

1. Abstract

Over the past 15 years, we have gathered information about serial killers. The result of this effort is the Radford Serial Killer Database, a database containing information on 1,737 serial killers worldwide. Our goal is to use this dataset to provide empirical answers to questions regarding serial murder. This poster presents the answers to two of those questions:

- (1) Is the profile of a white, male, in his mid to late 20s an accurate profile?
- (2) What is the IQ of the typical serial killer?

2. Developing the Database

- ▶ Find information about individual serial killers
 - Prison records
 - Trial transcripts
 - True crime books
 - Media reports
 - Internet sources
- ▶ Use multiple sources to verify information
- ▶ Develop Radford Serial Killer Database
 - 15 years of data collection
 - Information on 1,737 serial killers
 - Demographics and life history
 - Details about the crime
 - Sentencing details
- ▶ Develop serial killer profile and subtypes
- ▶ Determine if victim and crime scene info provide insight into serial killer demographics

3. Data Notes

- ▶ Because demographic profiles, especially regarding race, will vary across countries, we decided to answer our current two research questions using only serial killers from the United States (n = 1,237)
- ▶ Serial killer defined as:
 - Three or more murders (or two kills and caught before third)
 - Three or more separate events
 - Cooling off period between events
 - Motive (e.g., financial gain, power, sex) not considered in definition but was used to create subtypes of serial killers

4. Demographic Profile

- ▶ At first glance, the commonly cited serial killer profile appears to be accurate
 - White (74.1%)
 - Male (89.9%)
 - Mid to late 20s (27.5% at the start of their series)
 - Youngest was 11 (Clarence Hill, Kody Scott)
 - Oldest was 72 (Ray Copeland)
 - Mean age = 28.4, median age = 27.0
- ▶ But, combining the three elements tells a different story
 - White, male (65.3%)
 - White, male, mid to late 20s (18.2%)
- ▶ After controlling for demographic changes across decades, the race of serial killers seems to mirror that of the United States. The myth that there are few Black serial killers (20.4%) is simply not true!
- ▶ There is no accurate demographic profile for serial killers in general. The profile is different for each type of serial killer (e.g., lust, black widow).

5. Serial Killer IQ

Serial killers are commonly portrayed in the media as being highly intelligent (e.g., column by Dr. Joyce Brothers in *Seattlpi.com* on 8-14-2007). Perhaps because the media focus on serial killers such as Ted Bundy and mythical serial killers such as Hannibal Lecter (*Silence of the Lambs*)

- ▶ We were able to obtain IQ information on 95 serial killers
- ▶ Serial killers appear to be of normal IQ
 - Median = 102, Mean = 103
 - Low was 57 (Simon Pirela)
 - High was 165 (Theodore Kaczynski)
 - A second IQ testing put him at 155
- ▶ As expected, IQ varied by the type of serial killer
 - Raped victim
 - Yes: Mean IQ = 98.6
 - No: Mean IQ = 107.2
 - Personal method of killing (e.g., strangle, stab)
 - Yes: Mean IQ = 100.4
 - No: Mean IQ = 108.6
 - Organized versus disorganized
 - Organized: Mean IQ = 123.2
 - Disorganized: Mean IQ = 93.5
 - Mixed: Mean IQ = 107.6
- ▶ IQ data are complex as extreme scores are more likely to be publicized and there is certainly motivation to score low (especially below 70)