

**THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE  
OF  
MEN WHO MURDER THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In Canada approximately 70 women die each year at the hands of someone with whom each of them was or had been in an intimate relationship. This statistic has remained relatively static over a twenty year period of time. This study explores the subjective experiences of men who killed their intimate partners with the expressed purpose of examining ways of addressing this loss of life.

There is a dearth of social work research and literature on femicide. What research there is borrows theories from psychology, women's studies, sociology and criminology. The primary theory used is feminist theory and this theory suggests that men who kill their intimates are the same men who abuse their partners and that murder is a crime of power and control. This theory contends that men have been socialized into a patriarchal society which allows them to have power and control over women. Several researchers who do not use a feminist lens to examine the issue suggest that feminist theory is too narrow and simplistic to explore this complex issue. This researcher also found this to be the case.

Data from six in-depth interviews with men who murdered their intimate partners reveal that contrary to feeling powerful these informants felt powerless against the increasing emotion they were experiencing when faced with real or imagined destruction or loss of the relationship. The data further reveal that the respondents in this study came from family backgrounds which were abusive to varying degrees. Suggestions for further research as well as policy and practice implications are examined.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In Canada in 1999, 536 individuals were murdered. Of those, 143 were murdered by someone in the family with another 198 murdered by an acquaintance. Only 15% of all homicides in 1999 were perpetrated by a stranger and 32 of those 60 homicides were the result of a precipitating crime, most commonly robbery. Consistent with previous years, almost 90% of accused persons were male, as were two-thirds of the homicide victims. (Statistics Canada, 1999) On average, in Canada, 79 women are killed by their intimate male partners in any given year. (Statistics Canada: 1992, 1999, 2000) This average has remained relatively constant throughout the last twenty years.

The objective of this study is to elicit information about spousal homicide from men who commit the crime. The central questions this study addresses are, **what are the subjective experiences of men who kill their intimate partners, leading up to the murder and at the time of the murder itself?** This qualitative research study is to further investigate the stories of men who kill their intimate female partners and consequently further understand the nature of spousal homicide. This study attempts to give “voice” to the experience of men who kill their intimate partners with the expressed purpose of understanding and therefore addressing the needs of men and women who could potentially be perpetrators and victims of spousal homicide.

Murder has captured the public imagination since long before statistics have been kept. Although, most homicides are executed by young men and most are committed by someone the victim knows, and while a married woman is nine times more likely to be murdered by her spouse as by a stranger (Statistics Canada: Juristat: 1994:1), society still fears the dark stranger lurking, like Jack the Ripper, in the fog. Consequently, when someone is murdered by a stranger there is far more outrage and fear even though fear, statistically speaking, is not warranted. As an example of this phenomenon let us consider the cases of Debra Ellul and Nina DeVilliers. In 1989, Debra was stabbed 24 times by her estranged husband and died in her Hamilton, Ontario, home. Her murder was front page news for one day, slid to the third page on day two and flew off the back page by week's end. The murderer was her husband and while it was considered tragic it was a "family" tragedy. It was also seen as a private matter and not one with which the majority of people felt they should get involved. Even when Debra's husband was found not guilty and set free there was little ripple in the community conscience. Debra's mother marched in front of the court house every day, rain or shine, for two years with a sign that said "Justice for Debra." Most people walked by without a glance. (Personal communications with Debra's mother Ruth Williams: 1993)

Six months later, in that same year, Nina DeVilliers was kidnaped while jogging in broad daylight. She was held for several days and murdered by Jonathan Yeo, a complete stranger. There were no less than twenty front page headlines in eight days. Wilson and Daly (1988), maintain that, "from the perspective of the general public, unacquainted with



either victim or killer, the homicides that deserve the most severe penalties are transparently predatory attacks upon strangers. It makes good sense that people would react more punitively to such unprovoked killing mainly because they perceive themselves as potential victims.” (273-274). While it may make good sense this view feeds into the notion that the victims, if they know their killers, are less innocent and somehow responsible by virtue of this fact. As well this theory presumes that the attacks on intimates are not predatory, not volitional and not deterrable.

While Debra Ellul was seen as someone’s “wife” a victim of a “terrible family tragedy” which could only happen in certain “types” of families, Nina was seen in a different light (The Queen versus Ellul: 1990). She was a beautiful young girl with a promising future from an upper class family. Her father was a prominent surgeon and her mother a well-known artist. But more importantly and central to community sentiments, if it could happen to Nina it could happen to anyone or so the thinking went. Nina’s mother Priscilla, in sharp contrast with Debra Ellul’s mother Ruth, was having tea and consulting on matters of crime policy with the Prime Minister within two years of her daughter’s murder. Society cared about the kind of victim Nina was. Society could not understand what would possess a man to kill an innocent like Nina and yet wanted desperately to understand so as to insure that such a thing would not touch their lives. There was a Royal Commission struck and recommendations made in order to satisfy this community fear.

On the other hand the community seemed to have a ready explanation for why Guy

Ellul would kill Debra. Somehow Debra was seen as the type of victim who shared some of the blame for her own death. This societal judgement was evidenced during the trial where Debra was depicted as the less than virtuous wife who in the end deserved her fate. The judge declared, (based on Guy Ellul's testimony), that Debra was not a "good wife" and that the jury needed to decide if she had pushed her husband to the point where any "reasonable man" would have stabbed his wife 24 times. They decided she had. (Queen vs. Ellul: 1990) There was nothing for the community to fear from a Guy Ellul but the stranger who might jump out of the bushes like Jonathon Yeo, did warrant community fear . . . or so they thought.

A death such as Deborah's or some variation of this, plays itself out approximately once every five days. The funding for and building of more shelters for battered women, the call for tougher sentences for murderers and the increase in women's equality both at work and at home have seemingly not impacted the number of women killed by their intimate male partners. Quite obviously there is something about this issue that we have yet to understand fully. Clearly researchers, social workers and other professionals have devised solutions which miss the mark in terms of addressing the loss of life evidenced by these statistics. Perhaps we have assumed that men who kill are the same men who abuse and due to this assumption have missed whole pieces of the picture.

These assumptions, theories and explanations are contained within the research on intimate violence about why men might kill. These include research rooted in:

1) **Sociobiology:** Daly and Wilson ( 1988) are in the forefront of research in this area. They conducted a large study on homicide and analyzed the data from a biology and evolution of violence point of view. This theory postulates that men kill in order to possess, maintain and control women's reproductive possibilities.

2) **Psychiatric and physiological factors:** Layton (1996) examines homicide and concludes that "There are no precise figures on the social origin of killers, but it is clear that nine out of ten homicides, perhaps more, are now committed by members of the underclass—persons with little education and no professional qualifications, chronically unemployed and on welfare living in council housing, with chronic drug and alcohol problems often mentally ill" (1996:4). Dabbs, on the other hand, argues that men who have higher levels of testosterone are twice as likely to be physically abusive and are psychologically remote from their partners (Dabbs, 2002) Hare argues that often men who kill are sociopaths who kill because they have no conscience and if killing is expedient for them they will do so. This theory fits hand in glove with Wilson and Daly's in that Hare wonders if sociopathy may have been an evolutionary adaptive behavior at one point in human history. ( Hare: 1993) Other psychologists argue that men who kill have attachment problems, personality disorders and a myriad of psychiatric diseases. Still others contend that men who abuse and kill are often brain damaged and therefore have no criminal responsibility for their crimes. (Warnken et. al: 1994 )

3) **Patriarchy:** This theory contends that men kill primarily to exert the ultimate power and control over their victims and that this aggression as a method of control is taught

through the process of socialization which occurs in the context of the patriarchal society (Cottin-Pogrebin, 1983, Stout, 1991, 1992, Yllo, 1988, Walker, 1985).

**4) Value added sociological theory:** Peter Chimbos, a Canadian sociologist, conducted a qualitative study the result of which was to focus on the context within which the perpetrator was raised and committed the crime. (1978)

**5) The process of violentization theory:** Dr. Athens (1992) conducted a large study which took place over a ten-year period and which involved interviewing hundreds of violent criminals. He developed the theory of violentization. His data gave evidence that all violent criminals pass through a process which involves four steps, the end result of which is complete violentization. He postulates that murder is never “a crime of passion” but rather an interaction between the self and the victim as the self has constructed him or her. (Athens, 1998)

and

**6) The nested ecological theory:** Dr. Donald Dutton, (1994) proposes a theory which examines the interactions between the various systems which are at play in the lives of abusers. He gives little weight to macro explanations rather he focuses on the microsystem which he claims has the most powerful predictive power. (Dutton 1994) “Powerlessness rather than power seems to be implicated in male use of intimate violence.” “Males,” says Dutton, “try to control the things they fear, and intimate relationships are a source of great fear for abusive men.” (Dutton, 1994: 177)

In all the research noted above the one glaring oversight in all but two studies is the

lack of the voice of the perpetrator. Wilson and Daly note the oversight, though they themselves did not sample offenders. It is important to sample offenders in order to flesh out the statistical information available to us and to help us examine the richness of information that only the perpetrator of this crime has and which researchers need in order to better and more fully understand where the theory and practice intersect.

