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## This Issue in Brief

**Public Policy and Sentencing Reform: The Politics of Corrections.**—Author Peter J. Benekos focuses on the politicalization of corrections and presents a public policy critique of correctional reform. As fear of crime and victimization have generated retributive rhetoric and get-tough crime control policies, the consequences of these policies—high incarceration rates and prison crowding—have now become their own public policy issues with critical implications for corrections. A review of one state's legislative reform efforts suggests that sentencing policies can be proposed with the get-tough rhetoric but are ostensibly more responsive to correctional needs, i.e., overcrowding and cost, than to the issues of crime, criminals, or crime control.

**The Costliest Punishment—A Corrections Administrator Contemplates the Death Penalty.**—According to author Paul W. Keve, the United States—going contrary to the general trend among nations—is maintaining its death penalty, with growing numbers of prisoners on its death rows, while at the same time showing a general reluctance actually to execute. Meanwhile, the public is mostly unaware that maintenance of the death penalty is far more costly than use of life imprisonment and has no proven deterrent effect. The author cautions that the interest in expediting executions by limiting appeals must be resisted because even with all the presumed safeguards, there are still repeated instances of wrongful convictions. He adds that the death penalty as respectful of the feelings of victim families is a defective concept because it actually puts families through prolonged anguish with the years of appeals and successive execution dates.

**The Refocused Probation Home Visit: A Subtle But Revolutionary Change.**—Home visits have historically been used in the control/law enforcement function of probation work, as well as in the treatment/service function. However, the current state of probation—dramatically affected by burgeoning caseloads, increased numbers of “difficult” clients, and emerging issues of officer safety—has made it necessary to rethink the concept of home visits. Now, many

agencies are limiting home visits to high risk cases and using such visits solely for control—an approach which may be consistent with a shift in probation practice towards a law enforcement orientation. In an article reprinted from the *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, author Charles Lindner looks at the

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- Revocation of Probation
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- Imposition of Supervised Release After Revocation

# Understanding Mass Murder: A Starting Point

By RONALD M. HOLMES AND STEPHEN T. HOLMES\*

**T**HERE IS a great deal of misunderstanding about mass murder. Often, the terms mass murder, serial murder, and spree murder are used interchangeably. But there are fundamental differences in these three forms of "multicide," the killing of three or more victims. Motivation, anticipated gains, selection of victims, methods of murder, and other important elements are unique to each type. Here, one type of multicide—mass murder—is examined.

## *What is Mass Murder?*

Obviously, the complexities of mass murder cannot be explained in a simple definition. However, briefly stated, mass murder is the killing of a number of persons at one time and in one place. What constitutes "a number of persons," however, has been the topic of debate. Although some authorities have stipulated four as the minimum number of victims necessary for an incident to be called a mass murder (Hazelwood & Douglas, 1980), others have set the number at three (Holmes and DeBurger, 1985, 1988; Hickey, 1991). Dietz also offers the number three ". . . if we define mass murder as the wilful injuring of five or more persons of whom three or more are killed by a single offender in a single incident" (1986, p. 480).

The concern with numbers becomes complicated when injured victims are factored into the definition. Of course, if only two persons are killed and 30 are saved by the heroic actions of medical personnel, is this not also a mass murder? One can see the danger of limiting the definition to the number of victims killed.

Time is another critical element in the basic definition of mass murder. Typically, mass murder is a single episodic act of violence, occurring "at one time and in one place." One such case occurred at a McDonald's restaurant in San Ysidro, California. The victims, 40 in all (21 died), just happened to be in the "one place," the restaurant. Many similar situations have occurred. However, one must recognize that incidents may occur at slightly different times, say minutes or even a few hours apart, and also at different locales, perhaps only a few blocks away, and still constitute mass murder. For example, a mass murderer may go into a business establishment and kill several customers and then go across town and kill another person.

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This must be considered a single act of mass murder despite the slightly varying times and locations.

