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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION
OF
SPOUSAL HOMICIDE

by
Judy Lancaster

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
1992

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ABSTRACT

Extant research suggests that gender differences exist in the frequency, reasons, and motives for killing. The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions and actions of individuals who had engaged in the most lethal form of domestic violence from a gender differences perspective. In order to examine the perceptions and actions of male and female offenders, a micro theory of Symbolic Interactionism was utilized and the qualitative methodology of interviews was employed. Specifically, seven men and three women who had been convicted of spousal homicide or attempted homicide and who were incarcerated in Canadian Correctional facilities were interviewed. Although similarities emerged for the entire sample (eg. marital breakdown, identity threats, feelings of humiliation, fear and anger) there were also themes which were common for each gender. The majority of male respondents were afraid of losing their spouse, afraid of rejection, were jealous and possessive and ironically took action to try to salvage the relationship. The female respondents had been emotionally, physically and/or sexually abused by their partners and took action to end the relationship, the abuse and violence, and to end the fear of possible severe physical harm.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the fourteen women who were brutally murdered at L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal on December 6th 1989: Genevieve Bergeron; Helene Colgan; Nathalie Croteau; Barbara Daigneault; Maud Haviernick; Barbara Klueznick; Maryse Leclair; Annie St. Arneault; Michele Richard; Sonia Pelletier; Anne Marie Edward; Anne Marie Lemay; Maryse Laganier; Annie Turcotte. It is hoped that work of this nature will continue so that someday peaceful, non-violent relations between men and women will be the norm in this society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many individuals who deserve recognition for their support, encouragement and assistance. However, I must first extend my appreciation and thanks to my family for their open-mindedness, understanding and support especially during the periods when it appeared as though I would never enter a correctional facility. If it were not for them I would not have been able to conduct this research. I would also like to thank Dr. Thomas Fleming for his encouragement, support and constructive literary and theoretical suggestions. My other committee members, Professor Don Stewart and Professor Brian Mazer have also taken time out of their lives to assist me through all the stages of this project and for that and their support I would like to thank them. I would also like to thank Dr. Mary Lou Dietz for her support and assistance.

The next set of individuals deserve recognition because they helped me gain access to Canadian Correctional facilities, conducted file searches to find potential subjects, or acted as contacts within the institution which made the whole process of meeting my interviewees a lot smoother. First of all I would like to thank Dr. Frank Porporino, the Director of Research at Correctional Services of Canada in Ottawa, for giving me permission to enter Canadian Correctional facilities and conduct my research. Equally important in this process of "gaining access" was Ms. Evelyn McCauley, the Assistant Director of Research at Correctional Services of Canada. Ms. McCauley was an effective mediator in Ottawa and contacted several institutions to find potential respondents for my study. For all of her time and effort I extend a sincere thank-you. Ms. Heather Greigg, at Corrections Canada Regional Headquarters in Kingston, also mediated with staff at various institutions to locate individuals for this study and as a result her participation must also be recognized. At Millhaven Institution, I would like to thank Kathy Beres and Lisa McPherson for their assistance. At Warkworth Institution, I would like to acknowledge David Craig and Rhonda Twigg for their efforts. At the Prison for Women I would like to thank the Acting Warden, Donna Morrin, for giving me a break and allowing me to enter the institution and conduct my interviews. I would also like to acknowledge Helen Brochu at the Prison for Women because she helped locate women for this study.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the men and women who took the time and energy to participate in this study and talk to a total stranger about the intimate and personal aspects of their life.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The deliberate and merciless killing of fourteen female engineering students at L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal on December 6 1989 sparked national disbelief and concern amongst women, academics, feminists and society in general. Societal reaction illustrates the potency and ability of the media to shape and create specific perceptions of violent crime. Heinous crimes including mass and serial murder are frequently sensationalized by the media and as a consequence may create an inaccurate portrait of the nature of homicide for the general public. Self report studies, for example, indicate that the majority of women fear victimization from strangers (Hutchings, 1988; Rafter and Stanko, 1982). Despite the pervasiveness of this perception, catastrophic and senseless incidents such as the Montreal Massacre are relatively rare. A paradox is created because individuals generally believe they will be victimized by strangers when victims of violent crime are typically acquainted with the offender.

The literature consistently disconfirms this myth. In 1988, 78.7% of the solved homicides in Canada involved victims and suspects who were known to one another (Canada, 1989). Of these, 36.1% involved offenders and victims who were domestically related¹ and 42.6% were acquainted through

¹Domestically related refers to a combination of immediate family (husband, wife, father, daughter, brother), other kinship relationships (grandmother, uncle, cousin, mother-in-law, foster parent), and common-law family categories (Canada, 1989).

business or social situations² (Canada, 1989). The conjecture that victims and offenders of homicide are typically acquainted is substantiated by the literature (Chimbos, 1978; Wolfgang, 1957; Daly, 1988; Luckenbill, 1977). Despite the relationship between victim and offender (known or unknown), mass murder and spousal homicide share an underlying thread: the slaughtering of women generally reflects the inherent gender inequalities and sexism that exists in a capitalist, patriarchal society.

Although men kill and are killed more frequently than women there are a significant number of homicides that occur between men and women³ (Canada, 1989; Chimbos, 1978; Daly, 1988). Since information was first collected on homicide in 1961, 36.5% of the total reported homicide victims have been

²Both business and social relationships are included in the acquaintance category by Statistics Canada. Business Relationships are defined as "established relationships between persons such as: (a) fellow workers (unless closer relationship is known) (b) superordinate-subordinate roles (eg. landlord-tenant, employer-employee, teacher-student) (c) business partners (d) such informal remunerative relationships as live-in babysitting" (Canada, 1989, p.98). Social relationships include close and casual acquaintances. Close Acquaintances includes "persons who were known to have established long-term relationships" (Canada, 1989, p.98). Casual Acquaintances are "persons in a social relationship which had been established prior to the homicide incident. These relationships were not particularly intense or close, or were known only to be established relationships for which the information required to specify the particular nature of the relationship is not available eg. the relationship between a mother and her daughter's boyfriend, the relationship between persons involved in private social gatherings such as drinking parties" (Canada, 1989, p.98).

³In 1988 males represented 2/3 of homicide victims and almost 90% of homicide suspects (Canada, 1989).

female (Canada, 1989). Senseless violence against women whether it be mass murder or domestic homicide⁴, underscores the urgent need for a greater understanding of the interaction between men and women and how their relationship is influenced by existing societal structures and attitudes. Specifically, spousal interaction must be investigated because whether it is abuse or homicide, the majority of violence occurs in the matrimonial setting (Gelles, 1987; Hutchings, 1988; Stanko, 1985). Historically, sociologists and criminologists have consistently focused upon the victim-offender relationship as the pivotal issue underlying the development of a holistic comprehension of the nature of homicide (Wolfgang, 1958; Chimbos, 1978; Luckenbill, 1977; Block, 1981; Felson and Steadman, 1983; Katz, 1988; Goetting, 1988; Goetting, 1989).

Research on violent crime indicates that men are almost always the perpetrators of assault and homicide (Wolfgang, 1958; Chimbos, 1978; Gelles, 1987; Hutchings, 1988; Boyd, 1988; Adelberg and Currie, 1987; Linden, 1987). Approximately 14% of the criminal charges against men in 1985 were for violent offenses (Canada, 1986). Much of this violence however is directed towards women with whom they share intimate relations (Gelles, 1987; Hutchings, 1988; Lupri, 1989; Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Recent research by Gelles

⁴The term domestic homicide refers to homicides that occur between immediate family members.

(1987) indicates that 47% of the husbands he interviewed had hit their wives at least once and 25% of these men admitted hitting their spouses regularly⁵. Men are also more likely to be the suspects of homicides indicating that they engage in violent crime more frequently than women⁶ (Canada, 1989).

What makes these figures particularly unsettling is that they underestimate the frequency and lethality of violent interaction between men and women⁷. However, because of the lethality of the crime homicides are more frequently recognized and reported. They are better indicators of violent crime as a result (Linden, 1987; Canada, 1989). Despite the infrequent occurrence of homicide, the prevalence of violent interaction between spouses can be ascertained by examining homicide statistics. For example, forty-nine percent of the solved homicides between immediate family members involved husbands who killed their wives and 15% involved wives who had killed their husbands. When men kill their wives they frequently do so by beating⁸ them while women

⁵Regularly is defined by Gelles as being five times a year to daily (Gelles, 1987).

⁶In 1988, men were the suspects in 88.7% of the reported homicides in Canada (Canada, 1989).

⁷These figures underestimate the scope of violence in the home because of underreporting by subjects and the police. Police utilize discretion and frequently avoid charging individuals who commit violent crime in domestic situations.

⁸Female victims are most frequently killed by being beaten (26.2%), stabbed (23.8%), and shot (22.8%) (Canada, 1989). Male victims are most frequently shot (33.0%), stabbed (31.9%) and beaten (22.8%) (Canada, 1989).

typically kill in self-defense (Browne and Williams, 1989; Browne, 1987; Gelles, 1987; Hutchings, 1988; Stout, 1987; Chimbos, 1978; Wolfgang, 1958; Canada, 1989). These facts suggest that the act of homicide is frequently a final step in a series of violent interactions between men and women.

Violence against women, especially in the familial setting was not acknowledged academically or professionally until the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960's and 1970's (Stout, 1987; Hutchings, 1988). Chimbos (1978) argues that this lack of research is due to an idealized depiction of the family as an institution that provides love, support, cooperation and care. Additionally, legal and religious institutions have fostered an image whereby the man has the power, authority and the right of privacy within his "castle" to engage in behaviour that ensures his dominant position in the family and in society (Brinkerhoff and Lupri, 1988; Hutchings, 1988; Benjamin and Adler, 1980; Gelles, 1987; Stanko, 1985; Barrett, 1988). Consequently, the intelligentsia has avoided examining intrafamilial violence because society has created a harmonious, private depiction of the family; an unequal distribution of intellectual, economical and political power between men and women, and; the perception that women are the "appropriate victims" of violence (Chimbos, 1978; Hutchings, 1988; Dobash and Dobash, 1978; Gelles, 1987; Smith, 1987). This exclusion of knowledge

is due to sexism which permeates through, and is supported and perpetuated by society (Smith, 1987; Allen, 1989).

Explanations of violent crime such as homicide, demonstrate the sexist nature of criminological theory and the wider society. For instance, both theory and methodology focus primarily on male criminality and female victimization (Adelberg and Currie, 1987; Stout, 1987; Hutchings, 1988; Allen, 1989; Smart, 1977; Leonard, 1982). Criminologists justify their polarized and sexist investigations by arguing that women commit less crime than men and generally commit crimes against property (Smart, 1977; Adler, 1975; Simon, 1976; Linden, 1987). Women's lack of capacity for criminal and violent action is underscored by examining incarceration rates; only 11% of all provincial and federal inmates in Canada are female (Canada, 1989). Concomitantly, approximately 58% of the criminal charges against women in 1985 were property crimes (Adelberg and Currie, 1987). Although these facts are correct and widely recognized they do not justify the parochial nature of research and theory on female criminality. In fact, extant research clearly demonstrates that women are far from passive and as a consequence they should not be omitted from studies of violent crime (Gelles, 1987). Gelles (1987), for example, found that approximately 32% of the wives in his sample reported hitting their husbands once and 11% of these women hit their husbands

regularly.

Female criminality has been neglected because of gender stereotypes and sexism that has existed in a male defined discipline and society (Wilbanks, 1982; Leonard, 1982; Adler, 1975; Simon, 1976; Smart, 1977; Adelberg and Currie, 1987). This epistemology has developed and is reinforced because men have always been the creators, distributors and controllers of knowledge in our society (Smith, 1987; Eisenstein, 1986). These biases permeate through the traditional explanations of male and female criminality. Female criminals have customarily been perceived as having physiological or psychological deficiencies while male criminality has been explained by socio-structural variables (Lombroso and Ferrero, 1915; Pollak, 1950; Chimbos, 1978; Adelberg and Currie, 1987; Smart, 1977; Adler, 1975; Leonard, 1982). Additionally, violent female offenders have been portrayed as deviators from socially defined, feminine roles (Adelberg and Currie, 1987).

Explanations of spousal⁹ homicide must move beyond these sexist conjectures and begin to narrow the gaps in the literature by examining both male and female offenders of homicide. A comparative analysis is essential because of the numerous differences between men and women in general and their respective involvement in the act of killing. Basically

⁹Spouse refers to individuals who are legally married or are in common-law relationships.

and most importantly, the socialization process creates differences in how men and women socially construct, define, and interpret reality (Smith, 1987; Mackie, 1987). As a result, research must refrain from studying men exclusively and more importantly academics must avoid applying such findings to females especially when the crime is violent in nature. Gender differences exist in the frequency and circumstances surrounding homicide and these variations must be recognized and examined. Men, for example, are more likely to kill for monetary and sexual gain while women almost exclusively kill family or acquaintances in the heat of passion and/or after prolonged abuse (Boyd, 1988; Browne, 1987). The presence of others, precipitation by the victim, accessibility and utilization of weapons, and alcohol/drug consumption may also influence male and female offenders of homicide differently (Katz, 1988; Browne, 1987; Browne and Williams, 1989; Goetting, 1988, 1989; Wolfgang, 1958). In light of these facts, the dynamics of the victim-offender relationship will be examined with a specific emphasis on gender differences in perceptions and behaviour.

The research in question recognizes that both structural and interactional conditions influence the potential and actual occurrence of spousal homicide. In fact, it is assumed that macro, quantitative correlates act as a precipice for homicide. However, a micro, qualitative perspective of

spousal homicide is necessary because the research literature focuses almost exclusively on structural explanations of homicide. Specifically, the present research will examine how male and female offenders define and interpret the homicidal situation so that a greater understanding of why they arranged and/or participated in spousal homicide can be obtained.

This particular section, **Chapter One**, was created to provide the reader with a sufficient amount of background information regarding domestic homicide. The remaining portion of this research project has been divided into six chapters. **Chapter Two** reviews and critiques empirical and theoretical explanations of male and female criminality with a specific emphasis on homicide. **Chapter Three** was designed to familiarize the reader with the methodology utilized to extract data on spousal homicide. **Chapter Four** examines Symbolic Interactionism and explains how it is applicable to research of this nature. **Chapter Five** summarizes the stories of the male respondents and outlines the factors which influenced their behaviour. **Chapter Six** summarizes the stories of the female respondents and explains what factors stimulated their behaviour. **Chapter Seven** analyzes the data and highlights common themes which were associated with the entire sample and with each gender. **Chapter Eight** discusses the applicability and usefulness of this research.

Chapter Two

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Sociologists and criminologists implicitly recognize sex as a salient correlate of criminal and violent behaviour (Nettler, 1974; Adelberg and Currie, 1987; Hutchings, 1988; Simon, 1976; Smart, 1977; Linden, 1987). This fact is exemplified consistently by the literature and research by Linden (1987) reports that in 1982 adult males were charged with 76.9% of violent crimes and 54.3% of property crimes. During the same time period, adult females were charged with 8.3% of violent crimes and 13.4% of property crimes¹⁰ (Linden, 1987). Because male participation in criminal behaviour greatly exceeds that of females and because the creators of knowledge in society have been male, traditional literature has ignored or devalued female criminality (Smart, 1977; Smith, 1987). Criminologists have rationalized the parochial character of empirical and theoretical discourse on women who commit crime by citing the aforementioned sex differentials in crime rates.

Early theories that attempt to explain female criminality were based on biological determinism (Lombroso and Ferrero, 1915; Pollak, 1950; Cowie, Cowie and Slater, 1968). For example, Lombroso and Ferrero (1915) reported that women were

¹⁰ The remaining amount of property and violent crimes were committed by juvenile offenders. Specifically, juvenile offenders were responsible for 32.3% of property crimes and 14.3% of violent crimes in 1982 (Linden, 1987).

atavistically closer to their origin than men¹¹ , were naturally less ferocious, more conservative and passive and consequently were "congenitally less inclined" to commit crime. Lombroso, for example, argued that female prostitutes evolved in a way that made them uncharacteristically attractive and because of their attributes they would participate in this type of criminal activity (Lombroso and Ferrero, 1915). This theory would also hypothesize that those women who evolve with an unusual strength engage in violent crime (Lombroso and Ferrero, 1915).

Theories based on biological determinism have also been generated by Pollak (1950). He argued that women commit as much crime as men but stipulated that women are better able to conceal their delinquent behaviour due to biological and social factors. Pollak (1950) found a correlation between female bodily processes (i.e. menstruation, pregnancy and menopause) and the time that crimes were committed. He also suggested that social factors must be considered in order to understand the nature of female criminality. In an attempt to

¹¹ Lombroso and Ferrero (1915) studied the bones of females who were incarcerated (for crimes including prostitution, infanticide homicide) and who later died in prisons of Turin and Rome. Lombroso and Ferrero believed that women committed less crime because their skulls had fewer anomalies than males' skulls. They found this by measuring specific attributes of the skull including: cranial capacity, facial index, weight of the lower jaw, length of the branchial arches etc. Unfortunately, Lombroso and Ferrero based their examination of females on stereotypes of the time and have also been criticized for their unrepresentative sample and their confusion over sex and gender (Smart, 1977; Bowker, 1981).

progress beyond a traditional biological explanation, Pollak argued that "the whole social situation of female domestic service, whether white or coloured, breeds feelings of frustration and creates a desire for revenge; and this desire can be statisfied very easily due to the particular opportunities offered by this occupation" (Pollak, 1950, p.145). In other words, the nature of women's social roles in the domestic unit provide the appropriate conditions for criminal behaviour to occur. Pollak (1950) would argue that women are typically or traditionally appointed to responsibilities of cooking and as a result they have the opportunity to poison their family members (Pollak, 1950).

Although Pollak's explanations are based on similar stereotypes and ideologies as Lombroso and Ferrero, he recognized that social factors are salient and influence female criminality¹². Pollak argued that women are able to mask their involvement in crime because of the paternal attitudes of the formal social control enforcers of society (Pollak, 1950). The "Chivalry Hypothesis", which was introduced by Pollak and has been criticized by contemporary criminologists¹³, suggests that chivalry amongst the police,

¹²Common sense beliefs of the day were based on the assumption that women are inherently evil and the general ideology of biological determinism both influenced classical and contemporary theories and research on female criminality.

¹³Most criminologists agree that chivalry may partially explain lower rates of female crime but they generally note that other factors such as the methods of measuring crime (i.e. Uniform Crime Reports) produce an inaccurate portrait

lawyers and judges results in fewer females being arrested, charged and convicted for the crimes they commit (Pollak, 1950; Fox and Hartnagel, 1979; Smart, 1977;). To a degree, Pollak (1950) was cognizant of inequality between the sexes and suggested that as traditional social roles diffuse and women gain social, economic and political equality with men, chivalry will erode and the agents of the criminal justice system will respond by arresting, charging and convicting women more frequently. Subsequently, he predicted that the rate of female criminality would appear to escalate based on this attitudinal change (Pollak, 1950).

Pollak's prediction of an increase in the rate of female criminality has been supported by the literature but explanations for the alleged increase differ and have been debated by criminologists and sociologists (Adler, 1975; Simon, 1975, 1976; Smart, 1977; Steffensmeier, 1978, 1980; Fox and Hartnagel, 1979; Box and Hale, 1984; Hagan, Simpson and Gillis, 1979, 1987; Giordano, Kerbel and Dudley, 1981). Adler (1975) reported that between 1960 and 1972, the number of women arrested for robbery increased 277% for women and 169% for men; embezzlement increased 280% for women and 50% for men; larceny increased 303% for women and 82% for men; and burglary increased 168% for women and 63% for men. Extant research confirms the fact that the greatest increases in

of the nature of female criminality.

female criminality have involved property crime especially in the areas of larceny/theft and fraud/embezzlement¹⁴ (Linden, 1987; Adler, 1975; Simon, 1976; Steffensmeier, 1978, 1980; Fox and Hartnagel, 1979; Box and Hale, 1984).

The increase in the rate of females being arrested for criminal conduct has led to the emergence of the argument that a "new female criminal" has evolved (Adler, 1975). According to Adler, these "sisters" in crime are more masculine because of the Women's Liberation Movement and as a result they have moved into a pattern of behaviour which was once exclusively male (Adler, 1975). Specifically, the Women's Movement has generated an increase in the number of women who are demanding equal opportunities in legitimate (i.e. occupations) and illegitimate areas (eg. criminal subcultures). Consequently, Adler predicted a crisis in the amount of property and violent crime committed by females. Her conjecture is criticized however because female participation in violent crime, which is almost exclusively male, has not increased at a rate which would be consistent with Adler's theory¹⁵. Simon (1976)

¹⁴Between 1974 and 1983, the rate of adults charged with Criminal Code and federal statute offenses increased 6% for men and 38% for women (Linden, 1987). During the same period, men charged with property crime increased by 45% while charges against women for crimes against property increased by 61%. Although crimes against property have increased for men and women and the relative gap is decreasing, the absolute gap remains the same or has increased slightly since the sixties (Steffensmeier, 1980).

¹⁵Between 1974 and 1983, charges for violent crime increased 24% for men and 65% for women (Linden, 1987). Despite the large increase by females, the relative gap between men and

illustrated the deficiency in Adler's hypothesis by reporting that female arrest rates for homicide have been relatively stable over the past few decades. She suggested that the increase in female criminality is not due to the Women's Movement but rather has evolved because of broader societal changes (Simon, 1976). One of these changes involves the increase in the number of females in the labour force. As more women become wage-labourers, Simon argued, they will be provided with the opportunity to commit property crime more frequently (Simon, 1976). Because women are presented with a greater number of opportunities to commit crime, the rate at which they commit property crime will increase simultaneously (Simon, 1976). Furthermore, she predicted that the level of violent crime by women will decrease when societal changes occur because women will experience fewer feelings of frustration, powerlessness and victimization as traditional attitudes and expectations of women become more egalitarian (Simon, 1976). Research however, indicates that their participation in violent, masculine, male-dominated or white-collar crimes has increased but has remained substantially lower than males (Steffensmeier, 1980). Simon's prediction of a decrease in violent crime by females has not occurred.

A central theme of these explanations is that females are

women for violent crime has remained relatively stable since the sixties (Steffensmeier, 1980).

committing more crime because traditional social roles between men and women are dissolving and converging (Adler, 1975; Simon, 1976; Steffensmeier, 1978,1980). Box and Hale (1984) suggested that as sex-role expectations change and women participate more frequently in the labour force, the division of labour would change so that men's and women's roles overlap. By examining shoplifting, Box and Hale (1984) tested the hypothesis that women's participation in shopping will decrease as women become liberated/emanicpated¹⁶. They argued that as women shop less, their opportunities to engage in shoplifting should decrease and their corresponding arrest rate for shoplifting should decrease. Conversely, as males shop more frequently, they should be exposed to more opportunities to shoplift and their arrest rate should increase as a result (Box and Hale, 1984). Although levels of shoplifting should reverse with liberation/emancipation, it has been consistently illustrated that levels of property crime by both males and females are increasing (Adler, 1975; Simon, 1976; Steffensmeier, 1978; Box and Hale, 1984). Role Convergence Theory then, fails to adequately explain both the continuous increase in property crime and the slight increase in the rate of violent crime by females (Simon, 1976; Steffensmeier, 1978).

¹⁶Emancipation is defined by Box and Hale as "women being given more equal structural opportunities" and Female Liberation is defined as "an acceptance of a feminist ideology" (Box and Hale, 1984, p.480).

The Role Convergence Theory is also criticized because it fails to provide a social-structural explanation of the origin of sex-roles (Smart, 1977). The motives and intentions of females who commit crime are also not addressed and explicated (Smart, 1977). Further research has demonstrated that changes in the crime rate occurred before the period¹⁷ when the Women's Movement was most influential (Fox and Hartnagel, 1979; Steffensmeier, 1980). The utility of the Role Convergence theory then, is restricted to conjectures that postulate that opportunities for females to commit property crime have increased because of societal changes (Simon, 1976; Fox and Hartnagel, 1979). Thus, the "new female criminal", which was predicted to emerge because of the Women's Movement, has been deemed "more of a social invention than an empirical reality" (Steffensmeier, 1978, p.566).

Despite the legal and social advances that women have gained, women are still confined to traditional social roles developed in a patriarchal society (Smart, 1977; Steffensmeier, 1980; Smith, 1987). The Women's Movement has expanded women's roles so that today females are responsible for contributing economically (i.e. wage-earner) in the public sphere and socially (i.e. wife/mother) in the private realm of

¹⁷The period in reference is the late 1960's and early 1970's. Steffensmeier bases his conclusions on analyses of female crime rates from 1965 to 1977.

the family unit. The strides of women however are still viewed as negative and linked to the increase in the female crime rate. Fox and Hartnagel (1979), for example, suggested that non-violent property crime increases as women become involved in extra-familial roles¹⁸. Specifically, as women participate more frequently in extra-familial roles, the pressure they experience to succeed and to achieve upward mobility increases (Fox and Hartnagel, 1979). When this occurs Fox and Hartnagel argued that women may react and adapt to these strains by committing more property crime (Merton, 1938; Fox and Hartnagel, 1979).

Attempts to progress socially (i.e. recognizing equal rights), economically (i.e. expanding womens' roles into the labour force), and politically (i.e. giving women the right to vote) have created conditions that provide women with more opportunities in general. Although the state has introduced formal mechanisms (eg. Employment Equity) to equalize opportunities, barriers that prevent women from gaining equal access to legitimate, male-dominated occupations have remained intact and as a consequence women's structural position has

¹⁸Extra-familial roles that Fox and Hartnagel analyze are restricted to occupational and educational areas. The female labour force participation rate (LFPR)-per 1000 females age 14 and above was the definition utilized by Fox and Hartnagel (1979) to measure the role of women in the work force. Female participation in education was measured by the rate of females granted postsecondary degrees (PSDR) (Fox and Hartnagel, 1979). Fox and Hartnagel found that as the rate of female participation in occupational and educational arenas increase, the female conviction rate also increases.

not changed greatly since the Women's Movement (Steffensmeier, 1980). Because women have not participated in the traditionally male-dominated occupational hierarchy until recently, they continue to have fewer opportunities to become involved in illegitimate activities that evolve from legitimate occupations (Steffensmeier, 1980).

Only women in the high socio-economic platform have been able more readily and successfully to gain access to the power, status, and occupations that are generally male dominated (Box and Hale, 1984). As a consequence, upper-middle class women have been the primary recipients of benefits which are associated with social-structural change (Box and Hale, 1984). The majority of women have therefore become increasingly "economically marginalized" with the social changes that have occurred and as a result they have become unemployable or are employed in low status, low paying, part-time occupations (Box and Hale, 1984). Economic marginalization may therefore explain female criminality more adequately than the Opportunity Hypothesis¹⁹ and the emancipation/liberation of women per se (Fox and Hartnagel, 1979; Box and Hale, 1984). Steffensmeier (1980), for example,

¹⁹The Opportunity Hypothesis was forwarded by Simon (1976) and states that as opportunities to enter the labour force increase for women, there will be an increase in the rate of property crime by females. Specifically, as opportunities to enter legitimate occupations increase for women, illegitimate activities which are associated with legitimate occupations will be conducted more frequently by females (Simon, 1976; Fox and Hartnagel, 1979).

argued that the deteriorating economic position of women in today's society has influenced changes in the female crime rate²⁰. The Deprivation Theory of gender and crime recognizes economic marginalization and postulates that female criminality has increased because certain categories of women (eg. young, single, minority) have increasingly been situated in unfavourable positions in the labour market and, in addition, they are expected to be independent (Giordano, Kerbel and Dudley, 1981). Perhaps the increase in the amount of property crime by women can be attributed to the fact that women's position in society has not changed greatly and in some ways it has become economically worse. Another influential factor may be that societal expectations of women's behaviour are changing and causing conflicting views on appropriate gender behaviour.

Although early theories of female criminality focused on physiological and psychological factors, contemporary theories as indicated, provide social-structural reasons for their criminal involvement. The majority of theories that attempt to explain female crime however, have emphasized analyses of property crime because of women's lack of capacity to commit violent crime (Steffensmeier, 1978, 1980; Fox and Hartnagel, 1979; Smart, 1977; Adler, 1975; Simon, 1976). Conversely,

²⁰Steffensmeier (1980) also suggests that changes in law enforcement procedures and market consumption trends have influenced changes in the female crime rate.

theories that explain male criminality have consistently addressed external, social-structural factors and have emphasized violent crime.

One theory that attempts to explain why men engage in violent crime is referred to as the **Resource Theory of Violence**. According to this theory, violence in the family is utilized as a resource when other resources (such as prestige, money, power) are not present (Goode, 1971; Chimbos, 1978). Because resources are fewer in lower class families, Goode (1971) argued that these types of families will experience greater frustration and bitterness and resort to violence more frequently as a consequence. Although O'Brien (1971) associated the majority of violence with lower-class families, he discovered that the position of women in relation to their husbands may influence violent conduct as well. Specifically, he concluded that,

violence within the family was more common where the husbands were under-achievers in the work-earner role and where the husband demonstrated certain status characteristics lower than his wife.

(O'Brien, 1971, p.697)

Violence, according to these theorists, may be utilized by husbands who either lack the resources, skills or talent to support a superior status or who have wives who are equipped with a greater number of resources (eg. money or education) (O'Brien, 1971; Gelles and Straus, 1987). In these familial settings, husbands utilize violence in order to reaffirm their

patriarchal position or power within the family (O'Brien, 1971).

Early research on violence in the family suggests that violent crime was performed exclusively by lower class families (O'Goode, 1971; O'Brien, 1971). This myth is dispelled as recent research consistently suggests that violence occurs in families from all socio-economic spectrums (Chimbos, 1978; Gelles and Straus, 1987; Hutchings, 1988). Lower class families generally utilize social control agents and agencies more frequently than higher socio-economic families and as a consequence they are officially recognized as victims or offenders of violent crime more often (Mann, 1984). The perceived lower class tendency towards violence may also be due to the fact that violence is hidden better in upper-middle class homes and the criminal justice system often discriminates against the lower class by charging and convicting them more frequently (Hutchings, 1988).

The **General Systems Theory of Violence** suggests that when husbands lack the resources that are required to fulfil socially prescribed roles a wife-led family structure emerges (Straus, 1973; Chimbos, 1978). Wives may attempt to acquire power in familial relationships as social change transforms sex role norms and expectations (Whitehurst, 1974; Chimbos, 1978). When this occurs, the husband may engage in violent behaviour to reassert his superior position in the

relationship (Whitehurst, 1974; Chimbos, 1978). If a wife-led family emerges, the husband becomes increasingly dissatisfied with the marriage and utilizes physical force to maintain power (Straus, 1973; Chimbos, 1978). In response, the wife utilizes violence and role-segregation in order to minimize the violence (Straus, 1973; Chimbos, 1978). **The Resource Theory of Violence and The General Systems Theory of Violence** recognize that the acquisition and maintenance of power by husbands is an important explanatory factor of violent interaction between spouses.

Sociological theories must be examined in order to understand why males utilize violence generally and as a means of obtaining power. **The Subculture of Violence Theory** has been developed by criminologists to account for male violence. Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) suggest that violent behaviour occurs because a violent undertone exists in the values that individuals of specific groups (eg. ethnic and social) and ecological areas have in their socialization, lifestyle and interpersonal relationships (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967; Chimbos, 1978). Like the **Social Learning Theory**, the **Subculture of Violence Theory** suggests that violence is learned during the socialization process (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1964; Chimbos, 1978). Violence in these groups is perceived as appropriate behaviour and the more an individual is integrated into a group that emphasizes violence

the more likely he/she will utilize violence (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1964; Chimbos, 1978).

The Subculture of Violence Theory has been discredited by criminologists because research has shown that there is a weak association between attitudes, values and violent behaviour (Ball-Rokeach, 1973). The reason that an insignificant association between attitudes, values and violence was found may be because violence is frequently interpersonal (male-female) rather than intrapersonal (male-male) and the aforementioned theory does not distinguish between the two types (Ball-Rokeach, 1973). The values and attitudes of all of the participants must be considered in order to understand why individuals engage in violent behaviour (Ball-Rokeach, 1973). Another deficiency of the **Subculture of Violence Theory** is that it fails to explain how violent values develop, are transmitted and why all members of the specified groups (eg. lower class) do not engage in violent conduct (Chimbos, 1978). Racial, socio-economic, and gender biases therefore appear to exist in the assumptions that are forwarded by this theory.

