Delinquents' perceptions of family upbringing: An interpretive interactionist investigation of family patterns common in the youth of criminally charged adults.

Timothy John. Armaly

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Delinquents' Perceptions of Family Upbringing: An Interpretive Interactionist Investigation of Family Patterns Common in the Youth of Criminally Charged Adults

by

Timothy John Armaly

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Through the department of Sociology and Anthropology
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1996
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To my Mother and Father
and my High School Principal
Mr. G. W. Bezaire.
Abstract

Delinquents' Perceptions of Family Upbringing: An Interpretive Interactionist Investigation of Family Patterns Common in the Youth of Criminally Charged Adults

by

Timothy John Armaly

The area of family and deviance was examined from the perspective of the delinquent. The research investigated the question, “Do any patterns or similarities exist in how young men involved in crime perceive various aspects of their family lives during their childhood and teenage years?” Following an Interpretive Interactionist approach, 20 males sentenced to a period of probation for varying offenses, were interviewed utilizing an open ended questionnaire. Perceptions of such family aspects as discipline, communication with parents, affection, supervision, and other similar attributes were examined. Two distinct groups of individuals were revealed from the collected data. Group A, comprised of 14 subjects, perceived various aspects of their upbringing negatively. Group B, comprised of five subjects, perceived aspects of their upbringing more positively. The similarities within the groups of subjects, as well as the distinguishing characteristics of the two groups of individuals, were discussed.
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Introduction

An increasing amount of research has been conducted around the family unit and deviance. One circumstance frequently encountered within research dealing with the family has been termed the ‘broken family’ or ‘family breakdown’. However, there are inherent problems with studies dealing with the ‘breakdown’ of the nuclear family. Most notably is the fact that a number of the studies that have focused on the area have defined family breakdown in different ways. “Some define it by ‘children who do not reside with both natural parents,’ while others restrict broken home to ‘living situations in which only one adult resides with the child.’” (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1988, p. 18).

The majority of research defines the broken home as that which consists of only one parent. However, there is the possibility that the economic and residential conditions that single parents are forced into, may cause such groups to acquire the actual variables that are correlated with crime. Thus, the family structure would not be the correlate or the cause of increased delinquency but, in contrast, specific variables more readily found in such situations due to societal forces outside of the family unit.

Additionally, consideration must be given to the possibility that positive correlations found between ‘broken families’ and deviance exist simply because a number of variables that are related to criminality are more common in such family groups. The specific variables may also be found in traditionally sound families as well, but to a lesser degree. Gibbons (1987) noted that most theorists agree that the family is an important factor in the causation of criminal misbehavior. “Beyond this consensus, however, a variety of interpretations of the precise significance attached to home factors exists” (1987, p. 195).
A second inherent problem with the term ‘broken family’ is that the concept consists of a vast number of equally important variables. Each of the variables alleged to form the larger concept of the ‘broken family’ deserves direct attention. For example, specific parenting or socializing behavior could be addressed regardless of family structure. The abilities of the caretakers to socialize their children may be the result of poor housing, a lack of training, or their own inadequate upbringing. Thus, only after the specific relationships between deviant behavior and the socialization of children have been analyzed, should researchers begin to investigate which families are more likely to raise children which may become involved with crime.

**Statement of The Problem**

Although particular family structures may be inclined to possess or create the factors related to deviance, the matter will not be addressed in the research directly.

The present research will attempt to analyze the influence that parenting and various family related variables have on the behavior of adolescents. Specifically, the research will attempt to highlight family patterns in the backgrounds of delinquent young adults, that may have influenced the men’s involvement with crime. The necessary information will be collected by performing an ex post facto examination of a group of males ages 18 to 25, presently on probation for varying offenses.

The interest for the study, and alteration from prior research, lies in the fact that the delinquent’s perception of, as opposed to actual presence of family related variables will be analyzed. Although quantitative analyses may have highlighted
certain patterns among this group of males, the present research is interested in the perceptions that the subjects hold, with regards to the upbringing they had. Additionally, males in their early years of adulthood, as opposed to adolescents will be examined.

**Definition Of The Variables**

For the interactionist, concepts under study are at first *sensitizing* and only later operational. Denzin (1989b) noted that the process of operationalizing concepts within the interactionist framework is not an immediate process (p. 14). On the contrary, the process of sensitizing concepts takes place over time. The operational definitions are discovered rather than created. By utilizing the sensitizing approach, the behaviour under study is left non-operationalized until the study begins and the process representing it, as well as specific meanings attached to it are noted from the person(s) being observed. The definition of the concept or behaviour under study is formulated from the definitions given from those under study. It is exactly their definition that is sought.

Sensitizing a concept permits the sociologist to discover what is unique about each empirical instance of the concept while discovering what it displays in common across many different settings. Such a conception allows, indeed forces, the sociologist to pursue the interactionist view of reality to an empirical extreme. (Denzin, 1989b, p. 15)

Thus, the variables in the present study, those patterns or qualities in an individual’s life that may increase the likelihood of criminal behaviour, will be discovered through the interpretative process. By uncovering and analysing the men’s
perceptions of their family upbringings. It is the hope of the researcher that a number of patterns or variables will be discovered, forming the concepts under study.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Theoretical Considerations

Social Control Theory

Social Control theory holds to the idea that individuals have equal propensity to be either conformable or deviant. Consequently, society, through both formal (police, laws, etc.) and informal (family, friends, etc.) structures attempts to instill accepted norms, values, and beliefs into its members (Hagan, 1991). Further, “control theory sees constraints as operating inside and outside of the individual” (p. 95).

One aspect of social control theory implies that, through socialization, the family is responsible for internalizing upon its members, what society deems as acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Indeed the family unit has historically been responsible for the primary socialization of its offspring. According to Hodge and Kress (1988):

The family is seen as the agent of primary socialization. It is the site of the first decisive confrontation between individuals and the society they have been born into. Through the family, a society produces not simply physical bodies but also social persons. (Denzin, 1989b, p. 205)

The question may be asked. How does an individual accept or come to learn or assimilate the norms, values, and beliefs that society or even the family possesses?
Symbolic Interactionism

According to Denzin (1989b), symbolic interactionism rests on three assumptions. “Social reality as it is sensed, known, and understood is a social production” (Denzin, 1989b, p. 6). “Interacting individuals produce and define their own definitions of situations. People are capable of shaping and guiding their own behavior and that of others” (Denzin, 1989b, p. 5), and “in the course of taking their own standpoint and fitting that standpoint to the behavior of others, humans interact with one another” (Denzin, 1989b, p. 5).

Interaction becomes symbolic because individuals manipulate symbols, words, meanings, and languages throughout the process of interpretation (Denzin, 1989b, p. 5). The actions that are directed towards an object, by an individual, create the meaning that he or she assigns to it. However, these definitions are effected by interaction with others and are constantly changing because human experience is always altering. Thus, behavior is observable at the symbolic levels by examining the definitions that are assigned to events, objects, and situations while interacting with others.

As Denzin (1989b) noted, an interactionist must focus on all the symbols and interactions in a study of the meanings that an individual assigns to situations. “Focusing only on symbols, as an attitude questionnaire might, fails to record the emergent and novel relationships these symbols have with observable behaviour” (Denzin, 1989b, p. 7) For example, not only is it important to observe that an individual uses words portraying grief over an event, but equally important is the tone of voice and gestures that he or she uses which also indicate feeling and meaning.

Denzin noted that, while analyzing any behavior or event, the researcher must substitute their own perspective for that of the individual under study in order to
escape objectivism (Denzin, 1989b, p. 8). Any preconceptions must be noted and, if possible, kept from interfering with an individual's true definitions.

According to Denzin, theory is interpretation. Further theory and method must go hand in hand almost blending together (Denzin, 1989b, p. 2).

Theories are never proven right or wrong; they are more or less persuasive to one or another audience of readers. Theories, in this view, are interpretations of the social world. These interpretations may be imposed by the sociologist... or they may flow from the experiences and interpretations of those studied. (Denzin, 1989b, p. 3)

**Interpretive Interactionism**

The present research attempts to reject conventional methods of studying the family's relationship with crime. The majority of research dealing with the family's influence on crime generally studies the problem from 'outside' of the situation. By collecting statistics, researchers have been able to calculate trends and patterns for a number of family variables. However, little information has been obtained that allows a clear understanding of the social-psychological influences that actually lead up to, or allow, some individuals to become delinquent while others in similar circumstances 'steer free' of crime.

The focus of the present study will be the analysis of one central question. Do any patterns or similarities exist in how young men involved in crime perceive various aspects of their family lives during their childhood and teenage years? The answer to this question may lead future research to focus its attention in a new direction. It may shed light on one of criminology's central questions. What
causes some individuals to become involved with crime while others, even in similar circumstances, manage to refrain from unacceptable behavior?

It is the writer’s belief that there is only one way to correctly answer this question that Sociologists and Criminologists have been attempting to answer for years. Researchers must ask those individuals that are involved with crime, to relate their experiences to us. Only then, will we be able to better understand the variables and interactions that led up to the delinquency.

Thus, the most practical method for analyzing such a question is to seek information from those directly involved with crime. Denzin (1989a) was interested with the experiences of individuals and claimed that the most reliable and useful method of understanding social events was to somehow experience or grasp the events ourselves through Interpretive Interactionism. Interpretive Interactionism attempts to make the world of lived experience directly accessible to the reader. It endeavors to capture the voices, emotions, and actions of those studied. The focus of interpretive research is on those life experiences that radically alter and shape the meanings persons give to themselves and their experiences (Denzin, 1989a, p. 10).

The most practical area to begin any research that attempts to understand the behavior of individuals would seem to be with the individuals being studied themselves. No one can more clearly relate the events that led up to a behavior than the individuals involved. Researchers constantly ignore this fact, and continuously struggle to answer questions without the input of those under investigation. “Interpretive Interactionists are interpreters of problematic, lived experiences involving symbolic interaction between two or more persons.” (Denzin, 1989a, p. 13).

Denzin (1989a) noted that there are two basic types of interpretive research. The first type attempts to build meaningful interpretations of social and cultural
problems. The aim is to construct interpretations that are grounded in social interaction. This type of research can direct the second type of interpretive work, which is interpretive evaluation. In the latter method, research is performed on a fundamental social problem in order to provide policy-makers with recommendations for alleviating the problem. “Interpretive evaluation research is conducted from the point of view of the person experiencing the problem: it sides not with policy-makers, but with the underdog for whom policy-makers make policies” (Denzin, 1989a, p. 22).

The present research will attempt to utilize the former method of interpretive research with the hope of providing the necessary ‘ground work’ for future evaluation research. By understanding the male delinquent’s perceptions of his early family life, and how family variables may have contributed to his behavior, perhaps better policies can be established to deal with male criminals. In essence, the research may provide insight to correctional workers, allowing them to have a better understanding of why some criminals become involved with delinquent behavior.

Perhaps, by understanding certain family events that negatively affect some individuals, or by recognizing patterns that can steer some individuals away from crime even in the presence of negative experiences, correctional workers will be able to more adequately serve both delinquents and the community. The negative events that delinquent individuals experience need to be understood before they can be properly addressed. Further, this ‘understanding’ needs to originate from the delinquents themselves.

Denzin noted the dramatic effect that certain experiences can have on the lives of any individual. Denzin referred to this dramatic occurrence or event as the *epiphany*.

Those interactional moments that leave marks on people’s lives . . . . have the
potential for creating transformational experiences for the person. They are "epiphanies." In them, personal character is manifested and made apparent. By recording these experiences in detail, the researcher is able to illuminate the moments of crisis that occur in a person's life. They are often interpreted, both by the person and by others, as turning point experiences (Strauss, 1959).

Having had this experience, the person is never again quite the same. (Denzin, 1989a, p. 15)

Further, the epiphanies in an individual's life, are influenced by the presence, or absence, of a support network. More clearly put, the extent to which an event may positively or negatively effect an individual may be determined or influenced by the support he or she receives from family, friends, or relatives. Equally true is the idea that some people may have the inward strength to more effectively deal with problems that they encounter.

Denzin noted that there are four different types of epiphanies. In the major epiphany, an experience shatters a person's life and changes it forever. The cumulative epiphany occurs as the result of a series of events that have built up in the person's life. For example, a woman who murders her husband after years of battering. In the minor or illuminative epiphany, underlying tensions and problems in a situation or relationship are revealed. In the relived epiphany, a person relives, or re-experiences, a major turning point moment in his or her life (Denzin, 1989a, p. 17).

The meaning of an experience, is achieved through a triadic, interactional process (Denzin, 1989a). An individual must interpret a situation and then act toward an object, event, or process.

This interpretive process brings the event or object into the person's field of experience, where it is acted upon and defined. These interpretations are reflected against the person's ongoing self-definitions. These definitions of self
are emotional, cognitive, and interactional, involving feelings and actions taken in the situation. Meaning is biographical, emotional, and felt in the streams of experience of the person. Locating meaning in interaction involves uncovering how a person emotionally and biographically fits an experience into their emerging, unfolding definitions of self. (Denzin. 1989a, p. 62)

Thus, by understanding the epiphanies within an individual’s life, and how those experiences have been interpreted into that individual’s thoughts, we can gain a better understanding of how a situation unfolded from the delinquent’s point of view. The theory portrays the idea that what events occur in an individual’s life, are not as important as how those experiences are interpreted and placed into an individual’s memories.

Methodological Considerations

The Research Question

Denzin noted that the first step in the process of Interpretive Interactionism is to frame a research question. The researcher must precisely explain what phenomena is being investigated. Further, the question must ask how and not why. Thus, the researcher wants to know how the experiences occur in an individual’s life rather than why the experience occurs. This may vary for each individual or for groups of individuals. However, it is only by understanding how the “problem, as a private trouble, is, or is becoming a public issue that effects multiple lives, institutions and social groups” (Denzin, 1989a, p. 49), that we can begin to address the problem.
The Interview

Once the question has been formulated the interpretive process begins. The logical process to follow in obtaining the necessary information from the subjects being studied, is through interviews. Denzin (1989a) noted that the most practical method for achieving the information necessary for interpretive research is through open-ended interviews.

Open-ended interviewing requires working from a general list of information that the researcher wants or from a set of questions for which the researcher wishes answers . . . . The phrasing of the questions and the order in which they are asked are altered to fit each individual. Open-ended interviewing assumes that meanings, understandings, and interpretations cannot be standardized: They cannot be obtained with a formal, fixed-choice questionnaire. (Denzin, 1989a, pp. 42-43)

The interview is utilised in order to serve two broad purposes. It must translate the researchers objectives into specific questions so that the information obtained will provide the data for hypothesis testing. The second purpose is to assist the interviewer in motivating the respondent to elicit the necessary information (Denzin, 1989b, p. 107). The questions must be carefully worded so that the areas intended to be measured are captured (validity) and can elicit the same or similar information if reproduced at a later time (reliability) (Denzin, 1989b, p. 107).

The non-schedule standardized interview or unstructured schedule interview (USI) will be utilised for the present research. In the USI, the information that is desired from the respondents is gathered by allowing the interviewer to redefine, reorder, and rephrase questions to fit the characteristics of each respondent (Denzin, 1989b, p. 105). This is necessary in many studies given the fact that individuals under analyses may come from a variety of different backgrounds and educations.
The non-standardized schedule indicates an awareness that individuals have unique ways of defining their world. To meaningfully understand that world, researchers must approach it from the subject’s perspective. Second, this interview strategy assumes that no fixed sequence of questions is satisfactory to all respondents; the most effective sequence for any respondent is determined by his readiness and willingness to take up a topic as it comes up. (Denzin, 1989b, pp. 105-106)

This allows for individuals to expand on any subject or to raise important issues pertinent to the study, but which may not have been uncovered in a scheduled interview. Moreover, subjects may provide the necessary information in a larger sequence of statements, possibly out of order (Denzin, 1989b, p. 106). The necessary information is obtained, as with a scheduled interview. However, the order and wording may differ from respondent to respondent due to the fact that individual uniqueness forms the interview’s structure.

Interpretation

Once, the necessary information or experiences have been obtained, the information must be interpreted. Denzin (1989a), recommended the following basic strategy for interpreting the information obtained from an interview. First, the subject must be located within the social group being studied. For example, a teenager in a family whose parents are in the process of separating. Second, the problematic act or event that structures his or her life must be identified from the interview and captured within a personal experience or self-story. Third, the basic elements of the self-story must be interpreted. Fourth, these interpretations must be related back to the individual’s life (Denzin, 1989a, p. 44).
Hence, the heart of Interpretive Interactionism lies in “thick description, thick interpretation, and deep, authentic understanding” (Denzin, 1989a, p. 33). Interpretive researchers collect two basic types of narratives. “A personal experience story is a narrative that relates the self of the teller to a significant set of personal experiences that have already occurred” (Denzin, 1989a, p. 38). It deals with past experiences that the individual has experienced and which he/she is relating back to the listener.

“A self-story is a narrative that creates and interprets a structure of experience as it is being told” (Denzin, 1989a, p. 38). Therefore, events, and how they affect the individual, are explained as they unfold. Self-stories simultaneously deal with the past, the present, and the future. “Personal experience stories deal with the past. Self-stories deal with ongoing problematic occurrences in the person’s life” (Denzin, 1989a, p. 38). Often a narrative can deal with events that have affected the individual in the past and continue to affect him in the present.

The stories that are conveyed to the interpretive researchers, must be related back to the readers. This is accomplished through a process termed thick description in which meanings are captured within the account of an individual’s experiences. The researcher must not only convey to the reader the events which occurred but additionally the meanings that the person attached to the events and how the events effected the individual. A thick description gives the context of an act, states the intentions and meanings that organize the action, traces the evolution and development of the act, and presents the action as a text that can then be interpreted (Denzin, 1989a, p. 33).

The thick descriptions are then interpreted via the process of thick interpretation in which the researcher attempts to uncover and explain how the events have been interpreted by the subject, and how those interpretations have affected and structured how that person experienced the event.
Thick description attempts to rescue the meanings and experiences persons bring to the events that have been recorded. It reports these interpretations as they unfold during the interaction. It establishes the grounds for thick interpretation. Thick interpretation attempts to uncover the means that inform and structure the subject’s experiences. It interprets thick description. It takes the reader to the heart of the experience that is being interpreted. It assumes that all meaning is symbolic and operates at the surface and the deep, and the micro and the macro levels. It turns on thick description, which always joins biography to lived experience. (Denzin. 1989a. pp. 31-32)

Denzin noted that there are emotional and cognitive forms of interpretation and understanding. Emotional interpretation and understanding provides the conditions for deep, authentic understanding which Interpretive Interactionism attempts to build. Cognitive interpretations and understandings provide the essential meanings of an event, but do not attach emotion or feeling. Consequently Denzin (1989a) noted that “thick description is the cornerstone of interpretation studies. Without it, authentic understanding would not be possible” (p. 33).

The process of interpretive research is carried out in five stages which Denzin termed deconstruction, capture, bracketing, construction, and contextualization.

*Deconstruction* involves a critical analysis and interpretation of prior studies of the phenomenon in question. *Capture* means that the researcher secures multiple, naturalistic instances of the experiences being studied. *Bracketing*, or *reduction*, leads the researcher to attempt to isolate the key or essential features of the processes under examination (i.e., the stages of being a battered wife).

*Construction* describes the attempt to interpret the event or process fully, that is, putting together in a single case all the steps involved in being a battered wife. *Contextualization* occurs when the research locates the phenomenon back in the worlds of lived experience. (Denzin. 1989a, P. 31)
Deconstruction.

The initial stage of interpretive research basically examines and reviews what prior theories and studies have to say about the phenomena in question. "A deconstructive reading of a phenomenon involves a critical analysis of how it has been presented, studied, and analyzed in the existing research and theoretical literature" (Denzin, 1989a, p. 51).

Deconstruction clearly portrays prior conceptions of the phenomenon in question including how the phenomenon has been defined, observed, and analyzed. It then provides a critical interpretation of previous definitions and observations, and an analysis of the information is provided. The underlying theoretical model utilized in prior research is critically examined and the preconceptions and biases that surround existing understandings of the topic are also presented (Denzin, 1989a, p. 51).

Capture.

Within the ‘capture’ stage multiple cases and personal histories that embody the phenomenon in question are obtained by locating an institution or area where such individuals gather. The crises and epiphanies within the lives of the persons being studied are then located and multiple personal and self-stories are secured from the subjects in question concerning the topic or topics under investigation (Denzin, 1989a, p. 54).
Bracketing.

In the bracketing stage, the phenomenon is closely examined. The elements and essential structures of the event or process under investigation, are uncovered, defined, and analyzed. Denzin (1989a) noted that in the bracketing stage each instance of the event that has been obtained is analyzed as a separate instance of the phenomenon that is being studied. Rather than interpreting the event in terms of the standard meanings given to it by the existing literature, each distinct episode that has been obtained is analyzed on its own terms within the context that it occurred by taking into consideration the meanings that it had for the individual involved (Denzin, 1989a, p. 55).

Bracketing involves the following steps. The key phrases and statements that refer directly to the phenomenon in question are located within the personal experience, or self-stories that have been obtained in the interviews. The meanings of these phrases are then interpreted, with the help of the subject if possible. These meanings are then inspected for what they reveal about the essential, recurring features of the phenomenon in question. The researcher attempts to create a tentative statement, or definition of the phenomenon in terms of the essential recurring features that have been identified.

Construction.

Construction classifies, orders, and reassembles the parts of the phenomenon provided within the bracketing stage back into a coherent whole. The elements that have been dissected in the bracketing stage are ordered as they occur within the process or experience. The researcher then indicates how each element affects and relates to every other element in the process being studied. Finally, the
researcher concisely states how the structures and parts of the phenomenon cohere into a totality (Denzin. 1989a. pp. 58-59). "In the stage of construction, the researcher attempts to re-create lived experience in terms of its constituent analytic elements" (p .59).

**Contextualization.**

In the contextualization stage, the researcher attempts to interpret the structures obtained in the bracketing and construction stage, and give them meaning by locating them back in the natural social world. "Contextualization takes what has been learned about the phenomenon, through bracketing, and fits that knowledge to the social world where it occurs. It brings phenomenon alive in the worlds of interacting individuals" (Denzin. 1989a. p. 60). Thus, in this final stage, the researcher attempts to reveal how the phenomenon is experienced by ordinary people. This is accomplished by thickly describing its occurrences in the subjects' world of interaction.

Contextualizing involves the following steps. First, personal experience and self-stories that embody the essential features of the phenomenon as defined in the bracketing and construction phases, are obtained and presented to the reader. Contrasting stories, which will illuminate variations on the stages and forms of the process are also provided. Additionally, information is provided that indicates how lived experiences alter and shape the essential features of the process. Finally, the main themes of these stories are compared and synthesized so that their differences may be brought together into a reformulated statement of the process (Denzin, 1989a, p. 60).

The intent of contextualization is to show how lived experience alters and
shapes the phenomenon being studied. Whether the process is of being battered or fouling in a basketball game, the structures of the experience will be altered and shaped as they are experienced, described, and given meaning by their participants. Contextualization documents how this occurs. (Denzin, 1989a, pp. 61-62)

Biases

An important part of any study is for the researcher to realize and note his or her biases at the onset of the study. This is especially true with interpretive interactionism. How one perceives and interprets others' experiences will undoubtedly be affected by their past experiences, morals, values, and beliefs. The fact that a researcher has predetermined biases does not mean that interpretive interactionism is not valuable. In fact, a researcher's own experiences may be beneficial to the study.

All researchers have ideals about a topic before they begin. Consequently, Denzin points out that "value-free" Interpretive research is impossible. "This is the case because every researcher brings preconceptions and interpretations to the problem being studied" (Denzin, 1989a, P. 23). Denzin termed such biases as the hermeneutical circle or situation. The fact that researchers have prejudice towards certain views cannot be eliminated or denied. "This means that scholars must state beforehand their prior interpretations of the phenomenon being investigated. Unless these meanings and values are clarified, their effects on subsequent interpretations remain clouded and often misunderstood" (Denzin, 1989a P. 23).

Personalities, values, choices of different theories and methods, all contribute to preconceptions, biases, and differing interpretations. Sociologists' actions on the
empirical world are achieved by the adoption of specific methodologies. Their actions are translated into specific methods through lines of action that reflect their definitions of those methods. At the heart of this interaction is the *concept*, or a set of concepts. (Denzin. 1989b, p. 12)

Simply by choosing a quantitative research project with a questionnaire as opposed to a qualitative project with an interview, a researcher may cause different outcomes to be obtained. Methods and concepts continually interact with observations and theory which affects both the interpretation and finally the research. (Denzin. 1989b, p. 13.) One must substitute their own perspective and preconceptions with those held by the person being interviewed.

Denzin noted that the interview process itself has inherent problems.

These problems derive from the fact that the interview is itself an instance of ongoing interaction. It is a focused, usually face-to-face encounter which must rest on rules of etiquette while at the same time eliciting intimate and private perspectives. (Denzin. 1989b, p. 103.)

The problem lies in the fact that the rules that govern these transactions and conversations vary from one interviewer to the next. Further, the “conversation” that takes place is unlike regular talking given that it is “organised so as to give one person (the interviewer) greater control over the other (the respondent)” (Denzin, 1989b, p. 103). These inherent problems with the interview process must be noted and realised by the reader.

