Carrying the Burden: A Study on the Reported Experiences and the Lifelong Impact of Growing up with a Serial Killer Parent

by

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The above committee determined that the thesis is acceptable in form and content and that a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by the thesis was demonstrated by the candidate during an oral examination. A signed copy of the Certificate of Approval is available from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the experiences of the offspring of serial killers and how they were impacted by their parent's crimes. The study employed a thematic analysis of six subjects who wrote biographies detailing their experiences with a serial killer parent or guardian. The children's accounts revealed the complex relationships with their serial killer parent and their relationship with their family. This thesis also discusses the offspring's interactions with legal and social entities resulting from their parent's crimes, how they were impacted by their parent's crimes, the subject's overall experience, and revelations about their life. The results displayed that the offspring of serial killers identified various adverse social, emotional, mental, and physical experiences. Additionally, it was found that due to their parent's crimes, the subjects encountered phenomena such as internal and external stigmatization, indirect victimization, internalized guilt, and trauma-related symptoms.

Key Words: Serial Killers, Parents, Indirect Victimization, Relationships, Stigmatization

AUTHORS DECLARATION

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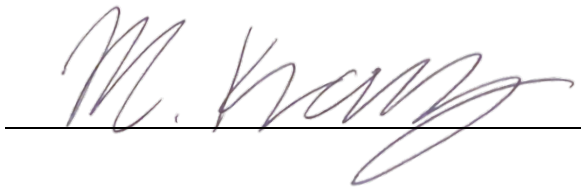

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STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication. I have used standard referencing practices to acknowledge ideas, research techniques, or other materials that belong to others. Furthermore, I hereby certify that I am the sole source of the creative works and/or inventive knowledge described in this thesis.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

This thesis will explore the experiences of the children of serial killers and how their biological and emotional connections to their parents impacted their lives. Family members, especially the children of serious offenders, are the unseen or disregarded victims of their loved ones' crimes. Despite family members being collateral victims of their loved one, they are often viewed as complicit or enablers in their loved ones' crimes. The term collateral victims have been traditionally used concerning war when an individual is harmed incidentally; however, the definition of collateral victims intersects with the victimization of offender's families. The families of offenders are indirectly impacted and are the unintentional victims of their loved one's crimes.

Serial murder is regarded as one of the most heinous crimes committed in society and, therefore, attracts a large audience through society-wide fear and fascination about serial killers and their crimes. Furthermore, the lives of serial killers and their children gain widespread attention in the media leading to mass scrutiny and societal stigmatization. The severe condemnation of the crimes, societal stigmatization, and the overall fascination establish adverse experiences for the children of serial killers. This project attempts to understand how severe crimes, vast public attention, and societal stigmatization amplify cases of serial murder and the impact it has on the children of serial killers.

This paper aims to determine how the children of serial killers are indirectly victimized and how the offspring describe their experiences through a qualitative exploration. This research

is designed to explore the lives and experiences of the offspring through their perspective. An essential aspect of understanding the children's experience in the current research is to allow the subjects to voice their feelings, ideas, revelations, and opinions. Six biographies either self-written or co-authored by the children of serial killers were examined and used as the main source of information, accompanied by quotes from their books to provide direct evidence from their perspective. Hereafter, all the subjects' writings will be referred to as biographies to maintain consistency. Using the biographical information obtained from the children's biographies, the information the subjects disclosed about their story will dictate the study's direction and focus. Applying this exploratory method will ensure that the main ideas presented by the subjects are accurately represented in the study (Kuczynski & Daly, 2003; Thomas, 2003).

It is imperative to understand that the serial killers discussed in this paper and often dissected in the media are not only serial killers, but to the subjects are mothers, fathers, guardians, spouses, and children, and therefore possess a significant impact on various people. As Albert DeMeo (2003) stated, "Bad guys are not bad guys twenty-four hours a day….For twenty-three of every twenty-four hours, he was just like any other father" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 103).

The current chapter will explore previous literature discussing topics related to serial murder and serial killers, the community's reaction to severe crimes, the media's effect on crime, direct versus indirect victimization, and the consequences of parental incarceration. Chapter 2 will discuss the process by which the data was collected and the methods used to analyze the data. This chapter will also state the questions used to guide the study. Chapter 3 will provide detailed case summaries of the study's subjects. The significant events described by the children in their books. It describes the subject's thoughts and feelings throughout their life, and their

perspective of the world. Chapter 4 presents the findings developed from the examination of their biographical information taken from their books. The emerging themes, the subject's relationship with their killer parent, family dynamics, interactions with certain groups, intersection with their parent's crimes, and the subject's realizations following their parent's crimes are investigated. Chapter 5 qualitatively analyzes the results derived from the study and respectfully compares the subject's experiences. Chapter 6 then compares the study's results and the children's experiences to relevant current literature. Finally, Chapter 7 will highlight the study's main findings and revelations about the experiences of serial killers' offspring. Suggestions for future research and the study's limitations will also be addressed.

In the last few decades, the topic of serial killers has gripped the interest of mainstream society (Fisher, 1997; Heir, 2020; Keeney & Heide, 1995; Schmid, 2005; Smith, 2002; White, 2014). The serial killer's ability to elude law enforcement and deceive the community for long periods while committing these horrific crimes is often fascinating to the public. Research has primarily focused on the source of their behaviour, categorizing types of serial killers, and their influence on the community and general society (Abe, 2019; Condry, 2010; Fisher, 1997; Fleming, 2007; Haggerty, 2009; Heir, 2020; Herkov, et al., 1994, 1997a, 1997b; Keeney & Heide, 1995; Lee et al., 2007; Schechter, 2003; Schmid, 2005; Skrapec, 2001; Smith, 2002; White, 2014). While research on the emotional, social, and financial hardships of families with a member incarcerated for homicide and less severe violent crimes has been thoroughly investigated, minimal research has been dedicated to the families of serial killers. Specifically, the impact and effects on the children of serial killers have received remotely no academic attention. Due to the absence of literature on the subject, it is unclear how the children of serial killers are affected by their parent's criminality. Since this research has been historically

neglected, there is vast potential for future research concerning the impact on the offspring of serial killers.

Serial Murder and Serial Killers

Haggerty (2009) asserts that North America has been home to the greatest number of modern reported serial murders worldwide. Despite the longtime presence of serial murder in society, scholars have yet to agree on a single definition and what specific elements are required to consider an individual a serial killer (Abe, 2019; Haggerty, 2009; Keeney & Heide, 1995; Schechter, 2003; Skrapec, 2001; White, 2014). Serial murder is a typology among multiple murder categories, including spree and mass murder (Abe, 2019). Each of these typologies possesses three distinguishable elements: (1) Number of victims, (2) Number of locations, and (3) Time between events. Most scholars suggest serial murder requires two or more victims (Some specify three), more than one location, and a clear time gap between murders (Egger, 1984; see also Abe, 2019; Haggerty, 2009; Keeney & Heide, 1995; Skrapec, 2001; White, 2014).

In comparison, whereas mass murder refers to the uninterrupted killing of four or more people in one location, seen commonly in acts such as school shootings, spree killers murder two or more people at multiple locations without a 'cooling-off' period which classifies the murders as a single event (Abe, 2019). Mass murder and spree killing are relatively similar types of multiple murder. However, serial murder is incredibly distinctive due to the time between murders and the typically long period between the first murder and the subject's arrest (Abe, 2019). In order to maintain consistency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI; 2005) definition of serial murder: "The unlawful killing of two or more victims by the same offender(s), in separate events," will act as the standard of this paper to determine an individual a

serial killer. This definition was selected as it was established during a multi-national conference comprised of recognized experts in the field in an attempt to determine a clear and universal definition. Furthermore, the definition provided by the FBI is most commonly referred to in contemporary literature (Haggerty, 2009; Morton, et al., 2008). Therefore, to maintain consistency within the study and appeal to current literature, the criteria outlined by the FBI (2005) will be the standard when referring to serial murder.

It has been estimated that no more than ten serial murders are active yearly in the United States (U.S.), accounting for around 100 murders of the 20,000 that occur yearly (Fisher, 1997). Even though serial killers make up less than 1% of murders, the killer's ability to carefully plan, stalk, kill, and dispose of a human, all while eluding police, is incomprehensible to society (Jenkins, 1994). The contrasting reaction of fascination and repulsion by academics and the general public has developed a growing interest in serial murderers (Heir, 2020; Fisher, 1997; Fleming, 2007; Lankford & Madfis, 2018; Schmid, 2005; Smith, 2022; Qubtan, 2013). Fisher (1997) assesses the collective fascination with serial killers by suggesting that good is taken at face value, but evil has to be analyzed and explained. However, the interest and attempts to explain why serial killers are 'evil' are largely problematic.

Despite thorough research on serial killers, scholars acknowledge that what is believed about serial killers largely outweighs what is known, creating popular misconceptions (Egger, 1984). Some commonly believed misconceptions about serial killers include: (1) They are dysfunctional loners, (2) they are only white males, (3) they are only motivated by sex, (4) they are all evil geniuses, (5) they cannot stop killing, and (6) they want to be caught (FBI, 2005). While in reality, serial killers are a diverse spectrum of beings that cannot be confined to a

specific race, gender, economic status, intelligence, sociability, or motivation (FBI, 2005; Morton, et al., 2008; Schechter, 2003).

The attraction and popularization of serial killers have created a façade of celebrity status among infamous criminals (Fleming, 2007; Hier, 2020; Schmid, 2005; Smith, 2002). It has become common practice to analyze the crimes and lives of serial killers in extensive detail through media stories, books, documentaries, T.V. series, and podcasts. The genre of true crime has skyrocketed, with popularized entertainment such as "The Prodigal Son," "Night Stalker: The Hunt For a Serial Killer," "Capturing the Killer Nurse," and "I AM A KILLER" on the streaming platform Netflix (Krieger, et al., 2019-2021; Holzman, et al., 2021; Graeber, et al., 2022; Holzman, et al., 2021; Parker, et al., 2018-2022). Most significantly, "Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffery Dahmer Story" (Cohen, 2022) quickly became the second most-watched Netflix series three weeks after its debut in September 2022. However, the source of this fascination with serial killers is concerning, as the initial intentions of curiosity and learning can undoubtedly translate to the idolization of serial killers. Through the glorification of serial murderers, the face of the modern celebrity has drastically changed (Hier, 2020; Schmid, 2005; Smith, 2022). The representation of "fame" and its inclusion of serial murderers and violent criminals suggests that others can achieve the same celebrity status through similar criminality.

However, the societal fascination with serial killers is more pronounced than in multi-media, movies, limited series, books, and podcasts. Beyond the rationalization of curiosity and learning about notorious serial killers, the obsessive societal response has expanded their celebrity status. The popular buy, sell, and auction webpage, eBay popularized serial killer memorabilia, later coined "Murderabilia." However, in 2001, eBay issued a statement to ban items associated with any notorious murders within the past 100 years from being sold on the

platform (Schwartz, 2001). Following eBay's ban on murderabilia, specialized websites surfaced to fill the demand for these memorabilia, such as Serialkillers.net, Darkmemorabilia.com, and Murderauction.com. On these sites, items such as autographs, letters, and drawings belonging to notorious serial murderers are sold for large sums. For example, on Murderauction.com, "John Wayne Gacy Summerdale House Oil Painting" is being auctioned with a starting price asking 175,000.00 U.S. dollars (USD) and "Richard Ramirez Original Satanic Bible Owned on Deathrow St San Quentin State Prison" is asking 12,500.00 USD as the starting price (Murder Auction, n.d.). The monetary prices of these items demonstrate the idolization and celebrity status assigned to notorious serial killers. Despite the heinous acts of serial murderers, society's admiration has been attributed to an unhealthy impression of means of popularity and glorification.

Community Reaction

Although the likelihood of being victimized by a serial murderer is extraordinarily rare, the community's fear of victimization is disproportionally high compared to more prevalent crimes (Fisher, 1997; Herkov, et al., 1994, 1997a, 1997b; Lee et al., 2007). The community's disproportionate fear of serial murder could be related to the public belief that the victims are picked randomly, ultimately threatening their expectations of safety, freedom from harm, and their perspective of the world as a meaningful place (Herkov & Biernat, 1994). With a serial killer at large, the ties between community members begin to deteriorate (Fisher, 1997; Herkov, 1994, 1997a; Lee, et al., 2007). The serial killer's anonymity forces citizens to seek protection through social avoidance (Fisher, 1997). The widespread notion that 'anyone' can be a serial murderer insists that residents can encounter and risk becoming the next victim at any time

(Fisher, 1997). Therefore, limiting social contact and interactions decreases the likelihood of victimization (Fisher, 1997; Herkov, et al., 1994, 1997a, 1997b; Lee et al., 2007). The potential of being victimized pressures residents into social isolation and ultimately strains the community's previously known cohesion (Fisher, 1997).

The disruption caused by serial murderers generates intense psychological distress among the residents of the affected community (Fisher, 1997; Herkov et al., 1994a, 1994b, 1997a, 1997b; Lee, et al., 2007). For instance, during a four-day killing span at the University of Florida, over 700 students dropped out, which was 300% higher than the school's average dropout rate (Herkov et al., 1994). Furthermore, there were reports of a significant increase in handgun, mace, and security system purchases and an overwhelming desire for counselling in the area while the serial killer was active (Herkov et al., 1994). As the crimes continue without the serial murderer being apprehended, the public's confidence in the police decreases and the community's focus on the crimes (Herkov et al., 1994). The lack of closure creates a sense of hopelessness in the community and leaves residents questioning whether the serial killer will ever be caught (Herkov et al., 1994). Law enforcement's failure to apprehend the offender brings assurance to their paranoia (Herkov et al., 1994).

Studies examining the psychological effects on a community infected by a serial killer observed increased anxiety, fear, depression, interpersonal issues, post-traumatic stress, and grief (Herkov et al., 1994a, 1994b, 1997). Furthermore, researchers discovered significant behavioural changes, including trouble sleeping, fear of being alone, fear of the dark, fear of going to school or work, and irritability (Herkov et al., 1994a, 1994b, 1997). However, specific individuals experience more intense trauma-related symptoms than other community members (Herkov et al., 1994a, 1994b, 1997). Vicarious victims display a more significant response to the crimes,

such as people who can emotionally relate to the victim through shared characteristics, people who live or frequent areas in proximity to the crimes, and children (Herkov et al., 1994a, 1994b, 1997). As discussed in this chapter, communities faced with serial murder are subjected to vicarious victimization, PTSD-related symptoms, and intense fear. However, in the following section, the implication of media in cases of serial murder and its tendency to amplify fear in the community will be explored.

Fear Generated by Media

One of news media's main purposes in cases of serial murder is to inform and educate the public on available and appropriate safety measures. Parallel to this idea, the Society of Professional Journalism's Code of Ethics states that media should "…balance the public need for information against potential harms" (Dahmen, 2018). Conversely, media reports on serial murder may harm society by inducing fear in the community, subjecting vicarious victims to further harm, and damaging viewers' emotional and psychological well-being (Herkov et al., 1994, 1997a, 1997b). News outlets exploit the tragedy and fear associated with serial murder by constructing the crimes as entertainment while over-reporting and misrepresenting the events (Dahmen, 2018). Significantly, the problematic exposure to media tactics shapes societies' perception of crime and causes viewers to inherit these destructive views of crime (Dahmen, 2018; Herkov, et al., 1997).

The term 'Infotainment' was developed to describe the media's ability to display itself as a credible source while, in contrast, styles, edits, manipulates, and carefully selects information to construct crimes as amusing to viewers (Dahmen, 2018; Lankford & Madfis, 2018; Reiner, 2002). Through these techniques, media producers disguise distorted or misrepresented facts as

vital, newsworthy information to the public (Lankford & Madfis, 2018). As the media gains public attention, it enables the chaotic surge of stories associated with serial murder cases.

Studies have discovered that cases with a considerable number of victims, tragedies, and time where the perpetrator is eluding police remain more prevalent in the media (Dahmen, 2018). Instances of serial murderers incorporate these elements and develop into high-profile cases with substantial media attention and longevity (Fleming, 2007; Heir, 2020; Lankford, A & Madfis, 2018; Reiner, 2002). Details of recent updates intrude on the individual's internet browsing, reading or watching the news, scrolling through social media, and ordinary conversation (Dahmen, 2018; Lankford & Madfis, 2018). The coverage of serial murder is nearly inescapable and disruptive to the public's daily life, intensifying vicarious victimization and societal harm.

Direct and Indirect Victimization

Serial murder is a crime with many victims who can be categorized as direct or indirect. Direct victimization refers to those who personally experience the crime and are typically viewed as the victim of a crime. In the case of serial murder, direct victims would include the individuals the perpetrator murdered (Condry, 2010). Indirect victimization consists of those who were not directly victimized but are connected to the primary victimization in a manner that causes suffering (Condry, 2010). Indirect victims are often overlooked as they did not personally experience the crime but encountered victimization due to their connection to the crimes (Condry, 2010). Serial murder affects a wide range of people indirectly, including families of the victims, families of the offender, and people with a personal connection to the victim or offender (Condry, 2010).

Research reflecting the impact of crime on the community, children, and victims' families has primarily dominated the conversation. While considerably fewer studies analyze the impact on the families of serious offenders, incarcerated offenders, and serial killers (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; Gekoski, 2013; May, 2000; Segura, 2014). Indirect victims, specifically relatives of the offender, are uniquely impacted by their relationship with those involved in the crimes (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; Gekoski, 2013; May, 2000; Segura, 2014). Despite both being secondary victims of the crime, the family of victims are often met with support and empathy. In contrast, the offender's families are criticized and shamed for their relative's crimes. Additionally, while the relatives of victims are viewed as an extension of the victimization, relatives of offenders are regarded as an extension of the offence (Condry, 2010). Furthermore, the relatives of offenders are subjected to severe societal stigmatization and self-inflicted stigmatization by applying society's beliefs to themselves (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; May, 2000).

Similar to the stages of bereavement, the relatives of murderers undergo several phases of coping following the realization of their loved ones' crimes (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; May, 2000). Beginning with the initial impact of discovering the crimes, relatives experience the stages of early coping, accommodation, helping others, and moving on. During the initial impact stage, relatives expressed feelings of shock and disbelief and considered that the life they had known would never be the same (Condry, 2003). In light of these changes, the family is forced to adopt new responsibilities to fill the gap of the offender's absence. Furthermore, the family often attempts to support the offender emotionally and materially during court proceedings and incarceration (Condry, 2010; May, 2000).

Due to their relationship with the offender, the family is often considered complicit or responsible for their relative's actions. It is commonly believed that the family of offenders have a significant role in their loved ones' criminality (May, 2000; Segura, 2014). The family members are viewed as a preventative function, and when unsuccessful, they are deemed a 'failed family' and share responsibility for the relative's criminality (May, 2000; Segura, 2014). As a result, the family is often left with feelings of guilt for their loved one's crimes (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; Gekoski, et al., 2013; May, 2000). At this time, the families often engage in physical, social, and technological isolation to avoid contact with the community and potential stigmatization (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; Gekoski, et al., 2013; May, 2000). In addition to the societal stigmatization of an offender's family, relatives are subjected to self-inflicted stigmatization (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; May, 2000). Once the family acknowledges their relative as a murderer, all other identity is tainted or lost (May, 2000). Their identity is replaced by the master status of being related to a murder, claiming the identity of the mother, father, brother, sister, or child of a murderer (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; May, 2000).

In the early coping stage, families of murderers rebuild their lives, discovering new meanings and making sense of the events (Condry, 2003). Families in the accommodation stage continue to rebuild their lives and reach a sense of normality through a routine (Condry, 2003). Rather than returning to their life before the arrest, they create a new normal and reestablish a healthy lifestyle (Condry, 2003). The helping others stage refers to the offender's families using their experience and insight to help others process similar circumstances (Condry, 2003). By helping others, individuals can transform their trauma into positive actions (Condry, 2003). Finally, the moving on stage can manifest differently in each case. Although most families accept that their lives could never return to what they once were, they achieved 'peace' in their

lives (Condry, 2003). From an emotional perspective, the families at this time actually believe that they are coping. However, they understand that trauma cannot be 'cured', but they acknowledge that the triggers are less frequent and severe (Condry, 2003).

Parental Incarceration

Although the literature on the offspring of serial murderers is limited, adequate research has been conducted on the children of incarcerated parents (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). Parental incarceration affects many families, with approximately 1.7 million children under 18 have once had a parent imprisoned in the U.S. (Young & Jefferson, 2019). Researchers estimate that 10 million offspring will experience parental incarceration in their life (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Furthermore, 46% of parents are repeat offenders (Murray, et al., 2014). Although Young and Jefferson (2019) assert that parental incarceration does not indicate the prospective success of the child, they agree that parental imprisonment acts as a 'turning point' for the children. How a child reacts to the event can determine the trajectory of their life, having long-term effects (Murray, et al., 2014; Young & Jefferson, 2019). Before incarceration, the parent's criminality is often paired with social disadvantages such as poverty, family disruptions and recidivism, violence in the home, and an overall poor environment for children (Wildeman, 2018). Additionally, studies have displayed that the disadvantages described have an effect on the child's likelihood to participate in criminal behaviour (Besemer, et al., 2017; Wright & Wright, 1992). The children of criminal parents were twice as likely to exhibit criminal behaviour than those who did not have criminal parents (Besemer, et al., 2017; Wright & Wright, 1992).

Children with incarcerated parents can experience numerous adverse effects referred to as secondary prisontization from their parent's imprisonment (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). A parent's imprisonment can negatively affect and alter a child's routine, relationships, economic stability, education, health, emotions, development, and view of family (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). Furthermore, studies have supported that the adverse effects of parental incarceration can persist into adulthood, having severe consequences (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Young & Jefferson, 2019). Research has reported that the offspring are subjected to long-term economic, educational, and health-related consequences (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Young & Jefferson, 2019). Specifically, the offspring of incarcerated parents are more likely to experience depression, PTSD, anxiety, low self-esteem, anti-social behaviours, emotional withdrawal, serious injury, HIV/AIDS, and overall poorer health than those who did not have a parent incarcerated (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Young & Jefferson, 2019). The offspring are also confronted with community stigmatization, rejection, harassment, unsatisfied educational achievement, a greater risk of needing public assistance, and experience issues with delinquency and drug abuse (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Young & Jefferson, 2019).

In a series of interviews with the children of imprisoned offenders, Murray, et al., (2014) stated that the children are immediately affected by the parents' arrest. When the parent is arrested, the children expressed feeling shocked, bewildered, and scared (Murray, et al., 2014). Furthermore, 40% of the children interviewed claimed to be present at the time their parent was arrested and reported symptoms of PTSD from the event (Murray, et al., 2014). The feelings described by the children continued and were compounded by the parent's trial, along with feelings of uncertainty about their parent's trial outcome and confusion about legal proceedings (Murray, et al., 2014). Once the parent is incarcerated, the children are burdened with the loss of a parent, stress from separation, relocation, and learning how to navigate the world without the parent (Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Seymour & Hairston, 1998).