Although the **Subculture of Violence Theory** inadequately explains the nature of violent behaviour, it correctly assumes that violence is learned during the socialization process. The **Social Learning Theory of Violence** also postulates that individuals learn violence during socialization. This theory,

which is generally supported by the intelligentsia, suggests that as individuals interact with parents and other socialization agents they learn that violence is an acceptable pattern of behaviour (Gelles, 1987; Chimbos, 1978). Males in particular are traditionally socialized to be competitive and aggressive and as a consequence they are taught to defend themselves and their masculinity physically (Mackie, 1987; Gelles, 1987; Chimbos, 1978; Smart, 1977). Furthermore, this theory postulates that the greater the amount of violence present in the familial setting during childhood, the greater the likelihood that an individual will internalize and/or utilize violence later in life (Chimbos, 1978; Gelles, 1987). Specifically, witnessing a violent interaction or being the victim of violence in childhood may lead to an individual either engaging in violent conduct or being the victim of violence (Chimbos, 1978). This theory, which is also known as **The Intergenerational Theory of Violence** is supported by the literature (Gelles, 1987; Chimbos, 1978).

Although social-structural factors are salient because they explain the sexual division of labour and the relative position of women in our society, an interactionist perspective must be utilized in order to understand why individuals engage in violent crime and homicide in particular. Contemporary studies on violent crime indicate that a micro perspective is required because the majority of

research focuses on macro, correlational data (Chimbos, 1978; Luckenbill, 1977; Felson and Steadman, 1983; Wolfgang, 1958). Because women infrequently engage in violent crime, it is necessary to examine the dynamics of the victim-offender relationship in order to understand why it occurs.

When theories attempt to explain why women engage in violent crime they generally cite the **Social Learning Theory** along with an **interactionist framework**. Women frequently become involved with men who have violent tendencies if they have been repeatedly exposed to violent interaction and believe it is normative (Browne, 1987; Browne and Williams, 1989; Menzies, 1973). As a consequence, these women frequently become the victims of physical abuse by their husbands or lovers (Browne, 1987). Extant research concludes that women generally act violently towards husbands or lovers in self-defense (Browne, 1987; Browne and Williams, 1989; Brinkerhoff and Lupri, 1988; Goetting, 1989). Because women frequently act violently towards a violent partner, an interactionist framework will be utilized in this study.

Criminologists are cognizant of the fact that **Victim-Precipitation** may influence the dynamics of violent interaction (Wolfgang, 1958; Chimbos, 1978; Miethe, 1985; Athens, 1980; Franklin and Franklin, 1976). Wolfgang (1957), for example, found that 26% of the 588 homicides he examined

(via police records) were the result of Victim-Precipitation²¹. Furthermore, Luckenbill (1977) suggested that 50% of the 70 homicides he examined were initiated by the victim by using or threatening to use physical force.

Women commit homicide most frequently after being provoked with physical violence by their partners (Wolfgang, 1958; Miethe, 1985; Goetting, 1988,1989). Goetting (1988) indicated that females in her study were twice as likely to be offenders of victim-precipitated killings than non-victim-precipitated homicides²². These findings clearly suggest that many women commit homicide as a last resort in response to an abusive situation (Browne, 1987; Browne and Williams, 1989; Goetting, 1988). Conversely, males act violently in response to verbal and physical provocation (Chimbos, 1978; Goetting, 1989). Chimbos (1978), who conducted an extensive study of spousal homicide, suggests that verbal threats are important cues that influence the behaviour of males.

²¹Wolfgang defines Victim-Precipitation as occurring when "the victim is the first in the homicidal drama to use physical force directed against his/her subsequent slayer" (Wolfgang, 1957, p.2). Specifically, victim-Precipitated cases are those in which the victim was the first to show and use a deadly weapon, to strike a blow in an altercation or to initiate violent interaction (Wolfgang, 1958).

²²Goetting found that 56% of the female offenders of homicide killed men who had precipitated their action while only 8.7% of the male offenders killed women who had precipitated their behaviour (Goetting, 1988,1989).

Specifically, Chimbos (1978) found that social threats²³ or incidents that threaten a man's ego or identity were common and influenced violent behaviour.

A common technique in arguments is to refer to old grievances or conflicts no longer relevant except as weapons to argue with.. ..another typical technique is to attack the spouses deviations from the culturally approved sex-role ideal..a wife may accuse her husband of being a poor breadwinner or an incompetent lover....similarly, a husband may accuse his wife of being bitchy, frigid, or promiscuous..Insinuations that the spouse is not a good parent to the children are commonly made (Chimbos, 1978, p.47).

Katz (1988) also recognized that verbal threats influence the dynamics of the victim-offender relationship. He suggests that offenders of homicide engage in lethal behaviour in order to defend morality in the larger social system, their moral worth and their eternal human values²⁴ (Katz, 1988).

²³Social threats may include: making fun of sexual performance, admitting to an extramarital affair, or mocking job performance or capabilities (Chimbos, 1978).

²⁴Katz does not provide definitions of values and morals in his examination of homicide. Levin and Spates (1976) provide definitions and categories which can be referred to when examining values. Values are divided into three categories: Instrumental, Expressive and Other. Instrumental Values refer to rationality and achievement and are broken down into achievement, cognitive and economic categories (Levin and Spates, 1976). Achievement values are defined as "values which produce achievement motivation for the individual in terms of hard work, practicality, or economic value (and) are often expressed by means of contributions to society through occupation and regard for ownership" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Cognitive values "represent the drive for learning as an end in itself as well as the means for achieving success, welfare, or happiness" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Economic values "are at the collective level (such as national, state, industrial) thus differing from individual goals of

Individuals who commit righteous slaughter"²⁵ believe that

achievement" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Expressive values refer to the realm of feelings and include self-expressive, affiliative, concern for others and religious-philosophical categories (Levin and Spates, 1976). Self-expressive values "include self-expressive values and goals..the main ones are humour, play and fun in general, relaxation, or exciting new discoveries and travel..art and beauty are included as well as other creative-expressive activities" (Levin and Spates, 1976). Affiliative values "may be the product of social conditioning, or a result of the need to belong to a group, to affiliate with another person..this category focuses upon the gregariousness of individuals and the friendships which they develop..these affiliative aims may be expressed as conformity, loyalty to the group, friendship, or other directedness" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Concern for others "does not depend upon a drive to interact..unlike the affiliative values, this category focuses upon attitudes and feelings toward particular groups or toward humanity in general..therefore, this category tends to include more abstract objectives than those associated with affiliation" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Religious-philosophical values "include goals dealing with the ultimate meaning in life, the role of deity, concerns with afterlife and so on" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Other values include individualistic, physiological, political and miscellaneous. Individualistic values are "concerned with values which stress the importance of the individual, the development of his (her) unique personality, individual independence, and the achievement of individualized personal fulfillment including rebellion" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Physiological values are "goals created by simple physiological drives such as hunger, sex, physical health, and physical safety" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Political values include "collective goals (such as state, community, national, international objectives) in their central reference to group decision-making processes" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Miscellaneous values include "any other goals not covered above (such as hope, honesty, purity, modesty, and manners" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395). Morality is defined as "ethics; upright conduct; conduct or attitude judged from the moral standpoint" (The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, 1988, p.649). Morals are "concerned with right and wrong and the distinctions between them" and formulated on the basis of your values (The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, 1988, p.649).

the victim is teasing, daring, defying or pursuing him/her to engage in violent conduct (Katz, 1988). Similarly, Luckenbill (1977) argued that victims engage in behaviour that the offender perceives as offensive to "face"²⁶. This behaviour may include a verbal comment, a failure to cooperate with a request or a physical gesture or act that the offender finds offensive (Luckenbill, 1977). In response, the offender may either excuse the behaviour because it occurred when the victim was drunk or joking around, leave the scene and avoid a confrontation or engage in a retaliatory move to restore face (Luckenbill, 1977). When the latter option is chosen, the offender responds verbally and/or physically and initiates an interactive process that may lead to homicide (Luckenbill, 1977).

According to Felson and Steadman (1983), the difference between an individual committing assault and homicide is the behaviour of the victim. Victims of homicide are more likely to display a weapon and behave more aggressively (Felson and Steadman, 1983). Felson and Steadman (1983) suggest that as the victim behaves more aggressively so does the offender. Specifically, physical and verbal (identity) attacks by the

²⁵"Righteous Slaughter" is referred to by Katz as homicide that occurs when individuals believe that homicide is a self-righteous act that must be executed in order to regain selfhood, self-worth and self-respect.

²⁶The term "face" was used by Goffman to refer to that image of self that a person claims during a particular occasion or social interaction.

victim are responded to by counter attacks of a similar nature and level²⁷.

Katz (1988) postulated that homicide occurs when the victim behaves in a manner which the offender finds humiliating and challenging. Because males are traditionally socialized to be more aggressive and competitive than females, they may feel compelled to respond to a challenge and participate in the act of righteous slaughter more frequently. Conversely, women may engage in righteous slaughter in order to regain self-respect that was lost in an abusive relationship or to protect their children (Katz, 1988).

Studies that examine motives for homicide imply that victim-precipitation influences victim-offender interaction because altercations and domestic disputes are two of the most common motives cited in the literature (Wolfgang, 1958; Chimbos, 1978). In husband-wife homicides, Wolfgang reported that the two most common motives were family quarrels and jealousy²⁸. Wives were more likely to kill their husbands in

²⁷That is, as the level of violence utilized by the victim increases so to does the level of violence utilized by the offender. If verbal remarks were made they were responded to verbally, if physical attacks were made they were responded to physically.

²⁸Wolfgang provides the following categories of motives of homicide: altercation of relatively trivial origin (insult, curse, jostling), domestic quarrel, jealousy, altercation over money, robbery, revenge, accidental, self-defense, halting of a felon, escaping an arrest, concealing birth, other, unknown. These categories have been widely criticized because the first two do not refer to substantive issues; only the domestic quarrel category defines relationship between killer and victim; and categories are

a family quarrel (33%:31%) while husbands were more likely to kill their wives out of jealousy (13%:10%) (Wolfgang, 1958). Studies consistently indicate that sexual jealousy and rivalry are common motives for homicide, especially for men (Wilbanks, 1982; Daly and Wilson, 1988; Chimbos, 1978; Wolfgang, 1958). Conversely, studies that explain motives for female offenders of spousal homicide are typically located in Wife Battering literature and suggest that women kill their husbands in self-defense (Jones, 1980; Browne, 1987; Browne and Williams, 1989; Hutchings, 1988).

Because verbal and physical provocation influence violent interaction between men and women, victim-precipitation must be defined in a manner that acknowledges both types of provocation. Other problems with acknowledging victim-precipitation as an important component of homicide between spouses is that it has been equated with victim-blaming (Miethe, 1985). Although this equation has been formulated and debated by sociologists, criminologists and Victim's Rights Groups, this research does not imply that victims should be blamed for their own death (Wolfgang, 1958; Miethe, 1985). The act of homicide typically results from a series of events in which both the victim and offender participate in

not mutually exclusive (Wolfgang, 1958; Daly and Wilson, 1988). Although Wolfgang provides a significant contribution to research on homicide and the period he conducted his research in was one where political conservatism, rigid divorce laws and religion were highly influential, his work appears to contain racial and sexual biases.

and the concept of victim-precipitation is simply being utilized to understand the interactive process that occurs between spouses prior to the homicide.

In addition to victim-precipitation, research suggests that the presence of others influences lethal interaction between individuals (Chimbos, 1978; Luckenbill, 1977; Felson and Steadman, 1983; Forrest and Gordon, 1990). Although most homicides are one to one encounters, research indicates that they occasionally occur in the presense of an audience (Goetting, 1988,1989; Luckenbill, 1977; Felson and Steadman, 1983). Studies by Goetting (1988, 1989) found that approximately 45% of male and female victims of homicide received blows/hits from their mates when others were present. By examining the role of the audience, Luckenbill (1977) found that 57% of the audiences that were present at the time of the homicide had intervened and encouraged the use of violence. The remaining audiences did not act positively or negatively towards the violence but the offender perceived their neutral stance as favouring the utilization of violence (Luckenbill, 1977). After the crime was committed, 48% of the audiences either helped the offender escape or destroyed incriminating evidence and they were therefore regarded as supporters of the offender's action (Luckenbill, 1977).

Social-psychological research on social facilitation²⁹ suggests that the presence of others will facilitate the participation in strong, well-learned responses and interfere with the performance of new forms of behaviour (Baron and Byrne, 1987). The Drive Theory of Social Facilitation suggests that the presence of others increases our level of motivation and arousal which facilitates the performance of dominant responses³⁰. Studies have found that individuals are more likely to exhibit dominant responses when others are present (Baron and Byrne, 1987). If violent conduct is a well-learned response to specific stimuli or interaction then this theory would suggest that the presence of others would facilitate a violent response.

Although there is support for this theory, other factors have been found to influence an individual's behaviour when others are present. Factors such as the concern about being judged by others (i.e. evaluation apprehension) and/or wanting to look good in front of others (i.e. self-presentation) may influence the behaviour of individuals as well (Baron and Byrne, 1987). Male offenders of spousal homicide may participate in lethal behaviour because they feel like they have to behave consistently with the qualities they

²⁹Social Facilitation is defined as "any effects on performance stemming from the presence of others" (Baron and Byrne, 1987, p.382).

³⁰Dominant Responses are defined as "our strongest responses in a given situation" (Baron and Byrne, 1987, p. 383).

acquired during socialization (eg. competitive, aggressive). The utilization of violence may be a way of proving to others, to the victim and to himself that he can defend his masculinity.

The ingestion or utilization of alcohol/drugs prior to the homicidal situation also acts as a dynamics flex for spousal homicide and violence in general. Research consistently suggests that victims and offenders of homicide were under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they engaged in violent interaction (Wolfgang, 1958; Chimbos, 1978; Goetting, 1988, 1989; Forrest and Gordon, 1990). Goetting (1988,1989) found that 35% of the female and 35% of the male offenders of homicide had been drinking while 24% of the female victims and 48% of the male victims were intoxicated prior to the homicide. These findings suggest that the behaviour of the victim is more important and influences the interaction between mates more frequently than the offender's behaviour. Felson and Steadman (1983) support this finding by indicating that victims of homicide are more likely to be intoxicated with alcohol/drugs than are victims of assault.

The difference in lethality cited by Felson and Steadman (1983) suggests that alcohol influences the aggressiveness of the victim's behaviour which would in turn affect the aggressiveness of the offender. The effects of alcohol on

violent interaction between spouses is described by Hepburn (1973) who concluded that,

alcohol tends to reduce the cognitive skills such as the ability of the drinker to perceive viable threat-reducing tactics, and may thus enhance the encapsulation process and lead to the tactic of retaliation..unable to retaliate with lucid verbalization, the intoxicated participant may resort to some other technique of establishing his/her identity and saving face (Hepburn, 1973, p.425).

Similarly, Chimbos (1978) indicated that 11.8% of his sample who committed spousal homicide believed that excessive alcohol consumption had instigated the argument that occurred prior to the homicide. Although alcohol consumption does not justify violent behaviour, it does influence the perceptions and reactions of individuals and as a result it must be investigated.

The literature reveals that the interaction between the offender and victim is important in determining whether a homicide will occur or not. Despite this fact, little research has been forwarded to examine the dynamics of the victim-offender relationship. The research in question will investigate the homicidal situation by comparing male and female offender's interpretations and the interactive process that occurred prior to the homicide. Because research consistently suggests that victim-precipitation, the presence of others and the consumption or utilization of alcohol and drugs influences violent interaction, these areas will be the

major focus of the study. Furthermore, a gender comparison will be conducted because most studies ignore female samples. Female offenders of violent crime have been ignored empirically and theoretically because of a belief in their lack of capacity to commit violent crime and because of a sexist ideology composed by the creators of knowledge in our society.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology was chosen to extract rich, thick data on homicidal interaction. This chapter will familiarize the reader with the purposive nature and composition of the sample, the problems associated with obtaining the sample, the methodology employed to extract data and the strategies utilized to analyze the findings in an effective manner.

Sample

Men and women who have been charged with spouse³¹ homicide³² were required for this study. As a result, individuals who were convicted and incarcerated for arranging, planning, killing or attempting to kill their spouses (or related-persons) were selected. Obtaining such a private, purposive sample however, was challenging and the steps taken

³¹ For the purposes of this research, the concept of spouse refers to individuals who are legally married or in common-law relationships.

³² The Criminal Code definition of homicide was utilized in this study. According to this definition, "a person commits homicide when, directly or indirectly, by any means, he [she] causes the death of a human being (Section 222 Martin's Criminal Code, 1989, p.141). According to Section 231, murder "is first degree when it is planned and deliberate" (Section 231 Martin's Criminal Code, 1989, p.147). "Culpable homicide that otherwise would be murder may be reduced to manslaughter if the person who committed it did so in the heat of passion caused by sudden provocation" where "a wrongful act or insult that is of such a nature as to be sufficient to deprive an ordinary person of the power of self-control is provocation.." (Section 232 (1) and (2) Martin's Criminal Code, 1989, p.150). Because of the focus of this research, individuals charged with "infanticide", as defined in Section 233 of the Criminal Code, were not included in this sample.

were numerous. These steps will be briefly outlined.

The first step involved getting permission from the Director of Research at Correctional Services of Canada to enter Correctional Facilities and conduct this research. This process took approximately five months. Once access was granted, the Assistant Director contacted correctional staff at various institutions (Millhaven, Warkworth and The Prison for Women) and file searches were conducted in order to find suitable participants. When individuals matched the criteria for this research, letters were written to the potential "subjects" to explain the research, who the researcher was and to ask them if they would be interested in participating in this study. These letters were not answered by anyone and consequently dates were arranged to meet with the potential subjects in person.

The next step involved actually travelling to the three institutions outlined above to meet the individuals who have the required qualifications. This strategy could not be employed for approximately eight to twelve months after the initial contact was made with Corrections Canada. Nevertheless, once inside the various institutions, contact was established with the potential participants. The purpose of the meeting was to re-acquaint the predetermined individuals with the nature of the research and to see if anyone was interested in getting involved. Those who agreed

to take part in the research were informed about anonymity, confidentiality and were asked to sign a consent form. Once the consent form, which followed Corrections Canada guidelines, was signed, the interviews began. This whole process took approximately one year to complete.

The sample that was eventually obtained was quite different numerically than the potential that existed. For the male sample, there were nineteen possible subjects but only seven men agreed to participate. The first subject was charged and convicted for murdering his wife but did not commit the act himself. Subjects two, three and four were charged and convicted for the murder of their partners. The fifth participant was charged and convicted for homicide three times for killing his wife, child and an unknown woman. Subject six was charged and convicted for murder for killing his ex-girlfriend's best friend after he and a friend robbed a gas bar where the victim worked. The last respondent was charged with "conspiracy to commit murder"³³ for hiring two men to kill his wife. Although the subjects' involvement varied, all of these men were included in the sample because their cases were in some way related to the topic under investigation.

³³ Section 465 "(1) except where otherwise expressly provided by law, the following provisions apply in respect of conspiracy, (a) every one who conspires with anyone to commit murder or to cause another person to be murdered, whether in Canada or not, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to a maximum term of imprisonment for life" (Martin's Criminal Code, 1989, p.264).

There were not as many female subjects to choose from. The number of potential female subjects for this study was six. All of these women were incarcerated at the Prison for Women in Kingston. Fifty-percent of the potential sample size ($N=3/6$) agreed to participate in this research. All three of these women were charged and convicted for a spouse homicide but none of them actually committed the act themselves.

Methodological Problems

There are numerous problems associated with this type of research in general. The first and most important stumbling block was gaining access to Canadian Correctional Facilities³⁴. Specifically, time and bureaucracy were the two major problems. As aforementioned, it took approximately twelve months to get permission and go through all of the stages required to obtain the sample. Bureaucracy appeared to play a role in the length of time it took to enter Correctional facilities.

³⁴ Lofland and Lofland (1984) discuss the problems of gaining access to a "difficult setting". Specifically, they revealed that "gathering rich data through observation..in a highly conflict-ridden prison..in situations of conflict internal to the setting-may be extraordinarily difficult." "Conflicts between the people being studied and the larger society may also generate 'difficult settings'. The suspicion, fear, protectiveness or demand for allegiance that are the by-products of such conflict are very likely to interfere with data collection" (Lofland and Lofland, 1984, p.17). Many of these problems were evident in attempting to gain access into Canadian Correctional facilities. For example, at the time where access was being requested the Prison for Women was described as having a volatile atmosphere because there were many suicides in the prison.

The second problem with this research lies in the low response rate of potential subjects. First of all, there was a lower number of incarcerated individuals for this type of crime than was originally expected. Consequently, there were fewer individuals available and even fewer who would agree to participate in this research. The low response rate combined with the smaller than expected number of individuals available made the sample size disappointingly low. The reasons why potential subjects did not want to participate vary but generally fall into one of the following categories: not interested; sick of talking about it; not dealing with it; sensitive nature of research; cases under appeal; and not available due to work schedule. Having such a small sample size signifies that generalizations cannot be made. This inability is not considered to be problematic however, because the qualitative nature of the methodology demands that an ideographic³⁵ and emic³⁶ perspective be utilized to analyze the data (Denzin, 1989).

The financial costs of this research was also a problematic factor. Specifically, money was spent on the following: phone calls to Kingston and Ottawa during prime time; gas for two trips to Kingston and one trip to

³⁵ Ideographic means that investigations assume that each interactional situation and text is unique and shaped by the persons who create it (Denzin, 1989).

³⁶ Emic means that investigations are particularizing, not generalizing in nature (Denzin, 1989).

Campbellford; accommodations for eight nights; and food for three trips. All of these activities and/or items were necessary to obtain a sample in Canada. Since funding was unavailable, the researcher spent \$800.00 from personal resources and missed the opportunity to travel to Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions where access had been approved. Consequently, the sample size remained low.

The small number of participants and the purposive nature of this sample may also be problematic. Many researchers, for example, have revealed that many individuals who commit homicide or other violent crimes tend to describe the situation in a way that rationalizes and/or justifies their behaviour, or makes them appear in the best possible light (Dietz, 1983; Stets, 1988). Although the majority of respondents, if not all, had their cases under appeal those who agreed to be interviewed appeared to retrospectively describe their situations as accurately as possible. Validity checks, via police, court and/or institutional records were not conducted however. Additionally, the potential for bias existed because of the purposive nature of this sample. For example, those who had not been caught, charged or incarcerated for homicide were excluded from this study (Wilbanks, 1982).

The ethics involved in utilizing a captive population was also a factor which permeated this type of research. A number

of procedures were enforced to ensure that ethics would be maintained. First of all, those who were initially selected were provided with information regarding the type of research that was being conducted and the types of questions that they would be asked. Only those who volunteered to participate in this study were interviewed. Before the interviews began however, those individuals who agreed to participate were asked to sign a consent form which informed them that they were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher also explained these guarantees verbally before the interview began. Interviews were only tape-recorded when the respondents gave their consent.

Although many problems permeated this type of research, the major advantage was extracting thick, rich data. Specifically, data were collected and analyzed by utilizing the techniques outlined in the Interpretive Interactionism model. According to Denzin, the Interpretive Interactionist listens to and records the stories of individuals and supplements these accounts with open-ended, creative interviewing (Denzin, 1989). This strategy was employed by the researcher. Respondents were initially asked to describe their involvement in the crime and once they provided a summary of their situation the researcher conducted open-ended or semi-structured interviews. This particular survey method was utilized because questionnaires would not tap the major

components of an individual's lived experience (Fleming, 1990). They were also the preferred method because previous research on spousal homicide suggested that questionnaires are too insensitive, rigid and inappropriate considering the delicate and complex nature of the topic (Chimbos, 1978). Questions were created to cover four primary areas: Background Information; Pre-Homicide Interaction; Homicide Interaction; and Post-Homicide Interaction (see Appendix D). Not all of the questions were applicable however because of the diversity of the sample. When these situations emerged, questions were asked that were better suited to the respondents' experiences. The length of time it took to complete the interviews ranged from half an hour to three hours in duration.

The primary objective of the interview was to elicit information on the events, action and interaction that occurred before the homicide. In particular, epiphanies or moments that were extremely influential and that altered the respondents experiences were identified (Denzin, 1989). The thoughts, feelings and behaviour of the respondents prior to, during and after the homicide were transcribed from the tapes and notes, interpreted and commonalities in the data have been outlined and explained.

This work has been molded, and the data was analyzed, by engaging in a process of interpretation outlined by Denzin

(1989). According to Denzin, research must illustrate how the research problem became and is a public issue that affects many lives, social groups and institutions. This procedure has been carried out throughout the text of this thesis but primarily in the Introduction and Conclusions/ Implications sections.

The next step involved interpreting the data by deconstructing or analyzing previous conceptions of homicide. In order to fulfil this part of the model, a thorough literature review was conducted on homicide (Chapter Two) and the data obtained from this sample was compared to previous findings (Chapters Five, Six and Seven). Specifically, empirical and theoretical studies on homicide and spousal homicide were investigated and the biases which have permeated the literature were discussed.

According to Denzin (1989), the phenomenon under investigation must then be captured by locating and situating subjects in their natural world. Since locating subjects prior to the homicide was impossible, this study located individuals within the criminal justice system. Incarcerated individuals were therefore interviewed to obtain thick, rich data on homicide.

The remaining steps were utilized in order to analyze the data. The first step in analyzing the data involved a bracketing procedure or locating key phrases and words which

were directly related to spousal homicide (Denzin, 1989). The following stage of analysis involved the construction of data (Denzin, 1989). Specifically, components of the respondents' stories were classified, ordered and reassembled to provide a thorough analysis of the data (Denzin, 1989). These procedures were carried out in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Lastly, Denzin (1989) claimed that the phenomenon under investigation must be contextualized. In order to provide a contextualization of the data, the respondents were asked to provide background information, to discuss the nature of their marital or common-law relationship in addition to their perceptions and actions which characterized and/or influenced their behaviour. The contextualization process is visible in Chapters Five and Six. Denzin's (1989) Interpretive Interactionism framework provides a valuable model despite his theoretical deviation from Symbolic Interactionism. His methodological formula is general enough so that it could be applied without having to convert to his phenomenologically persuaded theory. It was therefore utilized in this study while the theoretical orientation of Symbolic Interaction was maintained.

Chapter Four

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

According to Berger and Berger (1975), our experience of reality involves the simultaneous involvement in two different worlds. We inhabit a micro world of our immediate experience where we engage in face to face interaction with others and, with different degrees of significance and continuity, we inhabit a macro world of larger social structures (Berger and Berger, 1975, as cited by Mackie, 1987). Although both worlds are essential for and influence our experience, sociologists struggle with an explanation of how these worlds interrelate and overlap (Block, 1981; Stout, 1987; Mackie, 1987). Smith (1987) suggests that one way that this bifurcated consciousness can be explained is by utilizing a combination of Marxist and Interactionist assumptions. For example, Smith argues that in order to explain how the position of women in the larger social structure influences their everyday world, theories must be utilized that capture both the historical and local components of an individual's reality (Smith, 1987).

Research that examines differences in male and female behaviour must examine societal trends and changes in order to understand where each gender is located - economically, politically, and socially. Historically, society has been organized in a way that ensures male dominance and power (Smith, 1987; Hutchings, 1988; Stout, 1987). The creation of

knowledge then, contains and deep a pervasive bias because of the position of the "relations of ruling"³⁷ (Smith, 1987). This bias is demonstrated in today's society when one examines the educational hierarchy and discovers that the higher one climbs (eg. elementary, secondary and post-secondary), the fewer female instructors there are (Smith, 1987).

The exclusion of women in the making of knowledge, ideology and culture means that female experiences and ways of knowing have not been represented or acknowledged (Smith, 1987). Oakley (1974) recognizes this omission and asserts that,

it extends from the classification of subject areas and the definition of concepts through the topics and methods of empirical research to the construction of models and theory generally (Oakley, 1974, p.3).

This parochial examination of women extends to studies of criminality and delinquency (Smart, 1977; Simon, 1976). Criminological theory and methodology have excluded women because men have been viewed as the central features of our society and women as mere extensions of them. Criminological theory has been criticized because of these limitations. Its sexist nature has perpetuated because females comprise only a small percentage of the intelligentsia.

A capitalist, patriarchal society has also created a

³⁷ The "relations of ruling" has been defined as a "concept that grasps power, organization, direction and regulation as more pervasively structured than can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by the discourses of power" (Smith, 1987, p.3).

complex division of labour which has resulted in gender differences in the assignment and participation in sexual, reproductive and productive activities (Mackie, 1987; Barrett, 1988). The segregation of women into the domestic sphere has ensured that females experience a different consciousness than men (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1984 as cited by Mackie, 1987). Furthermore, as women have entered the paid labour force they have been segregated into low status and income occupations³⁸ (Mackie, 1983). This explicit and generally accepted discrimination against women has resulted in the development of a consciousness for women that is different from that of men (Armstrong and Armstrong as cited in Mackie, 1987).

Although a historical examination of gender relations is required, Smith argues that the everyday worlds that men and women experience must be taken as the null or starting point of an investigation (Smith, 1987). Concomitantly, the literature supports the need to partake in a micro, qualitative analysis of homicide in order to supplement existing macro, correlational data (Luckenbill, 1977; Felson and Steadman, 1983; Chimbos, 1978). As a result, Symbolic Interactionism will be the theory adhered to in this study.

The basic premise behind Symbolic Interactionism (S-I) is that specific behaviour can be explained by investigating how

³⁸ Over 50% of working women are concentrated in clerical, health, teaching and service occupations (Mackie, 1983).

an individual interprets and/or defines a situation (Ritzer, 1988). Symbolic Interactionism is an applicable theory because this study attempts to gain a better understanding of why men and women engage in spousal homicide by examining how and why they interpreted the situation as requiring a lethal, violent response. The utility of S-I will be demonstrated in this chapter by describing key themes and conjectures that have been forwarded by social scientists who have examined homicide from a Symbolic Interactionist perspective. Because the majority of these studies refrain from examining gender differences and the role of emotionality, the remainder of the chapter will explain how and why these concepts should and could be integrated into a study of homicide. This goal will be accomplished by referring to some of the basic assumptions and concepts that have emerged from the Chicago School of Symbolic Interaction and by citing studies on domestic violence and homicide that are not based on S-I but provide relevant findings.

Studies that examine homicide from a Symbolic Interaction perspective have focused on how an actor interprets and defines the homicidal situation. According to Stebbins (1969 as cited by Heiss, 1981), defining the situation involves the following steps:

1. a perception of the relevant traits of the participants including actor him/herself;

2. a perception of the participants' evaluations of the situation-the moral, emotional, or sentimental connotations of the immediate situation;
3. a perception of the goals and intentions of the participants-what the actors hope to accomplish by the interaction;
4. a perception of the actions which are suitable -what behaviour is appropriate and useful in order to achieve a goal-what the game plan is
5. a perception of the participants' justifications -these are often attached to the goals-they legitimate the participants' desire to accomplish a particular end-they can also serve as justifications in a moral sense and can defend the acceptability of planned actions (Stebbins, 1969 as cited by Heiss, 1981, p.180).

Humans act on the basis of meanings they extract from interaction (Ritzer, 1988; Heiss, 1981). An individual's definition of the situation (or covert behaviour) must therefore be examined in order to understand why he/she engages in specific overt behaviour (Ritzer, 1988).

One type of interpretation that has been investigated is referred to as the "character contest"³⁹. Luckenbill (1977) examined the situational dynamics of seventy transactions that ended in murder⁴⁰ and reported that in all of the cases the victim and offender engaged in behaviour that resembled a "character contest".

According to Luckenbill (1977), the victim and offender

³⁹ Goffman introduced the concept of "character contest". It is a term which refers to "a confrontation in which opponents sought to establish or maintain face at the other's expense by remaining steady in the face of adversity" (Luckenbill, 1977, p.177).

⁴⁰ Luckenbill (1977) obtained his data by analyzing court documents of individuals who committed homicide.

participated in six stages of interpretation and/or behaviour. The opening move emerged when the victim made a verbal or physical gesture which the offender defined as being an offense to "face" (Luckenbill, 1977). Three types of events occurred which sparked this interpretation of the situation. The victim either made a direct, verbal expression which was perceived as an insult towards an attribute of the offender or his/her family or friends (41% of the cases), refused to cooperate with the request of the offender which the offender perceived as denying his/her right to command obedience (34% of the cases), or made a physical or non-verbal gesture which the offender interpreted as being offensive (25% of the cases) (Luckenbill, 1977).

Stage two of the interactive process involved the way in which the offender extracted the meaning of the victim's gestures as being insulting to him/her. Almost forty percent (39%) learned the meaning of the victim's gestures directly from the victim while 21% learned the essence of the victim's gestures from an audience (Luckenbill, 1977). The majority of offenders (60%) therefore learned the meaning of the victim's gestures during the pre-homicidal interaction (Luckenbill, 1977). The remaining offenders constructed an interpretation of the situation based on rehearsals or similar situations which occurred prior to the pre-homicidal interaction (Luckenbill, 1977).