**Personal biases.**

As noted in the introduction, it is the researcher’s belief that the family plays a key role in the socialization of children. Consequently, it is a firm belief that a
child's environment, specifically the family environment, during the childhood and early teenage years of life, determines how an individual internalizes societal norms, values, and beliefs. Moreover, the family unit plays the central role in whether or not a child or adolescent becomes involved in, or rejects criminal behavior.

The researcher does not ignore the fact that there are a vast number of intervening variables that cause the likelihood of criminality to increase. However, the key support that a child receives will come from the family and close relatives. Most tragedies can be overcome with the support of a caring family. However, the total rejection or misguidance of a family member may be adequate, in combination with other outside variables, to allow some individuals to ignore acceptable conduct, and participate in delinquent behavior.

Summary Of Interpretive Interaction

Interpretation is a fundamental part of understanding. It is necessary for knowing and comprehending the meaning of an experience. "Understanding, by locating meaning in the experiences of interacting individuals, is the goal of interpretive Interactionism" (Denzin, 1989a, pp. 61-62). The only way to understand, and eventually deal with a problem in society, is to understand how the events are taking place within the lives of those individuals involved in the phenomena. Only then can truly effective methods be developed to deal with individuals who have been involved with such events or prevent others from becoming involved with similar phenomena. As Denzin very clearly stated:

The interpretive interactionist attempts to live his or her way into the lives of those being investigated. He or she attempts to see the world and its problems
as they are seen by the people who live inside them. As a strategy, this method throws the researcher directly into the social world under investigation. It requires the careful recording through field notes of the problematic and routine features of that world. Recurring structural, interactional, and meaning patterns are sought. Denzin, 1989a, p. 42

Specific Methodology

The general process of Interpretive Interactionism was utilized to answer the question, "Do any patterns or similarities exist in how young men involved in crime perceive various aspects of their family lives during their childhood and teenage years?"

Prior research dealing with the family and criminality was examined to reveal common beliefs about the subject. In the stage of deconstruction, a sample of theories representing the common and most widely held opinions of the family unit and deviance, were identified. The problems with the area of research, as well as limitations that have been distinguished were documented.

Interviews were conducted with 20 males, on probation for varying offenses, between the ages of 18 and 25. Thus, the individuals were located within the social group being studied (individuals on probation and, therefore, involved in crime). The problematic act (the crime) was identified, as well as the individual’s perceptions of various aspects of his family upbringing. An unstructured schedule interview (USI) was utilised to achieve this goal (see Appendix A).

Interviews were tape recorded, when permission from the subjects was granted, and in those situations where the subject did not wish to be audio taped. Meticulous notes were taken. All subjects were informed that they had the right to
withdraw from the interview at any time, and a brief explanation of the research was presented to them. Additionally, each respondent was asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix B).

The personal experiences and epiphanies were collected from the interviews and documented in short synopses, through the process of capturing. The subjects’ original names were replaced with randomly chosen names in order to maintain anonymity. The main facts and qualities of each subject’s perceptions of his upbringing and family life were identified. Direct quotes from the subjects were utilized to grasp the ‘mood’ of the interview and to enhance the summaries where practical. Thick description was utilized through the quotations and the descriptions leading up to the experiences being described by the subjects.

Following the capture of each interview, the subject’s perceptions were bracketed. Each case was analyzed to discover those events that the individual felt were important during his upbringing. The information was inspected to determine which aspects of his family life, for each specific case, were crucial. Feelings and understanding from the subject’s perspective were reviewed.

In the construction stage of the analyses, the common elements of family upbringing that the men had related were interpreted further and any patterns were noted. Thus, the common events or variables were defined from the perspective of the subjects as a whole. An attempt was made to interpret the common characteristics of family upbringing in a single case. One alteration from Denzin’s (1989a) methodology, was that any recurring features that were revealed for each subject’s specific perceptions were not identified in the bracketing stage. Although certain common characteristics between specific subjects were mentioned in the bracketing stage, the majority of recurring features were identified at the onset of the construction phase to eliminate repetition.
Finally, in the *contextualization* stage the process or patterns that were identified were applied back to the subjects. The phenomena were located back into the subjects' lives to reveal how the phenomena alter from individual to individual. The commonalities in how the subjects perceived various aspects of their family upbringing were identified in 'the real world.'

The process was thickly described in relation to the subject's actual experiences. Instances that embodied the essential features of the subjects' perceptions of family upbringing were presented. Additionally, contrasting cases were documented to illuminate how variations from the stages can occur. This revealed how lived experiences alter and shape the process.

From the similarities and differences that were discovered, a reformulated statement of the process involving family upbringing and later criminality was established. How lived experiences and individual perceptions alter the process was analyzed. The common factors or stages that were identified through the analyses of the subjects' perceptions were utilized to speculate how family upbringing may increase the likelihood of later criminality.

The Interpretive Process: Family Backgrounds

**Prior Research (Deconstruction)**

Two areas which have been outlined in prior research as particularly important in terms of the families' relationship to criminal behavior are lack of parental supervision and parental attachment. Within studies focusing on family structure, in addition to those that did not, these variables prevailed. Biron and Le Blanc (1977) noted that:
Using the better known results of studies on family and general delinquency, two major dimensions of the psycho-sociological aspect of family living have been retained. These are on the one hand, methods of socialization as seen through supervision and discipline and, on the other hand, the quality of ties between children and parents as measured through communication and affection. (p. 157)

The findings were supported by a meta-analysis of concurrent and longitudinal studies performed by Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1983). Extensive review of the Literature on family factors and Crime revealed that “socialization variables, such as a lack of parental supervision, parental rejection, and low parent-child involvement, are among the most powerful predictors of juvenile misbehavior” (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1983, p. 29).

Attachment

Although research on parent-child relationships and delinquency was underway even in the early portion of the century (Healy & Bronner, 1936; Zucker, 1943), the first in-depth look at the influence of family factors on crime was performed by the Gluecks in 1950. Although Glueck and Glueck only studied delinquent boys their findings are still worth noting.

With respect to attachment and delinquency, Glueck and Glueck (1950) noted that “a warm relationship between father and son is of great significance in helping a boy to develop a wholesome set of ideals through emotional identification with the father” (p. 125). Similar findings were reported with respect to the mothers’ relationship with the child (Glueck & Glueck, 1950, p. 125). Additionally, Glueck & Glueck (1950) found that “a far lower proportion of the delinquents than of the
non-delinquents . . . had close ties to their fathers (p. 126) and that "many fewer delinquents than non-delinquents . . . revealed attachment to their mothers (p. 127).

Brownfield (1987) analyzed the theory that a lack of male role modeling predisposes boys to become compulsively masculine and, consequently, violent or delinquent and found the theory only applied to white males. Further, Brownfield (1987) discovered that:

Assuming . . . compulsive masculinity is directly related to violent behavior, it does not appear to be generated by the mere physical absence or presence of a father figure. Rather it is primarily the quality of the relationship between white boys and their fathers that might affect compulsive masculinity and is associated with violent behavior. (p. 76)

Whitehead (1993), in an extensive review of family related factors and the disruption caused in the lives of youth, noted that extremely detrimental effects due to the lack of a father figure are almost inevitable. In such family situations the father usually falls into an unhealthy relationship with his child(ren). Cherlin and Furstenburg agreed stating that:

Even for [absent] fathers who maintain regular contact, the pattern of father child relationships changes . . . . Fathers behave more like relatives than parents . . . . Rather than helping with homework or carrying out a project with their children, non-residential fathers are likely to take their kids shopping, to the movies or out to dinner. Instead of providing steady advice and guidance, divorced fathers become "treat" dads . . . . It is the relationship itself, rather than the frequency of visits, that is the real source of the problem. (cited in Whitehead, 1993, pp. 65-66)

Thus, the relationship that is inevitably created between an absent father and a child, is reported by Whitehead (1993) to be the problem causing variable. The
attachment normally found in a situation where a father is present is no longer possible with a visiting father. Essentially, it is the quality of a relationship between father and child rather than the mere presence of a relationship that is important. Undoubtedly, such conditions could occur, to an equal extent, in family situations where a father is present but where the father/child relationship is poor.

The inadequate relationship between father and child and the effect it has on delinquency is important in light of recent statements made by Dr. Steinhauer, senior psychiatrist at Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children. Dr. Steinhauer noted that increasing violence is due to the lack of two interconnected biological and social needs—the need for a satisfactory and continuous attachment to a parental figure and the need to tame and defuse inherent human aggression (Valpy, 1993). Dr. Steinhauer, stated that “Children experiencing an unsuccessful attachment or multiple separations frequently have their level of biologically derived aggression greatly increased by the excessive rage resulting from the frustration of their attachment needs” (cited in Valpy, 1993). This increase in aggression could easily lead to delinquency.

One of the major names in research dealing with the relationship between indirect controls (specifically affection from and attachment to as well as from parents) was Hirschi (1969). Hirschi (1969) noted that “the bond of affection for conventional persons is a major deterrent to crime” (p. 83). Prior research, such as that of Walter C. Reckless, had proposed that when a parental bond was weakened or broken, peers, gangs, or delinquents could replace the conventional role of parents. The new bond, or more specifically, the individual’s association with other delinquents, became the cause of crime. However, Hirschi argued that individuals become delinquent before accompanying other delinquent peers and that a deficient attachment to parents alone affected the probability of delinquency. Essentially, “delinquency is viewed as taking place when a person’s bonds to
society are broken or weakened thus reducing his or her stakes in conformity” (Hagan & Sussman. 1987, p. 13).

According to Hirschi (1969) “the emotional bond between the parent and the child presumably provides the bridge across which pass parental ideals and expectations” (p. 86). The attachment is essential for the transfer, and a child’s internalization, of the parents’ norms, values, and beliefs. Consequently, “the relationship with the mother and the father are equally important in the causation of delinquency” (Hirschi. 1969, p. 112).

Further, the quality of attachment was divided into three separate components termed virtual supervision, intimacy of communication, and affectional identification. “Hirschi views these dimensions as indirect controls, which are factors that reflect the affection the adolescent feels for parents and inhibit delinquency because the adolescent wants to avoid hurting people for whom he or she feels affection” (cited in Seydlitz, 1993, p. 245).

Virtual supervision was defined by Hirschi as the psychological presence of the parents. Hirschi proposed that children who perceived their parents knew where they were and what they were doing (virtual supervision) would be less likely to become involved in delinquent activities. Hirschi noted that:

The child is less likely to commit delinquent acts not because his parents actually restrict his activities, but because he shares his activities with them; not because his parents actually know where he is, but because he perceives them as aware of his location. (Hirschi, 1969, pp. 91-90).

Hirschi argued that the more children shared their feelings with their parents, the more likely they would be to perceive them as part of their “social and psychological field” and the more likely they would be to consider the parents’ opinions when contemplating a delinquent act (Hirschi, 1969, p. 90).
Hirschi viewed the second measure of attachment to parents (intimacy of communication), as another important deterrent to delinquent behavior. Two indexes of intimacy of communication were forwarded. The first index referred to the amount that a child shared their thoughts or plans with his or her parents. The second index referred to the amount that parents explain their rules to their children, help explain items which their children do not understand, and explain why they feel the way they do about situations or topics. The first index differs in an important way from the second because in the latter “the flow of communication is from the parent to the child rather than from the child to the parent” (Hirschi, 1969, p. 90).

Hirschi found that both indexes of intimacy of communication were not only related to virtual supervision, but were also related to a child’s amount of delinquent behavior. However, the focus of communication was stressed as being a crucial factor.

It is not simply the fact of communication with the parents but the focus of this communication that is crucial in affecting the likelihood that the child will recall his parents when and if a situation of potential delinquency arises. (Hirschi, 1969, p. 91)

Hirschi’s final measure of parental attachment was affectional identification. Given that the first two measures of parental attachment are present, the final measure is equally important. As Hirschi stated, “If we assume that the child considers the reaction of his parents, he must then ask himself a further question: ‘Do I care what my parents will think?’” (Hirschi, 1969, p. 91). Thus, the affectional identification, love, or respect for parents was noted as the crucial element in a child’s bond to the parents.

Hirschi noted that in situations where a child feels his or her parents may discover a deviant act, the child may consider the parents’ opinions. However, the
rejection that the child may receive from the parents may not be sufficiently important to deter him or her from a delinquent act if the child cares little for the parents or their feelings. Hirschi measured affectional identification by asking children “Would you like to be the kind of person your mother (father) is?” (Hirschi, 1969, p. 92). Results indicated that as the amount of affectional identification increased the amount of delinquency in children decreased.

One important aspect of Hirschi’s theory is the interaction between the three dimensions of attachment. For example, “as would be expected, those who identify with their fathers tend to discuss their personal problems with them, and vice versa” (Hirschi, 1969, p. 93). Regardless of the vast amount of interaction that occurred, Hirschi (1969) still found that each dimension “appears to have an independent affect on the likelihood that the child will commit delinquent acts” (p. 93).

In concluding Hirschi argued that:

The closer the child’s relations with his parents, the more he is attached to and identifies with them, the lower his chances of delinquency . . . . The more strongly a child is attached to his parents, the more strongly he is bound to their expectations, and therefore the more strongly he is bound to conformity with the legal norms of the larger system. (p. 94)

One drawback to Hirschi’s 1969 study, was the fact that he analyzed only the behavior of boys and their delinquency. However, later studies supported the theory for both males and females (Canter, 1982; Gove & Crutchfield, 1982; Krohn & Massey, 1980; Seydlitz, 1990).

Additionally, Hirschi, at least in his earlier 1969 study, did not consider direct control, a sufficient or important deterrent of delinquent behavior.

Since most delinquent acts require little time in their [parents’] presence, and since most adolescents are frequently exposed to situations potentially definable
as opportunities for delinquency, the amount of time spent with parents would probably be only a minor factor in delinquency prevention. (p. 88)

Hirschi (1983) later considered the monitoring of children's behavior and the punishment of delinquent behavior (direct controls) important for the prevention of delinquency (1983, p. 53). However, supervision was seen as only linearly affected by the affection the parents felt for their children. Thus, parental affection towards children influenced parental monitoring which in turn affected the recognition of, and punishment of, delinquent behavior. No interactions between dimensions were assumed (cited in Seydlitz, 1993). On the contrary, Nye (1958) recognized supervision as an important deterrent to crime and considered interactions as taking place within the association.

LaGrange And White (1985) brought an added variable into the delineation from parental attachment to delinquency. Parental love was suggested to be as influential as parental attachment in the end because parental love actually controls the amount of parental attachment that will occur. "Drawing primarily from a social learning approach . . . strong parental attachments presumably are most likely to develop in children whose parents provide them with ample love and positive feedback" (p. 22).

Thus, LaGrange And White argued that children who receive greater amounts of love and affection would naturally have greater attachments to their parents. Further, the variable, parental love, was placed prior to parental attachment in comparison to Hirschi (1969) who began the delineation from parental attachment. However, following this ideology, one might suggest that where parental attachment is evident, some degree of parental love should, and according to LaGrange and White, must have been present in the relationship to begin with.

LaGrange And White (1985) additionally found evidence that the interactions described by Hirschi (1969) apply primarily to youth in middle adolescence. The
pattern was attributed to the idea that “social bonds are more important for mid-adolescent youths because the status of mid-adolescent youths is ambiguous” (cited in Seydlitz, 1990, p. 221). LaGrange And White (1985) argued that the mid-teenage years represent a critical period, especially in Western society. They reasoned that “mid-adolescent youths occupy a rather dubious status: they are generally less than fully oriented to their family of origin and at the same time are rigorously denied access to full participation in society” (LaGrange and White, 1995, p. 36). Further, LaGrange and White noted that because of the critical period that mid-adolescent youths are in, parents and other authority figures become especially important as “psychological anchors.”

One could question the order in which the variables attachment and delinquency occur. To clarify the issue, Junger-Tas (1992) analyzed whether weak attachment to parents leads to delinquency or visa-versa. Test results indicated that “in about 70% of cases the parents did not know that their children committed delinquent acts” (Junger-Tas, 1992, p. 14). Further, Junger-Tas (1992) found that when parents of occasional offenders were informed of their children’s behavior, they usually discussed the matter calmly and the information did not affect the parent child relationship negatively (p. 14). However, when parents of frequent offenders were informed of delinquent activity their reaction was generally negative. In either circumstance, “the majority of... parents do not know that their children commit delinquent acts, and so this behavior can hardly influence family integration” (Junger-Tas, 1992, p. 14).
Supervision

Glueck and Glueck (1950) found that families comprised of delinquents were more often deprived of maternal supervision (Glueck & Glueck (1950) p. 112). Additionally, the Gluecks reported that "a disproportionately lower percentage of the mothers of the delinquents ... gave or arranged for suitable care of their children by keeping close watch over them and providing for their leisure hours in clubs or playgrounds" (Glueck & Glueck (1950), p. 112). Those mothers having delinquent children who were present, were found to give less or only partial supervision to their children compared to mothers of non-delinquents (p. 113). However, the Gluecks' work failed to address the matter of paternal supervision.

Glueck & Glueck (1950) also noted that "more mothers and fathers of the delinquents ... than of the non-delinquents ... were lax in their disciplinary practices (p. 131) and that "some two-fifths (41.6%) of the fathers and a third (34.6%) of the mothers of the delinquents must be described as erratic in their disciplinary practices, swinging from overstrictness to laxity, without any consistency" (p. 132).

Laub and Sampson (1988) reanalyzed the Glueck's data correcting for ideological and methodological errors in what they termed "one of the most influential studies in the history of criminological research" (p. 355). After reanalysis Laub and Sampson (1988) noted that:

Mother's supervision, parental styles of discipline, and parental attachment are the most important predictors of serious and persistent delinquency. On the other hand background forces (e.g., parental criminality and drunkenness, broken homes, crowding) have little or no direct effect on delinquency, but instead operate through the family process variables. (p. 355)
Wells and Rankin (1988) noted the lack of interest in direct controls in comparison to research conducted on indirect controls. "Parental 'functioning' or 'child-rearing' variables are rarely highlighted in delinquency theory and research. Instead, 'indirect controls . . . or parental 'attachments' . . . are viewed as the more critical variable in controlling delinquent behaviors" (p. 280). However their findings indicated that "even when controlling statistically for the effects of 'attachments,' direct parental controls are significantly related to various measures of delinquency" (Wells & Rankin, 1988, p. 280).

Fischer (1983), in a review of the literature dealing with the effects of parental supervision and delinquency, concluded that there is a very apparent association between high supervision and low delinquency. The association was found in many different situations and under varying circumstances. Fischer (1983) stated that:

The relationship remains when variables such as mother's affection, parental conflict, parental aggression, mother's self-confidence, father's deviance, father's absence, father's occupation are controlled. And it appears to be effective under extremely adverse conditions such as poverty and authoritarian and repressive methods of child rearing. (p. 635)

Wilson (1980) supported the supervision/delinquency relationship further noting that "the child-rearing methods typical of non-delinquent families included a strict parental regime that limited the children's freedom of movement" (p. 204). Wilson (1980) analyzed the effect that parental supervision had on delinquency while taking into account such variables as place of residence and social handicap (such as high crime neighborhoods) and found that "the association of delinquency with laxness of parental supervision was confirmed, irrespective of place of residence and degree of social handicap" (p. 231). The results were followed by

The many young parents who have benefited from improved standards of living and have “shopped around” for new ways of handling their children in an endeavor to give them what they themselves never had in childhood are particularly at risk in adopting permissive methods of what they understand to be “child-centredness” without fully realizing the dangers inherent in setting no limits to their children’s choices. (Wilson, p. 234).

Wilson (1987), in a continuation and follow-up of the investigation, later stated that “lack of parental supervision is unquestionably the most relevant factor facilitating delinquency” (p. 291).

In Wilson’s 1982 study, the idea was presented that there may be a “multiplier effect” when considering supervision and delinquency in relation to the poor social mix of an area (e.g., poverty, poor architectural design which prevents supervision of children while out at play, and the presence of a disproportionate number of families who do not supervise their children) (p. 31). By this Wilson meant that “the aggregation of lax families will produce a more than proportional increase in vandalism and delinquency, affecting children from supervising families who would otherwise be non-delinquent” (p. 29). The idea is important in light of the fact that many single parented (especially single-mothered) families are forced to live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

However, Wilson (1982) clearly stated that the supervision/delinquency relationship held true regardless of the social environment. More importantly, Wilson (1982) later stated that a good social environment was not a ‘necessary precondition’ for proper supervision to aid in the prevention of delinquency. Wilson (1982) noted that:

This does not imply that a facilitating environment is a necessary precondition;
among the sample families in both the earlier study . . . and in the subsequent study . . . there were severely socially handicapped families living on subsistence incomes who succeeded in keeping their children out of trouble by consistent strict management, even though they lived in high crime areas. (1982, p. 31)

The idea presented by Wilson (1980, 1982, 1987)—that by moving towards more lax methods of punishment, there is the likelihood that delinquency among youth will rise—is interesting in light of recent studies which suggest that physical punishment is related to an increase in the probability of delinquent behavior. For example, Straus's (1991) findings supported the theory that “although physical punishment may produce conformity in the immediate situation, in the longer run it tends to increase the probability of deviance, including delinquency in adolescence and crime inside and outside the family as an adult” (p. 133). Cove and Crutchfield (1983), although supportive of the relationship between supervision, attachment, and delinquency, agreed that there is a definite relationship between physical punishment and later criminal behavior.

In conclusion, Straus (1991) noted that the complex relationship between supervision, including punishment, and later violent and criminal behavior is in need of greater analysis (p. 149). Straus stated that “since the findings are based on cross sectional studies, experimental studies are needed to test the causal nature of the relationships” (p. 133).

One of the major researchers dealing with direct controls and their effects on later criminal behavior was Nye (1958). Although Nye (1958) maintained that indirect controls, such as parental attachment, were crucial to the prevention of delinquent behavior, direct control was also emphasized as an equally important factor. Nye (1958) noted that:

Direct control is an important part of the total. Parents exercise it as they
restrict their children concerning the time allowed away from home, their choice of companions, and type of activities. They accomplish direct control by keeping children within the home, and by promising and delivering punishment for infractions of parental or societal rules. Direct control is occasionally accomplished by a system of rewards for conformity. (p. 7)

According to Nye (1958), direct control is imposed by restriction and punishment. The amount of restriction and punishment is extremely important because of the interaction it plays with other forms of social control. For example, if the direct control is too strict, an adolescent may not be able to meet his or her emotional and social needs with other peers. If direct control is inadequate or absent, the child’s behavior will be uncontrolled and undirected by parents or other authority figures. Further, the adolescent may lack a set of parental expectations or values which his or her parents regard as important which may, in turn, effect internal controls. Finally, if direct control is unfair or impartial, ambivalent or negative attitudes may be formed against the parent or parents which affects the indirect control they have over the adolescent (Nye, 1958, p. 79).

Therefore, the effect that direct control has on delinquency forms a U-shaped curve (Nye, 1958, p. 156). If the direct controls are too harsh or lax there is a greater chance of delinquency than if direct control is moderate and just. However, more recent studies have shown the relationship to be more complex (Seydlitz, 1993; Wells and Rankin, 1988). Wells and Rankin (1988) noted that “the relation between direct control and delinquency is not simple, direct, and linear” (p. 280).

Nye noted that discipline may be unfair in several ways. The parent(s) may not consider intent, discipline may be unexpectedly harsh if the parent is using punishment as a vent for negative emotions, or punishment may be administered for an act the child actually did not commit (Nye, 1958, p. 80). Nye noted that if
punishment is indiscriminate or unfair it may actually have inverse effects worsening the behavior of the child or adolescent.

Partiality was noted by Nye to be especially important. If a parent disciplines one sibling more than, or harsher than, other siblings or one behavior differently from one instance to the next, negative effects could occur with respect to both direct and indirect controls. Nye found evidence that an adolescent may perceive the different treatment of a sibling as indicating rejection by the parent thereby influencing the effectiveness of indirect controls (Nye, 1958, p. 80).

Another important factor noted by Nye was consistency of punishment. "If punishment is frequently withheld, the adolescent is not sure that it will be administered, with consequent loss of deterrent effect. Such practice may also adversely affect the adolescent's attitude toward the parent" (Nye, 1958, p. 82). Equally important is intent. "Punishment which fails to take intent or special circumstances into account becomes to a degree indiscriminate punishment, and as such becomes less effective in social control" (Nye, 1958, p. 84).

There has been considerable debate in recent years as to what types of punishment are acceptable, or more importantly, effective. However, Nye stated that "there are no techniques believed most effective. If punishment is justly and appropriately applied it should have some deterrent effect" (Nye, 1958, p. 86).

Nye emphasized the fact that direct and indirect controls work together. For example "direct control is . . . effective only when the child can expect to be detected in the delinquent act, is actually within the physical limits of the home, or is otherwise under the surveillance of adults" (Nye, 1958, p. 7). In the absence of direct controls, indirect controls become the important variable. Additionally, "direct controls are better inhibitors of delinquency when adolescents are more attached to their parents" (cited in Seydlitz, 1993).
Interaction

Wells and Rankin (1988, p. 281) noted the need for research examining the interaction between direct and indirect controls, and later attempted to analyze the combined effect (Rankin and Wells, 1990). Seydlitz (1993) also reported on the combination of supervision and parental attachment in relation to delinquency. However, research concerning the combined effect of familial variables on delinquency has only recently begun.