The underlying tenet of this research is to explore different ways of understanding the problem of femicide by gathering data obtained directly from the men who killed their intimate partners in order that solutions might be devised which better fit the reality of real peoples lives. Without this piece of the research puzzle, solutions will continue to be devised which have not, to date, lowered the rate of spousal homicide.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the recent social work research on violence has been conducted in the area of women who kill their partners even though women kill their partners less frequently than vice versa (Browne, 1987, Gavignan 1987, Stout 1991, 1992, Walker, 1985). The rise in this area of research may be attributable to the wave of feminism which has swept over North America, kindling interest in the area of women's studies and consequently violence toward women (Gavignan, 1987, Hoff-Sommers, 1994, Leframboise, 1996, Roy, 1977). It is worth mentioning that feminist theory is more than a theory in that feminism itself is a social movement. "A social movement is a group of persons organized around an ideology; it is a form of collective behavior mobilized to bring about a set of changes on the basis of a belief system" (Fargari, 1996:41). "Ideologies are beliefs about realities which are unexamined and by their nature held on faith" (Marchak, 1981:6) The feminist movement then is more like a religion than a theory.

The feminist movement is a movement based upon the ideology of patriarchy. As espoused by feminist theorists, patriarchy is an ideology that is limited to explaining behaviors in the most simplistic terms. As constructed, women are the oppressed and men are the oppressors. Men are socialized to be dominant and controlling while women are

socialized to be submissive and compliant. Men will do anything to maintain the patriarchy including killing if necessary. "Patriarchy requires violence or subliminal threat of violence in order to maintain itself" (Hoff-Sommer, 1994:188). Thus the assumption of the war on women. These very claims of violence may maintain a subliminal threat of violence which ironically perpetuates patriarchy. The perpetuation of patriarchy reinforces the image that men and women are at war and this further reinforces the experience of oppression. The patriarchal analysis of the problem of femicide leaves out everything but the stereotype. This stereotype was created by the movement. This construction leaves out anything but that which comfortably fits into the patriarchal analysis. Unfortunately this analysis leaves out large numbers of men and women. "Confronted with complex and changing relations, we try to reduce these to a simple, unified and undifferentiated whole. We search for closure, or the right answer, or the motor of the history of male domination" (Flax, 1987:636). Colorless and unlikelike these stereotypes reflect violent images of domination and submission; the oppressor and the oppressed with nothing in between.

Unfortunately this simplistic research on violence against women has been extrapolated and used to explain all spousal homicide. Theories about men who abuse have become the theories used to explain men who kill. The problem in using these theories is that they do not explain well enough or completely enough why men who abuse are not always men who kill and why some men who kill have never been violent or abusive before the murder.

Much of the research in the area of intimate violence has been limited to understanding why women say they kill their intimate male partners while little research has focused on why men say they kill their intimate partners (Browne, 1987, Pressman 1989, Roy 1977, Stout 1991, 1992, Walker, 1985). This may be explained and be understandable as this is a relatively new area of exploration. It may also be explained by the dominance of feminist theories in violence studies which explain violence and murder in the most simplistic terms and with an ideological agenda. Women within this theory are described in ideal, almost angelic terms and are constructed as morally superior while men are depicted as “less than,” and are constructed as both morally and physiologically inferior. Men, this theory explains, are much more prone to abuses of power and control due to the socialization which has occurred in the context of the patriarchal society. Dr. Dutton, takes issue with this “for a man, sociopolitical comparisons with women or a woman are irrelevant. What is experienced especially in intimate relationships is the power advantage women appear to have in their ability to introspect, analyze and describe feeling and process. Transference from early relationships in which females (mothers) had apparently unlimited powers still affects male assessments of power in adult relationships” (Dutton, 1994: 174).

Most feminist research describes characteristics of men who kill by using information garnered from the clinical observations of perpetrators or from reports by victims of abuse (Bersani, Huey, Pendicton, Denton, 1992). Little can be found which comes directly from the perpetrator of spousal murder. Although this is perhaps understandable given the



difficulty victim's families experience after the loss of a child and the resultant outrage which these families feel if a researcher seems to be "taking the side" of the perpetrator. As well women's issues have been ignored for so long that funding in the last twenty years has often gone toward research which focuses attention to women's stories and their voices. This outlook, however, is short sighted and misses the larger picture.

The results of the limited research on spousal homicide suggest that women who kill their intimate partners do so in self-defense, while men most often kill during a rage, jealous or otherwise (Stout, 1991, 1992, Straus, Gelles, 1989, Walker 1984, 1985, Roy 1977, Pressman, 1989). These are men who score highly, these researchers contend, in the need for power and control. Walker, (1985) claims that it is hard to explore the subjective experiences of men who kill as they tend not to be good historians as a result of "the loss of memory they experience during rage." (Walker, 1985:42) Inherent in this thinking is that women do not kill out of rage and if they happen to be enraged at the time of the crime, they are still considered good historians. This excellent memory recall, according to Walker, is a result of the hyper vigilance abused women have had to develop out of concern for when the next beating will occur (Walker, 1985). This hyper vigilance increases a woman's ability to remember (Walker 1995). There does not appear to be any research to back up the claim that men are not good historians and in fact the world renowned researcher on memory, Dr. Elizabeth Loftus, would refute this loss of memory claim. (Whidden Lecture, McMaster University: 1997)

Although there is little social work research in the area of men who kill their intimate

partners and certainly very little which explores men's subjective experience in this area, one can look outside social work research to the areas of psychology, sociology, women's studies and criminology in order to find explanation and examination in this area. Wilson and Daly, psychology professors at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, conducted a study on homicides committed in Canada and Detroit. They propose a model that examines spousal homicide from the ecological psychology perspective. Wilson and Daly assert that "marital violence arises out of men's efforts to exert control over women and their reproductive capacities, and women's efforts to retain some independence in the face of male coercion" (Wilson, Daly, 1988:295). From this assertion they draw conclusions about the link between the need for males to have control over the reproductive functions of females, and murder as a response to the loss of that control. (Wilson, Daly, 1988). They point to the statistical fact that one of the best predictors of the murder of a woman by her intimate partner is an age difference of more than fifteen years with the man being the older. In these May-December unions the homicide rates are more than four times as high as that in marriages with the most common age gap. They postulate that "there are legitimate grounds for heightened jealousy and perhaps for all sorts of conflict when one partner is a good deal older" (Wilson, Daly, 1988).

One of the weaknesses in this approach, and one that Wilson and Daly acknowledge, is that the information they used was derived from official police statistics and anthropological studies. Nowhere is the subjective experience of the perpetrator examined except through secondary sources (Wilson, Daly, 1988). They did not ask the perpetrator

to qualify why there would be this statistical anomaly rather they speculated as to the causes for it. Another weakness, (one that Wilson and Daly do not acknowledge), is that the area of socially learned behaviors, which may contribute to the aggression of men who murder intimates, is not examined (Dutton, 1984; Walker, 1984, 1985; Pressman, 1989). They also leave out important outliers such as men who kill but who do not have a history of spousal violence previous to the murder. They make a rather large assumption that men who kill are the same “type” of men who abuse and that murder is a natural progression which begins with a push which leads to a slap which somehow leads to murder.

On the other hand Peter Chimbos (1978), a Canadian sociologist, maintains that it is improbable that one can understand the complex nature of spousal homicide without scrutinizing the contexts both within which the perpetrator was raised and committed the crime. He developed a model he called the value-added model, which attempted to explain spousal homicide by thoroughly examining the context of the perpetrator (Chimbos 1978). What he discovered was the murder was most likely due to “sexual matters (affairs and refusals) and excessive drinking” (Chimbos in Wilson and Daly, 1988: 202). The most glaring limitation of his study is that the issue of gender is left out of the equation. He studied the homicidal behavior of perpetrators of both sexes and did not differentiate between them. However, despite the limitations, Chimbos developed a theory that helps us to understand the importance of context when studying human behavior.

As previously discussed feminist researchers contend that men kill primarily to exert

the ultimate power and control over their victims and that this aggression as a method of control is taught through the process of socialization which takes place within the patriarchal society (Brown 1987; Pressman 1992; Roy 1985; Walker 1985; Yllo 1994; Faludi 1991). Although feminist literature and research have contributed to the understanding of structured inequality that is part of the larger society, it has been limited in describing the experiences of men who kill their intimate partners (Faludi, 1991, Yllo, 1994, Walker, 1985). As a result of analysis of the broader societal context which de-emphasizes male differences, “they fail to examine the ontogenetic factors that might differentiate one male from another” (Dutton 1984: 168). They consistently fail to ask why more men don’t murder considering their assertion that the patriarchal society holds such a negative sway over its members. Dutton asks “what kind of causal weight does patriarchy have if 90% of the men raised under it are non assaultive?” (Dutton 1984: 173)

Dr. Donald Dutton, a psychology professor from the University of Victoria, argues against using a feminist framework to explain the aggression of men because the feminist framework tends to give little weight to the male individual differences and how these differences will mean different responses to socialization (Dutton, 1994). He further argues that single factor explanations for male assaultiveness are inadequate. He proposes instead a “nested ecology” theory which looks at the interactions between the various systems at play in the perpetrators life (Dutton 1994). His research gives evidence that “distal macro system influences such as patriarchal structure seem to have little effect on rates of individual wife assault; they are poorly related both to individual male patriarchal

beliefs and to violence. Exosystem factors, especially subcultural norms for assaultiveness, have a somewhat stronger effect whereas microsystem and ontogenetic factors seem the strongest of all”(Dutton: 1994: 177).