According to Luckenbill, stage three of the homicidal interaction involved the offender's response to the victim's offensive behaviour. In the majority of cases (86%), the offender introduced a verbal or physical challenge to the victim while 14% of the offenders responded physically by killing the victim immediately (Luckenbill, 1977). When verbal or physical gestures were raised by the victim, the offender typically counteracted with a verbal response (Luckenbill, 1977). For example, ultimatums were issued whereby the victim would have to apologize or face the consequences (43% of the cases), hostile commands were forwarded which invited the victim to respond physically (11%), or similar gestures which were insulting or degrading were offered (10%) (Luckenbill, 1977). The remaining challenges were in the form of overt physical violence which was not lethal in nature (22%) (Luckenbill, 1977).

The fourth stage of the homicidal transaction was the response of the victim. According to Luckenbill (1977), all of the remaining victims "came to a working agreement with the definition of the situation as one suited for violence" (Luckenbill, 1977, p.183). Although all of the participants implicitly or explicitly agreed that violence was required the victim illustrated this understanding in different ways. For example, forty-one percent of the victims did not comply with the offenders challenge, thirty percent of the victims

physically retaliated and the remaining victims introduced counter-challenges to the offender (Luckenbill, 1977). Due to the responses of the victims, Luckenbill argued that both the offender and victim were afraid to display weakness and consequently became committed to the violent interaction.

This commitment to engage in violent behaviour was reinforced by the availability of weapons at the scene (Luckenbill, 1977). In stage five, Luckenbill (1977) explores the victim and offender's commitment to violence based on the accessibility of weapons. In sixty-four percent of the cases, the offender left temporarily to obtain a gun, knife or object that could be utilized as a weapon (Luckenbill, 1977). In thirty-six percent of the cases the offenders secured a weapon without leaving the scene (Luckenbill, 1977).

During the final stage, Luckenbill (1977) provided an analysis of the behaviour of the offender during the post-homicidal situation. The offender's behaviour at this point depended upon his/her relationship to the victim and the presence of an audience (Luckenbill, 1977). If the victim and offender were intimately related or involved the offender typically remained at the scene of the crime and/or notified the police (Luckenbill, 1977). In thirty-two percent of the cases the offender remained at the scene voluntarily until the police arrived. However, offenders fled the scene of the homicide in fifty-eight percent of the cases and the remaining

offenders stayed at the scene involuntarily because of (a) person(s) in the audience (Luckenbill, 1977). Although Luckenbill recognized that the victim-offender relationship would influence post-homicidal behaviour he failed to demonstrate the nature of the relationship between the participants or the sex of the offender and victim. These facts are essential in order to get an indepth understanding of why the homicide occurred.

Felson and Steadman (1983)⁴¹, modified Luckenbill's research and concentrated on the alleged relationship between "character contests" and physical retaliation (Felson and Steadman, 1983; Ray and Simon, 1987). They argued that physical retaliation can be attributed to either face-saving or strategic self-protection concerns (Felson and Steadman, 1983). Specifically, victims of homicide were more likely than victims of assault to engage in identity attacks⁴² (41.5%; 29.2%), physical attacks (38.3%; 24.6%), and threats⁴³ (9.6%; 3.1%). Many offenders of homicide therefore

⁴¹ Felson and Steadman (1983) examined the case files of 500 males who were incarcerated for assault, murder and manslaughter. Their final sample however, consisted of 159 males (84 adults; 75 youths) because their case files had an adequate description of the offense for analysis.

⁴² Felson and Steadman defined "identity attacks" as explicit actions which involved "insults, rejections, accusations, complaints and physical violations that did not involve physical harm" (Felson and Steadman, 1983, p.63).

⁴³ Felson and Steadman (1983) defined "threats" as "verbal threats and garnishing a weapon without using it" (Felson and Steadman, 1983, p.63).

acted violently in order to save face or protect themselves from physical harm.

Although Impression Management studies have been a major focus for Symbolic Interactionists, there is conflicting evidence regarding its applicability for homicidal interaction. By analyzing Luckenbill's data and undergoing his own study, Athens (1985) argued that there is little evidence for "character contests".

A character contest presumes that people always commit violent criminal acts in order to display a strong character and maintain honour and face or to avoid displaying a weak character and losing the meaning which the perpetrators of violent criminal acts often attribute to their actions (Athens, 1985, p.425-426).

Instead, Athens (1980)⁴⁴, reported that the violent actors in his sample formed one of the following interpretations: a physically defensive interpretation; a frustrative interpretation; a malefic interpretation; or a frustrative-malefic interpretation. A Physically-Defensive Interpretation emerged when the actor takes the role of the victim (a specific other) and indicates to him/herself that the victim is or will soon be physically attacking him/her (Athens, 1980). The actor responds violently when he/she takes the role of a generalized other (Athens, 1980). During the latter

⁴⁴ Athens (1980) conducted interviews with 58 offenders (47 men; 11 women) who were convicted of criminal homicide, aggravated assault, attempted forcible rape and robbery where the victim was seriously injured.

role taking process, the actor indicates to him/herself that he/she ought to respond violently towards the victim (Athens, 1980).

The second type of interpretation that violent actors constructed is a Frustrative Interpretation of the situation (Athens, 1980). This diagnosis emerges when an individual takes the role of the victim, examines the victim's gestures and concludes that the victim is resisting or will resist a line of action that he/she wants carried out or that the victim will engage in a line of action that he/she does not want to occur (Athens, 1980). By taking the role of a generalized other, the actor indicates to him/herself that a violent response is required (Athens, 1980).

According to Athens, violent actors experienced a third type of interpretation. A Malefic Interpretation of the situation evolved when an individual takes the role of the victim and indicates to him/herself that the victim's gestures are "deriding or badly belittling the actor" (Athens, 1980, p.24). By taking the role of a generalized other, the individual then indicates to him/herself that the victim is a wicked and ill-disposed person (Athens, 1980). The individual continues making self-indications and concludes that he/she ought to respond violently (Athens, 1980).

The fourth interpretation of the situation that Athens (1980) forwarded is the Frustrative-Malefic Interpretation.

Initially, the actor forms a Frustrative Interpretation by taking the role of the victim (Athens, 1980). However, by taking the role of a generalized other the violent actor concludes that the victim is an evil person thereby switching to a Malefic Interpretation (Athens, 1980). The actor continues to take the role of a generalized other and he/she indicates to him/herself that a violent response is necessary (Athens, 1980).

The process of interpreting the situation, according to Athens (1980), involves defining and judging the situation. This occurs when the violent actor takes the role of a specific other (i.e. the victim) and a generalized other (Athens, 1980). Throughout this process, Athens (1980) emphasized the role of the "Me" or self as object. For example, Athens (1980) reported that he found a link between an individual's conceptualization of a generalized other and his/her own self-image. According to Athens, those individuals who reported having a violent self-image⁴⁵ had an "unmitigated violent generalized other" or an other who,

provides them with pronounced and categorical
moral support for acting violently towards
other persons (Athens, 1980, p.82).

By making a fixed line of interpretation⁴⁶ or an over-riding

⁴⁵ A Violent Self-Image is formulated when an "actor is seen by others and judges him/herself as having a violent disposition" (Athens, 1980, p.39).

⁴⁶ A "fixed line of interpretation" occurs when an "actor is continues to call out to him/herself a violent plan of action until he/she overtly responds violently" (Athens,

judgment⁴⁷, the actor with a violent self-image and an unmitigated violent generalized other formulated any one of the interpretations that Athens forwarded and responded by acting violently (Athens, 1980).

Violent actors also held incipient violent and non-violent self-images. Individuals who had an incipient violent self-image judged themselves and were perceived by others as having,

a willingness or readiness to make serious threats of violence, like ultimatums, and menacing physical gestures, to other persons as well as having violence related personal attributes as a salient characteristic (Athens, 1980, p.43).

Those who had formulated self-images of this nature had a "mitigated violent generalized other" or an other who provided them with definite, although limited, moral support for acting violently towards others (Athens, 1980). By constructing a fixed line of interpretation or an over-riding judgment the actor with an incipient violent self-image and a mitigated violent generalized other generally formed physically defensive or frustrative-malefic interpretations and responded in a violent manner (Athens, 1980).

1980, p.29).

⁴⁷ An "over-riding judgment" occurs when "the actor breaks out of a fixed line of indication, momentarily considers restraining his/her violent plan of action, and then redefines the situation as definitely calling for violent action" (Athens, 1980, p.36).

Individuals who had a non-violent self-image⁴⁸ had a non-violent generalized other or an other who did not provide moral support for acting violently (Athens, 1980). The incident which typically stimulated violence for these actors emerged when they had to defend themselves or loved ones from physical harm (Athens, 1980). Athens (1980) therefore argued that individuals who had a non-violent self-image and a non-violent generalized other would typically form a physically defensive interpretation of the situation. Although they acted violently and formed either a fixed line of interpretation or an over-riding judgment, these actors would generally form a restraining judgment⁴⁹ except in potentially life-threatening situations (Athens, 1980).

Although Athens' (1980) research does not provide evidence for "character contests" it has utility because it demonstrates a variety of ways that individuals perceive a situation as requiring a violent response. However, he neglects to examine a number of issues. For example, both men and women are included in the sample but he does not attempt to explain if and how the sexes differ in their interpretation

⁴⁸ A "non-violent self-image" is a perception of self that is created when "actors are not seen by others and do not judge themselves as having a violent or incipient violent disposition as one of their salient characteristics" (Athens, 1980, p.43).

⁴⁹ An individual who forms a "restraining judgment" breaks out of a fixed line of interpretation, redefines and rejudges the situation, and concludes to him/herself that a violent response is not required (Athens, 1980).

of the situation, their self-images and their conceptualization of a generalized other. In addition, Athen's study does not indicate how the "I", or self as subject, influences the actor's interpretation or violent behaviour. Depending on the circumstances, the "I" could stimulate spontaneous action that is violent in nature⁵⁰. Although spontaneous and/or violent behaviour frequently emerges when intense emotions are aroused, Athens fails to examine how the "I" and emotionality influence violent criminal behaviour (Mills and Kleinman, 1988; Denzin, 1984).

A final criticism of Athen's work lies in the composition of his sample. Athens (1980) interviewed individuals who have committed a wide variety of violent crimes. In order to obtain an accurate and indepth understanding of why individuals commit specific crimes, research should focus on individuals who commit one type of crime. Individuals who murder, rape, or rob others should experience different circumstances, have different victim-offender relationships

⁵⁰ By indicating that violent actors may be acting spontaneously, it is not assumed that the actor is out of control. Research indicates that men who batter women tend to state that they were "out of control" and in doing so either unconsciously or consciously avoid holding themselves accountable for their behaviour (Stets, 1988). Although Stets (1988) found that the batterers' emotional state may be "out of control" they were "in and out of control" of their behaviour. This is consistent with research on emotionality by Mills and Kleinman (1988). They argue that spontaneous action may be impulsive but it is patterned to some extent thereby containing an element of control. It also illustrates that both the "I" and "Me" play a role in behaviour.

and different reasons for committing the crime. However, Athens constructed four categories where his diverse sample was integrated. The diversity of his sample may be one of the reasons why he did not obtain evidence of "character contests" (Ray and Simons, 1987). Additionally, his lack of evidence for "face-saving" may have been due to the fact that the victim-offender relationship and the sex of the victim and offender were not explored.

Recent research by Ray and Simons (1987)⁵¹, offered little support for homicidal interaction involving "character contests" as well. Although their research focused on how the offender of homicide defined the situation they found that only two out of twenty-four cases involved dynamics that resembled a "character contest" (Ray and Simons, 1987). Instead, they found that all of the respondents described their interpretation and behaviour in a way that either excused or justified their course of action⁵² (Ray and

⁵¹ Ray and Simons (1987) interviewed 26 individuals who were convicted of homicide or manslaughter. They analyzed twenty-four cases which included six women. Only one case involved a spouse killing and it involved a male offender and a female victim.

⁵² Ray and Simons (1987) utilized Scott and Lyman's definitions of "excuses" and "justifications" in their analysis. "Excuses are "accounts in which one admits that the act in question is bad, wrong or inappropriate but denies full responsibility" (Scott and Lyman, 1968 as cited by Ray and Simon, 1987). "Justifications" are defined as "accounts in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question but denies the pejorative quality associated with it" (Scott and Lyman, 1968 as cited by Ray and Simon, 1987).

Simons, 1987).

The offenders who described their violent behaviour in terms of excuses did not identify with a violent generalized other and made up the majority of cases (18/24 or 75%) (Ray and Simons, 1987). The respondents typically stated that the homicide was an accident, occurred when his/her free will was spoiled by drugs/alcohol or misinformation, or he/she transferred responsibility to a scapegoat (Ray and Simons, 1987). Specifically, four of the respondents described a series of events that occurred prior to the homicide in order to partially excuse their behaviour (Ray and Simons, 1987). These "sad stories" or circumstances which allegedly affected the offender's behaviour included becoming unemployed, divorced, experiencing grief after a loved one died, serious financial loss or abuse from others (Ray and Simons, 1987). Because of these events, the respondents believed that they were not thinking or acting rationally when the offense occurred (Ray and Simons, 1987).

The remaining offenders (6/24 or 25%) defined the situation in a manner which justified their lethal action. These individuals accepted responsibility for their behaviour but believed that their action was legitimate because of the circumstances involved (Ray and Simons, 1987). Two of these respondents stated that the victim deserved being killed while the remaining four offenders perceived their action as

emerging in self-defense (Ray and Simons, 1987). Those who reported that the victims deserved to die were providing some evidence for impression management in the form of "character contests". Although only two respondents admitted to an interpretation of the situation which resembled "face-saving", Ray and Simons (1987) argued that this type of interpretation may be more common with certain types of violent crime. They therefore recognized the legitimacy and existence of "face-saving" interpretations and action. The nature of the victim-offender relationship and the sex of the actors involved in the homicidal drama may also stimulate the occurrence of "character contests".

The sex of the victim and offender and the nature of their relationship must be established in order to understand why individuals engage in violent, lethal behaviour. The fact that men and women generally differ in the amount of homicide they commit as well as in the methods, reasons and motives they have for killing, confirms the need to examine homicide within a gender differences framework. Although many factors may influence these behavioural differences, the next section of the chapter will explain how the interpretation process, which ultimately influences behaviour, can differ for men and women because of the gender specific norms, values, beliefs and behaviour they learn during the socialization process.

According to Goffman, "sex" or gender is the foundation

of a universal code which shapes social interaction and social structures (Deegan and Allen, 1987). Because of different anatomical features, all infants are automatically placed into one of two "sex-class" or gender categories (Goffman, as cited by Deegan and Allen, 1987). Dividing all individuals by gender ensures that boys and girls will undergo a different socialization process. Males and females are therefore treated differently, acquire different experiences, and consequently develop a "sex-class" or gender specific way of appearing, feeling and acting (Goffman, as cited by Deegan and Allen, 1987). For example, boys are typically taught traditional, instrumental characteristics such as competitiveness, aggressiveness, dominance and independence (Mackie, 1983). Conversely, girls are frequently taught expressive traits such as passivity, nurturance and dependence (Mackie, 1983). These gender specific characteristics are taught and reinforced during the play and game stages of the socialization process. During these stages an individual learns to take the role of specific and generalized others and he/she acquires a sense of social reality and a sense of self as a result (Ritzer, 1988).

Because differences exist in the socialization process for males and females they will develop different selves and self-concepts. The "Me" aspect of self allows an individual to take the role of others and recognize societal norms of

behaviour (Ritzer, 1988; Ashley and Orenstein, 1985; Breakwell, 1983). Self as object or the "Me" frequently guides the "I", the aspect of self which is spontaneous and acts in the immediacy of the moment, and therefore an individual's knowledge of roles, situations, values and morality maybe called upon (Ashley and Orenstein, 1985). Because the "Me" is based upon an individual's past learning, the qualities and attitudes that males and females acquire during the socialization process will be utilized and may direct the "I" into action (Ashley and Orenstein, 1985).

In addition to the traditional characteristics that men and women acquire they are also taught different values, morals, and "emotion rules" during socialization which influences the development and composition of the self. With reference to morals, Gilligan (1982) hypothesized that males and females experience different morality structures (Gilligan, 1982 as cited by Mackie, 1987). For example, Gilligan argued that women find connectedness with others as being important and generally perceive "ruptured" relationships, power and aggression as threatening. Consequently, a "female morality" emerges which underscores the fulfillment of responsibilities that involve individuals connecting with one another (Gilligan, 1982 as cited by Mackie, 1987). Conversely, males perceive the world in terms of autonomy, hierarchy and conflict and are generally

threatened by intimacy (Gilligan, 1982 as cited by Mackie, 1987). Due to these values, a "masculine morality" develops which is composed of,

a hierarchy of fundamental rights and freedoms that regulate the behaviour of independent, competitive individuals (Gilligan, 1982 as cited by Mackie, 1987, p.138).

These different moral spheres emerge because men and women learn to value different ideologies, attributes and behaviour. When the "Me" is called upon and the individual takes the role of a generalized or specific other to guide his/her behaviour these moral differences should produce different thought processes and/or behaviour for men and women.

Similarly, males and females learn which emotions can be felt and under what circumstances specific emotions can be expressed⁵³ (Harre, 1986; Heiss, 1981). The nature, extent and duration of emotions that can be experienced, expressed and that are perceived as being appropriate are learned during the socialization process as well (Heiss, 1981).

These "emotion rules" differ for men and women. For example, females are generally the sentimental sex because they are taught to recognize specific feelings and express them more readily and frequently than males (Mackie, 1987). According to Mackie (1987), anger is an exception to the norm

⁵³ Emotions are conscious feelings that are socially constructed, originate during interaction and unlike mere physiological sensations they are directed at something or someone outside of the individual (Stets, 1988; Heiss, 1981; Denzin, 1984).

of male inexpressiveness and female expressiveness. Although men are traditionally socialized to "have the tough mental fiber, the intellectual muscle to stay in control" they are also taught that the expression of anger is permissible to some extent (Brownmiller, 1984 as cited by Mackie, 1987, p.262; Heiss, 1981). Women, however, are generally expected to control their anger (Mackie, 1987; Heiss, 1981). Since "emotion rules" are generally perceived as being "moral facts" which should be obeyed, they will influence how men and women define a situation and interact (Mills and Kleinman, 1988; Heiss, 1981).

According to social scientific literature, emotionality and moral philosophies are components which influence violent, perhaps lethal behaviour (Mills and Kleinman, 1988; Stets, 1988; Denzin, 1984; Katz, 1988). For example, Denzin (1984)⁵⁴ argued that the key to violence⁵⁵ is emotionality and that the potential for domestic violence emerges when the moral code of the offender is affected by the actions of the victim. Gestures of this nature stimulate intense emotions and when the moral code of the offender provides support for violent conduct, he/she will act violently (Denzin, 1984). Through emotion, the offender engages in violent conduct in

⁵⁴ Denzin's (1984) investigation of domestic violence focuses on men who engage in physical abuse rather than homicide and utilizes a phenomenological framework.

⁵⁵ Denzin (1984) defines violence as "the attempt to regain, through the use of emotional and physical force, something that has been lost" (Denzin, 1984, p.488).

order to attack the inner code of the victim's integrity, transform the victim into an object and dismantle the victim's moral and personal worth (Denzin, 1984). By behaving violently, the offender believes that the victim will become more worthy (Denzin, 1984).

Katz (1988) also recognized that there is a relationship between emotions, morals and violent interaction. By analyzing a variety of data⁵⁶, Katz (1988) argued that the modal form of criminal homicide, righteous slaughter, involves three components: a line of interpretation; an emotional process; and a plan of action. Initially, the killer incorporates a line of interpretation where he/she believes that the victim is attacking an eternal human value and subsequently believes the situation requires a final stand in defending his/her basic worth (Katz, 1988). The second component consists of an emotional process whereby "seductions and compulsions" occur (Katz, 1988). Specifically, moral emotions, including humiliation, righteousness, arrogance, ridicule, cynicism, defilement and vengeance, are always part of this type of homicide (Katz, 1988). Typically, the killer transforms these emotions into a rage in order to locate a target to extinguish the feelings he/she is experiencing and

⁵⁶ Katz (1988) obtained data from the following sources: ethnographies and life histories produced by social scientists; reconstructions of criminality from police and academics who examined police records; autobiographies of ex-criminals written by professionals; and participant observation journalism.

to escape a humiliating situation (Katz, 1988).

According to Katz (1988), the final component of righteous slaughter involves a plan of action. Specifically, the killer successfully organizes his/her behaviour so that he/she can implement a plan that involves honouring the offensive behaviour by violently marking the victim's body (Katz, 1988). By engaging in violent conduct, offenders are defending morality in the larger social system as well as their own moral worth (Katz, 1988).

Denzin and Katz both demonstrate that emotionality and moral systems are important elements of violent conduct. However, their analyses of violent behaviour differ when the issue of control is examined. For example, Denzin (1984) explicitly states that violent conduct is an "uncontrollable act" and in doing so implies that the emotional response is uncontrollable as well (Denzin, 1984). Conversely, Felson and Steadman (1983), argued that violent conduct is rational behaviour because throughout the violent episode the victim and offender typically respond to each other's behaviour and the offenders were utilizing violence in order to defend their own physical safety or their honour. Similarly, Katz (1988) described the emotional response and violent conduct of individuals who commit righteous slaughter in a manner which suggests that offenders are in control of their behaviour.

Further research by Stets (1988)⁵⁷ revealed that when men batter women they perceive their emotional state and subsequent behaviour as being "out of control". By describing their emotions, particularly anger, as being "out of control" Stets argued that these men were consciously or unconsciously providing a rationale and/or an excuse for their violent behaviour (Stets, 1988). However, Stets (1988) claimed that "out of control" emotions could be a real aspect of the violence. With reference to behaviour, physically abusive men reported that their conduct was "out of control" by indicating that the physical abuse was an impulsive and irrational response to a stimulus (Stets, 1988). Although there was some evidence that their behaviour was out of control, there were also elements of control because they admitted that the violence they had generated could have been worse (Stets, 1988). The element of control is an important factor in homicidal interaction.

The conflicting evidence reported above underscores the fact that both aspects of the self-process, the "I" and the "Me", emerge during interaction. Although Denzin (1984) and Katz (1988) provided evidence for having control or lack of control over emotions and/or behaviour, they did not analyze the "I" and "Me" aspects of self or how they affect behaviour.

⁵⁷ Stets (1988) interviewed male offenders and their female victims of physical abuse in order to discover how they interpreted their emotions and violent conduct in terms of control.

Both aspects of self must be examined because emotionality and moral philosophies, which are located in the "Me" aspect of self, can influence how the "Me" guides the "I" or determine which aspect of self will dominate and stimulate action. For example, when an individual experiences intense emotions he/she may refrain from considering the appropriateness or moral implications of his/her behaviour. The spontaneous "I" may dominate in situations of this nature and cause individuals to react immediately without much self-reflexivity or reference to the "Me". However, an individual must make some reference to the "Me" or else he/she wouldn't be emotionally affected during the interaction. The "Me" may still influence the way in which an individual perceives and/or acts in a situation even if he/she does not refer to the normative and moral prescriptions and implications of specific behaviour. Intense emotions may be aroused and the "I" may react spontaneously when an individual's morals, beliefs, or sense of self has been mocked, devalued, challenged, or threatened.

During interaction then, the "I" and "Me" typically exist as alternating phases of the self-process (Mead, as cited by Ashley and Orenstein, 1985). The typical⁵⁸ way in which the

⁵⁸ The typical mode of the self-process occurs when the "I" and "Me" alternate but according to Mead, there is also an atypical mode in which the "I" and "Me" phases occur simultaneously or fuse (Mead, as cited by Ashley and Orenstein, 1985). During this atypical process, the "I" and "Me" disappear as distinct phases (Mead, as cited by Ashley and Orenstein, 1985).

aspects of the self-process alternate during interaction has been outlined in Mead's synopsis of the development of an act (Stets, 1988). According to Mead, the process of engaging in an act involves transcending through an impulse stage, a perception stage, a manipulation stage and a consumption stage (Mead, as cited by Stets, 1988). The Impulse Stage emerges when a stimulus from a problematic situation arises and an individual forms an attitude towards the stimulation (Mead, as cited by Stets, 1988). This initial reaction is a subjective, spontaneous response and is therefore dominated by the "I" aspect of self (Mead, as cited by Stets, 1988).

According to Stets (1988), men who are physically abusive towards their female partners experienced this stage when three types of stimuli were presented. The Impulse Stage emerged and violence erupted when a woman's behaviour was interpreted by the man as challenging his power, decisions, authority or control (Stets, 1988). Secondly, arguments concerning money typically led to the impulse stage and violent interaction (Stets, 1988). The third stimulus that influenced the emergence of the Impulse Stage was when friendships with others caused jealousy on the part of the offender, victim or both (Stets, 1988).

The next phase that characterizes the emergence of an act, the Perception Stage, is dominated by the "Me" aspect of self (Stets, 1988). During this stage, an object becomes the

focal point and an individual immediately makes plans for possible action with reference to that object (Stets, 1988). When deciding on the course of action, individuals take the role of a generalized other (Mead, as cited by Stets, 1988).

An individual enters the third stage, the Manipulation Stage, when he/she experiences contact with the object and acts with reference to it (Mead, as cited by Stets, 1988). At this point, individuals who are willing to engage in a violent act will either carry out the impulse to be violent, engage in violent conduct but with some control or inhibit the impulse to act aggressively (Stets, 1988). The "I" aspect of self dominates in this phase and under the direction of the "Me" carries out the response. The final phase in the processual development of an act is referred to as the Consummation Stage (Mead, as cited by Stets, 1988). This stage characterizes the completion of an act and is dominated by the "Me" aspect of the self (Mead, as cited by Stets, 1988). After the impulse is carried out, the "Me" evaluates the legitimacy of the act which ends the process (Mead, as cited by Stets, 1988).

According to Mead, all acts begin with the "I" and end with the "Me" aspect of self. No matter how the aspects of self alternate a variety of responses to a situation can emerge because an individual's past learning is combined with spontaneous non-reflective tendencies. Furthermore, because

the "Me" aspect of the self, differs for men and women interpretations and responses will differ along gender lines.

The "I" and "Me" aspects of self must therefore be addressed in order to explain how and why an individual interpreted the situation as requiring a violent, lethal response. Another component of the self which must be examined is the self-concept⁵⁹. Specifically, the identity of an individual must be investigated because research suggests that individuals who commit homicide frequently interpret the victim's gestures as threatening their identity (Chimos, 1978; Felson and Steadman, 1983; Dietz, 1983). Furthermore, men and women develop different definitions of what is threatening and different responses to gestures which are threatening.

⁵⁹ The "Self-Concept" is defined by Heiss (1981) as "the set of beliefs about oneself- the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to him/herself as object" (Heiss, 1981, p.57). Heiss (1981) argues that the self-concept involves four content areas: an identity set; a set of qualities; a self-evaluation set; and a self-confidence set. The identity set involves positional labels that relate to the social categories which we perceive as belonging to (Heiss, 1981). The quality set contains adjectives that refer to our qualities (eg. tall, rich, thin) and unlike the identity it is not limited to socially recognized attributes (Heiss, 1981). The evaluation set recognizes that people think of themselves in terms that have evaluative implications (Heiss, 1981). For example, the evaluative set is an individual's perception of how good he/she is at what he/she does and how good it is to be what he/she is (Heiss, 1981). According to Heiss (1981), the self-concept also includes a self-confidence set. In this part of the self-concept, an individual "estimates the extent to which he/she can master challenges and overcome obstacles" (Heiss, 1981, p.57).

Men and women construct different identities and overall self-concepts because the composition of the self differs depending on many factors including gender. According to Goffman, an identity based on gender or a "gender identity" emerges during the socialization process (Goffman, as cited by Deegan and Allen, 1987). This identity emerges when an individual,

builds up a sense of who and what he/she is by referring to his/her sex-class (gender) and judges him/herself in terms of the ideals of masculinity and femininity-this source of self-identification is one of the most profound our society provides (Goffman, as cited by Deegan and Allen, 1987).

Since gender is socially constructed, an individual's gender identity would initially emerge as a social identity. When an individual forms a social identity he/she defines him/herself in terms of group memberships, interpersonal relationships, social positions and status (Breakwell, 1983). These identification mechanisms (eg. group memberships, status) would be influenced by gender because gender identity is one of the most influential means of self-identification in society (Goffman, as cited by Deegan and Allen, 1987). The personal identity, which is part of the self-concept that "is free of role or relationship determinants," would also be affected by gender when an individual is faced with moral decisions (Breakwell, 1983, p.11). Gender is therefore a key component of the self-concept and will influence how an individual defines him/herself and this self-definition will

prescribe how he/she will define and act in a situation.

Theoretically, gestures which threaten an individual's identity challenge the content or evaluation of his/her identity (Breakwell, 1983). The content aspect of the identity includes the labels that an individual utilizes to describe him/herself (Breakwell, 1983). For example, an individual may consider him/herself to be a middle-class, intelligent, attractive person but if he/she loses these qualities or others inform him/her that he/she no longer has these characteristics then the content of the identity is being threatened (Breakwell, 1983). The evaluative component of the identity can also be threatened when the content of the identity is devalued (Breakwell, 1983). When threats of this nature occur, an individual is informed that having any of the content qualities (eg. intelligence) is bad and/or should be avoided (Breakwell, 1983).

The way in which an individual responds to a threat depends on a variety of factors including: whether the individual, his/her group membership or his/her group has been attacked; the importance that an individual places on being consistent and maintaining self-esteem; and who the person who is that is making the threat (Breakwell, 1983). For example, an individual may respond differently to attacks on him/herself, his/her group membership, or his/her group depending on the nature of the threat and what he/she

considers to be the most important component(s) of his/her self-definition. Attacks on the individual challenge whether he/she possesses prized personal qualities and refers to the content and evaluative aspects of the identity (Breakwell, 1983). An individual's group membership is attacked when a person is "told that he/she is not or should not be a member of a group whose membership they prize" (Breakwell, 1983, p.14). Other attacks focus on an individual's group. This type of attack occurs when someone informs an individual that the group to which he/she belongs is not worthy of membership (Breakwell, 1983). The gestures which are interpreted as threats to an individual, his/her group or group membership should differ for men and women because they value different qualities and are members of different groups.

Responses should also depend on the value an individual places on being consistent and maintaining self-esteem (Breakwell, 1983). Individuals generally behave consistently and in a manner that will retain self-esteem (Breakwell, 1983). However, if an individual does not perceive these attributes as being important, then the potency of the threat will not appear to be as great and the response should not be drastic in nature (Breakwell, 1983). The effects of the threat and the type of response that emerges will therefore depend on the importance that an individual places on being consistent and being able to maintain self-esteem (Breakwell,

1983). Men and women may value these qualities (behaving consistently and in a way that maintains self-esteem) differently and therefore be affected by the threat and respond to the threat differently.

The specific person who introduces the threat will influence how a threat is interpreted and the way in which an individual responds to the threat (Breakwell, 1983). For example, if the participants are intimately involved than the threat may be interpreted as being a deliberate attempt to hurt the other person and the eventual response could be as damaging or worse. Conversely, if the interactants are strangers or acquaintances an attack to the identity may not seem as threatening. The gender of the interactants should also influence whether a gesture is interpreted as being threatening and, if so, the type of response that is required. Threats between men, for example, may be interpreted as requiring a violent response more frequently because men are traditionally socialized to be aggressive and competitive (Mackie, 1987). Lastly, Breakwell (1983) argued that a gesture will be perceived as a threat and influence the type of response when the individual accepts the legitimacy of the comments.

An individual can respond to a threatened identity, which includes "any thought, feeling, action or experience which challenges the individual's social or personal identity", by

utilizing a "reconstrual response", a "mobility or change" response, or an "inertia" response (Breakwell, 1983, p.13). Specifically, these responses include: devaluing or invalidating the threat which is referred to as a "reconstrual of threat"; reconstructing his/her identity which is referred to as "reconstrual of identity"; moving to evade the threat which is referred to as a "mobility" response; changing the situation to erase the source of the threat or the reason for its justification which is referred to as a "change" response; or refraining from a response which has been labelled an "inertia" response (Breakwell, 1983).