Thus, a definition of mass murder should take into consideration 1) the number of victims, 2) the location of the murders, 3) the time of the killings, and 4) the possibility of distance between murder sites. These components become vitally important when differentiating between mass murder, serial murder, and spree murder. The determination of the type of homicide holds the key to understanding the character of the person who would commit such an act and enables law enforcement to put into motion the procedures and protocol called for in such a situation.

No matter how you define it, mass murder is neither an American nor a modern phenomenon. Cases spreading across history depict acts of mass murder. In recent times, however, mass murder seems to be on the increase—or is it? It may seem that such crimes have escalated because of the manner in which they are currently detected and reported. Table 1—which shows the names, locations, and number of victims of mass killers in the past 50 years in the United States—gives some idea of the magnitude of mass murder.

## *Differences Between Mass and Serial Murder*

There are significant differences between mass and serial killers. One difference is that mass murderers often die at the scene of the multiple slayings. They either commit suicide or place themselves in situations where they "force" the police to take lethal action. Only occasionally do they turn themselves into the police after the deed is done. Serial killers, on the other hand, take great pains to avoid detection and take elaborate measures to elude apprehension.

Community reaction to the two types of murders is also different. Typically when a mass murder occurs, the immediate community, as well as the rest of the nation, is alerted to the event and shocked by it. The community's panic is direct and severe but short-lived in that the mass murder is almost always either apprehended immediately or winds up dead. Shortly the social climate returns to what is was before the incident. Such is not the case with serial murder. The terror instilled by a serial murderer permeates the community's consciousness. There is no perceived end to the situation—it only ends when the killer is apprehended. Such situation existed in Seattle, which was terrorized for more than a decade by the Green River Killer, who murdered 49 women—some prostitutes,

TABLE 1. MODERN MASS MURDERERS

Year	State	Murderer	Death Toll
1949	New Jersey	Howard Unruh	Shot 13 neighbors
1950	Texas	William Cook	Shot 5 family members
1955	Colorado	John Graham	Bomb on a plane, 44 died
1959	Kansas	Richard Hickock	Stabbed/shot 4 members of Culter family
1959	Kansas	Perry Smith	Stabbed/shot 4 members of Culter family
1966	Illinois	Richard Speck	Stabbed/strangled 8 student nurses
1966	Texas	Charles Whitman	Shot 16, mostly students
1966	Arizona	Robert Smith	Shot 5 women in a beauty salon
1969	California	Charles Watson	Stabbed 9 persons for Charles Manson
1969	California	Patricia Krenwinkel	Stabbed 9 persons for Charles Manson
1969	California	Linda Kasabian	Stabbed 7 persons for Charles Manson
1969	California	Susan Adkins	Stabbed 9 persons for Charles Manson
1970	N. Carolina	Jeff MacDonald	Stabbed 3 members of his family
1971	New Jersey	John List	Shot 5 family members
1973	Georgia	Carl Isaacs	Shot 5 members of a family
1973	Georgia	Billy Isaacs	Shot 5 members of a family
1974	Louisiana	Mark Essex	Shot 9, mostly police officers
1974	Long Island	Ronald DeFeo	Shot 6 family members
1975	Florida	Bill Ziegler	Shot 4 adults in a store
1975	Ohio	James Ruppert	Shot 11 family members
1976	California	Edward Allaway	Shot 7 coworkers
1977	New York	Frederick Cowan	Shot 6 coworkers
1978	Guyana	Jim Jones	Poisoned/shot 912 cult members
1982	Pennsylvania	George Banks	Shot 13 family and acquaintances
1983	Louisiana	Michael Perry	Shot 5 family members
1983	Washington	Willie Mak	Shot 13 people in the head
1983	Washington	Benjamin Ng	Shot 13 people in the head
1984	California	James Huberty	Shot 21 at McDonald's
1985	Pennsylvania	Sylvia Seigrist	Shot several at a mall, 2 died
1986	Oklahoma	Patrick Sherrill	Shot 14 coworkers
1986	Arkansas	Ronald Simmons	Shot 16 family members
1987	Florida	William Cruse	Shot 6 persons at a mall
1988	California	Richard Farley	Shot 7 in a computer company
1988	Illinois	Laurie Dann	Shot, poisoned many, 1 death
1988	California	James Purdy	Shot 5 children in a playground
1988	N. Carolina	Michael Hayes	Shot 4 neighbors
1989	Kentucky	Joseph Wesbecker	Shot 8 coworkers
1990	Michigan	Lawrence DeLisle	Drowned his 4 children
1990	Florida	James Pough	Shot 13 in an auto loan company
1990	New York	Julio Gonzalez	87 people died in a night club fire
1991	Michigan	Ilene Russell	4 adults and 1 child in a fire
1991	Arizona	Leo Bruce	Shot 9 adults in a Buddhist Temple
1991	Arizona	Michael McGraw	Shot 9 adults in a Buddhist Temple
1991	Arizona	Mark Nunez	Shot 9 adults in a Buddhist Temple