One researcher, Dr. Lonnie Athens of Seaton Hall in New Jersey does focus on the subjective experiences of men who are violent offenders and murderers and examines those experiences through the lens of the symbolic interaction sociological perspective. He developed a comprehensive model he calls the process of violentization. He interviewed hundreds of violent offenders over more than a ten-year period and a pattern emerged from the data. From the data he could see four stages to the process of violentization. They are:

1. The first stage, brutalization which involves violent subjugation, personal horrification and violent coaching.
2. The second stage, belligerency is where he realizes he must find a way to stop people from brutalizing him.
3. The third stage, and a very significant one, is violent performance where he successfully resolves a conflict using violence. The significance of this success depends on the level of provocation from none through minimal and moderate to maximum with none being the most significant in terms of the level of violent performance required.
4. The final stage is virulency. According to Athens at this final stage the process is complete and can never be reversed. (Athens: 1992)

Dr. Athens incorporates the theory of the phantom community into his broader theory

of violentization. He does not believe nor did his data reveal that murders happens devoid of thought. There is no evidence to suggest that spousal murder is a crime of passion where the perpetrator had no thought about what was happening. “We should not be led astray by the current assumption of our time, according to which violent behavior is always destructive, dysfunctional and devoid of meaning. Objective situations don’t cause overt conflict rather it is the interpretation of such situations that is crucial.” ( Rhodes, 1999: 208) Dr. Athens went on to write “The Self as Soliloquy (1994), and Dramatic Self Change”(1995). In essence his research indicates that the self is developed and is sustained through soliloquies which then enable us to organize and negotiate our actions. Murder then takes place while the perpetrator talks to himself about the nature of the act he is going to commit, the reasons for the act and the character of the victim and justification to the self about what the self is about to do or has done. The phantom community which has been created over time supports this decision making process. In all cases he examined, where a violent action had occurred, the process of violentization was complete and the perpetrator had formed a violent phantom community. (Athens 1989, 1992, 1994 1995)

Athens does not leave out the issue of gender but argues that there is a division of labour where it concerns violence training and that within this division of labour may lie the inequality of women. The weakness in Athens’ research, if there is one to be found, is that he does not directly address the issue of men who kill their intimate partners although there were some examples in his data. As well he does not focus solely on murder but on

any violent crime.

In summary all the various models and theories for understanding male violence and murders of women are useful in understanding the complex nature of spousal homicide. Although feminist literature and research have been very useful in the understanding of structured inequality that is part of the larger society, it has been limited in describing accurately the experiences of men who kill their intimate partners (Faludi, 1991, Yllo, 1994, Walker, 1995). Psychological and sociological explanations have also made important contributions to the understanding of intimate violence. However, these studies by and large ignore the subjective voices of men who kill their intimate partners. Dr. Athens' work does explore the subjective voices of violent offenders but does not focus specifically on the murder which takes place in the context of an intimate relationship. It seems, given the current lack of research in this aspect of intimate violence, information about men who kill their intimate partners would be an important contribution to the literature on intimate violence. This information will not detract from the models that others have proposed for understanding intimate violence and spousal murder but rather give deeper analysis and enhance current understanding of the issue of men who kill.

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research was conducted using a qualitative exploratory research design. The data were gathered vis-a-vis in-depth interviews with men who had been convicted of and who admitted to murdering their intimate partners. Six men were interviewed. All six men admitted their crimes and were willing to tell the stories about their life, their crime and their life since the crime.

For this research project six men were interviewed both in prison and in a Hamilton, Ontario halfway house. This interviewer interviewed each of the men alone. The interviews were approximately three hours in length and were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed into a hard copy. All six advised their parole officer that they wished to be part of this research project. All respondents were without mental illnesses and all had been given life sentences for their crime. The men were aware that they could stop the interview at any time they wished; none did. Contrary to Walker's (1985) contention all six men proved to be good historians. The data were then coded and analyzed using acceptable qualitative research methods.



## SAMPLING

The sample of six men was purposive and was drawn from both the prison population of Beavercreek Penitentiary in Gravenhurst and from St. Leonards, a halfway house, in Hamilton. “Because the foundation of transferability is an adequate description of the sending context the search for data must be guided by processes that will provide rich detail about it. This requires a sampling procedure that is governed by emerging insights about what is relevant to the study and purposively seeks both the typical and the divergent data that these insights suggest”(Erlandson et. al.: 1993: 33.) The sample was chosen by the Director of St. Leonards, a halfway house population in Hamilton and by two parole officers in the case of Beavercreek. By having others choose the sample the possibility of this researcher reading through personal and confidential files was eliminated. This helped this researcher to avoid prejudicial questions and hindered making assumptions about the men in this study. This was the most ethical way of drawing the sample. In order to further enhance the objectivity of this researcher newspaper accounts of the men or their crimes were not read at any time.

As previously stated six men were interviewed. Culturally this was a diverse group with one respondent being Italian, one was black Ghanese, one was a Korean, and three were white Canadians from various parts of the country. Three of the six were married at the time of the crime while two were living together and one was in a dating relationship. Two of the men had been married previously. In three of the cases there was an age difference between partners of more than 15 years with the male being older. Their ages at

the time of the crime ranged from 18 to 55.

Three of the six had been in trouble with the law previous to the murder for which they were currently incarcerated, and had been convicted of a number of offences ranging from vehicular manslaughter to driving without insurance. Two of the six men had spent some time in prison. One of those received a life sentence previous to the murder of his partner for the death of four teens in a car that he was driving while drunk. None of the men had finished high school before the offense while all of them completed high-school in prison with two men taking university courses while incarcerated.

All of the men in this study came from families where the father was the “breadwinner” with the mother being a “homemaker.” Their fathers worked at a variety of jobs and professions including construction work, military work, medicine, electrician and painter. In terms of religious affiliation, four were self identified Christians, one was an atheist and one was a Buddhist.

The men in this study chose a variety of methods by which to murder their partners including: 1) stabbed once in the heart; 2) multiple stab wounds; 3) a hatchet to the head; 4) beaten to death with a two-by-four; 5) shot six times in the back; and 6) shot once in the heart. All victims died at the scene. These methods reflect what the research says about the methods men use when killing their intimate partners with knives and guns most frequently used in the commission of the murder. (Stout, 1994) Four of the respondents attempted suicide immediately after the murder. Only one was close to death. One man turned himself in, one fled to the U.S. and was captured three months later and

the other four were arrested at the scene. Only one was drinking at the time of the murder. All six received a sentence of life imprisonment with eligibility for parole anywhere from 10 to 15 years. All six men admitted their crime.

These men admitted to a variety of addictions with only two of the men who did not drink or smoke. Several of the men had drinking habits which ranged from chronic alcoholism and problem drinker to social drinker and nondrinker. One reported he was “a compulsive gambler.” Only one had ever had a drug problem.

The victims ranged in age from 17 to 55. In general the women were more educated than the man by whom they were murdered. All but one had high school degrees and three had University degrees with one having a degree at the master’s level and one about to enter law school. All the women were employed at the time they died.

### INSTRUMENTATION

Data were gathered through the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews using an interview guide. (Appendix I) This method is appropriate as it leads to more freedom to pursue hunches and improvise with questions. (Manlow, 1993: 70) The validity of the questions and consequently the data depends upon the following conditions a) the document is reported in the words of the person; b) the document represents free spontaneous and detailed expression of past experience, present aspirations and future plans and; c) the document is secured in a favorable situation with tendencies to deception absent or at a minimum (Taylor, Bogen: 1994).

In order to satisfy these conditions this researcher 1) did the interviews with full acknowledgment and permission of the informant; 2) the recordings were transcribed in their entirety and; 3) the interviewer attempted to create an atmosphere conducive to disclosure by being honest about motives and intentions and by making each informant as comfortable as possible by building rapport. This last step is the most important one in establishing the tone of a partnership as opposed to a researcher subject relationship. (Bogden , Taylor, 1994)

In all cases the interviews took place in a private room. This was insisted upon by this researcher in order to afford the informant as much privacy as possible. Although an interview guide was used in order to lend some structure to the process the questions were not asked in any specific order nor were they rigid and the interview was determined by a conversation with the respondent (Beeman, 1995:104). There were general topics such as a family history, dating history, events leading up to the crime, the crime itself, life since the crime. This style of question encouraged discussion about the informant's life and what was and is important to him. (Beeman 1995:104) Each general topic had several more specific sub-topics. All areas were covered by all the informants.

Although originally there were seven informants one refused to allow this researcher to interview him because of the resemblance of the interviewer to his victim. None of the other six refused to answer any question and several said they were sorry the interview had come to an end after three hours. Contrary to Walker's (1985) contention all six men proved to be good historians however, there was some reluctance around talking about

the actual murder which seemed more like discomfort and shame than actual memory loss.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

The first step in the data collection process was to get permission from McMaster University Ethics Committee. This was achieved in July 1999. The second step was to attempt to gain permission from Kingston penitentiaries through Corrections Canada to conduct this research in one of the many prisons in Kingston as this is where the majority of the sample resided. This researcher sent a copy of the proposal to Corrections Canada, The Lifeline Group and Mr. John Clinton of St. Leonards in Hamilton. Corrections Canada felt there were safety issues in their maximum security prisons and the Lifeline Group, although supportive of this research, were not allowed to take this researcher into the prison for safety reasons. However, Mr. Clinton of St. Leonards found three men in the halfway house population who fit the requirements of this study and agreed to be interviewed. Mr. Clinton also assisted this researcher in getting clearance to go into the Beavercreek Penitentiary a medium security penitentiary in Gravenhurst, Ontario. Clearance involved a criminal records check. In Beavercreek two parole officers asked the inmates on their caseload who fit the criteria and four agreed to be interviewed.