When a parent is arrested, the relatives of the family must rearrange their life to fill the absence and support the incarcerated parent (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). Most significantly, the relationship and contact between the child and incarcerated parent suffer severely, leading to diminished trust and reliability in the parent (Young & Jefferson, 2019). The children are separated and not allowed physical contact with their incarcerated parent, strict rules and procedures on contact are enforced, and overall poor treatment of incarcerated parents and families (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). According to Murray, et al., (2014), only 70% of children exchanged letters, 53% made phone calls, and 42% visited their parents while incarcerated. The correctional system, primary caregiver, and available resources control the child's contact with

their incarcerated parent (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). For instance, many participants in Murray, et al.'s (2014) study suggested that the financial burden of parental incarceration and the cost of phone calls from prison was not affordable, restricting communication. As a result, both entities have the power to promote or restrict the child's ability to continue a relationship with their incarcerated parent.

Physical visitation between the child and incarcerated parent was heavily discussed in the literature (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). All contact methods between parent and child are regulated, surveilled, and restricted (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). According to Nesmith and Ruhland (2008), the primary caregiver during the parent's sentence often discourages contact between the child and incarcerated parent, especially physical visitation. The primary caregiver and some children respondents asserted that the prison visitation environment was unsafe and believed the experience would negatively affect the child (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). In some cases, the primary caregiver also asserted that the parent was destructive or detrimental to the child's well-being while living with the incarcerated parent and that the separation benefited the child (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Additionally, the children reported avoiding visitation with their incarcerated parent as they described the correctional system process as uncomfortable, strict, humiliating, and degrading (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008).

The visitation rules in correctional facilities are strict, such as no physical contact and constrained visiting times which are often difficult for children to understand (Murray, et al.,

2014). Furthermore, the demands for visitation are often difficult for families and require planning, travelling, an adult to accompany the child, as well as the children and adult taking time off from work or school (Murray, et al., 2014). As the parent's incarceration location is not chosen, the families are also confronted with the distance between the child's home and their parent's prison facility (Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). In some cases, the families reported moving closer to the imprisoned parent, but in many cases, the families described living too far away to schedule visits (Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Nesmith and Ruhland (2008) suggested that the greater distance between the family and the correctional facility severely affected the likelihood of visitation. The study found that 46% of families living approximately 50 miles from the correctional facility did not visit the incarcerated parent, and 70% of families over 100 miles from the facility did not (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008).

Literature on parental incarceration has acknowledged the difficulties of maintaining a relationship with the child (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). As a result, researchers have suggested creating a more comfortable, safe, and child-friendly environment to preserve the parent-child bond (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Significantly, popular opinion supports that children require an environment in which they are comfortable, can express their feelings and emotions, are treated appropriately and safely by corrections staff, and are given the ability to build a relationship with their parents (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Providing an environment tailored to the needs of children proposes that the trauma related to transitional periods (arrest and release) can be reduced and prepare the child and parent with greater success upon release (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008).

When a parent is incarcerated, the children often quickly adapt to their absence and attempt to relieve stress from the non-imprisoned parent by adopting the incarcerated parents' responsibilities (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Young & Jefferson, 2019). However, after the parent is released and reunited with their child, the family's lives are again disrupted (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Young & Jefferson, 2019). When the parent is reunited with their family, the family encounters further difficulties, such as the parent's diminished skills after their sentence, impaired relationship with the child, renegotiation of familial roles, and potential poor influences by the parent (Aiello & McCorkel, 2018; Laurens, et al., 2017; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Murray, et al., 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Seymour & Hairston, 1998; Wildeman, et al., 2018; Young & Jefferson, 2019). As a result, parental incarceration significantly disrupts the family's life and presents various adverse effects for the children.

Ample literature relating to components in the study exists. However, research which fully embodies the current study's parameters, the offspring of serial killers, is significantly limited. Research on the children of high-profile offenders and the consequences of the biological and personal relationship with their parents is sparse. As the offspring of serious offenders are often seen as complicit in their parent's crimes, they are branded as criminals by association. As a result, the offspring of serious offenders and serial killers are regarded as criminals, while they are more closely related to victims of their parent's criminality. As this thesis focuses on how their parent's criminality impacts the offspring of serial killers, it will also advocate for the children as the unseen victims of their parent's criminality. The following section will detail how the subject's stories were selected, collected, and analyzed for the current study.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The current study utilized a qualitative research design to unearth the experience and impact on the children of serial killers. Qualitative analysis is an in-depth and open-ended exploration to highlight the meaning behind experiences (Butina, 2015). Since the study focuses on developing a greater understanding of the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences of serial killers' children, a qualitative narrative approach was the most appropriate data collection method. As Patton et al. (2015, p.21) describes qualitative analysis permits "…one to understand and capture the points of view of other people." The data in this study were collected through biographies shared by the children. Each of the writings detailed the accounts of their life as they reflected on their life experiences. After reading and understanding the offspring's biographies, connections between cases were determined and categorized through prominent themes and patterns.

Research Design

A qualitative design captures the unconfined perspective of the individual's stories (Mackenzie, et al., 2006; Patton et al., 2015). Furthermore, research on social phenomenon is well suited to the qualitative goal of understanding human behaviour and preserving the subject's perspective under multiple contexts (Mackenzie, et al., 2006; Patton et al., 2015). The study aims to understand if the children's perspectives and experiences correspond with a constructivist approach. Constructivists embrace subjectivity and the understanding of reality as a social construct (Mackenzie, et al., 2006; Patton et al., 2015). With the interest of this approach being the individual, it is imperative to acknowledge that a single truth does not exist. Still, each

individual possesses a unique understanding of the world in which they live. The distinct way individuals view the world, their societal role, and their reality influence their understanding. These indicate that individuals endure their own experiences and react according to their perspective, supporting the child's perspective on the events as their truth and representation of the experience.

A qualitative research design is also compatible with the study's small sample size (N=6) and the in-depth analysis of the complex nature of a person's experience (Patton et al., 2015). The chosen biographies provide detailed accounts of the children's thoughts and perspectives from early childhood to adulthood. Current published literature was canvassed, and the six writings chosen for the study were the only consistent accounts of the attitudes, experiences, and growth of the children of serial killers. Each of the children's published writings capture the child's feelings at different times and events during their life course, with the majority of focus on their perspective of their serial killer parent. The patterns unearthed across biographies were investigated and compared respectfully through a thematic analysis. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), the data was understood, initial codes were generated, and themes were located, reviewed, and defined. Using biographies, either self-written or directed by the subject, provides a similar ethos of emotionally in-depth, personal, truth-oriented storytelling and meaning assigning required for the project. The published writings also allow each case to be reviewed in the same medium of expression, permitting equal and transferable information.

Data Collection and Analysis

The subjects chosen for this study were required to include (1) Parent(s) or guardians who were convicted or strongly connected to two or more murders, (2) Fulfill the criteria of a

serial killer as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (2005), and (3) Have published biographical writings about their experiences. The biographies in the current study were located through a preliminary exploration on the Google search engine using terms related to "Children of serial killers". Following the initial search, further investigation was conducted using booksellers' websites (Amazon, Indigo, Barnes & Nobel) with similar search terms. While researching, only six books outlining the biographical histories of children of serial killers were located that fulfilled the study's requirements. A few other biographies partially fulfilled the requirements, such as "The Most Dangerous Animal of All," written by an individual who suspected his biological father was the serial killer known as the Zodiac Killer. However, Stewart and Mustafa (2014) or law enforcement did not have firm evidence that his father was a serial killer. Stewart's biological father could not have been definitively labelled a serial killer, so this memoir did not fulfill the study requirements.

Contract killers or those who perform murder for hire are not typically considered serial murderers. However, Albert DeMeo and his father were included in this study despite his Father's role as a contract killer for the Gambino family. Although it is uncommon for contract killers to be considered serial killers, some scholars support their inclusion in the category (Deitz, 1986; Miller, 2014; Vronsky, 2007). However, contract killers are often excluded from the label of serial killer as their motivation is strictly financial and is compared to an occupation rather than a leisurely activity. Other aspects, such as being paid to murder, having their victims selected, and not having the inner compulsion to kill, are also suggested to be distinctive elements possessed by contract killers.

Even though these aspects are said to separate contract killers and serial killers, Richard Kuklinski, also known as the 'Iceman,' has been referred to as both (Bonn, 2020; Hunter, 2019).

Kuklinski was a contract killer for the DeCavalcante crime family but reports also suggested that he began killing for the thrill and found pleasure in the act (Bonn, 2020; Hunter, 2019). Similarly, Roy DeMeo was a contract killer for the Gambino crime family, with multiple accounts suggesting that he began killing for pleasure (Gravano, 2022; Mustain & Capeci, 1993). "Murder Machine", a book detailing the Gambino crime family, more specifically, Roy DeMeo's crew stated, "The Roy DeMeo crew was the coming together of an uncommon union of killing spirits; Roy and his followers killed for profit, for revenge, and finally for fun. Many of their victims were themselves criminals, but many others are innocents who simply strayed into their merciless path…Just in Roy's crew there were five people you'd have to call serial killers" (Mustain & Capeci, 1993, p. vii). Sammy' The Bull' Gravano, a member of the Gambino crime family, also questioned his behaviour and said, "Roy started acting more like a serial killer than a made man" (Gravano, 2022).

In addition to the comments on Roy DeMeo's behaviour, Albert and his experiences met the criteria determined for this study. As Albert's father was strongly connected to or suspected of committing two or more murders, he fulfilled the serial killer definition presented by the FBI (2005) and wrote a biography about his experiences.

Table 1 displays the children's names and the titles of their biographies analyzed for the study. The Subjects' published writings were examined and compared through five categories: (1) Relationship with killer parent(s) or guardian, (2) Family dynamics and values, (3) Parent's crimes and criminal history, (4) Child's perspective, thoughts, and feelings, (5) The overall impact of their experience. The aforementioned categories were derived from common themes that emerged across the six biographies. The cases were then inductively reviewed to understand

the content and explore significant patterns, themes, and interrelationships highlighted in their stories.

Table 1

Subject's Name and Bibliographic Reference

Subject's Name	Bibliographic Reference
Mae West	West & McKay, 2018. Love as Always, Mum XXX: The true and terrible story of surviving a childhood with Fred and Rose West. Orion Publishing Group, Limited.
Hazel Baron	Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018 My Mother, A Serial Killer. HarperCollins.
Melissa Moore	Moore & Cook, 2015. Shattered Silence: The Untold Story of a Serial Killers Daughter. Cedar Fort.
Kerri Rawson	Rawson, 2019. A Serial Killers Daughter: My Story of Hope, Love, and Overcoming. Thomas Nelson.
Albert DeMeo	DeMeo & Ross, 2003. For the Sins of My Father: A Mafia Killer, His Son, and the Legacy of a Mob Life. Broadway Books
Sanford Clark	Flacco & Clark, 2009. The Road Out of Hell: Sanford Clark and the True Story of the Wineville Murders. Union Square Press.

Hypothesis and Questions

The current study was conducted with an exploratory methodology (Kuczynski & Daly, 2003; Stebbins, 2011; Swaraj, 2019; Thomas, 2003). Therefore, hypotheses and firm questions were not posed before conducting the research for this study. Exploratory methods are typically applied to discover new information on a topic, or in cases where the topic has yet to be investigated (Kuczynski & Daly, 2003; Stebbins, 2011; Swaraj, 2019; Thomas, 2003). This approach was appropriate as little information is known about the children of serial killers, and the topic required an exploration of the group. Through this inductive method, ideas about the children of serial killers were not constrained to a predetermined structure, allowing the subjects' writings to lead the discussion and the analysis to focus on what the children emphasized in their

writing. Therefore, the children's stories provided the foundation for the questions rather than looking for answers to fixed questions that may not have been considered important to the subjects. A similar exploratory approach, as presented by Thomas (2003), was followed. An initial read was performed to gain a general understanding of the children's experiences, specific segments were identified, these segments were then labelled and categorized, overlapping segments were reduced, and a model was created using the themes identified (Thomas 2003). Following this exploratory method, general and specific questions were developed to construct the results.

General Question

How were the children's lives impacted by being raised and sharing a familial connection to their serial killer parent?

Specific Questions

1. Did the serial killer's children share similar experiences, events, thoughts, or feelings?
2. How did the child express their understanding of their parents and their crimes?
3. Did their perspective change over time?
4. How did the children describe their interactions with the legal system, police, media, and community?
5. Did they encounter stigmatization?
6. How did they describe their family life and relationship with the killer's parents?

As discussed in this chapter, a qualitative narrative approach and thematic analysis were the most appropriate methods for the current study. Due to the small sample size of suitable subjects and the significance placed on the subject's experiences, this method was selected. The following chapter will provide insight into the offspring's experiences and victimization through the case studies.

Chapter 3: Case Summaries

This chapter will summarize the personal histories of Mae West, Hazel Baron, Melissa Moore, Kerri Rawson, Albert DeMeo, and Sanford Clark. Each case summary will highlight the major events and their experiences as discussed in the subject's biographies.

Mae West

As described in Mae's biography, her childhood seemed normal from the outside, but she knew nothing about her home life was considered normal. Her father, Fred West, and mother, Rosemary West, raised Mae and her nine siblings in Gloucester, England. Mae, her brother Steven, and her sister Heather lived in the basement, where they were left without supervision, with constant flooding and multiple locks. Mae and her two siblings were not allowed to wander around the house like their older half-sister Anne Marie and the lodgers who lived with their parents in the house's main area.

Rosemary was described as a violent, short-tempered, abusive, and unmotherly woman. In Mae's biography, countless incidents of her mother's physical abuse were described as a result of insignificant mistakes such as fallen forks and the children playing too loudly. Mae, Steven, and Heather would protect each other from their mother's wrath by taking responsibility for their sibling's actions and surrendering to her abuse. The children feared their mother and her beatings but were not scared of their father during childhood. Mae claimed that although her childhood was not happy, she felt safe, and some of her best memories were playing with her siblings in the basement.

During her early teens, she became aware of her parent's perverted and inappropriate sex life. As the children transitioned from the basement into the house, Mae recalled the inappropriate sexual behaviour of her parents and the explicit presence of bondage equipment, pornography, and sex toys. Rosemary also had a prostitution business and frequently attracted unknown men to the home. However, her parent's inappropriate sexual behaviour progressed into Mae and Heather experiencing threatening sexual advances from their father. Mae recalled her father's failed advances being followed by his warning that it is his duty as a father to 'break in' his daughter and taker her virginity. From Mae's account, her parents created a hostile home environment through inappropriate, controlling, dishonest, manipulative, secretive, and overall poor parental behaviour. Additionally, the West family struggled financially and utilized secondhand or stolen items. Mae and her siblings were forced into secondhand clothing, aiding their father in theft, and were demanded to leave school at 16 to join the workforce to supplement the family's income.

In 1987, Mae's older sister and best friend, Heather, went missing. When the children began questioning her absence, Rosemary and Fred designed elaborate and damaging stories about Heather to disguise her whereabouts. At this time, Mae was suspicious of her parent's outrageous stories about Heather and was worried about her safety. Heather's disappearance caused rumours to infect the town and ultimately pressured law enforcement to investigate. The investigators discovered human remains underneath the garden patio of the West home, as the rumours suggested, and Fred West was arrested. Mae was convinced that the arrest was 'one big mistake', but she and Rosemary agreed to be escorted to a safe house.

After the arrest of Rosemary and Fred West, Mae was devastated by the events, angry at the police for treating her like a criminal, sick, shocked, numb at the discovery of her father's

crimes, and fearful that her mother would be convicted. While in custody, Fred confessed to killing twelve women and committed suicide before trial. Mae was convinced she could never truly escape the clutches of the West name and had no future. She continued to believe that her mother was innocent, and despite the judgement of others for her supporting her mother, she maintained a relationship. In her book, Mae discusses the aftermath of her parent's arrest by claiming, "As children, we'd lost everything: father, mother, sister, house, family - even the few happy memories of our childhood had been destroyed" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 226).

Mae did not view herself as a victim but asserted that her sister and the other lives taken were the true victims. While reflecting on her experience with the help of a victim's aide service, her sisters, and her soon-to-be husband, Pete, she realized that she needed separation from her mother. Mae describes that after years of her mother's manipulation and fighting to gain her love, she was brainwashed by her mother. She recognized that an emotional connection between her and her parents will always exist and that "deep down, even as adults, [they] wanted to be loved by them and love them in return" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 171). As a result of her parent's crimes, Mae struggled with various issues socially and in relationships—in addition to Stockholm syndrome and survivor's guilt. She commends her ability to cope with the events through the birth of her daughter and the presence of a 'higher power'.

Decades after her parents' crimes, Mae married her longtime friend, Peter, raised two children and reconnected with some of her siblings. She now acknowledges the harm her parents caused and she no longer needs to live in their shadow.

Hazel Baron

From the age of nine, Hazel suspected her mother, Dulcie, was a murderer. Even at a young age, she realized her mother was evil and had the potential to be seriously dangerous. Hazel's mother was an attractive, intelligent, selfish, controlling person and expert manipulator who feared no limits to getting what she wanted. Hazel claims that her mother was always putting on a performance by using the stereotypical damsel in distress while presenting a well-mannered, kind, and classy appearance to manipulate men. Furthermore, Dulcie expected her family to display a similar façade and establish a good impression with others.

Although the family was in severe poverty and lived in tents during Hazel's childhood, she did not view herself as poor. She did recognize that her family was not normal and was forced to mature quickly. Rather than playing like other children, Hazel often looked after her younger siblings, Allan, Margret, and Jim, to help her mother. Her father, Ted, could not maintain a job due to his constant hospitalizations for severe arthritis and was rarely home. When her father returned home from the hospital, her mother hid the fact that she had been having an affair with Harry, the young 22-year-old camp neighbour. This secret was the first of many Dulcie burdened Hazel to keep and the prologue to her mother's first murder.

When Hazel's father went missing during the night he returned, she overheard Dulcie and Harry arguing about what they would tell the police. Dulcie called the police that morning, insisting that her husband must have woken up and drowned in the river while they were sleeping. Hazel's father's body was found in the nearby river days later. Although she did not want to believe that her mother was capable of murder, she knew her mother had something to do with his death. From that day, Hazel vowed she would no longer consider Dulcie, her mother.

Around this time, Dulcie confided in Hazel and unleashed more devastating secrets. She discovered her mother had been married and had four children before meeting her father. Her mother claimed that she desired new and better things, packed her belongings, abandoned her four children, and fled from her first husband. In addition to having four half-siblings she never knew, her mother confessed that she also named her first daughter Hazel. Although she had learned from her mother that "women were superior to men and that they had to be even tougher to get on in life. If that meant using and abusing men to do it, so be it"., Hazel did not want to believe her mother was capable of such heartless behaviour (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 38). However, her doubts were confirmed when her mother had a miscarriage while carrying quadruplets. She neglected to inform anyone she was pregnant and directed Hazel to hide the stillborn babies.

Hazel described her family life as a gypsy lifestyle as her family never stayed in one location for too long, kept to themselves, and worked hard to survive. With the frequent uprooting of the family and moving around Australia, Hazel's siblings did not receive a traditional education through school. However, Hazel attended school long enough to teach her younger siblings what she had learned, such as reading and writing. The family's financial struggles forced the children to supplement their income by finding jobs despite not being old enough to work. Her mother forged her age, and she began working as a nurse's aide. Hazel considers her enrolment as a nurse's aide as a life-altering event. For the first time, she was financially sufficient, independent from her mother, and found a sense of belonging.

While working as a nurse's aide, Hazel met her future husband, Bill. Despite initially being unsure of her true feelings for Bill, she jumped at the opportunity to marry him, distance herself from her mother, and be a part of the family she always wished she had. Although Hazel

attempted to create a new life for herself, tragedy followed her mother, and she knew her mother had to be responsible. When her mother was working as a housekeeper for a wealthy family, the barn on the land mysteriously burned down, and the man she worked for suddenly died. Following her mother's employer's death, she moved on to work at a hotel restaurant where one of the frequent wealthy customers had been burned alive.

Hazel knew she had to do something but was concerned that the authorities would not take her seriously or be declared mentally unwell. After being hospitalized for a mental breakdown, she finally gained the courage to unburden her mother's secrets and tell the authorities. To her surprise, the authorities valued her concerns and uncovered suspicious evidence when investigating the deaths of the three men. Although Hazel was relieved the police believed in her, she described feeling like a scared little girl with the possibility of her mother evading conviction and retaliating.

The trial was an exhausting and traumatic experience for Hazel and her siblings. However, she noted that the detectives on the case, Kelley and Fricker, were her 'guardian angels' and helped her get through the trial. She also commended a 'higher being' for giving her the strength to stand trial and giving her the helpful detectives. Hazel and her siblings were forced to testify against their mother and the cruel defence attorney who was especially critical of Hazel. Despite her mother and her husband signing a confession to all three murders, the confessions were determined to be a product of coercion and were not used as evidence. Hazel was pleading for the death penalty, but her fears had come true, as her mother had escaped the full arm of the law. Dulcie was found guilty of the three murders, but two of the convictions were overturned as a result of a judicial error at trial. In these two cases she later pleaded guilty

to manslaughter in one case and was acquitted in the other. As a result, her mother was sentenced to life in prison with an additional five years.

Hazel was ultimately relieved and felt safer with her mother's incarceration. She was no longer angry or afraid but felt sorry for her mother. Although, she did feel that she and the justice system let down her siblings, the victims, and the victim's families. Bill and Hazel began a new life with their four children and her hundreds of fostered and adopted children. She believed that by fostering and adopting children, she could "make up for just a little bit of what [her mother's] done" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 237).

Melissa Moore

Melissa described her early childhood as unhappy. She and her two siblings were best friends with little restrictions and constant play. Melissa could not understand how some families could be happy while others were not, and she wished she could find that happiness. To compensate for her difficulties, she often used fantasy and imagination to pretend her life was better than it was. Her father, Keith, was a truck driver and was absent for long periods for work, so most of the time was spent with her mother. When her dad did return home, the children were always happy to see him. He gave the children everything their mother could not. He played with them, showed affection, and spoiled them with treats and gifts. While Melissa was still young, her mother suspected her father of cheating and filed for divorce.

Melissa did not have a family like her friends at school. They did not have access to luxury items, struggled financially, and had a weak relationship with their parents. Her mother was always busy with housework or at her job, leaving little time for supervision, parent-child bonding, or emotional support. Although Melissa's family was poor, her mother could always be

trusted to provide food and shelter. As for her father, he was labelled as a 'Disneyland dad', only present when his truck route allowed him, always bringing laughs and fun, but never there for the tough times. Despite being divorced, Melissa wished he cared enough to come home and hoped he was remorseful for leaving his children behind. Melissa's father was described as an interesting character. He could be brilliant, generous, and caring but also be quick to anger, have no respect for boundaries, and be untrustworthy. Although her other siblings did not seem to feel the same way, Melissa began feeling uncomfortable with her father and realized he enjoyed teasing her.

