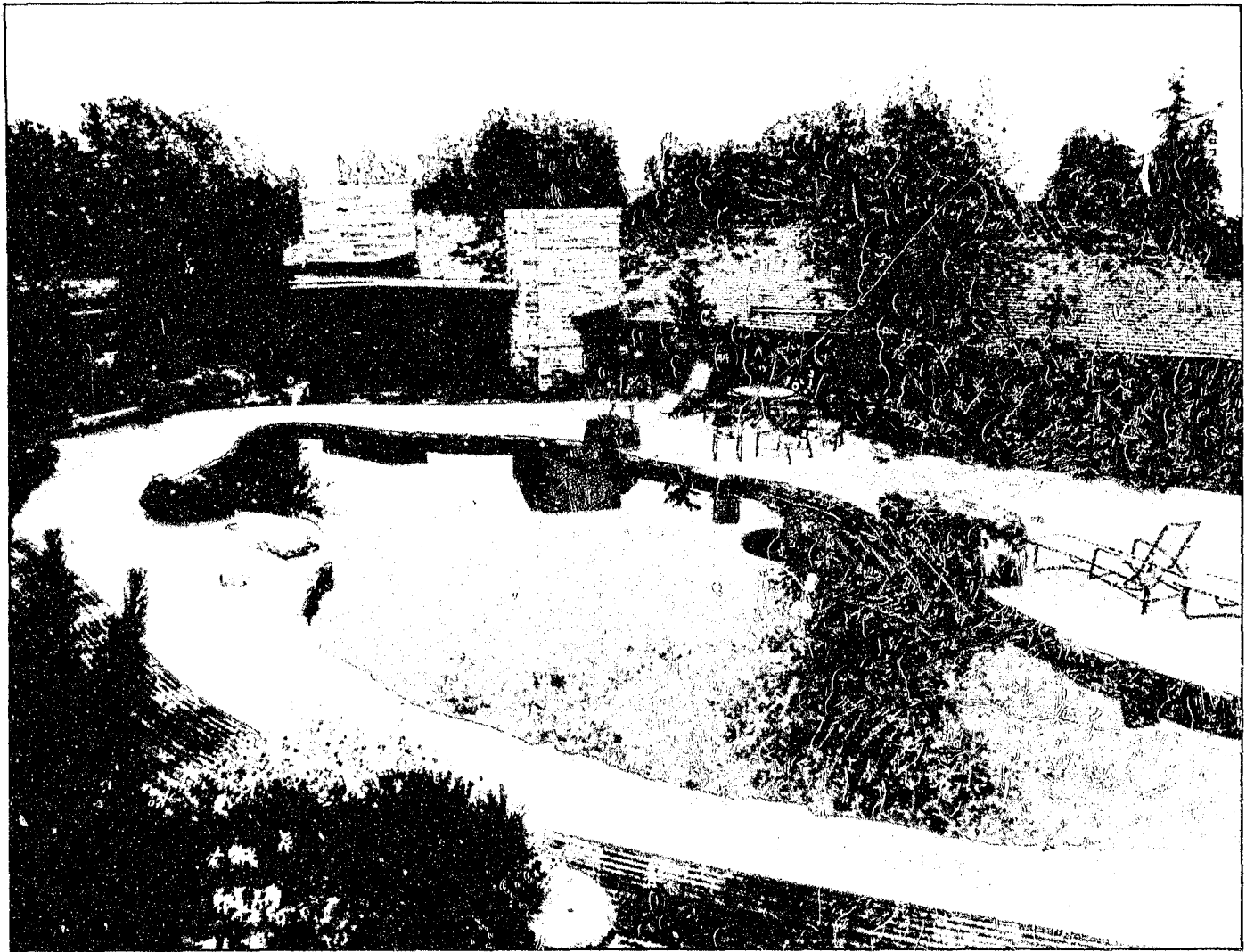


The crime scene shows great disarray. There is a spontaneous, symbolic, unplanned quality to the crime scene. The victim may be known to the offender, but age and sex of the victim do not necessarily matter.

If the offender is selecting a victim by randomly knocking on doors in a neighborhood, the first person to open a door becomes the victim. The offender kills instantly to have control; he cannot risk that the victim will get the upper hand.

The offender uses a blitz style of attack for confronting the victim, who is caught completely off guard. He either approaches the victim from behind, unexpectedly overpowering her, or he kills suddenly, as with a gun. The attack is a violent surprise, occurring spontaneously and in a location where the victim is going about his or her usual activities.

The offender depersonalizes the victim, targeting specific areas of the body for extreme brutality. Overkill or



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excessive assault to the face often is an attempt to dehumanize the victim. Such facial destruction may indicate knowledge of the victim or that the victim resembles or represents a person who has caused the offender psychological distress. The offender may wear a mask or gloves, use a blindfold on the victim, or cover the victim's face as he attacks. There is minimal verbal interaction except for orders and threats. Restraints are not necessary, as the victim is killed quickly.

Any sexually sadistic acts, often in the form of mutilation, are usually performed after death. Offenders have attempted a variety of sexual acts, including ejaculating into an open stab wound in the victim's abdomen. Evidence of urination, defecation, and masturbation has been found on the victim's clothing and in the home. Mutilation to the face, genitals, and breast, disembowelment, amputation, and vampirism may also be noted on the body.