In order to eliminate researcher bias this researcher did not read any newspaper accounts of the crimes nor were the cases discussed with the case managers. It was also considered that this would give the inmate or ex-inmate, who has little control of his life, some control in this study situation. It was also considered that the interview process

might be of benefit to the informant in that he might feel someone was interested in what he had to say and thereby give voice to his subjective experience (Taylor, Bogden: 1994)

Before each interview the informants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix II). This form described the purpose of the study and explained further that involvement in the study was purely voluntary and that the interview could be stopped at any time. Apart from the inherent benefits of the interview itself no other benefit was offered to the informant. No money was exchanged nor any promise of privilege. Inmates were informed about the three steps which were used to protect their anonymity: 1) their names will never be disclosed with only necessary prison officials, the halfway house director and this researcher having access to the names of the inmates involved in the study. 2) the interview guide does not bear the names of inmates, inmate's families or families of the victims so as to protect their identity and 3) identifying information about the crime is not to be part of the results of this study for example the location of the crime, the time of year of the crime etc.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data were first broken into several categories and analysis was done using methods as outlined in Bogden and Taylor's "Introduction to Qualitative Research: A Search for Meaning" (1984), Strauss and Corbin's "Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory" (1998) and Erlandson's "Doing Naturalistic Inquiry" (1993). "Data analysis is the process of bringing order,

structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationship among categories of data; it builds grounded theory” (Erlandson, 1993: 111). To this end the transcripts were first read in their entirety. The transcripts were read again examining them for emergent categories and themes. This researcher was careful to observe the cardinal rule in that codes fit the data and not the reverse. (Taylor, Bogden, 1984) A line-by-line analysis was done using the open coding technique which involves sorting the data into categories and sub-categories. This process was repeated until all themes and categories had been exhausted.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

Many categories and themes emerged from the analysis. For the sake of space this researcher selected the categories and themes which were specific to this part of the research project. They are: family background, the image of self, relationship with the victim and feelings and events leading to the murder.

### **FAMILY BACKGROUND**

The respondents were asked questions which allowed for description of their background with a focus on the quality of family relationships. Several themes emerged in terms of the relationships the informant had with their father, mother, grandparents and mentors. They are: absent fathers, emotionally distant nonviolent father, emotionally distant violent father, alcoholic father, mother as victim, mother as “the good woman”, the aggressive mother and grandparents as mentors.

#### **ABSENT FATHER**

Many of the respondents had a father who was absent for most of their formative years. Whether working out of town nine months of the year on construction, training to be a cardiologist for five years in Germany, hospitalized with M.S. for 23 years or away in



the war, these children were without a father figure for most of the years between one and 10 years of age. These boys often became the “man of the house” and therefore developed a resentment toward their father when he did come home. Long absences meant a “lack of male modeling” and “no strong male figure”. It also meant a relationship with mother that the father resented and which “caused conflict when dad returned home”. As one informant noted “I was a big threat to my dad”. This feeling of threat was particularly true in regards to the relationship with the mother. The father viewed the son as a rival. These fathers were very jealous of their wives and jealously also played a big role in the father-son relationship. This particular characteristic of the father-son relationship modeled how to react and feel in response to other male to male relationships in the respondent’s future. Many were very jealous and threatened if another male were in close proximity to their intimate partners.

### **EMOTIONALLY DISTANT/NONVIOLENT FATHERS**

When absent fathers returned home, they became emotionally distant or rather they never developed a closeness to their sons. Their sons had, in many cases, taken over the role of “man of the house” and “resented their father’s interference in their lives” and in their relationships with their mothers when they did return home. These fathers were not involved in any aspect of their son’s lives and yet had “high expectations” for their sons who, in many cases, had never developed the skills to fulfill those aspirations. This was a Catch-22 for these boys in that the model they followed was their father’s which

supported all their son's negative aspects while positive qualities were seen as a threat and therefore were criticized or ignored. As one respondent said "it didn't matter what I did I could never get close to my father". Another depicted his relationship with his father in this way "we didn't really click till we were older". In this case they "didn't click" until the son became "just like his father".

### **EMOTIONALLY DISTANT/PHYSICALLY VIOLENT FATHERS**

Although all the informants had emotionally distant fathers, several had fathers who were emotionally abusive as well as physically violent. One informant reported "my father was violent with everyone in the family --yes some of the beatings' I got I couldn't go to school because of the bruises-- he'd have gone to jail today". This same informant tried to burn down the minister's house, a house that his father had been painting, in an effort "to get back at him"...he was eight.

Another informant explained that "I always took my father's abuses to heart and felt my father hated me and as a result I grew with a lack of confidence." For this informant no matter what problems he faced in life his father always blamed him. "This pain", he explains, "was internalized and this process of internalization really hurt." "Consequently when anyone criticizes me I hear my father's voice all over again", he further explained. Fear was a primary emotion felt by the sons toward this kind of father. "I was afraid of him, everybody was. He was a very rough guy. He was violent all the time".

For others in this group "father always made the final decisions " and "love for

women always involves displays of jealousy.” These fits of jealousy often resulted in mothers and children being beaten. One father told his son “if I had killed your mother years ago then you would never have been born”. His message to his son in this incident was twofold. One, that he should be grateful to his father for sparing the life of his mother and secondly, in this incident this father also served as a role model to his son of one of the possible options in problem solving in an intimate relationship. This same informant reports “I got my expectations of women from my dad and that’s just the way I was”.

### **ALCOHOLIC FATHER**

Many of the respondents described their father as “alcoholic”. Some had difficulty describing their father’s drinking that way as is evidenced by this quote “I don’t have the right to call him that but he was an alcoholic for sure”. Another reported “my father loved his drink but he didn’t drink at home. And another “my dad liked typical wrestling and you know he drank.” This respondent believed the drinking to be “typical male behavior along with hitting women and children and infidelity”. Again for those whose father’s were alcoholic they too turned to alcohol.

### **MOTHER AS “THE GOOD WOMAN”**

Many respondents describe their mothers in almost angelic terms. One reported his mother to be “the heart of the home”, several others describe the mother as “a very good woman.” This sentiment seems to be attached to how bad the abuse by the father was. In

other words the more she had to put up with the more likely father and son were to “worship her”. One respondent described his mother’s life “as hell on earth” but she just kept taking it.

Again the more she had to “put up with” the more likely she was to be seen in saintly terms. For some respondents being “a good woman” and being religious seem to go together. Their sons view them as “good long-suffering women”. Mothers were to be like this because their role and their religion dictate this to be so. “My mother was the one to stay home she was always home cleaning so that is why I am closer to my mother”, one informant said explaining his close relationship with his mother. Another described his mother as “a survivor” as though she had been in a war. The fact that these mothers were at home all the time was seen as a positive attribute while the fact that the father worked and lived away from home was seen as a negative aspect of family life. For these men traditional roles were strictly adhered to when they had relationships. This was just as their mothers and fathers had modeled for them to be.

One respondent respected his mother because she was tranquil and well educated. He reported that “he worshiped her”. This is the same man who continues to worship his victim. Men in the group seem to have strong images of how women should be and act and these expectations were transferred to their female partners in later years.

### MOTHER AS VICTIM

In many cases the informant's mother was physically abused and was often abused in front of the informant. The informant developed the image of the mother as a victim. As one informant reported, some women are just "hostages to men". Another said "my mother was terrified of my father." He often beat her so badly that he broke bones and he broke her nose once". Life, for one mother, "was a long difficult road". Some of the informants perceived their mothers as weak and powerless, he explains, "my mother was powerless over her own life as well as powerless over my father's addictions." Note how this informant reports that his mother was powerless not over "father" but rather removes the blame and places it on the "addictions". (This same informant reported he had a gambling addiction and that it was the addiction which killed his partner). One informant said that as a result of his mother's powerlessness "I lost all respect for her".

In many cases when the son got old enough he gave his father "a taste of his own medicine". In one case after beating his father he felt such guilt that he remembered the incident in minute detail many years after the event. These sons would strive for closeness with their fathers and forgive them over and over again for their "bad behavior". It is interesting to note that these same men acted in the same way to their partners as their fathers did to their mothers. The combination of weak/victim mother and abusive father was a terrible combination for these children in that they focused on their fathers and tried so hard to get their acceptance that in the end they become just like the father especially in cases where there was no contradictory male role model or a mother who strongly

defended herself and her children. As one respondent said “ I broke my mother’s heart over and over” which was not unlike how the father treated her.

### **THE AGGRESSIVE MOTHER**

In some cases mothers were both victim and aggressor. This was the woman who fought back but in a way that modeled the use of violence to solve problems. One informant witnessed his mother pouring hot oil over the head of the father. This son then watched as the police took his mother away to jail. Another turned against the children by hitting them with a hair brush across the ears. In this case the father tried to intervene without success. In all these cases these were the mothers who fought back albeit in the same way as their partners, using violence and aggression to make a point. All of these women finally divorced their husbands.

### **GRANDPARENTS AND EXTENDED FAMILY AS MENTORS**

In five of the six cases when these informants, as children, could not get what they needed from their fathers and mothers they turned to their grandparents who, in many cases, lived with the informants. In only one case was this negative in that his grandmother “ruled the roost with an iron fist”. These boys turned to grandfathers and uncles to try to establish relationships. Generally these relationships were positive although not long-lasting as the grandparents were usually older and died before these boys reached adulthood. All the informants grieved for the loss of their grandparents and described their grandfathers, and in one case an uncle, as being mentors and heroes to these

young boys. When asked if they ever had a mentor one respondent reported that there had once been a foster father who cared for him but that it was “too little too late” and that Children’s Aid returned him home to his abusive father and weak mother before any positive affects could take hold.