Melissa did not take her parent's divorce well and struggled with loneliness. With her father gone, she lost all contact with his side of the family, with whom she was closely bonded and missed having her family. Melissa would often internalize her feelings due to the lack of emotional family support and feel responsible for her family's issues. Her self-worth was tremendously low. She believed that her father's absence and suicidal thoughts were her fault. The permanence that Melissa desired was again uprooted by changing schools, moving into her grandmother's house, and her mother's new boyfriend, Robert. Melissa described this time as one of the most challenging moments in her life. She described that the quick significant life changes had been complex and wished she could have more control over her life and have her own things. Her mother's abusive new boyfriend made the house unsafe, her school and home life were inducing tremendous stress, and survival was her main focus. In addition to these stressors, Melissa had heard that her father had been arrested for murder.

She no longer knew who her father was. Melissa was angry and ashamed to be his daughter and wanted to believe he did not murder anyone. Melissa tried to distance herself from her father and the media chaos he created, but she was curious and needed to know the truth.

Fortunately, Melissa and her father did not share a surname and, therefore, was not easily connected to him, but she was still worried that she would be judged for her father's crimes. Furthermore, her abusive boyfriend raped her, got her pregnant, and tried to terminate the pregnancy with physical force around this time. Melissa reflected on her current situation by saying that "At that moment, I felt I was in the worst possible situation for any girl my age could ever be faced with: Pregnancy, living in an impoverished, abusive home, in an abusive relationship, with a father in jail for murder" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p.162). With pressure from her boyfriend and his family, she decided to have an abortion. She blamed herself for all her traumatic experiences and was physically, emotionally, and mentally exhausted. She claimed she thought herself to be frail, broken, and did not deserving of anyone's love.

Her father was convicted of killing eight women in 1995 and sentenced to life in prison, ultimately sentencing Melissa to life without a father. Melissa once visited her father in prison and was relieved to realize that life could still go on without her father. She was determined to create a better life for herself, finish high school, and attend college. During this time, Melissa still relied on her father for advice in letters, even though they were usually inappropriate and needed to be reviewed before she could read them. She rationalized her relationship with her father by suggesting, "I loved that man, and I hated him. I hated what he did to all of us" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 179).

Through the help of T.V. personality Dr. Phil and deep personal reflection, Melissa underwent tremendous mental growth. She has learned that she can still be loved despite her family and can trust others. Melissa met her husband Sam and had two children. She began to lean into her faith and help others that have loved ones who have chosen harmful behaviours. By helping others, Melissa has learned that healing is possible and can ease her burden. Since she

shared her story, Melissa has helped thousands of women by attending Women's shelters and conferences and hosting a T.V. series in which she helps the families of perpetrators and victims get closure.

Kerri Rawson

Kerri had a strong relationship with her father, Dennis and idolized him. She described their relationship as unique and inseparable while growing up. Her father was fun, loving, affectionate, highly active in the kids' lives, and attended to all her needs with a supportive attitude. Kerri, her parents, and her brother, Brian, were seen as the perfect American family. Her parents had a happy marriage, the children were happy, they had little financial stress, and they were devoted Christians. Kerri's parents were emotionally, physically, and financially supportive.

Despite Kerri's favourable family life, she had always experienced a severe fear of being victimized. Her belief that she would be attacked began in childhood and manifested as night terrors until adulthood. During Kerri's childhood, she had great trust in her father and that he would protect her, keep her safe, and could save her. Around this time, Kerri also began doubting and questioning her faith. She was angry with God and could not understand how he allowed "bad things," such as her cousin and grandfather's death, to happen.

Kerri's family valued their faith and education immensely. The family attended church weekly and volunteered as service members, and Kerri's mother worked as a secretary for the church. Her father had attended college and received associate's and bachelor's degrees, while Kerri was supported through two education degrees. As Kerri grew up, she realized the complexity of her father and their relationship. At times, Kerri explained that her relationship

with her father was fraying as he seemed preoccupied, moody, and distant. Her father's moods became inconsistent. He teetered between extreme happiness and anger and became short-tempered, unpredictable, and threatening. When Kerri attended university, she struggled with her mental health and was experiencing depressive, anxious, and paranoid behaviour. Additionally, her night terrors became more severe, but she internalized these concerns and believed she had failed herself and her family.

At the age of 26, she moved to Detroit with her husband, Darian. Kerri was home alone one day, and with her father's safety tips in mind, she noticed a car out of place with a man watching her apartment. While telling her husband about the situation and that he needed to come home, she heard a knock on the door that changed her life. The man watching her from the street was an FBI agent who came to discuss her father's relation to an arrest for the infamous BTK (Bind, Torture, Kill) crimes. At first, Kerri denied that her father had any connection to the crimes and believed that the police had made a mistake as they had before. However, the officer admitted that they connected her father to the crimes through a DNA sample taken during her gynecology appointment.

Kerri was in shock and knew that her world was about to fall apart, and she did not believe she was strong enough to continue. Shortly after her father's arrest, journalists and news crews located Kerri and began harassing her with phone calls, knocking on her door, and camping outside her apartment to speak with her. The news was also infatuated with her father's arrest and was reported on T.V., newspapers, media platforms, websites, blogs and more. Kerri had to isolate herself physically and socially in her apartment and technologically to avoid attention and distance herself from her father. Although curiosity started to burn, Kerri decided

to research the reports discussing her father and discovered false information was being reported, such as the media incorrectly stating that Kerri and Darian had two children.

Kerri was angry. She was angry at the police for betraying her privacy, with the media's badgering and false reports, and with her father for the harm he had caused the victim's families and his own. After the shock, Kerri realized that the police were doing their job and that her father was purely responsible for his actions. At the time of his arrest, her father was ridiculed in popular media by people suggesting he was a monster and deserved to be executed. Although Kerri's thoughts about her father were conflicted, her father was still human, and she believed he deserved respect during his trial. Kerri and her father were in contact through letters, at which she begged that he would plead guilty and spare his family from undergoing a trial. Fortunately, in early 2005 her father confessed and pled guilty to ten murders. However, during the hearing, her father was forced to recount the details of his crimes in front of the court and his family.

Kerri grieved for the loss of her father, his lies and betrayal, and the damaged families. She turned to her faith to help her find the strength to continue. As she attempted to keep her family together, she realized that her father was not only responsible for destroying the families of the eight victims, but he was causing his own family to crumble. She did not know how to continue with that knowledge. She supported her difficulty with her father's arrest by claiming, "I have fought to hold on to the man I knew and the places we loved, but the truth is, he continued to inflict devastation, taking other lives and ruining families, while living with and caring for his own family" (Rawson, 2019, p. 226).

Kerri described this time of her life as an 'incalculable loss'. She had lost her father, her family, her home, her memories, her identity, and her privacy. As a Christian, she believed the true path to overcoming her father's crimes was forgiving him. However, she did not know how

to reach a mental space where she could forgive him for his actions and the destruction he caused. During this phase of uncertainty, Kerri also began to experience stigmatization and assumed the label of a serial killer's daughter. In her book, she says, "Guilty as charged. I'm BTKs daughter. No longer Kerri—she has gone" (Rawson, 2019, p. 160). In addition, she started to consider her biological connection to her father and worried about inheriting his murderous tendencies.

Kerri explained that she could intellectually accept the truth about her father, but accepting it emotionally was far more difficult. From the time her father was arrested, her life was separated before and after the arrest. Through on-and-off contact with her father, therapy sessions, reconnecting with her faith, and transparency with friends, she came to terms with her father's actions. She also learned that it was acceptable to miss and love her father. She explained, "I did not miss a serial killer, [I] did not love one—I missed my dad. I loved my dad" (Rawson, 2019, p. 272).

While living in Detroit, Kerri and her husband, Darian, had two children. Kerri became a victims advocate and dedicated her life to helping those who have experienced trauma, crime, and abuse. She declared that she had forgiven her father and had re-initiated contact through letters.

Albert DeMeo

Albert captured his childhood by stating, "My world centred around my father, and bit by bit, I was becoming more comfortable in his environment than with other fourth-graders" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 69). Albert and his father, Roy, had a unique bond. Albert had always wanted to be just like his father and would follow him anywhere he went, dressed and acting like

him. Roy was a safe, loving, nurturing, compassionate father who loved his family. Albert was proud of his father, his intelligence, the respect he received, people's willingness to make him happy, and how everyone liked him. During his early years, Albert also noticed some of his father's unusual behaviours, such as carrying a gun, only using a pay phone, and keeping money in envelopes. Despite his father's oddities, Albert loved him and trusted that whatever he did was moral.

Albert was just a young boy at home and school, but when he was on an outing with his father, they were two men doing business. His father would often take him to run errands and meet his associates, which were referred to as uncles and grandfathers. His father would answer any of Albert's questions and did not conceal the legality of his businesses. Without knowing his father's position in the Gambino crime family, Albert was paving his way toward the label of a 'junior wise guy'. Albert described this realization as his simplicity to lie, learning the mechanics and carrying a gun, making connections with his father's associates, and being trusted in his father's world. As Albert became more relied on by his father, he became uncomfortable living his dual life and had to learn how to compartmentalize to function daily. In his book, Albert described his difficulties by saying, "I was unable to process this contradiction, I tucked the information away in a separate compartment of my brain. I was rapidly developing an intricate network of such compartments. I had to keep the information separated, or I wouldn't be able to function" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 79). He was no longer seen as Roy's son but asserted a status among the crime family. Albert claimed he no longer found comfort or belonging in his life as an adolescent or a junior wise guy.

Albert, his parents, and two sisters lived a life described as a happy, traditional, Italian-American family. Albert's parents were well-involved in their children's lives, attentive,

affectionate, well-respected, and engaged in family activities. Besides Albert and his father, the DeMeo family was blissfully ignorant about their connection to organized crime. The DeMeos lived a luxurious lifestyle with more money than they knew how to spend. The family wanted their children to grow up to be well-educated, honest, respectful, polite people with good morals and attend Sunday school.

Albert soon discovered that his father was a member of the Gambino crime family through rumours passed around his school, and he eventually asked his father. The discovery of his father's involvement with organized crime was a devastating realization. Albert became overly concerned with his father's safety and constantly worried about his inevitable death, causing immense stress for a young boy. However, Albert continued to prove himself useful to the family. During a series of tests by the family, Albert was put in the situation of a prospective intruder and passed as he instinctively tried to fire an empty firearm to kill the intruder and display his loyalty to the family. Despite being sick with the idea that Albert could take another life, he used his primary school lessons to solve an issue with evidence in police custody by using a magnet to destroy evidence. Regardless of his and his father's pleasure with being trusted in the family, Albert was uncomfortable hiding his 'real life' and how effortless it was to lie about his participation in the crime family.

Although Albert was becoming immune to the anxiety and fear of potentially losing his father, he became emotionless and could no longer feel joy. His mental presence in his daily life had quickly declined; with his father absent, he was the man of the house and could only concentrate on keeping his family safe. When Albert was 13 years old, he realized that his father was a "dead man walking," and it was only time that he would lose his father for good. The DeMeo family was now under 24-hour police surveillance. His father was concerned for his

family's safety and moved the family into a hotel. When the focus deviated from his father, they set out back home. However, his father knew this was not enough, and he had to fake his death and flee the country to escape arrest or face being killed by the crime family.

The day that Albert had been dreading finally came. The police arrived at the DeMeo residence to tell the family that his father was found dead in the trunk of his car. However, Albert was emotionless except for a blinding rage after his death, and when asked to identify the body, he knew the body was his father, but he did not feel any connection to him. Before his father's death, Albert promised to distance himself from the crime family, not seek revenge for his death, and get a respectful, legal job. His father did not want the same life for his son and regretted getting him involved in his dangerous lifestyle.

Albert's father's associates had become family to him, but after his father's death, his associates turned against him and refused to help. Furthermore, his father's longest and closest friend, whom Albert has come to know as 'Uncle Nino,' was alleged to have killed his father. Alberts's previous connection and the police's move to dismantle the crime family, Albert was still under constant surveillance and scrutiny by the police. His father's former crew was also threatening him and, in one instance, drove him off the road near killing Albert. He was angry, frustrated, targeted, and could no longer trust anyone. As only a 17-year-old, Albert was subjected to significant stress, and he tried to act like a collected adult but felt like a frightened child.

Albert confessed that he "...had never thought of myself as a criminal; I had thought of myself as a son helping his father" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 214). Now with his father gone, he was no longer getting help from his associates but could not escape the label of the son of a 'Capo'. Once Albert turned 18, the legal system was allowed to subpoena him and increase its

pressure on him. The justice system believed that Albert knew more about the crime families' activity and was disappointed to learn that Albert did not know about the crimes they had disclosed to him. At this time, Albert discovered that although his father was not convicted of a murder he was suspected to be connected to an estimated 200 murders.

Albert eventually became a stockbroker on wall street and spiraled into a deep depression, alcohol abuse, and sex abuse. He entered a short marriage that quickly ended by Albert's troubling mental health and behaviour. He isolated himself from his friends and family to protect them from prospective danger. A book was released titled "Murder Machine" which detailed his father's life and exposed Albert's identity, which many of his coworkers quickly connected. After Albert attempted suicide twice, he was hospitalized in a psychiatric ward and made strides to become healthier. He found compassion for his childhood self and what he had endured and learned to forgive himself.

Sanford Clark

Sanford and his three siblings lived with their parents in Saskatchewan, but the children were treated very differently. Sanford was viewed as the 'black sheep' of the family and was constantly criticized by his mother despite not provoking her. As a result, he learned to internalize his emotions starting at a young age from his mother's controlling behaviour and blatant disregard for his feelings. No one in the family could oppose his mother without getting punished, so when she decided that Sanford would move to California with his Uncle Stewart to work on a chicken ranch, he had no choice but to comply. Sanford felt uncomfortable with his mother passing him off to his Uncle but could not figure a way out of the situation.

His Uncle Stewart had many strong opinions and was described as short-tempered, violent, demanding, and torturous. The excruciatingly long car ride from Saskatchewan to California was filled with Stewart spewing his ideas about beauty and Hollywood, such as his belief that people he deemed ugly were 'trash' that should be 'taken out'. At the Canada-U.S. border, Stewart had warned Sanford that he would be crossing into the U.S. illegally and would be arrested if caught. When Sanford was not attentive or would display what Uncle Stewart deemed incorrect behaviour, he would aggressively hit him. However, Uncle Stewart's smacks to Sanford's head were not as severe as what was to come. Uncle Stewart had created an isolated environment where he could fulfill his desires and now had a child who could not escape as his victim. Sanford was the subject of frequent physical, psychological, and sexual abuse by his Uncle. Sanford was violently beaten into constant fear of Uncle Stewart and was convinced that partaking in his abuse made him 'sick' too.

Not only was Uncle Stewart abusive towards Sanford, but his grandparents were also physically and verbally abusive towards him when he visited their house. Sanford believed that he would be safe from the abuse as he was needed to do physical labour on the chicken ranch and was blood-related to them. However, Sanford quickly realized that these facts were not enough to keep him from the abuse. Stanford thought, "And if his grandparents were sick people, and his uncle was a sick person and probably his mother, too—what did that make him?" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 84).

Sanford had established many rules to help him survive living with his uncle. First, the harder Sanford worked, the less Uncle Stewart had reason to bother him. Second, be submissive to Uncle Stewart's violence. If he had allowed Uncle Stewart to hurt him a little bit, the faster the beating would be over. Third, the more humiliation he endured, the less violent the beating.

Stanford suggested he could handle Uncle Stewart's beatings but found the sexual abuse shameful. He expressed that he was glad the humiliation of the rapes was done in secret and did not want anyone to know that it happened. The sexual abuse by Stewart caused severe physical and psychological trauma. Uncle Stewart would sodomize Sanford and sometimes use objects to rape him. During one event, Stewart used splintered wood and other sharp objects to sodomize Sanford, resulting in severe bleeding. In addition to sodomy, Uncle Stewart would also pleasure Sanford through masturbation. Sanford's sexual abuse had induced great psychological stress. He believed that his Uncle had turned him into a pervert, too. He expressed that he deserved the abuse and deserved to die because he was filth.

Once Sanford adjusted to the intense labour and abuse, Stewart's 'evilness' intensified. Stewart began kidnapping children to fulfill his sexual desires. When his uncle kidnaped a new boy, he entrusted and forced Sanford to be his accomplice by imprisoning them in one of the chicken coops and taking care of them. His uncle confessed that he was trying to make Sanford like him, complicit in the crimes, and teach him how to get away with it. Uncle Stewart had taught Sanford all he knew, from luring boys, to how to commit crimes, evade police, and create elaborate stories to develop an alibi. From the boy's screams, cries, and pleas Sanford heard, he knew the boys were experiencing similar abuse. The presence of a new boy was relieving to Sanford as they would get Stewart's attention, and he would not be bothered. However, Sanford felt intense guilt for feeling the relief and hoped that the boys had someone looking for them and that he could be saved too.

Stewart eventually escalated to murder and forced Sanford to dig graves for the bodies and help dispose of the victims. Additionally, his Uncle, on one occasion, tried to bury Sanford alive as punishment for not complying with his demands. At this point, Sanford was convinced

there was no way out of Stewart's grip and welcomed death. When his grandmother visited the ranch, she knew Uncle Steward was molesting young boys again. The family had fled Saskatchewan for Stewart's 'interests' and reminded Stewart that he needed to stay away from boys who knew him. In order to avoid detection, Uncle Stewart and his mother forced Sanford to help murder one of the kidnapped boys and dispose of his body.

While staying on the ranch, Uncle Stewart would force Sanford to write and send false letters that he was doing well to his family at home. Sanford's sister, Jessie, was the only one worried about Sanford and cared to read the letters he sent. However, Jessie knew something was wrong with Sanford and arranged a visit to California to ensure he was okay. While visiting, Sanford tried his best to conceal the abuse from Jessie and not worry her. However, Jessie saw right threw his façade and forced him to tell her everything. Sanford confessed what had been occurring while living with Uncle Stewart, and she developed a plan to help him escape. Unfortunately, this escape plan did not work, but when Jessie returned home, she called the local authorities to investigate Uncle Stewart.

After living with Uncle Stewart for two years, he knew the police were on to him. He had abandoned Sanford and fled California with the aid of Sanford's mother and his grandmother. The three of them were eventually caught and arrested. Sanford loathed Uncle Stewart for making him do these terrible things; he believed he was beyond forgiveness and deserved to go to jail. Sanford was taken to the hospital to be observed and speak with the detectives on his Uncle's case. Despite his fear of being convicted, imprisoned, and having to tell the authorities about the humiliation, Sanford told the detectives everything he knew and agreed to testify. Uncle Stewart was convicted of three murders and multiple counts of kidnapping and rape. He received the death penalty in 1928 and was hung in 1930. Sanford loathed Stewart for making

him do terrible things and thought he was beyond forgiveness, but he did not feel any better with his convict.

Mr. Kelley, the district attorney in Stewart's case, worked closely with Sanford, and they quickly developed a bond. While under the impression that he was in trouble, Sanford described Mr. Kelley as his guardian angel and showed him mercy for his crimes. Sanford was sent to a delinquent school for boys, where he was transformed into a model man and released back to Canada early. Before leaving, he had promised Mr. Kelley that he would prove that people could be rehabilitated and become positive citizens.

Once Sanford returned to Saskatchewan, he feared that people knew about his past and his relationship with Uncle Stewart. Sanford explained his thoughts at this time, "Once they know, what will they think of you? Once they know, why would they help you? Once they know, why would they care about a creature like you?" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 72). Sanford developed a strong bond with his remaining family, joined the Canadian armed forces, and returned home to be a member of the Canadian postal service. Sanford met his wife, June, and adopted two children from the 'hard to adopt list'. He struggled to forgive himself and suffered from severe bouts of PTSD, depression, and violent headaches. Sanford passed away in 1991 at the age of 78.

The biographical data for this study was collected through the subject's accounts of their experiences detailed in their biographies. The subjects' biographies summarized in chapter 3 will be used in chapter 4 to explore how the offspring of serial killers are affected by their parents' crimes.

Chapter 4: Results

Five themes emerged from the analysis of the subject's biographies;

(1) Relationship with the killer parent,

(2) Family dynamics and values,

(3) Interactions with law enforcement, media, legal system, and community,

(4) Intersection with parent's crimes, and

(5) Impacts and realizations.

The thematic findings from each case were then compared and reviewed. This chapter will examine the findings as described in the children's biographies.

Setting and Sample Population

This study aims to gain a greater understanding of how the lives of the children of serial killers are impacted by their parents. The demographics of the six subjects chosen for this study and their demographics can be viewed in Table 2. Consistent with the Radford/FGCU Annual Report on Serial Killer Statistics (2020), most of the subjects' parents were white males in the United States. However, the sample population also includes atypical factors such as parents who murdered together, a woman serial killer, and two serial killers not located in the United States. Additionally, the statistics on serial killer's state that only 7% die before a trial, while the current study includes two cases in which this occurred (Aamodt, et al., 2020).

In summary, the cases examined in this study incorporate four fathers, two mothers, and one uncle. Four cases were located in the U.S., while one case was in England, and one was in Australia. All the cases occurred between the 1920s and 1990s, with the lowest years active

being two years and the highest 20 years. Each serial killer was suspected or convicted of murdering between 3 to 200 victims. Finally, the majority of serial killers were convicted, with four sentenced to life in prison, one was sentenced to the death penalty, one committed suicide before trial, and one was killed before arrest.

Table 2

Demographics of Subjects

Subject's Name	Serial Killer's Name	Connection to Killer	Location	Year's Active	Number of Victims	Legal Result
Mae West	Fred West	Father	Gloucester, England	1960s-1980s	12	Suicide before trial
	Rosemary West	Mother			10	Convicted of 10 Counts
Hazel Baron	Dulcie Bodsworth	Mother	New South Wales, Australia	1950s	3	Convicted of 2 counts and acquitted of 1
Melissa Moore	Keith Jesperson	Father	Washington, U.S.	1990s	8	Convicted of 8 counts
Kerri Rawson	Dennis Radar	Father	Kanas, U.S.	1970s-1980s	10	Plead guilty to 10 counts
Albert DeMeo	Roy DeMeo	Father	New York, U.S.	1960s-1980s	Suspected of 200 (Unknown)	Death before conviction
Sanford Clark	Stewart Northcott	Uncle (Guardian)	California, U.S.	1920s	3	Convicted of 3 counts

Family Demographics

Table 3 shows the child and serial killer parent(s) primary occupations, the family's economic status, the killer parents' marriage status, and the number of siblings the children have.