Rankin and Wells (1990) were interested in how the combination of direct controls and attachment affected delinquency. The idea was similar to the concept of ‘tough love’ “which holds that either discipline or affection by itself is ineffective; they must be combined in strong measures to prevent delinquency” (Rankin & Wells, 1990, p. 143). Results indicated that although some interaction was apparent, “the expected interactions among these variables are far less evident than prior theorizing predicts” (Rankin & Wells, 1990, pp. 159-161). However, Wells and Rankin (1988) noted that the unexpected results may have occurred because “the test of the hypothesis is inappropriate or insufficiently sensitive, and/or the theory is overstated and in need of qualification” (p. 161).

Seydlitz (1993) noted that a major drawback to prior research dealing with interactions, was that they only included males of a particular age group (p. 244). In a study encompassing age, gender, and types of controls, Seydlitz discovered that although direct controls were related to deviance, the curve was not always U-shaped. Additionally, the association between indirect controls and delinquency was not linear but, like direct controls, curvilinear. More importantly though, Seydlitz (1993) discovered that the effect of direct control on delinquency depended on parental attachment at least for females aged 13 and fourteen (p. 264). Seydlitz (1993) stated that:
The findings demonstrated that delinquency is higher when parental attachment is low and monitoring and discipline are high. Further, the results suggest that not only is this interaction age-gender specific, but it also depends on the type of direct control and the parent. (p. 264)

Similar to Rankin and Wells (1990), Seydlitz (1993) noted that although interactions between the two variables were present, the interactions were age-gender specific and quite limited contrary to what prior theories may have suggested. However, Seydlitz (1993) stated that the present social control theories “cannot account for the complexity in the relationship between parents and delinquency” (p. 244) and that, consequently, much more research in the area is necessary.

Summary

When examining family variables and crime, emphasis should be placed on the relationships within the family unit as opposed to the actual structure of the family. “Nye suggested some time ago . . . that it is not the structure of the family per se which is causally related to delinquency, but rather the actual relationships and interaction patterns which are the key variables” (cited in Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987, 296).

Researchers have often assumed that a lack of supervision and attachment are directly a result of single-parented families or families in which the mother is employed. Many researchers claim that a mother’s absence, due to work, has a direct affect on children. “While it cannot be concluded that children of working mothers are necessarily neglected, the fact that a mother works often affects the training of the child” (Sutherland & Cressey, 1974, p. 210). Glueck and Glueck
reported that 64% of the delinquent children in their research in comparison to only 13% of non-delinquents, came from homes in which there was 'unsuitable' supervision by the mother (cited in Sutherland & Cressey, 1974, p. 210).

However, a lack of parental supervision and attachment can be found in families in which both parents are present. Sutherland and Cressey (1974) noted that “failures to present anti-delinquency patterns may be due to neglect of training because of the absence of the parents or because of the unconcern of parents (p. 213)”. The emphasis on single-mothered families may simply be the consequence of the greater number of such family units in comparison to other 'non-traditional' family groups.

For example, Cernkovich and Giordano (1987) have noted that a lack of individuals comprising other family groups suspected of having a proportionally higher risk of raising delinquent children has caused researchers to dwell on single-mothered homes.

The small number of cases in father-only, father/stepmother, and mother/stepfather homes forced a restriction of the analyses to both-parent and mother-only homes. As a result, research based on larger samples of these types of family structures, especially mother/stepfather homes, is required before any definitive conclusions can be drawn. (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987, p. 317)

An emphasis on single-mothered homes has led many researchers to assume that a lack of supervision and attachment is directly a result of single-parented families or families in which the mother is employed (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987). Families headed by two parents can be equally influential or more influential on future delinquency in children than single-parented families. Glueck and Glueck (1950) noted that “the conjugal relations of only a third (36.8%) of the parents of the delinquents, as compared with two-thirds (65.3%) of the parents of the non-delinquents, were good, which means that the parents were compatible and
there was no undue quarreling between them" (p. 111). Similarly, "Nye found that delinquency is higher in unbroken but unhappy homes than it is in broken homes" (cited in Sutherland & Cressey, 1974, 212). Thus, research has revealed that specific variables found in any family structure may influence deviant behavior.

Although the assumption is often made that single-parented families will inherently provide less supervision, the argument could be made that an equal number of homes with two parents present have little concern for, or supervision over, their children as well. In either situation Egeland and Sroufe (1981) "found that neglect or parental rejection had the most devastating impact on a child [with reference to later criminal behavior]" (cited in Kruttschnitt, Ward, & Shebble, 1987, p. 504).

In single parented families the mother (or father) usually will have to begin working outside of the home to support her/his children. Even in homes with two parents present, it is often necessary to have two incomes to support the family. As with many other studies concerning family patterns and delinquency, researchers have tended to focus on the structural rather than the interactional elements. Cernkovich and Giordano (1987) clearly discovered this pattern in prior studies noting that:

Researchers tend to agree that maternal employment affects behavior indirectly, through such factors as lack of supervision, loss of direct control, and attenuation of close relationships. Similarly, most agree that its effects depend on a number of conditions, such as social class background, race, the attitudes of family members regarding maternal employment, whether the employment is full or part time and so forth . . . . Once this is noted, however, the analyses tend to focus on the structural level. (p. 297)
Through review and testing of prior research, it has been clearly demonstrated that “family dynamics are considerably more important than family structure in affecting delinquency” (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987, p. 316).

Cernkovich and Giordano (1987) noted that the area of family and deviance “is best characterized . . . by a relative lack of interest on the part of criminologists—by the belief that family members are not nearly as important as peer, school, and various structural factors in understanding delinquent behavior patterns” (p. 295). Cernkovich and Giordano further argued that “while theoretical lip service usually is paid to the notion that the important variables are probably social-psychological and interactional in nature, the analyses have tended to be primarily structural and macrosociological, only touching the interactional surface” (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987, p. 297).

Cernkovich & Giordano proposed that “such variables as personality characteristics and parent-child relationships are avoided because they are ‘too psychological’” (p. 296). Even those studies that propose to evaluate the consequences of family breakup on delinquency, tend to unjustly relate the effects back to the actual separation as opposed to the discourse leading up to separation. Consequently, “most studies of the broken home and delinquency, for example, have divided families into two discrete categories—broken and unbroken—and . . . give ‘absolutely no clue as to why broken homes are related to delinquency’” (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987, p. 297).

Researchers must examine why individuals from similar backgrounds have different behavioral outcomes. Why do some individuals from seemingly stable homes become delinquent? More importantly, why do some men and women from ‘inadequate’ families, abusive homes, or some negative upbringing, become involved with delinquent behavior while others from similar situations do not?
Undoubtedly, some aspect of the social-psychological must be at work. The perceptions that individuals are left with under any of a number of circumstances far outweigh the actual presence of any variable. Although the facts of a given situation are important, such as the amount of violence in a home or the structure of a family, the effect that these variables have on individuals are more crucial.

For a clearer understanding of the delinquent, not only the presence of variables should be sought but additionally, the emotions and perceptions that accompany such factors. Our ability as researchers, to uncover the characteristics or variables that result from certain interactional situations and eventually lead to criminal behavior, can only be clearly understood through the 'minds' of the delinquents.

**Interviews (Capture & Bracketing)**

Twenty individuals were interviewed from the Windsor Probation office. Their self-stories and epiphanies are presented in summaries of the interviews which *capture* the main points of interest and the 'climate' of the interview. The reader must keep in mind that the subjects' perceptions were presented in the following 'capture' summaries and not those of the researcher. All of the subjects' names have been replaced to maintain anonymity.

Each summary was followed by *bracketing* in which the information presented by the subjects was analyzed and broken down into their main parts or steps. Each case was looked at exclusively by its own merit separate from any grand theory and separate from every other interview. The key elements of the individual's specific incidents were highlighted.
Bill

Capture.

Bill had been a repeat offender since he was nine years old. His parents were never separated or divorced. However, Bill was placed in a foster home at the age of 10 because of fighting between his two sisters and himself, and the fact that his parents could not control him. Bill noted that he had Turret’s Syndrome which caused him to be impulsive, often taking action before he could think about a situation. He did not recall his parents fighting often, although he did recall that he constantly fought with his two sisters. He remained in contact with his parents throughout the time he was in foster homes and centres. At the time of the interview he was again in a foster home at the age of 18.

Bill stated that his relationship with his parents had improved drastically over the past several years. He was visiting them every other weekend and was talking to them both on the phone on a regular basis. Bill clearly recalled that his relationship with his parents only improved after he had left home.

Bill did not recall his family being close. As mentioned, he fought a great deal with his two younger sisters and the family did few activities together. Any outings were usually trips to a cottage up north. Bill reported that his parents worried about him, but only when he was with certain friends. He aspired to be like his father who was a draftsman and worked with computers. Bill stated that he did not respect his parents when he was younger but noted that he did at the time of the interview. He laughed as he mentioned the fact that he could understand things his parents said ‘back then’ that made absolutely no sense to him at the time. Similarly, he was not proud of them when he was younger, but was at the time of the interview.
Bill noted that he was not able to talk to either parent about things that were personal to him and that the situation continued to be similar at the age of 18. He reported that, "Things like that just never came up." The only time he recalled having close conversations with his father was when he started to get into trouble at the age of nine.

When the police would bring me home after I'd get into trouble, my dad would try to tell me how I was gonna [sic] end up in jail and stuff but I'd never believe him. That's what I mean about respecting him now cause now I can see that what he was saying was true. That's the only time we talked about personal stuff though. Bill informed me that he and his father had began to talk about the past more often and had started to discuss miscellaneous topics. However, he still did not talk about subjects that were really personal to him.

Bill had a curfew while growing up but never followed it. He said that he was not allowed to 'hang out' with a couple of friends but that he did anyway. Bill also recalled that his parents never really dictated where he could and could not go. He basically went where he wanted with his friends. With respect to punishment, Bill reported that his parents tried everything with him.

They gave me the belt; that didn't work. They tried taking my money from me; that didn't work. They tried grounding me too but that didn't work either. I guess I just never learned.

Bill informed me that he knew when to expect a punishment but never really knew what type of discipline he was going to receive. He stated that, "They tried everything though." When I asked Bill what he thought the reason was for getting involved with crime, he suggested that his parents could have been stricter, but did not want to blame them.

I'm not blaming my parents or anything but I guess they weren't strict enough.

That and cause I have Turret's Syndrome. I don't think before I do stuff. Like, I'm
not blaming them or anything. I just think that they could have been more strict and stuff. And well I guess that had something to do with it. I didn’t listen. I don’t know; friends. the way I was raised. . . . impulsiveness.

At this point in the interview Bill began to reveal more to me and started to express more emotion when speaking about a group home he had attended. He noted that his situation changed after he was sent to a group home. He had been placed in foster homes near his parents. Then they returned him to his parents’ home but that did not work so they sent him to foster homes once again. Eventually, he was placed in a distant city where he lived in a centre. Bill noted that when he initially moved out he really did not want to. “Although I can see it did good. I really didn’t wanna [sic] leave at the time.”

Bill recalled that most of his trouble with the legal system started while he was at the group home. He stated that at approximately the age of 15, he began to experiment with drugs. He started to smoke marihuana, take ‘hits’ of LSD, and get into trouble with the law all at approximately the same time.

I had been sent to another centre at a place kind a [sic] far away. I think it was cause my city was changed and so were all my friends. I had to start all over again and I just didn’t care. I went from foster home to foster home but that was at home. Then they stuck me in this place that was away from home for about three years and it sucked.

Bill reported that after he returned from the institution to his home city, his relationship with his family improved drastically. He was very glad to be home again. Bill recalled that the people were ‘OK’ in the group home, but that he hated the group home itself. The rules were very strict. Bill informed me that he was only allowed outside for an hour a day without a staff member. When he was out alone, he had to call a staff member every half hour to inform him or her of his location. “They just
wanted us to sit around and play Nintendo all day. That’s fine with them cause they come and go every eight hours but we had to be there all the time.”

Bill recalled going to a conservation area once a month but said that, “It didn’t make up for it.” After approximately six months Bill began to leave the home or would simply not return after his allotted time away. The staff tried to ground him, but he would simply leave again. Then Bill said to me, “I’ve got to tell you something I’m kind a [sic] proud of cause. well, I pulled it off.” He then began to explain how he had received a 30 day jail sentence and a term of probation.

I couldn’t stand it and had to get out of there cause I hated it so I set my mind in leaving. I made a bomb threat to my school, took off, and stole some money. After jail they sent me back here. That’s all I wanted anyway. I did it purposely cause I hated it. I couldn’t get out of that place so I made them not want me anymore.

Bill did not blame anyone else for his actions. He believed that his problems were the consequence of his own poor judgement. He stated, “I made the choices that I made.” Although he did not desire to leave home he felt it was ‘for the best’ because ‘things went downhill’ when he lived at home. However, he stated that circumstances improved when he was near home again. He noted that he ‘gets along’ with his new foster parents and is allowed to visit and talk to his real parents often.

Bill reported that his relationship with both parents, but especially his father, had improved since he returned. Bill said that he knows, “The future will get better cause I’m gonna [sic] make it that way.” He planned on going to school and finding a job dealing with computers. He stated that he is, “Through with getting in trouble with the law.” He did not want to spend the rest of his life in jail. He had recently acquired his first part-time job.
Bracketing.

Bill suffered from Turret's Syndrome and this fact cannot be ignored. The impulsiveness from the disorder undoubtedly affected both his home life and his involvement with the legal system. However, his absence of an immediate family and his constant 'shuffling' from one foster home to another, and to group homes must have affected him negatively.

Bill was initially placed in foster homes because he could not 'get along' with his two sisters. He attributed the fact that there was fighting to a problem with himself. He then assumed that his absence from his 'real home' was the consequence of his own actions, and thus, his own fault. Although he avoided talking in detail about his initial removal from the family, in the few statements that he did make it was obviously disturbing to him at the time. He was 10 years old.

Bill recalled that his relationship with his parents improved after he had left the home which only served to reinforce the idea that his lack of a relationship with them was his own fault. He was not close to, was not proud of, nor did he respect his parents at a young age. Additionally, he did not think that they worried about him most of the time and he did what he pleased and ignored their discipline. Bill did not want to blame his parents for his delinquency, but was clear that he thought that they could have been more strict with him.

Bill could never talk to his parents about personal issues and only began to have meaningful conversations with his father after his involvement with the legal system. Bill was sent to a group home which he disliked. Whether Bill actually used his bomb threat as a means to getting home or simply rationalises his behaviour with the story after the fact is irrelevant. Bill was obviously uncomfortable away from his home and desired to at least be close to his family. At the time of the interview, Bill was content with his place of residence with foster parents that he appreciated and who lived close
to his parents’ home. Of special note is the fact that Bill only blamed himself for his delinquency.

The essential features of Bill’s family upbringing were upsetting at best. Bill was taken from his home at the young age of 10. Prior to that point he felt that his parents were not strict enough, and that he did not have a close relationship with either parent. His relationship, in the way of close conversation, only improved after his involvement with crime. Following the removal from his home, Bill was transferred to numerous families and several group homes. His life was never stable. He desired to be close to his family and was extremely frustrated with his position (being in a group home). Consequently, Bill created a disturbance which not only resulted in his being returned close to home, but which also resulted in his delinquency. He blamed his actions on himself.

Alex

Capture

Alex was a 25 year old charged with the assault of his girl-friend. He had no prior convictions. His interview was unlike the others I had completed up to this point. He was a very quiet individual who seemed rather depressed. The interview flowed differently than the others because Alex spontaneously talked about the course of events that unfolded during his upbringing.

Alex had one older sister. His father worked while his mother stayed home to raise his sister and himself. However, Alex noted that his father was often absent and finally left permanently when he was six years old.
Alex recalled that, on many occasions, his father fought with his mother both verbally and physically prior to the separation.

I don’t remember much cause I was only six but I do know that my dad used to yell a lot and my mom would yell back. It happened a lot more just before he left for good but that just might be cause I remember that more. I don’t know. He started to hit her a lot near the end too. He’d smack her in the face in front of me.

Alex informed me that after his father left his mother, his relationship with his dad became “non-existent.” That continued until approximately one year prior to the interview when Alex regained contact with his father. However, Alex noted that he rarely has contact with his father and that the visits are “uncomfortable” and “meaningless.”

Alex described his mother as an alcoholic who could not provide for his physical and emotional needs. His older sister was raised by his maternal grandmother because she was too difficult for his mother to handle. She left when Alex was approximately eight years old. Alex recalled that his relationship with his mother was “OK to a point” but that because he looked and acted like his father and because his mannerisms were quite similar to his father’s, his mother “resented him in a way.”

My dad was a good musician and so am I. I act a lot like my dad did too. I think that because I was like him and look a lot like him and cause I can sing good like him too, that it reminded mom of my dad and she really hated him at the end. That made her kind a [sic] not like me I think.

Alex believed that his likeness to his father was the main contributing factor to the poor interaction between him and his mother. Additionally, his mother was a very domineering woman, and forbade Alex to pursue his career as a musician. Again, Alex attributed this to the fact that his father was a musician.
Alex informed me that his mother was often verbally and physically abusive towards him because of her "heavy drinking." Their relationship had only recently improved due to the fact that his mother had become ill and was forced to quit drinking.

When Alex was approximately seven years old his mother began a common-law relationship with another man. The individual also had a seven year old who came to live with Alex and his mother for a short period of time. Alex recalled that the relationship between his mother and her new boy-friend was "good." His sister also lived at home for a short period of time until she no longer associated well with the family and returned to her grandmother's home. The boy-friend's son left to live with his real mother at approximately the same time.

That was probably the only few months that I can remember being kind a [sic] normal. I got along really good with him [step-father]. He was more like a dad than my dad ever was. I remember that after a few years they started to fight. One day my mom got me up and packed our stuff up and left. I didn't have a clue she was leaving. I lost contact with him after that until just a few years ago. but he died right after we met again.

Alex was obviously disturbed by this. He preferred not to talk about the incident any further but made it clear that this man was the closest to a father he had ever had. He was quite resentful towards his mother for leaving.

Alex noted that he 'got along' with his sister, but that their relationship was never close. He lost contact with her two years prior to the interview and at the time had no contact with her at all.

After his mother left his step-father, she formed a homosexual relationship with a woman whom they moved in with when Alex was approximately 15. Alex told me that his mother entertained many friends who were homosexual for a period of approximately one year and that throughout that period he was witness to behavior
that he found quite 'upsetting.' Again, Alex was unwilling to talk about the incident further and wished to move on to another topic.

At the age of 16, one year after his mother moved in with her girl-friend, Alex moved out of the home. For the first year Alex lived with his sister, friends, his father, at the YMCA, and occasionally on the street for short durations. Once he was away from his mother he began to pursue his career as a musician.

His second serious relationship, which produced two children, ended when his common-law wife left him for another woman. She retained custody of the two children and although Alex described their relationship as 'cordial' he noted that he was rarely allowed to see his children.

Alex had a 'much better' relationship at the time of the interview.' However, he had assaulted his girl-friend after an argument. Although she had forgiven him and they had reconciled their relationship, the incident resulted in his term of probation. Alex informed me that he wanted to get help for his anger because he, "Trusts no one and has a lot of pain mixed with the goodness in his heart."

Bracketing.

Alex was a quiet man who seemed very depressed. Prior to his father permanently leaving the home, he was constantly absent. His parents fought verbally and physically prior to the separation. He was witness to violence against his mother as noted in his quote that his father would 'smack' her in the face in front of him. This was how his father dealt with arguments. He then lost contact with his father except for uncomfortable and meaningless encounters.

Alex's mother could not provide for his needs and was an alcoholic. Their relationship was also 'poor.' She began to abuse Alex at a young age. His poor
relationship with his mother was attributed to his ‘likeness’ to his father. He felt that his aspirations to be a musician were being blocked for this reason. He lost his sister at a young age as well.

At the age of seven his life became as close as he would remember to being ‘normal.’ He had what was the closest he would to a father, a brother, his sister at home, and his mother. This was shattered when his mother took him from this new home without warning. His step-father died shortly after Alex contacted him.

Alex’s mother formed a homosexual relationship and entertained others with behaviour that Alex would only describe as disturbing. Ironically, Alex’s second serious relationship ended when his common-law wife left him for another woman. The incident resulted in the loss of his two children. Alex described the pain mixed with goodness in his heart.

The essential features of Alex’s upbringing began with a ‘dysfunctional’ family in which his mother was an alcoholic, his father was rarely present and beat his mother in front of the kids, and in which his father eventually left when Alex was very young. Little and poor contact was retained with his father. His sister was then removed from the home and his mother beat him. He attributed his poor relationship with his mother and his blocked musical aspirations to his likeness of his father. His only ‘real’ family was ‘destroyed’ when his mother ‘tore’ Alex away from the closest thing he had to a father at the age of seven. This father figure died shortly after their re-acquaintance.

His mother began a homosexual relationship which was followed by behaviour he found disturbing. A later relationship ended when his wife left for another woman. Alex was charged with assault against his girl-friend.
Joe

Capture.

Joe, who was 19, was three years old when his parents separated. Although Joe did not recall much of the separation he knew from his mother that his parents fought often prior to the separation. Joe had lived with his mother since the separation and had seldom seen his father. With much animosity in his voice Joe reported that "I've talked to my father about 20 times in the last 18 years."

Joe was a repeat offender who was transferred from the young offenders unit to the adult unit at the age of 18. He had been in and out of the probation office and had spent several nights in jail since his early teens.

Joe's mother had a relationship with a man Joe referred to as his step-dad. Anger was immediately evident in Joe's voice when he spoke of the man. Joe's initial words to me were "I hate him. They've been going out for about 10 years." His mother married Joe's 'step-dad' when Joe was approximately six years old.

I never got along with him. Not even the first time we met. I always hated him.

Things got a lot worse after he came along. The guy was just a jerk from the start. He's always been like that.

Joe had four brothers and step-brothers with whom he had a 'fairly good relationship.' However, his family, as a unit, had never really been close. "Mom, me, and my brother used to do a lot of things before she remarried, and then after she met him things kind a [sic] all just went down hill." Joe informed me that he had a very close relationship with his mother and felt that he could confide and talk to her about most subjects. "Mom was always the type to talk about things with me and explain things but my step-dad was more the type who said this is the way it goes and if you
don’t like it tough.” His mother was always concerned about where he was and what he was doing but neither his father nor his step-father had ever been concerned. Although he respected his mother very much, Joe did not want to be like her when he grew up. At the time of the interview he was unsure of what his ambitions for the future were.

When Joe was 15, he was caught smoking marihuana and was ‘kicked out’ of the house. However, Joe explained that he would have left anyway. He had told his mother since she had remarried that the day he turned 16 he was leaving. Joe recalled that it was at least a year before he spoke to his mother again. The time away from home was extremely difficult.

I lived on the street for about the first year. I didn’t want to go on welfare so I lived off of friends and stuff, but after a year I had to go on welfare cause I didn’t have any place to go anymore and it was gettin [sic] cold out. After that I went to school for a while then quit. I’ve been working for my uncle a bit.

After the remarriage, Joe had very strict rules. Prior to that point, Joe had seen his mother’s rules as ‘fair.’ However, he recalled that his step-dad placed rules on him that were extremely ‘unreasonable.’ Joe had a curfew of 8:30 at the age of 15 and recalled that he could never do things with his friends. His friends were allowed to stay out later on the weekends and to stay overnight at acquaintances but he was never allowed to participate. Additionally, he was not allowed to go to dances until high school. Joe explained that both of his parents would not allow him adequate freedom after the remarriage.

He trusted my brothers but not me. After she remarried, my mom didn’t trust me as much anymore either. If I said I was at friends but was going to be late she wouldn’t believe me and I’d get grounded.

This was an obviously disturbing issue for Joe. His step-dad apparently treated Joe differently from both his own brothers and his three step-brothers.
He was always mean to me because I was the one to tell mom when he did things wrong. He would threaten me and my brothers that if we told he would tell mom on us for things that we'd [sic] done wrong. My brothers wouldn't say nothing but I would so we ended up hating each other. Who is going to believe a seven year old compared to your husband? He was really into head games and was a real smart guy so he never got caught. She caught him playing head games with me a couple of times but never really did anything.

Joe explained that his mother and step-dad worked opposite shifts so that she was unaware of what his step-dad was doing the majority of the time. Joe noted that most of his relatives hated his step-dad for things that he had done but that his mother could never 'see it.'

I think that her first marriage with my dad was so bad that she wanted to believe that nothing could be wrong with this one. She didn’t want to have to go through another divorce. My first real dad was so bad to her that he [step-dad] probably didn’t even seem bad.

Joe ‘gets along’ with his real dad but their relationship basically consists of going out for a beer now and then. They had just recently began to talk but Joe stated that, ‘He is more like a friend than a father.’ They don’t talk about ‘regular father son things.’

Joe started to get into ‘trouble’ at approximately the age of eight after his mother’s remarriage. He was caught stealing in grade four and was caught breaking a church’s windows at age nine. “I started cause I was so angry probably.” Normally, Joe was simply grounded. When asked if anything in particular had changed his feelings, Joe related the following story to me.

When I was in grade four I got caught stealing so my step-dad gave me the belt. I had long brown marks on my back and on my ass and legs. I stayed in my room all night and the next day his father and his son who was 16 came over. So he says,
“Pull down your pants. I want them to see what I did to you.” and this was right in front of the company and all. He says. “Pull them down now or you’ll get it again.” So I did. I told mom and she doesn’t believe it. She just blocks it out.