The relationship between threatened identities and violence has been documented in the research literature (Chimbos, 1978; Felson and Steadman, 1983; Dietz, 1983). For example, Chimbos⁶⁰ (1978) reported that events which threatened the offender's identity were frequently present during the homicidal interaction. Specifically, events which hurt the offender's feelings, pride, self-esteem and threatened his ego occurred and emerged prior to the homicide in the form of verbal insults and deviant action (eg. extra-marital affairs) (Chimbos, 1978). These identity threats included comments or gestures which referred to the offender's sexual performance, extramarital sexual practices or job

⁶⁰ Chimbos (1978) conducted interviews with thirty-four males who were convicted of killing their spouses.

performance and generally provided negative feedback regarding their ability to engage in traditional sex-roles (Chimbos, 1978). These types of threats were frequently the source of marital conflict and 76% of the offenders in his sample stated that the victims had presented them with a threat of this nature on the day the homicide occurred. These findings demonstrate that threats often refer to an individual's gender and that gender identity is extremely important and when threatened can produce violent and/or lethal behaviour.

Gender differences in interpretation and behaviour during potentially lethal situations is demonstrated simply by acknowledging the fact that men are more likely to act violently and commit homicide than women (Goetting, 1988; Chimbos, 1978). The socialization process and the "Me" aspect of self must be examined in order to explain why men engage in violent conduct more frequently.

Because men and women possess different characteristics, morality spheres and emotion rules, the nature and composition of the self and self-concept will differ and affect the interactive process between the "I" and "Me". Specifically, the aspect of self which dominates and guides behaviour may differ for men and women depending on their values, beliefs, and morals they possess and the circumstances they encounter. Additionally, men and women acquire different identities which influences how and why they interpret and/or act in a specific

way. These diverse factors provide the potential for men and women to experience different interpretations and/or behave differently during homicidal interaction. As a consequence, the interpretations and behaviour of both the men and women who kill their spouses must be examined.

Chapter Five

MALE SAMPLE

I can't remember any feelings or emotions associated with it for two hours of that night..it was like I was a third party just watching it happen (Joe).

In the following chapter the stories of seven men, who either hired someone to kill their spouse whether it transpired or not, killed their spouse themselves or killed someone who was linked to their spouse, are summarized. These stories are supplemented with information regarding the most important factors involved in their cases as well as an examination of how the offender interpreted and defined the situation. Additionally, each case will be analyzed in terms of the values that were important to the offender and the emotions that were aroused during an epiphanic situation⁶¹. After the cases have been summarized and analyzed the chapter will conclude with an examination of the samples' background.

Case #1: Doug

Doug was 26 years old when he hired his cousin to kill his 29 year old wife, Carol. He grew up in a small city in Ontario and had a "rough" childhood because his father was an alcoholic who physically abused Doug and his mother. He had completed a grade 12 education prior to the offense and was working as a Taxi Driver at the time of the offense. Carol had completed a college education and was working as a Registered Nurse at the time of the offense. The offender described their total annual income as being typical of a middle class family. They had one child, a daughter during their 10 years of marriage and she was 9 years old at the time of the offense. Just prior to the offense Carol was planning to leave him but they had never attempted to separate or divorce one another prior to the offense. Doug had previously

⁶¹ An epiphanic situation is an incident or event that produces or creates an epiphany in a person's life. Epiphanies are defined by Denzin as "interactional moments that leave marks on peoples lives and have the potential for creating transformational experiences for the person" (Denzin, 1989, p.129).

been charged for credit card fraud when he was a juvenile but received probation and was never incarcerated prior to the offense. Neither Doug nor Carol had attempted to seek counselling for mental illness prior to the offense.

Although there was no violent interaction between Doug and Carol during their marriage, Doug admitted to physically abusing their daughter. According to Doug, the violence he had been exposed to during his childhood had affected him later in life because throughout his marriage he noticed his behaviour becoming more like his fathers. Specifically, Doug mentioned that when his daughter was born he began to become abusive towards her even though he never abused his wife physically, mentally or sexually. He admits that he knew he shouldn't physically abuse anyone and claims he didn't want to but he did it anyway.

Doug and Carol were married when they were 16 and 19 years old respectively. Doug never wanted to get married in the first place but they got married after only 6 months of dating because his wife-to-be became pregnant. At that point in his life, Doug was looking for fun not a commitment. Carol's parents were not pleased when they found out that Carol was pregnant and they persuaded Doug that they should get married given the circumstances. What made matters worse in Doug's eyes was that he never got along with Carol's parents. Part of the problem between Doug and Carol's parents was their differences in religious denominations, subsequent beliefs and practises. These differences were often a source of conflict between the couple and created a lot of tension in their relationship. These conflicting beliefs and values were never really resolved during their marriage.

Because Doug did not whole heartedly want to get married at such a young age, he never attempted to change his lifestyle after they were married. Although he was not unfaithful he was a member of a band for a number of years and consequently he spent a lot of time playing in the band and would frequently go out with the boys and drink a lot.

Despite his lifestyle, Carol was generally happy with the marriage for a number of years because her primary goal was to escape the emotionally abusive household that her father had subjected her to.

Just prior to the offense however, Carol was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their relationship and wanted Doug to settle down considering the length of time they had been married. These issues became very aggravating to Doug

and the fact that his wife was starting to pressure him to become more family oriented influenced Doug's desire (whether he believed it would occur or not) of wanting his wife dead.

A day or two before the offense occurred, Doug had discussed the idea of having his wife killed for \$10 000 with his cousin but Doug never thought his cousin would take him seriously. On the day his wife was killed, Doug went to pick Carol up from work, which he usually did, but when he arrived he was informed that two other persons had already picked her up. Even though no formal agreement was made and no money was exchanged, Doug was fairly certain at this point that his cousin was the person who picked up his wife. Instead of trying to prevent the event from happening he went to the babysitter's house to see if his wife had picked up their child. When he found out that she had not picked up their daughter he knew for certain what was happening and went home. At the time his wife was killed he was sitting at home with a couple of visitors. He had established an alibi.

The day of the homicide, Doug's cousin Bill and Bill's girlfriend Linda picked up Carol at work. Although Bill was supposed to conduct the business solo, his girlfriend wanted to be a part of it so she accompanied him. Since they were related and because Bill and Linda had picked Carol up from work on previous occasions the victim was not suspicious when the two came by to pick her up. Both Bill and Linda were on drugs when they picked Carol up and killed her. As they drove Carol out of town Linda attempted to strangle Carol to death with a telephone cord that she and Bill had deliberately placed in the car the evening before. They then placed her body in the trunk of the car and drove to a ski-lodge further down the road. When they arrived at the ski-lodge, Bill and Linda opened the trunk and saw that Carol was still alive. At this point, Bill took a tire iron and hit Carol on the head repeatedly until she died. They left Carol's body at the ski-lodge and drove back into town. Doug and Bill were charged with first degree murder and were given a life sentence each with no chance of parole for 25 years. Linda was charged with manslaughter and sentenced to 8 years in prison but according to Doug, Linda was out after serving only 3 years.

Relevant Factors in Doug's Case

The issue that Doug believed to be important and which he felt influenced his behaviour was the fact that he never wanted to get married in the first place. He believed that

marriage should involve love but because his wife's religious beliefs encouraged getting married under these conditions (i.e. an illegitimate pregnancy) Doug was pressured by her family to marry Carol. The different religious philosophies that he and his wife embraced forced him to sacrifice values which he thought were important and a lifestyle that he wanted. Having sacrificed his religious-philosophical values⁶², Doug believed that when his wife asked him to "settle down" and become more family oriented that he would have to sacrifice individualistic values⁶³ as well. The resentment and bitterness Doug felt towards his wife because he didn't want to marry her grew when Carol asked him to change his behaviour just prior to the homicide. Up until just prior to the homicide, Doug's feelings of resentment were overridden by indifference because throughout his marriage he was able to continue doing things that he enjoyed and which gave him a positive identity. However, when Carol asked Doug to become more family oriented his indifference shifted and his resentment flourished to anger and fear. He was afraid of losing his bachelor-type lifestyle, his bachelor-like self-image and his independence and was angry at Carol for

⁶²Religious-Philosophical Values include "goals dealing with the ultimate meaning of life, the role of deity and concerns with the afterlife" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395).

⁶³Individualistic Values are defined as values that "stress the importance of the individual, the development of his (her) unique personality, individual independence, and the achievement of individualized personal fulfillment including rebellion" (Levin and Spates, 1976, p.395).

expecting him to sacrifice these values as well. Undergoing such behavioural changes would require that Doug would have to change self-i.e. who he was and what was important to him. Doug was unable to cope with the epiphanic situations in his life. Although it may appear minor, the incident where his wife asked Doug to change his bachelor-type lifestyle was a major turning point for him. This major epiphany⁶⁴ Doug experienced became intertwined with a relived epiphany⁶⁵ because Doug began to think of the original reasons why he got married. The changes that were requested of him influenced Doug to define the situation as one that threatened his identity and that required rectifying or "saving face". By having his wife killed Doug was able to control the situation and preserve both his lifestyle and his definition of self which included values that he wasn't willing to sacrifice.

Case #2: Roger

Roger had an unhappy, "disruptive" childhood. His parents separated when he was three years old at which time Roger and his brother lived with their grandparents. When Roger was five years old, he moved in with his mother and step-father when his mother returned to the rural area where he was living. Up until this point Roger had lived a relatively normal, happy life. The thought of having a step-father made

⁶⁴A Major Epiphany is described by Denzin as an episode or incident that is a major turning point experience in a person's life-an experience that would change an individual's life forever (Denzin, 1989).

⁶⁵A Relived Epiphany is described by Denzin as an incident or event that causes an individual to relive an old situation or experience (Denzin, 1989).

Roger unhappy and during the eleven years he lived with his mother and step-father his unhappiness grew. During this time, he was the victim of daily psychological and physical abuse by his step-father. According to Roger, the abuse that he and his brother experienced was the result of prejudice by his step-father. Roger and his brother were of mixed origins (White, Black and Native) while his step-father was White. Roger believes that his step-father wanted him and his brother to change their beliefs, values and behaviour in order to assimilate into a lifestyle that he felt was normative and appropriate for a White, Anglosaxon culture. The abuse and explicit prejudice Roger experienced affected his attitude towards people and his behaviour later on in life. Specifically, Roger felt that he became an introvert and his trust in humankind diminished as a result of his childhood experiences.

Terri was married twice before she married Roger. She had a daughter from her first marriage and her husband from her second marriage was Roger's cousin. They initially met through Roger's cousin but they did not get involved at that point because Roger was also married. Coincidentally, Roger and Terri were reintroduced after they had both divorced their spouses. They dated for awhile and subsequently got married.

Roger was 41 years old when he killed his 35 year old wife Terri. During their seven year marriage there was no violent interaction between them even though they both were substance abusers. They argued frequently however, and their fights typically erupted after Terri would, without notice, disappear for days, weeks or months at a time. Just when Roger believed that their relationship was over, she would return home like everything was normal.

Terri left Roger five or six times during their marriage. Her departures, according to Roger, stemmed from the fact that Terri was having emotional problems ever since her father died. His death sparked memories of continuous, extreme sexual abuse that she had experienced in her childhood. These memories were suppressed until her father died and as she began to remember her painful childhood she started abusing alcohol and drugs. In addition to abusing substances, Terri began to disappear without notice sometimes for three or four months at a time. During this time, Roger began seeking psychiatric help in order to receive advice regarding the most effective ways to help his wife. Upon realizing that therapy was the most appropriate and effective way of helping Terri, he continuously tried to persuade her to seek professional help throughout their marriage. She never did.

At the time of the homicide, Roger had a Grade 11 education while Terri had obtained a highschool diploma. Roger was working as a Tractor Trailer Driver and Terri was a Computer Operator and a Waitress at the time of the offense. Their total annual income at that time was approximately \$50 000.

According to Roger, a sequence of events occurred which influenced the occurrence of the homicide. The initial incident occurred when he came home from work one Friday evening and found Terri lying on the bed in an unconscious state. She had tried to commit suicide by overdosing on Valium which she had obtained from a physician. Once he realized what she had done, Roger put Terri in the shower to bring her around like he had done many times in the past. Once she came around, they sat around and Roger began smoking a few joints of hash. He initiated a conversation regarding their marital problems which, for Roger, stemmed mainly from her inability to deal effectively with the emotional trauma Terri was experiencing. He suggested, once again, that by getting therapy she could straighten herself out. Terri responded by telling her husband about a dream that she had just experienced. In this dream she was talking to her father and he asked her to join him in death. Roger reacted verbally and told her that she was disturbed and needed help. Terri usually became angry when Roger would make comments of this nature. However, in this particular situation she responded to his request atypically by telling him that she appreciated his concern but believed that nobody could help her. The next morning they went to visit Roger's parents and stayed there until Sunday night. When they arrived home, the two of them began drinking Tequila. They both began taking drugs as well: Roger began smoking hash and Terri began taking Valium. After they finished the Tequila, they began drinking Whiskey. Roger also took two Valiums that evening after Terri asked him to. While ingesting these drugs they sat around and listened to music and watched television. During the evening, Terri told her husband that she was planning to leave the next morning to see her mother. They began arguing about her decision to leave because Roger could not understand why she had to leave. Their argument cooled off and there was no violent interaction between the couple at this time.

They continued to party and eventually Roger fell asleep while his wife stayed up, watched television and continued to drink on the bed beside him. Around 3 o'clock in the morning Roger heard a commotion and awoke to find his wife heading out the front door with her bags packed. He was surprised to see that she was leaving because he thought that he had convinced his wife to stay during their argument earlier that evening. When

she realized that Roger was awake Terri remained in the house and they began to argue. Roger began asking his wife what she was doing and she told him that she wanted to see her mother. Roger suggested that she call her mom but Terri refused. According to Roger, during this argument Terri began saying things that really hurt him. Specifically, she told him that she would rather be dead than know that her father "raped" her and she also told him that she was leaving him for another man.

At that point, Roger thought that he wasn't going to allow her to leave under those conditions (i.e. using another man as an excuse). Their conversation became more intense verbally and Terri made an attempt to physically leave the house. Roger physically restrained her and they struggled until he managed to get Terri onto the bed. He let go of her, things calmed down and Roger believed that Terri had changed her mind and decided to stay.

Roger went into the bathroom and smoked some hash to settle down. He was sitting on the toilet smoking when Terri came in and announced that she was leaving. Roger responded, "no, you're not going to leave" and he grabbed a survival knife that was hanging on the bathroom door. He stabbed her as she was walking out of the bathroom. Roger then left the bathroom and went back to bed where he slept for three or four hours. When he woke up he noticed that his wife's suitcases were still at the door and he didn't realize at that time what he had done. He walked towards the bathroom and saw Terri lying on the floor with a knife beside her. He washed the knife off and covered his wife up with a shawl. Roger then washed the blood off himself, got dressed and walked to police headquarters where he turned himself in. He told the police that he had killed his wife but he couldn't tell them why. Roger was charged with second degree murder and sentenced to Life without chance of parole for 12 years.

Relevant Factors in Roger's Case

There are four major factors which influenced Roger's lethal behaviour. The first issue that Roger believes was important is that Terri was not dealing with her emotional problems effectively and she frequently attempted suicide because of her problems. The fact that Terri didn't trust Roger enough to allow him to help her made him angry.

Additionally, he became very frustrated because everytime he believed that he had convinced Terri to seek therapy she would change her mind. At times she would agree to go to a psychiatrist but when Roger made an appointment for her she wouldn't show up. Roger's anger and frustration stemmed from the high regard he had for trust and the lack of control he felt because he was unable to help his wife. Her lack of trust in his ability to help her was insulting to Roger because the value of trust was important to him especially since he had difficulties trusting others due to his childhood. The trust he was able to feel towards his wife was shattered when he found out periodically over the course of the marriage that she had been participating in extra-marital sex with his cousin.

Another factor that Roger believes influenced his behaviour was that just prior to the homicide Terri began saying things that hurt him deeply. She told him that she would rather be dead than know that her father raped her and that she was leaving him for another man. These comments were impactful and resulted in the escalation of anger and frustration that Roger was already experiencing. Once again, the fear of having no control over the situation was important as well as the fear of losing his wife and being rejected. Consequently, his ego appeared to be threatened when Terri told him that she was going to leave him for another man.

Thirdly, the fact that just prior to the homicide she was actually physically leaving the house may have heightened the intense emotions that Roger was experiencing. If Terri left then it would symbolize his inadequacy in helping his wife which would mean that he was a failure.

The fourth factor which Roger believes influenced his behaviour was the fact that he had been consuming large amounts of alcohol and other drugs on the evening of the homicide. The way in which he interpreted the situation (i.e. as requiring a lethal response) may have been influenced by the substances he had been taking. The emotions he was experiencing over the months became more intense because of the cumulative epiphany⁶⁶ he was experiencing. When this emotional state was combined with large amounts of different types of drugs, like on the evening of the homicide, Roger's ability to perceive and define a situation accurately had been reduced.

Roger defined the confrontational situation between him and his wife as requiring lethal action. By killing his wife a number of things could be resolved for Roger. He could gain control over the situation by eliminating the emotional trauma both he and his wife were experiencing. For example, if he killed Terri she would no longer have to suffer from the

⁶⁶Cumulative Epiphany is defined as a series of events that have built up in a person's life (Denzin, 1989).

memories of sexual abuse by her father and he would be the one who helped her forget about the abuse. Concomitantly, by killing Terri he would be able to preserve his faith in the value of trust and prevent losing his wife and being rejected which threatened his identity as a virile man.

Case #3: Jack

Jack was 46 years old when he killed his wife Brenda. They had been married for 26 years and had three children together. He had a grade seven education at the time of the homicide while his wife had a college diploma. Throughout Jack's life he had worked many different blue collar, labour oriented jobs and was working as a foreman in a dye shop at the time of the offense. Conversely, Brenda was a Registered Nurse and was the primary breadwinner of the family. Jack considered their income as being that of a lower-middle class household.

Jack experienced an unhappy, unstable childhood. The unhappiness stemmed from the fact that his father was an alcoholic who emotionally abused him. His unhappiness continued as he grew up because his parents separated when he was young. He spent most of his growing up years in a small city in Ontario even though he changed homes frequently after his parents separated. At this time, Jack lived with an aunt for a period of time in addition to an Orphanage where he lived for a couple of years.

Despite the abuse he encountered during his childhood, Jack did not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse his wife or their children. However, Jack described one incident where Brenda hit him on the head with a telephone and he bled from the hit.

Neither Jack or Brenda attempted to separate or get a divorce during their marriage. They had just moved into a new house at the time of the homicide. Despite these facts, their relationship was unstable. Brenda was having an affair with her brother-in-law's boss just prior to the homicide and Jack's knowledge of the affair made him anxious and angry. According to Jack, he wasn't jealous of her being with other men per se and he claimed that he encouraged his wife to have extramarital sex after his heart attack even though he knew that she had had two affairs prior to his heart attack. His laissez faire attitude regarding monogamy resulted after his

heart attack because he could no longer perform sexual intercourse. Jack's attitude changed however, when Brenda became involved with someone new. The man whom his wife was seeing just prior to the homicide bothered Jack for three reasons: he believed that the "other man" was just using his wife; he found out the "other man" had twisted his son's arm on one occasion, and; the "other man" was older than he.

Jack became very frustrated and depressed about the quality of his marriage and began seeking counselling from a variety of sources. The problems in their marriage stemmed from both Jack and Brenda. Jack had been an alcoholic and a gambler for twenty years of their marriage. After his heart attack however, he quit drinking and gambling. He was very depressed about the fact that he could not be the primary breadwinner for the family. He was frequently on welfare and as a consequence Brenda was the primary provider. He didn't have a problem with the division of labour per se. He respected the fact that Brenda was smart and had a better education than he did. However, Jack did have a problem with society's portrayal of the ideal and appropriate roles for men and women. Other problems stemmed from his wife's infidelities because Jack was always unsure where he stood in their relationship.

The depression, frustration, anger and anxiety Jack felt because of his lack of capacity to fulfil the traditional obligations of husband and breadwinner led him to seek counselling from psychiatrists, psychologists and a priest. According to Jack, these therapeutic sources viewed his problems as being irreparable. It appeared as though none of the counsellors wanted to help Jack get to the heart of his feelings. Jack reported that all of the professionals recommended that he divorce his wife and the psychiatrist prescribed drugs to cure Jack's ailments instead of giving Jack counselling and guidance on how to cope and deal with his feelings. Jack was also seeing a regular physician for his heart problems and between this doctor and his psychiatrist he was taking 5 different prescription drugs until just prior to the homicide when his psychiatrist prescribed one more drug for anxiety.

A few days before the homicide occurred, Brenda informed her husband that she was going to visit her sister. This upset Jack because he knew that when she said she was going to her sister's house she was going to see another man. After his wife left, he went to the hospital to see a psychiatrist for his anxiety. He told the psychiatrist that he was having marital problems and told him [her] that he was getting close

to a breaking point. The psychiatrist prescribed a sixth drug to help him deal with his anxiety. When he left the hospital he was feeling very anxious and when he arrived home his wife wasn't there.

The next day he woke up angry. His wife was still not home and he remembered that she had sold their car to the man with whom she was having the affair. Jack remembers thinking that he should find the car and shoot it. Such desires were not common for Jack and when he realized what he was thinking he thought he should get rid of his gun.

He left the house with his gun and proceeded to rent a car. He drove by a shop where he thought he could sell his gun but because there were no parking spots available close to the store Jack decided to keep it. At this point he was still intent on finding his car and so he drove by Brenda's sister's house and noticed that the car was not there. He then drove to where his wife worked but neither the car or his wife were there either. He continued driving around, went to the bank and withdrew \$2000. He thought he would give some money to his wife for their children and then go to Las Vegas to get away from his problems.

At this point Jack's goal had changed. Initially he wanted to locate and shoot the car that was in the "other man's" possession. His attention shifted to the individual who now owned his car. Jack's objective now was to find the "other man" and scare him because he was just using his wife and he had twisted his son's arm. He continued to drive around and eventually decided to go home since he could not find his wife or the "other man". When he arrived home he noticed his car, the one that had been sold to the "other man", in the driveway. He decided to go in for two reasons: to scare off the other man and to give money to his wife for their children.

When he entered the house, gun in hand, he found his wife in the kitchen with a man who fit the description of the man she was having an affair with. According to Jack, Brenda lied and told him that the man was there to fix the stove. The stove was brand new. They began to argue about her story and the "other man" ran out of the house. During the argument Jack turned away from Brenda and when he turned around he noticed that she had picked up a chair and was going to throw it at him. When he faced her and saw that she was holding up a chair he said he felt like he was having either an anxiety attack or a heart attack. Upon feeling this attack he felt physically threatened and committed to retaliating. He shot

her to death. He tried to revive her and called the ambulance and police but she died in his arms. Jack was charged with second degree murder and was sentenced to Life without chance of parole for 10 years.

Relevant Factors in Jack's Case

According to Jack, one of the underlying factors that influenced his lethal action was his inability to fulfill the "American Dream". This dream involved participating in the traditional roles that society portrays as being important and appropriate for men. His attempt at attaining the ideal image of husband and breadwinner was unsuccessful. After his heart attack he was unable to perform sexually and as a result his wife became involved in extra-marital affairs. Additionally, he was unable to maintain a job for long and as a result Brenda was the primary breadwinner in the family. These roles were important to Jack and because he could not perform them he became very frustrated, depressed and angry. His anger stemmed from the rigid expectations and roles that society has for men and women because they are traditional in nature and not always attainable.

A second factor which Jack believes influenced his behaviour was the man his wife chose to have sexual relations with just prior to the homicide. Brenda's involvement with other men was generally acceptable to Jack because of his lack of capacity to fulfill her sexual needs but he didn't approve of this particular man because he thought he was using his wife. His anger intensified when he found out that the "other

man" had twisted his son's arm. He began feeling even more inadequate because he couldn't participate in the roles of husband and breadwinner. His definition of self in terms of sexuality, virility, monetary worth and occupational status was inconsistent with societal standards. Consequently, Jack's feelings of anger, anxiety, frustration and depression intensified because of this cumulative epiphany and he began seeing a psychiatrist.

The number of drugs that were prescribed to Jack from both his psychiatrist and his physician may have influenced his judgement and his ability to think of alternative ways of dealing with the pre-homicidal situation. Jack was prescribed Oxazepam and Ativan which are Benxodiasepine derivatives that act as tranquilizing agents to treat anxiety (Clayton, 1987). His psychiatrist also prescribed Elavil which is a mood elevator used to treat depression (Clayton, 1987). Additionally, his regular physician had prescribed Blocadren which is given for hypertension, Flexeril which is a skeletal muscle relaxant and Tylenol #3 which is a pain reliever (Clayton, 1987). The side effects of this unique combination of prescription drugs is unknown. However, the ingestion of Benxodiazepine derivatives which would include Oxazepam and Ativan can result in drowsiness, fatigue and lethargy in addition to paradoxical effects such as increased anxiety, hyperexcitation, hallucinations, acute rage and insomnia

(Clayton, 1987). Although the precise effects that these drugs had on Jack cannot be explicated, it is reasonable to assume that their combined effect may have had an impact on Jack's decision-making capabilities and his ability to perceive a situation accurately. This possibility is more convincing when one realizes that just prior to the homicide Jack was prescribed the sixth prescription drug -i.e. Oxazepam. Despite these possibilities, one cannot conclude that the reason Jack killed his wife was because he was taking prescription drugs.

The reasons why Jack was taking these drugs are the keys to why he killed Brenda. Jack's inability to perform sexually and be the primary breadwinner began to take its toll on Jack and when the additional problems with his wife's lover arose he became very disillusioned and confused. Jack described his emotional state just prior to the homicide as being similar to a man fighting in a war. For example, Jack believed that he finally came to a point where he could no longer endure the pain he was experiencing. Jack referred to The Anatomy of Courage (1966) to describe the similar effects that men experience while fighting in a war.

It is a fact that even the bravest man cannot endure to be under fire for more than a certain number of consecutive days even if the fire be not very heavy (Lord Moran, 1966).

Jack believed that he could no longer handle the emotional

trauma that he was experiencing and as a result he decided to end the battle that was being fought in his mind. He could end the war, which for Jack was the extreme negative feelings he experienced because his definition of self was inconsistent with the "American Dream", by eliminating the source that continuously reminded him that he failed to achieve this dream.

Lastly, Jack believed that his lethal action resulted when his physiological value of physical safety was threatened. During the homicidal interaction, Jack turned to find Brenda holding a chair in a manner which indicated to him that she was going to throw it at him. When he saw the chair raised he felt physically threatened, experienced feelings similar to an anxiety or a heart attack and consequently felt committed to a confrontational response. According to Athens (1980), Jack experienced a Physically Defensive interpretation of the situation. Such an interpretation occurs when the violent actor indicates to him/herself that the victim's gestures mean that the victim is in the process of physically attacking him/her or will be in the near future (Athens, 1980). Jack's fear of physical harm stimulated action that resulted in self-preservation.

Case #4: Phillip

Phillip enjoyed a happy, stable childhood and was not exposed to violence or abuse during this time. He grew up in a small town in Ontario. He had never been charged with anything

prior to the murder of his wife and he never sought treatment for mental illness at any point in his life.

Phillip was 27 years old when he killed his 26 year old wife Wendy. He was working as a Tool Grinder in a machine shop and had completed grade ten. Wendy had gone to college and was working as a social worker at the time she was killed. Their total annual income was approximately \$20 000.

Phillip and Wendy were married for seven years when the offense occurred. They had three children together and at the time of the offense their son was 2 years old and their daughters were 3 and 5 years old. According to Phillip, there was no violence in their relationship prior to the homicide and their typical arguments were related to trivial things like household chores. Neither Phillip nor Wendy officially tried to separate or get a divorce but Wendy lived with a friend for awhile when she returned to school so that she could try to collect Mother's Allowance. After a short period of time Wendy moved home permanently and wanted Phillip to move out so that she could continue to collect social assistance.

According to Phillip, his marriage began to deteriorate and his wife began to change when she decided to return to school. Two months prior to the homicide, Phillip started to become very depressed because his wife's hours at school began to change drastically. She began arriving home late in the evening on a regular basis. Consequently, Phillip found himself doing everything: he worked; took care of the children; and, unpacked household items because they had just moved to a new home so that they would be closer to the school that Wendy attended. Additionally, Wendy asked Phillip to live somewhere else so that she could obtain Mother's Allowance. These incidents made Phillip increasingly dissatisfied with his marriage and he and his wife began arguing more frequently.

One month before the homicide Wendy had to go away for four days. She did not inform her husband that she was leaving or when she would return, she just left. During this time another incident occurred which angered Phillip. Wendy attended a school party and didn't return home for two days. Phillip was very depressed at this point because he had known Wendy since she was twelve years old and thought he knew her. More importantly, up until this point he thought their marriage was relatively good and solid. Phillip's anger and depression grew and two weeks before the homicide occurred he seriously considered committing suicide. He went down to the

basement of his home one evening and noticed a couple of guns sitting there. He began cutting up a rifle with the intention of killing himself. He stayed up all night thinking about it and decided not to do it. Instead he went upstairs and took the children to school.

According to Phillip, the relationship with his wife improved somewhat three days before the homicide occurred and his spirits began to rise as a result. However, his mood spiraled downwards again when his wife informed him that she wanted to spend Christmas at her mother's house. Phillip's anger began to grow: not only didn't she want to spend Christmas with him and their children but she didn't want to decorate the house. Phillip didn't think that her behaviour was appropriate especially since they had young children. His anger escalated even more when Wendy began to pressure him about signing some separation papers so that she would be eligible for Mother's Allowance.

The day before the homicide everything seemed to return to normal again. Wendy told Phillip that everything would be alright and that she would straighten things out in their relationship. However, on the day of the homicide she changed her mind again and wanted Phillip to leave so that she could collect welfare. They began to argue about how her behaviour was affecting the children. Phillip told Wendy that it was as if she didn't have time for the children anymore and he then tried to explain how her attitude and behaviour was affecting them. It hurt Phillip to hear that one of his daughters had told a teacher that her mother wasn't around anymore and see his eldest daughter sit in a closet when they argued. According to Phillip, Wendy responded to the illustrations of her neglect with a "don't worry about it" attitude. Her attitude made Phillip angry and depressed.

On that same evening, Phillip went downstairs to get the Christmas decorations out after Wendy and the children went to bed. While in the basement Phillip began to think "what's the point", his wife didn't seem to care about him or the kids and she wasn't going to spend Christmas with them. He stayed downstairs for a couple of hours and began to think about how his life was turning out. He was angry and depressed and thought the best way to deal with the situation was to kill himself. He picked up the gun and pointed it at his head a couple of times but instead of pulling the trigger he decided that he wanted to talk to his wife one last time. He went upstairs, gun in hand, to the bedroom where his wife was sleeping. Phillip remembers staring outside for awhile, touching his wife's hair and pointing the gun at her. He

dosen't remember pulling the trigger or shooting her.

After Phillip shot his wife he went downstairs and sat in the living room. He remembered thinking that for some reason he had to get out of the house but he wasn't sure why. He left the house and started walking down the street towards the police station. He sat on a park bench for four or five hours and then went into the police station and told the police that he thought he might have killed his wife. Phillip was charged with second degree murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment without possibility of parole for fifteen years.

Relevant Factors in Phillip's Case

Phillip believes that there were two major factors which influenced his behaviour. The first factor was the change in Wendy's attitude and behaviour when she returned to school. During this time Wendy began coming home late at night, going to bars and avoiding responsibilities that were related to the family. As a result, Phillip's responsibilities began to increase when Wendy returned to school. For example, in addition to working full-time he became the only member of the family to look after the children and take care of the household duties. Phillip became particularly concerned with the negative effects that his wife's neglectful behaviour had on their children. The attitudinal and behavioural changes that Wendy exhibited with her family demonstrated to Phillip that her values were undergoing a process of transformation. This metamorphosis is exemplified by the fact that just prior to the homicide Wendy believed that obtaining welfare on false grounds was legitimate and appropriate conduct. Consequently, Phillip became angry and depressed when Wendy's moral

standards changed because she no longer considered the value of family to be important.

The second factor which influenced Phillip's emotional state and the subsequent lethal action was the incidents where Wendy would constantly insist that their relationship was solid but then do things that would make it appear as though she wanted the relationship to end. For example, she would claim that she wanted the marriage to stay intact but afterwards would ask Phillip to move out so that she could collect Mother's Allowance or tell him that she wasn't going to spend Christmas with him and their children. This contradictory behaviour made Phillip extremely anxious, frustrated, angry and depressed because he never knew where he stood in their relationship. Wendy's behaviour threatened Phillip's religious-philosophical value of the family.

Phillip defined the cumulative epiphany he was experiencing as hopeless and as a result he wanted to commit suicide. The thoughts of killing himself stemmed from the fact that he could no longer accept the way his wife was devaluing the importance of family. By committing suicide he could uphold the perception of family that was central to his value system and eliminate the pain that was associated with his wife's behaviour. Despite his original intention, his anger was displaced onto his wife which resulted in her death

and not his. By killing his wife, Phillip could exterminate the person who threatened to dismember the family unit, eliminate the pain that he was experiencing and protect his children from being exposed to behaviour that was inconsistent with his values. Phillip's behaviour symbolized his desire to uphold the value of family and his definition of appropriate familial behaviour. Specifically, he could maintain his definition of self by preserving his image of the ideal husband/father and take control of a situation that he couldn't influence in the past.