TABLE 1. MODERN MASS MURDERERS—(Cont'd)

Year	State	Murderer	Death Toll
1991	Arizona	Dante Parker	Shot 9 adults in a Buddhist Temple
1991	Ohio	Kim Chandler	Shot her 3 children
1991	Kentucky	Michael Brunner	Shot girlfriend, her 2 children
1991	New Jersey	Joseph Harris	Shot 4 people at post office
1991	New York	Andrew Brooks	Shot father and 3 men
1991	Hawaii	Orlando Ganai	Shot 4 people including inlaws
1991	Texas	George Hennard	Shot 22 people in a restaurant
1991	Iowa	Gang Lu	Shot 5 college students and officials
1991	New Hampshire	James Colbert	Strangled wife, suffocated 3 daughters
1991	Kentucky	Robert Daigneau	Shot wife and three strangers
1991	Michigan	Thomas McIlwane	Shot 3 workers in a post office

some not—and remained unapprehended. The news media recently reported that the Green River Killer may have returned to Seattle. Forty more victims—a quantity similar to the number originally attributed to this killer—have been found. The community's fears remain unassuaged. The mass murderer is often painted as a demented, mentally ill person. People interviewed on TV after the fact of a mass murder will make such statements as the killer had been seeing a mental health professional, had been on medication, or had been threatening fellow employees. In other words, the killer was displaying certain signs that should have made him or her detectable had society used appropriate expertise and resources to do so. The serial murderer, on the other hand, gives no such clues. Ted Bundy, Gerald Stano, Randy Craft, one and all, were not easily discernable serial killers. They walked into the lives of many, often invited, and fatally dispatched them with little concern. Serial killers generate a social paranoia that mass murderers do not; people feel a personal vulnerability when a serial killer is at large.

Surette (1992) discusses two types of social behavior: front stage and back stage. Front stage behavior is that which is public and displayed to others. The mass murderer has often been judged in an *ex post facto* manner as angry, raging with outward-directed hatred, or displaying other behaviors which those who bother to notice would see as certainly atypical. Those interviewed after the recent mass slaying in Killeen, Texas, all saw the killer as an angry and hostile person. One survivor of the Wesbecker killings in Louisville, Kentucky, upon hearing what were simply loud and unusual sounds, remarked, "I bet that's crazy Joe Wesbecker coming back to kill us all." Another employee in the plant said Wesbecker told him of a plan to arm a model airplane and fly it into the plant,

exploding it once it was inside (Yates, 1992). This is front stage behavior typical of mass murderers.

The front stage behavior of serial killers is typically a "normal" picture of societal adjustment: The person functions as a law student, the owner of a construction company, a social worker, or an engineer. But the secret behavior—the back stage behavior—is something only the victim sees. It is the early detection of the front stage behavior of the mass killer that may alert to the catastrophic back stage behavior which may follow.