Disorganized offenders might keep the dead body. One murderer killed two women and kept their body parts in his home for 8 years. He made masks from their heads and drums and seat covers from their skins. Earlier, he had exhumed the bodies of eight elderly women from their graves and performed similar mutilative acts.

The death scene and crime scene are usually the same in murders committed by the disorganized offender, with the victim being left in the position in which she or he was killed. If the offender has mutilated the body, it may be positioned in a special way that has significance to the offender.

No attempt is made to conceal the body. Fingerprints and footprints may be found, and the police have a great deal of evidence to use in their investigation. Usually, the murder weapon is one obtained at the scene and is left there, providing investigators with evidence.

Case Example of a Disorganized Offender

Murder 1: A husband returning from work at 6:00 p.m. discovered his wife's body in the bedroom of their home. An autopsy revealed she had been murdered sometime in the morning after being confronted by the assailant as she went to empty the garbage outside. The victim was shot in the head four times, and thereafter, disemboweled with a knife obtained in her home. Other than slash wounds to breasts and mutilation to internal reproductive organs, no evidence of sexual assault or molestation was found. The victim was first slashed in the abdomen, and the assailant pulled her intestines out of the body cavity. The victim had what was later determined to be animal feces in her mouth. Garbage was strewn about the house. A yoguri cup was found, and indications were that the murderer used the cup to collect blood from the victim, which he then drank.

Crime 2: On the same date, a house burglary occurred within one-quarter mile of the victim's residence. Garbage was strewn throughout the home. Evidence indicated the burglar urinated on female clothing and also defecated in the house. No one was home at the time.

Crime 3: Two days later, the carcass of a dog was found in the same neighborhood. The dog had been shot in the head, and the bullet was determined to have come from the gun

used in the first murder. The dog was disemboweled.

Murder 2: Four days after the first shooting, a woman, waiting for a male friend to pick her up for a day's outing with her neighbor, noticed the man's car had pulled into her neighbor's driveway. She telephoned to say she would be right over; however, receiving no answer, she looked out her window again to note the man's car was now gone. Becoming suspicious, she went over to the house and discovered the bodies of her male friend, her female neighbor, and the neighbor's child. A 22-month infant was missing from the home; however, a bullet hole was found in the pillow of the child's crib, along with what appeared to be brain and skull matter. This was also found in the half-filled bathtub, indicating the child had been killed and the body washed and removed from the scene. The female victim had been severely slashed and mutilated. She had been murdered in the bedroom where she had been disemboweled from breast bone to pelvic area. Internal organs, including spleen, kidneys, and reproductive organs, had been removed and mutilated. No attack was noted to external genitals. The murderer had attempted to remove an eye and also had inserted a knife into the anal canal, cutting the victim severely in this area. Definite fingerprints with blood were found on the abdomen, shoulders, and legs of this victim. Additionally, a ring of blood was found on the floor, indicating a bucket-type container was used to collect blood.

The following information was extracted from a profile developed by the BSU:

Suspect description: White male aged 25-27; thin, undernourished

appearance; single, living alone in a location within 1 mile of the abandoned station wagon owned by one of the victims. Residence will be extremely slovenly and unkempt, and evidence of the crimes will be found at the residence. Suspect will have a history of mental illness and use of drugs. Suspect will be an unemployed loner who does not associate with either males or females and will probably spend a great deal of time in his own residence. If he resides with anyone, it will be with his parents. However, this is unlikely. Subject will have no prior military history; will be a high school or college dropout; probably suffers from one or more forms of paranoid psychosis.

The police narrowed their search to a 1-mile radius of the stolen vehicle, seeking a man of the suspect's description. A 27-year-old white male, 5'11" and weighing 149 pounds, was located in an apartment complex within the same block as the abandoned car. The man was in possession of a gun that matched the murder weapon in the slayings. Also found in the apartment were numerous body parts thought to be animal and possibly human. The man had previously been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic and had been committed to a mental facility after he was found sucking blood from a dead bird. After he had been released, he was found in the desert bloodstained and wearing a loincloth. He told police he was sacrificing to flying saucers. He was released by police; however, later a child's body was found in the same vicinity. Evidence was found in his apartment indicating his obsession with blood, mutilation, and possible cannibalism of humans and animals.

Conclusion

In summary, this research study of differences between organized and disorganized sexual murderers with regard to profile characteristics and crime scene indicators provides an important foundation for the investigative technique of criminal profiling. By achieving the two study objectives, we have established that variables do exist that may be useful in a criminal profile and that do differentiate between organized and disorganized sexual murderers. It is important to be aware of the limitations of this study. We do not mean to imply that all unsolved cases can be profiled successfully. We wish to emphasize that this study was exploratory and indicates that we have identified significant variables in crime scene analysis.

A second important step can now be taken—that is, performing test profiles using previously identified variables and comparing results with cases which have already been profiled by BSU Agents. These test profiles would be the second phase for advancing the scientific study of the profiling process.

Further refinement of profile characteristics and deductive reasoning used by "experts" will provide an advancement in the state of the art in building an "expert knowledge-based system" for law enforcement. Expert knowledge-based systems are a subset of the field of artificial intelligence and are derived by using knowledge and reasoning patterns of experts to create computer programs which emulate these experts. These systems are easy to use, require mini-

mal training, and have English-language interface with the users. Expert systems, currently used in many fields, are continually being adapted as more knowledge is gained through their use and application. As in these other applications, expert systems will never replace skilled law enforcement representatives, but are a tool that is continually being updated by the knowledge gained through use. **FBI**