When asked why he believed he originally became involved with crime. Joe noted that he was probably ‘just a bad kid.’ Joe did not blame anyone else for his involvement. “I only blame myself for what happened. Bad choices.” Joe briefly mentioned that he was often alone with his brother before the remarriage. His mother would put them to sleep and then leave for the night shift. She would return before they woke up in the morning. Occasionally the brothers would be left with a baby sitter. After the remarriage the situation worsened because Joe would be left with his step-dad. “I cried every night later cause mom would work midnight’s and I would get left alone with my step-dad.”

When questioned about his parents’ beliefs on stealing and other regularly accepted social norms. Joe explained that his parents both were like ‘other normal people.’

My step-dad just made my life rough. He loved to punish me. If there was a chance of punishing me he’d jump right in there. My life was hell from the second they met and it never got better. I hate the guy.

Bracketing.

Joe’s father left when he was three years old and he rarely saw his father after the separation. This angered Joe. His relationship with his father emerged into a friendship ‘over beers’ in which regular father/son subjects were never discussed. His mother often had to work following the separation and would occasionally leave the two boys alone while she worked the night shift.
Joe referred to the man that his mother later married as his step-dad. His initial words were that he hated the man. Anger was very evident throughout the interview, but was especially apparent whenever Joe spoke about his step-dad. His family was close prior to his step-dad’s arrival, and his relationship with his mother was good, but the situation went “downhill” following the introduction of his step-father.

Joe described a scenario in which his father not only beat him but in which the beating was followed by a humiliating experience. His step-father, proud of his ‘punishment,’ insisted that Joe remove his pants in front of the step-grandfather, and older step-brother. If the request was not met another beating would follow. The result was an obviously humiliating experience.

Further, Joe’s brother’s and step-brothers were treated differently because they would ‘keep quiet’ with respect to the step-father’s ‘misbehaviour.’ This was apparently the case from the onset of their relationship. However, Joe explained that his mother rarely believed him because her first marriage had been so terrible that she did not want to accept that anything could be wrong with her second marriage.

His mother would attempt to explain subjects and rules to Joe, but the step-father dictated rules without explanation. Joe’s mother changed with respect to her ‘closeness’ to Joe after her remarriage. His freedom was hampered, rules changed, and punishments were unpredictable all following the introduction of his new father. Joe was ‘kicked out’ at the age of 15 but would have left at age 16. His initial years on his own were very difficult.

The essential features of Joe’s family upbringing began with the separation of his parents at age three. Although he could not recall the experience, the fact that he rarely saw his father angered Joe. Moreover, their relationship was not like a typical father/son relationship.

Joe’s mother occasionally had to leave the two boys alone prior to her remarriage with a man that Joe ‘hated.’ He felt that he was treated differently than the other
children by his step-father because he would not accept his ‘indecent’ behaviour. However, his attempts to explain his step-dad’s ‘head games’ were not believed because his mother could not accept that her second marriage could be as bad as her first marriage.

Joe’s father beat him and on one occasion humiliated him in front of relatives. Joe’s misbehaviour began at approximately the same time his mother met his step-father. He was forced to leave the home at the age of 15 because of delinquency, but would have left at the age of 16 voluntarily. His life had changed, becoming more strict and unreasonable, and his relationship with his mother had weakened.

Joe’s initial years on his own were very difficult. He had to move from friends’ homes to the street and finally accepted welfare to support himself. He only blamed himself for his involvement with crime.

Ken

Capture

Ken was a 19 year old on probation for a charge of breaking and entering. He also had prior infractions for assault and theft. His criminal history began as a young offender and he was transferred to the adult unit at the age of 18.

Ken informed me that he had one younger brother and an older step-sister from his mother’s first marriage. Both of Ken’s parents worked while he was growing up because the family had little money. Ken stated that his father was abusive verbally and physically towards his mother, often in front of himself, his brother, and his sister, and that on one occasion he had called the police himself. His father was never charged.
When Ken was five years old his mother and father were divorced. His father never returned to visit nor did he ever pay child support. He recalled that the family was very poor from that point forward and that his misbehaviour began at approximately the same time.

Ken’s sister helped care for him and his brother while his mother worked two jobs. He recalled that his mother was seldom around after his father left and that his sister took the place of his mother. Ken stated that he did not ‘hate’ his mother for her absence. On the contrary, Ken respected his mother for the effort that she put into supporting the family. “We all had to grow up real fast after that. Especially my sister. She ended up being mom really. I had to be dad in a way I guess.” Ken’s mother informed him that he was the ‘man of the house’ and he attempted to “live up to the name without complaint.”

Ken stated that he had a good relationship with his mother and siblings. Although they rarely did anything together because of finances and a lack of time, they all ‘got along’ and rarely fought with one another. Ken reported that he had occasional contact with his father after he had left his mother.

I usually saw my dad on the street. We would pass each other once in a while cause we all lived in the same town you know? He would usually offer to buy me something to eat. We would talk but it wasn’t like he was my dad. It’s like he felt like he had to buy me food or something. He was always promising to come and visit but he never did and that just pissed me off even more.

Ken saw his father for the last time three years prior to the interview. He assumed that his father had moved back to his home country. Ken seemed disturbed by the fact that his father had left without saying good-bye or giving the family any warning even though their relationship was poor.

When Ken was approximately eight years old he began to steal. Although his mother had set curfews for him and had repeatedly told him not to steal, Ken would
not listen. “If I had no money I would steal stuff and that’s just the way it went.” Additionally, Ken often associated with a group of friends whom his mother did not approve of. Again Ken stated that, “There was nothing she could do.” Her attempts to punish him through groundings or scoldings were unsuccessful. Ken reported that he behaved at home but that when away from his mother he was ‘into trouble.’

When Ken was 16 he moved out of his mother’s house for approximately four months. However, he returned home because he could not afford being on his own and his ‘troubles’ escalated into involvement with the police. He had also experimented with drugs and alcohol. His schooling suffered because of fighting and truancy. He had left because he and his mother could no longer ‘get along.’

Ken was residing with his mother and brother at the time of the interview. He stated that their relationship had improved to some extent but that there were still problems. Ken reported that he is just “ticked off at the way things turned out.” His family had no money because his mother had been out of work for four years. At times this had resulted in his mother having to request help from Ken’s step-sister and her husband. “There is never money for food and extras at the end of the month.” When questioned about his present offence, Ken stated that he regretted it but, “What happens happens.” Overall, Ken seemed like a very bitter individual.

**Bracketing.**

Ken had been charged with multiple offences beginning at approximately the age of eight. His parents both worked while he was growing up and the family had little money. His father was abusive verbally and physically towards his mother. On one occasion Ken called the police himself.

The situation worsened when Ken was five following the divorce of his parents. Ken had to become ‘the man of the house’ and his step-sister replaced the duties of his
mother. Although Ken respected his mother for her hard work and effort she was rarely around. They were close but could not afford activities together. Ken’s father never visited, even after promises to do so, and would often buy Ken food after passing on the street as if he ‘felt sorry’ for him. His father left completely just prior to the interview and although their relationship was poor, his total disappearance disturbed Ken.

Ken had rules and curfews but would not abide by his mother’s wishes. The family had little food and no ‘extras’ so Ken would steal. He associated with a poor crowd and misbehaved in school. He tampered with drugs and alcohol. Punishments were unpredictable, minor, and unsuccessful.

At the age of 16, Ken moved out for several months because he could no longer ‘get along’ with his mother. After he returned, their relationship improved slightly but was still poor at the time of the interview. Ken was upset at how ‘things had turned out’ and seemed unwilling to take responsibility nor was remorseful for his actions. He was upset with their poor conditions. He suggested that these poor conditions drove him to steal.

The essential features of Ken’s family upbringing began with a poor marriage in which his father beat his mother in front of the children. The poor marriage, in which both parents were often absent due to work, ended in divorce when Ken was five.

Although Ken was close to his mother the family could rarely do activities together because of poor finances. This always remained a problem. Ken had to be ‘father’ while his step-sister was left with the task of raising Ken and his younger brother. Ken’s father never visited although he often promised to do so. He disappeared altogether two years prior to the interview.

Ken moved out due to an argument at age 16 but returned after a short time. He experimented with drugs and alcohol, misbehaved at school, and continued to steal
because of his poor financial position. He showed little remorse or responsibility for his delinquency. He was very dissatisfied with his upbringing or present conditions.

Jack

Capture.

Jack, who was 25, had numerous problems with the legal system beginning at approximately the age of nine. He only had one brother and his parents were married although the marriage had been ‘brutal’ as long as Jack could remember. Throughout the interview, Jack’s memories of childhood were constantly connected to violence.

What seemed to be most troubling to Jack was the fact that his brother, who had cancer, was his only close companion. The problem lay in the fact that his brother spent the majority of his time in the hospital. Jack was not allowed to see him during those periods and found it difficult to cope with anything during those times. Further, Jack was left with a baby-sitter during those lengthy periods because his father and mother both worked and spent their remaining time in the hospital with his brother.

Jack informed me that his family was not close and that his parents constantly fought both verbally and physically.

It was bad enough that my dad hit us. You know what he’d do? He’d actually get on top of my mom right in front of us and just keep smacking her in the face. If she tried to say anything when he was pounding us he’d just beat the heck out of her.
The one person Jack was close to (his brother) was away in a hospital from the ages of 3-5 and 10-12. During those periods Jack communicated with him via a tape recorder. He would tape his messages and in return his brother would record a message and send it back. Those periods were quite obviously the most difficult for Jack.

I remember one thing that really bugged me. When I was about six my brother had just gotten [sic] back from the hospital. He’d been gone for a couple months cause he had to get his gall bladder fixed or something like that. Anyhow, we were playing around in the driveway and I accidentally pushed him and his stitches ripped and I could see right into his gut. They stuck him back in the hospital for a couple months. I really remember that cause I thought it was my fault. I had to be by myself again after that.

Another disturbing memory for Jack was his early school years. Because of the violence at home in addition to the loss of his brother for extended periods of time. Jack was constantly being punished at school.

One thing that really bugged me was the fact that no one ever bothered to ask what was wrong. They’d just expel and strap me over and over. I didn’t even care after a while. You know, like you come to school after your dad just kicked the crap out the whole family and they think your not paying attention cause you’re a bad kid or something but they don’t even bother asking what’s wrong.

Consequently, Jack never finished high school. However, he did enroll in college courses later in prison and again following his release.

When asked if the family did any activities together, Jack explained that his father tried to ‘buy their love.’

That was the confusing part. My dad would beat us and then five minutes later he’d give us five bucks and tell us to go to the store. He was a Janitor and a DJ
so he had lots of cash. He used to take us to the Checkered Flag [a race car track] religiously.

Jack stated that growing up was confusing due to the fact that no one ever knew what to expect from his father. They never knew if he was going to shower them with gifts or beat them. “He was like a time bomb that no one could predict.”

Jack informed me that he was close to his mother and could talk to her about anything. However, his mother was with his brother in the hospital the majority of the time and was always unhappy.

One thing that really bugged me, and I haven’t told hardly anyone this. When me and my brother were younger, we used to go on what we called street walks. We’d stay out all night after we said we were at a friend’s. One night we came back early and heard my parents talking so we thought we’d listen. You know what we heard? My mom is crying and saying to my dad, “How come you come in here for 20 minutes with her and only 10 minutes with me. You don’t act the same when we’re alone either.”

Apparently, Jack’s father was having an affair as well as sleeping with the woman and his wife together. Jack and his brother had suspected something was occurring with a woman who was supposedly a friend from where their father was a Disk Jockey, but were never certain. Jack noted that he lost total respect for his father at that point and had hated him ever since that day. Jack informed me that on the outside his father was ‘good’ but that ‘behind closed doors’ he was controlling and sick. “He fooled everyone.”

When Jack was approximately 10, he had mistook something his mother had said for her wanting him to show his bruises and marks to the principal at school. After his father had beat him and his brother one day, they went to school and informed the principal. His mother had not meant for them to report the incident
and what followed was again devastating for Jack, but finally broke the chain of violence.

After we showed them to the principal, my dad got in a lot of trouble and they split us up. I got put in a regional children’s center for three and a half months before my dad finally got me back. They couldn’t take my brother cause he needed too much hospital care. That’s the thing that sucked. It just ended up separating me and my brother again and it was my fault. Dad quit hitting us for the most part after that though. He was still controlling though and still is.

Jack reported that his father, although he was violent, was not strict at all. He was not told where he could or could not go, who he could hang around with, or how late he could stay out. Any rules that were enforced were different from day to day.

Jack stated that his father actually promoted his initial criminal behavior. Jack had often used pain killers to get high. When he was 13 years old his father would send him to the grocery store to steal groceries in exchange for 20 pills. Further, at approximately the same time, Jack’s father, while at a movie together with the family one evening, informed the brothers that he was aware of the fact that they were smoking marijuana.

He says, “I know you’re smoking it and I know that you know we are, so from now on you guys can smoke at home but you have to keep it in the house.” For my 13th birthday I had all my friends over and we all got really high. All my friends thought my parents were cool.

Jack’s first contact with the law occurred at approximately the age of nine. His friend illegitimately called the fire department to Jack’s house and they suspected it was Jack. Rather than ‘rat’ on his friend, Jack ‘took the heat’ and spent a week in a detention center. He had been in and out of homes, on probation, and in jail following the incident for numerous property and highway violations. For several
months he would simply steal a car, get drunk, and try to get into chases with the police. Jack stated that he, “Was self-destructive because life didn’t matter.”

Just prior to the interview, Jack had his first child. He noted that it had changed his life. He had to become responsible. Additionally he was soon to be married. His sentence for his last offense would end in two months and he hoped to get his life ‘back in order’ and to create a decent life for his new family. Although he blamed his father for his initial involvement with the criminal justice system, he noted that it was his own fault for perpetuating the delinquency. Moreover, he felt that it was his responsibility to change things.

Bracketing.

Jack grew up in a family setting that he described as ‘brutal.’ His father not only beat him and his brother, but would also beat his mother in front of the children. The physical violence was accompanied by a great deal of verbal abuse. His parents never separated although the situation barely improved over the years.

Jack’s past was plagued with a recurring theme. His brother was ill with cancer and was constantly being taken away to the hospital. Jack’s brother was his only close companion. The pain during the absences was only diminished by the passing of a tape recorder with messages between the two brothers. The only other individual with whom Jack could confide, his mother, was absent at work or visiting his brother the majority of the time. Consequently Jack spent the good majority of his upbringing with baby-sitters.

Jack misbehaved in school and dropped out of education early because the teachers and principal were unwilling to understand his behavior. His inability to pay attention or to learn were never questioned. He was simply seen as a ‘bad
kid.' This disturbed him because he could not talk about his situation at home. When he finally, mistakenly, informed the school of the abuse, he was removed from his home, and his brother once again, for a duration of time. Jack blamed himself for a number of his brother’s absences. The abuse subsided after this incident.

Jack’s father was never consistent with ‘false love’ or discipline. He would beat them and then shower them with gifts. ‘Outsiders’ viewed Jack’s father as a man who loved his family when he was actually quite cruel to the children and his wife. Additionally, at a young age, Jack discovered that his father was ‘cheating’ on his mother and sleeping with his mother and another woman together. Jack lost respect and hated his father following the incident.

Jack became involved with the law at the age of nine, and continued his criminal behavior well into his early adulthood. His father would reinforce both his drug habits and his criminal behavior by exchanging pills for stolen groceries.

The essential features of Jack’s family upbringing began with an abusive home. Not only were Jack and his brother beaten, but his mother was also beaten in front of them. This was accompanied by verbal and emotional abuse. Jack’s brother was sick and often absent. His only communication with his brother was a tape recorder. Additionally his mother and father both worked and were absent, leaving Jack at home with a baby-sitter, because of their occupations or because they were visiting Jack’s brother. Jack’s mother, the only parent he could confide in, was rarely present at home and was always unhappy.

Jack was angry with the school where he was seen as a badly behaved child, because officials never questioned why he was upset. When he did report his dysfunctional home life, it resulted in his removal from the home. At a young age, Jack was witness to a disturbing event revealing the fact that his father was cheating on, and hurting his mother. He hated his father after the incident. Further, although
'outsiders' saw Jack's father as a good man. He was deceiving them. He would beat the family, and them give them gifts. He was equally inconsistent with his punishments.

Jack's father began reinforcing criminal behaviour when Jack was young. Additionally, he allowed the use of illegal substances in the home. This increased a drug problem Jack had begun. Jack's depression led to reckless behaviour which perpetuated his delinquency. Although he blamed his father for his introduction to crime, he only blamed himself for continuing his problematic way of life.

Eric

Capture.

Eric, who was 18, had been, and was on probation for several charges including possession of narcotics and breach of probation. His parents were separated when he was approximately eight, although they were never divorced. They were together 'off and on' repeatedly from that time forward although they were separated the majority of the time. Initially, Eric lived with his father but when he was older he lived an equal amount of time with both parents at two week intervals.

Eric recalled that prior to the separations, his parents argued often and simply could not 'get along.' Although he believed that his family was close at the time of the interview, he explained that his family was not close while he was growing up. The family performed activities together such as camping and fishing vacations. However, following the initial separation, trips were seldom and the closeness that was a part of the family when he was very young was no longer present.

I guess we did things and were close in a way when I was really young, but they
started to fight and just not get along way before they actually split up. We stopped getting along and quit doing stuff when that happened. They were just upset and stuff so how could they be happy doing things together?

Eric had one younger sister who was 16 that he “got along with OK.” He noted that he had a good relationship with both parents, although he preferred to talk to his father. He explained that it was easier to discuss things with his father because he was more like himself. When asked if he aspired to be like either parent, he simply answered, “No.” When asked what he wanted to do when he was older Eric replied, “Don’t really matter, just do something.”

Eric was one of the more difficult men to interview. He rarely elaborated on any question and seemed to be extremely apathetic. Through Eric’s responses, tone of voice, and actions, I was left with the impression that he simply ‘did not care.’ There was a drastic lack of emotion about anything I asked Eric.

From the ages of eight to ten, Eric recalled having a curfew of 9:00 PM. When he was older, approximately 15 or 16, he had a curfew of 11:00 on weekdays and 12:00 or 1:00 on the weekends. The curfew depended on what Eric was doing. Eric admitted that his parents did not like some of his friends but he felt that they could not control who he associated with.

They don’t like some of my friends. They don’t like me with them but what can they do. They try to keep me away from them but what can they do? They’d ground me but then I’d just be out in a couple of days. It never lasts.

Eric reported that his punishments were usually groundings which required him to remain in the house. However, his groundings usually lasted only one or two days before his parent(s) would ‘give in’ and let him out again. Eric’s parents were very lax about the neighbourhoods he ‘hung around’ in and the functions he attended. He explained that they never enforced which areas he could go to or which arcades or dances he could attend, so Eric went where he pleased.
When away from his home, Eric felt that his parents were very unaware of what he was doing, who he was with, or where he was. "They were probably too wrapped up in their own problems. They were always trying to figure out whether or not to split up again." Eric’s resentment of the fact that his parents were constantly separating was apparent in his tone of voice. Eric’s problems with the legal system began when he was 13. He attributed the cause to the friends that he associated with. He stated that they were a “bad influence on him.”

Near the end of the interview Eric ‘opened up’ to me and somewhat contradicted one of his earlier statements. He explained that he rarely fought with his parents and then stated that it was usually his mother that was ‘there for him.’ Although he had originally stated that it was his father that he preferred to talk to, he later explained that his mother was the one who bailed him out of jail when he was arrested, and that it was usually his mother who reminded him about, and drove him to, his appointments.

My mom is more talkative than my dad is. My dad don’t like to talk much, especially about me on probation and stuff. He don’t like the police much so my mom usually takes care of it. He doesn’t like the cops cause they bother people.

Eric informed me that his father agreed with traditional norms such as stealing and fighting, and stated that his activities involving him with the legal system angered his father. Eric was attending school at the time of the interview and had not ‘encountered’ the police. His term of probation would end shortly, and he noted that he would have no additional problems in the future. He desired to attend college and had stopped associating with the friends he was with at the time of his criminal activities. Moreover, Eric stated that his friends were the main contributing factor to his problems, and that if he could stay away from them, that he should be ‘OK.’ However, Eric also reported that the neighbourhood that he ‘hung out’ in was a key
factor in his delinquency. Thus, Eric planned on remaining away from the area where
his problems began.

Bracketing.

Eric was difficult to interview because of his general attitude. He was apathetic
and gave the impression that he really did not care about many aspects of his life. He
was angry with the fact that his parents had separated constantly while he was
growing up beginning at the age of eight. The fighting between the two adults was a
common part of Eric’s past.

After the initial separation, the families activities became rare and there was a
general atmosphere of discontent in the home. He ‘got along’ with his younger sister,
had no real aspirations for the future, and did not desire to be like either parent. He
initially informed me that he preferred to talk to his father who was ‘like him’ and
later contradicted himself and stated he preferred speaking to his mother who was
more ‘talkative.’ His father was angry with Eric due to his involvement with the
police, although he disliked the police because they ‘bothered people.’

Eric’s discipline was never properly enforced. His groundings rarely lasted. He
felt that his parents were often unaware of his location, friends, or activities. Although
he had curfews, he often misbehaved. He stated that they could not control him and
were often unaware of him because they were too concerned with their own problems.

Eric blamed his delinquency on a poor choice of friends and the neighbourhood
where he associated with his acquaintances.

The essential features of Eric’s family upbringing began with the initial fighting
and separation of his parents at the age of eight. The fighting and instability of the
family continued into his late teens. He was inconsistent in explaining which parent
he was more comfortable talking too, and carried anger and resentment towards both individuals for their constant arguing and separating.

Eric believed that his parents where often unaware of his location, acquaintances, or activities, felt they had little control over his behaviour, and that his parents were unable to enforce his punishments. He blamed his delinquency on bad acquaintances and corrupt neighbourhoods.

Don

Capture.

Don was an 18 year old who had been transferred from the young offender’s unit to the adult unit. He had prior records for mischief, assault, and breach of probation. His most recent term of probation was the result of a second assault charge.

Don was born from parents who were never married. His father left when he was still an infant. Thus, Don had no memory of his father ever living with his mother. Don’s Step-father moved into the home when Don was approximately three.

According to Don, his step-father was the closest thing he ever had to a father. His relationship was closer with his step-father than with his real father who he regained contact with when he was 15 years old. Although Don had contact with his real father at the time of the interview, he explained that their relationship was more like ‘a friendship’ than a father/son relationship.

Don’s mother left his step-father three years prior to the interview and Don lost contact with the man approximately two years after the separation. He had lived with his step-father and real mother for approximately 13 years.
Don informed me that his family was never close and explained that his parents (mother and step-father) fought almost every night. Although the fighting was usually only verbal, at times the incidents escalated to physical confrontations between the two adults. However, Don stated that his step-father “mostly physically handled her” and that the incidents “were not really abuse.”

Don mentioned that, originally, the family performed many activities together such as outings to Cedar Point or family ‘get-togethers’ in a park. Every Sunday the family would gather with relatives, and at the end of the day they would make plans for the following Sunday. The family that assembled was Don’s step-father and his relatives. Although Don ‘got along’ with his extended family members, he noted that he was often upset because he felt as if he was not completely accepted by either his mother’s or step-father’s relatives due to the fact that he was mulatto. His skin colour was the cause of name calling and abuse both at home and in his schools.

Don stated that he had a ‘good’ relationship with his mother until he was 15 years old at which time he was ‘kicked out’ of the home. He felt that his relationship with his mother steadily became worse following the incident because he still associated with his step-father, whom his mother had left, and had a good relationship with him. Don wanted to be with his step-father and felt torn between him and his biological mother. “What caused a lot of the confusion was the fact that I wanted to be with my step-dad after they were separated.”

Don noted that when he was younger his parents (mother and step-father) always knew who he was with when he was out of the home. His step-father was lenient but his mother was not. Don had a curfew and was told who he could and could not associate with. They dictated where he was allowed to spend his time as well. Rules were explained to the best of his recollection. However, punishments were often groundings which usually only lasted approximately an hour because his parents would ‘give in.’
Don aspired to be like his step-father while he was growing up and respected both his parents. He still felt, at the time of the interview, that his mother was ‘strong minded’ because she had experienced so many hardships. His mother made the best out of bad situations. However, Don could never confide in either of his parents nor his real father. He did not feel comfortable talking about personal issues or school.

Don was ‘kicked out’ of the house at the age of 15 shortly after his mother had left his step-father. From that point up to the time of the interview, Don had been ‘on his own.’ He had spent a great deal of time having no residence at all. Don explained why he was forced to leave his home.

I was pretty shocked when I got kicked out . . . the argument started with my girlfriend and went to my mom. We were yelling at each other in the basement and my mom came downstairs and said, “Calm down and shut up,” and she [girlfriend] told her [mother] to shut up and I smacked her [mother] in the mouth and I started arguing with her . . . and she said, “Get out and don’t come back.” She says, “If you don’t leave I’m going to call the police,” . . . and I hung up the phone on her and stuff cause she was dialling the number and I didn’t think that was necessary but I ended up leaving and sleeping in the neighbour’s car, a station wagon, and I slept there till school, and I went to school, and I went home and my stuff was packed.