*Classification of Mass Murder*

As with many forms of human conduct and behaviors, sociologists and other social and behavioral scientists have taken it upon themselves to organize mass murder into social constructs. Such constructs are often based upon behavioral dynamics, motivation, victim characteristics and selection methodologies, loci of motivations, and anticipated rewards. This methodology was used by Holmes and DeBurger in their development of a typology of various types of serial killers (1988, pp. 46-60). This typology has been widely cited as an instrument for analysis and discussion and will be employed here.

*Behavioral Background: Basic Sources*

The exact etiology of the mass murderer is unclear. As it is true that mass murderers are different from serial killers, it is true that the root causes of such personalities are also different. It is the unique combination of the biology, the sociology, and the personal psychology of an individual which accounts for the personality and thus the behavior of an individual.

No one factor causes a person to become a mass murderer. The total personality of multicial offenders cannot easily be explained by simple biological inheri-

tance (Hickey, 1991). Moreover, brain disorders, a blow to the head (Norris, 1988), or simple chemistry cannot totally explain behavior (Podolsky, 1964). The same is true of sociogenic factors. The root causes of delinquency, which many held dear in the 1960's—poverty, female-headed families, etc.—do not explain mass murder any more than they explained delinquency. If these factors were direct causative factors, then all who experienced poverty as a child or who were raised in a home with an absent father or father-figure would become delinquent. Holmes and DeBurger relate:

"Bad" neighborhoods, economic stress, family instability, and violence in the culture do not directly produce serial murderers. Out of a cohort that experiences the worst possible combinations of social stresses, relatively few will engage in outright criminal behavior and fewer still will become homicidal. . . . (1988, p. 48)

Another important distinction regarding mass and serial killers is that, based on the analysis of more than 400 cases of serial murder, there is overwhelming evidence that serial murderers do not wish to be apprehended. They wish to continue their killings for whatever motivation impels them to do so. Very few surrender themselves to the police. Edmund Kemper is an exception to the rule. He said that "the killings had to stop" (HBO, *Murder No Apparent Motive*). Kemper killed his mother in California one day, her friend the next day, and then drove to Colorado. He turned himself in to the police after driving back to California. Such behavior is unlike that of all other known serial killers. As for the mass murderer, apprehension is not an issue. The mass murderer has no intent to kill again unless he is a revenge or mercenary type of mass killer. As mentioned earlier, most of the time the mass murderer will be willing to die at the scene of the crime, either committing suicide or forcing those in authority to kill him.

#### *Victim Characteristics*

Victim traits do not appear to be a crucial element in mass murder. The victim is in the wrong place at the wrong time. The customers at the McDonald's restaurant had no role in the Huberty mass murder scene other than simply being there. The victims of the Tylenol killer shared no common trait other than buying a particular brand of medicine at varied and unrelated stores.

#### *Motivation*

Another element used to categorize mass murderers is motivation. What is the motivation for a person to commit such an act of human atrocity as the murder of a large number of people? This is not an easy question to adequately address. A partial answer lies in the location of motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic. For example, is there something deep within the person, something over which the person has no con-

trol? This is a common theme often heard in interviews with multicial offenders, e.g., serial killers. They identify an "entity" within their personality, an entity which impels them to kill. This entity is a small part of the serial killer's personality, but this one percent can take over the other 99 percent (Michaud & Aynesworth, 1983). Such phenomenon does not appear to be true with mass murderers.

More likely the motivation rests outside the individual, something which commands to kill. For example, Charles Manson commanded Tex Watson, Susan Atkins, Leslie Van Houten, and Patricia Krenwinkel one night to kill Sharon Tate, Steven Parent, Abigail Folger, Voytek Frykowski, and Jay Sebring, and Leno and Rosemary LaBianca the second night. This instruction to kill rested outside the personalities of the killers themselves; Manson served as the motivational locus.