Table 3

Family Demographics

Subject's Name	Killer parent and Subject's Occupations	Economic Status	Marriage Status	Number of Children
Mae West	Father- Construction Mother- Prostitute Mae- Secretary	Lower Class	Married	10 (5 half-siblings)
Hazel Baron	Mother- Cooking and housekeeping Hazel- Nurse	Lower Class	Divorced 3 times	9 (5 half-siblings)
Melissa Moore	Father- Transport driver Melissa- Victims advocate	Lower Class	Divorced	5 (2 half-siblings)
Kerri Rawson	Father- Security installation and Compliance officer Kerri- Victims advocate	Middle Class	Married	2
Albert DeMeo	Father- Organized crime Albert- Stockbroker	Higher Class	Married	3
Sanford Clark	Uncle- Pianist and Chicken Rancher Sanford- Military and Canadian Postal Service	Lower Class	Single	4

The majority of serial killer parent's and guardian's worked gender-normative jobs. The father's

and Uncle's occupations were male-dominated blue-collar jobs such as construction, transport-truck driving, security installation, and farming. In contrast, the serial killer mothers worked as Homemakers and housekeepers. Dennis Rader and Stewart Northcott also pursued less labour-intensive jobs as a compliance officer and a pianist, respectively. Finally, as opposed to traditional methods, Roy DeMeo's primary income was from organized crime, and Rosemary West's was from prostitution.

The majority of female children sought out occupations that focused on helping others. Melissa Moore and Kerri Rawson pursued jobs as victim advocates, and Hazel Baron worked as a nurse's aide at a hospital. Mae West was the outlier who maintained a clerical career. As for the male children, Albert DeMeo and Sanford Clark had very different occupations. Albert became a stockbroker on wall street, and Sanford served in the Canadian armed forces. When he left the armed forces, he landed a job with the Canadian postal service.

In four cases, the children described their family as having financial issues and considered themselves lower class. Mae, Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford classified themselves as 'poor' and described the families' financial hardships, including working multiple jobs or having the children work to supplement their income, scavenging or stealing, and lacking expendable income. In contrast, Kerri and Albert discussed a 'comfortable' lifestyle in which their families did not struggle financially. Kerri claimed her family was middle class, while Albert's family was affluent and higher class.

Rosemary and Fred West, Dulcie Bodsworth, Dennis Radar, and Roy DeMeo, were all married at the time of arrest or death. However, Dulcie Bodsworth's third husband and Dennis Radar's wife divorced them shortly after incarceration. Keith Jesperson was also divorced from

his wife, but the separation occurred years prior to his arrest. Lastly, Stewart Northcott was single and had never married.

Rosemary and Fred West had seven girls and three boys for a total of ten children. Before marrying Rose, Fred had custody of two children, Charmaine, his stepdaughter, and Anne Marie, his biological daughter. Rosemary went on to bear eight other children, with Fred being the biological father of only five children, including Mae. The other three children were products of Rosemary's prostitution business and fathered by her clients. Dulcie Bodsworth produced nine children with three different men. In Dulcie's first marriage, she had four children and gave birth to an additional four children, including Hazel, in her second marriage. In Dulcie's final marriage, she had one child. Keith Jesperson fathered three children. During his marriage, he had three children, including Melissa. Following the divorce, Melissa's mother had two additional children with her second husband. Dennis Radar had two children with his wife, Kerri and Brian. Roy DeMeo had three children with his wife, including Albert and two daughters. Finally, Stewart Northcott did not father any children but assumed guardianship of his nephew Sanford and moved to California, U.S. While Sanford left his two brothers and sister at home in Saskatchewan.

Relationship With Serial Killer Parent

The children's relationship with their serial killer parent was highly complicated. In Table 4, the children's feelings towards their serial killer parent were evaluated through the following factors: was the child scared of the parent, who was the child's preferred parent, parents' main positive attributes, parents' main negative attributes, whether the child still loved their parents, did the child visit their parent's when incarcerated, and whether the parent

emotionally, physically, or sexually abused the child. All the cases except Kerri and Albert were scared of their serial killer parent. Similarly, all the subjects stated that their father was their preferred parent except for Kerri, who claimed she liked both parents equally.

Melissa, Kerri, and Albert expressed that they still loved their parent despite their crimes. Hazel and Sanford stated that they did not love their serial killing parent. As for Mae, she

Table 4

Relationship With Serial Killer Parent

Child's Name	Scared of Parent(s)	Preferred Parent	Claim to Still Love Their Parent(s)	Maintain Contact After Arrest	Abused by Parent(s)
Mae West	Yes	Father	Father - No Mother - Yes	Regular Visitation with Mother and Exchanged Letters	Emotional, Physical, and Sexual Abuse
Hazel Baron	Yes	Father	No	Regular Visitation and Exchanged Letters	Emotional and Physical Abuse
Melissa Moore	Yes	Father	Yes	Visited Once and Exchanged Letters	Emotional Abuse
Kerri Rawson	No	Both	Yes	Exchanged Letters	No
Albert DeMeo	No	Father	Yes	N/A	No
Sanford Clark	Yes	Father	No	No	Emotional, Physical, and Sexual Abuse

insisted that she no longer loved her father but continued to love her mother. Mae, Hazel, Melissa, and Kerri maintained contact after their parent's arrest by exchanging letters. In addition, Mae and Hazel regularly visited their parents after their arrests, and Melissa visited her father once. Sanford did not visit his uncle after his arrest, and last saw him during the trial.

Finally, both Mae and Sanford experienced emotional, physical, and sexual abuse by their parents. Hazel encountered emotional and physical abuse, and Melissa was emotionally abused. Both Kerri and Albert denied any abuse by their parents.

Family Relationships and Dynamics

Table 5

Family Relationships and Dynamics

Child's Name	Parents Relationship	Siblings Relationship	Family's Relationship with Community	Importance of Family	Family's Religious Beliefs	Family Values
Mae West	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Atheist	Rare love and affection, did not value education, positive representation, fear government, and financial contribution
Hazel Baron	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Atheist	Rare love and affection, did not value education, positive representation, high independence, and financial contribution
Melissa Moore	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong	Catholicism	Rare love and affection, did not value education, high independence, and Catholic morals
Kerri Rawson	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Catholicism	Love and affection, valued education, safety, and supportive
Albert DeMeo	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Catholicism	Love and affection, valued education and Catholicism, ignorance is bliss, and being a 'man '
Sanford Clark	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Atheist	No love or affection, did not value education, high independence, and hard work

Table 5 considers the relationship between the parents, siblings, and community members, plus the importance of family, religion, and values. The subjects' relationships are categorized through their strength (weak, moderate, or strong), as the subjects described in their published writings. Mae, Kerri, and Albert described their parents as having a strong relationship, while Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford indicated their parents had weak relationships. All of the subjects had a strong or moderate relationship with their siblings. Mae, Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford had strong relationships with their siblings, while Kerri and Albert only had moderate relationships. The subject's relationships with the community were split evenly, with Melissa, Kerri, and Albert's families having a strong relationship with the community and Mae, Hazel, and Sanford's families having a weak relationship. Mae, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert's families demonstrated family as high importance. Hazel and Sanford's families described the value of family as having little importance. Three subjects, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert, identified as catholic, while Mae, Hazel, and Sanford identified as non-religious.

In summary, each family demonstrated different standards of values and beliefs in their family life. Mae, Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford's families did not share love or affection and did not value education. In contrast, Kerri and Albert's families showed love and affection and valued education. Mae and Hazel's families are also expected to contribute financially to the family and maintain a positive reputation. The children were expected to be highly independent in Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford's families. Catholic values were also significant in Melissa, Kerri, and Albert's families. Lastly, the West's feared government entities, Kerri's family emphasized safety and supporting each other, the principles of ignorance as bliss and 'being a man' in DeMeo's family, and Sanford's family valued hard work.

Interactions With Groups

Table 6 displays how the children perceived their interactions with the police, media and journalists, legal system, and community. As a result of their parents' criminality, the children were exposed to these groups and were labelled the “Children of a serial killer”. The children’s interactions with these groups were categorized as having positive, mixed, negative, or indifferent effects. The subjects who did not discuss or did not have an interaction with a particular group were assigned N/A or were not applicable.

Table 6

Interactions With Groups

Child's Name	Interaction With Police	Interaction With Media and Journalists	Interaction With Legal System	Interaction With Community
Mae West	Negative	Negative	Negative	Mixed
Hazel Baron	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Positive
Melissa Moore	N/A	Negative	N/A	Mixed
Kerri Rawson	Positive	Negative	Negative	Positive
Albert DeMeo	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative
Sanford Clark	Positive	N/A	Mixed	Positive

Hazel, Kerri, and Sanford had expressed positive interactions with police, while Mae and Albert describe having negative experiences. However, Melissa did not encounter the police regarding her father’s crimes. Most children had negative experiences with the media and journalists concerning their parent’s crimes. Hazel encountered the media and journalists during her mother’s trial, most significantly in newspapers, but this did not affect her. Sanford did not have an interaction with the media. All the children who interacted with the legal system had a negative experience as they encountered revictimization or received an undesirable outcome

during the trial. Sanford was the only subject with a mixed impression of the legal system as he was forced to testify as his abuser questioned him during the trial, but he was also shown mercy in his sentencing. Finally, Hazel, Kerri, and Sanford described having a positive experience and did not encounter stigmatization or poor attitudes from their communities following their parent's arrest. Mae and Melissa had mixed impressions as they did not personally encounter stigmatization but were negatively impacted by what they believed the community thought of them. While Albert described negative interactions with the community after his dad's death, his identity as a mobster's son was revealed, and he became a social pariah when a book about his father's crimes was released.

Intersection With Parent's Crimes

The subject's intersection with their parent's crimes is displayed in Table 7, including if the children knew about the crimes, if they suspected the crimes, if they participated in the crimes, whether their participation was voluntary, and if they experienced any primary

Table 7

Intersection With Crime

Child's Name	Knowledge of crimes	Suspected crimes	Participation in crimes	Have ever been primary victimized
Mae West	No	No	No	Yes
Hazel Baron	Yes	Yes	No	No
Melissa Moore	No	No	No	Yes
Kerri Rawson	No	No	No	No
Albert DeMeo	Yes	Yes	Yes (Voluntary)	Yes
Sanford Clark	Yes	Yes	Yes (Involuntary)	Yes

victimization. Mae, Melissa, and Kerri did not have knowledge of their parent(s) crimes or

suspected criminal activity. Hazel, Albert and Sanford had suspected and knew about the crimes. Furthermore, Albert and Sanford were complicit in their parent's crimes, with Albert voluntarily and Sanford involuntarily participating. Albert helped his father with his loan shark operation by retrieving payments. Sanford was forced to help his uncle contain the boys he kidnapped, helped murder a boy, and discarded the many victim's bodies.

Finally, four of the subjects, Mae, Melissa, Albert, and Sanford, were all primary victims of a crime at some time. Mae and Sanford suffered from physical and sexual assault at the hands of their parents and uncle, respectively. Melissa had been the target of an assault by a female gang while walking home from school and was hospitalized for her injuries. She also claimed that her boyfriend at the time had sexually assaulted her. Her rape led to an unwanted pregnancy which her boyfriend attempted to terminate by physically beating Melissa. Finally, Albert was physically assaulted and left in critical condition after his father's former associates intentionally made him crash his car in a ditch. Hazel and Kerri were never personal victims of a crime.

Child's Impact and Realizations

Table 8 illustrates the overall impact of being the children of a serial killer parent using the following categories: Mental and social impact, presence of a higher being attributed to help with coping, children's attempts at redemption, and the subject's mental growth and realizations. All the subjects suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in addition to other mental

Table 8

Child's Impact and Realizations

Child's Name	Mental Impact	Social Impact	A 'Higher Being' used to cope	Child's Attempts at Redemption	Mental Growth and Realizations
Mae West	PTSD, Stockholm Syndrome, and Survivors Guilt	Labelled 'Child of a Serial Killer', Fear of Stigmatization and Public Attention, and Loss of Privacy	Yes	Sharing her Story	"I've made mistakes in my life as all people do, but there's no reason why I should feel ashamed of being me" (West & McKay, 2018, Pg. 304)
Hazel Baron	Depression and Anxiety	Labelled 'Child of a Serial Killer', Fear of Stigmatization and Public Attention	Yes	Sharing her Story and Adopting and Fostering Children	"Hazel certainly wasn't going to let Dulcie ruin the second half of her life as she had done the first half" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, Pg. 236)
Melissa Moore	PTSD, Suicidal, and Eating Disorder	Labelled 'Child of a Serial Killer', Fear of Stigmatization and Public Attention, and Loss of Privacy	Yes	Sharing her Story and Working in Victims Advocacy	"While I had absolutely no control over how my parents treated me and how they felt about me, I suddenly realized that I could control one very important thing—how I responded or reacted. I was in charge of how I let them affect me" (Moore & Cook, 2015, Pg. 228)
Kerri Rawson	PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, Suicidal, and Night Terrors	Labelled 'Child of a Serial Killer', Fear of Stigmatization and Public Attention, and Loss of Privacy	Yes	Sharing her Story and Working in Victims Advocacy	"I didn't miss a serial killer, didn't love one—I missed my dad. I loved my dad" (Rawson, 2019, Pg. 272)
Albert DeMeo	PTSD, Depression, Suicidal, Paranoia, and Sex and Alcohol Abuse	Labelled 'Child of a Serial Killer', Fear of Stigmatization, and Public Attention, Loss of Privacy, and Being seen as an Associate with the Mafia	Yes	Sharing his Story and Exited Organized Crime as he Promised his Father	"My father made me who I was, but it was up to me to decide who I was to be. The choice was in my hands" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, Pg. 275)
Sanford Clark	PTSD, Suicidal, Night Terrors, and Survivors Guilt	Labelled 'Child of a Serial Killer', Fear of Stigmatization and Public Attention	No	Adopting boys on the 'Hard to Adopt' list and Proved that People Can Be Rehabilitated	"He was also armed by this point with the awareness that other people were also haunted, in their own ways" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, Pg. 263)

health disorders such as major depressive disorder and general anxiety. Melissa, Kerri, Albert, and Sanford struggled with suicidal ideation and discussed certain points in their life that they contemplated suicide. The three subjects, Hazel, Kerri, and Albert, had been diagnosed with depressive disorders. Hazel, Kerri, and Albert expressed having an anxiety disorder and experiencing frequent panic attacks. Kerri and Sanford suffered from Night Terrors and had difficulties sleeping. Mae and Sanford struggled with survivor's guilt for surviving their parents and uncle, respectively, as Mae's sister and the other boys brought to the ranch were killed. The subjects also displayed mental health disorders unique to their cases. Mae dealt with Stockholm syndrome, Melissa struggled with an eating disorder, and Albert experienced issues with sex and alcohol abuse in addition to paranoia. In addition to the mental disorders described, the subjects also struggled with intense feelings of shame and guilt as a result of their parent's crimes.

Similarly, all the subjects were socially impacted by assuming the label of being 'the child of a serial killer' and shared fears of stigmatization and public attention. For example, Kerri claimed, "I was the daughter of a serial killer, and I didn't know anyone else like me" (Rawson, 2019, p. 305). Mae, Melissa, and Kerri also experienced a loss of privacy due to the fascination of the community and media. Finally, Albert was uniquely associated with the mafia and was treated by police and society as a member of organized crime. All the subjects, except Sanford, suggested that God, the universe, or a higher being helped them cope with and overcome their parent's crimes. All the children also performed acts of helping others to vindicate themselves and the pain caused by their parents, with Hazel explaining her passion for helping others as "I'll make up for just a little bit of what she had done" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 237).

Except for Sanford, the subjects attempted to redeem their parents' actions and provide context to their lives by sharing their story through their biographies. As Mae prefaced her story,

"I want to describe my experience – shared by my siblings – of being connected biologically and emotionally to two people who are regarded by people as evil, and of living in the shadow of their terrible actions" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 19). Hazel fostered and adopted children, and Sanford adopted two boys from the 'Hard to Adopt' list. Additionally, Melissa and Kerri pursued work in victim's advocacy to help others who have been victimized. Albert and Sanford also fulfilled their promises to their father and attorney respectively. Albert kept his promise to his father by abandoning the life of organized crime, and Sanford proved to himself and Mr. Kelley that people could be rehabilitated.

As displayed in this chapter, the subjects described sharing similar experiences. Despite encountering similar events, the subjects described having different perspectives on their experiences. For example, five of the subjects encountered the police due to their parent's crimes, with three describing a positive interaction while two having a negative experience. In other aspects, such as the subject's self-reported social impact, all the subjects discussed assuming the label of "the child of a serial killer" and fearing stigmatization. The following Chapter will discuss the findings from the study more in-depth. This chapter will describe the subject's experiences more thoroughly by providing quotes from the offspring's biographies and comparing the findings to current literature to understand the children's experiences better.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Analysis

The purpose of this research was to investigate how the children of serial killers were impacted by their crimes and their relation to their parents. The study's results were analyzed using five themes: relationship with killer parent, family dynamics and values, interaction with groups, intersection with crime, and child's overall impact and realizations. This Chapter will use these five themes to discuss the children's experiences as they wrote in their biographies and interpret the findings using direct quotes from the offspring.

Family Demographics

The subjects in the current study are the children of serial killers, but the marital status of the parents varied. In the majority of cases, the children's parents eventually divorced, but the timing and motivation for separating differed among families. The motivations for divorce in the study resulted from the knowledge of their significant others' crimes and suspicions of infidelity.

All but two of the subjects, Rawson and DeMeo, identified their families as lower-class. However, during their childhood, Mae and Hazel did not view themselves as poor or underclass, while Melissa indicated that she knew about her family's financial issues and was envious of other children who could afford designer jeans and the newest toys. Although the subjects had vastly different childhoods, all but Sanford Clark expressed a sense of 'normalcy.' For example, Mae described that her family participated in typical family behaviour such as watching TV as a family, family road trips, and Christmas traditions. Opposingly, Sanford was uprooted from his home in Canada and separated from his family to live and work with his uncle. At this time,

Sanford was not enrolled in school but was confined to the chicken ranch, where he was subjected to harsh physical labour, avoiding his violent abuse and managing his uncle's victims.

Relationship with Serial Killer Parent

Similar to the children and parents of other, less serious types of crime, relationships between the children and their killer parents were complex and significantly transformed throughout their lives. The children's descriptions in their biographies of their killer parents were largely negative. Kerri and Albert illustrated the most positive reflections of their parents but revealed numerous meaningful negative attributes. For example, Albert defended his father by stating, "No one could have asked for a better father than mine" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 11). He also illustrated him as "…tender, warm, a man who nurtured the lives of animals and children alike. He carried his gun for self-defence, to protect himself in the dangerous world he lived in" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 99).

Mae, Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford painted a highly negative picture of their parent. The positive attributes associated with the parents were; funny (Rawson, 2019; West & McKay, 2018), protective (DeMeo & Ross, 2003; Moore & Cook, 2015; Rawson, 2019; West & McKay, 2018), well-respected (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018; Flacco & Clark, 2009; DeMeo & Ross, 2003), smart (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018; Moore & Cook, 2015; Rawson, 2019), and caring (DeMeo & Ross, 2003; Moore & Cook, 2015; Rawson, 2019). However, the negative attributes describing the parents were plentiful, including manipulative (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018; Flacco & Clark, 2009; West & McKay, 2018), threatening, (Flacco & Clark, 2009; Moore & Cook, 2015; West & McKay, 2018) inappropriate (Flacco & Clark, 2009; Moore & Cook, 2015; West & McKay, 2018), unaffectionate (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018; West & McKay, 2018),

remorseless (Moore & Cook, 2015), violent (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018; Flacco & Clark, 2009; West & McKay, 2018), and cruel (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018; Flacco & Clark, 2009; Moore & Cook, 2015; West & McKay, 2018), in addition to the identifiers for their crimes such as rapist, murderer, and serial killer. For example, Hazel describes her mother by stating, "Beneath the pleasant façade, she was a harsh, tough and cruel woman" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 69). Similarly, Mae illustrated a negative light on her father, saying, "He had absolutely no boundaries in talking about that [sex] in front of us and there'd be a steady stream of crude and disgusting jokes which no decent parent would think of making in front of young children" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 41).

Parent/Child Bond

Parallel to their descriptions of their killer parent, Mae, Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford described fearing their parents'. Mae and Sanford's fear was a result of the frequent physical abuse they endured from their parent or uncle. In comparison, Hazel and Melissa's fear arose from their parent's behaviour when in their presence, such as suggestions and evidence that implied their capabilities of harming others. Hazel had witnessed her mother's manipulation of men throughout her life and was suspicious when the men in her mother's life began to die. Hazel's concern for her mother grew as she said, "She didn't know what her mother had done, but she feared her hand was behind this somehow" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 67). Melissa knew her father was capable of committing horrible acts when as a child as she was caring for a litter of kittens until her father strangled them. Furthermore, her father confessed to Melissa that he knew how to kill someone and not get caught. Despite these incidents, Melissa

only began to fear what her father was capable of doing in her teens and admitted feeling threatened when he was around.

The emotional and physical bond between a child and parent is complicated, as will be demonstrated in this section. Despite the heinous acts their parents committed, Hazel captures the intricate bonds in her biography by proclaiming, "Every girl needs her mum. A young girl's relationship with her mother shapes her life; it makes her what she is, whether for good or bad. It's a complex but powerful bond that no one outside it can ever understand (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 29). Despite all her mother had done, she "…could not turn off her feelings towards her mother. And despite feeling that her mother deserved the death penalty, she knew she could never live with herself had that actually happened" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 178). Similarly, Mae expands on her emotional bond with her parents by writing, "In spite of the things our parents had done to us – the beatings and abuse – we still deep down, even as adults, wanted to be loved by them and to love them in return" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 171). In each of the subject's writings, they are conflicted about their feelings towards their parents and undergo severe emotional stress attempting to understand these feelings.

Ultimately, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert admitted to still loving their parents. As Kerri captured in her biography, "I didn't miss a serial killer, I didn't love one — I missed my dad. I loved my dad" (Rawson, 2019, p. 272). The three subjects who had admitted to still loving their fathers knew the truth about their duplicitous lifestyle but had only encountered their father persona. As Kerri suggested, the children did not love the serial murderer person that society had seen, but rather they loved their fathers as they had known them.

Similarly, Mae claimed, "Your own experience of them [your parents] has been more complicated, and you've seen a side to them which makes them more than simply monsters"

(West & McKay, 2018, p. 301). While both of Mae's parents were convicted of multiple murders, her reflections on her feelings toward them differed. Mae desperately wanted to be loved by her mother; therefore, when she was arrested and displayed affection towards Mae, she reciprocated, despite her mother's crimes. Mae disclosed she still loved her mother, while in light of her father's crimes and suicide, she felt indifferent. She labelled her father as cowardly and undeserving of sorrow for his death.

Likewise, Hazel and Sanford's descriptions of their parents were indifferent. The two subjects did not describe love for their parent but also did not blatantly express hatred. Hazel stated, "I don't hate her; I don't even dislike her. She was like a neighbour, and I did the right thing by her" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 237). Although there was no affection towards her mother, she did not despise her either. Similar to Hazel, Sanford did not express hatred or love for his uncle but felt indifferent about his arrest and receiving the death penalty. After discovering his uncle had received the death penalty, "Sanford knew that relief was the appropriate response, but he still found it hard to feel much. He slept no better that night" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 282).