Case #5: Larry

Larry grew up in a large city in Ontario. His family was described as "dysfunctional" because both his parents were alcoholics. His father sexually abused his sister and was emotionally abusive with him. He was forced out of his parents' home at knifepoint when he was seventeen years old. He believes his childhood experiences had an impact on his adult and married life. Specifically, Larry stated that the emotional abuse he encountered and the substance abuse he witnessed influenced his life in the following ways: there was emotional abuse between Larry and his wife Rhonda; he had a low level of self-esteem; he lacked a clear set of values; and he overcompensated on material items because he was not provided with many material goods during his childhood.

Larry and Rhonda had been married for eight years before she was killed. Although emotional abuse was common, there was no violent interaction in their relationship. Their arguments were generally regarding the responsibilities of the house and the fact that Larry didn't spend enough time at home. They always managed to talk out the problems that they had. Their marriage appeared to be strong and stable. They had a nine-month old boy at the time of the offense and neither one had attempted to separate or get a divorce.

At the time of the homicide, Larry was a 30 year old man who had a B.A. in psychology and was working as an accountant.

Rhonda had a highschool education and although she had been a bookkeeper she was a full-time mother just prior to the homicide. Their total annual income was approximately \$50 000.

According to Larry, the event which stimulated the occurrence of the homicidal situation was that he got caught embezzelling at work. He had been embezzelling for approximately two years but didn't get caught until 48 hours before the offense occurred. He was finally confronted with it at work, was asked to resign and was told that court action would be taken against him. Larry panicked. He contacted a lawyer who told him that he would probably be incarcerated for a year. The thought of going to jail horrified him. After the conversation with his lawyer, he began thinking of a way out of the situation. Believing that he couldn't confide in anybody, he decided that he didn't want to lose his family and figured that the only solution was to murder his wife and child and then kill himself. Larry was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol when he made the decision.

The next evening he couldn't sleep because he was thinking of a way to escape going to jail. Around 4:30 in the morning Larry came to the conclusion that he wouldn't allow anyone to take his family away from him. A half an hour later he got a knife out of the kitchen and stabbed his wife and nine-month old son to death while they slept. Larry then left the house and drove around for approximately an hour wondering what he was going to do next. In a confused state Larry remembers looking at other people as though he was in a dream and when he noticed that there was blood on him he threw a sweater on top of himself. He then remembered that his intention was to take his own life so he began looking for a bridge to drive into. When he was unable to locate one he drove into an oncoming car because that was the next thing that came to his mind. He killed a third person and injured himself in the accident. Larry underwent heart and facial surgery and was unconscious for two days. When he woke up there were two homicide detectives waiting for him in the hospital. He told them everything. He was charged with three counts of second degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment with no chance of parole for 12 years per murder.

Relevant Factors in Larry's Case

Larry experienced a major epiphanic situation⁶⁷ just

⁶⁷A Major Epiphany is described by Denzin as being an experience that shatters a persons life and makes it never the same again (Denzin, 1989).

prior to the homicide which influenced his behaviour. Forty-eight hours before Larry killed his wife he was caught embezzeling money from the company where he worked. His co-workers informed him that they were aware of his activities and that court action would be taken against him. He panicked after his lawyer told him that he would probably be incarcerated for a year and his fear of going to jail and losing his family became the most important factors influencing his decision to carry out a double murder suicide.

I came home (from work) and I just saw no way out of it...I hadn't been eating or sleeping very good for a couple of weeks prior to the homicide and I had lost a substantial amount of weight..on the night of the homicide I went to bed and I wasn't sleeping very well..I was thinking of how I could get out of this..I guess you could say that I came to the conclusion at approximately a quarter after four or four-thirty in the morning that nobody was going to take my family away from me..about five o'clock in the morning I got a knife out of the kitchen and I stabbed my wife and child to death..they were both in bed.

The fear and anxiety that Larry felt about going to jail and losing his family was so intense that he could see no other way of dealing with the situation. According to Larry, it wasn't difficult to decide to murder his family because he viewed his wife and child as possessions. By killing his wife he wouldn't have to give up his "prize possessions" or go to jail.

Perceiving his wife and child as objects was just one of

the ways in which his childhood experiences had influenced him. Larry also believed that his childhood experiences may have influenced his decision to use violence because he experienced and witnessed abuse as a child and because he never acquired a clear value system during his childhood.

Case #6: Joe

Joe was a 23 year old high school graduate who was unemployed when he and a male friend decided to rob a gas bar where 21 year old Laura worked. Although Joe had known Laura for three years they were not intimately involved. In fact they met through Joe's ex-girlfriend. Joe knew that Laura would probably be working that evening but he and his co-accused chose that particular location anyway because it was close by. Joe had not been exposed to abuse or violence as a child, had never been charged for an offense prior to this incident and had never sought treatment for mental illness.

The night before the crimes occurred Joe and a male friend were sitting in a parking lot talking. The idea of pulling off a robbery came up in the conversation but Joe claims that neither one of the men thought about it seriously-they were joking around. The next evening however, Joe and his friend were sitting in the same parking lot getting ready to go into a night club. It was a Friday night and there were no cars in the club's parking lot. At that point, out of pure boredom and the desire for excitement, Joe and his friend robbed the gas bar where Laura worked. They were not drinking or on drugs when the decision was made or when the act was carried out.

Joe's accomplice Tim remembered that he had a pellet gun in the trunk so they grabbed the gun and Tim drove them to the gas bar where Laura worked. Although they were wearing masks, Joe believes that Laura recognized one of them because she decided to accompany them after the robbery. He and his partner did not threaten her physically or verbally and they did not "twist her arm" or display a weapon. Joe believes her decision to get in the car was half volunteer and half forced because even though no weapon was directed at her she may have noticed the pellet gun inside the car. After Joe and Tim successfully pulled off the Armed Robbery they, now accompanied by Laura, drove towards the outskirts of town.

According to Joe, even at this point the men had no intention of killing Laura. With no destination in mind the three of them continued to travel along the side roads outside of town. During this time Joe and Laura had consensual sexual intercourse. Although Joe's memory of that evening is weak, he knows that after they had sex something was said or done from that point on that triggered his lethal action.

According to Joe, after he and Laura had sex they began talking about their common link: Laura's best friend and Joe's ex-girlfriend. Laura informed Joe that his ex-girlfriend was leaving the province the next morning to marry someone else. Joe recalls that when he found out that she was leaving and marrying someone else he felt a great deal of anxiety. Although he was unable to remember the exact emotions he was experiencing at that time he was told that he was in a "fit of outrage" and very angry. Immediately following the conversation they had about Joe's ex-girlfriend Joe and Tim stopped on a side road where Joe struck Laura with a hammer fifteen or sixteen times from behind. She died of massive head injuries.

They left Laura's naked body on the side of the road and drove back into town. It took the police six weeks to gather enough evidence to arrest them. Joe and Tim were both charged with first degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment without chance of parole for 25 years.

Relevant Factors in Joe's Case

Joe's case is unique because he did not kill his legally married or common-law spouse. However, he did kill someone who was associated with his ex-girlfriend. The most important factor that influenced Joe's lethal behaviour was the conversation he had with the woman he killed immediately preceeding the homicide.

I had sex with her that night, it wasn't forced
I don't think..I don't think unless she ever
saw the weapon..and then something was said or
done somewhere from that point on that just
triggered a violent reaction..I believe the
conversation that took place just before she
died was in relation to my girlfriend..I learned

that she had left the same morning to leave the province to get married..I can't remember any feelings or emotions associated with it..I know that it did cause a great deal of anxiety when I found out (about my ex-girlfriend)..based on what I have been told I was in a fit of outrage..total anger..on that road after we stopped..she died..she died of massive head injuries.

Laura's comments about his ex-girlfriend made Joe very angry and he was unable to deal with the magnitude of his emotions in a non-violent way.

Joe had been involved with his ex-girlfriend for sixteen months and she was the first woman he had established a serious relationship with. Although they were no longer involved Joe still had feelings for her and when he heard that she was marrying someone else he experienced feelings of jealousy and possessiveness. Such feelings are probably accurate especially Joe even admitted that,

at that point and time you see I was very possessive..afraid to be alone..definitely jealous.

Joe's definition of self as a virile man could have been threatened by the conversation with Laura. Being informed that his ex-girlfriend was marrying someone else could have reminded him of the problems he had with women in general. Specifically, the thought of being a failure in the relationship and being rejected by the only woman he loved resulted in an intense emotional response. The fear of being alone and being rejected made Joe a very angry man.

Additionally, there were many other issues in Joe's life

that made him angry in general.

Besides just facing a very bad relationship with my ex-girlfriend I was going to look for work everyday and basically people saying 'don't call us we'll call you'..that was going on for seven months..I had moved around alot while growing up..it was hard growing up..there was built up anger from that..just all of those years I think of not dealing with it..I had alot of anger directed at myself..I was violent in one sense..I dealt with anger by throwing things, yelling or going for drives..there was a day when I would throw a sledge hammer across the street if I got upset or kick a door down if I got mad at her (ex-girlfriend)..but I never struck or abused anyone else..this one psychiatrist that I saw after my arrest described me as a "walking time bomb" and she (Laura) found the trigger that night.

Joe's initial anger stemmed from a cumulative epiphany (i.e. his perception that he had an unstable childhood and his inability to obtain employment) and when Laura introduced a conversation regarding his ex-girlfriend he experienced a relived epiphany which caused his anger to escalate. Because he had ignored dealing with his problems and his anger during his life he didn't know how to deal with the anger-inducing situations that recently arose in his life.

The problems that Joe was experiencing just prior to the homicide resulted in heightened feelings of frustration and depression as well as anger. When Laura told Joe about his ex-girlfriend marrying someone else his ability to handle his emotional state in a non-violent manner dissolved. Joe killed Laura because she was the one who reminded him of one of his most recent failures (i.e. his relationship with his ex-

girlfriend) and because she introduced the possibility of being rejected by his ex-girlfriend. His manhood was threatened and he displaced the anger he had for his ex-girlfriend onto the woman who was closest to him. Upon hearing the information relating to his ex-girlfriend Joe may have perceived Laura as symbolizing or representing his ex-girlfriend. With this image in mind, Joe may have killed Laura in order to prevent her (his ex-girlfriend) from leaving him. Joe took lethal action in order to eliminate the intense negative feelings that were related to his inability to maintain a relationship or a job.

Case #7: Sam

Sam was 28 years old when he planned to have his 19 year old common-law wife Marianne killed by two hitmen. Just prior to being incarcerated for kidnapping and sexual assault, which were charges that Marianne laid, he had gained a grade ten education and was working as an autobody repairman. Marianne was completing high school when he attempted to have her murdered.

Sam and Marianne had been living together for two years, did not have children together and had never separated during their common-law relationship. According to Sam, there was no violence or abuse in the relationship prior to the incidents where Marianne laid charges against him. Although he had never been charged with violent offenses before then, Sam had been charged with several non-violent offenses. These charges included Trafficking Marijuana, two counts of Break and Enter and Impaired Driving. He served three months in jail for the Break and Enter charges, was given two years probation and ordered to pay three-hundred dollars in damages for all of these offenses. Neither Sam or Marianne had received treatment for mental illness.

Just prior to the time when Marianne charged Sam their relationship had begun to deteriorate. According to Sam, the

problems in their relationship arose when he began working out of town. During this time Sam and Marianne began to drift apart because Sam was away working most of the time. Marianne began drinking again at this time as well. The new distance between them and Marianne's problematic drinking habits concerned Sam and his hopes of a happy, long-lasting relationship with Marianne evaporated when he found out that she was unfaithful to him.

Just prior to the charges being laid against Sam, Marianne told him that she was going to stay at a girlfriend's house for the weekend. While she was away Sam began thinking of how their relationship was changing and how anxious he was because he really wanted their relationship to survive. He decided to go find Marianne at her girlfriend's so that they could talk about the nature of their relationship. Instead of finding Marianne he was informed that she was spending the weekend with another man. Sam was really shocked and angry because they were a month and a half away from their wedding day and he believed that their relationship was solid. He knew that she was really nervous about getting married but couldn't believe that she would behave in a way that would jeopardize their relationship.

Sam's anger intensified when Marianne didn't return home on Sunday. The next morning he picked her up at the day care where he knew she would be. Knowing that she had been with another man and in a very angry state he grabbed Marianne and pushed her into his truck so that he could talk to her. After he dropped her off at her girlfriend's house Marianne and her friend went to the police station where she laid charges of kidnapping. While he was hiding from the police for this charge he was also charged for Sexual Assault because of one of his visits with Marianne. During this time, Sam went to visit Marianne and found another man with her. They got into a heated argument and Sam gave Marianne two open handed slaps. Marianne charged Sam with Sexual Assault and a Canada wide warrant was issued for his arrest. Although the charge of sexual assault arose from that incident it was later dropped because there was no sexual interaction whatsoever.

Sam was incarcerated for confinement and kidnapping, sexual assault and "disguise with intent" for evading the police. While in prison however, nine charges were laid against him altogether including: confinement and kidnapping; sexual assault which was dropped; disguise with intent; three counts of verbal threats where one was dropped; possession of stolen goods which was dropped; and after a period of time, conspiracy to commit murder. He received three years for the

original charges and seven years for the conspiracy to commit murder.

The conspiracy to commit murder charge arose after Sam had been incarcerated for approximately six months. He was angry at Marianne for putting him in jail and afraid that he would not survive in prison. He heard stories about inmates getting killed or hurt and because he was a small man he feared for his life. Additionally, he was attacked by two men who had heard that he was serving time for sexual assault. This incident reinforced Sam's fear that he wouldn't make it through the penal system alive and this fear caused Sam to take action.

Because Marianne had placed Sam in this life-threatening environment he decided that if he killed her he wouldn't have to serve his time because she was the one who claimed that he had committed these offenses. A fellow inmate set Sam up with two men whom he believed were hitmen. He met with them and told them that the method he preferred for her murder was an overdose because he thought it wouldn't look suspicious. The exact manner in which they achieved that goal was left open to their discretion and Sam told them that he would give them \$2000 once the job was done and the rest of their fee when he got out of prison. The men left and later the same day they called Sam to tell him that they would take the job if he was still interested. He confirmed his request and committed himself to the planning of Marianne's murder. Immediately following the phone call, the two men, who were undercover police officers, came to Sam's cell and charged him with "conspiracy to commit murder". There was no exchange of money and Marianne's life was saved. He pled guilty to the charge and although he had been a substance abuser for fifteen years he did not attempt to use that as an excuse for his actions. He was given a seven year sentence.

Relevant Factors in Sam's Case

Sam's case is also unique because he attempted to hire someone to kill his common-law wife Marianne. The murder never transpired however because while incarcerated Sam unknowingly hired two undercover police officers to kill his spouse. He was charged with "conspiracy to commit murder" and sentenced to seven years in prison for the offense.

The most important factors that Sam believes influenced his decision to have his common-law spouse killed was that she had put him in prison and while incarcerated he feared his life. Sam describes the events which led to his decision in the following passage:

We more or less had been split apart..I was in jail..she put me there..she had me up on charges and I was looking at a bit of time out of it and it was more or less the influence of an individual there (in prison)..you know saying 'you're not going to make it through the penitentiary system'..and there were alot of incidents of certain things that happened to people inside prison..a pot of grease being thrown on a guy, a guy getting stabbed through the heart four or five times..you hear stories like that that build up to me thinking 'holy jumping'... I wasn't thinking straight..I had been locked up and I had been beaten up more or less..I had a couple of ribs bruised..I thought well, there's no way I'm going to make it through..it made me think of my life..my life or the other party's life and I guess I valued my life more..I feared my life and that was the biggest factor..that was my biggest consideration..I don't know, it was more or less the thought of without her (Marianne) around who was there who was going to back anything that why I was in there (prison)..so it was more or less going to be abolished..so the two of them put together combined to (or resulted in) the thought of hiring a hit man and what not.

Sam was angry at his partner for putting him in jail and his physiological value of physical safety was being threatened in prison. The fear and anxiety he felt about being harmed physically increased dramatically after he was attacked. His decision to hire someone to kill his spouse came immediately following the attack on his life which was a major epiphanic situation for Sam.

Sam believed that by killing his wife the charges that she laid would be dropped because there would be nobody to verify that he committed the alleged offenses. After she was out of the picture he would not have to remain in prison and face the threat of physical harm every day. So, another inmate set Sam up with two men who he believed were hit men. Fortunately for Marianne the two men were undercover police officers and when Sam confirmed his desire for them to murder his spouse he was charged.

Sam's anger towards Marianne also stemmed from a minor/illuminative epiphany⁶⁸ that was directly related to their relationship. His relationship with Marianne had changed dramatically just before she charged him with kidnapping and sexual assault. They had begun to drift apart when Sam started working out of town and Marianne began drinking again which, according to Sam, resulted in her engaging in sexual relations with another man. Sam found out about this man just before he was charged for kidnapping and sexually assaulting Marianne.

I knew she was fooling around and we were a month and a half away from our wedding date we had set a year before and she was fooling around on me so I was pretty hot..you know?

The anger that arose from this epiphanic situation intensified when he was incarcerated and believed that he may not survive

⁶⁸According to Denzin, Minor/Illuminative Epiphany occurs when underlying tensions and problems in a situation or relationship are revealed (Denzin, 1989).

because of her. By killing Marianne then, Sam believed that he could eliminate the reason that he was in prison and escape the life-threatening environment he found himself in.

Background Information

The remaining portion of this chapter will compare the background of each respondent. Factors relating to each individual such as age, education, occupation, hometown, childhood, criminal charges and/or incarceration and mental illness will be discussed and similarities will be outlined. Additionally, information that is directly related to the marital life of each subject will be provided. Specifically, factors including annual household income, length of relationship, number of children, divorce/separation attempts and prior violence or abuse in the relationship will be summarized.

Individual Factors:

Age of Offender

The age of the respondents when they either hired someone to kill their spouse whether it transpired or not, killed their spouse or killed someone related to their spouse, varied by twenty-three years (23:46). However, 57.1% (4/7) of the offenders were in their twenties when the offense occurred. Two of the other offenders (28.6%) were in their forties and only one offender (14.3%) was in his thirties.

The only explanation for the youthfulness of the sample

may lie in the hypothesis that these men may be more aggressive than their older counterparts. However, because of the small sample size generalizations cannot be made. Factors that are related to the marital relationship, such as length of marriage, are probably more significant.

Education

The majority of the sample had very low levels of education. Four of the respondents (57.1%) did not complete high school. Of these, two men had completed grade ten, one man had completed grade eleven and one man had completed grade seven. The remaining offenders (3/7) had completed at least a grade twelve education. One of these men had completed one year of trade school and one man had obtained a Bachelor of Art's Degree.

Although the majority of respondents had a low level of education a causal link between education and individuals who commit homicide cannot be made. A factor that may be significant however, is the educational level of the offender's spouse. In 71.4% of the cases (5/7), the offender's spouse had completed a higher level of education than the offender.

Occupation

The majority of offenders (71.4% or 5/7) were working in

blue-collar occupations⁶⁹ when they committed the spouse-related offense. Another offender had also worked in a blue-collar job but at the time of the offense was unemployed. The specific types of occupations the respondents had include: taxi driver, tractor-trailer driver, tool grinder, mechanic apprentice and autobody repairman. Only one of the offenders was working as a white-collar professional at the time he murdered his wife. He was an accountant.

Hometown

Three respondents (42.9%) came from urban areas or cities, two offenders (28.6%) came from small towns and one offender grew up in a rural area. The remaining offender moved around a lot during his childhood and considered both cities and towns his home.

Childhood

A common trend emerged with regards to the childhood experiences of the sample. The majority of offenders (71.4% or 5/7) had an unhappy childhood. Generally, the unhappiness stemmed from the fact that they came from families which were composed of at least one parent who was an alcoholic or who subjected them to physical and/or emotional abuse. Three offenders (42.9%) had at least one parent who was an alcoholic. Of these, two of the offenders (Doug and Jack) had

⁶⁹Rinehart defines blue-collar workers as "the manual working class" who work in occupations including: manufacturing and mechanical; construction; labourers; transportation and communications; service; and fishing, logging and mining (Rinehart, 1986, p.77).

a father who was an alcoholic and the third (Larry) reported that both his parents were alcoholics. One respondent reported that he had been subjected to physical abuse by his alcoholic father and another man stated that he experienced emotional/psychological abuse by both his alcoholic parents. Emotional/psychological and physical abuse was also reported as being a regular occurrence for another respondent.

Consequently, alcoholism was a factor in 42.9% (3/7) of the sample, physical and/or emotional/psychological abuse was relevant in 42.9% (3/7) of the sample and both parental alcoholism and abuse was a factor in 28.6% (2/7) of the sample. Only one respondent reported that he had experienced a happy childhood and had not been subjected to physical, emotional or sexual abuse during his childhood. Generally, the respondents had experienced unhappy, disruptive, dysfunctional childhoods. Although the majority of the sample had not witnessed or been subjected to violence, these findings illustrate the utility of the **Social Learning Theory** because 85.7% (6/7) of the sample reported that their dysfunctional or traumatic childhoods have had an impact on their attitude and behaviour throughout their life.

Criminal Charges and/or Incarceration

Three of the respondents (42.9%) had never been charged with a criminal offense before they committed the spouse-related crime. The remaining individuals (57.1%) had been

charged at least once but only one respondent (14.3%) had been incarcerated. Doug had been charged and convicted for credit card fraud when he was a teenager and was given probation. Jack had been charged with "sureties to keep the peace" but no further action was taken. Larry had been charged and convicted for possession of marijuana when he was twenty years old and he had to pay a \$50 fine. Sam had been charged and convicted, on different occasions, for trafficking marijuana, break and enter twice and impaired driving. He was incarcerated for three months, given two years probation and was ordered to pay \$300 in damages. Although the majority of the sample had previously been charged and convicted, their crimes were generally minor and non-violent in nature and as a result their criminal past does not appear to be the most significant factor relating to homicidal interaction.

Mental Illness

Five of the men interviewed (71.4%) reported that they had never sought or received treatment for mental illness. This finding is consistent with recent literature which indicates that mentally ill persons are rarely dangerous or assaultive even though the media portrays them in that framework (Gallagher, 1987). The pervasive societal stereotype that individuals who are mentally ill commit violent crime is once again disconfirmed. In fact, one of the men who sought psychiatric help did so in order to help his

wife deal with her emotional problems more effectively. Consequently, only one respondent actually sought therapy in order to deal his emotional problems.

Factors Relating to Marriage

Income

The majority of offenders (71.4% or 5/7) reported that their total annual household income (i.e. the total annual income from both the offender and his spouse) at the time they committed the spouse-related offense was under \$50 000 per year. One of these respondents was unemployed at the time of the offense. The remaining two men (28.6%) estimated their total annual household income as being \$50 000. Although most offenders had a low annual household income, none of the respondents cited income as a reason why they committed the offence. Similarly, according to the composite index utilized to measure socio-economic status⁷⁰, five of the respondents

⁷⁰The index that is utilized most frequently by sociologists to measure Socio-Economic Status (SES) includes variables of education, annual family income, and occupation of chief breadwinner. Specifically, each variable is broken down into five possible categories and each category is ranked. For education, the categories include college graduate, some college, high school graduate, some high school and grade school only (or none) where college graduate is ranked the highest with five points and they decrease by one point as the educational level decreases. The categories utilized for annual family income include: \$65 000 and over; \$30 000 to \$64 999; \$15 000 to \$29 999; \$8 000 to \$14 999; and under \$8 000 with the highest income bracket getting five points which decrease by one as one goes down the income categories. The categories utilized for occupation include: professional or managerial in large firm or proprietors; semiprofessional or managerial in small firms; clerical and sales; skilled and semi-skilled labour; and agriculture and unskilled labour. Professional occupations

(71.4%) had a lower-middle socio-economic status (Spencer, 1990). One of the remaining men had a lower socio-economic status and the other had an upper-middle socio-economic status (Spencer, 1990). Despite the low SES of the respondents recent social scientific research suggests that individuals from all levels of the socio-economic platform commit homicide and therefore predictions cannot be made based on SES (Chimbos, 1978).

Length of Relationship

The length of relationship between the offenders and their spouses varied by twenty-four years (2:26). However four of the men interviewed (57.1%) reported that they had been legally married for 5 to 10 years. Roger had been married for seven years, Phillip had been married for seven and a half years, Larry had been married for eight years and Doug had been married for ten years. Sam had been living with his common-law spouse for two years. Joe had been friends with the woman he killed for three years and had just broken up with her friend who he had been seeing for sixteen months. Jack had been married for twenty-six years before he

are ranked five while agriculture and unskilled labour ranks one point. Points from all three variables are simply added together. If the resultant score is fifteen then your socio-economic status is upper, if it is twelve to fourteen points then it is upper-middle, if it is nine to eleven then your SES is middle, if your score is six to eight then it is lower-middle and if your score is three to five points than your SES is lower (Spencer, 1990, p.222).

killed his wife. The lengthy relationships that most of the respondents had with their spouses would result in strong emotional ties and allow epiphanies to arise.

Children

Four of the respondents (57.1%) reported that they and their spouses had children during their marriage. Of these, Doug had one daughter who was nine years old at the time of the offense, Jack had three sons who were twenty, nineteen and thirteen years old, Larry had a nine-month old son who he killed along with his wife, and Phillip had a two year old son and two girls who were three and five years old. In two of their other cases the respondents mentioned that their spouse had a child from a previous relationship or marriage. Despite the fact that most men had children in their lives, whether they were their own or not, none of the children witnessed the homicidal interaction that occurred between the offenders and their spouses.

Divorce/Separation

The majority of the men interviewed (71.4% or 5/7) stated that neither they nor their spouses attempted to officially separate or get a divorce. However, in three of these cases the respondents' wives were planning to separate from them just prior to when they were killed and one of these same women had been the only spouse to leave her husband during the marriage. Additionally, two of the men reported that although

they hadn't officially separated from their spouse their wives were having affairs with other men. Despite the fact that most couples hadn't separated during their marriage all of the respondents admitted that they were experiencing problems in their relationships.

Prior Physical, Emotional, or Sexual Abuse in Relationship

All of the men reported that there was no physical abuse or violence in their relationships before they committed the offense. One of the respondents stated that both he and his wife were emotionally/psychologically abusive towards each other and another man reported that his wife was emotionally/psychologically abusive towards him. Although prior physical abuse was not common in the sample, three of the men (42.9%) mentioned that they didn't know how to deal with the intense negative emotions they were experiencing prior to the offense. This inability could explain the lethality of measures taken by the respondents.

Chapter Six

FEMALE SAMPLE

They [police] got to have somebody..I don't blame them for that..a body lays there dead, they got to claim it..someone owns it and actually at that point I almost began to believe that I did own it..that's kind of sad too (Leanne).

The cases of three women who were charged for their husbands murder will be summarized and analyzed in the following chapter. None of these women actually killed their husbands themselves but were charged for murder along with men who committed the crime. Consequently, knowledge of the homicidal situation in these cases is sketchy and based on the information they obtained from the police, their lawyers and/or trials or by the men who actually committed the offense. Despite these problems, the women in this sample provide rich detail regarding the situational events/incidents leading to the homicide and their stories demonstrate a common way in which women are charged for their husband's murder. The chapter will conclude with a discussion that outlines and compares the backgrounds of the sample.

Case #1: Barbara

Barbara was 32 years old when she hired someone to kill her 34 year old husband David. At the time of the offense, Barbara was working as a secretary/receptionist and had completed a grade nine level of education. Her husband was a caretaker at the time he was murdered.

Barbara and David had been married for just over three years at which point Barbara left him because he physically and emotionally/ psychologically abused her. Unfortunately, Barbara was used to such abuse because her mother physically abused her on a regular basis throughout her childhood. Although the physical abuse in her marriage was less common than what she experienced growing up Barbara was still exposed to three or four incidents where her husband hit her. Barbara called the police in two of the incidents and her landlord called the police once as well. She charged her husband twice with assault but the charges were dropped by the police.

The physical abuse she experienced in her marriage was combined with regular emotional/psychological abuse. According to Barbara, David called her a tramp, a bitch, a slut, stupid and he accused her of having sexual relations with other men. Despite the abusive nature of the relationship, Barbara returned to David after they had been separated for two and a half years. They had been reunited for two and a half months before the offense occurred.

During their reunification old patterns of communication began to emerge. David began to emotionally/psychologically abuse Barbara again and they began to argue more frequently. According to Barbara, most of their arguments occurred because David was a jealous and possessive husband. Although money was sometimes a stimulus for argumentative interaction, their fights typically emerged because David was jealous of a sixty-seven year old male friend of Barbaras. She was not romantically involved with this man. In fact, Barbara considered this man to be her adopted grandfather. Although their relationship was of this nature, David's insecurity prevented him from perceiving it in this manner. Eventually the arguments and emotional/psychological abuse became a daily occurrence and Barbara became "sick" of the whole marital situation.

Two days before the homicide occurred Barbara and her husband went to visit her adopted grandfather. He lived in an apartment that was in the same building as Barbara and her husband's apartment. Although her adopted grandfather lived with his girlfriend the three of them were alone during the visit. A heated conversation developed when Barbara's husband began to question the nature of the relationship between Barbara and her adopted grandfather. All three of them began to argue in this situation. Although Barbara's husband usually didn't attempt to hit her when others were around, David tried to hit her during this incident. In response, Barbara picked up a frying pan that was on the stove in order to hit David back. The adopted grandfather stepped in and prevented any violent contact between them. This incident made Barbara angry and she told both of the men that if they didn't "smarten up" she would leave and neither one of them would see her again. Things then cooled down and Barbara and her husband went home.

When they returned home they had supper and Barbara's husband went to bed. Barbara however, was still "fuming" and had three or four drinks of rye. A short time later Barbara told her husband that she was going downstairs to visit some

friends/acquaintances. During the visit she talked to a friend about having her husband killed. The person whom she asked to take care of her husband was only an acquaintance but Barbara felt comfortable enough with him to make such a request. According to Barbara, this was the first time she had discussed the idea of having her husband killed with anyone. Initially, Barbara's acquaintance told her that he would not kill her husband. He then went to see if another person that he knew would commit the murder while Barbara waited for him in his apartment. The second man also responded negatively at first but then changed his mind and agreed to kill David. The two men returned a short time later to the apartment and told Barbara that the job could be done. While discussing the plans for her husband's murder, Barbara and her two male friends were interrupted when David came downstairs to join his wife. The subject of conversation quickly changed and the four of them sat around and talked for awhile. They all went out for coffee and then Barbara and her husband went home. Barbara and her husband went to bed.

The next day Barbara got up and went to work as she usually did. However, at this point Barbara knew that the murder was going to occur and when. She left work around 7 o'clock in the evening and returned home to find that her husband had a visitor. The acquaintance who was going to kill her husband was in their apartment. According to the killer, he and Barbara's husband went out for coffee and talked for awhile. They then went for a walk and only Barbara's acquaintance came back from that walk. Barbara wasn't willing to explain how her husband was killed.

After David was killed, Barbara's acquaintance came back to her apartment and told her that the job was done. Although Barbara knew that her husband was going to be killed she felt some remorse when the man told her that he was dead. After the man informed her that her husband was dead, Barbara, the killer and a couple of other friends (who didn't know what happened) went out for coffee. She came home and continued her usual routine as though nothing had happened. The next day she reported to the police that her husband was missing. Shortly after she made the report she was arrested. She was getting ready to leave the area. Barbara was charged with first degree murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole for twenty-five years.

Relevant Factors in Barbara's Case

Barbara believes that she asked someone to kill her husband because she perceived the marital situation as

unchangeable. She returned to David two months before he was killed because she believed that he would no longer be abusive. However, her husband began to be emotionally/psychologically abusive and his jealous and possessive nature emerged when they reunited. Not only did his degrading comments threaten her individual values such as identity, self-esteem and self-respect but his physical gestures also threatened her physiological value of physical safety (Levin and Spates, 1976). Consequently, the cumulative epiphany Barbara experienced prior to the separation became a relived epiphany for her when she returned to her abusive husband. In other words, the emotional/psychological and physical abuse she was subjected to became a series of painful events that influenced Barbara to leave her husband (i.e. a cumulative epiphany). When she returned and the old patterns of interaction began to emerge, she began to think about all of the abuse that she had tolerated in the past (i.e. a relived epiphany). Her anger and feelings of hopelessness increased during this time and the turning point for Barbara was the argument that emerged with her husband and her adopted grandfather. This argument demonstrated her husband's jealousy and possessiveness and Barbara realized that her husband was not going to change. After this argument, Barbara realized that she could no longer tolerate his behaviour and within hours she asked someone to kill her husband.