With James Huberty the motivation to kill rested within Huberty himself. For a myriad of reasons ranging perhaps from occupational and social class frustrations to other stresses, he killed—not because someone commanded him to, but because he believed that society was operating against him, and he was reacting to the injustices he perceived in society.

#### *Anticipated Gain*

The anticipated gains are also something to consider in any typology. What is the person to realize from his personal behavior? Is it revenge at a former supervisor in the workplace for giving a poor job performance rating (Wesbecker)? Is it to acquire a monetary reward by setting a fire in a business building? Clearly, the anticipated gains here are entirely different. The results, however, are the same: the deaths of a number of innocent persons. The gains are either expressive (psychological) gains or instrumental (material) gains. Examination of perceived gains is important in the consideration of the type of mass killer, not only from a law enforcement point of view, but from a social/behavioral perspective as well.

#### *Spatial Mobility*

Much has been discussed about geographical mobility as a trait of serial killers. Spatial mobility was a significant factor in Holmes and DeBurger's development of the four types of serial killers: Visionary, Mission, Hedonistic, and Power/Control (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985). However, spatial mobility as related to victim selection does not play a critical role in mass murder. Unless the person is involved in mass murder for pay, e.g., an arsonist who is compensated by others to set fires for the personal profit of a business, most mass murderers are geographically stable.

One exception to spatial mobility is the Disciple Killer. Falling under the spell of a charismatic leader,

these mass killers are often runaways or castoffs from a family. They are not necessarily indigenous to the area where they fall under the spell of their leader. However, the domicile is often semi-permanent, and the victims unfortunately live in the same locale as the killers and their leader.

### *Typology of Mass Murder*

The development of a typology of mass murderers is an arduous task. The first decision, discussed earlier, concerns what is the base number of victims for a mass murder case. Already decided is the baseline number of three.

The next task is the development of a taxonomy predicated upon the following elements: basic sources, victim characteristics, motivation, anticipated gain, and spatial mobility. There are also other elements to consider, e.g., type of weapon used, lifestyle of the killer himself, relational closeness or affinity of the victims, and personal mental/physical health of the killer. Four raters placed 47 known mass murderers—responsible for a total of 437 victims—into one of the five theoretical categories discussed below. The agreement rate among the raters was 93 percent. Table 2 illustrates the traits of the five categories of mass murderers.

#### *The Disciple*

The Disciple follows the dictates of a charismatic leader. There are more than a few examples of a disciple mass killer. Consider Leslie Van Houten. A former high school cheerleader and beauty queen, this young woman of 16 fell under the spell of Charles Manson. Of course, she was not alone. Lynette Fromme, Tex Watson, Bobbie Beausoleil, and others fell under the spell of their leader.

What caused these "nice, normal" young people of the peace generation to become ruthless and merciless killers? There is no easy answer. But what is known is that in the case of the disciple mass murderer, selection of victims is at the discretion of the leader. Manson allegedly told his followers to kill those who happened to be at a formerly rented home at 10050 Cielo Drive. The house was the former residence of Doris Day's son, Terry Melcher, and actress, Candice Bergen (Bugliosi, 1974, p. 4).

The motivation for mass murder for the Disciple Killer rests outside the killer. The leader of the group demands the action. The killer wants acceptance by the leader—this is the psychological gain, the expressive gain. This psychological acceptance is paramount in the need hierarchy of the mass killer; he feels he deserves psychological approbation only if he carries out the wishes of the leader. Money, revenge, or sex are

not the motivating factors nor the anticipated gain. The disciple scenario was also played out by the followers of Jim Jones at the massacre at Jonestown in Guyana.