Contact After Arrest

Albert and Sanford were the only subjects who did not contact their parents after their arrest. Albert's father died before he could be arrested, and Sanford's uncle was sentenced to the death penalty. As a result, Albert did not have the opportunity to contact his father as he was killed before he could be arrested, and Sanford was institutionalized in a delinquent house for boys when his uncle was incarcerated and executed.

Although Mae did not contact her father after his arrest, she was in contact with her mother after her arrest. Mae summarized the letters her mother would send her as

> …a big part of [her] life. Some contained advice, others described her [mother's] life inside [in prison], many contained lists of clothing or other items she wanted me to buy and send to her. Often it was a combination of all these. Her letters were sometimes full of self-justification and self-pity, at others they were chatty, full of jokes and prison gossip (West & McKay, 2018, p. 18).

Each of the children who did contact their arrested parent were conflicted about contacting or remaining in contact. Kerri, for instance, "figured with enough time and distance from [her] father, [she] would heal" (Rawson, 2019, p. 313). At distinct points, the subjects confessed to needing an emotional and or physical separation from their parent by cutting or postponing contact. Hazel and Mae both physically visited their mothers regularly while they were incarcerated. In addition, Mae also connected with her mother through letters between visits, whereas Melissa and Kerri connected with their fathers primarily through letters. Melissa visited her father in person once while accompanied by family, stating, "For whatever reason, it was surprisingly healing to see that life hadn't stopped just because Dad was in jail" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 218), but only remained in contact after through letters and phone calls.

Effect of Parental Incarceration

When Mae first began visiting her mother, she believed others judged her for wanting to see her. Despite her worries, Mae would visit her mother 1-2 times a month. During her visits, Mae would provide her mother emotional, material, and financial support. She described that

> …as time wore on it was as if she sensed that I now had so much against her, I might want to break the bonds between us altogether, and so more and more she would play the victim and the little girl (West & McKay, 2018, p. 271).

Eventually, her mother's manipulation led to her distancing herself from her mother's constricting bonds.

Hazel was saddened to see her mother incarcerated and would visit her frequently. Similar to Mae, Hazel understood the emotional damage that came with visiting her mother and attempted to seize a connection with her. However, Hazel realized,

> …that her mother needed her for the first time in her life. She was under no illusions as to the reason for that—she was the only one in the family who visited Dulcie [her mother], and Dulcie saw Hazel as her lifeline to the outside world (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 208).

Despite her reservations, Hazel continued contact with her mother.

Melissa and her father exchanged letters where she often asked for fatherly advice. She explained, "Sometimes Dad's letters would sound like a normal letter from a father to a daughter. Other times they were really weird" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 238). To avoid the inappropriate sections of his letters, Melissa often had someone else summarize the "normal" parts for her. Although eventually, she attempted to preserve her psychological well-being by cutting ties with her father and no longer read his letters.

Finally, Kerri and her father were in contact through letters and mostly reminisced about their relationship before he was arrested or discussed his status while incarcerated. When Kerri's mental health rapidly declined, she decided to suspend contact with her father until she considered herself mentally stable. Ultimately, Kerri reconnected with her father, writing in a

letter to him, “I have come to terms with what happened with you and laid it to rest. I’m never going to understand it, but I forgive you. I’m sorry, and I miss you”, when she was ready (Rawson, 2019, p. 317).

Experience of Child Abuse

Besides Kerri and Albert, the subjects were subjected to various forms of abuse from their parents: physical, emotional, and/or sexual. Mae and Sanford identified all three forms of abuse by their parents and uncle respectively. Mae’s mother, Rosemary, had perpetrated physical, emotional, and sexual abuse towards her, while her father, Fred, did not physically abuse Mae but emotionally and sexually abused her. Rosemary was known to be violent towards her children, including smacks to the head, throwing objects, and whippings with her tea towel. Mae recalled, “The last time she was truly violent towards me was when I was in my early teens, and she came after me with a knife” (West & McKay, 2018, p. 69). Rosemary and Fred abused Mae emotionally by controlling all aspects of her life, withholding affection, and targeting her with belittling comments. Fred sexually assaulted his daughters with Rosemary’s aide and would inappropriately touch Mae in a sexual nature. Although Fred’s advances were unsuccessful towards Mae, her sisters revealed that he had raped them. In addition, Fred and Rosemary would force Mae to watch them perform sexual acts on each other, watch pornography, and listen to her mother have sex with her clients.

At the hand of his uncle Stewart, Sanford was frequently physically abused. Sanford would routinely suffer smacks to the head, and in a severe case, boiling water was thrown on his back. The isolated environment of the chicken ranch where they lived was the foundation for Sanford’s emotional abuse and allowed him to control Sanford. Stewart would consistently

threaten to harm Sanford's family if he did not abide by his commands, dehumanized Sanford, and had explosive unpredictable moods. The sexual abuse Sanford endured was significantly harmful. Stewart would perform sexual acts on Sanford, including sexual touching, rape, and sodomy. Although Sanford was undeniably a victim of Stewarts' abuse, "Sanford came to recognize himself as a partner in the filth that went on in that place" rather than a victim (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 95).

Hazel vaguely described fearing her mother's physical abuse, saying "[she] and the others [her siblings] were belted by her if they spoke out of turn to anyone outside the family" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 45). In addition, Hazel highlighted her mother's psychological abuse as she felt more settled and confident,

> Nothing Hazel did was any good. Hazel realized the constant belittling was her mother's way of maintaining control, but while it was so frequent that it should have been like water off a duck's back….What hurt the most was when Dulcie expanded the personal insults to include the rest of Hazel's social group and indeed the whole town of Wilcannia. No one liked Hazel, Dulcie said—no one. She would never amount to anything (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 78).

Lastly, Melissa endured emotional abuse from her father. Although she stated her father would never lay a hand on her or her siblings but would frequently emotionally harm his children. Melissa asked herself, "why my father seemed to like tormenting me" While he would ignore her pleas to stop (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 77). In one instance, Melissa described a time when her:

> Dad knew [she] was deathly afraid of heights, so [she] made him promise not to tease [her] on the bridge.… When [she] was in the middle of the bridge at the unstable

> area….[she] shrieked in terror, clinging to the railing. [she] turned [her] head to see my father bouncing up and down, chuckling (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 77).

Family Relationships and Dynamics

View of Parental Bond

The subject's descriptions of their parent's marriages were divided into healthy and unhealthy relationships. Mae, Kerri, and Albert labelled their parent's relationships as happy and healthy. Albert explained that his "parents seemed happy together, and [his] father was attentive and affectionate with [his] mother," and Kerri insisted that "Dennis [her father] cherished Paula [her mother]. [Her] dad would tell you the same—still to this day" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 85; Rawson, 2019, p. 9).

Although, Hazel and Melissa suggested their parents had an unhappy and unhealthy relationship. Hazel's mother and Melissa's father were both unfaithful in their marriages. For example, Melissa highlighted that she "… didn't understand, but they seemed to blame each other for a lot of their unhappiness. Blame was a language [she] heard all of the time" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 28). Sanford's uncle Stewart was single and never married.

Relationships with Siblings

The subjects overall displayed moderate to strong bonds with their siblings. However, their parent's crimes significantly affected their sibling relationships, causing their bonds to weaken or strengthen. Mae, Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford described having a strong relationship with their siblings. Mae described a protective and loving nature between siblings stating, "One

of us would try to take the blame and the beating that followed because, even if it wasn't true, we hoped it might save the others from being punished if one of us stepped forward and said we'd done it" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 70). However, Child Protective Services (CPS) took custody of and separated the four youngest siblings from the family. In addition, the aftermath of Mae's parent's crimes caused a separation between Mae and some of her siblings but also strengthened others.

Hazel and her siblings had tight bonds while they were younger and grew distant as her mother denied regular contact between her and the siblings, still living with her mother. The most notable example is when,

> Hazel asked Allan to give her away and he was proud as punch to say yes, but Dulcie belted him, taking a leather belt to his back. Then she banned the rest of Hazel's brothers and sister from the church service and they were all too scared to oppose her (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 80).

Although, before the trial, the siblings unified to testify against their mother and maintained a strong relationship after their mother's incarceration.

Melissa also described a strong bond between her and her siblings when she was younger. Although, as they grew up, Melissa and her siblings avoided being home and facing the wrath of their short-tempered stepfather. When they did, Melissa said it was "a rare treat for my siblings and I to spend the day together. Our lives had gone in multiple directions — all away from each other" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 76). Unlike Mae and Hazel, Melissa's relationship with her siblings did not regrow during her adult life.

Lastly, Sanford rarely mentioned his younger brothers during his childhood, so the strength of their relationship was unclear. However, Sanford and his older sister, Jessie, had a

tight bond. Similar to Mae and her siblings, Sanford and Jessie were loving and protective of one another. When Sanford moved to California with their uncle, he began sending letters that sounded suspicious which worried his sister. As a result, Jessie travelled to California to visit Sanford to remind him,

> You're my brother, Sang [Jessie's nickname for Sanford]. I love you. And I'm sorry if things have been bad for you here. I was never able to do anything about it before this. But I'm here now. Now I want you to tell me the truth and don't make me drag it out of you, either! (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 239).

Once Jessie finally pried the information out of Sanford about their uncle's cruel treatment, "Jessie had found somebody in the Canadian Immigration Authorities who had listened to her and sent a cable to the Immigration Office" in California to rescue Sanford (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 262). Once Sanford returned to Canada, Jessie and his bond grew significantly stronger as they worked together to build their new lives.

In comparison, Kerri and Albert did not describe their sibling bonds as strong but suggested a moderate relationship with their siblings. When Kerri described her childhood, she rarely mentioned her brother, which would imply that their relationship was insignificant. However, she did mention staying in touch and often visiting her brother while he was serving in the U.S. Navy. Like Mae's and Sanford's sibling relationships, Albert assumed the role of protecting his sisters. Although Albert did not describe a strong relationship with his sisters, he supported and cared for them. However, Alberts's approach was different from Mae and Sanford, as he protected his sisters from a distance. Albert's father had asked him to

> …carry [his] gun whenever [he'd] leave the house, and [he] can't let [his] sisters go anywhere alone. I don't want your sisters to be scared, and you've all got to go to school.

[He had] got to watch out for Lisa during lunch and breaks. Try not to let her notice, just keep an eye out" and Albert abided by his father's wishes (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 117). In addition, Albert and his father had kept their criminal lives separate to "…protect them [their family] from that knowledge [connection to the mafia]. Part of the task of keeping them safe in their ignorance now fell to me" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 77). Lastly, when Albert was in adulthood and was struggling with paranoia, he suggested that he "…would not let [his] mother or sisters come near [his] house for fear they would be killed" and by distancing himself from them was their "…only hope of safety" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 254).

Childhood Isolation

In order to control the subjects, many of the parents restricted their children's interactions with others and did not make connections in the community. Mae, Hazel, and Sanford were socially isolated by their parents and uncle, leaving weak or non-existent community ties. For instance, Mae, Hazel, and Sanford, the parents and uncle, avoided community ties to conceal the family's criminal activity. Mae described their family as "…a very private family. 'What happens in this house is our business and nobody else's!' Mum would say. We'd hardly ever have anyone but family round and it was up to Mum and Dad who came over the threshold" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 10). Mae also suggested that family privacy extended into the children's social lives, and therefore, the children did not have many friends and did not participate in community groups or activities.

Hazel's family also valued their privacy, and during her childhood, her mother ensured control by limiting their social contacts outside the family and spreading rumours to taint any possible relationships. Hazel insisted that in her early years, her mother "…needed to be in

control and keeping the children at home ensured that" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 25). Hazel also suggested their frequent moving and refusal to plant roots in a community was "…in case people got to know them. They were suspicious of everyone and kept changing their surname" in order to avoid being tracked (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 45).

Finally, while Sanford was living in California with his uncle, Sanford was isolated on the chicken ranch and did not have contact with anyone outside the property. Consequently, Sanford's only human interactions were with his uncle, his uncle's victims, and the odd visit from his grandparents. Sanford had no ties to the community and was isolated to the grounds of the chicken ranch. However, Uncle Stewart forced Sanford to send falsified letters home to his family, telling him, "Just let the folks know that you're all set up in California, going to school, attending Scout meetings, and even helping out good ol' Uncle Stewart with a little of the ranch work when there was time" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 69).

Community Ties

In contrast, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert participated in the community and built strong connections through local events and activities. Although Melissa was active in her town, her family did not have a particularly strong connection to the community. She stated that she "…did not have involved parents who would support school activities like PTA [Parent Teacher Association] or Girl Scouts" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 60). As discussed earlier, Melissa would avoid being at home by joining school activities such as dances or the public pool; she joined a youth church group and often stayed with a friend. To escape her adverse home life, she described having "one of two choices: either stay at home where [she] was a prisoner in [her]

bedroom so Robert [her stepfather] couldn't dominate [her] every movement or leave for the day" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 142).

Since an early age, Kerri and her family were highly active in the community, especially through their church. They attended church every Sunday, where her father was an usher and an assistant to the pastor, her mother was in the choir and had secretarial duties, and Kerri was an Acolyte. In addition, her father was a scout leader for her brother's troop, and Kerri participated in track and field events through her school. While in university, Kerri was invited to join a bible study group named "Campus Crusade". She described a typical weekend with the Campus Crusade with

> …gatherings for praise and worship and a talk on faith. On the weekends, we might build bonfires at Pottawatomie Lake, make s'mores, and sing worship songs. We'd wrap up Saturday nights with a late-night, or early-morning, breakfast at Village Inn and try hard to get up in time for church a few hours later (Rawson, 2019, p. 104).

The DeMeo family also had strong connections to the community, but these relationships were not built through joining clubs or other activities like Kerri and her family. Rather, Albert and his father were connected to the Gambino crime family and built many strong community ties through their association. When Albert was young and tagged along with his father to run errands, he explained,

> Everyone, it seemed, respected my father. I thought it was wonderful that everyone seemed to know my father and that they all wanted to give us gifts. I could tell my father was proud to have me see how much everyone seemed to like him (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 56).

Along with the respect and favours they received, Albert and his father were well-known and liked in the community. In addition to the illegal side of Albert and his father's lives, the family would host large parties for the neighbours. Albert described one of the parties his father held:

> The Fourth of July celebration we held that summer was the biggest we'd ever had….My father went all out that year to host the neighborhood celebration….Everyone drank Coke and beer and ate until they couldn't hold another bite, and the kids swam in the pool and ran around on the grass screaming and giggling….It took nearly an hour just to move the boxes of fireworks from the garage to the front lawn and get set up: There were rockets, flares, sparklers, everything you could imagine (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, pp. 85-86).

Religion

Faith was a consistently encouraged value among Melissa, Kerri, and Albert's families. The children regarded themselves as religious and discussed engaging in Christian practices and expressing their beliefs. Melissa, Kerri, and Albert belonged to different sectors of the Christian church but practiced religious traditions such as baptism and attending mass. Although Melissa's father did not identify with a religion, she and her mother demonstrated Christian values. Melissa described the families' contradicting beliefs by saying,

> Sometimes, Dad's way sounded more appealing — that this life was just a free-for-all, and we would not be accountable at the end of it. This was a complete contradiction to my mom's beliefs. Still strongly attached to her Catholic beliefs, my mother felt that we would be punished for every wrongdoing (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 156).

Even though Melissa identified with Christianity from a young age, she did not demonstrate a committed belief until she entered high school. Following her enlightenment in her teenage

years, she became a devout Christian and continued her faith into adulthood. When Melissa was confronted with her father's crimes, she turned to her faith to help overcome adversity.

As previously stated, Kerri and her family were active members in the Christian community and often had roles during the services. Kerri did have spans of disbelief and even stated, "I was hurting, lashing out at God, then feeling guilty for my anger…. I'd been trying to walk away from God and I thought I'd done it, but now he kept wrestling with me" (Rawson, 2019, p. 51). However, she rediscovered her faith during university and joined a school bible study group. She summarized her overall view of religion by saying,

> My faith had been built with a firm foundation by my parents and my grandparents, Sunday after Sunday at church as a child. It had taken terrible hits over the past five years, but now it was beginning to show me some hope (Rawson, 2019, p. 82).

Kerri continued a strong relationship with God into adulthood and used her faith to accept her father's dual life.

Albert and his siblings were raised in a religious environment, with his parents identifying with sectors in Christianity. Although his family was not traditionally present in the church, Albert described that his parents were Christians but no longer practiced their faith. He said, "Neither of them practiced their religion anymore, but they wanted us to grow up with a belief in God and good morals: conscientious, well mannered, honest, and respectful" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 14). As a result, Albert and his siblings attended Sunday school and underwent the transformation stages (Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation) to become a full member of the church. After Albert uncovered the dangers of his father's job, he was in constant fear that during one of his father's late-night "business dealings," he would be killed. During the hours of waiting for his father to return home, Albert would bargain with God and plead to have him be alive,

saying, “I would get better grades, stop swearing, help my mother more, anything God wanted if He would only protect my father” (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 77). However, Albert did not mention religion or Christian values while recounting his adult life.

Mae, Hazel, and Sanford did not identify with a religion or explicitly state being religious. Mae insisted that “[she’d] never been a particularly religious person, certainly not a devout Christian let alone a regular church-goer” (West & McKay, 2018, p. 186). Similarly, Hazel stated that “The Barons hadn’t been brought up a particularly religious family” (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 26). Sanford did not specifically mention religion, implying that he did not identify with a religion or viewed his religion as insignificant to his story.

Fear/Paranoia

A family value that was discovered among the subjects was a common fear of a specific group or type of person. Mae, Hazel, Melissa, Albert, and Sanford’s families feared authority figures such as police, social workers, and teachers. Mae and Hazel’s families’ fear of authority stemmed from the belief that they had the power to and would separate the family. Mae highlighted this fear by stating,

> There was always a threat, largely unspoken but sometimes quite explicit, that if any one of us children complained about any aspect of our home life to anyone–by reporting a beating, for example–we might be taken into care and the family would break up as a result. However bad things were at home, no child ever wants that (West & McKay, 2018, p. 75).

Similarly, Hazel’s family was taught to avoid speaking or interacting with anyone, with her mother saying, “Stay out of the way of the police, of the authorities, of the neighbours. Anything

to stay out of the way of anyone and everyone" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 26). In addition, the family feared providing the authorities with their legal identities and living situation to collect welfare. Rather than trusting the authorities, the family travelled around to find odd jobs and changed their names to ensure they were not being tracked.

While confiding in her councillor about her father's lack of boundaries when speaking about women, Melissa realized that the topic raised suspicion and

> the school could call the authorities. It dawned on [her] that if [she] told her everything, it could cause the breakup of [her] family. That thought was so unbearable, [she] didn't dare pursue the conversation any further, and [she] let it drop (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 136).

Following her disturbing conversation with the school counsellor, she did not discuss her father's uncomfortable stories about his dating life with other authority figures.

Although Albert and Sanford's families feared authority, their fear was derived from the knowledge of their parent's and uncles' crimes and the possibility of being implicated or separated. Albert described his realization of his father's criminal activity when he was ten years old, saying, "My father was a mobster. He was part of the Mafia. I was dizzy with fear….I lived in constant terror of losing my father" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, pp. 72-74). Albert's main concern was his father's death, but he also knew that law enforcement could take away his father by arresting him. Even though he never saw himself as a criminal, but as a son helping his father, Albert knew that he had been straddling the line of legality and was the police's next target. Before he went to bed, he said

> I mentally listed every crime I had ever committed. Speeding and carrying a concealed weapon, yes. Collecting packages for my father? Yes, probably a crime, for some of them

> had undoubtedly contained illicit cash or stolen property, though I never opened any of them. Aiding and abetting a felon? But my father hadn't been a felon at the time; he'd never even been charged. Failing to report crimes I had known about? Was that illegal? Did it make any difference that I was a minor during all of it? I didn't know. Drenched in fear, confusion, and guilt, I struggled to sort out the nature of my misdeeds (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 214).

Sanford's fear of law enforcement was similar to Albert's, as he knew that involuntary complying with his uncle's activities was considered illegal. Sanford recognized that his illegal status in the U.S. and the "filth" he participated in would send him to jail. His uncle Stewart also made sure to ingrain the horrific possibilities of what the police could do by threatening, "Best part is, you do it to yourself! So if the crooked cops don't kill you when they arrest you, the crooked prison warden does it later, real slow! It's as if they make you execute yourself! Ha-ha-ha! Hilarious, eh, Sanford?" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 236). Uncle Stewarts' fearful ideas about prison led Sanford to believe that if he got arrested, he said that he would expect "…to be thrown into prison, where he would languish as the sex toy of whatever psychopath ran the cellblock" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 284).

Melissa and Kerri's families were not particularly fearful of law enforcement or authority figures. Rather, they were taught to fear others and the potential of being victimized by a criminal. Melissa expressed that

> While I trusted my mother to provide us with food and shelter as best she could, I felt she could not provide for our safety from the terrors of the world. In my eyes, no one would mess with my father, unless they were ridiculously foolish (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 78),

and that her father's absence had left the family feeling vulnerable to potential harm. While Melissa and her family were already fearful without having their father at home to protect them, he made an effort to remind them of possible dangers, warning them, "too many sickos out there" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 111).

In a similar fashion, Kerri's family had a deep fascination for safety and security measures to protect themselves from victimization. She explained, "My dad repeatedly taught us to be fearful of strangers, not to open doors to people we didn't know, to be extremely cautious" (Rawson, 2019, p. 4). Kerri was especially affected by the family's fear of intruders, and it caused her to have frequent night terrors. She described her night terrors during childhood as,

> Half-awake, I'd often argue with her, sometimes belligerently, saying, 'There's a bad man in the house—in my room.' She would gently reassure me, 'No, you're dreaming, you're safe—go back to sleep.' I'd drift back off because my mom was right there and my dad was right across the hall—and he'd never, ever let anyone or anything hurt us (Rawson, 2019, p. 25)

As she got older, her fear of being a victim grew, and she explained,

> When I got home in the evenings, I checked my utility and bedroom closets plus the space behind open doors, and I even whipped the shower curtain back, making sure the apartment hadn't been inundated with bad guys. The night terrors I'd had since I was little grew into full-on haunting (Rawson, 2019, p. 111)

Role Expectations

The subject's families explained having specific values which shaped how they interacted and saw the world. The most commonly expressed values were built around gender roles,

education, inter-family affection, representation, and family. All but Melissa and Kerri's families exhibited a strong sense of gender roles. Mae explained that her father made a point of asserting, "'Making babies–it's what you're for,' he'd say. 'The more the merrier!'" and didn't have any further expectations for his daughters than having children and getting a job (West & McKay, 2018, p. 108). In fact, when Mae started her life away from her parents, she said, "I was keen to make the most of my new independent life, though. I learned to drive–something that infuriated Dad, who believed women were no more than baby machines" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 133).

Hazel's family also operated within gender roles stating her mother "never drank nor smoked nor swore, not even a bugger or bloody or shit. It was not appropriate for women to talk like that, she said" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 77). In addition, the men of the family were expected to have labour-intensive jobs, whereas the women were taught "womanly duties" such as cooking, baking, cleaning, and sewing. As for Albert, he insisted that,

> Neither my mother nor my sisters shared in the knowledge he began to impart to me. It was a man's thing, passed on from father to son. I started learning about guns when I was six. My father imparted these lessons as matter of fact as he taught me to build shelves or install decking (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 51).