I was angry..he didn't have any reason to be jealous..it also made me feel like giving up ..saying the hell with everything and just leave..leave him period..I guess I reached my breaking point where I couldn't take any-more emotional abuse in my life...after we went home I was still fuming..I had a few ryes and then went over to another person's place and talked to them about taking care of my husband.

Barbara also believes that the alcohol she consumed that evening influenced her choice of dealing with the situation in a violent and lethal manner.

I had three or four ryes before I decided.. that is nothing compared to usual but it did affect my frame of mind..I wasn't thinking clearly.

By having someone kill her husband she was achieving the same objectives that would be elicited if she had killed David herself. For example, she was "saving face" or preserving her identity and re-establishing her self-hood, self-esteem and self-respect by having someone else kill him. The atmosphere which Barbara perceived as being threatening would disappear if the source of her fear, David, was eliminated.

Although Barbara wanted David dead, she couldn't carry out the act herself. Perhaps she was afraid of the possible legal ramifications or maybe she couldn't express her anger in a physically lethal manner. By having someone else kill her husband Barbara could have her identity maintained, cope with the intense anger that he caused her, and at the same time dissasociate herself from the crime and hold somebody else

accountable for his death. Barbara felt some remorse after she found out her husband had been killed but did not attempt to inform the police of her part in the crime. Instead, she told the police that her husband was missing and she was planning to leave the area when she was arrested.

Case #2: Joanne

Joanne grew up in a rural area in Ontario. She described her childhood as "unhappy and psychologically unstable" because her father was an alcoholic who abused both her and her mother. He emotionally/psychologically and physically abused Joanne during her childhood. Although the physical abuse was less frequent than the emotional/psychological abuse, Joanne was beaten up a few times when she was a teenager and on one occasion witnessed her father beat up her mother.

The abuse Joanne experienced during her childhood had psychological and social implications with regards to her attitude and behaviour. She began to think that everything was her fault. For example, she began to believe that it was her fault that she had been abused and she blamed herself for her parents' separation. She began to think in this manner because her father constantly insisted that it was her fault. Additionally, Joanne began to experience feelings of hatred towards herself for allowing her father to abuse her and towards her father for being abusive. She began drinking heavily when she was fourteen years old in order to deal with the pain she was encountering at home. When she started dating men she noticed that she typically became involved with men who were physically and/or emotionally/psychologically abusive. Joanne was also "raped" when she was twenty-one years old which served to deepen her psychological wounds. The only man she had been involved with who wasn't abusive towards her was her ex-husband but he wasn't an ideal partner either because he was a habitual criminal. When Joanne met and moved in with Jeff the same situation emerged although he, like her previous boyfriends, did not appear to be abusive until they had been together for over a year.

Joanne was 35 years old when her 38 year old common-law partner, Jeff, was murdered. She was working as a cashier in a hardware store and had obtained a grade ten education at the time of the offense. Jeff had completed a grade eleven education and was a truck driver when he was murdered.

Joanne and Jeff had lived in a common-law relationship for six years before Jeff was killed. During this time, Joanne left Jeff five times. These separation periods ranged from two to eight months and resulted because Jeff emotionally/psychologically and physically abused Joanne. During their common-law relationship, she was subjected to monthly physical abuse involving punches, kicks, ripping out hair, and verbal threats that were made with and without a weapon. According to Joanne, Jeff told her and several others (including her mother) that he was going to have somebody kill her. Jeff made verbal threats to Joanne on two occasions and in one of these incidents he had a knife to substantiate his threat but didn't use it.

The threats of physical harm were accompanied by physical abuse. For example, a violent incident erupted when Jeff came home drunk after work and kicked the phone out of Joanne's hand. His foot struck Joanne in the hand breaking her knuckles and then made contact with her face which resulted in a swollen, bruised cheek. Joanne walked into the kitchen, grabbed a knife and stabbed Jeff in the arm. Jeff ran to a neighbour's house and called the police. The police wanted to charge Joanne but Jeff wouldn't let them press charges against her. This was the only time that Joanne retaliated with a weapon and it was the only incident where the police were called.

The monthly physical abuse that Joanne experienced was supplemented with emotional/psychological abuse. The emotional/psychological abuse occurred more frequently than the physical abuse and Joanne believes that both measures were taken to control her behaviour. The types of comments that were commonly made and which were emotionally abusive involved her capabilities as a mother and her relationship with her family. According to Joanne, Jeff would make her feel as though he was her only source of family and would prevent her from obtaining or maintaining social ties outside the home by being abusive.

Joanne left Jeff two months before the homicide occurred because of the constant abuse. The event which sparked her departure occurred when they began fighting and Jeff left the house angry. Joanne knew that "the fight was on", that he was angry and probably drinking, and that when he returned he would probably beat her up. At this time Joanne was at a point where she seriously considered using a hammer to retaliate if he made a violent gesture. The fear of getting hurt physically and the realization that she was at the point where she would seriously harm Jeff stimulated her decision to

leave. She and her daughter (from another relationship) packed and went to stay at Joanne's mother's house.

During the separation period Jeff contacted Joanne on several occasions. According to Joanne, Jeff would show up where she worked to give her mail, stop her in the middle of the road, phone her at her mother's and leave notes in her car. The primary goal of his actions was to get Joanne back. Consequently, he wasn't violent with her during this time. However, Joanne believes that he wasn't violent during this time because there were usually others present when he came around.

Joanne became very depressed about the whole situation, began drinking heavily, and met a new man whom she began to meet and drink with on a regular basis. During their short acquaintanceship, Joanne confided in this man and told him about the abuse that she had been subjected to in her last relationship.

The evening that Jeff was killed Joanne and her new male friend had gone to a restaurant where they conducted their usual behaviour: they drank heavily and engaged in conversation that constantly retorted back to her relationship with Jeff. Although Joanne does not remember the details of their conversation that evening because she was intoxicated, she knows that she made remarks about how angry, hurt and depressed she was for being exposed to more abuse in her life. She also recalls that her new male friend talked about killing Jeff that evening and she responded "go for it" as a joke because she was very angry at Jeff. However, she didn't take his remarks seriously because he was the sort of man who was "all talk and no action". They continued talking and drinking until the restaurant closed and then Joanne went to her mother's house and went to bed.

The events that led to Jeff's murder at this point are questionable. The police reported that Jeff was shot to death in a field near his home when Joanne and her new male friend were supposedly in the restaurant drinking. The police alleged that Joanne and her male friend planned the murder and that her male friend carried out the act. The police alleged that Joanne's motive for Jeff's murder was to obtain the money from his house. Joanne denies having anything to do with her boyfriend's murder and doesn't know what the real story is because her new male friend also claims he is innocent. However, Joanne and her new male friend were charged with Jeff's murder. Joanne was charged with second degree murder

and sentenced to life imprisonment without chance of parole for 13 years.

Relevant Factors in Joanne's Case

Joanne's case is similar to Barbara's because neither one killed their spouse. However, unlike Barbara, Joanne did not hire or ask somebody to kill her common-law partner. Although she claims that she is innocent the police charged her for planning her partner's murder and they charged a man whom she had recently met for carrying out the murder. For the purposes of this analysis, it will be assumed that Joanne's male acquaintance killed Jeff whether she asked him to do it or whether he carried the act out on his own.

Joanne left her common-law partner two months before he was killed because she was tired of his abusive behaviour. She was subjected to monthly physical abuse and daily emotional abuse during their six year relationship. Because she had experienced these forms of abuse in previous relationships and in her childhood Joanne came to a point where she could no longer tolerate Jeff's abusive behaviour. The low levels of self-worth, self-respect and self-esteem that she was able to maintain despite her past disappeared completely during the duration of her relationship with Jeff.

Everytime he would beat me I would feel worse
about myself every time..uno, you're late
getting home or something and he beats you up
and you think oh well gee if I hadn't been
late getting home, if I had come home earlier
..you try to rationalize it's all your fault

it's happening because it has happened all your life and you think you are doing something wrong..I didn't have anymore respect for myself I don't think..I looked like a slob half the time and my mom would tell me, "Joanne, you look like shit"..I had no self-esteem..I was a piece of shit that's how I felt about myself..a lousy mother..I just felt terrible about myself..terrible you don't even realize you are feeling like that you think it is normal, at least I did.

By leaving her jealous, possessive and abusive partner, Joanne was able to regain her self-worth, self-respect and self-worth. Instead of utilizing violence or committing righteous slaughter to "save face" or salvage her identity Joanne was able to achieve the same goal in a non-violent manner: by leaving her spouse. The timing of her departure was crucial if a non-violent strategy was to be utilized. Joanne admits that if she hadn't left him when she did then she probably would have killed him.

The night I left to go to my mother's house for two months he left mad and he was swearing..two hours had gone by and I knew he was drinking, I knew the fight was on..I had a hammer sitting on the couch and I had it in my head that if you come in this door tonight and you hit me then I'm going to whack you in the head with this hammer ..like that was how I was getting eh..and then I just thought to myself, no..I got scared eh..I thought well it has been two hours, he's really going to be drunk, I just got out..I said to my mom "I'm coming over" and I got my daughter and left..but yea, I was getting to that stage where like I'm going to whack you in the head with this hammer if you hurt me.

She was able to end the cumulative epiphany of abuse and

salvage her identity by leaving her partner.

When Joanne left Jeff she was very angry at him for subjecting her to abuse.

I was hurt, angry, mad yea..frustrated, scared..very scared of him..If I'd see his car coming down the road I would literally just..you know..he was running around telling people "I will go back with him and we're going to get married and I love him as much as he loves me" ..I thought he was losing his mind or something when I heard this from people, "if she's not going back with me then nobody's having her"..he even told my own mother that he was going to have me killed and my mom told him like "that's my daughter you're talking about" and he says "well I won't be around when it happens" and I was really scared and my mom's saying just stay away from him..and I did because I was scared..when I left I hated him..I just wanted out..I went to my mother's..that's the way I dealt with it.

The man whom Joanne met after she separated from Jeff became a drinking "buddy" who listened to Joanne's stories of being victimized. They always drank heavily when they were together and the topic of conversation usually revolved around Jeff.

I had been drinking my face off, meeting this guy in restaurants for the two months I had been separated from Jeff..and I would go to his house and drink..but I didn't know him that well..I had been with this new guy for those two months off and on..more or less partying..and this was the topic (Jeff) of me and this new guy's discussion everytime I would meet him..what this prick had been doing to me and how I had just had enough and we would talk about it..on the night Jeff was killed we were in a restaurant drinking and

this new guy said he was going to kill him..
and I was so drunk that night..I don't
remember him saying that..I'm listening to
what people were saying in court eh..apparently
he was saying that he was going to kill him and
I said "good idea, he's a goof anyway..do it"..
just drunk talk..that's why I am involved.

During the meetings with her new acquaintance Joanne would explicitly describe both the abusive situations that she had been subjected to and the anger, frustration, depression and fear she was experiencing. The intensity and potency of Joanne's emotions were recognized by her acquaintance. By killing Jeff, Joanne's acquaintance could express her emotions through his physical lethal action. Specifically, her anger at Jeff was displaced onto her male friend and he took action on her behalf to eliminate her source of pain.

Case #3: Leanne

Leanne grew up in a metropolitan city in the United States. She came to Canada in 1983, with two sons from her first marriage, to marry Bill. Leanne and Bill were married for three years and had a daughter together. However, they were in the process of getting a divorce when Bill was killed. At the time of the offense, they had been separated for fourteen months with the divorce pending and a custody battle was in the works over their eighteen-month old daughter.

Leanne left Bill because he had abused her physically, sexually and emotionally/psychologically. The physical abuse Leanne experienced was sporadic and irregular but continuous in nature. For example, two weeks would pass with no physical abuse and on other occasions the physical abuse would last three days in a row. According to Leanne, Bill would grab her, throw her across the room or down the stairs, smash her into walls and shake her.

Although Bill never punched or hit his wife his behaviour was violent enough to hospitalize Leanne and elicit third-party intervention. On one occasion, Leanne told her thirteen year

old son to call the ambulance because she was pregnant and possibly in labour after Bill physically abused her. Leanne didn't want her husband to drive her to the hospital because she was afraid of him. Her son called the hospital and told them that his step-father had beaten up his mother and that she was in labour as a result. The hospital informed the police of the situation and both the ambulance and police came to the house. According to Leanne, the police did not attempt to charge her husband but instead tried to convince her to make up with him.

The second time that Bill's abusive conduct was interrupted was just prior to when the couple separated. Leanne had been home from the hospital with their daughter for four months when Bill attempted to physically abuse her again. Leanne's sixteen year old son stepped in between them, stopped the potential violence and told his step-father to leave or else the rest of the family would leave him. They separated at that point because Leanne realized that she could no longer subject herself or her children to this lifestyle.

Bill also subjected his wife to sexual and emotional/psychological abuse. The sexual abuse occurred immediately following the physical abuse. After physically abusing Leanne, Bill sometimes forced his wife to have "violent" sexual intercourse. Although the sexual conduct was not consensual, Leanne did not define it as sexual abuse initially because they were married.

Despite the pervasiveness of these forms of abuse, Leanne was subjected to emotional/psychological abuse most frequently. Bill would threaten her on a regular basis. For example, he would tell his wife that if she didn't behave then he would be forced to "correct her behaviour". In other words, if Leanne didn't work to support him and look after all of his needs then he would harm her physically. Both Bill and Leanne had completed University but Bill didn't like to work and Leanne wasn't allowed to work legally in Canada. Despite the possible legal ramifications, Leanne worked as a legal secretary before their daughter was born in order to support the family. When they separated, Bill informed the authorities that his wife was working without a permit because he thought that he would gain custody of their daughter if Leanne was incarcerated. His plan did not work however, because Leanne was given a non-custodial sentence.

When Leanne and Bill separated, Leanne checked into a psychiatric hospital where she stayed as an inpatient for three months. She sent her boys to the United States to stay

at her mother's house and Bill looked after their daughter. During her hospitalization she was attacked by two men one day as she was walking to the store. These men knew her name and Leanne believes that her husband hired them to kill her. Leanne became more frightened of her husband after that incident because she had experienced a similar situation in her home before she checked into the hospital. Two men attacked her when she was at home alone with the baby and they beat her up so badly that they probably would have killed her if her son hadn't come home. According to Leanne, Bill's motive for having her beaten and/or killed was similar to the reason why he told the authorities about her illegal behaviour: he wanted their daughter. Specifically, he wanted full custody of their daughter and was willing to do anything to achieve that goal.

When Leanne checked out of the hospital she moved in with Bill's aunt and began to share custody of the baby with her husband. Leanne had the baby for four or five days and Bill had custody of their daughter for the remainder of the week. Bill would come to his aunt's house to pick up and drop off the baby. During the exchange of the baby, Bill would not come into his aunt's house. Instead, he waited in his car until Leanne would have to come outside and then he threatened her without having any witnesses. According to Leanne, Bill threatened to kill her every time they met to exchange the baby.

Nine months after Leanne and Bill separated she told her husband's aunt that she was moving into an apartment of her own. Bill's aunt supported her decision to start a new life and as a result led her nephew to believe that Leanne was still living with her. Bill never knew that his wife wasn't living there anymore and neither Bill nor his aunt ever knew that she had moved in with another man.

Leanne lived with another man for five months before her husband was killed. She didn't want Bill to find out about it because she thought that he would kill both her and her new boyfriend. She didn't want Bill's aunt to find out about her new living accommodations either because she was the only person Leanne knew in Canada who would help her during her time of need. Leanne's new boyfriend was aware of the trauma that she experienced in her previous relationship but he never made any comments about wanting to kill Bill. Leanne reported that neither she or her new boyfriend had ever discussed the possibility of having her husband killed at any time.

Fourteen months after Leanne and Bill separated and five

months after Leanne moved in with her new boyfriend, Bill was murdered. He was shot twice in an underground parking garage of his apartment building. His wallet was missing and there were no witnesses. The police established that the murder occurred at approximately seven-thirty in the evening. The police came to Bill's aunt's house at five or six in the morning to inform his relatives about the homicide. When they arrived they found both Bill's aunt and his wife. Leanne had slept over at his aunt's house that evening because she was supposed to get custody of their daughter the next morning.

Leanne and her new boyfriend were charged two months after Bill was murdered. Prior to that, Leanne checked into the psychiatric hospital again because she could not function properly after she found out about her husband's murder. She remembers thinking that perhaps the men who had attacked her had killed her husband and that they would come for her next. Leanne stayed in the hospital for four or five days to sort things out and then she moved back in with her boyfriend.

According to Leanne, neither she or her new boyfriend had anything to do with Bill's murder. However, the police did not believe that they were innocent. The police alleged that Leanne deliberately sought out a man to kill her husband after she left Bill. The new man she had moved in with had a lengthy criminal record and had used firearms in the past and as a result the police believed that he killed Bill. According to the police, Leanne planned the murder and her new boyfriend carried out the plan. Although there were no witnesses, the police alleged that Leanne watched coldheartedly as her new lover shot and killed her husband. Leanne's alleged motive for having Bill murdered was so that she could have full custody of their daughter. Leanne and her new boyfriend were charged for murdering Bill. Leanne's new boyfriend, who was theoretically the killer, was acquitted of the murder charge while Leanne, who was theoretically the planner, was charged with first degree murder and given a life sentence without chance of parole for twenty-five years.

Relevant Factors in Leanne's Case

Leanne's case is also unique because like Joanne, she maintains that she was not involved in her husband's murder. The police charged her however, with the planning of her husband's murder. Her new boyfriend was charged with carrying out the murder. However, he was acquitted of the charge.

Leanne was sentenced to life imprisonment for planning a murder for which there is no murderer.

Now I have no killer..now I have a murder and no killer..X killed him and they never looked for him so I said to my lawyer when my boyfriend got acquitted "now they better look for the killer" and the lawyer said now they make you the killer..I said "no they (police and prosecution lawyer) said for three months I never touched a firearm in my life..a twelve gage shotgun is not a weapon a woman would use for her first time killing someone"..and they spent months saying it couldn't have been me..I must have gotten someone else because I have never touched a firearm.

When Leanne was asked if she knew who "X" was she replied,

no..but now supposedly, if he's acquitted and I'm charged with the planning then who did the murder..I say X did it..they're probably not investigating the murder..no they own me and they have twenty-five years and someone's paying and that's all they care about.

Leanne denies knowing who the killer is in this excerpt but in another part of the interview she made it sound like she was aware of the killer's identity.

His (her husband's) death was a sad thing..a bunch of occurrences that happened caused it ..it got out of control and someone didn't like it..all the abuse that happened to me someone didn't like it.

Does Leanne know who killed her husband? If so, who is she protecting? Maybe her new boyfriend killed Bill or maybe it was one of her sons who was supposedly living in the United States. Because these questions remain unanswered an analysis cannot be conducted with regards to the killer's motive or why

he/she interpreted the situation as requiring a lethal response.

Although Leanne did not kill her husband one could see why she could come to that point and want him dead. He abused her physically, emotionally/ psychologically and sexually during their three year marriage. The threat of physical harm increased substantially when she left him which is common in violent relationships (Browne, 1987). For example, Leanne believes that her husband hired men to kill her on two occasions and he threatened to kill her when they exchanged the baby as well. Consequently, Leanne's physiological value of physical safety was being threatened as well as her individual values of selfhood, including self-respect and self-worth, on a regular basis (Levin and Spates, 1976). Leanne was able to regain these values partially by leaving Bill and by seeking therapy. As a result, she avoided utilizing a violent method, such as righteous slaughter, to reconsentrate her definition of self and her version of "the good" or behaviour which is consistent with her morals and values.

Background Information

The remainder of the chapter will examine the background of the female sample. Individual factors such as age, education, occupation, hometown, childhood, criminal charges and/or incarceration and mental illness will be explicated and

compared. Additionally, specific factors that describe the marital life of each woman will be outlined. For example, information pertaining to annual household income, length of relationship, number of children, divorce/separation attempts and previous violence or abuse in the relationship will be discussed.

Individual Factors

Age of Offender

The age of the women who were charged for their spouse's murder varied by eight years (32:40) with the mean age being thirty-six. At the time their partners were killed, Barbara was 32 years old, Joanne was 35 years old and Leanne was 40 years old.

Education

Two of the women in the sample did not complete secondary school. Barbara had a grade nine education when she asked an acquaintance to kill her husband. Similarly, Joanne had completed grade ten when her spouse was killed. Leanne, however, had obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a teaching certificate from the United States before she married Bill.

Occupation

All three of the respondents were working in occupations that are traditionally female dominated. Barbara was working as a secretary/receptionist when she asked someone to kill her husband. Similarly, Leanne was working as a legal secretary

before she had her baby. At the time her husband was murdered, she was a full-time mother. The third respondent, Joanne, was working as a cashier in a hardware store.

All of the women fall into the clerical, services and sales sector which comprises over 50% of all working women (Status of Women Canada, 1989). These occupations are generally low paying and have low status and consequently women who work in this sector are financially dependent upon their spouses to a certain extent (Status of Women Canada, 1989). These financial ties generally prevent women from leaving an abusive man (Menzies, 1978; Browne, 1987).

Hometown

The areas where the respondents grew up varied substantially. Both Barbara and Joanne grew up in Ontario. Barbara described her home as being a small town while Joanne reported that she grew up in a rural area. Leanne, however, grew up in a metropolitan city in the United States.

Childhood

Two of the respondents reported that they had unhappy and psychologically unstable childhoods. For Barbara, the unhappiness and psychologically unstable childhood was due to the fact that she was subjected to regular physical abuse by her mother. Similarly, Joanne reported that her childhood was unhappy and unstable because her dad was an alcoholic who abused her physically and emotionally/ psychologically.

Additionally, Joanne witnessed her father beat up her mother on one occasion. Leanne however, stated that she had a happy, stable childhood. She was the only woman in the sample who was not exposed to violence during her childhood.

These findings are consistent with the literature on battered women. For example, Browne (1987) reports that 71% of the battered women who killed their mates and 65% of the abused women in their sample who didn't kill their abusive mates had been exposed to violence during their childhood. The **Social Learning Theory** of violence is demonstrated because women who are exposed to violence at home are more likely to become involved with abusive mates.

Criminal Charges and/or Incarceration

All three of the respondents had been charged with an offense before they were charged with their spouse's murder. Barbara was charged nine times for credit card fraud before she was charged for murder. She was incarcerated on two occasions for a period of six months each and given probation for the remaining charges. Joanne was charged twice for impaired driving and once for fraud when she was a teenager. She was given probation for these offenses. Leanne was charged for working without a permit and using a false social insurance number. She was given a suspended sentence for each immigration offense. The non-violent nature of their crimes is consistent with the majority of women who are charged with

a criminal offense in Canada (Canada, 1986).

Mental Illness

Two of the women had received treatment for mental illness before they were charged for murder. Barbara sought treatment on two occasions because she was trying to deal with the abuse she experienced during her childhood. The first time she was hospitalized she did not know her husband and was pregnant with another man's child. The second time she was hospitalized she met David. According to Barbara, David was in the hospital because he assaulted his mother. Leanne also sought treatment for mental illness. After she separated from Jeff, she checked into a psychiatric hospital in order to cope with the physical, emotional/psychological and sexual abuse that her husband subjected her to. She was an inpatient for three months immediately following the separation and remained an outpatient for a year. Leanne also checked into the hospital after she found out that her husband was killed. Joanne did not seek therapy for mental illness or for the abuse she suffered before she was charged for her partner's murder.

These findings are consistent with research on mental illness. Women are more likely than men to admit to feelings and behaviour that may be labelled as a psychiatric disorder (Gallagher, 1987). Additionally, women in North America express their feelings more freely than men (Gallagher, 1987).

As a consequence, they seek out help to deal with their emotional problems more frequently than men (Gallagher, 1987). Although women are more likely to identify feelings associated with mental illness and seek out professional help it cannot be assumed that women experience mental illness more frequently than men (Gallagher, 1987). Men are socialized to ignore symptoms because of the negative sanctions they receive for abnormal behaviour (Gallagher, 1987). Thus, past studies that indicate that women have higher rates of mental illness are erroneous because they are based on hospital records and these studies examined disorders such as depression and anxiety which are more common amongst women (Gallagher, 1987).

Factors Relating to Marriage

Income

All three of the respondents reported that their total annual household income (income of the couple) was less than \$31 000. Barbara and her husband were collecting social assistance when she asked someone to kill him. Joanne reported that she and her common-law partner had an annual household income of approximately \$14 400. Leanne and her husband had an annual household income of approximately \$30 000. According to the composite that sociologists use to measure socio-economic status (SES), two of the women (Barbara and Joanne) have a lower-middle SES and Leanne has an upper-middle SES (Spencer, 1990).

Length of Relationship

The length of relationship between the offenders and their spouses varied by three years (3:6) with the mean period of time being four years. Both Barbara and Leanne were legally married for three years before their husbands were killed. Joanne, however, lived with her common-law partner for six years before he was murdered. The short duration of their relationships was common because the women were abused by their spouses. Two of the women were previously married as well.

Children

Only one woman reported that she and her husband had a child together during their marriage. Leanne and her husband had a daughter who was eighteen months old when Bill was murdered. Although the other women did not have children with their spouse, they had offspring from previous relationships. In fact, all of the respondents reported having at least one child that was not their spouses. Barbara had a son, Joanne had a daughter, and Leanne had two sons from a previous relationship. Joanne and Leanne's children lived with them when they cohabitated with their spouses. These children witnessed their step-fathers abuse their mothers.

Divorce/Separation

All three of the women in the sample had separated from their spouses at some point during their marital or common-law

relationship. Barbara and David had separated for two and a half years and were reunited for two and a half months before she had him killed. Joanne and Jeff separated five times during their six year relationship. The duration that they were separated ranged from two to eight months. Leanne and Bill were separated for fourteen months before he was murdered. A divorce was pending and they were in a custody battle over their daughter. All three of the women initiated the separation because their mates were abusive. Consequently, two of the women (Joanne and Leanne) were not living with their spouses when they were killed.

Prior Physical, Emotional, or Sexual Abuse in Relationship

All of the respondents stated that they had been subjected to physical and emotional/psychological abuse by their mates. Additionally, Leanne was sexually abused by her husband.

All three women reported that a third party had intervened in their violent interaction on at least one occasion. In Barbara's case, the police were called three times because her husband was physically abusing her. She called the police on two occasions and her landlord called them when the other incident occurred. Barbara charged her husband with assault twice but the charges were dropped by the police. The violent interaction that emerged between Joanne and her common-law was intervened by a third-party on one

occasion. Joanne's partner called the police on her because she stabbed him in the arm after he kicked her in the hand and face. The violence that Bill subjected Leanne to was also intervened by a third-party on two occasions. The first time assistance was sought out was when Bill physically abused his pregnant wife and she went into labour. Leanne told her son to call the ambulance and the hospital contacted the police. When the police arrived they did not attempt to charge Bill and they encouraged Leanne to make up with her husband. The second time Bill's violent conduct was intervened was when their daughter was four months old. Her husband attempted to physically abuse her and her son stepped in and prevented the violence from occurring. The way in which the respondents described the attitude and behaviour of the police is consistent with the research literature. The police continue to view the family as a private institution and as a result they are reluctant to get involved in domestic disputes (Menzies, 1978).

The police tend to give a low priority to domestic disturbance calls, do little when they do respond, frequently fail to submit official reports of complaints and, generally, tend to discourage abused wives from taking any legal action (Benjamin and Adler, 1980).

Unfortunately, many women eventually kill their abusive husbands in self-defense after they had unsuccessfully searched for alternative solutions including the police (Browne and Williams, 1989).

Chapter Seven

GENDER DIFFERENCES

The reasons why men and women take a human life are fundamentally different. The literature consistently reveals that men kill for a variety of reasons including monetary and sexual gain while women tend to kill after prolonged abuse by their partner, frequently in self-defense. These variations warrant a thorough investigation of gender differences in homicidal behaviour. The respondents in this study described unique circumstances and perceptions which led to homicidal behaviour. Although their stories can be viewed as unparalleled, commonalities permeate the data. Many of these similarities provide a link for the entire sample while others emerge along gender lines only. This chapter will demonstrate that gender differences exist in the type of epiphanies experienced, the offender's perceptions of the situation, the reasons or goals that characterized the homicide, and the role that was played in the homicidal drama. The themes which characterize the sample as a whole will also be discussed throughout the text of this chapter because both analyses are required to understand the dynamics of the homicidal situation.

Epiphanies

All of the offenders described an event or a series of circumstances which eventually led them to take action whether violence was the intended vehicle or not. Although these epiphanies were explicitly described in earlier chapters, the

general themes which characterized their epiphanies will be explicated in this section.

The situations that embarked a critical turning point for the male offenders involved both cumulative epiphanies or a series of events in their life (N=4/7) and major epiphanies or incidents that changed the offender's life forever (N=3/7). Two of the male respondents also experienced relived epiphanies which appeared to increase the intensity of their emotional response and reinforced the need to take action.

Four of the male respondents experienced epiphanies when they noticed changes in their partner's attitude and/or behaviour. These changes were perceived as negative for them personally and/or for their relationships. For example, Roger's wife began remembering the incidents of sexual abuse that she had experienced during her youth. When these suppressed memories surfaced, Terri began to drink heavily, attempted suicide on several occasions, left Roger frequently and refused to seek counselling for her emotional trauma. Roger believed these changes were detrimental for his wife and for their relationship. The epiphany he experienced was therefore directly related to changes in his wife's attitude and behaviour. Doug, Jack, and Phillip also reported epiphanic situations which emerged when their spouses altered their behaviour.

The remaining epiphanic situations arose from events that

were not directly related to the offender's intimate partner. In these cases (N=3/7), external events stimulated their epiphanies and their lethal behaviour. They are equally important however, because the respondents believed that the problematic situations they were encountering would involve their spouse or affect their relationship. Larry, for example, experienced an external epiphany and believed that it would negatively affect his marriage. As previously mentioned, when he realized that he would be incarcerated for embezzling Larry decided that the only way to prevent losing his family and going to prison was to partake in a double-murder suicide.

Unlike the male respondents, all of the epiphanies that the women reported (N=3) emerged as a result of their mate's behaviour. Specifically, all of the female respondents experienced cumulative epiphanies because they were subjected to varying degrees of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse from their partners. Not only were the women's spouses at the root of their epiphanic situations, the female offenders were more likely to perceive their partner's behaviour as deliberate because it was abusive, violent and repetitive in nature.

Gender differences therefore exist in the type of epiphanies that were experienced and the length of time it took for the epiphanies to develop. The female offenders were

more likely to experience epiphanies involving abuse and/or violence which transpired over years. They did not arise due to changes in their spouses' behaviour. Whereas, the male offenders' epiphanies developed over a shorted period of time ranging from minutes, hours, days and months and stemmed from changes in their partners behaviour or changes in their lives which affected their relationship with their partner. According to the men, violent or abusive conduct was not a characteristic of the victim-offender interaction. Furthermore, the men reported that violence and abuse was not utilized by them or against them. Violence and abuse therefore did not stimulate their epiphanies.

Rehearsals and Victim-Precipitation

Epiphanies appeared to evolve when individuals were exposed to a series of situations which were viewed as unacceptable and/or negative or emerged during the pre-homicidal interaction when the victim, intentionally or unintentionally, provoked the offender. Some of the respondents in this study reported that their epiphanies arose from rehearsals⁷¹ or Victim-Precipitation⁷² that evolved in

⁷¹ Rehearsals occurred if the respondent experienced transactions with their partner in the past which involved the same problems, discussions, interaction and aroused similar feelings and perceptions as the incident(s) which led them to kill, or allegedly have their spouse killed regardless of whether it was premeditated.

⁷² Homicide that involves Victim-Precipitation occurs when "the victim is the first in the homicidal drama to use" or attempt to use "phycsial force" and/or make verbal or physical gestures which initiate an interactive process

the pre-homicidal interaction. Both rehearsals and victim-precipitation influenced the development of epiphanies and created the cognitive perspective required to engage in lethal behaviour.

Two of the male respondents described situations prior to the prehomocidal interaction that can be classified as rehearsals. For Roger, the incidents that occurred on the weekend and evening of his wife's murder had been the norm for a long period of time. Specifically, on the night Terri was killed they both drank heavily, discussed her emotional problems and argued about the idea of her going to therapy. During that interaction, Terri threatened to leave her husband for another man. On many other occasions however, the couple drank together, argued about the fact that Terri would not seek counselling, and experienced incidents where Terri would leave her husband spontaneously and return to inform him that she had sex with his cousin (who was also her ex-husband) while she was gone. According to Roger, the only difference between the rehearsals and the evening he killed his wife was that he had drank a greater amount of alcohol, ingested a greater amount and variety of other drugs, and his wife told

resulting in homicide regardless of the intention. The first part of the definition which has been quoted is Wolfgang's definition of Victim-Precipitation (Wolfgang, 1957, p.2). Because his definition has been criticized for excluding non-physical gestures the definition utilized in this study combines Wolfgang's conceptualization with verbal gestures which may have provoked the offender (Meithe, 1985).

him that she would rather be dead than remember her abusive past.