Spatial mobility is a consideration here. Typically the acts of violence associated with the slaughter of innocents are near the location of the leader. So, a Disciple Killer would not be a traveler in the same sense as would a geographically transient serial killer. However, the mass murderer will follow the leader and is unlikely to be from the area where the homicide occurred. The types of weapons used in this form of multicide are usually restricted to hand weapons, knives, guns, etc. The Jonestown case, where death was by poison, was an exception.

With the Disciple Killer, unlike others, there does not appear to be a general dislike of the world around the killer. Neither is the person placed in a situation in which the only way to remove himself from the situation is to kill. The Disciple Killer is murdering because of the effect the leader has upon him. There are no particular victims (the victim trait is inspecific) to be dispatched. The victims, typically strangers, are selected by the leader, and the orders are carried out by the dispatched disciple. One may compare the case of a soldier in war who leads prisoners to their certain demise not because of the soldier's fear for his own life, but because of his dedication to following the orders of the leader. By the same token, a certain amount of personal responsibility is relieved in this scenario. Many defendants at Nuremburg raised this point as part of their defense.

The Disciple Killer may have an additional dimension, a trait more likely found in the serial killer. If a Disciple Killer's leader demands further action—and since the killer's "reason to be" centers around the approbation of the leader—the killer will not be willing to die through suicide or police interdiction. The Disciple Killer will live to kill again.

#### *The Family Annihilator*

Dietz (1986) has offered another type of mass murderer. The Family Annihilator is one who kills an entire family at one time. This killer may even murder the family pet. The murderer is the senior male in the family, depressed, often with a history of alcohol abuse, and exhibits great periods of depression. The motivation typically lies within the psyche of the individual. Oftentimes feeling alone, anomic, and helpless, this killer launches a campaign of violence against those who share his home. Because of the despair in his own life, the killer wishes to change the situation by reacting in the most bizarre fashion.

TABLE 2. TRAITS OF MASS MURDER TYPES

	Discipline	Family Annihilator	Pseudocommando	Disgruntled Employee	Set & Run
<b>Motivation</b>					
Intrinsic		X	X	X	
Extrinsic	X				X
<b>Anticipated</b>					
<b>Gain</b>					
Expressive	X	X	X	X	
Instrumental					X
<b>Victim</b>					
<b>Selectivity</b>					
Random	X		X		X
Nonrandom		X		X	
<b>Victim</b>					
<b>Relationship</b>					
Affiliative		X		X	
Strangers	X		X		X
<b>Spatial</b>					
<b>Mobility</b>					
Stable		X	X	X	
Transient	X				X
<b>Victim</b>					
<b>Traits</b>					
<b>Specific</b>					
Nonspecific	X	X	X	X	X

Concerning spatial mobility, the Family Annihilator is indigenous to the area in which the crime occurs. A lifelong member of the community, he chooses to end the life of his own family for reasons which may be unclear not only to the investigators but to the killer as well. In 1988, David Brown in Minnesota axed four family members to death for no clear reason. George Banks in 1982 shot 13 family members and relatives for unknown reasons. These killers were well known in their communities. Ronald Simmons, recently executed in Arkansas for his crimes, killed 16 members of his family. James Colbert killed four in his home in New Hampshire. Spatial mobility plays little role in this type of mass murder.

#### *Pseudocommandos*

Dietz offers yet another type of mass murderer. The Pseudocommando is preoccupied with weaponry. Often the killer stockpiles exotic weapons in his home. Assault weapons, machine guns, even hand grenades are not unknown to this mass murderer. This killer's

homicide usually occurs after a long period of deliberation and careful planning. There is no clear understanding of the etiology of the Pseudocommando. Certainly there are social components to the behavior—the killer's world plays an integral part in his behavior. But the Pseudocommando lashes out at society in a most grotesque way. Something in his world is not correct, and he will "teach the world a lesson" by his behavior.