Don explained that he was ‘kicked out off and on’ following the argument and was never at home for a long period of time. At the age of 16 he stayed with some friends of his sisters for a short duration. Don started to smoke marihuana, drinking, smoking cigarettes, and ‘hanging out’ on the streets until seven o’clock in the morning. “It was kind of a crack house. There was hookers and stuff up there. I wanted to go back to mom’s. I was crying. She wouldn’t let me back. That’s when I broke the window.” The broken window resulted in a charge of mischief.
Don stated that his mother was tired with his sister’s ‘ways’ and was not going to put up with any misbehaviour from him. Don’s sister had been a source of frustration to his mother throughout the years she was growing up and Don believed that she was unwilling to tolerate any ill behaviour from her second child. Thus, after his step-father was told to leave, Don’s mother had no tolerance or explanation of rules. Don had no idea of what was ‘going on’ following the incident.

After Don was told to leave his home he began to ‘open up’ to his step-father. His step-father tried to convince Don’s mother to allow Don to return home and ‘played the middle man.’ This, Don explained, made things worse because his association with his step-father made him an “asshole in his mother’s eyes.”

Don informed me that his relationship with his girlfriend was one of the main contributing factors to his delinquency because it added to the problems he had at home.

It happened because I was too high and mighty with my ex-girlfriend. If we argued I would take it out on my mom and then I’d get so frustrated cause I hurt them both so it would get out of hand and my mom would call the police and it started off with breaking the window trying to sneak into the house cause I wanted to stay there, and that went to breach and I just recently got charged with the assault and then a couple more breaches.

These events created the anger that Don described. The fact that his mother was unwilling to help him amplified that anger. Don explained that he was not violent but simply angry. In a statement, he noted that he just wanted to return to his home. He did not want to sleep on the streets again, which he often had to do. He would get ‘kicked out’ at 1:30 in the morning. He respected his friends and their parents and would not want to wake them. Thus, he would attempt to get into his mother’s home. A term of his probation was to stay away from his mother’s house which led to charges of breach of probation.
Don noted that the transition from good to ‘nothing,’ with respect to his family life, made him feel like no one cared. His sister did the same thing but she received forgiveness and more ‘chances.’

Aint [sic] nobody wanted to listen to me and my mom’s friends would try to tell her. I had friends of hers that would try to keep in touch and they’d try to let her know and she just wouldn’t have it. She thinks I’m too much like my dad.

Bracketing.

Don never knew his real father until later in life. His mother remarried when he was three. Don considered his step-father the ‘closest thing to a father.’ Don’s mother left his step-father and Don eventually lost contact with the man. His real father was more like a friend than a father.

Don recalled that his family was not close and that his sister was often ‘into trouble.’ His parents fought considerably, sometimes escalating into physical abuse. However, Don did not recognise the violence as abuse. He described the incidents as, “Not really violence.” and, “Mostly physically handling her.” Such statements seemed to portray that Don was unsure of what behaviour between two adults was acceptable.

Much of Don’s confusion stemmed from the fact that his family life developed from ‘good’ to ‘poor’ following the separation of his mother’s second marriage. He regarded his step-father as his father and the few years that the man was present were the closest to a ‘normal’ family life that Don had. He was accustomed to family outings and some discipline.

Following the absence of his step-father, Don felt torn between his mother and the man he regarded as his father. Moreover, Don felt that his mother resented him for
associating with his step-father and continuing to go to the man for support subsequent to the separation.

At the age of 15, Don's relationship with his mother had degraded to the point where they could no longer 'get along.' This led to Don's removal from the home by his mother. Don struggled continuously following the incident as he constantly attempted to move back home. At times Don had to live with individuals who introduced him to alcohol, drugs, and a criminal way of life. Don began to accept an 'uncaring' attitude towards life in general.

His anger from the past in addition to his belief that his sister received preferential treatment and 'more chances.' led Don to assault his mother and girl-friend on two occasions. Additionally, in his attempts to find shelter in his mother's home, Don had breached terms of his probation resulting in further criminal charges. At 16 years of age, Don simply wanted a 'normal' life again.

The essential features of Don's family upbringing began with the absence of his real father at a young age. His only father, his step-father, provided the only 'normal' lifestyle in Don's memory. His family outings and disciplined upbringing radically altered when Don's mother left his step-father.

He stayed in contact with the man for a short period of time until he lost contact altogether. This contact and relationship with Don's former step-father angered Don's mother. He felt torn between the two adults. Don's real father, who he gained contact with in his mid-teens, was more like a friend than a father.

Don was 'kicked out' of the home at the age of 15 after which he had to live on the streets, at friends, and in dwellings with a criminal atmosphere. His attempts to gain his mother's acceptance, and thus her support, failed. The anger from his past as well as the violent behaviour he witnessed from his mother's second marriage contributed to his own charges of assault. His attempts to move back home resulted in breaches of
probation. Don had always felt that his mother had more tolerance of his poorly behaved older sister than himself.

Ed

Capture.

Ed was on probation for assault at the age of 25 and had one prior conviction for possession of narcotics. Of all the subjects interviewed, Ed was the most difficult to deal with. He was very reluctant to talk and his answers were usually brief. Although he spoke little, he seemed to be the most disturbed of all the subjects that I interviewed with respect to his upbringing.

Ed spent half of his formative years with his mother and the other half with his father. His parents separated soon after his birth. He had a brother and sister from his father’s second marriage and a brother from his mother’s second marriage. He had little contact with any of his step-siblings and was not close to any of them.

Following the separation, Ed remained in the custody of his mother who moved around continuously so that Ed’s father would not find them. Apparently, Ed’s father was a truck driver who was, “Into partying and was a heavy drinker.” By the age of three, Ed had been to 13 different schools in two cities.

Ed had no contact with his father until the age of five. At that time his father took him one day without his mother’s permission. Later the same day Ed was returned to his mother by the police. Ed lost contact with his father once again.

At approximately the same time, Ed’s mother moved in with her boyfriend. Ed ‘got along’ with his new step-father initially, but the relationship progressively worsened due to Ed’s ‘behavioral problems.’ At the age of nine, Ed was sent to
live with his father. His mother moved back to her home town and later moved again with a new boyfriend to the other side of the country. She had remained in partial contact with Ed by mail. However, Ed had not seen his mother since a year after he was sent to live with his father.

From the age of 9 to 19 Ed resided with his father and step-mother. Although the relationship with his father was unstable initially, his father quit drinking when Ed was 11 and the situation slowly improved following that point. Ed informed me that in his later teenage years he ‘got along well’ with his new family, but that at the age of 19 he left because his room and board was too expensive.

At age 19, Ed moved in with his girlfriend and her family for approximately one year. The relationship was ‘good’ initially but his girlfriend began to hit Ed and ‘antagonize’ him so that his ‘anger built.’ By the end of the relationship Ed was hitting her back. He was kicked out of the home and found a place on his own.

Ed later met a new girlfriend. The relationship ended when he assaulted her which resulted in his present term of probation. His anger again had built to the point where he ‘could not control it.’

We get along at first. I have medical problems which cost me a lot of money. I don’t have a medical plan so it’s really frustrating. That and I don’t like being sick. It’s been really hard to keep a job because of my disease. She was on my case cause she was supporting me. It wasn’t my fault though. She just kept bugging me until I lost it. I can only hold things in for so long. My whole life I’ve always felt out of control.

Ed tried to get help for his ‘abuse problem’ at the request of his girlfriend. She told him that he would ‘deal with it’ if he loved her. Ed stated that he joined the program. However, during the process his girlfriend left him for a new boyfriend so her request was, “Just a crock like everything else.”
Bracketing.

Ed was a very ‘disturbed’ individual. He was very angry with his past especially the fact that he felt disowned by his mother. He had spent half of his formative years with his mother and the second half with his father.

Ed had step-siblings from both of his parents’ second marriages. However, he was not close to any of the individuals. He was constantly moved at a young age because his mother feared his father. This likely inhibited his ability to create close friendships. His initial contact with his biological father was being kidnapped by him.

Ed was able to have a good relationship with his mother’s new boyfriend initially, but when Ed began to have what he described as behavioral problems, his mother simply ‘shipped’ him off to his father’s home. Ed had not seen his mother since the age of 10. They remained in contact by mail.

His relationship with his father improved only after his father quit drinking. Although Ed stated that he ‘got along’ in this new environment, he left the impression that he was never fully accepted into his new family. His father never fully developed an adequate relationship with him.

Ed eventually left his second home and began to live with girlfriends. He had assaulted at least two women and felt that life was, “Just a Crock.” He had little tolerance for frustration before he ‘lost it.’

The essential features of Ed’s upbringing began with his constantly having to move at a young age to avoid his abusive father. At the age of five he was ‘kidnapped’ by his father but returned. He was never close to either parent nor was he close to his step-siblings. He was sent to live with his father at the age of nine for misbehaving after which time he never saw his mother again. They remained in contact by letter after she moved to the other side of the country with a new boyfriend.
Ed’s stay with his father improved gradually. However, Ed left at the age of 19 to live with girlfriends who he assaulted because they would push him until he would ‘lose it.’ Ed felt ‘out of control’ and had little faith in humanity. He believed everything was a lie or deception.

Larry

Capture.

Larry, a 20 year old, had been sentenced to probation for a period of one year because he stole money from his father. Additionally, Larry had prior records of drug and property offenses. Although Larry was 20 years old, he acted and spoke like an individual in his early teens due to a learning disability caused by an accident in his childhood.

Larry had attempted suicide on several occasions and had been placed in hospitals on two occasions because of self destructive tendencies. Additionally, Larry showed me his arm which carried numerous scars from times when he had burnt himself with the butt of a cigarette.

Larry’s parents separated when he was eight years old and were temporarily back together again when he was 19. The second attempt at making the marriage work lasted only six months. Larry explained that his parents fought often prior to the initial separation, sporadically during the separation, and again one month after they moved back together. Larry informed me that they ‘get along’ better when they are apart. Although Larry lived with his father, he spent a substantial amount of time at his mother’s house as well. Both of Larry’s parents remained single.

It’s always bugged me that they’re split up cause they still talk to each other all
the time. I don’t understand why they can’t get along when they live together. It’s like they’re married but they’re not so we have to be split up even though we’re not really. You know what I mean?

Larry stated that his family had never been close. His only sister, who was two years older, moved out when she was 16. She had a four year old child and lived with her new boyfriend. Larry rarely talked to his sister and indicated that they did not get along. “We fought a lot when she lived here so we still don’t get along. I talk to her once in a while but just when I have to.”

Moreover, Larry also informed me that the family rarely spent time together. Larry stated that he spent the majority of his time ‘hanging out’ with his friends, who were both 16, or sitting in his room watching a large amount of television. His father bought him a computer when he was approximately 18 so that he could keep himself occupied. Larry explained that he had a difficult time relating to individuals who were his own age. Moreover, his friends attended school during the day, so Larry had nothing to do during that time period.

Larry explained that he had an ‘OK relationship’ with both parents. He talked equally to his mother and father although he felt more comfortable discussing things with his mother.

My dad is always lying around and stuff. He doesn’t like to talk. He’s always downstairs in the dark. He can’t get a job cause he hurt his back so he watches TV all day. When I ask him stuff he tells me to ask mom. When he’s feeling OK we talk about fishing and stuff though. We’re supposed to go fishing soon. Dad just has to get some more money first.

Larry’s mother typically discussed topics such as work and school with him. She had constantly attempted to convince Larry to go back to the adult learning center to finish his grade twelve. Larry had made an effort to complete school on three separate occasions but had dropped out each time.
My mom and me go to the States a lot to buy cigarettes and stuff. She talks to me about school and stuff then. She wants me to go back to school to get the rest of my credits but I hate school. The whole thing's dumb and the other people there make me feel stupid. I talk to my friend about personal stuff.

She's not my girlfriend. She's just a friend.

Larry informed me that he had a female friend who was 18. He started associating with her a year before the interview and had spent more time with her than his two male friends, over the past several months.

Larry recalled that he had a curfew at both his mother's and his father's house, although it was easy for Larry to 'get away with things' at his father's home.

Dad goes to sleep early and even when he's awake he never knows what's going on. That's how I took his money. I only took it cause I didn't have none and I was going to put it back anyway. So I just sneak out when I want to go out. My friends don't have curfews so we just hang out and find stuff to do. I like being at mom's house but I get to do more at dad's.

Additionally, Larry's father and mother grounded him for not abiding by their rules. However, Larry stated that his father often forgot and that when he did recall, Larry would simply climb out of his window without his father's knowledge.

Larry believed that his male friends were a bad influence on him. It was during those times that Larry spent with them that he became involved with the legal system.

We never have nothing to do so we hang out at the arcade and stuff. That's where we started to smoke up and that's where I started smoking. That and both my parents smoke so I get smokes from them. We got into trouble stealing more cause we had nothing to do. It was kind a [sic] for excitement and stuff. That and cause none of us really have any money. Lately I'd rather spend time
with [female friend] cause she’s more my age and I like talking to her. When asked if there was anything in his past that changed the way he thought about things, Larry explained that it was when his father lost his job.

When my dad got fired he just started to sit around. He was already bummed out about mom and him so I think he exaggerated his getting hurt. He just sat around after that and always has since then. He doesn’t care about anything so why should I. He hardly even talks any more except to give me shit about something.

Larry informed me that he felt that the main contributing factor to his delinquency was his association with his two younger friends and the fact that they never had anything to do.

Plus the fact that my dad turned me in. He thinks that it’d be better for the cops to get involved because I don’t listen to him. I think he just likes to see me in crap. I wasn’t really in trouble till this happened and the cops weren’t even going to get involved until he made it formal. I need to do something though. My new friend is cool. I’m gonna [sic] get a job. She told me that I have to start doing things for myself and I believe her. I don’t think I’ll be in trouble anymore. In a way it’s my own fault cause I didn’t care before.

Bracketing.

As the consequence of a childhood accident, Larry was a 20 year old who acted much like a young teenager. He was a very depressed individual who had attempted suicide and had caused himself bodily harm on several occasions. This had resulted in his placement under psychiatric care.
Larry's parents separated when he was eight although they never lost contact. They had attempted to restore the marriage when Larry was 19 to no avail. Although Larry intensely desired his parents to renew their marriage, he insisted that they 'got along' better when they were apart.

The situation confused Larry, because his parents had always remained single, and although they often spent time together and never lost contact, they could never make a marriage work. This was an important and disturbing issue which seemed to preoccupy Larry's time. His family was never close, they did not do activities together (although his father made promises to do so), and he had a poor relationship with his sister.

Larry had two younger friends because he had a difficult time relating to individuals his own age. He had just met a girl of similar age who seemed to be a 'good influence' on him. She was attempting to convince Larry that he needed to take control of his future and make positive choices for himself. His two younger friends, whom he had stopped associating with for the most part, were a negative influence. They spent a great deal of time 'hanging out' getting into trouble and 'smoking up.'

Larry's father 'sat around' because he had lost his job. Larry believed that his father just 'did not care' and Larry had adopted a similar ideology. He also spent a large proportion of his time sitting around and watching television.

Larry enjoyed being at both his mother's and his father's homes. He could talk to his mother more easily but found that he had more freedom at his father's home. His mother had stricter rules and it was easier for Larry to 'get away' with things at his father's. The contrast in rules between the two homes may have been confusing to Larry at times.

Larry blamed his involvement with the legal system on the poor influence of his friends, his lack of things to do, and because he did not care. He stated that his
father had the police unnecessarily become involved after he stole money because his father was unable to control his behavior. However, he did not directly blame his father for his criminality.

The essential features of Larry’s family upbringing began with the separation and constant fighting of his parents when he was eight years old. Although Larry’s parents remained single and often contacted each other, they could not restore their marriage and continuously fought when together. This was both confusing and disturbing for Larry.

Larry’s father spent the vast majority of his time ‘sitting around’ watching television following an accident. Larry had copied the behaviour and simply ‘did not care.’ His relationship with both parents, and his sister, was poor and his two younger friends were a bad influence on him. In their ‘boredom’ the individuals had ‘run into problems.’ A lack of finances contributed to Larry’s final charge of theft.

Larry had different rules at each home where he spent a similar amount of time. His mother was easier to talk to but his father was more lax in his discipline. Moreover, it was easier to ‘get away’ with things at Larry’s father’s home. Larry had a new friend who was a positive influence on him and planned on turning his life around. Although he felt his father’s use of the police to correct his theft of money was unnecessary, he blamed his delinquency on poor judgement, bad peer influence, and an uncaring attitude.
Bob

Capture.

Bob was a 25 year old repeat offender who had been involved with criminality since his early teenage years. Bob's parents were divorced when he was eight. He then lived with his mother. He rarely contacted his father and his mother had remained single the majority of the time since the separation.

Bob recalled that his parents fought often prior to their separation. He simply remembered that the separation was 'confusing.' However, he reported that the end of the fighting between his parents, as a result of the separation, was a relief to him and his one older brother.

The fact that Bob rarely saw his father no longer bothered him. However, Bob noted that, initially, the absence of his father troubled him a great deal.

At first it just seemed OK cause the fighting stopped. Then it kind a bugged me cause I never saw him and I wasn't sure why. I guess I just got used to it after a while though cause when I did see him once in a while he was a goof.

The family was not close prior to, and immediately following, the separation. However, Bob informed me that over the years his mother, brother, and self began to do 'little things' together again such as outings to the beach and that, eventually, when he was in his later teens, they began to go on trips once again.

Bob advised me that his relationship with his mother had improved drastically in the two years prior to the interview, but that it was 'terrible' when he was younger. He recalled that his mother was 'impossible' and that talking about anything was 'a joke.'

She couldn't talk. All she could do was yell I think, cause every time there was
an argument she’d just blow up at me and tell me I was grounded. Then she wouldn’t even talk about it anymore. That would really tick me off.

Bob also recalled that his mother tried to ‘control him’ when he was out of the house, but that once he had left she neither knew where he was nor cared as long as he was at home on time. Additionally, Bob stated that his mother would complain a great deal about his grades but would never offer to help him with his school work.

She would just bitch all the time about how I was screwing up my life and make me feel real dumb, but she’d never actually offer to help me get better at reading or anything like that. I knew I was stupid in school. I didn’t need her to tell me too.

Bob never respected either parent when he was younger. However, in recent years he had started to respect his mother because she had to raise the two boys by herself. She had always purchased pleasing gifts for birthdays and Christmas and had been supportive of both of them in their job searches.

I never wanted to be like my mom or dad. My mom does a bookworm kind a job and my dad is just an idiot. I like working with my hands. You know, like a mechanic or something. She’s been real good about helping me with résumés and stuff for the last couple years, and now that I’ve had a job for a couple of months she’s really happy.

Bob often fought with his older brother. He indicated that the fights were usually physical and that he and his brother did not actually start to communicate well until they were both in their later teens. The two of them often had to come home from school and be by themselves because their mother worked. Bob’s brother was old enough to take care of him but was rarely around. Bob spent the majority of his nights after school with his friends and never did his homework.
His mother would come home from work and usually go to bed or to her room to watch television.

As a result of his being alone constantly, Bob indicated that he began to drink his mother’s liquor at a young age.

I don’t know if she didn’t know that I was drinking it or just didn’t care cause she never said anything. After a while me and my friends started doing it at their houses too. We’d add water sometimes so that it didn’t look as bad. It was something we did all the time.

Bob informed me that eventually, around the age of 13, the drinking became mixed with marihuana smoking, and at about the age of 15 Bob was experimenting with a variety of drugs.

Bob stated that he never felt comfortable talking to his mom about things that bothered him until he was older and their relationship had improved. However, Bob had a couple of close friends that he could talk to and occasionally he felt comfortable talking to one of his friend’s parents about subjects like work or school.

Bob stated that his mother’s rules went from very lax to ‘ridiculous.’ Sometimes she didn’t care where he was and other times she was ‘impossible.’ She rarely dictated who Bob could associate with, except for extreme circumstances where one of his friends was, “In serious trouble with the cops.” Punishment usually consisted of groundings for short durations of time. However, Bob simply ‘snuck’ out of the house or ‘skipped out’ of school to compensate for any time he had lost while he was grounded. Bob informed me that his groundings, “Never lasted anyway.”

One thing that really sticks out in my mind, and I guess I should tell you this. When I was about 11 or 12 my mom said I couldn’t go dirt bike riding after school for no good reason. She was trying to ground me for something stupid.
Anyway, I went and when I came home she had stuck all my stuff outside and said I was kicked out. I slept in a tent in the bush behind our house for the weekend and ate at my friend’s place. He was giving me food out of the window. I ended up living at his place with his parents for two years until they kicked me out and I moved back home. I guess that kind of bugs me even today cause it’s like she didn’t even care. It was just one less thing she had to worry about. We still don’t talk about that very much.

Bob’s mother became involved with Bob’s life to a greater extent after his return home at approximately the age of 18. Bob wanted to play hockey again and wished to race dirt bikes. However, Bob explained that he had already become involved with the legal system at this point and was in trouble for destruction of private property, breaking and entering, and being chased by the police on his dirt bike on several occasions.

When I asked Bob what he felt the main contributing factor to his delinquency was, he explained that it was a combination of a number of variables. He blamed it vastly on his, “Own stupid decisions,” but felt his time alone, his lack of a good relationship with his brother, and his own anger were factors as well.

Bracketing.

Bob lived with his mother who left her husband when Bob was eight years old. Aside from random visits with his father, Bob rarely contacted the man. His impression of his father was poor at best. His mother had remained single for the majority of time subsequent to the separation. Although the fighting between his parents ended after the separation, Bob found the event confusing.

Although Bob was not close to his mother, father, or brother, and in fact often fought quite physically with his brother, the relationship with both his mother and
brother improved over time. In his later teens, Bob, his mother, and brother had began to travel together again. His relationship with his father was practically non-existent.

Bob stated that his mother was initially stubborn, that talking about any subject was 'impossible, and that rules were illogically dictated without explanation. Although his absences were controlled, Bob felt that once he was away from home his mother had little idea of his location, activities, or companions.

Bob did not do well in school and received little support from his mother who often made him feel 'dumb.' Additionally, his mother worked and his brother was absent after school so Bob began drinking and misbehaving at a young age. The delinquency worsened as he grew older.

His mother was never consistent nor would she enforce punishments. He was eventually 'kicked out' of the home at the age of approximately 11, after which he spent the following two years at a friend's home. He could talk to a friend's parents about some topics. He was still disturbed about the fact that his mother had removed him from the home.

Although Bob's relationship with his mother had improved and he was once again living at home, his choice of friends remained poor. Bob was well immersed into the legal system and remained angry about a number of events in his past.

The essential features of Bob’s family upbringing began with the fighting and eventual separation of his parents at the age of eight. He lived with his mother and brother with whom he had a poor relationship. His father was seen on a few occasions but the contact was 'unpleasant.'

Bob's mother and brother, who should have been watching Bob, were often absent. Bob began to drink and experiment with drugs at a young age. Consequently, his delinquency began in his early teens.
His mother was inconsistent with punishment, discipline, and explanations for rules, and had little or no control over Bob’s behavior once he was away from the home. She was unwilling to help Bob with his problems or school and often made him feel stupid.

Bob was ‘kicked out’ of the home at the age of 11, lived in the ‘bush’ behind his house, and later spent two years with a friend’s family. After being ‘kicked out’ of his friend’s residence, Bob returned home. Although his relationship with his mother and brother had improved, Bob still carried hurt and anger about the events that unfolded during his upbringing.

Chuck

Capture.

Chuck, who was 25, was on probation for assault and had one prior conviction for mischief. He came from a family in which he resided with his two younger brothers. His father had two sons from a previous marriage. However, these half-brothers were adults and did not reside in the home.

Chuck’s father was employed outside of the home. Additionally, Chuck’s mother began a career when Chuck was 14. She first attended University and then continued with her profession. Chuck’s parents separated when he was three years old after which he remained in the custody of his mother with his two brothers.

Chuck informed me that his father was an alcoholic who was physically abusive towards his mother. His mother had an ‘abusive problem’ and was hospitalized numerous for psychological ailments.

My mom was kind a weird in a way. She was OK for a while and then she
would get all screwed up again. Sometimes she was nice to us but most of the
time she was always yelling at us and hitting us for something stupid. She was
beating me and my brothers four times a day sometimes.
Chuck believed that his mother ‘beat’ him because he was ‘like’ his father.
Although Chuck became involved in numerous verbal arguments with his mother,
he never reacted physically towards her, even in his later years at home.
When Chuck’s mother was hospitalized he and his brothers were separated and
sent to relatives or placed in foster homes by the Children’s Aid Society. This
pattern continued throughout Chuck’s earlier formative years. His father had
visitation rights to the children. However, he would often make promises to see
them but, “He never came through.”
Everyone knew who my dad was except me. My brothers even got to see him a
couple times, but I wasn’t around. I never got to see the guy. He was never
around while I was growing up and that just don’t seem right.
Chuck recalled that he would become very angry as a teenager if people told
him that he looked like his father. He was obviously angry discussing his father
and the way that his mother had raised him.
I spent a lot of time being resentful towards my mom and dad while I was
growing up. I hated the fact that my dad never came to see me and cause he
made promises he never kept. He shouldn’t have said anything at all. I was
mad at my mom for all her garbage too.
Chuck informed me that he disliked school while growing up because the other
kids in school would ‘beat him up.’ He was small for his age. Additionally, Chuck
recalled that he started to ‘smoke up’ at approximately the age of 13. This led to
the use of ‘harder drugs.’ However, he quit his experimentation with drugs within
a year because they made Chuck feel ‘scared’ and ‘uptight’ and amplified the
‘bad’ feelings that he already possessed.
When Chuck was approximately 13, he was ‘kicked out’ of the house for a verbal argument he had with his mother. From that point until he was approximately 19, Chuck lived with friends, at his mother’s, and at times on the streets. He stated that, “From then on I was in and out of everywhere.”