Additionally, when his father was not around, and after his death, Albert took on the responsibility of protecting and caring for his family. Despite only being fifteen years old, he repeatedly emphasized his role in the family by reminding himself, "Stay strong, act like a man, don't let them see what you're feeling" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 182).

Lastly, Sanford's family demonstrated heavy gender roles even though they were not explicitly stated. For example, his uncle suggested, "Any normal boy loves adventure. Once any real boy gets out onto the road, you know, with the wind in his hair, it's only natural for that boy

to want to keep on traveling as far as he can" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 15). Sanford also highlighted the discrepancies between his mother's treatment of her children by saying,

> Jessie also understood that throughout the years in her family house, her gender had protected her from activating the same levels of craziness in Winnie that Sanford and their father did—and which young Kenneth and the youngest, Eddie, were likely to do when they got older (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 63).

Melissa and Kerri's families did not mention having any overshadowing gender roles. Melissa did not discuss any tones of gender roles, but Kerri recalled being praised by her father, saying, "That's my tomboy!" (Rawson, 2019, p. 23). Even when Kerri got older and was in university, she explained, "I was glad Dad had never considered me a girl. I much preferred going along with the guys instead of spending a week in malls, even though going along with Dad meant sleeping on rocks" (Rawson, 2019, p. 58). Although she was her parent's only girl, rather than forcing her to participate in more "girly" activities, they accepted that she enjoyed being physically active and being around the boys in her family.

Role of Education

All subjects' families except Kerri and Albert did not value education. Mae, for example, confided that her "Mum and Dad would insist on me leaving school as soon as I was sixteen and wasn't legally required to attend…despite this, I did the best I could and was always anxious to show how seriously I took my schoolwork" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 76). Similar to Mae, Melissa's family did not care for the children's education, but she was determined to attend college and make a better life for herself. Melissa revealed that "graduating from high school was the light at the end of the tunnel for me….Over the last two years of high school, I saw my

siblings drop out of school, and I vowed to continue to the last day: graduation" (Moore & Cook, 2015, pp. 254-255). Despite Mae and Melissa's family's lack of attention towards their education, they got good grades and valued their school work.

Hazel and Sanford attended school until their parent or uncle moved locations, and they were not transferred to new schools despite not legally being allowed to drop out. At the time both subjects were removed from school to work, Hazel was 14 years old, and Sanford was 13 years old. Hazel and Sanford's families did not value the traditional education taught in schools. Rather they valued money and work experience. Hazel explained that their family was "rarely in one place long enough for the children to go to school again and anyway" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 45). When Sanford moved to California, his uncle did not register him for school so he could work on the chicken ranch full-time. However, Uncle Stewart forced Sanford to write letters to his parents saying, "Let the folks know that you're all set up in California, going to school" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 69).

Finally, Kerri and Albert's families were the only subjects that valued education. Kerri's father had an associate's degree in electronics and a bachelor's degree in administrative justice. As a result, Kerri's family expected their children to become successful adults through education. Kerri was an intelligent and active teenager, as she said,

> I was sixteen years old, a junior at Wichita Heights High School, where I switched between honors classes every fifty minutes. After school, I played golf in the fall and ran track in the spring. Some Saturdays, I would compete with my scholar's bowl team, and on Sundays, I worked an afternoon shift, often by myself, at Snacks (Rawson, 2019, p. 32).

When Kerri was getting overwhelmed by her extracurriculars she quit some of her activities to which her father said “That’s all right, kiddo. Your studies are more important” (Rawson, 2019, p. 34). However, as a college student, Kerri was on the pre-vet track and was struggling academically. She described, “I’d been a good student in high school, excelling even in the hardest classes offered. Now, midsemester, I floundered. I skipped classes, slept in till noon, crammed late into the night before tests” (Rawson, 2019, p. 52). Her parents pushed her to complete her schooling, and she graduated from Kanas State University in 2001 with a bachelor’s degree and in 2003 with a degree in education.

Similarly, Albert’s family highly valued education. Even though his parents were not successful through traditional standards, they wanted their children to succeed without following their parents’ paths. Albert described himself as “a model student, always on time and prepared” (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 141). While accompanying his father whenever he could, his father made it clear that school should be his main priority. Albert explained,

> I did well in my classes because my father remained a stickler about homework and school participation. Even when he needed my help, he would wait for a weekend or vacation before involving me. I was never allowed to cut class. It was a strict family rule” (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 140)

Albert graduated from high school, attended St. John’s University to study business and worked on Wall Street during the summers until he graduated from college and became a full-time stockbroker.

Love and Affection

Kerri and Albert were the only subjects whose families provided consistent love and affection. Kerri and Albert described the father they knew and lived with as loving and caring people. When Kerri was first informed about her father's arrest, she sent him a letter saying, "You are my father and I love you. You raised me and Brian as well as any man could, you took care of us, protected us, taught us so much about life and the things in it" (Rawson, 2019, p. 183). Similarly, Albert described his father in a similar light by saying, "The father I knew was tender, warm, a man who nurtured the lives of animals and children alike" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 99).

In contrast, Mae, Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford described not receiving love from their parents or uncle despite longing for their affection. Mae suggested that even though she knew it wasn't rational, "…the things our parents had done to us–the beatings and abuse–we still deep down, even as adults, wanted to be loved by them and to love them in return" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 171). In addition, Hazel remained unaffected by her mother's lack of affection, saying, "She would always go and visit Dulcie, never expecting any sign of affection from the woman she had long ceased calling mother. She was never disappointed" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 78). In Melissa's case, she described her father as an affectionate person. However, her father was rarely present in her life. Melissa's mother was the most active parent in her life, she expressed, "My mother's side of the family didn't hug, greet one another with enthusiasm, or say 'I love you.' It just was the way it was, and although they cared about one another deeply, their circumstances growing up reinforced this dynamic" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 65). Finally, Sanford did not explicitly state if his uncle was affectionate, but he implied, "He surely did not love him, but he had to keep him alive anyway" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 97).

Outward Presentation of Family Values

For many of the subjects' families, the presentation was a significant value that all family members expected to uphold. Mae, Hazel, Albert, and Sanford's families valued how they presented themselves, such as their appearance and attitude, to others in the community. Albert's family's importance of representation differed from the others as his family's motivation was derived from wanting them to be good people. Albert discussed that his parents wanted them to "Grow up with a belief in God and good morals: conscientious, well mannered, honest, and respectful" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 14). Correspondingly, his family was expected to possess these values and inherit these principles in their daily life. For example, Albert discussed his father "…taught me to have respect for older people; he told me that they were living history books, full of wisdom" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 59).

In contrast, Mae, Hazel, and Sanford's family's significance for presenting themselves were motivated by creating a positive image to avoid unwanted attention. While reflecting on her childhood, Mae explained,

> Despite her emotional and physical violence towards us, she did look after us well in certain practical ways. She made sure we were properly fed. We were regularly bathed and well-scrubbed and our clothes were always clean even if they were often hand-me-downs. She took particular care to make sure we were well turned out for school….I used to think it was simply a matter of pride for her – that she didn't want to be seen as a bad mother. Now it seems more likely it was because she didn't want the school, or anyone else for that matter, to ask any awkward questions about how we were being brought up at home (West & McKay, 2018, p. 74).

Similarly, Hazel described that her and,

> …the others were belted by her if they spoke out of turn to anyone outside the family. Not in front of other people of course, as Dulcie never let reality get in the way of their image. She always had the kids as neatly dressed and as clean as possible (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 45).

Sanford's uncle also required him to look clean and presentable as he would yell,

> Sanford! You can go ahead and get some sleep tonight, but as soon as you get up I want you to draw enough water from the well to get thoroughly bathed. Do it before you start breakfast, even. I want you in presentable condition (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 50).

Uncle Stewart's orders to clean himself were often accompanied by his grandmother coming for a visit, and wanted to alleviate any suspicion as to what was occurring at the ranch.

As for Melissa and Kerri, their families did not emphasize how they presented themselves to others. As Melissa's family struggled to make ends meet, looking presentable was not viewed as a priority in the family. Despite the other subjects suggesting an emphasis on the way they presented themselves to others, Melissa did not imply any significance in her family's appearance. Likewise, Kerri's description of her family also did not signify the importance of their presentation.

Importance of Family

The last family value highlighted through the subjects' stories was the importance of family. Mae, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert described having their family as a priority. As Mae had stated,

> Both of them had grown up with a strong sense that family was important and they had brought us children up to feel the same way. My siblings and I all came to believe that, however strange and distressing things might be within the four walls of our house, we needed to stick together – especially if our family came under threat from the outside world" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 96).

Even though Melissa may not have had a familial bond as strong as the West's, she assured that when her mother and father had divorced, her mother and siblings' relationship was important. Melissa stated that her mother was the one who tried to keep the family together by saying, "My home life was hell, but my mother did everything she could to keep our little ragtag family together" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 250).

Although Kerri's family did not explicitly express the importance of family, it was evident that her family shared a tight bond and relied on each other. When Kerri's father was arrested, the family asked him to plead guilty to salvage the family's emotions, to which he agreed and replied in a letter, "I wanted Mom out of harm from the onset. I cooperated with the police, I cooperated with the court, to save taxpayers millions and family wishes on plea" (Rawson, 2019, p. 253). Additionally, her family supported each other physically, emotionally, and financially, helping each other whenever needed. In one instance, Kerri described being ill, and her parents travelled from Kanas to Detroit to help her saying, "My parents helped me, bringing boxes of food to stretch my grocery budget and making sure I could cover rent" (Rawson, 2019, p. 113).

The DeMeos were highly family oriented and expected to care for each other. His mother and sisters' contributions to the family were different from Albert's and his father's but were nonetheless important to the family. Although Albert and his father were highly active in the

Gambino crime family, their family remained a main priority. As a result, Albert and his father separated their "at-home life" and "mobster life" to protect their family from their criminal activity. Albert described that his mother "dedicated her life to creating a safe, happy home for us" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 130), while he and his father were responsible for protecting the family. When Alberts's father died, that burden was passed down to him with his father's final command saying, "'Take care of the family, Al. Take care of your mother and sisters.' It was the only thing left I could do for him. I was not going to fail him" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 181).

In comparison, Hazel and Sanford's families had little regard for the value of family. Hazel highlighted her mother's care for her family by explaining, "Being family meant nothing to her — she had walked out on four children and got rid of another four" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 101). She also added, "It seemed to Hazel that Dulcie always felt there was something better, as evidenced by the way she had discarded her first two husbands," both of whom she had children with" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 80). Similarly, Sanford's uncle was self-centred and did not value family unless he could benefit from them. Sanford recognized that despite his uncle's beatings, he needed him to work on the ranch and killing him would be irresponsible. Sanford insisted that "He had Uncle Stewart up his sleeve, therefore. He surely did not love him, but he had to keep him alive anyway" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 97).

Interactions With Groups

As a result of their parent's crimes, the subjects encountered groups related to the apprehension and prosecution of a criminal. The study evaluated how the subjects perceived their interactions with law enforcement, the media and journalists, the legal system, and the community in relation to their parent's crimes.

Negative Interactions with Police

When the police first arrived at Mae's house, she and her siblings were interviewed separately. During her conversation with the officer, she explained, "I remember them being very cold with us, as if they thought we knew more than we were saying. They were treating us as suspects. It made me angry as well as confused" (West & McKay, 2018, pp. 160-161). After Mae's father was arrested, the police acknowledged the large media presence. In addition to their home being a crime scene, the family could no longer live in the home and were temporarily placed in a safe house. Mae and her mother took refuge in a series of safe houses until her mother was arrested. When her mother was arrested, the officers immediately told Mae that she could no longer stay at the safe house and had to vacate by the end of the day. Mae stated,

> I didn't understand what they thought had changed that day for me to no longer need protection from the press. Afterwards, when they admitted to us that the house had been bugged, I realised it was because they had what they needed: I'd been interviewing Mum for them and now my job was over, I wasn't needed any longer (West & McKay, 2018, p. 13).

Despite her home being seized by police and told it would likely not be released anytime soon, Mae did not have anywhere else to stay. When she asked what she should do, the police replied, "Sorry, love, can't help you with that. I'm afraid you're no longer our responsibility" (West & McKay, 2018, p.13). As a result, Mae insisted that she had a negative interaction with law enforcement.

Albert's experience with law enforcement was especially unique due to his father's status as a member of the Gambino crime family. Nonetheless, his frequent encounters were described as negative as he explained, "To them I wasn't a teenager or even a human being; I was just the

mobster's son, and I was treated accordingly" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 193). Unlike the other subjects, Albert's first interaction with law enforcement was with the police notifying the family about his father's death. Albert described six police officers aggressively shoving themselves through the door past him recalling,

> 'Roy's dead, Gina,' one of the detectives said. I flinched at the familiarity with which they spoke to my mother. 'We found his body in the trunk of his car.' There was no attempt to soften the blow. I had the sense they were hitting as hard as they could in hopes of shocking my mother into revealing something (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 173).

As Albert was grieving for his father, the police had him under constant surveillance. He explained, "With my father gone, I thought the surveillance on our family would fade away. Instead it shifted focus, from my father to me. Every time I left the house, someone followed me" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 210). Additionally, the police tormented Albert with false traffic violations, and he described,

> The psychological war with the government I had been drafted into escalated steadily….a series of odd incidents began occurring. They began with my car radio, stolen from the parking lot….one morning to discover that my speedboat cover had been taken while the boat was moored to the floating dock out back. And finally, on the morning I was scheduled to testify, I went out to the driveway to find all four tires of my car flat….All of these incidents had taken place while government cars surveyed me continually (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, pp. 224-225).

With the poor treatment and harassment by the police, Albert asserted that he had a negative experience with law enforcement.

Positive Interactions with Police

In contrast, Hazel, Kerri, and Sanford expressed that their overall experience with the police was positive. At first, Hazel, Kerri, and Sanford believed they would be or had a negative experience during their initial contact with the police. Despite her reservations, Hazel was the only subject in the study that initiated contact with the authorities by alerting them about her mother's crimes. However, she knew that to stop her mother from harming others, Hazel would need to alert the authorities and risk being labelled as delusional or mentally unstable. "They might even have Hazel declared mental if they thought she was telling such dreadful 'lies' about poor Dulcie" she asserted, and when she mentioned her mother not being imprisoned for killing her father to a doctor, he suggested, "I could have you committed for such serious accusations" and threatened to send her to a mental asylum (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, pp. 100, 109). Despite Hazel's initial reluctance to confide in law enforcement, she described her interaction as positive and trustworthy. In her book, Hazel discussed having the most contact with two officers, Ray Kelly and Del Fricker, saying, "Hazel and Kelly hit it off immediately" and "Hazel knew she needed someone to rely on and her trust in Del Fricker was not misplaced. Del quickly became Hazel's rock. She guided her through what was going to happen and told her about court etiquette, but most importantly she kept Hazel calm and boosted her confidence, giving her the courage to keep getting into that witness box" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, pp. 106, 148).

Interactions with Legal Council

Sanford described having a similar experience as his uncle convinced him that he was as culpable for the crimes, and if the police discovered his involvement, Sanford would endure further abuse while incarcerated. Correspondingly, when Sanford was first introduced to the

police, he feared incarceration and did not fully cooperate. When Sanford was arrested, he was originally housed in a private room in the hospital ward of a prison. However, the district attorney, Mr. Kelley, as Sanford referred to him, mentioned moving Sanford into the general area of the prison. At this point, Sanford began providing more details about the crimes and pleaded with Mr. Kelley to let him stay in his room, saying, "If you let them put it on me, I can't run from the big guys. They'll start the bleeding again" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 268). Once Sanford opened up with Mr. Kelley, he had an instant connection, saying, "Mr. Kelley's kindness and tolerance were wonderful things", something that he has not experienced (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 284). In his book, Sanford acknowledged and appreciated his positive interaction by referring to Mr. Kelley as his "guardian angel". (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 286).

Response to Arrest

Kerri's expressed her first encounter with the police as a negative and traumatic experience. Kerri was confronted by an FBI agent at her apartment who disclosed that her father had been arrested and they believed he was a serial murderer. Kerri explained that her initial interaction with law enforcement acted as "a vivid, detailed loop circled from the first day. It lasted for minutes, and I stared off into nowhere as it flashed. As my mind replayed it, I felt fear again—physically, like it was happening over and over, my chest seizing each time" (Rawson, 2019, p. 158). Kerri's declared the police's disclosure of her father's crimes was as a traumatic experience in which she developed PTSD-related symptoms. However, the trauma response to her father's arrest was only demonstrated in her case, while Mae, who was physically present at both her mother's and father's arrest, did not disclose similar trauma.

Furthermore, Kerri revealed feeling used by the FBI, stating, "Now I felt that the police had used me. They had accessed my private medical records without my permission" to compare her DNA to the samples found at the crime scenes (Rawson, 2019, p. 193). Kerri had lost her faith in law enforcement and developed an intense fear of authority figures in uniform. Eventually, though, she recognized that the anger she held at the police was unfounded, saying, "I needed to forgive them for taking away my father; it was their job and they had done it well. He deserved to go away—forever. That was on him, not them" (Rawson, 2019, p. 223). Despite her strong feelings against the police when she was notified of her father's arrest, she realized that the police had treated her and her family with sympathy and respect. Melissa was the only subject who did not have contact or interact with the police as a result of her father's arrest.

Issues with Privacy and Revictimization Through Media Exposure

Mae, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert described being negatively impacted by the media's broadcasting and fascination with their parent's case. In Mae's case, she explained that the media had a significant effect on her daily life, saying,

> …we couldn't pretend it wasn't happening–it was being described as the 'Trial of the Century' and was being covered extensively in the papers and on TV news, and in any case, we had a massive personal interest in the outcome, so we ended up following it through the media as closely as it seemed the whole nation was doing (West & McKay, 2018, p. 195).

The police initially protected the family from the media by placing Mae and her mother in a safe house. Despite the media's persistence, law enforcement revoked their protection when Mae's mother was arrested, and she was responsible for fending off the reporters herself. She described

being approached by media organizations multiple times, saying, “The News of the World [media organization] pursued me, wanting a story, but the last thing I needed was that kind of attention. All I wanted was to keep out of the public eye and focus on my life with Amy [her child]” (West & McKay, 2018, p. 249). Eventually, Mae and her brother Stephen signed a contract with “The News of the World” to tell their story, and in return, the journalists protected the family from being harassed by other news organizations. However, “The News of the World” could not fully protect the family from other media teams. For example, information about Mae’s father’s funeral ceremony was leaked. When the family went to attend, she said, “I was warned there were reporters already gathered outside the crematorium gates” (West & McKay, 2018, p. 180). In an attempt to evade the media harassment, Mae and her sister Tara moved, saying, “Tara and I were totally alone in that town but at least it meant we had a chance of escaping the media attention” (West & McKay, 2018, p. 3). Additionally, Mae was upset with the misinformation and assumptions made in media reports. In one instance, Mae described,

> As I grew older, I became more and more aware that our family wasn’t normal, which is why I find it hard when people suggest, as some who have written about our family have, that it can’t have been that bad for me and my siblings because our parents were abusers and we hadn’t really known any other life (West & McKay, 2018, p. 79).

As a result, Mae did not have the opportunity to grieve the loss of her parents as she was constantly physically and socially burdened by media organizations.

Melissa did not personally have contact with the media but asserted that the reports on her father on various platforms had a significant impact on her. Melissa’s first interaction with reports on her father’s crimes was when she visited the local library to look at the newspapers. As her family refused to discuss her father anymore, the news was the only source of information

about her father and his crimes. When reading an article about her father, one of the victim's sisters was interviewed and was quoted "She stated that my dad was a monster and should be killed" in the newspaper (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 195). Although she believed that was an awful statement, hearing the pain her father caused and how they talked about him took an emotional toll on Melissa. During her father's trial and his newfound celebrity status, she explained,

> I felt an intense amount of shame about my father's behavior and the media circus he was creating with the press. Because we lived far enough away from Yakima, Portland, and most of Dad's stomping grounds, not too many people knew that he was my father. After the things I had been seeing and reading about, I began to have an intense fear of being connected with him (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 236).

Furthermore, Melissa described an instance where a series on her father was airing on the TV at her friend's house. She detailed the situation by saying,

> Fascinated, Stephanie and her mother stopped what they were doing to watch the coverage. I was so embarrassed and humiliated. I thought they knew. I began to tremble. The secrets I kept in the dark hole deep inside me—all the shame and guilt—had been called out by the national news anchor. They were going to ask me about him; they were going to judge me based on my father (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 241).

The continuous media coverage of her father was stressful for Melissa as she believed that people would be able to connect her to her father and that her identity as "the daughter of a serial killer" was being broadcasted without permission.

The media's negative impact on Kerri's life was heavily emphasized in her book. She discussed the adverse experiences related to the physical and digital harassment of her family

after her father's arrest. During Kerri's first interaction with law enforcement, the FBI warned her to be prepared for the media presence saying,

> The media is going to start showing up tomorrow or Sunday. Your family is going to need to be careful. Start making some decisions now—where you will be staying, with whom if you are going to talk to anyone or not, what you're going to say (Rawson, 2019, p. 148).

Shortly after the warning from the police, she explained, "Darian looked through the peephole and saw two local TV reporters standing in our hallway with a cameraman. The camera light was already on. They were already recording—waiting for someone to open the door" (Rawson, 2019, p. 160).

Compared to the other subjects, Kerri discussed the media's presence as having a greater interference in her life. She described that when her father was arrested, the media intruded on her life, saying,

> More news trucks were parked outside our apartment, and one followed Darian, who kept swinging Michigan lefts to shake it. Reporters showed up at his office, and his co-workers would answer the door for him. Reporters were calling him at his job and on his cell too: 'I'm so-and-so, from so-and-so, and I would really like to speak with your wife. Do you know how we can contact her? Do you know where she is?' (Rawson, 2019, p. 176).

Kerri insisted that the media's burden was exceptionally stressful, describing, "The media was hounding my family, making us feel as if we had done something wrong" (Rawson, 2019, p. 193). When the media began to lift their pressure on Kerri, she continued saying that

> The news trucks were gone, but the media would still try to contact us. I came home one day to find an envelope duct-taped to my door, with the words National Enquirer scribbled on the outside— Everyone from Oprah to Larry King was asking for an interview, and I told everyone no. So did Mom—a united front of solidarity (Rawson, 2019, pp. 184-185).

Unlike Mae's experience with the media and police, the police in Kerri's case were consistent in their desire to help protect Kerri's family from the media. At the height of what Kerri described as a media circus, she extended her appreciation by stating, "The chief told the reporters and the camera operators and the news trucks they couldn't be on private property or in private buildings, and then stationed a local police officer outside our building" (Rawson, 2019, p. 161).