Phillip was also exposed to rehearsals of argumentative interaction which led to the murder of his wife. Like Roger, he did not plan to kill his wife. In fact, Phillip initially planned to commit suicide but he projected his violence onto the individual who was the source of his pain and depression. So, although Phillip did not originally plan to kill his wife, he had planned to behave violently because of the rehearsals he experienced. In this way, the impact of rehearsals on Phillip was negative, produced the mindset to engage in lethal behaviour, and resulted in his wife's murder.

Theoretically, all of the women experienced incidents that could be characterized as rehearsals even though they were not interacting with their spouses when the homicide occurred. However, Barbara was the only woman who admitted that she was involved in her husband's murder. As a consequence, she was the only female offender who claimed to have responded to rehearsals by arranging or planning her husband's murder. For Barbara, the incidents that became rehearsals involved argumentative and potentially violent interaction. According to Barbara, these episodes emerged because her husband was emotionally abusive and jealous. When similar circumstances surfaced again, Barbara decided that she would no longer tolerate his behaviour and immediately asked

someone to kill her husband. He was dead within forty-eight hours.

For Barbara, that incident represented the pre-homicidal interaction. Regular exposure to abuse stimulated the same type of turning point and need to take action that was evident in pre-homicidal interaction. Barbara believes that she developed the frame of mind to have her husband killed due to the cumulative effect of the rehearsals.

Like Barbara, Joanne and Leanne had been subjected to emotional and physical abuse by their partners during their relationship. Even though they were separated from their partners when the murders occurred, their partners were still subjecting them to emotional abuse and/or physical violence⁷³. Specifically, intimidation⁷⁴ or overt threats of violence were made by their spouses to them directly or to their friends and family. The post-separation period then, did not prevent Joanne and Leanne from experiencing abuse and/or violence. There is no question that these incidents contributed to the death of their husbands but the way in

⁷³ Research by Lupri (1989) reveals that abusive men become more violent after their marital or cohabitating partners leave and/or divorce them.

⁷⁴ The Ontario Association of Social Workers outlined two forms of emotional abuse: intimidation and humiliation (Ontario Association of Social Workers, 1986). "Intimidation" is defined as "an overt or implied threat of violence (Ontario Association of Social Workers, 1986, p.15). "Humiliation" is defined as "an attack on the dignity and self-esteem and involves the withdrawal of approval, emotional support, love, affection and often sexual contact" (Ontario Association of Social Workers, 1986, p.15).

which murder became the product of their behaviour is debatable. In other words, emotional and physical abuse did influence the final outcome but they did not act as rehearsals for these women.

Due to these circumstances only three respondents (two men; one woman) or thirty-percent of the sample experienced rehearsals. The infrequent occurrence of rehearsals is inconsistent with the literature on homicide (Luckenbill, 1977; Chimbos, 1978). Luckenbill (1977) for example, reported that "in almost half the cases there had previously occurred what might be termed rehearsals between the victim and offender" (Luckenbill, 1977, p.177)⁷⁵. For Luckenbill (1977), physically violent behaviour was not a prerequisite for rehearsals nor was it required for the definition utilized in this study. However, when previous violent conduct was examined it was found that 30% of the total sample or all of the female respondents had been exposed to physical violence before the homicide occurred. This percentage is also low compared to other research. For example, Chimbos (1978) found that previous violence had transpired between the victim and offender prior to the homicide in 85.3% of the cases. Although rehearsals and previous violence was not a common experience for these respondents, it should be restated that

⁷⁵ Luckenbill defined rehearsals as "transactions that included the escalation of hostilities and sometimes physical violence" (Luckenbill, 1977, p.177).

violence was a predominant feature of the female offenders' rehearsals and epiphanies while it was not for the men.

One reason why rehearsals were infrequently experienced by the offenders is because the majority of respondents were not interacting with their spouses when the homicide occurred. In fact, seventy-percent of the total sample (N=4 men; N=3 women) did not participate in pre-homicidal interaction with their spouses. Doug, for example, was visiting neighbours when his wife was killed while Sam planned to have his partner killed when he was in prison. The other men, Larry and Phillip, killed their wives while they were sleeping.

This lack of participation in pre-homicidal interaction contradicts the perception that many spouses act violently in the heat of passion. It also explains why only three respondents (Roger, Jack and Joe) or 30% of the total sample described circumstances that resembled Victim-Precipitated homicides. Roger, for example, reported that his wife offered verbal and physical gestures which initiated a series of argumentative transactions and violent interaction that resulted in her death. The verbal gestures involved statements which stipulated that she would prefer to die than remember her past and that she wanted to leave him for another man. These comments were supplemented by physical gestures which involved Terri's attempts to physically leave the house. Both types of gestures were introduced by the victim before

the homicide. According to Roger, the physical and verbal gestures forwarded by Terri prompted his violent behaviour.

Similarly, Jack believes that he killed his wife because of the physical gestures she displayed immediately preceding her death. He claimed that he automatically responded when Brenda lifted a chair during a heated argument. Jack indicated that he perceived his wife's gestures as a threat to his well-being. His response was lethal because he happened to be carrying a weapon when his wife introduced the "threat". Given the context of the situation (i.e. that Jack arrived home to find another man in his home with his wife; that Jack was generally depressed and unhappy with the current state of his marriage; and that Jack was on prescription drugs) it is reasonable to assume that in this situation argumentative interaction would have developed. However, the possibility of a lethal response to the situation increased because Jack entered the house and the interaction with a weapon.

His goal was to frighten a man who was having an affair with his wife. Despite this fact, Jack downplayed the part he played in the pre-homicidal behaviour and stressed the effect his wife's actions had on him. By doing so, Jack was consciously or unconsciously rationalizing his behaviour. Nevertheless, Jack's behaviour did not evolve solely because of his wife's behaviour. It was a combination of things

including the fact that Jack was carrying a weapon, was in the frame of mind to utilize violence or threaten to use violence if the situation warranted, and the way in which his wife behaved. Victim-Precipitation therefore provides only a partial explanation for the lethality of Jack's behaviour and the behaviour of the other respondents.

The male offenders described Victim-Precipitated homicides more frequently than the women in this study (N=3 men; N=0 women). This finding is also inconsistent with the literature on homicide. As noted in Chapter Two, research on homicide demonstrates that women are more likely to be the offenders of Victim-Precipitated homicides than their male counterparts (Goetting, 1988). The reason why a greater number of men were involved in Victim-Precipitated homicides in this study could be due to different sample sizes, different definitions of Victim-Precipitation in other studies, the fact that 2/3 of the female sample denied any liability or participation, and/or the motive of the offenders when they delivered their stories. With reference to the latter explanation, the offenders could have described the homicide in a way that rationalizes their behaviour and holds them less accountable for their action⁷⁶.

Accessibility of Weapons

⁷⁶ Many sociologists and criminologists assert that when individuals discuss the homicide or their involvement in a violent crime, they tend to do so in a way that rationalizes their behaviour (Stets, 1988; Stanko, 1986; Ray and Simons, 1987).

All of the respondents who were influenced by Victim-Precipitation (Roger, Jack, Joe) were also influenced by the accessibility of weapons. When these men responded to the Victim-Precipitated circumstances they were able to acquire an object or instrument that could be utilized as the murder weapon or object without leaving the scene. While this accessibility was an important factor for 42.9% of the men in this sample, it did not play a role in the female offenders' behaviour.

Alcohol and/or Drugs

The way in which the respondents in this study perceived the situation may have been influenced by the consumption of alcohol or the ingestion of other drugs. Specifically, alcohol may have reduced the offender's ability to see alternative ways to solve their problems, increased their need to retaliate physically, or increased the likelihood that the offender's would misjudge the situation or misinterpret the meaning of the victim's behaviour.

Four of the offenders in this study (N=2 men; N=2 women) or forty-percent of the total sample reported that they were drinking alcohol or taking other drugs when they allegedly planned, arranged or carried out their partner's murder. Barbara, for example, reported that she had consumed three or four shots of rye when she decided that she wanted to have her husband killed. Although Barbara was "feeling no pain" when

she asked someone to kill her husband, she had twenty-four hours to sober up and think about her request before her partner was murdered. She had the opportunity to prevent the homicide from occurring but chose not to change his fate. Alcohol may have given her the edge necessary to make a decision of that nature but it was not the only factor involved. The fight that transpired earlier that day and the memories of similar incidents led Brenda to drink and subsequently prompted Brenda's decision to take action.

Although alcohol was not the most important factor for Barbara, drug consumption did play a significant role in the remaining cases (N=3). For example, Joanne implied that one of the major reasons the state won its case and charged her with murder was because she was intoxicated when her friend suggested that he kill her ex-boyfriend. In a drunken state, Joanne told her friend to "go for it" because she believed that his offer was "just drunk talk" and it made her feel better to wish her ex-boyfriend harm after the way he had treated her. These comments convinced the police that Joanne planned her partner's murder.

Roger and Jack were also taking drugs when they engaged in lethal behaviour. As outlined in Chapter Five, Jack was taking six different prescription drugs for various physiological and psychological problems when he killed his wife. The sixth drug, Oxazepam, was prescribed the day before

the offense occurred. Although Jack could not articulate how these drugs affected him, he does believe that they influenced his decision to threaten and/or injure his wife's alleged lover. Jack could not remember another incident where he had developed the frame of mind to utilize violence and/or had engaged in violent conduct and therefore believed that this uncharacteristic urge was facilitated by the drugs. Furthermore, the perception that his marriage was in jeopardy and that he must respond to the situation appeared to reach a climax the day he killed his wife. With this in mind, the combination of drugs Jack was taking may have assisted in creating an exaggerated perception of the situation which prompted an exaggerated response. Drugs therefore assisted in the development of a cognitive perspective required to engage in violent behaviour. Because of this fact, licit drugs and their effects on cognition and behaviour must be included and examined in further studies of homicide.

Roger was also taking drugs on the evening he killed his wife except in his case they were illicit and were combined with alcohol. Specifically, Roger had consumed large quantities of tequila and whiskey, smoked hash, sniffed cocaine and took valium on the night the homicide occurred. Roger described himself as a heavy drinker, but admitted that on the evening he had taken a greater amount and variety of drugs than usual. For example, Roger had never taken valium

in his life and was concerned about the effect that this particular combination of drugs and alcohol would have upon him. However, he ingested these drugs over the course of the evening while his wife behaved comparably by drinking tequila, whiskey and taking valium. Roger believes that the alcohol and drugs "acted as a catalyst" but he admitted that the drugs were not to blame, he was.

Besides misjudging the meaning of the victim's behaviour, two of the male offenders (Jack and Joe) felt like they were "out of control" when they killed their spouses. Jack attributed this feeling to the drugs/alcohol. For example, he suggested that when he killed his wife he felt like he "was in a car accident on ice..no control..it was like putting on the brakes but you couldn't stop". Similarly, Joe stated that when he killed his ex-girlfriend's best friend "it was like I was a third party just watching it happen". Although Joe was not intoxicated at the time he killed Laura, the ingestion of drugs seemed to intensify Jack's need to take action and it reduced the likelihood that he would utilize alternative ways of solving problems.

The consumption of alcohol and/or drugs was an important factor for 28.6% (N=2/7) of the men and 66.7% (N=2/3) of the women. Although a higher percentage of the female respondents were consuming alcohol and/or other drugs, none of the victims were behaving in a similar manner. With the male respondents

however, one man (Roger) reported that his wife had been drinking and taking drugs alongside her husband. This may partially explain why both Roger and his wife were unwilling to backdown from the situation. Such behaviour resembles character contests.

Character Contests

Three respondents (N=2 men; N=1 woman) or thirty-percent of the sample engaged in behaviour that can be described as character contests. As aforementioned, both Roger and his wife stood their ground in order to obtain their respective goals. Terri wanted to leave her husband and was willing to do anything to make it happen while Roger wanted his wife to stay and was willing to do what it takes to make her stay. Neither individual was willing to settle for something they did not want. Similarly, Joe saved face at the expense of his victim. However, in Joe's case, he was the only individual in the victim-offender relationship to stand steady and feel that he had to save face in the situation. Specifically, Joe felt humiliated by the victim's comments and was not willing to be viewed as an incompetent man in front of his friend or anyone else for that matter. In this way, Joe's behaviour was viewed as a character contest and was influenced by the fact that his friend was present. This is the only case where others were present during the homicidal drama and his friend's presence appeared to influence the violence that

emerged.

Barbara's behaviour also displayed elements that are common in character contests even though she was not involved in a confrontation with her husband when he was killed. For example, Barbara was not willing to allow the abuse or arguments, which were sparked by jealousy, to continue. She asked someone to kill her husband in order to stop his behaviour and show herself and others that she would not tolerate such conduct. Knowing that she wouldn't be able to hold her own physically or remain steady in the face of adversity, she hired someone who could. In this way her behaviour resembles a character contest.

Not only were these respondents driven by the desire to save face but their action was also stimulated by the fact that they perceived the victim's behaviour as personally offensive. Roger and Barbara, for example, found their partner's verbal and physical gestures as offensive while Joe perceived his victim's verbal comments in the same manner. Therefore, one reason why the respondents engaged in character contests, participated in Victim-Precipitated homicides, allegedly played a role in the victim's murder, or took action in general was because they perceived the victim's verbal and/or physical gestures as personally offensive. In general, ninety-percent of this sample found the victim's behaviour as offensive in nature. Six of these respondents (N=3 men; N=3

women) or sixty-percent of the sample found the victim's verbal and physical gestures as personally offensive. Two of the remaining male offenders (Doug and Joe) interpreted the victim's verbal gestures as offensive while Sam perceived his girlfriend's physical gestures alone as repulsive.

By engaging in character contests, lethal behaviour or action that stops the victim from continuing offensive behaviour the respondents were making a statement. Specifically, the offenders in this study were illustrating that they were not willing to accept being humiliated and/or allow their beliefs, their reputation, their respect and their identity to be exploited. Their character contests, rehearsals, Victim-Precipitated homicides, epiphanies, and/or action in general involved and perhaps emerged from being exposed to gestures which threatened their identity.

Identity Threats

Many offenders described the victim's behaviour in a way that can be conceptualized as threats to their social identity. These threats were gender-related and challenged the respondent's beliefs, values and role affiliations. Eight offenders (N=5 men; N=3 women) or eighty-percent of the sample depicted scenarios where their spouse had exposed them, intentionally or unintentionally, consciously or unconsciously, to gestures or incidents which threatened their identity.

Doug stated that the idea to have his wife killed came to

him when she began requesting that he stop behaving like a bachelor. Theoretically, Carol's behaviour represented an evaluative threat to Doug's group membership. In other words, by asking Doug to give up his bachelor role and status, she was implying that bachelorhood should be avoided. Doug valued his bachelor status and when he was asked to abandon it his social identity was threatened.

The remaining men (N=4) experienced content threats which attacked them as individuals. For example, these men reported that their victims had made verbal comments or behaved in a way that challenged whether they still held "prized personal qualities" (Breakwell, 1983). Specifically, the gestures indicated to the men that their partners were dissatisfied in the relationship and that there was the possibility that they would leave them. Some of these threats were explicit because the respondents were informed or discovered that their spouses were having affairs. Nevertheless, the victim's actions introduced the men to the possibility that they may not be virile, good lovers, good husbands/fathers and adequate breadwinners. In other words, the women challenged whether the men have gender-specific qualities that they value. For example, Jack's inability to perform sexual intercourse and gain long-term employment due to a heart attack led him to experience Role Strain⁷⁷ and identity threats. Although Jack

⁷⁷ Role Strain occurs when an individual has difficulty living up to role norms (Heiss, 1981).

claimed that he had encouraged his wife to seek out lovers after the heart attack occurred, his identity was still threatened every time his wife had an affair or brought home the pay cheque.

Identities were therefore threatened when the respondents believed that their masculinity was being challenged. Because the offenders are intimately involved with their victims, these threats were perceived as legitimate and requiring a response which would prove that they possess the desired qualities or that they can perform traditional roles appropriately. The nature of these threats and the feelings of desperation, rejection and anger that stemmed from having their masculinity challenged could explain why the offenders gained the cognitive perspective to respond violently. Indeed, identity threats were one of the most important factors influencing the respondents' behaviour.

This finding coincides with research conducted by Katz and Barnard. Katz, for example, suggested that men commit righteous slaughter in order to stand up for virility and the traditional meaning of masculinity (Katz, 1988). More specifically, Barnard argued that men kill their spouses when,

a walk-out, a demand, a threat of separation were taken by the men to represent intolerable desertion, rejection and abandonment..the precipitating event for the homicide was their inability to accept what they perceived to be a rejection of them or their role of dominance over their eventual victims..the unspoken sense

of dependency on their wives was the key to this type of homicide was well as the sex-role stereotypes that encourage men to believe that they have the right to control their wives' whereabouts and activities and that led them to express the pain of separation or rejection in aggressive rather than more sensitive ways (Barnard, as cited by Browne, 1987, p.144).

With these characteristics at hand, Barnard concluded that men typically engage in "sex-role threat homicides" (Barnard, as cited by Browne, 1987). Gender-related identity threats were therefore common elements of the victim-offender interaction and frequently stimulated lethal behaviour for the respondents in Barnard's study and in this research as well.

The humiliation that stemmed from being subjected to gender-related identity threats and the growing inability to tolerate the situation, which partially emerged because of the humiliation, contributed to the perception that action must be taken. Humiliation played a role for three of the male respondents (Jack, Sam and Joe) and their urge to respond to the situation stemmed partially from trying to extinguish the humiliation (Katz, 1988). Furthermore, the powerlessness and feeling of incompetence which accompanies humiliation frequently created a desire to gain control over the situation (Katz, 1988).

Although not all of the male respondents were consumed by humiliation, they all had an overpowering desire to gain control over the situation for some reason. By making a decision to rectify the situation or by taking action of some

kind the respondents were attempting to take control over a situation and perhaps reduce the anxiety that was associated with their problems. This reasoning was articulated by Larry,

once I decided on a course of action I became relatively calm..I was relieved because I knew how I was going to deal with it.

The humiliation, anger, depression and anxiety that stemmed from identity-threats, non-compliance by the victims or the epiphanic situation in general generated a perspective of the situation which involved the inability to continue tolerating whatever problems they were experiencing. All of the offenders (N=10) came to a point where they could no longer tolerate the situation. Specifically, the respondents found that they could no longer endure or accept the events which stimulated their epiphanies or the ramifications of those incidents. This inability to tolerate the situation led to the perception that action must be taken.

The lethality of the respondents' behaviour and the reason why the victims' gestures were interpreted as threats can also be due to the jealous and possessive nature of some of the male offenders. Specifically, the men may have experienced an internal threat or acquired a subjective understanding that the victim's behaviour was a threat to

their masculinity, when an outside observer would not have, because of jealousy and possessiveness⁷⁸.

In three cases (Roger, Jack, and Joe), jealousy and possessiveness appeared to have been a contributing factor. Two of these respondents openly admitted that they were jealous and possessive men and believed that the obsession they had with their partner influenced their violent conduct. This finding is consistent with extant research which suggests that jealousy and possessiveness are one of the major motives of criminal homicide (Wolfgang, 1958; Chimbos, 1978; Daly and Wilson, 1988; Goetting, 1989; Polk and Ranson, 1991).

Although not all of the men took action because they were jealous and possessive, the majority did take action because they were afraid of losing their partners. Specifically, five of the respondents (Roger, Jack, Phillip, Larry, Joe) or 71.4% of the male offenders took action because they feared losing their mates. This perception came from experiencing identity threats, rehearsals and/or epiphanies.

The identity threats the women experienced were also related to their gender, but they came in different forms and

⁷⁸ According to Breakwell (1983), Internal Threats are "the threatened person's subjective understanding of the threat" (Breakwell, 1983, p.). External Threats are "the understandings that other people have of the threat" (Breakwell, 1983, p.). With these definitions at hand, Breakwell (1983) suggests that an individual may feel threatened (an internal threat) when others do not see the situation as threatening (external threat). In other cases, the individual may not perceive an incident or gesture as a threat (internal) but others may (external) (Breakwell, 1983).

produced different implications and consequences. For example, all of the women experienced threats to their individuality and these threats came in the form of emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse. Specifically, their ability to perform the traditional role of wife/mother was challenged and "prized personal qualities" including attractiveness, intelligence and independence were threatened when they were subjected to abuse. Barbara's husband, for example, told her that she was a "tramp, slut, bitch, [and] stupid" on a daily basis and frequently accused her of "running around" with other men. Leanne reported that the abuse she experienced made her feel "dumb, stupid, and incompetent" and supported the idea that her husband's behaviour had threatened a sense of her 'self'.

I don't know who that person was..that was a cowering little dog and I don't know how you get to that point..I was not the same person.

Joanne also believed that her common-law partner's abusive behaviour had threatened her identity as a woman, a wife, a mother and an individual in general.

The abuse they experienced therefore not only stimulated their epiphanies and designed their rehearsals but served as identity threats as well. However, the abuse that characterized their identity threats did not challenge their gender identity exclusively. Instead, the action of the victims threatened their entire self-concepts. Furthermore,

the women were able to articulate with no hesitation that the victim's actions were threats and intentional in nature⁷⁹. As a result, the consequences of the victims' behaviour were described as being detrimental to the offenders' physical and psychological well-being. For example, all of the women implied, sometimes explicitly, that their partners' abusive behaviour had decreased or eliminated their self-respect and self-esteem.

In retrospect, all of the women realized that they were no longer the same person who had initially entered the relationship. They also mentioned that they felt powerless and incompetent which indicates that the victims' identity-threats and abusive behaviour in general stimulated feelings of humiliation (Katz, 1988). Humiliation, in fact, was a factor for all of the women in this study. Like some of their male counterparts, they took action to end the humiliation they were experiencing. However, they also took action to stop the abuse, end the constant fear that they would be

⁷⁹ In these cases the events that were understood to be threats by the offenders (internal) would have been perceived the same way by others (external) thereby producing consistent perceptions of the situation. However, the gestures or incidents that the men perceived as threats may not be perceived in the same manner and thereby different perceptions of the situation emerge. The reason for introducing this type of interpretation process is to understand if the offenders had a legitimate reason to perceive the situation as threatening. Nevertheless, the perceptions of the offenders are legitimate in the sense that they were lived experiences for the offenders and influenced their behaviour.

physically harmed or killed, and to salvage their self-respect.

All of the women and three of their male counterparts (Roger, Jack and Phillip) initially took action to change the course of their relationships, end the humiliation they were experiencing, and gain control over the situation by making an effort to negotiate with the victim⁸⁰. Despite their efforts, the respondents reported that the victims would not comply with their requests. Similarly, the literature suggests that criminal homicide frequently occurs when the victim will not comply with the wishes of the offender (Felson and Steadman, 1983; Athens, 1980; Luckenbill, 1977; Chimbos, 1978). Nevertheless, it was at this point, when negotiations failed, that these offenders chose alternate measures to obtain their goals.

After unsuccessful negotiation attempts, both the male and female respondents (N=3 men; N=3 women) eventually utilized violence or allegedly became involved in their partner's murder. Prior to this time however, the female respondents attempted another strategy to gain control over their lives and salvage their self-respect, self-esteem and

⁸⁰ Heiss (1981) argues that three components exist in the negotiating process. The first step in the process of negotiating is that "parties have divergent interests and actor assumes that it is to his[her] advantage psychologically and/or tactically if other drops his [her] definition and embraces actors" (Heiss, 1981, p.). Heiss also suggests that it must be "possible for actor and other to communicate with each other" and there must be the possibility of compromise (Heiss, 1981, p.).

self-concept. Specifically, all of the women separated from their spouses at some point during their marital or common-law relationship. Although two women were separated at the time their partners were murdered, they were still exposed to abuse and violence. The remaining woman, who was living with her husband again at the time of his murder, was also subjected to abuse upon returning to the relationship. Consequently, the second set of non-violent, socially acceptable measures were also perceived as failures. It was at this point that the women allegedly played a part in the killing of their partners.

The female respondents entered a second stage of problem solving tactics before they allegedly became involved in their spouse's murder. They attempted a greater number of strategies than their male counterparts and in doing so utilized non-violent methods to achieve their goals more frequently. They responded to identity threats by utilizing a mobility strategy which involves moving to evade the threat while their male counterparts were more likely to use a change tactic to erase the source of the threat (Breakwell, 1983). Additionally, their actions were not driven by jealousy, possessiveness, or the fear of being rejected or losing their spouses like many of the male respondents were⁸¹. Gender

⁸¹ The female respondents however, did report that their partners were jealous and possessive and believed the abuse stemmed from these qualities.

differences were therefore visible in the way the respondents interpreted the situation and the way they reacted to their perceptions and/or the situation in general.

Primary Versus Secondary Role

All of the men in this sample admitted that they were, to some degree, responsible for taking or attempting to take the life of another person. They all recognized that their action, intentionally or otherwise, stimulated the occurrence of a homicide or attempted homicide. Because of this factor, the men played a major or primary role in the crimes that transpired.

Three of the male respondents (Doug, Larry and Sam) or 42.9% of the men in this sample made plans or discussed the possibility of having their spouses killed. Larry and Sam revealed that their actions were planned and deliberate. For example, Larry openly admitted that his actions were premeditated:

the intention was to make it as quick
as possible..as gruesome as that sounds
..after that I had no set plan to take
my own life.

Conversely, Doug avoided portraying his behaviour in this manner. Coincidentally however, Doug was the only member of this trio to be charged with, and convicted of, first degree murder. Only one other male respondent was convicted of first degree murder (Joe) and as such only 28.6% of the male sample were sentenced to life imprisonment without eligibility for

parole for twenty-five years.

Two of these men (Doug and Sam) or 28.6% of the male sample were charged because they hired individuals to kill their spouses. In both cases, the respondents did not seek out professional "hitmen" to perform the murders. Instead, Doug talked to his cousin about having his wife killed and Sam hired two men who were supposed to be ex-felons. In other words, they sought out individuals who were readily available and who were familiar to them, to commit the crimes. This pattern of hiring someone within the offender's social network was also the method utilized by one female offender in this sample. Barbara, for example, asked a male acquaintance to kill her husband or find someone else who could do it for her.

The act of hiring someone to kill a spouse is a disturbing but interesting phenomenon. Two men (or 28.6% of male sample) and one woman (or 33.3% of female sample) or thirty-percent of this sample did just that. Although only one woman hired someone, the percentage of females hiring others was greater. Gender differences in this type of acquaintance or domestic homicide however, cannot be made because it has not been systematically addressed in social-scientific literature. Even still, Lindedecker⁸² (1990)

⁸² Lindecker (1990) became involved in investigating the nature of homicide during his twenty years as a police and criminal court reporter and another ten years as an editor and freelance crime writer. He wrote To Love, Honour and Kill which outlines ten true stories of husbands and wives who kill their spouses.

hypothesized that,

the female of the species...is much more likely than the male to resort to a "hands-off" method of dispatching her mate. She is more likely to use poison, or to pay someone else either with sex, money, or other material goods..to do the dirty work for her (Lindedecker, 1990, p.3).

Barbara played a primary role in her husband's murder because she admitted that she had played a key role and revealed that she had asked someone to kill her husband. She was the only woman in this sample who confessed to playing a part in her partner's murder. Two of the women (or 66.7% of the female sample) did not agree with police and prosecutors who argued that they had planned their spouse's murder. Both Joanne and Leanne deny being involved in their partner's murder. The state therefore argued that they had played a primary role in their husbands' murders while the women themselves claimed that they played a secondary role at best. Although police and court records were not examined, there was an obvious discrepancy between the women's version of the story versus the state's version. Both versions will be outlined from the respondents' perspective but the women's version of their own behaviour has been viewed as their lived experience in the homicide.

The evening Joanne's common-law partner was killed, Joanne was in a restaurant drinking with a male acquaintance. According to Joanne, the police argued that she had talked to

her friend about having her common-law spouse killed and from that point they planned his murder. Her friend then carried out the act. Although Joanne admits that she was in a restaurant with her friend and that the conversation involved her spouse, she denies a plan of any kind.

The real truth, which I'm telling this lawyer that the cops don't say I was drunk out of my mind and I really don't know what I said and that's the truth..it was no big plan like they said it was.

According to Joanne, the police claimed that her motive for wanting her partner killed was the monetary value of the home they were sharing prior to their separation. Once again, Joanne clearly pointed out that the motive established by the police was completely false.

They even made it out in court like I wanted this house..this \$40,000 house that's what I wanted you know like and I'm looking at them going 'oh'[in disgust]..that's why I wanted him dead ..and their just uno..that's my motive..mean-while it's the second house I owned in my life ..the first one I just walked away and never went back..it dosen't really matter to me about the house you know?

Furthermore, Joanne was given ample opportunities to kill her husband in self-defense if she wanted to so, so why didn't she? She realized that she was coming to the point where she could utilize violence to defend herself and when she became aware of this potential she decided to leave her partner.

I don't know if I could actually kill someone..I don't know, unless I was defending myself and scared then I think yea I could because I was getting that scared.

Joanne's male acquaintance was charged for killing her common-law partner. Because this individual was not interviewed, his version of the story is unavailable. Not even Joanne knew for sure whether he committed the crime or not. However, because this man's story is unknown and because he was charged and convicted for the murder according to Joanne, it will be assumed that he did commit the murder. The theoretical question then is why did he do it? Many speculations can be forwarded. For example, Joanne's male friend probably interpreted Joanne's affirmative response to violence as being serious and as such the go-ahead to conduct violence. Perhaps it became personal for this man after hearing the way Joanne's partner had been treating her. An attitude may have developed such as "who do you think you are..treating this woman this way..do you think you can do this to everyone..I don't think so" due to good old fashion chivalry. A sense of obligation to help a woman in need could have emerged. Similarly, he could have been the type of individual who is comfortable being aggressive, standing up for himself and utilizing violence as a means of dealing with problems.

Even if these hypotheses were accurate, why did he commit homicide when he could have demonstrated his point and achieved the same goals in a non-violent or less violent way? Once again, speculation is the only tool available to answer

this question. It is possible that this man felt like he should represent her and stand up for her as if she was standing up for herself. Maybe he believed that he was fighting for her, on her behalf. Unfortunately, only he knows if and why he killed Joanne's common-law partner.

Leanne also described her situation as being quite different from the police version. Like Joanne, Leanne separated from her abusive spouse to prevent or avoid a lethal confrontation and she too met a new man during her separation. According to Leanne, the police argued that she planned the murder for her new boyfriend to carry out. As with Joanne's case however, Leanne claims that the state's version is false.

They alleged a..I was looking for somebody to kill my husband, took up with Kevin, he has a lengthy criminal record and had used firearms in the past and um we planned it.. ..so that Kevin actually did the murder but I was present and I watched while my boyfriend brutally murdered my husband..it made me look pretty cold and calculated.

The state's argument that Leanne's new boyfriend killed her husband was not proven beyond a reasonable doubt and as a consequence he was acquitted of the charge. Despite this fact, Leanne was still charged for planning the homicide. Her alleged motive was custody of her baby. However, a great deal of time passed between when her husband was murdered and when she was arrested. If she was guilty and her motive was the baby, why didn't she get her baby and flee the country?

I could have left Canada during those two months, returned to the United States..I was free..they would have to come look for me..oh no..me I'm going to stick around.. Kevin would say to me before Bill was killed 'let's just take the baby and take off, let's just go..forget the court, forget it'..I would say 'no, no that's kidnapping I want to do this legally through the courts.

Similarly, if her motive was the baby why did she allegedly decide to have her husband killed when he had custody of the child?

Actually he took control of the baby that day which is even like sort of stupid like ..I don't think I would go to kill him if I thought the baby was with him..you see he was in his car [when he was murdered] ..how would I know she wasn't there?

Although both Joanne and Leanne deny having any involvement in the crimes that transpired, the murders probably occurred because the women were exposed to abuse and violence. In this way, these women played a secondary role in the murders. According to the women interviewed, this type of role is also common amongst women who are charged under "The Parties Act"⁸³. Under this section,

⁸³ "The Parties Act" refers to the "Parties to Offences" section of the Criminal Code. Section 21 stipulates that "(1) everyone is a party to an offence who (a) actually commits it, (b) does or omits to do anything for the purpose of aiding any person to commit it, or (c) abets any person in committing it; or; (2) where two or more persons form an intention in common to carry out an unlawful purpose and to assist each other therein and any one of them, in carrying out the common purpose, commits an offence, each of them who knew or 'ought to have known' that the commission of the offence would be a probable consequence of carrying out the common purpose is a party to that offence" (Section 21, Martin's Criminal Code, 1989, p.26-27).

anyone is guilty of murder who commits murder, does or omits to do anything for the purpose of aiding or abetting any person to commit murder..or anyone who knew or ought to have known that a murder would occur (Walford, 1987, p.18).