### SUMMARY

All the informants in this study had difficult, conflicted relationships with their fathers as well as with their mothers albeit in a different way. These men spent many years trying to understand and come to terms with these relationships. The types of relationship described were consistent with those described in Athens work on violentization in that these men, as boys, were often brutalized and coached into having a violent self image and a violent response to conflict. They also seemed to hold traditional views of women as the homemaker and in all cases their mothers did not work outside the home. Not one of the respondents had a strong relationship with their siblings or with their own children in later years. Mentors and strong positive male role models as well as strong female role models seemed to make the difference in terms of how these men as children felt about themselves. There seems to be a continuum of anger and violence directly related to how they were regarded as children and then as men.

### **IMAGE OF THE SELF**

The respondents were asked questions about how they viewed themselves as children, as men and in light of their crime. Questions were asked in relation to what their parents, siblings and peers thought about them. Not surprisingly considering some of the respondents family backgrounds, negative self image was a theme in terms of their view of self. This category fell into two sub themes: 1) violent negative self-image and 2) nonviolent negative self-image. Although positive self images were rare in this group, some men did hold positive self regard particularly in relation to whom they saw themselves as having been as young boys.

#### **NEGATIVE-VIOLENT SELF IMAGE**

All respondents in this category embraced a negative image of themselves to varying degrees which seemed to change and develop over time and was directly related to the image their parents held of them. Particularly powerful, to the respondent, was the image the father held of his son. One respondent's view of himself was that of a violent person "but only when triggered". "Once triggered" he reports "I would become a different person not the normal easy going get along with anyone kinda guy". Triggers ranged from "arguing about how to read a road map" in one incident to real or imagined infidelity in others. Several could fly into a rage if supper wasn't ready on time. Another responded described himself as "being like a tornado going through people's lives but



since the murder the eye of the storm has passed". Other violent descriptions of the self were: "I was too violent", "too aggressive", "out-of-control", "very controlling", "I had a terrible temper" and "I was a scrapper most definitely the black sheep of the family." One remembers the day that he became just like his dad: "The abuse occurred until I was 16 that was the last time he raised his hand to me. I told him if he ever touched my mother or me again that was it." The violence was implied but it worked and the process was complete and he was "just like dad". This is the same man who kidnaped a taxi driver at knife point during a prison escape. All of the above are the violent depictions some of the respondents had of themselves and particularly of their response to others. It is interesting to note that the descriptors used were the same descriptors the respondent used in relation to their fathers.

As to what the respondent perceives the reasons for the development of these negative self-images to be, they vary. One respondent contends that he held "a male abuser belief system" which embraced a view of women which "involves controlling every aspect of her life" and thereby tried to change any aspect of her character which did not fit his rigid view of women as "the good woman". This belief system was one his father espoused and the one to which his mother was victim. Another describes his violence as a sickness which manifested itself in his relationships, "I was sick spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally". "Things had to be done my way", another said, I was too controlling, very possessive". And another, "I knew I was too aggressive, too violent toward women and I knew I had to stop, I didn't like it but I didn't hit every girl just a

couple”. This respondent was violent with women who were most like his father. He eventually, (after prison), married a woman who was just like his mother. His anger and aggression were manifested in the inability to express a rainbow of the emotions. He could only express his anger and violence.

There is an insecurity arising from the negative self-image which leads to the perceptions of a threat from another person, usually a man, and feeling of jealousy and anger provoke a decision about a violent action as a solution to the problem of the perceived threat. Consider the following excerpt:

*“One time I arrived and knocked on the door and she had someone in there and of course it flipped me out I kept knocking because I knew someone was in there. So I said he has five minutes to be out of there or I’m coming in and taking him out of there. He finally left. I was pretty angry you know, very hurt. More hurt than angry. I never said anything to him. When he came out of the house he started to walk up the street and I just backed the van up right even with him until he got to an apartment. I thought he is just trying to avoid the problem you know. I just backed all the way up the street right beside him. I’m looking at him but he wouldn’t turn his head and look at me, I think if he would have turned his head and looked at me I would have got out and ...I was ready to hurt this fellow but I didn’t because he wouldn’t look at me. But if he had I would have gone the distance. You know it wasn’t his fault but I would have taken it out on him. It could have gone volatile in a hot second.”*

This cycle is not unlike the violent modeling they witnessed as young boys. For an example of this cycle consider this excerpt from a “Jim”. “I would worry when I went to work what was she doing. I’m convinced there were other men for her. I became obsessive. Sometimes she would go out and be gone to her brothers for hours and hours. Sure she was with other guys! That night she went to her brothers. That night she died. She didn’t deserve to die she just happened to be there and my anger was directed at her.

She wore it all. Her murder was an accumulation of everything”. Like this respondent many of the men make the connection of the murder to the violent modeling with which they grew up. These men could use the term murderer and murder in relation to themselves and the act they committed.

### **NONVIOLENT NEGATIVE SELF-IMAGE**

Some of the respondents had never been physically violent before the murder and therefore they did not embrace a violent self-image. They did not even admit to violent thoughts. As a consequence these men were very surprised by their violent actions when they killed their partners. These were the respondents who described the feeling as one of “snapping”. These men had little positive descriptors to use in relation to themselves. One man, when asked, responded “self image ...it was nonexistent.”

These men viewed themselves as “blah”, “nothing special”, and “zilch”. “Bad” was the description that came up most frequently in this category. They also describe themselves as: “a man with no self-confidence”, “possessing no self-esteem”, “not having the ability to make a relationship work”, “I have never been good enough” and “was never able to express myself”. Another reported “I was totally invisible” and questioned if the murder was a way to be more visible. All these descriptions are about an absence of characteristics or abilities as opposed to the presence of the characteristics of violence as in the first category. That being said jealousy as an ever present feeling factored into this category as well as the previous one. As ‘Ian’ tells us “based on my background growing

up seeing how men treat women to me it seemed like a natural to express your love by showing displays of jealousy'. His victim died due to just such a show of jealousy.

### **POSITIVE NONVIOLENT SELF-IMAGE**

None of the men held a strong positive self-image. Several could not think of one good attribute that they possessed yet several others could report a few positive traits.. The most frequently reported positive characteristic in this category was quiet: "quiet", "quiet reserved" and "easy to get along with". Quiet was seen as a positive quality by these men while several other respondents interpreted their quietness as an inability to communicate. Several had very specific nonviolent positive self regard. These men viewed themselves as "not possessive", "very accepting", "very compassionate", "bright", "very forgiving", "never violent", "never jealous", "always truthful" and "never been in a fight in my life" that is until they murdered their partners. Upon examination these men were most likely to be the men who had a mentor who held them in high regard, and/or a nonviolent father and/or and mother who was not a victim. These men could not use the term murderer in relation to themselves and most often called the murder "the incident".

### **SUMMARY**

The data reveal that most of the respondents felt differently about themselves before the murder than after. Some felt that they were better people since the murder although they did not attribute the betterment of their character to the action of the murder. The

murder, they said, was “ a wake up call”. As one man put it:

*“It’s hard to say but I’m a much, much better person than I was since I committed the crime. It’s sad to say but I learned from it OK. I can say I’ve been on both sides of the fence. If somebody tells me I know how you feel no you don’t unless you’ve been through what I went through because we all feel different, act different.”*

For all the respondents in this study violence leading to death (murder) was the crime which led them to prison however as is evident from the data not all were physically violent before the crime. Men who had some positive images of themselves were the most shocked by the murder when it happened while men who held violent self images were less surprised with one respondent clearly knowing he was capable of murder long before the murder happened. One respondent seemed to fall into Hare’s (1994) category of psychopathic murderer. He murdered because it was expedient to do so and he expressed little remorse for his crime. This respondent held himself in very high regard at the time of the murder and continues to do so.

### **RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VICTIM:**

#### **CHANGES IN PERCEIVED QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP**

The respondents were asked questions about the relationship with the victim with the expressed purpose of gaining information and understanding about how the relationship began, developed and ended with the murder. Questions were asked in order to try to get underneath how the men felt at the beginning of the relationship and how they felt just before they murdered their victims. As would be expected several themes emerged and were on a continuum. They are: 1) Wonderful perfect love/wonderful love, 2) Detachment / Anxious attachment, and 3) Passionate / Very Bad.

#### **WONDERFUL PERFECT LOVE / WONDERFUL LOVE**

Some of the respondents perceived their relationship as “wonderful”, “super” and “perfect”. They felt “they were perfectly matched”, “had lots of chemistry” and “were soul mates”. For one respondent he perceived that he and his wife had “the ideal life” with their motto being “together we can do anything”. This same respondent felt that “their marriage was the envy everyone”. He perceived this to be because they “had open communication”, which included “never having secrets” and “holding great respect for each other”. He also perceived their relationship was perfect because they never argued. “It was”, he said, “a relationship full of feelings.” One respondent put it brilliantly when

he said “yes you **know** your love is strong it’s not that you **know** it’s not.” This knowing appears to be very strong even when all the circumstances conflict with that knowing and even when the object of that love is telling her partner that the image he holds is incorrect.

These types of relationships were based on romantic love and were not violent physically. If there had been disagreement, which most relationships have, these respondents could not admit to them as to do so would have shattered their image of the perfect romantic relationship. Men in this category had great difficulty in talking about the murder and in fact both said they could not remember the actual “incident”. When asked the question, if everything was perfect why did their partners leave them, they could not entertain the thought that she may not have felt that the relationship was wonderful. The victim was giving indications that she was planning on leaving but this respondent vehemently stated that behavior such as hers was not an indication that she was leaving or that she was unhappy. For one respondent it was the only question of all the questions asked that visibly disturbed him. It seems on careful examination that he created and maintained the image of a perfect relationship in spite of the victim’s behaviors which were contrary to the image. The image became a burden to maintain. He silenced her on the subject when presented with contradictory information and when her behavior could not be reinterpreted as anything but dissatisfaction she was silenced permanently.