At the age of 16, Chuck began ‘hanging out’ with kids who were, “In trouble with the law.” When he was 19, his father made him a deal that if he would stop associating with his friends, he could live cost free in an apartment his father owned. At that time, Chuck began talking to his father again.

Chuck noted that he eventually contacted his father more frequently, although their relationship remained distant. Chuck described his relationship with his father as ‘shallow.’ “We get along but we don’t get personal or nothing like that.”

Chuck had one child from the relationship that ended due to a charge of assault towards the mother. He wished to reconcile the relationship and see his son again. She had withheld the child from him following the incident. Chuck had attended a program for abusive individuals, but had discontinued the meetings because he, “Left every night feeling like a monster.” This caused Chuck to feel ‘suicidal.’

I wanted to leave her after a while cause I couldn’t figure out how to get along with her any more. We have a kid now and everything. I don’t want to leave her cause it makes me feel guilty. She’s a lot like my mom in a lot of ways and that would make me just as bad as her. I guess I kind a [sic] feel responsible for her.

Chuck had been hospitalized on one occasion for suicidal tendencies and had sought help numerous times for feelings of depression, anxiety, and paranoia.

Chuck simply wanted to get his life ‘back in order.’ He desired to find a job again and wanted to have visitation rights to his child. Chuck stated that he simply wanted stability in his life.
Bracketing.

Chuck was the eldest of three brothers. His father worked and his mother remained at home until Chuck was 14. His parents separated when he was three. Chuck's father had been an abusive, alcoholic father. Additionally, Chuck's mother was abusive and was often removed from the home because of psychological disorders. The children were separated during the periods of sickness and sent to relatives or The Children's Aid Society. This was a common pattern throughout Chuck's childhood.

Chuck carried a deep anger towards his mother and father. He felt animosity towards his father because he often made promises to see Chuck but never upheld his plans to visit. Chuck never knew his father although, in his view, everyone else seemed to. Further, he carried anger towards his mother for her abusive behavior towards the children and her constant sickness and abnormal behavior.

Chuck believed that his mother beat him continuously because he was like his father. He was easily angered by individuals who stated that he resembled his father. Chuck fought with his mother but never physically.

At the age of 13 Chuck began to experiment with drugs and was kicked out of his home. He lived in numerous locations following the incident. At the age of 16 his delinquency escalated because of Chuck's association with a poor crowd. His relationship with his father improved but always remained shallow.

Chuck had a relationship that ended because he had abused his girlfriend. He was angry because he could not see his child, and upset because he felt like a 'monster.' He began to have suicidal tendencies and was often confused by the fact that he wanted to leave his girlfriend but felt responsible for her. He did not want to be as bad as his mother by leaving her. Chuck was a very depressed and angry individual.
The essential features of Chuck’s upbringing began with an abusive home, an alcoholic father, and a psychologically disturbed mother. His parents separated when he was three after which he rarely saw his father despite his many promises to visit.

Chuck’s mother often beat the children and was sent to a hospital for her psychological problems on many occasions. The children were separated each time. Chuck was kicked out of the home at age 13, lived ‘everywhere,’ became involved with drugs, his delinquency escalated, and he finally settled down in an apartment his father owned. He believed his mother disliked him because of his resemblance to his father. Although Chuck and his father became closer, their relationship was always shallow.

Todd

Capture

Todd was a 25 year old who had several prior infractions with the law beginning at approximately the age of 16. The final infractions included several drug related charges. In addition to his term of probation, Todd had been sentenced to a period in prison. He grew up with one sister and seven brothers and was the second oldest.

Although Todd’s parents were never separated, Todd’s father became a truck driver when he was approximately eight years old. At that point forward his father was seldom around. He would leave on trips for up to three months at a time. Todd explained that it was as if his father was never around.

At about the same time we moved to the city my dad got a truck driving job. He was never around after that and when he was home he was usually yelling at us
or punishing us for something we’d done wrong a month before. I hardly ever saw my dad. He left my mom to take care of all us kids for the whole time I was growing up there.

Todd informed me that there was a great deal of verbal fighting between his father and both the children and his wife. Although Todd ‘got along’ with all of his brothers and his sister, he explained that they were not close. However, he was close to his one older brother. Those few times when he did talk about personal issues, it was with this particular brother.

Todd recalled that the family rarely did anything together. Moreover, it was seldom that the family was together. Two or more of his brothers were usually away at friend’s homes or just ‘hanging out’ somewhere. The situation worsened after his father began driving a truck because his mother could not ‘control’ all the children.

Todd felt that he had a reasonably good relationship with his mother. However, the relationship deteriorated in Todd’s early teens because he began to ‘get into trouble’ at school and his mother was tired of dealing with his problems.

I looked up more to my mom cause dad was never around. I could talk to my mom but I never did because it didn’t feel comfortable and I knew she’d be upset. She was already ticked off most of the time cause she had to deal with my dad not being around plus she had all us kids to take care of.

Todd explained that what relationship he did have with his father was poor. His father was the disciplinarian and he simply enforced the rules when he was at home. He recalled that his father was always yelling and that they never ‘just talked.’

Todd stated that his mother was more concerned about his well being than his father was. If either parent was to know what he was doing or who he was with, it would have been his mother. However, Todd explained that his mother seldom
knew of his activities or his associates because there were simply too many children to take care of along with regular house work.

We didn’t really listen. Mom couldn’t enforce the rules with all us kids when dad wasn’t around. . . . Mom didn’t really say who we could hang around with. She never saw my friends cause we hung out in different places.

Todd stated that his mother tried to explain rules to the kids but that his father simply enforced the rules. Often the teenagers would be punished for things they had done wrong weeks before because their father would discipline them when he came home. Discipline consisted of a great deal of yelling and ‘pushing them around.’

According to Todd, when the children were grounded, the groundings did not last as long as they should have. His father would set the punishments and then leave again. His mother was unable to enforce the punishments after his father had left. Additionally, Todd explained that he never knew what to expect in the way of punishment because neither parent was consistent. Punishments were dependent on the mood that either parent happened to be in at the time.

Todd’s father would rarely attempt to talk to Todd. Additionally Todd recalled that his father was a heavy drinker so that conversations always ‘turned bad’ and ended up in arguments and yelling.

When Todd was asked what he felt the main contributing factor to his delinquency was, he explained that he was ‘out of control.’

I hung around with the wrong people, got wrapped up in drugs, and just didn’t care. That and I never did what I was supposed to in school. I was always screwing around. I hated school. I lied and got away with it at home and at school so nobody ever knew what I was doing.

When Todd was 17, he moved to the other side of the country. His father had taken a new trucking position so that he was at home more often again. Todd
could not deal with the yelling and fighting that occurred with his father ‘always around’ so he and his eldest brother moved away. “My father gave us an ultimatum. Follow the rules or get out. We were used to our freedom so we left.” After leaving home, Todd’s problems with the legal system continued and became worse, ending with a prison term and probation.

Bracketing.

Todd grew up in a large family in which he was only close to one brother. His parents were never separated although his father was verbally abusive towards his wife and was rarely at home because of his occupation.

The family seldom did anything together and was rarely together at all. His mother had little control over all five children with Todd’s father constantly absent, so one or more of the children were usually ‘hanging out’ somewhere other than the home. Additionally, there was little time or money for any family outings.

Todd had a poor relationship with his father and preferred to talk to a brother over his mother because she was often upset with his misbehavior. He respected his mother because she had to raise all the children by herself.

Todd’s father enforced rules without explanation. Punishments were often given weeks after a misbehavior because his father was absent. Consequently, the majority of Todd’s memories were of a father who would ‘push the kids around.’ Likely the punishments were not associated with the ‘crimes’ because of the gap in time between the two activities. Moreover, neither parent was consistent with the punishments and the disciplinary measures were rarely upheld after Todd’s father left for work again.
Todd’s mother rarely knew of the children’s activities, locations, or associates because there were too many children to care for. He eventually began to experiment with drugs, became ‘caught up’ in delinquent activity, and his relationship with his mother deteriorated further.

When his father returned home for longer periods of time, Todd and his brother left because they were used to their freedom and could not tolerate their father’s constant yelling.

The essential features of Todd’s family upbringing centres around the fact that his mother was unable to control a large family with a father who was rarely present. When the father was present he was usually yelling at his wife or kids, and punishing them for prior misbehaviours. Discipline was sporadic, inconsistent, rarely upheld, and without explanation.

Todd was unable to talk to his mother or father although he had a reasonably close relationship with his mother. He had one older brother with whom he was close. There were rarely activities between the family members and often the family was not even together. One or more children were usually out with friends. His mother knew little of the children’s activities or companions because of her inability to control all of the children.

As Todd’s behaviour worsened he felt less able to confide in his mother. He became involved with delinquent behaviour and once his father returned home he could not tolerate the constant fighting. Todd and his closest brother were given an ultimatum to leave or follow the rules so they left. He blamed himself for his criminality because he was out of control, never did what he was told, and because he lied and ‘got away with it.’
Kurt

Capture.

Kurt was a 22 year old who lived with his mother and brother. He had a lengthy criminal record beginning at a young age including drug offences, failure to report to court, wilful damage, and assault. Kurt was very quiet and reluctant to talk.

Kurt reported that he had two brothers and one sister. His parents were never married, and separated when he was one year old. His sister and older brother remained with his father while he and his second oldest brother remained with his mother. Kurt’s mother stayed at home with the children until the youngest child (Kurt) was in school. She then began a part-time job.

Kurt remained in contact with his father after the separation. However, his father was diagnosed with cancer several years prior to the interview. Kurt informed me that his relationship with his father improved and strengthened after his father became ill. However, he passed away one year prior to the interview and Kurt could not deal with the loss.

I never really got to know my dad until he was sick. We was gettin [sic] closer after that cause we talked about more stuff and more personal. It’s hard, cause I never really knew how much he meant to me till he was gone and I wish we could have been like that when we was kids.

Kurt mentioned that he had lost a close family member to cancer again, his grandmother, approximately two months prior to the interview. The death only served to bring back the memories of his father’s death. He had not dealt with either loss well. He noted that he had a great deal of unresolved anger concerning the death of
his father and the loss of his grandmother, and that he was unaware of how to deal with the pain.

Kurt stated that his mother stipulated some rules during his upbringing. If his mother disapproved of his friends he would simply stop associating with them. He recalled that he ‘got along’ with his oldest brother and his sister. However, he seldom saw either of them because they had left with his father. His second oldest brother, whom he lived with, was constantly in trouble with the legal system. He stated that his brother was ‘bad news’ so he made an effort not to associate with him.

Kurt noted that he had a. “Screwed up family of his own.” He was the father of a seven year old daughter from a previous four year relationship and a three year old daughter from a two and a half year relationship. He attempted to stay in contact with both of his children but explained that it was difficult because he did not pay child support and his relationships with their mothers were poor.

After the death of his father, Kurt began to drink heavily. Further, he began to smoke marihuana. He stated that occasionally he became abusive after he drank or used drugs. He recalled that the physical and verbal abuse created from his drinking resulted in his assault charge. He explained that he was upset with his father’s death, the fact that he was unemployed and had no money, and that he had to be supported by his mother. The financial frustration, coupled with the anger about his father, were also factors contributing to the assault. Kurt was upset that he had hurt the girl he loved. He was unwilling to discuss his upbringing further.

Bracketing.

Kurt was another subject who was difficult to interview because of his reluctance to talk. He came from a family in which his parents were never married
but separated when he was one. He believed that his family was ‘defective’ and that he also had begun a ‘screwed up’ family.

When the marriage ended, Kurt was separated from his oldest brother and his sister who remained with their father. Kurt, who resided with his mother and second oldest brother, had very little contact with his siblings under their father’s care. The brother he lived with was involved with criminal behaviour and, thus, was a bad influence.

Kurt had some rules while growing up and would not associate with friends that his mother disapproved of. However, as a result of his anger and frustration over the death of his father and grandmother, Kurt began to drink and experiment with drugs. His relationship with his father was finally improving just prior to his death. Kurt believed, that the anger, hurt, and frustration coupled with drug and alcohol abuse resulted in his violent behaviour.

The essential features of Kurt’s family upbringing began with two parents who were never married but separated when he was one. He was isolated from his oldest brother and his sister who left with their father. Kurt’s relationship with his father only improved later in his life when his father was sick and dying. He was never close to his two distant siblings. The brother he lived with was involved with criminality and was a poor influence.

Kurt’s mother applied rules to Kurt and stipulated who his friends were. However, following the death of Kurt’s grandmother, which resurfaced hurtful memories of his father’s death, he began to drink and experiment with drugs. The anger mixed with the effects of illicit substances caused Kurt to become violent. Kurt believed that his own family as well as the family he was raised in were ‘screwed up.’
Glen

Capture.

Glen was a 25 year old charged with assault who had no prior infractions with the legal system. He lived at home with his parents who were never separated during his upbringing but who had a terrible marriage. Glen also had five brothers and a sister who he did not get along with.

Glen informed me that while he was growing up both of his parents worked. His parents could never ‘get along’ and the family was never close. He could not recall any time that the family had performed an event together or had gone on a trip together. Further, Glen noted that his father was away a good majority of the time that he was growing up. “He was out with his friends flirting with chicks probably.”

Glen described his father as a ‘womaniser’ who drank often and was emotionally and physically abusive towards his mother and the kids.

My dad always had this thing with authority and power. He had to be in charge.

You know what I mean? I had to watch him hit my mom and beat my brothers all the time. My older brothers, I’m the youngest, they would call the police and they came and arrested him all the time for hitting us.

Glen noted that he had great respect for his father when he was younger but then followed the statement by saying, “I didn’t know the difference between respect and fear, but as I got older I realised it was fear.”

Glen’s mother left his father on numerous occasions but always returned after a short period of time. He noted that she was fearful that her husband would “kill her” if she did not come back to him. He felt that his mother was a “Great woman who tried to protect her children from being hurt by their father.”
When Glen was approximately 10 years old his mother had a nervous breakdown and had to be hospitalised for one week. Following the incident his mother was constantly under psychiatric care. Between the ages of 10 and 15 Glen ‘rebelled’ against his mother and would swear at her when she tried to discipline him.

I had more than enough from my dad. I knew it wasn’t fair but I was sick of getting crapped on from my dad. I knew that if my mom told me to do something I could get away with not doing it but with dad it was impossible without a good whipping. I guess I really took advantage of my mom.

Glen began to respect his mother again when their relationship improved at approximately the age of 15. He began to ‘see’ that he was hurting his mother and that she was simply trying to love him. The new respect for his mother came in conjunction with Glen beginning to run away from home. He did this on several occasions and during one episode left to stay with a friend for a month. He stated that he could not ‘handle’ his father and the situation at home any longer.

Glen reported that he did not recall a great deal of his teenage years because he had ‘blocked’ them out. He did recall, however, that he was not a problem at home or in the community and that he associated with a good group of adolescents. His parents never were concerned with his companions.

By the time Glen was 19 he had lost total respect for his father after coming to the realisation of what his father ‘really was.’ They would often argue.

If you want to know one thing that changed my way of thinking tell me what this would do to you. We [Glen and father] got into one really bad argument when I was about 20 and the ass-hole actually stuck a gun to my head. Believe it or not he went and pulled the trigger too. The gun wasn’t loaded but I don’t think he even knew that. He was so mad he would have blown my head off. That was it for us after that.
Glen’s father passed away two years prior to the interview. Following the incident with the gun, Glen and his mother left to live with Glen’s sister. Glen’s father stayed at home with his new 22 year old girl-friend and frequently travelled to his ‘home country’ with her. “He died over there on one trip but I didn’t care because at that point I hated him anyway.”

Glen noted that, emotionally, his family became closer after his father’s death. His mother’s problems decreased and the brothers began to speak to one another. Glen informed me that the family would never be close like ‘normal families’ because there were too many scars between them.

Glen had problems with alcohol and drugs for a period of time in his later teens. Additionally, he was suspended from school on numerous occasions for swearing at teachers and for truancy.

At the time of the interview, Glen was married. He informed me that he had a two year old daughter and a wife that he loved. However, sometimes when he drank “a power trip would come out” which would result in him fighting with his wife. One incident resulted in Glen actually hitting his wife. That, in turn, resulted in his term of probation. Glen stated that he was frustrated and embarrassed about his offence, and was not happy with who he was or where his life was going.

Bracketing.

Glen’s parents had a ‘terrible’ marriage and he had poor relationships with his brothers and sister. Further, the family could not get along, was not close, and rarely did anything together. Glen described his father as an individual who was always absent from the home and who would ‘flirt’ with other women while away. What Glen initially felt was respect for his father, he later discovered it to be fear.
Glen completely lost respect for his father after an incident in which his father held a gun to his head and threatened to kill him. The fact that Glen’s father may have been ‘bluffing’ in the scenario is irrelevant. Glen firmly believed that his father wanted to, and would have killed him. His father later left with a younger woman and died while absent. Glen showed no remorse for the passing of his father.

Glen respected his mother but treated her poorly for several years because he was ‘fed up’ with the situation at home. He had realised that he could ‘get away’ with things around his mother that were not possible with his father. Glen’s mother, who had a nervous breakdown, was under constant psychiatric care. She had attempted to leave her husband but always returned out of fear that the man would kill her. Glen’s father beat both his mother and the children. Glen, regardless of his situation, still considered his mother a ‘great woman’ because of what she had dealt with while he was growing up.

Glen began to run away from home at the age of 15, perhaps to escape from his home life. He would stay with friends. He associated with a good group of adolescents and believed that he was never a problem at home or in the community. However, he was often in trouble at school.

Although Glen’s family became closer after the death of his father, he did not believe that they could ever be as close as ‘normal’ families because of the scars that had been formed throughout his upbringing. He had ‘blocked out’ a majority of his youth, had experimented with illicit substances, and was unhappy with his life. He had began to physically abuse his wife, like his father had.

The essential features of Glen’s upbringing revolve around a violent home life. Both of Glen’s parents worked and his father was abusive towards his wife and children. The father was rarely at home, ‘flirted’ with other women, and had to have ‘power’ in the home. The family was not close and rarely did anything together.
Glen's mother had a nervous breakdown due to the home situation after which she needed constant psychiatric supervision. She would always return after leaving her husband because of a fear that he would kill her. Glen believed that his father had attempted to kill him on one occasion. He realised that his respect for the man was actually fear.

Glen did not associate with a poor crowd, was not a problem except for at school, and respected his mother 'greatly.' However he began to run away at the age of 15, experimented with drugs, and out of anger and pain blocked out the majority of his youth.

Tim

Capture.

Tim was a 24 year old on probation for arson. He had one prior assault charge. Tim had one younger brother and one older adopted brother. Additionally, his father had three children from a previous marriage who were considered to be part of the family and who visited weekly.

Although his father had a criminal record, Tim stated that he was raised in a stable home with no violence or substance abuse. His parents were never separated and he considered that they had a close relationship. Further, Tim stated that he continued to relate well to all of his siblings and step-siblings and that they 'got along' well while they were growing up.

When Tim was eight years old his eldest step-brother died in a fire and Tim still had a difficult time dealing with the loss.

I was really close to him cause he spent a lot of time with me. We were probably
closer than the rest of us were, but we all got along OK. When he died it really screwed me up for a while cause that’s a lot for a little kid to deal with you know?

Tim noted that in grade school and during his initial teen aged years he associated with a ‘bad’ crowd. However, in grade nine he quit associating with the group at his parents’ request. He had a curfew on weekdays but was allowed to do as he pleased on weekends. Tim explained that his parents trusted him and his judgement because, overall, he was a ‘good kid.’

At the age of 18, Tim moved away from his parents’ home because he wanted to see what life would be like on his own. He had to work to support himself but reported that he had no difficulty with the situation and enjoyed the added freedom.

With regards to his present charge of arson, Tim claimed that he was innocent and had been wrongfully accused. Tim was very difficult to talk to. He appeared to be quite uncomfortable with any questions dealing with his past. He was especially reluctant to talk about his relationship with his mother and chose to avoid the questions altogether.

Bracketing.

Tim was one of six individuals whose scenarios differed from the 12 discussed above. However, he was dissimilar from all of the interviews because of the severity of his present and previous charges and the fact that he was reluctant to talk about different aspects of his past even though he reported that he had a good family upbringing. The interview failed to reach much of the information that could have been helpful.
An interesting note is the fact that Tim's charge was for arson. His older step-brother, whom he was very close to, had died in a fire. Although the similarity between the two incidents may have been coincidental, the resemblance is interesting.

Tim believed that he had a close family. Even children from the father’s prior marriage were considered part of the family and joined in some of the family activities. His father had a criminal record, but Tim stated that there was no abuse in the home. He respected his parents and would obey their rules. He quit associating with individuals if his parents disliked them. However, he was unwilling to speak directly about his mother and the interview was brief and difficult.

Fred

Capture.

Fred was a 22 year old who was on probation for a charge of breaking and entering and theft. He had no prior infractions with the legal system. Fred noted that he lived with his mother and father up until the age of 11. At that time his parents separated and he remained with his father and two brothers.

Fred stated that he had always had a supportive and caring family. He had seven step-siblings from his step-mother’s and step-father’s previous marriages, all of whom were married and on their own. Fred had a good relationship with all of them. Additionally, he had remained in contact with both of his biological brothers and was living with one of them at the time of the interview.

Fred lived with his father until he was almost 18 years old. At that time he went to live with his mother in the city. He left his father on good terms. He stated that he
wanted a ‘change of pace’ and to see what the city was like. Fred believed that his behaviour went ‘downhill’ from there because of bad peer influences.

Fred was living with his mother for approximately one year before he was told to leave because of a party he had held at her home. He then lived with a number of friends before his brother invited him to live at his residence. In total, Fred lived in six homes within a one year period.

While on welfare and out of work, Fred recalled that he began to ‘hang around’ with a new friend. The individual was a ‘crappy influence’ and encouraged Fred to help him break into a home. The friend had convinced Fred that they were poor and that by taking a few items and selling them that they could ‘get things back together.’ The two individuals were caught in the process of leaving the home with stolen property. Both were arrested.

Fred stated that he was never a ‘problem child’ and that none of his prior friends were ‘trouble makers.’ His new companion had numerous infractions with the legal system. Fred informed me that the friendship was ‘short lived’ and that the encounter with the legal system had served to teach him a valuable lesson.

Fred stated that his term of probation was the sole result of poor choices, a bad neighbourhood, and the ‘wrong friend.’ He insisted that his delinquent behaviour was the first, and would be the only incident he would have with the police. His parents supported him through the incident and his family had not ‘judged him.’ Fred planned on returning to live with his brother who was both supportive and a positive influence.
Bracketing.

Fred was one of five individuals whose delinquent behaviour seemed ‘out of character’ and isolated. His parents separated when he was 11 years old. However, he remained in contact with his mother while living with his father and two brothers. He had a supportive family and was close to his siblings and step-siblings. He lived with one of his brothers who was a positive influence.

At the age of 18, Fred moved to the city to live with his mother. He was asked to leave the home at the age of 19 because of a party he held. He met a friend who encouraged Fred to break into a home to steal goods and sell them as a means to supplement their lack of funds.

The individuals were ‘caught in the act.’ The incident resulted in Fred’s charges. Fred felt that he received a very positive, and supportive, upbringing and that he was seriously led astray by one corrupt companion. If not for his poor financial position at the time of the crime, Kurt stated that he would not have been as easily persuaded. He seemed genuine about his intentions to continue a crime free life and return to school.

Frank

Capture.

Frank was a 20 year old, who had moved to Canada from a foreign country. His offence was dissimilar from any of the other clients. He had been charged for making threatening phone calls to his cousin whom he had dated for a period of time. When she decided to end the relationship, Frank called several more times. There were other problems within the family, so Frank’s cousin claimed that he had threatened
her. After being charged with uttering threats, he represented himself in court unsuccessfully. The offence was his first in either country. He firmly stated that he did not threaten her and cannot understand why he was given three years probation. Consequently, he had a criminal record to deal with at the beginning of his new life in Canada.

Frank had a very close family while growing up and still did at the time of the interview. He informed me that although he never had set curfews while growing up, his father would tell him not to be in late. When Frank would come in late or do something his father did not approve of, his father would sit Frank down and discuss the problem with him. He was rarely grounded or punished. His father never dictated the type of friends that Frank could associate with because Frank stated that everyone was friends in the neighbourhood of his old country.

My friends used to come over and do homework at my house. My father would watch us and was like a father to them too. It was like that in my country. We were all friends in my country. Here I am friends with good people too and my father likes them.

Frank informed me that there were areas that his father would not allow him to play in when he was younger and that even at the time of the interview, his father would ask him not to go to certain neighbourhoods. Frank respected his father and felt that he was a “smart man.” His father trusted Frank’s judgement. Further, Frank knew that if his father did not want him to go to a certain neighbourhood, it was likely not a safe area or good for him.