Approximately forty-percent of the "lififers"⁸⁴ in the Prison for Women in Kingston have been charged with murder under this section of the Criminal Code (Walford, 1987). According to Walford (1987), many of these women were charged because they were with men who killed someone, usually a police officer. Many women were also found guilty because of the "ought to have known" component of the "Parties Act". The role that these women played appeared to be minimal and/or undetectable. This type of involvement is also illustrated by the fact that only 20% of female lififers in the Prison for Women participated in premeditated murder (Walford, 1987). Walford's findings, and the discoveries from this research, illustrate that women convicted of homicide frequently play a secondary role. The men in this sample however, were more likely to be primary participants in their spouse's murder.

Role of "I" and "Me"

Self As Object

Ninety-percent of the respondents in this study (N=6/7 men and N=3 women) did not encompass a violent disposition and

⁸⁴ Walford (1987) defines Lififers as "prisoners who have been sentenced to life imprisonment for either first or second degree murder" (Walford, 1987, p. 16).

as a consequence the majority of offenders were identified as having non-violent self-images⁸⁵. The only respondent to reveal a violent self-image⁸⁶ was Joe. Despite Joe's conceptualization of self, he denied utilizing violence against his partner or his victim before the homicide. This was also the case for the majority of offenders. None of the respondents initiated violent interaction prior to the homicide. However, one woman (Joanne) stabbed her partner in the arm after he initiated a session of physical abuse.

Athens (1980) argued that individuals who have non-violent self-images form non-violent generalized others or others who do not provide moral support for acting violently. He also indicated that individuals with non-violent self-images and non-violent generalized others would only act violently in self-defense after they formed a physically-defensive interpretation of the situation. The majority of respondents in this study acted violently when they had non-violent self-images but only one man (Jack) had the potential to develop a physically-defensive interpretation of the situation. Why then, did the majority of these respondents act violently? Perhaps the respondents felt as much pain and vulnerability with identity threats as they would have if

⁸⁵ The definition of "Non-Violent Self-Image" is based on Athens (1980) definition which is outlined in Chapter Four.

⁸⁶ The definition of "Violent Self-Image" is based on Athens (1980) definition which is outlined in Chapter Four.

physical threats had been offered by the victims. The need to take drastic action may have stemmed from the desire to prevent psychological pain.

The victim's verbal gestures, especially those which challenged an individual's identity, may therefore be as threatening for some people as physical threats are for others. By associating those individuals who acquire non-violent self-images and non-violent generalized others with physically-defensive interpretations exclusively, restrictions are placed on the types of stimuli required to arouse violent, lethal behaviour from the average non-violent individual. Humans have different degrees of endurance, different levels and/or types of cognitive experiences, and different values, philosophies or objects worth defending. As a consequence, individuals with non-violent self-images may form other interpretations of the situation. This is possible because the majority of individuals in this study had non-violent self-images but refrained from forming physically-defensive interpretations of the situation.

Self as Subject

In order to discover if the spontaneous aspect of self, the "I", emerged in the self-process of the individual one must focus on those respondents who participated in pre-homicidal interaction. Of the three respondents who engaged in pre-homicidal interaction (Roger, Jack, Joe), all of them

indicated that their decision to kill, regardless of it was fully articulated, or their action in general, was spontaneous in nature. The "I" aspect of self was therefore an important component of their self-process during the pre-homicidal interaction.

Interactive Process Between "I" and "Me"

Both the "I" and "Me" aspects of the self-process were visible in the interpretation process and/or violent behaviour of those respondents who engaged in pre-homicidal interaction. Although the way in which the "I" and "Me" interacted is not explicitly recognizable, one can make some predictions based on what was disclosed in the interviews.

The first step is that the victim makes a verbal or physical gesture which is interpreted as negative to the offender personally or detrimental to his relationship with his spouse. Perhaps a similar gesture was forwarded on previous occasions. The offenders perceives the behaviour as offensive because it challenges their values, beliefs and/or identity and by taking the role of a specific other (the victim) the offender perceives these threats as legitimate. The offender then takes the role of a generalized other which prescribes the appropriate behaviour for each gender and the particular situation. The generalized other also provides guidelines regarding the appropriateness of violence as a means of solving the problem. These prescriptions may depend

upon the offenders previous experience with, or exposure to, violence in their childhood socialization or in their life in general. The "Me" is therefore the most important aspect of self during this stage. At this point, strong emotions are aroused and with these emotions the "I" aspect of self emerges. As the "I" predominates the self-process, the offender spontaneously decides, whether he/she articulates it as such, to take action to change the situation and prevent the victim from continuing their threatening behaviour.

Because such high emotions are aroused and the situation is perceived as intolerable, the "I" and "Me" aspects of the self-process fuse. The "I" guides the spontaneity of the response while the "Me" suggests which action should be conducted considering their gender, the situation in general or the type and degree of threat that was forwarded by the victim. The "Me" indicates what values or morals are being threatened and due to overwhelming emotions and the overpowering nature of the "I", the "Me" may not provide the individual with the moral implications and/or appropriateness of engaging in violent behaviour. The offender reacts spontaneously based on this fusion of the self-process and kills the victim.

After the offender kills the victim, the "I" and "Me" defuse, the emotional stance fades, and the "Me" aspect of self comes into play again. The offender reflects upon

his/her behaviour and by taking the role of a generalized other may be able to see the moral and legal consequences of his/her actions. Depending on their own philosophies and goals, offenders will turn him/herself in or flee the scene of the crime.

Unlike Mead's version of the self-process, it is hypothesized that during homicidal interaction the sequence begins with the "Me" and ends with the "Me". Although theoretically irregular or atypical, the fusion of the "I" and "Me" is possible under extremely stressful, highly emotional situations where a lot is perceived to be at stake. Fusion may also be possible because two men (Jack, Joe) explicitly stated that they felt "out of control" when they killed their spouses whereas the remaining man did not make such a comment even though his behaviour was spontaneous.

Unfortunately, gender differences in the aspects of self or the interactive process between the "I" and "Me" cannot be better understood because the male respondents were the only offenders to engage in pre-homicidal interaction. This fact alone however, illustrates a gender difference: the male respondents were more likely to engage in pre-homicidal interaction than their female counterparts. The females were more likely to play a passive role while the men played more of an active, primary role in the homicide. Another difference lies in the general goals or motives of the

offender. Sex and money did not appear to be major stimulators. Because marital or relationship breakdown was common amongst all of the respondents except Larry, the male offenders were more likely to take action because they hoped to salvage the relationship (ironically) while the women were more likely to take action to end the relationship. In fact, three of the men (Jack, Phillip, and Joe) were so distraught and depressed just prior to the homicide that they were at the point of considering or attempting suicide. None of the women described depression of that magnitude. Gender differences were therefore evident in the descriptive stories provided by the offenders.

Chapter Eight

CONCLUSIONS

You suffer this abuse by your husband and you think the Criminal Justice System or the police will treat you fairly..they treated me as bad as my husband did..they played more games with me, more manipulative tricks then he did..and it's all in the name of justice (Leanne).

The patriarchal nature of societal ideology and structure stimulated the permissibility and acceptance of violence against women. In the Nineteenth Century for example, men were legally allowed to utilize coercive, violent conduct over their wives. According to Sir William Blackstone, English Civil law gave the husband,

the same, or a larger authority over his wife: allowing him for some misdemeanors, to beat his wife severely with scourges and cudgels..for others only moderate chastisement (Sir William Blackstone, as cited by Browne, 1987, p.165).

These laws provided the foundation for the American judicial system and as a consequence a patriarchal perspective appeared in colonial criminal justice systems as well. The influence of English Common law is demonstrated in a court ruling in North Carolina in 1864:

the law permits [a man] to use towards his wife such a degree of force, as is necessary to control an unruly temper, and make her behave herself; and unless some permanent injury be inflicted, or there be an excess of violence, or such a degree of cruelty as shows that it is inflicted to gratify his own bad passions, the law will not invade the domestic forum, or go behind the curtain. It prefers to leave the parties to themselves, as the best mode of inducing them to make the matter up and live together as man and wife should (Sir William Blackstone, as cited by Browne, 1987, p.166).

Violence against women was therefore institutionalized and legitimized structurally as well as ideologically via the criminal justice system. During this time, the law recognized the fact that violence in the home existed but implied that it

was part of the marital package and that legal or outside interference should be avoided.

These patriarchal attitudes and practices are evident today in the criminal justice system and in society in general despite legal and ideological changes in the Twentieth Century. For example, men are no longer allowed to beat their wives legally. Despite this indoctrination, men have continued the practice of abusing their wives or common-law partners and the police have continued to treat domestic violence as a private matter (Edwards, 1989; Menzies, 1978). It has been estimated that each year one million women in Canada may be physically, psychologically or sexually abused by their husbands, boyfriends or former partners (Pollak, 1990). Although legal changes have attempted to prohibit violence theoretically, patriarchal biases are still evident in the criminal justice system. Specifically, Edwards (1989) argued that,

Violence committed against wives, cohabitees, girlfriends, lovers in the privacy of the home, unlike violence against strangers or acquaintances committed in private or in public, is rarely dealt with in the Criminal Courts..when it is made the subject of a criminal charge violence against women intimates is frequently 'down-crime', defined as an assault when assault pertains or differently assigned as a crime of criminal damage or breach of the peace (Edwards, 1989, p.50).

To a large extent, violence against female intimates has not permeated into the courts because the police still view

domestic violence as a private matter. Both social-scientists and the female respondents in this study argued that the intervention procedures utilized by the police in domestic disputes are passive and ineffective because they rarely lay charges or separate the participants (Edwards, 1989; Menzies, 1978). Leanne, for example, summarized her opinion of the police in the following way:

I think male police officers still have a male chauvenistic attitude..it's a domestic, take care of your trouble and work it out..I made my son son call the ambulance..he [her husband] had thrown me around and I went into labour..so the cops came..they looked at me, uno..here I was in a stretcher and they said "can you make up with your husband?" and they left.

As Leanne demonstrates, domestic violence continues to be viewed as a private problem and is treated as such by the police (Menzies, 1978; Edwards, 1989). Patriarchal biases are therefore still evident in the criminal justice system and in societal structure and ideology in general. Consequently, abuse and violence continues in our society even though there has been an increase in both public awareness and in the number of challenges to the status quo regarding the patriarchal structure of society and the traditional roles of men and women.

As public awareness increased, society has become aware of the extent of the problem of wife abuse and domestic violence and as a result the "private" matter has become a

"public" issue (Mills, 1959). Specifically, the "private troubles" of abused women did not become a "public issue" until the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1970's (Freeman, 1980). During this time, a greater awareness of violence against women emerged because consciousness raising tactics and other assertive strategies were utilized to create change (Barrett, 1988; Eisenstein, 1989). Around the same period, social-scientific research began to flourish and as studies became available the extent of the problem was identified more accurately. As public awareness increased, the problem of domestic violence became more of a public concern.

Domestic violence, although frequently hidden because of the private nature of the family, is a public concern because it affects the interactants, their social support network of family and friends, the community (eg. shelters), and the state (eg. the criminal justice system). Women, for example, may have to find refuge outside the home or seek police intervention to assist them if they find themselves in an abusive, violent situation. Because programs need to be in place and the police must frequently become involved it is a public issue that must be addressed. It is also a public problem because domestic violence reflects the values, morals and beliefs of the larger society.

Domestic violence, therefore, has macro roots in

patriarchy and has implications in the micro and macro worlds. For example, because patriarchy influenced societal structure and ideology it provided the opportunity for domestic violence to emerge, exist and continue. The structural arch of patriarchy, which influenced North American judicial systems, permeated into the micro world of interpersonal interaction because individuals were behaving consistently with that particular ideological perspective. That is, men were acting violently against their spouses partially because they were allowed to do so. In this way, the wife, husband or the micro world was being affected by a patriarchal society or the macro order.

The micro world of the interactants who engage in the most lethal form of domestic violence, homicide, was investigated in this study. All of the respondents in this study are linked by the following themes: marital or relationship breakdown; identity threats by the victim; desire to gain control over the situation; desire to end an intolerable situation; feelings of humiliation, anger, fear, anxiety and frustration; and desire to end an intense emotional perspective that was associated with the problematic situation. However, gender differences did emerge in the data as well. Specifically, men and women experienced different types of epiphanies, experienced different types of identity threats, had different stimulants which produced

similar emotional perspectives, utilized different types and numbers of strategies to resolve the situation, played different roles in the homicide and had different goals and/or motives for taking action.

The epiphanies that the respondents experienced produced strong emotional perspectives which stimulated them to take action. The majority of male and female offenders, if not all, experienced feelings of frustration, depression, anger, fear, anxiety and/or humiliation. The men were frustrated and depressed typically because they realized that their relationship with their spouse had disintegrated to a point of no return. Their anger, anxiety and humiliation stemmed from the fact that they were unable to effect change in the relationship. The majority of men were afraid of losing their spouse and being rejected even though the traditional masculine morality sphere values independence rather than connectedness with others (Gilligan, 1982 as cited by Mackie, 1987). According to Gilligan, ruptured relationships are more problematic and/or detrimental for females than males. This may be true but many of the men in this sample were jealous, possessive, insecure and formed definitions of self which were based on their relationships with women. As a consequence, these men were unable to cope with the perception that their relationships were breaking down. The perception of marital or relationship breakdown was therefore an important

stimulator of violence because when these fears were absent the respondents were able to cope with, and resolve, marital or relationship problems non-violently.

Although the male respondents generally had non-violent self-images and non-violent generalized others, they were socialized to a certain extent to value traditional male qualities. For example, many of the men were uncomfortable knowing that they did not have control over the situation and illustrated via violence that they could obtain control, be dominant, and aggressively stand up for themselves. These beliefs and ways of behaving are similar to those outlined in Box's definition of the "real man".

To be a 'real man' in our culture is to realize that 'a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do'.. ..he has to be strong, powerful, and independent; he should be prepared to be tough in overcoming adversity, to be forceful and never flinch or show cowardness, to be dominant by fair means or foul, to be constantly striving for achievement and success, even at the expense of others if necessary, to be competitive and determined to win although prepared to take defeat 'like a man' and above all, never, never to be seen acting or talking like a girl (Box, 1983, p.145).

Societal expectations associated with being a 'real man' appeared to have influenced the perceptions and actions of the male respondents in this sample. Jack, for example, was extremely anxious, frustrated and depressed because he could not fulfill the traditional breadwinner role and could not fulfill his wife's sexual needs. The identity threats, which challenged the male respondents' prized masculine qualities,

influenced their interpretations and action as well. Despite these facts, only two men facilitated violence in order to 'save face'. Others however, may have participated in a type of character contest where violence was utilized in order to save or maintain their reputation for friends and family. This could be the case because many participants would not go to a marriage counsellor because they were too ashamed and/or embarrassed that the relationship was not working out. In fact, some of the offenders did not even discuss having marital problems with family because of shame. Ironically, the majority of men in this sample took action to prevent losing their spouse and/or to resolve the relationship. The lethality of their action and the active, aggressive role they played in the homicides was due to many factors including: the escalation of fear and desperation associated with losing their spouses, the desire or need to act consistently with traditional masculine behaviour, the inability to effect change or achieve their goals by utilizing other strategies and/or the consumption of alcohol and other drugs.

The females in this sample experienced physical, emotional/psychological and/or sexual abuse from their partners. Their epiphanies arose because of abuse and the identity threats they were exposed to were implemented via abuse and violence. The women were afraid of being severely injured or killed and they were humiliated when they

recognized the effects the abuse was having on their self-concept, self-respect and self-esteem. Consequently, they attempted non-violent ways of dealing with the situation by leaving their partners. When this method failed, they allegedly planned and/or arranged their spouses' murders. Because two of women claim that they were not involved in their partners murders, they were viewed as passive players in the homicide. Regardless of their role, all of the women wanted to end the relationship with their spouse. The overall goal of the women would have been to end the relationship, end the abuse, end the threats of being killed, regain control over their lives and resalvage their self-worth, self-respect, and self-esteem..

The purpose of this type of research is to examine the relationship between personal troubles (i.e. domestic violence) and the public policies and institutions that are designed to deal with it (Mills, 1959; Denzin, 1989). Strategies and policies must address gender differences in homicidal behaviour in order to approach the problem of lethal domestic violence effectively. Research clearly shows that women frequently make attempts to obtain outside intervention before committing spousal homicide (Browne and Williams, 1989). Lindsey, for example, (1976, as cited by Browne and Williams) found that all of the women who had killed their husbands in his sample had called the police for help at least

five times before they engaged in lethal action. Police must therefore take a more aggressive, proactive approach when investigating domestic disputes. For example, charges should be laid more frequently and restraining orders should be obtainable with fewer problems and should be enforced (Browne and Williams, 1989; Menzies, 1978).

Other alternatives should be available as well because research reveals that women frequently search for alternative solutions and only kill when they feel hopelessly trapped in a situation where they see no practical escape (Browne and Williams, 1989). Perceptions of being 'trapped' stem from the lack of faith in police intervention, the awareness that shelters are generally overcrowded, and the financial and emotional dependence women have on their partners (Menzies, 1978; Browne and Williams, 1989). Policies and strategies for women must therefore focus on possible alternatives for women in abusive situations. Police practices must change and the number of shelters for women and their children must increase so they can accommodate more women and allow them to stay for longer periods. This is particularly important because Menzies (1978) found that 31% of the abused wives in his sample returned to their husbands after their time was up at a refuge.

Preventative measures for the men are not as easily identifiable. Policies or strategies must focus on educating

men on gender equality, the acceptability of non-traditional attitudes and behaviour, appropriate ways of coping with marital problems, and the acceptability of obtaining counselling for marital or relationship problems. Most of these strategies are not enforceable however, because traditional socialization and perceived societal support in a patriarchal, capitalist society, is at the root of these issues. Furthermore, homicide may not be the end result of escalating violence between spouses. When this is the case how would one be able to take preventative action? Perhaps reduction via band-aid strategies is more realistic than prevention because social-structure and ideology in general must change if violence against women and domestic violence in general is to be reduced or eliminated. Not only does the macro order have to be understood, examined in order to explain why violence against women and domestic violence in general occurs, but it is also important to study the dynamics of the victim-offender interaction and lived experiences. The goal of this exploration was to gain a greater understanding of the situational components of homicidal interaction and attempt to comprehend how and why individuals developed the cognitive framework to engage in lethal behaviour. It is hoped that this study will provide the basis for a larger, more representable study of spousal homicide.

Appendix A

Dear XXXX,

I am writing because I am a student with the University of Windsor who is conducting research on homicide that occurs between married or common-law spouses.

The research I am conducting involves looking at what occurred between you and your mate prior to the offense, especially your feelings. I know that talking about this may be hard but I am hoping that you would consider at least meeting me to see if you would feel comfortable talking to me. If you volunteer to participate in this research, you would be asked to take part in an interview that would last approximately one to two hours. You would be guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality so that your name and details of the case would be altered so that no one could be identified when I write my paper. Interviews would be conducted in a sensitive manner so that any questions you were uncomfortable with you wouldn't have to answer.

I honestly believe that there is a need for the public to understand what men who have committed this offense usually experience. I am not conducting this research to be judgemental or reinforce stereotypes about men who commit this type of crime. I am very open minded and I apologize if this request offends you. I am only interested in learning from your experience and I hope that you will consider my request at being involved in my research. I would like to be given the opportunity to learn from you about what happens when this crime is committed and I think the public needs to know the circumstances that usually occur.

I will be coming to the institution on July 29th and 30th and I hope you will at least meet with me and see if you would be comfortable discussing this sensitive topic.

Thank-you very much for your time,

J. Lancaster
M.A. Candidate
Sociology and Anthropology Department
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Windsor, Ontario
N9B 3P4

Appendix B

Dear XXXX,

I am a University of Windsor M.A. student who is doing research on homicide that occurs between married or common-law spouses. Specifically, I am looking at gender differences in the experiences and interaction that occurs between mates prior to the offense. In order to proceed with my research I have to interview men and women who have committed this type of crime. I am writing to see if you would volunteer to participate in a study.

I understand that the nature of this crime is very personal and very difficult to discuss with anyone, especially a stranger. However, I would appreciate the opportunity to learn what happens during this offense from those who have experienced this situation. Interviews would be conducted emphatically and sensitively with women who volunteer to participate. Interviews would take approximately two hours and would be tape recorded with consent only.

My motives are humanistic and academic in nature. I honestly believe that there is a need for the public to understand what women typically go through - physically and emotionally prior to the offence. Hopefully, providing such information would fill in some gaps with regards to why women commit homicide. Additionally, providing such information would help increase public awareness about violence against women since it is known that women usually act violently in self-defense. I would like to think that studies like this would reduce stereotypes about women who commit crime.

Studies that examine women who commit homicide are rare especially in a Canadian context. The lack of research is basically due to the fact that it is very difficult to gain access into Canadian Correctional facilities. Many attempts are made but few individuals actually receive permission to conduct research unless they are affiliated with Correctional Services of Canada. Fortunately, the Warden at the Prison for Women has given me permission to conduct my research even though I am in no way affiliated with Correctional Services of Canada.

As a woman, I feel very strongly that research of this nature is essential for a greater understanding of violence

Appendix B

against women and women who commit crime in general because they have been neglected in theory and research. I understand that women in correctional facilities in Kingston have been studied alot over the past year so I do not want to impose on your rights as an individual or cause you any unnecessary aggravation. All I ask is that you consider meeting me in person to see if you would feel comfortable talking to me about your situation. If you decide at that point that you do not want to proceed with the interview then that is not a problem. On the other hand, if you decide to be interviewed then the interview would be conducted directly after we get acquainted. I would appreciate it if you could contact me as soon as possible either way so that I can arrange a schedule with the Warden at P4W for when I can come to both the P4W and the Isabel MacNeill House. I can be reached at (XXX) XXX-XXXX and will accept a collect call. Feel free to call me even if you would like more information regarding my study. I live with other students though so please tell the operator that the call is for me and if someone else dosen't accept the call (because they do not know about my research) then please try again. Another option is to contact Donna Morrin at the P4W because she is aware of my research and could let me know if you are willing to be interviewed.

Thank-you very much for your time,

Sincerely,

Judy Lancaster

Judy Lancaster
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Appendix CConsent Form

I, _____ (Name) have been asked to take part in a research project about homicide between married and common-law individuals.

I agree to take part in this study, but I understand that my taking part is purely voluntary, and that I am free to refuse to answer specific questions. I may also withdraw from the study if I feel it necessary. My participation in this study will not count for or against me in any way.

During the interview I will be asked to describe the circumstances surrounding the offense and I also agree to do this. I will also be asked to answer specific questions concerning the events that occurred and the feelings I experienced. I also agree to allow the researcher to obtain additional information from my institutional files if it is required.

Any information I give will be strictly confidential. Nothing I say will affect my position here in any way. The information I give will be used for scientific purposes, in order to better understand the interaction that occurs between spouses prior to a homicide. My answers will be coded in such a way that I cannot be identified in any report of the results.

My signature below indicates that I have read the above, and that I agree to take part and give my consent to the researcher having access to my institutional file. The interviewer will also sign to guarantee the conditions stated above.

Date

Inmate's
Signature

Date

Interviewer's Signature

Appendix D**Interview Schedule**

Date of Interview:

Subject #:

Institution:

Start Time:

Finish Time:

Areas of Concentration

A. Background Information

1. Sex - Male/Female
2. Age - How old were you when you committed the offense?
3. Education - What level and/or grade of formal education did you complete?
 - Example: elementary school, secondary school, post-secondary (college, university)
4. Occupation - What did you do for a living?
 - Example: farmer, housewife/mother, labourer, foreman, public administrator, retail salesperson, teacher, physician, lawyer, engineer
 - What did your spouse do for a living?
5. Income - Approximately what was the total annual income in your household?
6. Home - How would you characterize the place where you spent most of your growing up years?
 - Examples: rural area (farm or non-farm under 3 000), small town (under 3 000), large town (3 000 to 10 000), small city (10 000 to 100 000), large city (100 000 to 1 000 000), metropolitan city (over 1 000 000).
7. Childhood - How would you characterize your childhood? (eg.happy, unhappy; stable, unstable)
 - Were you exposed to violence as a child?
 - If so, in what form and how frequently?
 - How has this affected you and your relationship with your spouse?
8. Length of Marriage/Relationship - How long were you married or living in a common-law relationship (living together for two years or longer) before the offense occurred?
9. Children - Did you and your spouse have children?
 - If so, how many children do you have and what sex are they?
 - If so, how old were they at the time of the offense?
10. Divorce/Separation - Did you and your spouse temporarily separate or attempt/get a divorce from one another during your married or common-law relationship?

- If so, generally why did you separate (violent/non-violent reasons)?
- If so, for how long were you separated and why did you get back together?

11. Prior Violence in Relationship - Before this incident occurred were there previous times when violence was utilized in the relationship?
 - If so, how frequently did the incidents occur?
 - If so, what level of violence was typically used?
 - If so, why do you think that violence was utilized?
 - If so, were the violent incidents ever intervened by a third party? If so, who intervened (friends, family, police)? Was intervention deliberately sought out by you or your spouse or did others intervene because they thought it was necessary?
12. Previous Charges and/or Incarceration -Prior to this incident, were you ever charged with an offense?
 - If so, what were you charged with and how long ago did this occur?
 - If you have been charged more than once by police, how many times have you been charged altogether (including this time)?
 - What type of sentence(s) did you receive for each offense (eg. custodial vs. non-custodial)?
 - If you have been incarcerated previously, explain how often and when this occurred?
 - Was your spouse ever charged with an offense?
 - If so, what charges were laid and/or what type of sentence did he/she receive (custodial vs. non-custodial)?
13. Mental Illness -Have you ever received any treatment for mental illness (i.e. appointments with and/or treatment by medical physicians [eg. psychiatrists] or psychologists)?
 - If so, characterize the nature of this treatment
 - If so, when did this treatment occur?

- Was your spouse ever treated for mental illness?
- If so, characterize the nature of this treatment
- If so, when did this treatment occur?

B. Pre-Homicidal Interaction

1. Incidents/events by victim and offender prior to Homicidal Interaction that stimulated, encouraged or influenced the occurrence of the offense

a. verbal interaction between victim and offender

- Explain what types of things you and your spouse discussed/argued about before the offense occurred
- Was this topic discussed/argued about previously and if so how frequently? (eg. once before, once a week)
- Who initiated the final discussion/argument?
- If similar arguments occurred in the past were they initiated by the same person?
- If similar arguments occurred previously how did you and your spouse resolve them (eg. outside intervention) or were they unresolved?

b. physical gestures or action/interaction by victim and/or offender

- Explain what type(s) of physical interaction occurred between you and your spouse prior to the homicide (eg. slapping, hitting)
- Explain these physical gestures or action/interaction in the order that they occurred (in terms of who initiated the action, the reaction of the other person - a play by play of what physical action was taken by each party prior to the homicide)
- Were these gestures and action/interaction frequently utilized between you and your spouse in previous arguments/discussions?
- If so, why did this one result as it did?
- How did your spouse's verbal comments make

- you feel in previous arguments and in this discussion before the offense occurred?
- Were the feelings you experienced towards the situation and your spouse in other arguments/incidents any different from the feelings you experienced before this offense?
 - How did your spouse's physical gestures or action/interaction make you feel?

2. Consumption of Alcohol or Drugs Prior to the Homicide

- a. Consumption by Offender -Did you take any alcohol or drugs prior to the offense?
 - If so, explain what type of substance you ingested, the amount you consumed and the level of intoxication you were experiencing prior to the offense
 - In what ways, if at all did alcohol influence your action (verbal or physical) or reaction (verbal or physical) to the interactive exchanges you had with your spouse?
 - What amount of drugs/alcohol do you usually take and how frequently do you take them?
- b. Consumption by Victim -Did your spouse take any alcohol or drugs prior to the offense?
 - If so, explain what type of substance he/she took and if and how you think that the consumption affected your spouse's verbal or physical behaviour
 - What amount of drugs/alcohol did your spouse usually take and how often did he/she take them?

3. Presence of Emotional, Physical or Sexual Abuse Prior to the Homicide¹

¹Emotional/Psychological Abuse is defined as "non-physical abuse which covers a range of behaviour and expression ranging in severity from condescension and belittling to serious terrorizing. It may precede or accompany physical abuse or may not escalate into actual physical violence. It takes two forms: intimidation (an overt or implied threat of violence and humiliation (an attack on the dignity and self-esteem and involves the withdrawal of approval, emotional support, love and affection and often sexual contact)" (Ontario Association of Professional Social

- a. Offender participation in Abuse - Throughout your marriage/relationship did you ever engage in emotional, physical or sexual abuse towards your spouse?
 - If so, what type of abuse and how frequently did this behaviour occur?
 - Was abusive behaviour engaged in just prior to the offense? If so, explain exactly what abuse occurred
- b. Offender recipient of Abuse - Throughout your marriage/relationship did you ever get abused by your spouse?
 - If so, what type(s) of abuse did you receive and how frequently were you subjected to this abuse?
 - Did your spouse conduct abusive behaviour just prior to the offense?
 - If abuse was a regular occurrence in your relationship (you being a recipient or participator of abuse) explain the ways in which it may have changed in nature over time (compare previous abusive situations with the one prior to the offense)

C. Homicidal Interaction

1. Ways that the Pre-Homicidal Interaction Influenced Lethal Behaviour

- a. How did your mate's verbal comments affect your behaviour (verbal and physical)

Workers, 1987, p.15).

Physical Abuse is defined as "besides punching and slapping, physical assault includes pushing, arm twisting, kicking, beating with an instrument, choking and, in some cases, methodical torture" (Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers, 1987, p.15).

Sexual Abuse is defined as "a specific, degrading type of physical violence, which includes all forms of sexual assault, including rape (which often occurs even when sexual overtures have not been repulsed or refused); instrumental rape; performance of sexual acts under coercion, either with the abuser or others. The last may include forced participation in prostitution, pornographic performances or filming" (Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers, 1987, p.15).

- b. How did your mate's physical gestures or behaviour affect your behaviour (verbal and physical)
- c. Why did you utilize violence?
- d. What was your intent or goal and was the utilization of violence a means of accomplishing that goal?
- e. What was your primary motive or reason for engaging in this behaviour?
- f. What emotions were experienced during the pre-homicidal and homicidal interaction?
- g. What values were experienced during the pre-homicidal and homicidal interaction?
- h. In what ways did you feel threatened (physically and/or psychologically) and what specifically was being threatened?

2. Location of the Offense

- a. Where did the offense occur generally (eg. your house vs. a bar) and specifically (eg. bedroom vs. bathroom)?

3. Presense of Others During the Pre and/or Homicidal Interaction

- a. Were there others present prior to and/or during the offense?
- b. If so, how many others were present?
- c. If so, how were these individuals related to you and/or your spouse?

4. Method Utilized

- a. How did you actually commit the offense?

5. Alcohol/Drug Ingestion

- a. -If alcohol/drugs were taken prior to the homicide, how did this affect the Homicidal Interaction -How did the consumption of drugs/alcohol influence your behaviour and your spouse's in terms of the following areas: i.e. behaviour at the time of the offense - type of weapon used, location of offense, number of attempts, presense of others (eg. more or less committed to the act), staying/fleeing the scene? -Were you intoxicated at the time of the offense?
- b. -Was your spouse intoxicated at the time of the offense?

D. Post-Homicidal Interaction

1. Feelings Towards Situation and/or Spouse After the Offense
 - a. How did you feel psychologically after you had committed the offense (eg. relief, hatred vs. remorse, love)?
2. Action Taken by Offender After the Offense
 - a. Did you attempt to leave the scene after the offense?
 - b. If yes, was the attempt successful?
 - c. If you remained at the scene was it a voluntary or an involuntary act?
 - d. What factors influenced your decision to flee or remain at the scene after the offense (eg. presense of others)?
3. Premeditation
 - a. Did you plan the offense?
 - b. If so, what factors were involved with planning the offense?
4. Salience and Significance of Pre-Homicidal Interaction on the Actual Homicidal Interaction
 - a. What factors influenced the final outcome of homicide (eg. unequal power distribution in relationship, financial hardships, employment related stress, self-defense)?
 - b. How important was the Pre-Homicidal Interaction in influencing the Homicidal Interaction?
5. What sentence were you given for this offense?

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