As previously stated the respondents who perceived their relationships as perfect found it difficult, if not found it impossible, to accept responsibility for the deterioration of the relationship. In fact they could not see nor would admit that the relationship was

deteriorating. As one respondent put it “I couldn’t think about it not working because it seemed like a failure like I would end up like my parents”. However, for those who could see some downward spiral, they projected the responsibility elsewhere. They described the problems as attributable to “environmental problems” meaning, in this case, the fact that he was unemployed. For another he could admit that his marriage had “slipped a few notches” but thought it was the fact that the marriage counselor they were seeing to “tune up the relationship” had “turned his wife against him”. For these men when the end came they were both “totally shocked” that the partners left them. Until the murder and long after they continued to perceive the relationship as wonderful and close to perfect. When their partners left and in one case the victim clearly wanted to separate, this respondent attributed the action on her part as being the influence of others. Both insisted that their partners had loved them “right up to the minute she died”. After one respondent shot his wife in the back he was seen leaning over his victim and telling her how much he loved her. Even in death the image of perfection was not to be shattered so strong was/is that image.

### **DETACHMENT/ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT**

Two of the six respondents began a relationship with the victim without the “feeling of love”. As one said “we had to get married and I didn’t love her”. In this case a pregnancy precipitated the marriage. In another case the respondent’s father arranged a marriage for his son. “This was not a love marriage. The first time we met we married



and we were strangers”. As he reported “she belonged to me she was my wife”. Feelings of a positive nature were not an expectation in these relationships nor were there ever any present. Neither perceived their marriages to be happy at any time. One explained that his marriage was “very tumultuous”. Slowly and over time both men’s perceptions of their partners became obsessive. The behavior associated with this obsessiveness included stalking, controlling her behavior and activities and verbal abuse. As one of these men reported “I didn’t have a relationship I had a hostage”.

While anxiety appeared to be a strong feeling in all cases examined it was a particularly strong feeling in this type of relationship. Both of these relationships were fraught with arguments and verbal abuse with no reports of physical violence until the murder. Both use the term anxiety and obsessiveness to describe how they felt about the relationship just before the murder. Both felt that they had “done the victim a favor in marrying them” and in the case of the arranged marriage he felt that because his father had given her to him that she “belonged to him” much as a purchased possession would.

For the respondent who had married out of obligation he reports that after twenty years of marriage and seven affairs on her part the latest affair was more than he could take. He was anxious all the time and had a sick feeling inside. He sought help at the local hospital emergency room but the doctor was a female and he could not bring himself to talk with a woman about his marriage. He chose murder to “end his suffering”. Divorce was not entertained as an option for either respondent. For one “divorce was wrong” for religious reasons and for the other divorce was not ever considered so abhorrent was the

thought.

For the respondent who had the arranged marriage he reports “ we met in September and married in October and from the beginning it was very hard to stay together. There was a lot of criticism on her part and an anxiety on my part to change”. In this relationship arguing was a daily occurrence and he felt “anxious all the time”. This respondent was the most passive of all the respondents but was the most obsessive and killed in the most violent way. He is also the respondent that described the killing as a method to get rid of his anxiety. “With each blow the anxiety left and it has never returned”.

### **PASSIONATE / VERY BAD**

Many of the respondent’s relationships began and were based on passion both physical and emotional. In this theme the respondents began a relationship based on physical passion alone. These respondents reported that they did not love the victim. In one case he describes the beginnings as having “a rip-roaring time together” and “she was wild like me”. This relationship was rated as “the most passionate I ever had.” The positive perceptions of this relationship revolved around drinking and sex and the perception was fleeting. Love of the partner was not part of the perception. This respondent loved another woman but ran off with S. because she was “a dream”. “The dream quickly turned to a nightmare”, he reported.

Just as the relationship was more passionate than any other so too was it “more

volatile”. The respondent perceived that in a very short time the relationship became “very bad”. It was physically abusive and mutually combative with both hitting each other. At first, he said, there was a brief time of “happiness” but he soon perceived the relationship as one “that would never work.” In the end the fact that “I couldn’t control my feelings when she left and it was eating me up” and for the other respondent “the anxiety about her other involvements was horrendous.” What her other involvements meant for him was “there was no place for us in that”. These men also felt embarrassed that they had “been made a fool of.” I was always angry, frustrated and hurt. He became, he said, “frustrated and angry all the time”. He wanted to get out but did not know how because the negative emotions were so strong. In the end, he said, “I killed my relationship”.

### **SUMMARY**

For men who believed their relationship to be “perfect” and “wonderful”, they seemed to be the most shocked by marital difficulties and separation. The men in this category could not admit, even years after the murder, that there had been marital problems. One man who had this type of relationship asked the interviewer if she could help him to understand why he had murdered his partner because “he did not understand why it (the murder) had happened when they had loved each other so much.” The men who began their relationships in a detached way were also men who suffered the most anxiety when the relationship was ending. Rather than being relieved that a bad marriage was over they experienced severe anxiety. Perhaps this anxiety is a result of a clear

understanding that rejection is imminent whereas for men who don't admit to any problems the rejection and pain rest below the surface and are not fully experienced. Conversely men who had strong sexual, passionate detached relationships were also detached emotionally. The two men who fall into this category suffered the least remorse and felt the murder was a way to "solve a problem". Detached men who become anxiously attached when separated describe returning to the detached state following the murder and spoke in very detached terms about the victim's death where men who were "in love" and passionately involved felt deep remorse and grief.

### **FEELINGS AND EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE MURDER**

In order to understand the respondent's actions, which led to murder in all six cases, it is imperative that we attempt to understand what the respondents were feeling and experiencing a few days before they murdered their partners. It is also important to understand why certain actions were chosen in response to those feelings. Clear themes emerge in this section with the most prevalent emotion experienced being anxiety which will be the focus of this section. Several different actions were chosen as a response to the anxiety. They include: 1) stalking, 2) avoidance and 3) murder as the final response.

### **ANXIETY**

Of all of the feelings experienced by the respondents, in relation to the period of time leading up to the murder as well as the murder itself, anxiety was the most prevalent feeling expressed. All other feelings were in abeyance to anxiety. Anxious thoughts and

feelings were a response to several events including separation, imminent separation, infidelity or suspected infidelity and in one case the fear that he was about to be caught embezzling from the victim's trust fund in order to gamble.

The feelings of anxiety were so overwhelming for one who reported "when I found out she was going to leave I was sick not sick sick but that feeling inside ... anxious and panicky". Another reports "the night I lost it...it might have been an accumulation of all that anxiety." Another began feeling anxious the moment he married his wife and when she left he experienced such heightened anxiety that he lost his job as well as all of his friends. He rarely ate and experienced escalating anxiety for a year before the murder "every waking moment was focused on how to get her back so I wouldn't feel like this anymore." The anxiety provoked other feelings including powerlessness, anger, rejection and hatred toward the self and others with anxiety being the first emotion experienced at the first sign of crisis in the intimate relationship

### **RESPONSES TO ANXIETY**

#### **STALKING**

Stalking, for many of the men in this study, was the first response in an attempt to relieve the anxiety. One respondent described how stalking both relieved the anxiety and exacerbated the anxiety as well as the stalking behavior. The stalking would begin with thoughts which included "I was afraid she wouldn't come home" or "I didn't know where

she was and **I needed** to talk with her to clear the situation up.” These thoughts led to more anxious feelings and thoughts including, “I knew there were other men for her and I needed to catch her.” This appears to be another way to be rid of the anxiety as the anxiety, on the surface, seems to be related to the unknown so that if somehow he can justify why he might be doing what he is doing then he might be able to alleviate the anxiety, or so the thinking goes. Also, in this situation, if the perpetrator can be seen to be right, even to himself, then it would be her fault and not his and he would be vindicated and the reward would be to be anxiety free.

Another common thought was, “I must find out why she left.” These types of thoughts resulted in the continued escalation of anxious thoughts and feelings. The way some men responded to this escalation was to think “if only I could see her, to talk with her then the anxiety would go away and this would set the matter straight.” Consider this excerpt:

*“I didn’t know where she was. I tried to find out. I didn’t sleep, I just paced the house, drank coffee and I kept saying what did I say? What did I do? I don’t remember. What could be so awful that she had to leave me? I HAD to find out. I phoned her parents, friend, my kids, my brother, her work, I was in shock”.*

When Jack finally spoke with the victim the anxiety was relieved but only momentarily and when it returned it was much worse because talking to her had brought relief and now he craved relief from the anxiety. He also, at this point, focused on her power to relieve the anxiety and she became the one he looked to as being the perpetrator

of his pain. At no time during this internal dialogue did he say to himself that he has control and choice about his feelings. At this point his anxiety reached a peak and he said to himself, "I must see her so I'll go down to her work and I will take a loaded gun to show her so she will know how important it is for me to talk with her". Jack is one of the men who was not violent before the murder had never been in trouble with the law, had a good job and thought his marriage was perfect.