Frank left me with the impression that he respected his parents a great deal. He apparently obeyed his parents to the best of his ability and could only recall one incident, at approximately the age of seven, when his father had kept him in the house for two days for disobeying. With respect to his criminal offence, Frank explained that he knew he had hurt his mother and father and would make a point of never
doing it again. He loved his parents and would not do anything to purposely disappoint them. Frank carried deep rooted family ties that were an important part of the culture he grew up in. To disrespect his parents would be a terrible thing. Family was very important in ‘his country.’

Frank had, and continued to have, a strong relationship with his parents. He was able to talk more openly to his father and would often go to him for advice. He had a deep concern for disappointing his father and it was apparent in his explanation that he did things out of love and respect for his family and parents.

He just talks to me and says my son this is good, this is bad. Which way do you like to go? My father and me were very close. We always talked about things. He did not punish me. He would tell me what I have done wrong and I listen. My father is a smart man because he has experienced many things. In my country we listen to what our family says.

Although Frank was close to both parents, he indicated that he preferred to talk about certain subjects with his father and others with his mother. If the topic dealt with things such as women or work he would talk to his father. If Frank was upset about something he preferred to discuss it with his mother. Additionally, Frank informed me that when he spoke to his father about anything or his father made a decision, he always discussed them with his mother prior to giving Frank an answer.

When I asked Frank if his family fought he was surprised. Frank still lived at home with both parents.

No No. If there is a problem in my family we all sit down the whole family and talk about it. If my sister has a problem or my mother or anyone we talk about it, the whole family. We all think about it and say this is what I think and my dad says this is what I think and the same with my mother and then we decide which is the best way to do it.
Frank's family continued a tradition of routinely gathering together to do things as a family. It was not only the nuclear family but the extended family as well, that met every weekend at the park to spend time together. He had five brothers and one sister.

Although Frank’s parents were angry that he had dated a woman who was 15 years older than him, they were not angry about the charges. They felt, as Frank did, that he did not deserve to be on probation and that he had been unjustly punished.

 Bracketing.

Frank was charged with uttering threats. He had no prior criminality and felt certain that his future would be problem free. He came from a stable family in which his parents had never been separated. He was very confident in the fact that his parents, as well as his siblings, had a close and positive relationship with open communication. Rather than setting rules or curfews, Frank’s father would allow him to make his own decisions and would discuss any matters that he disapproved of.

Frank communicated effectively with both his parents and although he preferred to talk to his father, there were topics that he was more comfortable confiding in with his mother. He had a close nuclear and extended family which sustained contact through regular gatherings.

Frank obeyed and acted on what he believed were his parents’ wishes because he respected and loved his parents. He would refrain from activities that would upset his parents because he did not want to disappoint them. Their approval was a concern for Frank at all times.

Rather than fighting, incidents that needed clarification or discussion would be approached as a family or would be dealt with in a controlled manner. Frank’s input as well as that of the other members of the family, was apparently important to Frank’s
parents. With regards to his conviction, Frank’s mother and father were more concerned with his well being than with his alleged crime.

Jay

Capture.

Jay was convicted of impaired driving but had no prior history with the legal system. He was 25 years old and came from a stable family background being the middle child of three brothers. His parents had been married for 29 years. His father worked full time and his mother stayed home to raise the three children. Once the brothers were in high school, she began to work part time and started a full time career five years prior to the interview.

Jay stated that he had an excellent relationship with both of his parents. He considered them to be extremely supportive and understanding. Additionally, Jay explained that he had a good relationship with both his older and younger brothers. Although their relationships were difficult at times during his teenage years, he explained that they. “Always got along reasonably well.”

Jay also considered that he had a close family. He reported that they often went on camping trips and vacations in their youth and that the family went to church together every Sunday.

We went all over the place as kids. They were always taking us someplace. Starting when I was about seven we went skiing every year. Every summer we would go camping. We went to the east coast, up north, to Florida. Plus my father often took us to Boblo [an amusement park] and to the beach.
Jay stated that his parents rarely fought and that when there was a fight it was a 'brief argument.'

Jay reported that he had strict rules to follow while he was growing up. His parents usually knew where he was and who he was with. He had a curfew until the age of 18. The curfew was increased as he grew older. However, each time he was late the curfew would be moved back an hour for a period of time.

Punishments consisted of groundings or scoldings. On several occasions Jay ‘got the strap.’

If we were really bad we got the strap. On our hands just like you would at school. I never got it at school but I got it at home a few times. If I got it I usually deserved it though. Like one time I wasn’t supposed to go near our new house that was being built but I did anyway and knocked holes in the walls. I got the strap for that.

When Jay was older, punishments consisted of groundings which involved the loss of some privilege like driving the car.

Jay stated that he respected and was proud of both of his parents. He aspired to be like his father when he grew up. He noted that he continued to go to his father for advice about school or employment matters. Jay also confided in his mother, but usually conversations were related to girl-friends or ‘more emotional issues.’ Although he reported that his relationships with each parent were different, Jay considered himself to be equally close to both his mother and his father.

Jay stated that his father usually explained rules to him but that, “Sometimes the rules were set and we just had to follow them.” He explained that he was ordinarily aware of why a rule existed and that he generally knew what to expect in the way of punishment.

Jay’s activities and friends were also monitored. He noted that none of his friends were ‘extremely bad’ although he had a couple of poor choices in companions. His parents would never force him to quit associating with a given person. They would
simply explain how they felt and allow Jay to make his own choice. However, Jay's activities were controlled. For example, he was not allowed to go to school dances until the age of 16. Additionally, he always had to inform his parents of where he was going and ask for their permission.

Although Jay stated that there were no incidents in his family background that he felt affected him in any way, he explained that he had experienced a traumatic event that occurred when he was 17 years old. Although he did not wish to discuss the situation he said that it was a 'life changing experience' that continued to effect him even at the time of the interview.

When asked what he thought the main contributing factor to his crime was. Jay explained that it was a mixture of bad circumstances and stupidity.

I had a four year relationship with a girl that I thought I was going to marry. We split up and I was having a hard time dealing with being lonely. I ended up going out with an old friend and one thing led to another and I got drunk. I couldn't find the friend and was twice as upset now cause alcohol does that to you. I started thinking, got really bummed out, and all I wanted to do was go home. Being drunk and not thinking straight that's what I did. I shouldn't have even had the keys on me. The next thing you know I was in the ditch.

Jay informed me that his parents supported him through the ordeal. He had not felt rejected by either his mother or father but, on the contrary, felt that they had gone out of their way to help him through the incident.

They never judged me once. They knew it wasn’t like me and they knew that I was in enough trouble as it was. I didn’t need to hear how stupid I was cause I was well aware of that. They were just there as supporting parents for me at the time when I needed them.
Bracketing.

Jay was an individual who grew up in what appeared to be a very stable home environment. His father worked while his mother remained home to raise the three children. After the boys had all started school, Jay’s mother began to work and eventually took on a full time career of her own. Jay had no prior convictions with the legal system so that his crime appeared isolated and out of character.

Jay had to follow strict rules while growing up. Failure to abide by set rules resulted in punishments which Jay described as ‘deserving.’ He usually knew what to expect and his father would normally explain rules to him. Punishments were groundings, spankings as a child, or scoldings.

Although his choice of companions were not forced on him, Jay’s parents would relate their feelings about specific friends to him. His activities and the areas he socialised in were monitored. Additionally, Jay had a curfew to follow which was strongly enforced.

Jay described his family as being close. He had a good relationship with his two brothers. Additionally, the family often went on trips together and would attend church as a family on a weekly basis.

Jay aspired to be like his father, and respected both parents. He felt equally close to his mother and father and would discuss issues with both parents although he felt more comfortable with a specific parent depending on the topic. Jay explained that even after his criminal offence, his parents were ready to support him and help him through the consequences.
John

John was on probation at the age of 23 for an impaired driving charge. His parents were divorced when he was seven years old. However, John recalled that there was little fighting before or after the divorce. "They never fought in front of us. They just started to become distant. They didn't go near each other as much." John recalled that he was confused at the time of the separation because he did not understand what was happening. After the separation he lived with his mother and had never had step-parents. John's mother had one boyfriend for a short period of time with whom he got along well.

John remained in contact with both parents after the divorce and still had a good relationship with both parents at the time of the interview. The fact that they had divorced bothered John initially but faded in time because, "They both seemed happier on their own."

John noted that he always felt that his family was close even after the separation. He had three brothers and two sisters and associated well with all of them. John was the middle child. Prior to the separation, the family had travelled together. Later they continued to go away together, but with one parent at a time and usually not all the children at once. The difference in age between John and his youngest brother, made it difficult for either parent to take them both to a place they would equally enjoy. Thus, the parents and children would go on separate trips which John stated were just as enjoyable.

John explained that he had an open relationship with both his parents. The communication did not change even after the separation. "I didn't see either one of
my parents any less after the divorce. They were good about that.” Additionally, John noted that his mother was more concerned about where he was and what he was doing. His father was more ‘laid back’ and allowed John to do what he wanted to. John reported that his father trusted his reactions and instincts to ‘be right’ where as his mother always assumed the worst.

John did not want to be like either parent although he respected them both very much. He wanted to be a musician. That had always been his goal and his parents both support him in his aspirations. John stated that he could, and always had been able to, confide in both of his parents, but more with his father than his mother.

My mother has a tendency to pull things out of proportion. She always assumes the worst or that I’d get into trouble. My father was more understanding. I could tell him more and he seemed to understand me better. Now I can go drink with my dad just like a friend. I guess I could talk to both of my parents though. It just depended on what the subject was.

John explained that he could ‘bounce’ ideas for the future off of both parents and his grandfather as well. “I always wanted to be a musician and always talked about it with my mom and dad. They always supported my ideas about that.”

John recalled that his parents never really explained the ‘rules of the house.’ Basically, the rules were laid down and they had to live by them. Up until the age of approximately 16 or 17, John had curfews and the duration of his time away from home was controlled by his parents. However, his mother and his father were not as concerned about where he was. John recalled that he was allowed to go where he pleased.

One ‘big rule’ that John noted was who he could and could not associate with. “I admit that a couple of my friends were goofy. But it was the ones that were nice and polite that they didn’t like because they thought they were trying to deceive them or something.”
John recalled that, until approximately age 15, he was punished, and that it was usually a grounding or a loss of allowance for a period of time. He usually knew what to expect in the way of punishment if he did something wrong.

With respect to his charges, John reported that the incident was, “Simply and wholly the result of my own stupidity.”

I wasn’t thinking about the consequences. I was being selfish and not thinking about what would happen. I was being selfish and not thinking about other peoples’ feelings and what it would do to them. I didn’t think about what they were going to have to go through.

John had just returned from a vacation to British Columbia with his father. He explained that the trip increased the strength of their relationship although it was always good. “I can talk to him as an adult now. He opens up to me as an adult now and seems more interested in my opinions as a person.” John stated that his father was accepting that he was getting older. The same was not true of his mother.

“Mom....I’ll always be her little boy. She’s very argumentative. We have different points of view. She tries to put her thoughts into my head.”

John concluded by noting that he felt that the break up of his parents did not affect him because it seemed common. Many of his friends were going through the same situation while he was growing up and almost all of his friends’ parents were separated when he was in his teens. “It just seemed normal to me.”

**Bracketing.**

John was an individual whose situation was significantly different from the others interviewed. Although his parents separated when he was young, John remained in contact with each parent and did not feel that their relationships had
been negatively affected by the event. Additionally, he continued to have a good relationship with his siblings who remained with him and his mother. John stated that he did not see his father any less after the separation. Of special note was the fact that his parents did not fight often in front of the children prior to the separation and that John stated that his parents seemed happier after the separation.

John felt close to his parents while growing up although he preferred to talk to his father who was more ‘laid back.’ His mother was stricter and often assumed the worst in situations. Both parents had strong rules regarding John’s companions, and John had curfews. However, he felt that he could go ‘where he pleased.’ Although rules were not explained. John reported that he usually knew what to expect in the way of punishment. He aspired to be a musician. Both his parents and his grandfather supported his desire and he stated that he could talk to his parents about the issue.

Although characteristics of family vacations changed after the separation, John felt that the quality of family outings remained stable. The children would travel with one parent at a time and usually alone or with a sibling of similar age. John stated that his relationship with his father had recently improved because his father was accepting him as an adult. His crime was an isolated incident.

Jim

Capture.

Jim, who was 25, was charged with an offence which resulted in a term of probation. Aside from the incident, he had no prior infractions with the law. Jim’s parents were never separated. They did not fight often and according to Jim had a
good marriage. Jim lived at home until the age of 19 and only left to go to University. He was an only child and associated well with both parents. Jim noted that he had a very close and normal family life.

The family did many activities together such as camping, fishing, travelling to Europe, and regular outings to the family cottage. He was equally close to both parents. Jim noted that his mother and father were very ‘open minded.’ He was a ‘good kid’ growing up who never had any problems with the law. Jim recalled that his parents were concerned about what he was doing in the sense that they cared about him, but were never really concerned about his specific activities because they trusted him. His friends were ‘decent people.’ Thus, his parents never stipulated who Jim could and could not associate with. Both Jim and his friends stayed out of trouble.

Jim did not aspire to be like either parent although he respected and was very proud of both of them. His father excelled in math and science, while Jim felt his talents were centred in the more creative disciplines. He had always felt that he was different than both of his parents. Jim made note of the fact that he respected both of his parents because they had to escape from a communist country and move to Canada to ‘start all over again.’ Their degrees were not honoured in the new country so they went back to school to re-educate themselves.

Jim noted that he was ‘a latch key kid.’ Both of his parents worked. This, Jim noted, was necessary because they had to start from scratch and build up what they had lost.

I remember as early as grade two that I used to wear a key around my neck on a string. I would go home and make something to eat for myself. Something simple like a sandwich. I didn’t use the oven or anything. It didn’t bother me though. I was a very independent kid. Plus, I had lots of friends so it wasn’t like I was all alone.
Jim had baby sitters up until grade two who would care for him. Moreover, if Jim was going to be left for an extended period of time he would be placed with a ‘sitter’ even after grade two. Jim recalled that he ‘got along’ with all of his sitters.

Jim’s parents were very liberal in their rules towards him. He could do what he liked even at a younger age. However, Jim noted that he never abused that fact. “I wouldn’t come in at two in the morning or anything like that. I never really gave them reason to slap down rules. I was a pretty good kid growing up.” Jim informed me that when he did ‘really get out of line’ he would be grounded, but that such circumstances were rare and that when they did occur he was expecting the punishment he received. He was never punished physically such as with a ‘spanking.’ Normally, his parents would talk to him if he misbehaved. “When I did get out of line, they would usually just sit me down and talk to me. We were very open about stuff like that, so they would try to explain to me why I shouldn’t be doing something.”

When asked, Jim could not recall anything that affected him in any substantial way. However, Jim reported an episode that stood out in his past.

When I was about 13 or 14 up at my cottage, I took out my parents car and got in an accident. I was allowed to use the car even though I had no licence but just to go to my friend’s place up the road. There was nobody around up there so my parents didn’t care. I wasn’t allowed to go on the highway though and this time I did. I went a little too fast and got into a bad accident. I could have been killed along with my friends but we weren’t. My parents didn’t do anything. What could they do? They were just glad that I was OK. They knew that I was aware that I had screwed up. There were no repercussions from the police either. That was the worst thing that I ever did.

Jim then explained to me what had led up to his term of probation. He had target shot at his cottage since the age of 10. There was a road about a kilometre away, but it was an access road which was seldom used. A new neighbour had moved in near the
area. had heard him shooting, and had called the police. Although the police admitted
that Jim had taken many precautions such as an adequate target, they insisted that an
accident could occur if a small child or other pedestrian were to come up the road out
of sight. Jim was charged with careless use of a firearm. Although his guns were
returned, and his licence was not revoked, he was given a conditional discharge; a one
year term of probation. Jim was not issued a criminal record and felt that his
probation was, “Just a waste of taxpayers money.”

I’m not really a criminal. I blame the justice system for my involvement in crime.
They wasted taxpayers’ money to process me and stick me on probation just
because someone important complained. They gave me my guns back and didn’t
even take my license. That’s aggravating.

Bracketing.

Jim was another individual whose situation could be seen as ‘unexpected.’
Although he described himself as a ‘latch key kid’ his crime was an isolated
incident and he reported that most aspects of his family life were very positive.
The short periods of time that he had to be alone after school at a young age,
apparently had not affected him negatively. He had high admiration for both of his
parents, felt loved by each of them, and had close relationships with both his
mother and his father.

Jim did not have set rules but was aware of his boundaries and knew to expect
punishments in the way of groundings when he misbehaved. Usually, his parents
would discuss those incidents with Jim that they felt were unacceptable. However,
out of respect, Jim attempted to refrain from activities that he knew would upset
his parents. Additionally, Jim’s companions were ‘decent people’ so that parental
control of his associates was not necessary. Jim felt comfortable discussing issues with his parents, the family did many activities together, and the three individuals had a very ‘close and normal family life.’

Jim described his parents as open-minded individuals who trusted his actions and behavior because he had not given them cause to do otherwise. In one traumatic incident in which Jim had disobeyed his parents and ruined the family car in a potentially fatal accident, his parents were more concerned about his well being than his disobedience. His crime was an isolated incident that had unfortunately resulted in his term of probation.

**Patterns Observed (Construction)**

The data that were collected from the 20 interviews revealed two distinct patterns or categories based on similarities in the perceptions that the criminally charged adults held regarding their family upbringing. Thus, the individuals could be separated into two groups and analyzed accordingly. One group (Group A), comprised of the first 14 interviews that were presented, could be described as individuals with extensive criminal histories, or delinquents charged with more serious offenses. The second group of individuals (Group B), comprised of the last five interviews that were presented, could be described as single or isolated criminal offense delinquents or those charged with ‘minor’ criminal offenses. Only one subject, Tim, would not adequately fall under either of these two categories. Table 1 and Table 2 display the offenses and distinguishing family upbringing characteristics for the two groups of individuals based on the patterns observed.

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1. The individuals were not interviewed in the order that they appear in this paper, but were grouped and ordered as a matter of convenience both to the researcher and the reader.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Offense(s)</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Repeat Offender Theft/Bomb Threat</td>
<td>father always absent &amp; eventually left, parents fought verbally and physically, mother abusive alcoholic, related her abuse to his likeness of father, step-father (like father) died, mother began homosexual relationship, disturbing behavior in front of him, first serious girl-friend left him for another woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Assault</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Repeat Offender</td>
<td>parents separated, rarely saw father, eventual relationship like friend not father. boys left alone while mom worked night shift, hated step-father who hit and later humiliated him, rules changed and lost freedom after remarriage, kicked out at 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>Breaking &amp; Entering</td>
<td>poor family, father physically and verbally abusive towards mother and kids, parents divorced when 5, sister like mother while real mother worked, respected mom and close but no money for family activities, dad promised to visit but never did, poor associates, punishments unpredictable, lost contact with father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior Assault &amp; Theft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Repeat Offender</td>
<td>father abusive towards mother and kids, beat mom in front of kids, brother had cancer and always absent, blamed himself for a number of absences, parents absent working or with brother, problematic in school because of abuse, father not consistent with love or discipline, reinforced criminal activity with drugs, allowed drugs at home, caught father 'cheating' on mother</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Breach Of Probation</td>
<td>parents separated when 8, always fought, lived intermittently with both parents who were separated and back together throughout childhood, trips and closeness ended after initial separation, inconsistent discipline rarely enforced, parents had little control over his behavior, more concerned with their problems than welfare of kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; Possession Of Narcotics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repeat Offender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>parents not married, father left when infant, later contacted but never close, step-father most like father, mother left step-father after 13 years, remained in contact with step-father and mother related to for it, step-father 'pushed' mother around, lost contact with step-father, kicked out when 15, lived on streets &amp; 'crack' house, mother would not take him back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many Prior Charges Breach, Mischief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>most difficult to interview, seemed most disturbed, ½ formative years with each parent who separated after birth, first contact with father was kidnapping, little contact with step-siblings, sent to live with father when 9, only contact with mother was mail since age 10. moved out at 19. suicidal, learning disability, parents separated when 8, both never remarried which angered him because they acted married but were not, rarely talked to only sister, family not close, father always laying around, different rules at each home, father more lax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One Prior Possession Of Narcotics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Theft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>Repeat Offender</td>
<td>poor impression of father, never knew him, parents fought often before separation, fought with brother, mother made him feel stupid, drank &amp; smoked marihuana when alone after school, kicked out and lived with friend, inconsistent rules and punishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destruction Of Property, B&amp;E, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chuck</td>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>abusive &amp; alcoholic father, parents separated when 3, lived with mother and 2 brothers, mother abusive and had psychological ailments, mother beat him because like father, mother hospitalized numerous times &amp; brothers separated &amp; placed with relatives or in foster homes, father promised to visit but never did, angry because he resembled father. kicked out at 13. poor peers, shallow relationship with father, suicidal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior Mischief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>Drug related charges</td>
<td>father heavy drinker &amp; fought with wife and children, truck driver who was always gone, mother left with 7 children &amp; could not control them, not close to siblings except for one brother, unable to talk to parents, fair relationship with mother, parents rarely knew location, activities, or associates. groundings never lasted, discipline inconsistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repeat Offender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>parents never married, separated when 1, rarely saw sister and 1 brother who went with father, misbehaved brother and self with mother, relationship only improved with father prior to his sickness &amp; death, few rules, felt family was 'screwed up,' drank &amp; smoked marihuana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criminal History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen</td>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>parents had terrible marriage, not close to 5 siblings, both parents worked, family never together, father always absent, womanizer, was physically &amp; emotionally abusive, respect for father really fear, mother remained out of fear husband would kill her, respected mother, mother had nervous breakdown, began running away at age 15, was never problem at home or in community, father held gun to head and threatened to kill him, no remorse after father's death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Prior Convictions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2
Infractions and Distinguishing Family Characteristics For Subjects with Minor Offenses
(Group B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Offense(s)</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Break &amp; Enter &amp; Theft, No Prior Offenses</td>
<td>parents separated when 11, lived with father and two brothers, good relationship with siblings and step-siblings, at 18 went to live with mother in city, left father on good terms, kicked out of mothers at 19 for party, lived with friends and then brother, met poor friend who influenced him to steal for money on one occasion, only knew him for short time, regretted decision to steal, stated it was one time behavior that would not happen again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Uttering Threats, No Prior Offenses</td>
<td>very close family, gathered every weekend for reunion of relatives, had no curfew but knew to be in at reasonable time, if father had a problem with him the issue was discussed, was rarely punished because he respected father and attempted not to disappoint him, did not dictate friends because he associated with good peers, would restrict where he went, respected both parents and could talk to both, closer to father, problems discussed as a family, associated well with all brothers and sister, charged with making threatening phone calls, defended self and lost, had never been in trouble before in either country and claimed he would never have problems with legal system again, parents concerned about well being more than crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>Impaired Driving, No Prior Offenses</td>
<td>parents never separated, family very close, close to both brothers, often vacationed and spent time together, church every weekend together, mother stayed home to raise kids until in school, described parents as supporting and understanding, close to and could talk to mother and father, parents rarely argued, strict curfew, activities and areas to socialize in were restricted, never dictated friends but would explain how they felt about certain peers, punished with groundings and sometimes “spanking” for misbehavior, knew what to expect in way of punishment, rules explained, described crime as isolated incident resulting from personal problems, parents supportive of incident and more concerned with his well being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Impaired Driving, No Prior Offenses</td>
<td>parents divorced when 7, little fighting before or after the divorce, never fought in front of kids lived with mother, never had step-parents, confused about separation but later seemed normal because all his friends were experiencing similar situations, remained in contact with father and had good relationship with both parents, felt parents were happier on own, communication with parents did not change after separation, mother more concerned about his location and activities, father more laid back, trips continued after separation but not as family, found trips to be equally enjoyable, respected both parents who supported his aspirations, never really explained rules, had curfews and time away from home was controlled, controlled who his friends were, punished by groundings until age 15, felt crime was result of stupid and selfish choice, isolated incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>Careless Use Of Firearm, No Prior Offenses</td>
<td>parents never separated, parents escaped from communist country and had to begin a new life, respected parents very much, rarely fought and had a good marriage, family did activities together, equal close to both parents and could talk to both of them, parents very open minded, never set rules because they trusted him, never stipulated who he could associate with because he had good friends, no curfew, never over-stepped boundaries, grounded when he was really bad, usually discussed misbehavior with him, latch key kid but never disturbed by it, had many friends, baby-sitter if left for a long duration, very independent, had bad accident when seriously disobeyed parents as teenager, were more concerned that he was not hurt than with the misbehavior, felt he was wrongfully charged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Tim was not placed in either group. His perceptions of his family upbringing were unlike either group. He had serious charges but related his family background in positive terms. However he was reluctant to talk about his past in detail especially with respect to his mother.

Tim | Arson, Prior Assault Charge | close to brothers, older step-brother died, father had criminal record but was “normal,” lived in stable home, parents never separated, close relationship with both parents, associated with bad crowd, curfew on weekdays but allowed to do as he pleased on weekends, moved out when 18 on good terms. said he was wrongfully charged, declined to discuss mother in detail. |
Multiple Incident or Major Offense Subjects

Although each subject’s perceptions of their family upbringing were undoubtedly dissimilar, in some respect, from every other subject, there were commonalities or patterns that were apparent in the first group of interviews (Group A). The individuals all perceived numerous aspects of their family upbringing negatively. However, one interesting characteristic of the individuals, was that the majority of the subjects blamed themselves for their delinquency as opposed to some factor within their family.