Victim characteristics play no role in the victim selection process. Unlike the case of the serial killer with a shoe fetish (Jerry Brudos) or preoccupation with hair style (as Rule [1980] arguably claims about Ted Bundy), the victims here may simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time. When Huberty walked into McDonald's in 1984, the only relationship he shared with the victims was that they were all in the same place at the same time.

Motivation rests within the psyche of the Pseudocommando. There is something inside him which impels, or commands, that the massacre occur. There is

nothing outside the personality exacting the killing of innocent persons, as with the Disciple Killer. Anticipated gain of the Pseudocommando is twofold. First, the activity of the mass kill calls attention to the issue which the killer believes to be important. In Huberty's case, the nation's economic state—which resulted in his moving to California from Ohio—was certainly one of the reasons he committed the act. The second anticipated gain is that the name of the killer will live in infamy. Most of us recognize the name of James Huberty; how many know any of the names of his 40 victims? Most of us recall the name of Charles Whitman; what is the name of even one of his more than a score of victims? Such is the point.

Concerning spatial mobility, there is little evidence to suggest that it is a significant factor for Pseudocommandos. Huberty, for example, moved to California and committed his murders there; Whitman lived in Texas, the site of his crime.

#### *Disgruntled Employees*

Disgruntled Employees are often former employees of a company who have been dismissed or placed on some form of medical leave or disability. Many times, as a result of psychiatric counseling, the person perceives that he is suffering a great personal injustice beyond his control. He retaliates by going to the place where he was once a valued employee and searching for those who have wronged him. Both Joseph Wesbecker and Patrick Sherrill played out such scenario. In 1986, Sherrill returned to the post office where he had been an employee. Looking for supervisors, he started firing in the rooms and corridors of the post office, wounding and killing indiscriminately. Even though Sherrill's primary motive was to kill supervisors, he actually wounded and killed many coworkers. Joseph Harris also killed his fellow workers in the post office, partly in response to his perception that he was unfairly treated there.

The psychological sources of a Disgruntled Employee's mentality are certainly worthy of consideration. This type of killer often has severe psychological problems which interfere with normal day-to-day functioning. The person either may be on some form of medication or undergoing counseling or psychotherapy for a condition which is often diagnosed as paranoia. The anticipated gain is also psychological. There is no money to be realized, no social justice issues, nothing outside the world of work and the imagined injustices which were committed against him there.

The victim selection process for the Disgruntled Employee is nonrandom. He seeks a particular group of persons to kill, those who shared the workplace. However, once inside the workplace, the killer will then randomly fire, shooting anyone who happens to

be there. The motivation to kill here—a drive to "right a wrong"—rests within the murderer's personality. He is there to call attention to a wrong directed and carried out against him.

Spatial mobility with this type of mass murderer is quite limited. Often this person has been employed with the same company and has lived in the same community for years. Wesbecker, for example, worked for Standard Gravure Company for more than 15 years. Sherrill was a postal worker for over a decade. Wesbecker was a native of Louisville, Kentucky, where he committed his murders; Sherrill had lived in the same community for more than 20 years. The danger to citizens in the community, however, is quite limited. This may mollify the citizens in the community at large but does little to placate the families of the victims.

#### *Set-and-Run Killers*

Another type of mass murderer is the Set-and-Run Killer (Dietz, 1986). Spurred sometimes by a motive for revenge, sometimes for anonymous infamy, and sometimes simply for creature comfort reasons, this type of killer is qualitatively different from the others discussed.

Most mass killers either commit suicide at the scene or force law enforcement officials to kill them. Such is not true with the Set-and-Run Killer. This murderer will employ techniques to allow escape before the act itself occurs. For example, a Set-and-Run Killer may plant a bomb in a building, setting a time device so that the murderer is far removed from the scene when the explosion occurs. In other cases, this killer tampers with a food product or a medicine, places the container back upon the shelf, and leaves. The killer, then, does not directly observe the consequences of his act. He may be across town or even in another country when the results of his actions become evident.