### AVOIDANCE

Two of the six respondents had a very different response to anxiety. Although they describe severe anxiety their response, in contrast to wanting contact and stalking their victim, was to avoid contact with the victim as contact, they felt, would make the anxiety worse. Time away from their partner was the way to heal for these men. In both cases infidelity on the part of the victim was confirmed and the perpetrator, who held traditional views of women, viewed the victim as irreparable along with the relationship. She was now "a bad woman" with whom he no longer wished contact. The victim sought a relationship with the perpetrator and in some way wanted to repair the image he now held of her. In both cases an argument began, insults were hurled with the murder of the woman the end result. Consider Ian's story again:

*"Well we got into an argument and you know I started to say well basically what I felt about her and we traded insults. She said the other guy was a better guy than I would ever be and so I pushed her and then I shoved her to the point she picked up the knife and*

*I pushed her and in all the confusion I stabbed myself and then I lost it and began stabbing her.” She died at the scene.*

### **MURDER**

One respondent described the murder as a problem solving method. “The murder solved the immediate problem of the anxiety”, he reports, “and I felt better once I killed” and “the anxiety left and never returned”, said another.” In some ways how they describe the murder is in terms of trying to restore some equilibrium to their emotional self. They describe the self as being under attack. None of the respondents talked about the victim in terms of hatred and anger although some felt that the victim was the author of and the one responsible for sustaining the anxiety. In fact many of these men felt that the women in their lives had control over these feelings. As the feelings became out of control the woman became seen as controller of the feelings and responsible for not relieving them of these strong negative feelings. Then the men began to view the woman as the enemy. Murder than was decided upon as a way to both get rid of the feelings and the enemy who was seen as responsible for those feelings.

### **SUMMARY**

Men in this study felt extreme emotion for several days before the murder and in two cases for many months before the murder. Anxiety was experienced as a powerful emotion and stalking was a prevailing behavior in an attempt to alleviate the feeling of



anxiety. Contrary to feeling powerful these respondents felt powerless and seemed to lack understanding of why they felt the way they did. Several described the murder as a way out of the anxiety. All of them use the term snapping as something they experienced at the time of the murder. For the men who had, in their view, a perfect life they describe the turn of events as waking up and being in “a nightmare”. The soliloquy which they employed in relation to the victim does lend credence to the view that contrary to this being “a crime of passion” there is a reasoning through of what needs to be done and why.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The murder of a woman by her intimate partner is not simply a family tragedy or a private matter. The number of women killed each year and the response to that killing is the equivalent of an airliner crashing once per year and the federal aviation inspectors simply stepping over the wreck, loading up the next plane and allowing it to take off. A less than thorough examination or no examination at all results in more loss of life both in the case of the airplane crash and femicide and examination to date has been done through a decidedly feminist lens.

This researcher is aware that there has been a strong negative critique of feminist theory in the body of this paper. Regardless of how painful it may be it is crucial that researchers analyze why they use the theories they do and why they choose to look at an issue in one way versus another. It is important to understand that the image of men who kill as a man frothing at the mouth and killing in order to maintain power and control are images built from an ideological view point by a movement with a political/social agenda. Solutions are then molded to fit with the horrific images presented. We must acknowledge “that the formation of a particular discourse creates contingent centers of power which define areas of knowledge, passing truths and frameworks of explanation and understanding. Those with power can control the language of the discourse and can

therefore influence how the world is to be seen and what it shall mean.” (Howe: 1994:522) In the area of woman abuse and murder feminists have had the power of the discourse on the issue of woman abuse. This has meant that women and men who fall outside the prescribed categories have been largely ignored. Feminists explore what is useful and ignore what is not. Most of the men in this study fell outside the understood stereotypes.

The solutions devised and lobbied for to date are: shelters for battered women, stiffer penalties for men who abuse (ironically the law and order agenda of the far right), restraining orders and anger management groups for men, some of which are court ordered. In terms of lowering the death rate of women these solutions have worked so infrequently one wonders why they continue to be the only solutions asked for. Feminist therapists discourage the use of family counseling as a method of intervention and believe that they, as therapists, have been successful with a women, when she has left her abusive partner. Feminist theorists are against using systems theory to look at families as they report that this somehow puts some of the responsibility for the abuse onto the woman and the woman is the victim and therefore blameless. Psychoanalytic theory is equally “woman blaming” and so is employed infrequently. Given that the focus is on the woman where are the troubled men to go for help when they need it? Although, clearly, there is a need for society to show disdain for violence against women and femicide by enforcing stronger penalties, strong penalties alone will not save women. There will come a time when the men in the equation can no longer be ignored for to do so will only ensure the

continued deaths of women.

The men in this study were not a homogenous group and the differences between the men can lend valuable information to the existing research on intimate violence and femicide. Further these men are not always men who were abusive before the murder.

In the families of the men in this study, they all without exception came from traditional homes where the man was “the bread winner” and the woman was “the homemaker”. The men remarked that women were often subservient to men and that this was the way it should be. Clearly this is not a causal factor but more qualitative research is necessary to understand if strict role expectations in the family contribute to femicide and if so how.

Some men in this study did fall into the category of being abusive men who abused their wives to death. Their self image, self talk and actions were violent because they themselves were victims of abusive violent families. They learned what they lived. However, several other informants were never violent before the murder. The data reveal (in a limited way) that contrary to feeling angry these men felt emotional pain, hurt and defeat. Anger was a bi-product of much stronger emotions. They perceived themselves to be powerless and felt powerless with their partners just as they did as young children with their abusive fathers and in some cases with abusive mothers. The data presented here do not reveal men who feel a need for power and control over the other rather to the contrary they feel powerless and out of control. This concurs with Dutton’s (1994) theory that men who are abusive or kill often feel very powerless in intimate relationships. In most of

these cases the murder was not the final act in a lifetime of escalating abuse.

Walker (1985) contends that men are not good historians due to the rage they experience which causes memory loss. There was language in the data that at first blush lends credence to this view. The respondents used terms like automatism, blacked out and the more common "I can't remember." This researcher, by virtue of the fact that time could be spent with the informant and questions could be asked in a variety of ways, concluded that unlike true memory loss replete with the frustrations which often accompany it, the answers the men gave seemed more like selective memory. Although more exploratory research is needed in this area there did appear to be a connection between selective memory loss and guilt and shame as Dutton also points out in his research.

Wilson and Daly's Sociobiology theory was only useful to this researcher in terms of helping to focus on the issue of age difference which did come up with the men interviewed. Wilson and Daly (1988) contend that an age difference of more than fifteen years is a very good predictor of murder. In their book "Homicide" they report that they are aware of this statistic but did not speculate why this might be. In this study two men were over fifteen years older than their victim. One man explained that he felt he consistently picked younger women because he had been in prison throughout his twenties and thirties and therefore was developmentally "stuck" in his late teens which was where he left off before prison. Men involved with much younger women did have difficulty negotiating their partner's different developmental stages as Wilson and Daly suggest.

One respondent who was 17 years older than his partner could not understand why his partner wanted children after eight years of marriage when they had explicitly decided that they would not have children. Did these men who were involved in these May/December unions kill out of wanting to control their partner's biological possibilities as Wilson and Daly contend? This research did not capture any language that would indicate this to be so but more research is necessary in order to understand this most intriguing statistic.

Dutton's (1994) and to some extent Chimbos' (1978) use of the ecological theory was very useful as it helps to focus attention on the microsystem and those factors which Dutton and Chimbos both claim are predictive in nature. As Dutton contends, his theory is more useful in looking at men who abuse and kill because it is a complex issue and using simplistic theories to examine complex questions does not work well whereas using a multi-system analysis, as was done here, is a most useful method of discovery.

Family life for almost all the men in this study was not a positive experience. They all had problems with one or more parents which in turn affected how they saw themselves as men. Relationship with their fathers was particularly conflicted and often emotionally distant. Only one or two of the men had anything positive to say about themselves and their descriptions were limited to the positive way they perceived themselves to be as children. Athens' research speaks directly to the issue of the development of the self and the importance of that development in the life of violent criminals. "Soliloquies, says Athens, "supply the vital sustenance without which the self cannot live" (Athens in Rhodes: 1999: 266). The small section of analysis in this paper speaks volumes about the

need for children to have positive self regard and mentors and heroes to support that self regard. The data also support Athens' contention that the self is developed through soliloquy and that these soliloquies are developed through the process of internalizing the phantom community. If those adults who have responsibility for the child are violent so too will be the offspring.

Athens' (1997) theory is the most useful of all the theories examined and fits very well with Dutton's theory although Athens expands the theory considerably. All the men in this study were brutalized to some degree whether by commission or omission and this brutalization took place first in the family. Some of the men in this study had been through the four stages of violentization. For the others this researcher questions whether the murder itself was the final step in violentization or perhaps their first successful violent performance. Does this then mean that these men are without hope of change as Athens claims? Again more research would be needed to answer that question although we know that men in Canada who kill their partners and serve time in prison very rarely kill again. Could we say that these men are violentized and without hope of change? Perhaps jail is the intervention necessary to stop the process. Again a most interesting observation which could lead to more research.

One of the largest contributions of Athens' research is to dispel the myth of murder as a crime of passion. The crimes written about here were all crimes decided upon and executed with full thought to the outcome (death). As Athens discovered, people who commit violent crimes are talking to themselves about the crime they are about to commit

and about the nature of the person against whom they are about to commit the crime. The men in this study did have great difficulty in discussing how they felt at the time of the actual murder and what they were thinking at the time leading up to the murder so it is difficult to discern what thinking was employed at the time of the actual murder. This too is worthy of more research.