The first common perception noted by the subjects was fighting. The majority of the Group A delinquents (12 of the 14) recalled heightened arguing in the home. The fighting was between the parents (biological or step-parent) and was directed from the father to the mother the majority of the time. Further, fighting was usually physical and verbal or emotional. The subjects were not only exposed to the fighting themselves, but were often subjected to observing their mother’s being abused by their fathers. In one particular case (Don), the individual was no longer clear on what constituted abuse. He defined abusive behavior as ‘just pushing around.’

The second common perception was related and similar to the first. The vast majority of the subjects were abused by one or both parents (11 out of 14). The abuse was usually verbal or emotional although physical abuse was reported by half of the 14 individuals in Group A. The violence was coupled with emotional or verbal abuse. Moreover, the abuse commonly originated from the father or step-father. However, in five instances, the subjects in Group A reported the mother as being the abuser either alone or in addition to the father.
The third common perception was the absence of one or both parents (12 out of 14 subjects in Group A). The separation of the child or teenager from his parent(s) was most commonly the result of divorce or separation. However, the subject could have been removed from the home or the parent(s) may have rarely been present in the home resulting in similar perceptions of the incident.

The separation had resulted in a poor relationship with the parent. The interaction had been described as „shallow,” „like friends,” „non-existent,” and in the extreme case the father’s death had come as a relief to one subject, actually enhancing the relationships between the remaining family members. The absence was often attributed to the fact that the parent(s) simply did not care about the child or adolescent.

The recollection of the parent(s) leaving or constantly being absent had been perceived by the subjects in an extremely negative way. This must be noted in comparison to a subject from Group B. According to John’s perceptions, whose parents divorced at age 7, both his mother and his father made an effort to remain in contact with him and attempted to lessen the impact of the separation to the best of their abilities.

In the perceived situations of the Group A subjects, a parent, step-parent, or both parents had either left or had always been absent, or the subject had been removed from the home. The incident had caused deep resentment or anger. The feelings were the result of the lack of contact with the parent or due to the fact that the child or adolescent perceived that the parent cared little for, or had no regard for, his feelings or welfare.

In the extreme scenario (Don), the father had left, the step-father who had replaced his father eventually „disappeared,” and finally he was told to leave the home by his mother and, therefore, was separated from her. Half of the Group A subjects’ fathers were constantly or completely absent from the subject’s life. In
five additional cases, both of the parents had been absent to some degree (a total of 12 out of 14 experiencing neglect by at least one parent).

Another common perception of the Group A subjects was a lack of discipline, irregular discipline, or inconsistent discipline. Again, a difference from the perceptions of the Group B subjects must be noted. Where similar perceptions of discipline had been reported by subjects in Group B (for example no curfew, or no stipulation of friends), the individuals related the absence of rules to the fact that they were well behaved. Consequently, rules were not necessary. Reasonable behavior was the commonality for Group B subjects, and boundaries were not crossed out of respect for the parent(s).

On the contrary, the common perception of Group A subjects was that their behavior was poor and that certain characteristics of parental discipline had in some manner contributed to the fact. Although it was not common for a subject to blame his parents, it was common for a subject to report poor and inconsistent discipline or to recall that his parent(s) had little control over his behavior or rarely enforced or upheld rules. Further, it was common that the subjects perceived that rules were rarely explained.

A fourth common perception related by the Group A subjects, was that there was poor communication between the father and/or the mother and the subject. The subjects often were not comfortable or incapable (due to absence) of discussing matters with a parent. Consequently, it seemed as though a number of the Group A subjects had become emotionally distraught in one or two ways. Either the subject had become a very angry individual and possibly unable to control his angry impulses, or the subject had become depressed and suicidal, or both.

The Group A individuals had reported feelings of being 'out of control,' 'screwed up,' and 'just wanting stability.' Although none of the feelings could be
directly related to a lack of communication between the individual and his 
parent(s), the lack of a close parental relationship had undoubtedly increased such 
negative emotions.

An interesting perception was reported by three subjects that is worth noting. 
Don, Chuck, and Alex had attributed their poor relationship with their mother to 
the idea that they resembled their fathers. In each instance of the perception, the 
subject had been convinced that the poor relationship that existed between his 
mother and himself was the result of similarities or an attachment to their 
biological fathers. In Don's case, he felt torn between his biological mother and 
the man he regarded as his father.

A further common perception noted by the subjects, was that they had been 
'kicked out' of the home at a young age. On occasion the subject had left the 
home because of some disturbing or constraining behavior or because of negative 
circumstances in the home. For example, Alex, who's mother was engaging in 
behavior with other women that he was unwilling to discuss. This occurrence 
would likely enhance feelings that the parent(s) cared little for the individual. In 
fact, out of the 14 Group A subjects, 6 had been kicked out, had left, or, in the case 
of Bill and Jack, had been sent to foster homes.

Although not directly related to the family, a final common perception that 
should be noted, with respect to Group A subjects, was that 10 of the 14 
individuals perceived that they were badly behaved in school, had poor academic 
skills, or both. Whether the academic problems were the consequence of a family 
situation or behavioral problems or visa versa is unclear. However, the fact that 
the majority of the subjects reported the perception of school related difficulties is 
interesting.
Single Incident or Minor Offense Subjects

Of the 20 subjects interviewed, 5 individuals had situations that separated them from the remaining men. The particular subject’s (Group B) had been charged with an offense that seemed out of character or isolated. In comparison, the 14 Group A individuals had all committed an offense that could be described as ‘serious’ or were repeat offenders. In fact, the vast majority of Group A subjects had extensive criminal histories beginning in their early teens. The delinquent acts reported by the Group B subjects were the result of poor decisions, or in the case of Jim, could best be described as unreasonable.

The indication of a clear separation between the subjects raised a question: What differences existed, if any, between the perceptions of the Group A and Group B subjects? Not surprisingly, there were clear differences reported by the two groups of males.

Of the five individuals in Group B, only two of the subjects’ parents had separated. However, separation was not the important characteristic. The subjects had each reported that their parents rarely fought. Even in John’s situation, whose parents were divorced, he perceived that his parents fought little prior to or following the divorce, and stated that his parents never fought in front of the children. This was drastically different than the fighting that was reported to have occurred between the parents of the Group A subjects.

Another characteristic quite different from the Group A individuals was that the subjects in the latter group did not perceive that there was abuse towards the children in the home. Not one of the five subjects in Group B reported abuse, either physical, verbal, or emotional, by either their mothers or their fathers. Further, all five individuals not only stated that their parents were present, but indeed stated that they had good relationships with their parents.
The subjects in Group B reported that they were close to their parents and siblings and participated in events as a family. Moreover, the common perception of the subjects in Group B was that they had a strong respect for their parents to the point that they neglected to participate in misbehavior because they did not want to disappoint their mother or father. Additionally, all the subjects still respected both parents at the time of the interview.

A third characteristic distinguishing the two groups of individuals from each other was previously mentioned. Although only two individuals in Group B (Jay and John) reported that they had specific rules such as curfews to follow, all but one of the men reported that they were punished to some degree (usually groundings) for misbehavior. The important factor was that of those individuals who did not perceive that they had rules while growing up, each of the subjects noted that rules were not necessary. They were aware of what behavior their parents would not approve of, and made an attempt not to disappoint their parents. When they were misbehaved they were expecting punishment and perceived the consequences to be just.

Of the five individuals in Group B, only one subject had been asked to leave the home. However, he was not kicked out until the age of 19. Further, he did not relate the experience in the negative ‘tone’ that many of the subjects in Group A had. After holding a party and being asked to leave, Fred proceeded to live with his brother. However, of greater importance was the fact that four out of the five Group B subjects had remained at home with their family well into their later teens.

An additional perception of importance, that was reported by three of the Group B subjects, was that their parents had been more concerned with their well being than with their delinquency. In the case of Jim and Jay, their parents had ‘overlooked’ the seriousness of their misbehavior, their first priority being directed
towards the safeguard of their child. In both of these incidents which involved a serious accident, the subjects believed that their parents had neglected to scold or rebuke them because they were aware that they had already realized their error. The parents showed their concern and allowed their support to take priority over any punishment. Similar circumstances were reported by Frank.

What appeared to be the most important common perception with the Group B subjects was that the men had excellent communication with both their mothers and their fathers as children and as teenagers. Further, the common perception was that the relationships between the men and their parents was good. The subjects felt that they could go to their parents for guidance and their parents supported their aspirations for the future even when dissimilar from their own.

Tim was the only subject interviewed who could not be easily categorized based on his perceptions. Although his offenses were serious, he reported that he came from a stable home, had a good relationship with both parents who were never separated, and was close to his siblings. However, he was allowed to do as he pleased on weekends and reported that he associated with a poor crowd. Additionally, his closest step-brother had died in a fire. Ironically, Tim had been charged with arson. Further, Tim was reluctant to discuss much of his past in detail especially with respect to his mother. However, there are undoubtedly situations where individual perceptions will not resemble any pattern.

Application Back To The Subjects’ Lived Experiences (Contextualization)

With respect to delinquency, no researcher will ever discover one clear pattern for the causes and onset of such unacceptable behavior. As noted, there are hundreds of variables and intervening aspects both inside and outside of the family.
that influence crime. Coupled with this, is the fact that in any group of individuals, hundreds of different psychological variables are at play. Consequently, there may be thousands of possible patterns that could result in the delinquent behavior of a child, teenager, or adult. However, it would not be a misconception for criminologists to strive to discover common perceptions of family upbringing with the hope of better understanding and, perhaps, more effectively preventing or reducing delinquent behavior.

There is sufficient support for the theory that the social and psychological factors combined, played an important role in the beginnings of delinquent behavior. Consequently, it is the perception of those interactional moments in a delinquent’s childhood and youth that were sought to more clearly understand how an individual internalizes specific events from his past.

Of the 20 men who were interviewed, common perceptions were noted. No pattern will ever be the same for any individual. Each situation will alter from the commonly perceived variables to some degree. However, the similarities in the perceptions of the men’s upbringings can be noted and illustrated effectively.

For the delinquent who becomes involved in serious crime or who has a history of delinquent behavior, specific perceptions of family upbringing seem to be apparent.

A common perception is that there was undue and severe quarreling between a delinquent’s parents. The fighting is often both physical and verbal or emotional. For example, Jack whose father not only fought with his mother but would actually physically pin down and beat her in front of the children. “You know what he’d do? He’d actually get on top of my mom right in front of us and just keep smacking her in the face.” The behavior was not common in every instance and altered in severity from subject to subject, but was undoubtedly one very real perception for the majority of the serious offenders. However, Kurt, neither
confirmed nor denied his parents’ fighting, and Bill stated that his parents did not fight.

A second characteristic is that the serious offenders perceive that the siblings in their homes have been abused as children. The abuse reported ranges from minor and emotional or verbal to severe physical abuse. Joe, for example, was humiliated in front of relatives when asked to remove his pants to reveal marks from the prior day’s beatings. “He says, ‘Pull down your pants. I want them to see what I did to you,’” and this was right in front of the company and all. He says, “Pull them down now or you’ll get it again.”” Glen’s father had held a gun to his head and Glen had perceived that his father would have shot and killed him had their been bullets in the gun.

The ass-hole actually stuck a gun to my head. Believe it or not he went and pulled the trigger too. The gun wasn’t loaded but I don’t think he even knew that. He was so mad he would have blown my head off.

Again, not all individuals report such violence. For example, Larry, Kurt, and Bill did not report any abuse.

Separation from the parents resulting in anger and feelings of neglect, unworthiness, or perceptions that the parent(s) do not care, are commonly reported. In many cases, the fathers’ or mothers’ absence seriously effects the individual. For example, Alex’s biological father who had been continuously absent, was eventually replaced by a step-parent whom Alex regarded as “the closest thing he ever had to a father.” However, Alex’s mother unexpectedly left the man one day and, shortly after Alex regained contact with the man, he passed away.

He was more like a dad than my dad ever was. . . . One day my mom got me up and packed our stuff up and left. I didn’t have a clue she was leaving. I lost contact with him after that until just a few years ago, but he died right after we met again.
The absence of a parent is not always the result of separation. For example, Todd’s father was continuously absent due to a truck driving job. Bill was removed from the home and was sent to various foster homes and centers. He preferred to be at least close to his parents and missed them enough to make false bomb threats in an attempt to be sent home from a center.

In connection with the absence of a parental figure is a lack of a close maternal or paternal relationship. Either due to absence or simply the unconcern or neglect of the parents, the majority of subjects could neither talk, nor felt close to their parents and had no respect for them. Eric reported that his parents were, “Probably too wrapped up in their own problems. They were always trying to figure out whether or not to split up again.” Joe recalled that he ‘hated’ his step-father from the first moment they met.

My step-dad just made my life rough. He loved to punish me. If there was a chance of punishing me he’d jump right in there. My life was hell from the second they met and it never got better. I hate the guy.

The lack of a close relationship aggravates another common perception. Many males perceive that they could not discuss issues or talk to either their mother, their father, or both parents (step-parents). Don’s mother would not listen to his pleas to allow him to move home. He had been restricted from visiting his mother as a term of his probation. Todd noted that attempts to talk to his alcoholic father commonly ended in an argument or fighting.

Many individuals perceive that they had inadequate discipline, unpredictable discipline, discipline that was never enforced, or rules that were never explained. For example, Larry who lived with his mother and father on a biweekly basis, had different rules in each home. His father was more ‘laid back’ so that he could do what he pleased. Eric perceived that his parents had almost no control over his behaviour.

They don’t like some of my friends. They don’t like me with them but what can
they do. They try to keep me away from them but what can they do? They’d ground me but then I’d just be out in a couple of days. It never lasts. This ‘inadequate’ control of the individual was not perceived by subjects with less serious offences who attributed any lack of discipline to the fact that they were behaved.

Finally many delinquents feel that they were, in a sense, discarded. The parent(s) orders them to leave. As if the individual disassociates the act from his misbehavior, he perceives that the parents don’t care about him any longer. The circumstances may result because of an absent father, or because a child is sent to foster homes, as in Jack, Bill, and Todd’s circumstances, although the effect is still the same. The fact that a number of delinquents were ‘kicked out’ and basically left to live ‘on the streets,’ the majority of them at a very young age, must have enhanced any negative emotions of unworthiness. Low self esteem would be almost inevitable. Bob noted that,

I went and when I came home she had stuck all my stuff outside and said I was kicked out. I slept in a tent in the bush behind our house for the weekend and ate at my friend’s place. . . . she didn’t even care. It was just one less thing she had to worry about. We still don’t talk about that very much.

Conclusions (Reformulated Statement of the Process)

The negative perceptions that many serious and repeat offenders carry regarding their family upbringing cannot be ignored. There is a clear pattern that can be observed with such individuals. Moreover, this pattern is different for individuals who have committed a single less serious delinquent act and whose
behavior seems out of character. Delinquents following this less serious criminal
description perceive their family upbringing in a more positive light.

The recollection of serious delinquent adults almost reveals a ‘downward spiral’
effect. The individuals are exposed to parental fighting, and parental abuse of the
children. Discipline is inadequate, unpredictable, or non-existent. Further, a
parent or parents are often absent for one of a number of reasons and the absence
has been perceived by the individual extremely negatively. The delinquent reports
feelings of unacceptance or unworthiness. They feel that the adult did not care
about their well-being.

Their involvement with delinquency further reduces their self-respect and
serves to reduce the already poor relationship between the child and the parent.
The added frustration, anger, and resentment leads to further delinquency and the
cycle continues. It was common for the subjects in the more serious offense
category to feel ‘out of control’ or to have the desire for ‘more stability in their
lives.’

The one differing characteristic, if summed up, between the more serious and
repeat offenders and the less serious offenders, is that the latter group perceive
their upbringing much more positively. They reported close relationships and a
respect for their parents. They recalled having parents who rarely fought,
supported their aspirations for the future, and spent time with the children as a
family. Discipline was present or was not seen as necessary because of the good
behavior of the individual. Thus, it would seem that what causes some individuals
to perceive the same or similar circumstances positively instead of negatively is
completely reliant on the relationship they have with their parent(s), how their
parent(s) deal with situations, and the general ‘atmosphere’ of the family unit.

With respect to structure, all that can be stated is that how the separation is
handled by parents seems much more important than the separation itself. If the
children are 'protected' from the majority of negative characteristics involved with a divorce, their perceptions of the situation apparently are more positive. However, the argument could be made that most adults involved in a separation are either unable to, or unconcerned with, protecting their children from the impact of the situation. Although the lack of 'protection' may not be intentional, the parents may fail to realize the damage to the child or may be too engrossed with their own pain to realize the injury being inflicted upon the child.

As researchers, we may never be able to fully determine why some individuals in poor family settings become involved with crime while others in similar circumstances do not. Similarly, we may fail to discover why people from seemingly favorable situations become delinquent. Undoubtedly, there is a complicated mixture of the psychological and sociological variables which takes place. This 'mixture' of two separate and complicated processes may produce countless combinations. For example, some individuals may simply possess stronger coping mechanisms, allowing them to deal with poor situations more easily. The pattern observed where-by individuals from disturbing family backgrounds simply quit caring, may be the case where some young men were not equipped with adequate coping mechanisms. Their perception of the situation would differ based on the interpretation of their circumstances.

Taking into consideration the combination of the sociological and psychological forces that are working in each case of delinquency, it is unlikely that theorists will ever discover one clear pattern leading to criminality. It would seem futile and unimportant to do so. However, our society may be able to prevent likely cases of criminality, by recognizing and intervening in problematic situations. There are undoubtedly different variables, all of which are important, which act on an individual in each circumstance. The multitude of variables affect different persons diversely depending on their psychological make-up and
sociological backgrounds. By recognizing the sociological forces common in the backgrounds of delinquents, we as a society may be able to intervene and prevent or reduce criminality before it occurs. Further research to determine the interaction between environment and the individual, which takes place for the criminal, is crucial to our understanding, and possibly prevention, of crime. Additionally, a clearer understanding of what variables affect the perceptions of individuals is necessary.

Possibilities for Future Research And Direction

Future studies could add valuable information to the present research. For example, the methodology in the present study could be duplicated with female offenders or could be duplicated in order to discover whether different perceptions exist between certain races. The perceptions of family background could be analyzed to discover the specific socio-economic variables that are relevant to criminality. Additionally, children who have been removed from ‘troubled’ homes, and where intervention has taken place could be studied over time. Research could possibly determine if counseling and a new positive environment are sufficient enough to alter perceptions and possibly prevent the likelihood of future criminal behavior. How many individuals who are removed from dysfunctional families and counseled, become delinquent later in life? Can the damaged perceptions of young children from troubling backgrounds be altered, or is the process irreversible?

If society is unwilling or unable to adjust appropriately to the rapid pace that family reconstruction is taking, negative results could indirectly occur. With the growing number of single-parented families, families with both parents in the work
force, in addition to the relatively new idea of same-sex parents, the precise
socializing variables affecting delinquency are desperately in need of further
research. Intervention is necessary such as redefining laws, creating adequate
daycare centers, or simply educating individuals within society, in order to
compensate for our changing definitions. Arguably, until society accepts and
adjusts for such alterations, the family will be unable to adequately socialize and
serve as a unit of social control.

An increasing amount of research continues to indicate the importance of care-
givers in reducing delinquency. However, the information is not relayed to the
parents and other individuals who are responsible for the socialization of youth and
adolescents (social workers, day care workers, etc.). Fischer (1983) noted that “it
seems clear that proper supervision of children is an effective means of reducing
delinquency. What is needed now is to inform parents of its importance and to
teach them the proper procedures for enhancing its effectiveness” (p. 639). Wilson
(1982) supported the idea stating that, “If greater involvement of the parents is to
be the primary aim of the proposals then the most effective way of achieving this
might be in an educational setting” (p. 32).

Additionally, as more couples begin to rely on daycare services that become
responsible for child care the majority of the time, interest should be focused on
the quality and accessibility of such organizations. Eichler (1983) noted that:

For children, a mother with a paying job means in the vast majority of cases that
they will be cared for outside of their own home . . . . No longer is the mother
the only, or even the most important, socializer of the child but this task is now
often shared with virtual strangers (p. 46).

Thus, the question is no longer whether or not the parent(s) are properly
socializing the child or children, but, on the contrary, whether society is supplying
the services that are adequate to properly socialize children. For example,
Balthazar and Cook (1984) noted that "children in small families have a better chance to develop very close relationships to parents, which facilitate indirect control by parents, than do those in large families" (p. 109). One question for researchers should be how youth are effected in daycare centers in which few adults must supervise, and socialize, vast numbers of children. How will such situations effect the perceptions of children? Further research is necessary in the area of daycare services and their effectiveness at socializing our youth. Perhaps the system is in need of radical changes given our altering society?

Regardless of the circumstances that surround the socialization of children and adolescents, the necessity of a clear understanding of family related variables seems apparent. A thorough comprehension of the relationship between delinquency and the care-giving practices of parent(s), will undoubtedly aid in the associations between alternate care-giving agencies and the future behavior of children.
References


Appendix A

Interview Schedule

“Do any patterns or similarities exist in how young men involved in crime perceive various aspects of their family lives during their childhood and teenage years?”

1) Were your parents separated or divorced?
   If yes
   Do you remember how this affected you? How did you feel at the time?
   Did they often fight prior to the separation? How did this effect you?
   Did you live with a step-parent? Did you get along with him/her?
   Did you remain in contact with your mother/father after the separation? How did this make you feel?

2) Do you consider that your family was close? Was it always this way?
3) Did your parents fight often? (Don’t ask if answered in question
   1) Did this start or stop at any particular time while you were growing up?
4) Did your family do any activities together? Did this ever change?
5) Did you feel that you had a good relationship with your mother and/or father?
   Why? Did this relationship ever change for any reason?
6) Do you feel that your parents were concerned about what you were doing when you were not around them? Did they seem to be genuinely concerned about your behavior at school or in the community? Did their concern ever change at any point?
7) While you were growing up did you want to be like your mother/father? Did you respect your mother/father? Were you proud of your mother/father and look up to them? Did this ever change and if so why?
8) Could you confide in your parents when you had a problem such as in school or with a girlfriend? Could you discuss plans or share your thoughts and opinions with your mother/father?
9) Did your mother and/or father attempt to explain the rules they had for you or discuss how they felt about topics and issues that could effect you?
10) Was the time that you spent away from home, such as how late you could stay out, what time to be in after school, or when you could spend the night at a friends house, dictated by your parents through curfews or any other means?
11) Did your parents dictate or control the activities you participated in or the areas that you socialized in or at? For example where you played sports, if and which dances you could go to, arcades or parties you could attend, etc.?
12) Did your parents have rules or dictate who you could and could not associate with?
13) Were you ever punished for not abiding by your parents’ rules? If yes....What types of punishments did you receive for breaking different rules. Did you know what to expect. in the way of punishment, for breaking rules or for unacceptable behavior?
14) What do you think may have been the main contributing factor to your delinquency?
15) Was there any incidents or turning points within your family that stick out in your mind as being especially important either positive or negatively.
16) Are there any incidents in your youth that stand out as affecting the way you perceived things? I.e. That made you start thinking about things differently?
17) Did your parents move often? How did this effect you?
18) Was your father/mother out of work for a long time? IF YES How did this affect you?
19) Was a lack of finances a reason for arguments in the home? Did this cause you concern?
20) How did your father and/or mother feel about stealing? Fighting? Was your father and/or mother supportive of any activities that society labels as criminal which your father/mother may have justified due to your economic status etc.? For example. Did your father/mother feel it was justified to steal food if you could not afford any?
21) Was your father/mother involved in a bike gang or any other type of group which may have influenced criminal behavior? How did this make you feel?
22) Was there an adult, outside of the home, with whom you could speak about problems you were encountering such as a teacher or relative?
23) Do you blame anyone for your involvement with criminal justice system?
Appendix B

Consent Form

To Participant:

I am a student at the University of Windsor presently working on my Master’s Degree in Sociology with an emphasis in Criminology. The research that I am involved in examines the relationship between crime and family experience.

Your participation in this research, specifically the following interview, is completely voluntary and is not associated with your probation or terms of probation. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from my research at any time. Additionally, you may ask questions at any time, and you may refuse to answer questions. Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed. Your name will not be used and the information you provide will be presented in a way which prevents identification of sources. You have the option of allowing the interview to be audio taped. If you choose to allow me to audio tape the interview all tapes will be destroyed after the analyses have been completed.

If you have any further questions following this study you may contact me at 253-4232 extension 2191 by leaving a message for Tim Armaly or by contacting Professor Shuraydi at the University of Windsor. You may also request a copy of the results, as well as a full explanation of the research upon completion, by contacting me at the number noted above.

The research has been approved by the department of Sociology and Anthropology Ethics Committee. Questions or concerns you have about this project should be directed to the Head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at 253-4232 (Ext. 2190) for referral to the departmental ethics committee.

Having read and understood the following conditions I, the undersigned, volunteer to participate in the research being performed by Tim Armaly.

______________________________  ______________________________
Participant’s Name               Participant’s Signature

______________________________
Date
Vita Auctoris

Name: Timothy John Armaly

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Year Of Birth: 1970

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