Role of False Reports

In addition, the media reports contained false information about Kerri and her family, which compounded her stress. She was angry with the media, recalling, "At the bottom was an article about the daughter of BTK and her husband, who had two children and lived in the Metro Detroit area" and "The media was reporting I turned you [her father] in. That's not true" (Rawson, 2019, pp. 159; 182). Despite this information being published, Kerri was shocked to hear the false reports as she did not have any children and did not help the police during their investigation of her father.

Albert's experience with the media was similar to that of Melissa's. Although he had limited interaction with the media directly, he suggested he was negatively impacted by the media's interest in his father. Despite his father's status and the public knowledge of his father's connection to the Italian mafia, his father was rarely mentioned in the media. However, the

media's fascination with the downfall of organized crime in New York highlighted his father's case. Albert described witnessing a televised news report which said, "'Reputed mobster Roy DeMeo found murdered….'" followed by a "…photograph in the paper of my father's frozen body in the trunk of our car, a crystal chandelier resting on top of him like a bizarre monument" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 190). As Albert had promised his father, he tried to protect his mother and sisters from their secret life, but the media's broadcasting of his father made the secret more difficult to contain. Years later, Albert mentioned that a book was published and gained attention from his peers, describing,

> The book was titled Murder Machine: A True Story of Madness and the Mafia. According to the advertising blurb, it was based on revelations from my father's old crew….My father's name was emblazoned on the cover and included on nearly every page of the text (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 243).

Similar to Kerri's experience, Albert also highlighted the frustration and anger resulting from inaccurate information. He insisted that "I read detailed descriptions of events that were grossly inaccurate, events that I had witnessed firsthand. A number of these "factual accounts" were completely untrue" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 244). In addition, Albert explained that the book presented his father in an inaccurate and disrespectful image. He stated that

> What enraged me beyond words, beyond my ability to contain it, was the book's depiction of my father. In the words of Capeci, my father had been transformed into a cowardly, hulking creature who killed for pleasure and groveled in sensory pleasure: a fat, drunken beast devoid of remorse, incapable of compassion, a preevolutionary monstrosity (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 244-245).

The Effect of Timing and Media

Finally, Hazel and Sanford had limited interactions with the media and described their experience as insignificant. Both subjects did not suggest emotion while discussing their interactions with media. Rather, they stated the interaction as a part of their story. One significant difference between Hazel and Sanford compared to the other subjects was that the arrest of their mother and uncle respectively occurred when news outlets were not as prevalent. As Hazel's mother's arrest took place in 1964 and Sanford's uncles in 1928, the periods did not have the rapid broadcasting power of contemporary technology present in the other subjects' cases. Therefore, the lack of modern mass media may influence Hazel and Sanford's interaction with the media and its indifferent effect.

Hazel described seeing a newspaper during her mother's trial, "The photographs of Dulcie and Harry made it onto the front pages of that afternoon's newspapers. Hazel had to confront these shots as she and Bill drove along Crown Street" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p.143).

When Sanford was in adulthood, a murder occurred in his community, and he feared that the news would uncover his past. However, he stated, "The local murder case came and went, and nobody in the news media ever named him or tried to interview him. There was no public mention of the Wineville murders" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 325).

Experience with Trial

As a result, Mae, Hazel, Kerri, and Albert discussed having negative interactions with their respective legal systems. Mae explained that with her mother's trial, "It was hard to know how this evidence was going down in court, not being there myself" and believed that "If she

were convicted, it would somehow be my fault" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 220). During her mother's trial, Mae was pregnant with her first child. She highlighted the contradictive traditions of a mother-daughter relationship stating, "Far from receiving the kind of emotional support many daughters receive from their mothers when they are expecting a child, I would have to be the one giving support to her" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 187). Mae stated that the trial caused her severe stress, saying,

> I wasn't interested. I didn't want to eat. I couldn't relax. I found it very difficult to sleep….I just wanted the whole thing to be over and for her to be found not guilty so that I could try to move on and focus on the baby I was due to have in only eight weeks' time (West & McKay, 2018, p. 226).

Like many of the subjects, the details of Mae's mothers' crimes were unknown until the trial. She described, "I felt wretched for the relatives of the victims who, like me, were also hearing some of these details for the first time" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 211).

Similar to Mae, Kerri did not attend the trial hearings saying, "I should've showed up at court and sat behind him, been there for him. But I was afraid. And I was ashamed I didn't have the strength or courage" (Rawson, 2019, p. 205). However, like Mae, Kerri claimed, "he was still my father, and while continuing to be torn apart inside, I quietly tried to support the man I knew through his arraignment and trial" (Rawson, 2019, p. 205). Additionally, Kerri discovered the details of her father's crimes during her father's trial

> We knew the guilty plea was coming. But we didn't know my dad would be asked by the judge to describe the murders to the court. I don't think my dad knew either. I didn't watch it live. Instead, I watched a few short clips of my dad speaking and read through the court transcript posted online. That's all I could handle. Along with the rest of the

> world, on the day my dad pleaded guilty, I learned many horrific details about his crimes (Rawson, 2019, p. 244).

Experience of Providing Testimony

Significantly, in Hazel, Albert, and Sanford's cases, the subjects testified in the trials regarding their parents and uncle. Hazel explained that she had "…to face her mother six times in the courtroom — three times to give evidence at committal proceedings to determine if there was enough evidence to send Dulcie to trial, and then three more times during the trials" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 145). Like Mae, Hazel was pregnant at the time of the trial and, unfortunately, had an unusual miscarriage six months into her pregnancy. Hazel explained that she "…knew why she had lost her baby. She put it down to the stress and panic of realising that she was going to have to face her mother in the not too distant future and stand up to her in public" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 143). During the first few testimonies, she explained that she "…was terrified, exhilarated and nauseated, all at once" but following her first testimony, she began to feel more confident (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 10). However, she emphasized that the defence attorney's demeanour on her mother's case "…made her feel that she was the one on trial" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 144).

Despite Hazel's mother being found guilty of three murders, Hazel explained that multiple errors and, in her perspective, poor judgment led to her mother being acquitted of two of the murders. She described that at the trial for the death of her father,

> Justice Simon Isaacs had realised after the trial for the murder of Ted Baron that he had made a mistake in his instructions to the jury. The Court of Criminal Appeal said as much

> in its judgment that quashed the Bodsworths' convictions and ordered the couple face a new trial (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 181).

As a result, Hazel's mother was only sentenced to one count of manslaughter and one count of first-degree murder following the three first-degree murder charges. Hazel was said to be "…furious. What had happened to life behind bars?….She had done the right thing going to the police but the justice system had let her down, let her father down" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 186). Finally, she explained, "It had taken almost three years and the court saga was almost over" and Hazel believed that she would not have to worry about her mother anymore (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 201).

Albert also testified concerning his father's crimes and death. However, Albert's case differed from the other subjects as the trial took place after his father's death, and therefore, the trial was not an attempt to indict him. Rather Albert was subpoenaed to provide information regarding his father's, his father's crews, and the Gambino family's crimes. Although Albert was not yet 18 years old, and therefore could not be subpoenaed and could only talk to law enforcement voluntarily. He discussed his interactions with the legal system by illustrating that,

> In the weeks following my father's murder, they did everything they could to force me to work with them. They couldn't subpoena me, since I was still under age. But they could call me in for 'just a few more questions' about my father's death. When I left the house, they followed me, and when veiled threats didn't work, they tried sympathizing with me about my 'poor murdered father' (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 205).

Despite the legal system's ploys to incriminate Albert, he stated, "I'd watched the legal system talk out of both sides of its mouth all my life" and did not fall for their tactics (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 211).

Following years of harassment by the legal system with surveillance and multiple subpoenas, Albert was summoned to court to testify about his father's activity in organized crime. He described the prosecutor's heartless behaviour while he was on the stand by explaining,

> The clerk glanced at Mack [the district attorney], who nodded slightly and continued speaking as the clerk began laying other photos in a semicircle around the smiling snapshots of me and my dad. These were crime scene photos taken at the time of my father's murder. There were about a dozen of them, taken at various angles while he lay contorted in his own blood in the trunk of our car. There were close-ups of his face and hands, where the bullets had penetrate (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 227).

After the head prosecutor realized that Albert was not going to provide or did not know as much information relating to his father as they thought, he said,

> Prosecutors kept me on the stand all day, repeating my previous testimony, but when they finally excused me, they did so without warnings or innuendoes. After conferring with all parties involved, Greg [his lawyer] told me that my long legal ordeal seemed to finally be over. The prosecution had no plans to subpoena me again (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 238).

Sanford described having mixed feelings about his interaction with the legal system. His experience with the legal system was also unique as he was forced to testify as his uncle and his abuser (Uncle Stewart) represented himself in court. As the victim of his uncle's sexual and physical violence, Sanford was fear stricken when he provided his "…testimony in open court under direct examination by Uncle Stewart went through that first day and stretched into a second" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 277). However, Sanford felt grateful and "saved" with his legal result saying,

> It was a privilege to be in this program, and Sanford was grateful. He had expected to be thrown into a prison, where he would languish as the sex toy of whatever psychopath ran the cellblock. Anything better than that was a gift. This, however, was more than he could have dreamed (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 284).

Finally, Melissa did not encounter or express feelings toward the legal system and therefore was not included in this section.

Community Reaction

Hazel, Kerri, and Sanford initially hesitated with socializing but ultimately depicted their interactions with the community as positive. In Hazel's case, she recognized that her mother was well-known in the community and would therefore be identified as her daughter. Before her mother's trial, she described an event where she was

> In the café, Shirley [her friend] tried to deflect attention from Hazel when the locals came in to buy the papers because, by then, people had figured out that the police were looking for Hazel's mother, the woman who had at one time or another cooked most of them a meal at the Court House Hotel (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 121-122).

Hazel's premature expectation of the community to be disgusted with her connection to her mother was fortunately incorrect as she stated, "They had been away for almost a year, and everyone in town was very welcoming on their return" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 112). Moreover, Hazel and her family did not endure adverse experiences related to her serial killer mother and effortlessly reintegrated into society. Although Hazel's experience with the community was not drastically different from the other subjects, it is important to consider

Hazel's involvement in arresting her mother. Hazel's effort to get justice and alert the authorities about her mother may have influenced the community's perception of her and her family.

Kerri was profoundly affected by self-inflicted stigmatization and the anticipated backlash from the community in relation to her father's crimes. She was fixated on what the community thought of her or would recognize her as the daughter of a serial murderer. She detailed her thoughts during one of her first interactions in a social setting by stating, "…all of them unaware the daughter of a serial killer was among them. What if someone knows who I am? Who I belong to?" (Rawson, 2019, pp. 166-167). Like many other subjects, Kerri did not experience a negative interaction with the community personally, but she did notice how her family was the center of attention. After her father's arrest, she recalled her family home became a monument for gossiping neighbours to watch the collapse of a broken family, stating, "The street I grew up on was swarming with sightseers, and the Park City police were trying to keep folks from helping themselves to my parents' mailbox or whatever else they fancied from our yard" (Rawson, 2019, p. 156).

Despite the public fascination with serial killers and the ongoing tragedy of the Radar family, Kerri described the community as shockingly accepting. When the news of Kerri's father's arrest reached her local news, her neighbours and friends were supportive. For example, Kerri wrote, "Our neighbors across the hall left a nice note on our door, offering to pick up groceries for us" as the media's stalking prevented them from leaving the house to shop (Rawson, 2019, p. 161). When Kerri shared her connection to her father with her church group, the congregation supported her and even labelled her "an unlikely hero" (Rawson, 2019, p. 318).

Like the other subjects, Sanford's disgust in himself was projected onto what he believed society would view him after they discovered what happened on the ranch. He reflected on his acts and his future by saying,

> But one thing for sure, they were going to talk and talk and talk and then they were going to hate you because that's what good people do to perverts. And now Uncle Stewart had turned him into a stinking pervert himself (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 80).

With Sanford's fear of others knowing his status, he figured,

> …he had two main hurdles to clear. The first was going to be people's reaction to him back home since everybody had to know all about the case. He could only deal with that according to how they responded to him. If he got past the initial encounters, he figured that they would get used to having him around after a while (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 291).

Despite his reservations with the community and fear of being stigmatized, Sanford was well-accepted by the town when he returned to Saskatchewan. While trying to confess his sins from the ranch, his soon-to-be wife admitted that the community knew about his past, saying, "'People—Sanford, they're good and they're kind and they want to give you a chance at life'" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 300).

Mae and Melissa also experienced self-inflicted stigmatization, which they projected onto community members. However, these subjects described having mixed interactions with their community. Mae acknowledged the community and the world's attention was on her family, saying, "The wider public–understandably–has remained both repelled and fascinated by them, struggling to make sense of them even with the advantage of looking at the story from the

perspective of outsiders" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 15). After her parent's arrest, she admitted feeling alone and wrote,

> Although I had committed no crime I felt like a criminal on the run, living in a series of flats and houses, hoping no one would find out who I was, with really only Tara [her sister] for moral support….I could see no hope of finding the kind of normal relationship most people have (West & McKay, 2018, p. 183).

Mae emphasized, "We were desperate to hang onto as much privacy as we could. We barely went out" but when she did out for necessary reasons, she mentioned "…measuring people's reactions to me, even in tiny encounters like saying hello to someone in the street, or paying for something in a shop" (West & McKay, 2018, pp. 194-195). She stated that eventually she,

> …was, finally, in my new home with my new baby, hoping against hope I could make a new life for us", however, she was also still "afraid too that my old life would always keep following me, that I would never escape the stigma of being the daughter of Fred and Rose West (West & McKay, 2018, p. 8).

Mae worried that because of her parent's crimes and her status, she would not be able to live a promising future. However, her beliefs about her future were unfounded as she built new relationships and strengthened others. She eventually felt comfortable enough to admit her past and connection to her parents to a co-worker explaining, "It was such a relief. She continued to treat me exactly as she had done before. It was the beginning of the strongest friendship of my adult life and it continues to this day" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 260). Despite not encountering personal stigmatization from the community, she acknowledged,

> I also know that, no matter the facts, there are some who will continue to stigmatise myself and my siblings. Regard us as no more than weird curiosities, children of freaks

> who came to regard the behaviour of our parents as normal and never learned the difference between right and wrong (West & McKay, 2018, p. 301).

Melissa shared a similar fear of people finding out who her father is but did not experience personal stigmatization. She explained that "not too many people knew that he was my father. After the things I had been seeing and reading about, I began to have an intense fear of being connected with him" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 236). Although others did not identify the connection to her father, she did experience people in the community expressing their disgust about his crimes, unknowing that he was her father. Despite her discomfort with the people's comments, she did not disclose her connection as she explained, fearing "…they were going to judge me based on my father" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 241). As Melissa's father was arrested in another state and had different surnames, the community was unaware of her status, and she did not disclose her connection. As a result, she was forced to rely on her family, who ignored their father and pretended he no longer existed. As Melissa began to develop more stable relationships, she felt comfortable exposing the truth about her father, and she explained that she was pleasantly surprised, "I had two friends who knew me—knew my past and knew about my father—and still loved me" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 242).

Finally, Albert was the only subject who described having a negative experience with the community. Albert had always had the life he lived with his father separated from his home life. Therefore, the community was, for the most part, unaware of his criminality and his father's connection to the mob. When Albert married his wife, he confessed his and his father's past, but unlike the other subjects, she did not reply with acceptance. He suggested that she perpetuated the stigma by saying, "Carrie shrank from me in humiliation and anger, insisting fiercely that no one must find out about this" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 250). However, both of his worlds

collided when a book written about his father and his crew was released and gained popularity. Albert described that the book began to attract attention in the office, and his co-workers discovered his father's status recalling, "Some of my co-workers now treated me like a celebrity because of the book's revelations; others backed away in suspicion" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 249).

Intersection With Parent's Crimes

In this study, three subjects were unaware of their parent's criminality or the extent of their crimes. Mae, Melissa, and Kerri did not know or suspect their parent's criminality and were shocked by the discovery of their crimes. For example, when an FBI agent revealed the news about her father, Kerri defended him by saying, "I talked to Dad on the phone last night. He hasn't ever done anything wrong. He's a good guy" (Rawson, 2019, p. 139). The three subjects initially denied their parent's involvement or capability of the crimes and insisted on their parents' innocence. Mae revealed her initial belief that her mother's innocence was never questioned and said, "I truly couldn't imagine she was capable of such crimes" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 12). Whereas Hazel, Albert, and Sanford suspected and knew about their parent's criminality. Hazel, for example, suspected her mother was a murderer at nine years old when her father was mysteriously murdered. However, when another man in her mother's life died under suspicious circumstances, Hazel said, "While she didn't want to believe it, she just knew her mother had got away with another murder" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 68).

Unlike Hazel, Albert and Sanford knew of their father and uncle's crimes as they personally witnessed the murders and participated in the crimes. Their writings showed that participation in the crimes varied, as Sanford involuntarily participated in his uncle's murders

and rapes. Whereas Albert voluntarily participated in the organized crime business but did not realize the severity of his father's crimes and was not directly connected to any of his father's murders. Sanford described an instance where his uncle forced him to help dispose of the body of one of his victims; his uncle watched as "…Sanford carry out his order to drop the roasted skull back into the tar bucket and then pound at it with a fence post" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 107). Sanford described that in order to avoid his uncle's violent beatings and being his next victim, he had to abide by his uncle's commands. In comparison, Albert willingly participated in organized crime and helped his father by picking up money from customers in his illegitimate businesses. However, Albert did not participate in his father's murderous affairs, but he said he discovered, "My dad, the person I loved most in the world, had killed people" and that "…doing hits was part of his function as a Gambino man" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, pp. 100; 99).

In two cases, the subject's parents murdered family members. Mae's parents had murdered her sister, Heather and Hazel's mother murdered her father. While Mae had known her sister was missing, she did not believe she was dead and certainly did not think her parents had murdered her. Mae realized that she had not only lost a sister but felt "…guilty about being the one that survived, and that her death may have prevented mine" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 122). Whereas Hazel's feelings about her father's death were more in line with resenting her mother, saying, "Hazel had stopped loving her mum after her dad's body was retrieved, once his death was confirmed and he was never coming home from any hospital again" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 31).

All the subjects insisted that despite their parent's crimes, they still possessed an emotional connection with their parents which could not be broken. Direct quotes and examples

of the subject's perception of their relationship with their parents in relation to their crimes include:

Mae:

> I want to describe my experience – shared by my siblings – of being connected biologically and emotionally to two people who are regarded by people as evil, and of living in the shadow of their terrible actions. None of us chooses our parents. I can't wish away the connection I have to mine. I can't undo what they did. I can't escape the past and never will. These are all facts which myself, my brothers and sisters have had to learn to live with and still do so on a daily basis (West & McKay, 2018, p. 19).

Hazel:

> "Despite it all, Hazel could not turn off her feelings towards her mother" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 178).

Melissa:

> "I was NOT my dad. A part of him was in me, but I had created a different life than his" (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 282).

Kerri:

> "But he was still my father, and I loved him — no matter what he had done" (Rawson, 2019, p. 256).

Albert:

> "Whatever else he had done, whoever else he had been, he had been my father, and I had loved him more than my own life. And he had loved me" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 264).

Sanford:

> He had lived up to his dream of seizing a normal life from the ashes of the murder farm. Of course, there was still the heaviness, always the heaviness, and that twisted little version of Uncle Stewart in the back of his mind (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 322).

Through these quotes, it is evident that the subjects believe that the bond shared with their killer parent, biological and emotional, could not be disconnected or destroyed. While Mae, Kerri, and Albert described being emotionally attached to their parents through affection, Hazel, Melissa, and Sanford explained their connection as a result of their biological relationship. Although their experiences and connections to their parents were different, their parent's crimes significantly impacted their lives and continued to influence them.

Child's Impact and Realizations

Grieving the Loss of an Incarcerated Parent

The subjects described immense hardships, mental growth, and self-reflection following their parent's crimes. Initial feelings about oneself were overwhelmed by the ideas of their new place in the world. For example, Mae stated, "I would never escape the stigma of being the daughter of Fred and Rose West," and Melissa shared similar feelings saying, "I was filled with shame. I didn't know anyone who had a dad in prison, much less for murder. Serial murder" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 8; Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 221) as demonstrated by Hazel when she asked, "How would their parents [she and her husband] tell [her children] that their grandmother was a murderer who had killed their grandfather?" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 148). In

addition to Hazel: Mae, Melissa, and Sanford, she also discussed how they were supposed to address their children's questions about their parents and how to protect their children from the burden of knowing their past.

The sense of grief and loss the children experienced after losing their parents to incarceration or death was devastating. Mae recalled, "Nothing can possibly prepare you for such an experience…. I knew this was my life and nothing would ever be the same again" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 10). The subjects, particularly Mae, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert, described having difficulties adjusting to their parent's loss. Albert could not grieve for his father when he died as he assumed the role of the man of the house and was focused on supporting his family. However, in his later life, he finally began mourning the loss of his father and reflected on his childhood as a mobster's son, saying, "I would love and miss the man until the day I died" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 275). Although Albert was one of the few subjects whose parents died, his father's absence significantly impacted his life. Kerri had a similar experience after her father was incarcerated, saying, "I had a memory for every song on that album. The immense loss I'd suffered hit hard. I was missing him so much it hurt to breathe" (Rawson, 2019, p. 276). Kerri, for instance, after her father's arrest, stated, "Everything I'd ever known, loved, believed was falling down around me. My whole life was a lie — from before I was born" (Rawson, 2019, p. 151).

Helping Others'

Melissa introduced her book by saying,

> I couldn't find a single book on the subject. The few people I entrusted with my inner battle seemed as bewildered as I was. This is a question that has faced millions of

> people—the skeletons in the family closet—and even after a millennium of human experience, most of the time, the issue is not spoken of openly. Shame and humiliation win out, and the deadly silence continues (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 9).

She explains that she did not know how to cope with her father's crimes and could not find a guide to help her. So, Melissa shared her story to reduce the stigmatization of offenders' families and created her guide to help other people who encounter a similar journey.

Additionally, Hazel and Sanford adopted and fostered children to provide them with a stable family and a greater life. Sanford described selecting a,

> 'Hard to adopt' child, usually meaning an older child who has been through a series of foster homes and has a hard time trusting or relating to people. Most prospective parents preferred to avoid dealing with the inevitable scars that came with damaged children. Sanford specifically asked about them…. They often went from foster homes into lives that spiraled downward until the man who had been the tormented boy destroyed himself. All Sanford could do was to attempt to give a child what Mr. Kelley gave to him (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 316).

Sanford and his wife June adopted two boys from the "hard to adopt" list, Jerry and Robert. Hazel and her husband Bill also adopted and fostered children, trying to help as many lives as possible. It was said that,

> For many of the 101 foster children in total that the amazing couple opened up their hearts and lives to over the years, Fostering children made her feel as though she was making some amends for the damage her mother had wreaked on other people's lives (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 237).