Obviously depending on the motivation of the act itself, victim selection varies. For example, if a person is employed to set a building afire for insurance purposes and a hundred people are inside the building at the time of the blaze, the characteristics of the victims are of no significance. The anticipated gain here is monetary. The owner of the building is paying the killer, perhaps an arsonist, to do the deed. There is no psychological motivation; there is no injustice to prove to society. The motivation lies not within the personality of the killer but is instrumental gain, money.

In some instances, the victim of the Set-and-Run Killer may be once removed. Take, for example, someone who tampers with a food product from Company X. Five people purchase and ingest the food. All five die. But in the mind of the killer in this scenario, Company X is truly at fault and is actually the in-

tended victim. Therefore, the motivation here is psychological, exacting revenge on the company for a perceived wrong. The gain is also psychological. No money is realized. Moreover, Company X may lose money because customers will no longer purchase the product for fear that it may be contaminated.

Because he flees the scene before the killings actually occur, the Set-and-Run Killer is very difficult to apprehend. Realizing the motivation, anticipated gain, and victim characteristics (in this instance, once removed) is crucial to understanding and apprehending the Set-and-Run Killer.

### Conclusion

Since the authors started this article, at least nine more cases of mass murder have occurred in the United States. And there is no indication that incidences of such crimes will subside. There will always be persons who will be motivated by personal, economic, or social pressures to commit multicide. This is not an easy truth for society to accept, if only because the murder of innocent victims reminds us of our own personal vulnerability.

The first step in dealing with a concern as somber as mass murder is a clear understanding of the nature of the act itself. A theoretical typology, such as the one outlined in this article, can aid in this understanding. The typology offered here, which is unique in the literature, not only helps to explain the anticipated gains and behavioral motivations of mass murderers, but also considers victim selectivity, victim relationship, and perpetrator mobility. Such information will give a somewhat clearer picture of what types of persons would commit such heinous acts.

This is not to give the impression that it is easy to spot potential mass murderers. What separates mass murderers from persons with similar traits who do not resort to such violence is a question that is difficult to answer. Indeed, there may be no sufficient response. But what is known is that friends and relatives often report—unfortunately all too late—“danger signs” which should have been recognized. For example, the individual who has verbalized a plan to kill is not taken seriously, and he later kills eight persons in his workplace. Such situation is not unique. The person who exhibits gross signs of depression, an anomalous interest in exotic weapons, a stated sense of anomie, or other such behavioral traits may be only a step away from carrying out an act of multicide.

Mental health professionals and probation/parole officers, among others, may be in a position to recognize potentially dangerous individuals who are physically—and more importantly psychologically—poised for fatal violence on a large scale. In becoming aware of the behavioral and psychological traits of mass

murderers, mental health and criminal justice practitioners at least open the door to the possibility of circumvention. Law enforcement officers, too, need to be apprised of their unique position in relation to mass murderers. As mentioned earlier, mass murderers often place themselves in situations that force law enforcement officers to kill them. Other times, the murderers commit suicide. In either case, the officers are placed in a situation where their own lives are in jeopardy.

What can society do about mass murder? Unfortunately, little can be done once an attack commences. As far as stopping the crime before it happens, some say that effective gun control legislation is the answer. Certainly, if gun control could be rigorously enforced, it might deter some mass murderers, but it is not the answer for society's protection from the mass killer. Except in the case of mass murderers who kill for pay, underlying the actions of most of these killers are problems which stem from pressure, real or imagined. These pressures may arise at a societal level or from the individual's own position in a work situation or family unit. Mass murderers lack the motivations commonly associated with serial murderers—a point that must be recognized and appreciated.

Recognizing that mass murder is fundamentally dissimilar from other forms of homicide and must be dealt with differently is important. Certainly, a better understanding of mass murder will not be the pivotal element in eradicating this form of violence. What it is, however, is a recognition of the problem—a first step, a starting point.

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