The stories the men in this study told were most often about the feelings of anxiety and how stalking was a response to the anxiety and one way to try and alleviate this strong emotion. The feelings of anxiety were directly related to their low self esteem and their feelings of powerlessness in light of such strong emotions. The stalking included self talk about the victim and her responsibility for the anxiety. These men did not have the tools to calm themselves. Their self talk and internal soliloquies about the victim became more violent as time passed and as the anxiety increased. Violence, as a final solution, was decided upon bit by bit which, in the end, culminated in murder. Athens puts forth the view that violent soliloquies are employed by those to which violence has been done and with this research this theory holds true. All the men in this study were violated by one or more parents in both nominal and severe ways. For those who were violated in severe ways they had a life that was much more conflicted than those who did not. Again this speaks volumes to child welfare agencies or anyone who does work with children and families.



### Implications for Policy and Practice

*“A theory with no policy implication is sterile, whereas a policy not guided by any explicit theory is foolhardy. Implementing a policy that is not based explicitly on some theory is like driving to a destination without a road map” (Athens: 1997:154)* What destination do we want on the trip and which map will we use to get there?

First this research shows, albeit in a limited way, that the modeling of parents is a significant factor in the development of both self esteem and negative problem solving methods. As Dutton (1994) points out the microsystem is a stronger causal factor in violence than any other system in the life of a child. Children with violent parents, where there is no intervention or mentors, will become violent. Fathers who assault their partners or mothers who assault children teach their children to be violent and to use violence as a method of problem solving. Communities that do not address the violent members in their communities will become more violent year after year.

Athens’(1997) work on the process of violentization is significant. Teachers, social workers, police and physicians need to be made more aware of the significance of the first and second stage of violentization for this is the point where intervention would be the most beneficial. Programs which teach non-violent problem solving should be made part of the curriculum both in elementary and secondary schools. The earlier this is taught to children the better. Although we know that home is the strongest system of socialization school plays a strong second role. Bullying on the playground should be seen for what it is, violent performances, and should be taken seriously and be viewed as a symptom of a

greater problem. Often, as this research shows, men who kill are men who were brutalized as children by someone who was supposed to love and care for them. Society and their communities were responsible to protect them and by not doing so failed them. It takes a village to raise a child and it takes a violent village to raise a violent child. The village (community) bares some corporate responsibility for turning a blind eye to children in need.

Secondly, men who present at hospitals, to their family doctors, social work environments, probation and parole offices or have police contact and who are anxious and are stalking their partners should be viewed as being extremely dangerous to their partners, their children and themselves. If we shift our focus from sheltering and counseling victims to addressing the emotional and psychological needs of abusive men then perhaps change can occur but first we have to recognize that those needs exist. Anger management courses which have no mentoring component should be changed to include this as a foundation of the group. This, however, would involve a shift in paradigm. It also involves dispelling myths about men and men's lives. Several of the men in this study came to the attention of their family doctor, the emergency department of their local hospital and in one case a psychiatrist shortly before they killed their partners. If the professionals they came into contact with had more comprehensive assessment tools and education then perhaps tragedy could have been averted. If only they did not hold the image of the man who murders as a monster and whom they think they surely would recognize upon sight, then perhaps the impending murder could be predicted. If only they

could look beyond the images to the reality. The man who murders his partner has often been a law abiding citizen, a contributing member of the community and, on the outside at least, does not look like a particularly troubled individual.

Thirdly, in the last few years Children's Aid Societies have changed from a subjective assessment of family model which relied solely on the assessment ability of the worker, to a risk assessment model which, although remaining subjective in nature, organizes the worker's assessment in terms of drawing the worker to focus on and attend to issues of neglect, violence in families, addictions and adult mental health. There seems to be a renewed emphasis on intervening earlier for better results for the children which is a positive change. However, in this research, only one of the men ever came to the attention of the Children's Aid Society in his area and then without positive results. The question is would the men in this study have, as children, come to the attention of a child protection agency. The answer is no, at least not then. Would they today? The system has changed enough to perhaps include these men as children but for the men in this study who were from middle and upper class homes probably not. The majority of the client population of most Children's Aid Societies is decidedly not the middle or upper class. The data and current literature reveal that early intervention for all children who are being brutalized is necessary to ensure healthy non-violent homes and communities.

The changes which need to occur are not all major changes although some are. First, with a slight paradigm shift, we might see ourselves clear to begin to realize that shelters for battered women, although a great band-aid solution to a growing problem, do not save

women's lives in any significant numbers. The number of deaths have remained the same for twenty years although the number of shelters have increased significantly in that time. By ignoring women's voices who ask time and again where her husband or partner can get help, we simply ensure there will be more victims. It's like treating the symptoms and not the disease. We are told there is not enough money for men's groups and the men's groups that are being developed are predicated on feminist images and stereotypes of men. In the early days of the feminist movement there was a lot of discussion about opening shelters for men with men being removed from the homes. This discussion fell by the wayside as the solutions became more directly women focused and as the ultimate solution to the problem was seen to be to get her away from her partner permanently, even when the woman voiced the opposite desire. The fight for money is a reality and if money is available it usually is given to shelters over men's groups. In an ideal world there needs to be provision for both for to leave the man with his needs unaddressed is to ensure more victims of violence and of femicide.

### **Limitations of this research**

There are a number of limitations of this research. First and foremost is sample size. With only six men the analysis is limited but does provide some direction for further research. The findings then are cursory by virtue of sample size. The size of this research paper is another limitation in that, for example issues of class and culture were not included in the current analysis due to space. Another limitation of qualitative research is

that the story given is one with an agenda. The participants want to put a positive spin on their side of the story and the researcher must always be aware of this and repeat questions in a manner which attempts to get the most accurate picture of the respondents experience possible. In spite of the limitations the data does reveal some intriguing issues and questions which could be the foundation for further research.

#### **Directions for further research**

As stated previously further research is needed if we are to ever understand the dynamic of anxiety and how large a role this feeling plays in intimate murder. There is also more research needed to try to capture more language of the murderer's soliloquy. What was he saying to himself in the days and even minutes leading up to the crime? Athens' study could be replicated with men who murder intimates in order to ascertain what phantom community the perpetrators employ and what soliloquies they use leading up to the murder. More research which looks specifically at class and culture would also be helpful along with research on what intervention works well with those who are anxious and stalking their victims.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Many women died at the hands of their intimate partners this year and many women will die next year. Will this type of research now or in the future make a difference? This researcher hopes so. The loss to society, to communities and to the children of the victims and to perpetrators is incalculable. There could be solutions which will see a decrease of women's deaths. We simply need to be open, creative and care enough to make the necessary changes. Professionals need to think outside of the box that the media and those with a political agenda have devised for us. As professionals we should analyze why we do our work in the way in which we do. We should ask what lies beneath our theories and practice?

In 1952 John Steinbeck wrote his great novel *East of Eden*. His observations ring true now just as they did then. He observes, "The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell he fears. And with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for rejection, and with crime guilt-and there is the story of mankind". Therein too lies the tragedy of femicide.

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## APPENDIX I

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interviewer will ask both open and closed-ended questions in the following six areas in order to try and complete each man's story from his own perspective. This is only a guide consequently other areas may emerge as the researcher proceeds with the interview. The questions will be asked in a sensitive manner and with the purpose of eliciting as much information as possible regarding each man's history. Examples of the types of questions which will be asked follows each area heading.

1. **Demographic Information:** age, education, employment history.  
How old are you? When did you complete school? What kind of work have you done?
  2. **Family Background:** Family composition and size, childhood physical, emotional, sexual abuse, parental alcohol and drug abuse, abuse by a parent or of a parent. Positive family experiences.  
Please tell me about your family? Did you have brothers and sisters? Where were you situated in the family...oldest, youngest, middle? Describe for me what the rules in your house were? Please describe what would happen in your family if you broke the rules? How was anger expressed in your home? How was love displayed in your home? Please describe the relationship between your mother and father? Did either of your parents have a drinking or drug problem? Describe your relationship with them now?
  3. **Criminal history:**  
Before now have you ever been in trouble with the law? If yes describe for me what it was like the first time you got into trouble. What were you thinking at the time of the crime? How did you feel when you got caught? Were you incarcerated before now?
  4. **Relationship history:**  
At what age did you start dating? Please describe your early relationships? Please describe your relationship with your partner? What did you like about her and what did you dislike? How long did you date before you married or moved in together? Did the two of you ever fight? If yes describe for me what it felt like when you fought? If no why do you think you did not fight?
-

**5. Events leading up to the murder:**

Please describe what you were thinking and doing leading up to the murder of your partner? Could you describe the events of that day or night? How were you feeling leading up to the murder?

**6. Events after the murder**

Please describe for me your life since the crime?

**APPENDIX II****CONSENT FORM**

I HEREBY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCE OF MEN WHO MURDER THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH IS TO STUDY THE EXPERIENCE OF MEN WHO MURDER IN ORDER TO FURTHER UNDERSTAND THESE BEHAVIORS. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED BY GWEN LAMONT WHO IS DOING THIS RESEARCH IN HER CAPACITY AS A MASTERS' STUDENT OF SOCIAL WORK AT MCMASTER UNIVERSITY AND IS BEING SUPERVISED BY DR. JIM GLADSTONE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN SOCIAL WORK AT MCMASTER UNIVERSITY.

I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN AN INTERVIEW UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY.
2. I MAY REFUSE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTION AT ANY TIME.
3. I MAY WITHDRAW FROM THE RESEARCH STUDY AT ANY TIME.
4. MY NAME WILL NOT BE RECORDED ON THE INTERVIEW FORM AND THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE SEPARATED FROM THE INTERVIEW FORM SO THAT MY IDENTITY WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