Lastly, Melissa and Kerri pursued jobs in victim's advocacy to help those who have encountered similar struggles. In Kerri's about the author section in her biography, she wrote, "Since her father's arrest, Kerri has been an advocate for victims of abuse, crime, and trauma, sharing her journey of hope, healing, faith, and forgiveness" (Rawson, 2019, p. 326). Similarly, Melissa described her work and purpose, saying,

> My work has taken me into domestic violence shelters, conferences, and symposiums where I've been able to help thousands of women break the grip of physical, emotional, and verbal abuse. I've been on national television appearances where the hosts and I talk openly and powerfully about ways to find the hope that is necessary for healing (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 292).

Melissa continued to work in victim advocacy and headlined a docuseries titled "Monster in My Family." In her series, she helped the family of serious offenders overcome their loved ones' crimes and united the offender and victims' families to provide closure.

Mental Health and the Aftermath of Detection

Significantly, the subject's mental, emotional, and social well-being were affected, ultimately changing how the subjects navigated through society. The children described experiencing various mental health-related issues as a result of their parents' crimes. Following their parent's incarceration, the subjects detailed their feelings and later discovered a mental diagnosis for their experience and were treated. For example, Kerri had been suffering from night terrors and symptoms of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation since she was in university. However, she insisted, "Rader's dealt with their own crud in Kansas countryside tradition: head down, dug in, doing whatever life called for next. Dealing with it in your own

way and time, you'd eventually get over it" (Rawson, 2019, p. 53). As Kerri alluded to, her mental health was not a serious illness, and she just needed to "deal with it" as members of her family did. Although, when the FBI approached Kerri in her home and informed her about her father's arrest for serial murder, she developed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The debilitating effects of her PTSD eventually convinced her to seek professional help.

Consequently, Mae and Sanford experienced symptoms of Stockholm syndrome and survivor's guilt due to their upbringing. Both Mae and Sanford developed an emotional connection to their parents and uncle despite enduring physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at their hands. The two subjects described symptoms of survivor's guilt. In Mae and Sanford's instance, Survivor's guilt refers to the guilt of surviving their parents and uncle's abuse while others did not. When her father confessed to his crimes, Mae's discovered that her sister, Heather, had been brutally murdered by her parents. She reflected on this information by saying,

> I have sometimes wondered whether Heather's murder somehow saved me. Did the trauma and horror of her death have such an effect on Mum and Dad that it was impossible for them to think of doing the same thing to another of their children? It may well have been so. It's a thought that hasn't made my life any easier. At times I've felt so guilty about being the one that survived, and that her death may have prevented mine. It's another part of the legacy my parents have left me (West & McKay, 2018, p. 122).

Similarly, Sanford confessed, "Guilt continually swarmed over him because of his relief at being left alone" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 46) as Sanford knew that when he was left alone to complete his chores, his uncle was likely abusing one of the boys he kidnapped. He explained that he and the boys that his uncle Stewart had brought to the ranch, raped and killed, were in

some respects the same. However, Sanford survived his uncle's sexual and physical abuse, while the boys that Uncle Stewart kidnapped did not.

Albert experienced sex and alcohol dependency to cope with his father's death and his paranoia. During his early adulthood, he described,

> On weekends I drank myself into oblivion, often waking in the middle of the night to find a naked stranger in my bed. I didn't remember who the women were, and I didn't care. The only thing that mattered was that I wasn't alone. My greatest fear was being sober and alone…. I only knew I had to kill the pain, even if that meant oblivion. Many nights I longed for death; it would be a relief to get it over with. My father had chosen death. I deserved nothing more. I have no idea how I survived those years. I should not have come through alive (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, pp. 232-233).

Furthermore, Albert was struggling with paranoia and "…became convinced that [he] was being followed, that the government was looking for [him] again, that the Mob had taken out a hit on [him]" (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 254). At this time, he began distancing himself from his loved ones and would not let anyone near his house. He also struggled with sleep, as his paranoia led him to stand guard over his house and protect himself from potential threats during the night.

Across all the cases, guilt and shame were also frequently mentioned. The subjects expressed feelings of shame and guilt for their parents' crimes due to their connection and relationship with their parents and, in Sanford's case, being forced to participate in the crimes. Mae stated, "Although we had no knowledge of, or responsibility for, the crimes, we have still felt guilt and shame through our association to them…" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 19). Melissa noted that since her father did not express remorse or guilt for his actions, she felt the burden

turn to her, saying, “[Dr. Phil] helped me realize that I had assumed the blame, shame, and guilt that belonged only to my father” (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 274).

Accepting labels and Mental Growth

Since the time the subject's parents and uncle were arrested, the children have undergone tremendous mental growth. The subject's initial thoughts and feelings were hopeless and irredeemable. However, the subjects came to these realizations and summarized their later life by stating their growth.

Mae reevaluated her life, realizing, “I’ve made mistakes in my life as all people do, but there’s no reason why I should feel ashamed of being me" (West & McKay, 2018, p. 304). Hazel decided that “[She] certainly wasn’t going to let Dulcie ruin the second half of her life as she had done the first half" (Baron & Fife-Yeomans, 2018, p. 236).

Melissa realized that,

> While I had absolutely no control over how my parents treated me and how they felt about me, I suddenly realized that I could control one very important thing—how I responded or reacted. I was in charge of how I let them affect me (Moore & Cook, 2015, p. 228).

Kerri eventually coped with the idea,

> What’s in my past is what it is; it can’t be changed — Dad murdered ten people and devastated countless lives. Yet on the days when I’m not wrestling with hard, terrible truths, I will tell you: I love my dad — the one I mainly knew. I miss him (Rawson, 2019, p. 319).

Albert realized that,

> My father made me who I was, but it was up to me to decide who I was to be. The choice was in my hands. I had my own shoes to wear, my own journeys to take. I had chosen a different journey from my father's. I would love and miss the man until the day I died, but I would not repeat his mistakes. We are each responsible for our own sins, he for his, and I for mine. We are not intended to bear each others. No one can survive that burden (DeMeo & Ross, 2003, p. 275).

Finally, Sanford recognized, “He was also armed by this point with the awareness that other people were also haunted, in their own ways" (Flacco & Clark, 2009, p. 263).

These revelations were the result of the subject's healing process. Although the subjects came to different conclusions about their lives, they all encountered significant mental growth. As many of the subjects possessed harmful beliefs about themselves, their mental growth included finding compassion for themselves, realizing that their feelings were valid and that they were not responsible for their parent’s actions.

This chapter examined the experiences of the offspring of serial killers and how their parents’ crimes impacted their lives. A thematic analysis was conducted using the data and direct quotes collected from the six biographies and identified themes among the subjects’ experiences. After the themes mentioned throughout the study were determined, the subject’s perspectives, thoughts, and feelings regarding each theme were discussed. The final chapter will summarize the study’s findings and limitations and explore future research avenues.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This paper employed an exploratory qualitative narrative approach and thematic analysis to gain a greater understanding of the children of serial killers (Kuczynski & Daly, 2003; Stebbins, 2011; Swaraj, 2019; Thomas, 2003). This method was suitable because of the small sample size (N=6) and the desire to focus on the subject's experiences (Butina, 2015; Patton, et al., 2015). Additionally, the lack of information about the children's experiences allowed for an exploratory approach. In this section, the findings discussed in the previous chapter will be related to current literature to determine parallels between the subjects' experiences and existing ideas.

Serial Killers

Popularized stereotypes about serial killers assert that they cannot maintain meaningful relationships (FBI, 2005; Morton, et al., 2008; Schechter, 2003). However, the serial killers in this study maintained meaningful relationships, were married, and had children. Similar to the FBI (2005) report, stereotypes relating to serial killers being anti-social and unable to maintain meaningful relationships were discredited. Furthermore, Gerberth and Turco (1997) reinforce these ideas by suggesting that approximately 12% of serial murderers are married, 28% have been divorced, and 60% have never been married.

Experiences with the Justice System and Media

The children's experiences with law enforcement, media and journalists, the legal system, and the community shared significant connections to the literature on the families of serious

offenders (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; Gekoski et al., 2013; May, 2000; Yardley, 2017). As Condry (2003) noted in her work with the families of serious offenders, police are often the first agency the families encounter, as law enforcement is responsible for investigating the family and alerting them of their loved ones' crimes. Following the initial interaction, the police are in frequent contact with the family during the criminal process (Condry, 2003). Condry's (2003) study reported that the subjects had a negative experience with the police as the families expressed being treated carelessly during their interactions. Parallel to Condry's (2003) research findings, Mae and Albert expressed having a negative experience with law enforcement. Mae and Albert described that their law enforcement agencies treated them as if they were criminals and with overall hostility. However, three subjects perceived their interactions with law enforcement as positive and expressed gratitude to the officers for their efforts.

All the subjects whose parent or uncle was arrested described the event as an adverse experience. However, following their parent's arrest or death, Mae, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert described encountering issues with privacy, inaccurate information and depiction of the offender, and stigmatization through the media (Condry, 2003; Gekoski et al., 2013; May, 2000; Yardley, 2017). The research on the relatives of murderers discovered that the families felt that the media violated their privacy and inappropriately disclosed their identity as a relative of a serious offender. Gekoski et al. (2013) suggest that the media can exacerbate the impact on the families by physically approaching and interfering with the family's lives and media coverage of their loved ones' cases. However, it can be argued that the subjects in the study experienced greater harm from the media than the families of serious offenders. Due to the high-profile manner of serial murder and the aspects of the crimes, cases of multiple murder receive greater media attention. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the families of serial may experience greater

victimization by the media due to the increased fascination with their cases. Despite the prospective differences in the severity of media's harassment of serious offenders' and serial killers' families led to feelings of re-victimization and delayed the healing process (Gekoski et al., 2013).

The legal system for the common citizen can be a foreign and confusing process. Condry (2003) claims that families of those with loved ones being processed in the legal system are exhausted with learning and keeping up with legal procedures while supporting their family members. Mae, Hazel, and Kerri were engorged in their parent's court proceedings, either attending in person or being updated through news reports and expressed the stress it caused. Furthermore, with the addition of Albert, these subjects explained feeling revictimized by the legal system (Gekoski et al., 2013). Consistent with the findings of Gekoski et al. (2013), the subjects described their interaction with the legal system by suggesting that their faith in the legal process was destroyed.

Effect of Parental Criminality

The parent's or guardians' crimes and incarceration were strongly connected to the subject's assertion of various mental health symptoms. In addition to the subject's declared diagnosis, such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety disorders, the subjects also described feelings of anger, loneliness, guilt, and emotional withdrawal. Similar to Nesmith and Ruhland's (2008) study on incarcerated parents' children, these feelings and discomfort were expressed while visiting their imprisoned parents. Furthermore, feelings of shame and guilt in relation to their parents' crimes were common themes presented by the subjects. As demonstrated in the

literature, the families of serious offenders described feeling guilty for their parents' actions and supporting their loved ones (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; Gekoski, et al., 2013; May, 2000).

Studies have also indicated that the children of criminal parents were more likely to participate in criminal behaviour (Besemer, et al., 2017; Wright & Wright, 1992). However, Albert and Sanford were the only subjects who exhibited criminal behaviour in the current study. As discussed previously, Sanford's criminality was involuntarily coerced by his uncle. Consequently, it is likely that if not for his uncle's coercion, Sanford would not have aided in the crimes. In contrast, Albert voluntarily aided in his father's criminal operations and understood the legality of his actions. Similarly, a study by Dijk, et al., (2019) states that the sons of members of a criminal organization are more likely to participate in criminal activity. Specifically, the study found that 91% of the sons were suspected of committing a crime by the police, and 52% had committed four or more crimes. The subjects seized their criminal activity after Albert's father's death and Sanford's uncle's arrest. Furthermore, most of the section did not participate in any criminal activity.

Stigmatization

To some degree, all subjects believed they were judged or stigmatized by their community. Despite their assumed community perceptions, the subjects had limited negative interactions with others due to their parent's criminality. However, the lack of perceived poor interactions with the community may have stemmed from the protective actions the subjects implemented to avoid stigmatization. Condry (2003) and May (2000) state that the family of murderers often self-isolates immediately following arrest, only to socialize if necessary and also relocate to areas where their status as the relative of a murderer is unknown. In addition to self-

isolation and relocation, the subjects also practiced technological separation to distance themselves from the opinions of others, changed their names to avoid connection to their parent, and only disclosed their parent's criminality to select individuals (Condry, 2003; May, 2000). Although strangers were seen to withdraw from the relatives, as described in Mae, Hazel, Melissa, Kerri, and Albert's cases, friends of the family were more likely to be supportive (Condry, 2003).

May (2000) proposes that the label of being related to a murderer can taint and diminish an individual's identity. She refers to this process as a "master status" in which all attributes associated with the individual are no longer relevant and were replaced by the status of being the relative of a murderer (May, 2000). Similar to May (2000) and Condry's (2003, 2007, 2010) findings, the parent's status as a serial killer was projected onto the subjects internally and externally. Internally, the subjects described themselves as connected to a serial killer who self-identified with the label. While externally, media reports and the community branded the subjects as "the son, daughter, or nephew of a serial killer," leading to further stigmatization. The external and self-inflicted stigmatization process referred to as "kin contamination" described by Condry (2010) and May (2000) created a general strain for the subjects. However, the subjects also noted that this strain and kin contamination would be or was passed on to their children acknowledging that the contamination did not end with them.

The Aftermath

All the subjects expressed that when their parent or guardian was arrested, the remaining members of the family's lives were forever changed (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; May, 2000). As a result of their parent's criminality and imprisonment or death, the family, especially the

children, experiences a sense of loss or bereavement (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; May, 2000). The sense of loss stems from the child's inability to maintain a relationship with their parent or pursue possible hopes and dreams with the offender (Condry, 2010). Furthermore, the children lose their sense of identity by losing what they knew or understood their life to mean and through kin contamination (Condry, 2010; May, 2000). All the subjects, except Sanford, discussed having trouble accepting the reality of their parent's crimes. During this process, the subjects also expressed difficulty accepting the knowledge of their parents' crimes and connecting this new reality to what they had previously believed.

Following the parent or guardian's arrest, the subjects were forced to find new meanings and reflect on their life after their parent's crimes (Condry, 2003). As suggested by Condry's (2003, 2007, 2010) work, the subjects entered a stage of grieving that she coined "helping others." In this stage, she proposed that families of serious offenders use their experience to help others and seek redemption for their loved ones' crimes (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010). Through this process, families of serious offender's help others to give their personal suffering and experience a purpose (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010). Similar to Condry's (2003, 2007, 2010) findings, all the subjects helped others through different methods and attempted to redeem themselves from their parent's sins. The subjects described that sharing their story by writing about their experiences was an attempt to help others and tell their truth. At the same time, other subjects suggested that they worked in victim's advocacy and adopted or fostered children as a form of redemption.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis investigated the experience of children with serial killer parents and analyzed the impact on the children's lives through their perspective. Popular misconceptions assert that serial killers are anti-social outcasts and, therefore, are incapable of developing or maintaining meaningful relationships. However, serial murderers often have strong relationships and stability and appear as average community members. Many are married with children, have a stable income, a house, job security, and are members of community social groups (FBI, 2005; Morton, et al., 2008). In addition to the demanding responsibilities of having a family, serial killers can perpetrate multiple murders. As displayed in the current study, serial killers are capable of having and maintaining families. Through skillful deception, these serial murders operate as two independent juxtaposing people, deceiving the community, law enforcement, and their families. Despite the common public skepticism, the families of serial murderers are typically unaware of their loved ones' criminality (Suspicious members do not suspect the severity of the crimes) (Condry, 2003, 2007, 2010; May, 2000). As demonstrated in this study, the subjects can simultaneously embody the role of a caring parent to children while committing violent and heinous murders.

The majority of subjects described their family as normal. A few subjects, such as Mae, suggested that they understood that some aspects of their family life were not traditional but believed they had a functional home life. Furthermore, they primarily perceived their relationship with their parents as conventional. As a result of their parent's crimes, the subjects encountered similar experiences and events, such as their parent's arrest and interactions with the police, the justice system, and the media. In correspondence to Condry's (2003, 2007, 2010) work, the

subjects reportedly endured similar social and mental impacts, underwent considerable mental growth, and attempted to redeem their crimes by helping others. Although the subjects experienced overlap, the children did encounter experiences unique to their case. For example, Albert and Sanford were the only subjects participating in their father and uncles' crimes, respectively. In contrast, the other subjects did not participate or have knowledge of their parent's crimes.

The relationship between the child and their serial killer parent was complex and confusing for the children. Unlike the outsiders dictating the serial killers as "monsters," the children knew the serial killer as a father, mother, or uncle. The subjects' unique experiences provided insight into the contradicting lives of their parents through society's lens and how they had experienced their parents. After their parent's arrest, the subjects had to learn how to socially re-navigate their world. When the children explained their relationships with their killer parents, most subjects described an initial shock when they discovered the crimes. As the truth about their parent's criminal behaviour was exposed, the children were tasked with reevaluating their relationship with their parents. The arrest and conviction of the parents altered the child's perception of their relationship, with the children having to make the choice of resenting or forgiving their parents. Amongst the offspring, the frequency and means of contact with their parents after their arrest was a significant topic. Most children remained in contact with their parents while incarcerated either through visitation, phone calls, letters, or a combination of the three. As Nesmith & Ruhland (2008) suggested, the subjects described that maintaining a relationship with their parents was difficult, and the frequency of contact between child and parent changed due to the stress.

The subjects' interactions with the groups discussed in the study resulted from the parents' crimes. Although few subjects suggested having positive interactions with the groups, the majority described having negative experiences. When the subjects encountered these entities, they struggled with major life changes and the loss of a parent. During this sensitive time, the subjects were tasked with being interviewed by police, working with lawyers, keeping up with their parent's court proceedings, and fighting off journalists and media crews. As a result, the subjects indicated having majorly negative experiences with these entities.

As suggested by the subjects, fear of stigmatization and perceived stigma were significant concerns. However, the subjects did not recall an incident where they faced blatant stigmatization, except for Albert, who suggested he encountered considerable stigmatization. Despite the subjects not experiencing overt stigmatization, they struggled with severe self-inflicted stigmatization. The parents' crimes made the subjects label themselves "the child of a serial killer" and transfer their perceptions onto others. The projection of their self-inflicted stigma on others led subjects to avoid community contact and ultimately isolate themselves from society.

As discussed in this study, the children share an extraordinarily unique perspective of their family and serial killer parents. This paper's primary goal was to understand better how parents' criminality has impacted their children's lives. These infamous serial killers who are labelled as 'evil' and condemned by society are also known as someone's mother, father, or guardian. Subsequently, the knowledge of the crimes betrays their experiences, relationships, and memories with their parents. Leaving the children to wrestle between the parents they knew and were raised by versus those who commit incomprehensible violent acts. In addition to the emotional toll inflicted on the children, they also experience significant social disintegration. The

family of serial murderers, specifically the children, can be implicated in their parents' crimes rather than seen as indirect victims. As a result, children encounter harsh stigmatization and lose their sense of identity due to their familial and biological relations. In an attempt to diminish their ties to their parent, the children use physical, emotional, and social avoidance to separate themselves. They frequently used tactics such as physical relocation to remove themselves from the area of trauma, changing their surname to avoid connection, suspending contact with the criminal parent, and self-isolation to prevent stigmatizing encounters. However, many of the children realized that despite their efforts, they could not sever the connection between child and parent.

The current study's findings provide a greater understanding of the adverse experiences faced by the offspring of serial killers. In light of these findings, society must view the children of serial killers as victims of their parents' crimes rather than an extension of their criminal behaviour. As detailed in the offspring's stories and illustrated in this study, the children of serial killers are largely impacted by indirect victimization. Therefore, to reduce the victimization directed at the offspring of serial killers, it is vital to understand the consequences of society's stigmatization and alter the harmful perceptions of the offspring.

Prevention and Policy Implications

Previous literature on serious offenders and the subjects from the current study expressed feeling lost and unable to figure out how to proceed after their loved one was arrested (Condry, 2003, 2007; May, 2000). "Aftermath," an organization established to help and support families of serious offenders, was discussed by Condry (2003, 2007) and May (2000) as a beneficial resource for families. Although the program was described as successful, the program was

unfortunately disbanded in the mid-2000s due to a lack of funding. Melissa's biography describes her desire to seek help and also mentions the decline of the Aftermath program (Moore & Cook, 2015). The discussion of Aftermath and its support by Condry (2003, 2007) and May (2000) suggests a need to re-establish a group that assists the families of serious offenders.

A significant area discussed by the subjects was the treatment by agencies in the justice system and media. Some subjects described being mistreated by law enforcement and the legal system by stating they felt criminalized during their interactions. The subjects who expressed a negative experience with the agencies acknowledged that the individuals they encountered were doing their job. However, they also indicated that the agencies should have addressed them more delicately as they described themselves as vulnerable at the time. Condry (2003, 2007) also suggests that since the police are typically the first agency to make contact with the families of serious offenders, law enforcement should provide helpful resources and refer families to programs that provide support, such as Aftermath.

Additionally, the subjects expressed confusion about the process of their parent's arrest and what was required of them. In this situation, the children described a lack of communication between their families and the justice system, indicating that the confusion added more stress to the process. These feelings were exacerbated when the children described resorting to the media to get information about their parents' cases. The children indicated that greater communication with law enforcement and the legal system would have decreased stress during their parent's cases.

The subjects' interactions with the media substantially affected the children as they felt betrayed, vulnerable, misrepresented, and victimized by the media. The media's reports disclosed their connection to their parents, published inaccurate information and were taunted by

journalists and news crews. Overall, the children believed they needed privacy after their parent's arrest. They believed the media's persistence and insisted that the media's physical presence and reports prolonged their ability to mourn for their parent and cope with their crimes.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

The current study allowed for an in-depth analysis of the children of serial killers but had multiple limitations that require acknowledgement. A primary limitation to consider is the possibility of bias in the books selected. Some of the books used in the study were co-authored and, therefore, could have altered the meaning of the subjects' stories or restricted information. Consequently, the data gathered from the books with co-authors were not direct accounts of the subjects. Another limitation to consider is the small sample size and its generalizability. Although the study's small sample size also allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the subject's experiences, the study poses issues with generalizability.

Lastly, previous research on the family of serious offenders and murderers is sparse. There has been virtually no research conducted on the impact on the families and children of serial killers. Further research is required to completely grasp how their parent's crimes impact the children and how to protect and relieve the children from the harm of the serial killer parents. Future research should also consider conducting interviews with the offspring of serial killers to establish a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences. Additionally, interviews with the offspring would expand the available subjects to those who did not write biographies. It would be advantageous to explore how the experiences of being a child of a serial killer influenced the personal lives of these children in more detail. It would also be beneficial to understand how their experiences influence their personal relationships with spouses, children, or

people of the same sex as their serial killer parent. A more detailed exploration of these critical aspects and the lives of these serial killer children would be helpful in understanding the impact on them and their families. They could supplement what is known about families with criminal loved ones.

The children of serial killers are tainted and implicated in their parent's crimes while suffering from the loss of a parent. Future research, society, scholars, and the legal system are urged to view and treat the perpetrators' families as victims, especially in high-profile cases such as serial murder.

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