Chapter One

1. Discuss how the media has influenced the public’s view of serial murder.

The media can influence the public’s view in a positive or negative way. This all depends on the media organization and its purpose. Whether their purpose is to be the first to get the facts and stay ahead of law enforcement on the investigation or work with law enforcement to educate the public but not present a false view on the killings and suspect. “The public’s interest in serial murder cases makes serial murder an attractive storyline for the media (Morton, 2005).” This is the whole reason why media puts so much time and effort into covering serial murders is because of the public’s interest. Once again how the media influences the public really depends on that organization’s purpose, the media can present a false picture possibly hindering the investigation. Or a media organization could work in conjunction with the public affairs officer to properly educate and inform the public as to not hinder the investigation. Serial murders also do thrive on media attention to their crimes and victims, criminal profilers and behavioral analysis units can determine this through their investigations and somewhat regulate information fed to the media. All in all the media has a big influence on the public’s view of serial murders and their crimes.

2. What are some of the stereotypes of serial murder?

One of the most common stereotypes of serial murders is that they are white males, ragging psychopathic lunatics that are loners and socially awkward. However, this is the quite opposite as we have read in our textbook but also what the FBI states in a publication titled Serial Murder: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives for Investigators. In this publication they talk about several serial killers that where respectable family men in the community and some even in the military services. We know as humans we cannot and should not stereotype individuals, especially criminals as they can vary greatly.

3. Contrast myths and facts surrounding serial killers.

Many myths of serial killers are that once they start they cannot stop killing, or that they travel throughout the country killing or that they want to get caught. There are conflicting facts around this as the BTK killer murdered his victims between 1974 and 1991 and was captured in 2005 after sending new messages to the media that ultimately led to his arrest. Or the Zodiac killer, to this day is unknown, murdered his victims in the 1960’s and 1970’s and has not murdered since. At least no clues or evidence have shown that he has killed again. Killers traveling are quite the opposite, serial killers generally focus on one specific area of killing and leaving their victims. Look at the Green River killings, where he focused on dumping his victims in one general area. Same goes with serial killers wanting to be caught, once again look at the Zodiac killer. To this day there are no clues leading to the Zodiac killer’s identity.

4. Compare and contrast mass, serial, and spree killings.
Mass killings are just that, it is one mass killing that generally ends with the suspect being captured or killed by police or the suspect commits suicide. Such as our more common active shooters today, they are considered mass killings. Examples of these would be the Newtown massacre or Columbine shooting. Serial killings is similar in a sense to mass killings as it is generally three or more victims but spread out over time and the killer themselves actively and sometimes efficiently avoids and eludes capture. Spree killings once again involves three or more victims but spread out through different locations and is generally conducted in a short amount of time from hours to days. An example of spree killings would be Andrew Cunanan in 1997, who started in California and ended up murdering and committing suicide in Florida.

5. Explain Holmes’s serial murder typologies. Pick a case of serial murder and use one of his typologies that are most suited to the case. Why is it best suited?

Visionary Type – such murderers kill in response to the commands of voices or visions usually emanating from the forces of good or evil. These offenders are often believed to be suffering from some form of psychosis.

Mission-Oriented Type – these offenders believe it is their mission in life to rid the community of society of certain groups of people. Some killers may target the elderly, whereas others may seek out prostitutes, children, or a particular racial/ethnic group.

Hedonistic Type – offenders in this category are usually stereotyped as “thrill seekers,” those who derive some form of satisfaction from the murders. Holmes and DeBurger also identified subcategories in this typology, including those who kill for “creature comforts” or “pleasure of life.” Another subcategory Holmes and DeBurger refer to is “lust murderers,” which includes offenders who become sexually involved with the victims and often perform postmortem mutilations.

Power/Control-Oriented Type – in this typology Holmes and DeBurger contend that the primary source of pleasure is not sexual, but the killer’s ability to control and exert power over his helpless victim. Some offenders enjoy watching their victims cower, cringe, and beg for mercy.

For my serial murder case I am going to use the Zodiac killer. Even though this individual was never caught, he communicated greatly with the media and law enforcement and showed reasons for his killings. Even though not all of his letters were deciphered, few were that showed his reasons for killing. It was claimed that the Zodiac murdered for the hunt of man, claiming is to be the most elusive game to hunt. So based on that, I determined the Zodiac killer to be of a Hedonistic type according to Holmes. Due to the fact that Hedonistic types are thrill seekers so they would kill for the passion of the hunt.
Chapter 2

1. Discuss how the media has influenced the public’s notion of evil.

The media can overplay the notion of evil at times when dealing with serial killers. As our textbook says, “the reality is that people are much more likely to be killed in a domestic argument, by an intoxicated driver, in an accident, or by disease than by Satan worshipers (Hickey, 2013).” It is because when the rarity instance that a satanic killing has occurred the media will overplay it stating that the world is filled with satanic worshipers. While crime and murders is naturally evil, that does not mean that suspects spiritually practice Satanism.

2. Discuss how past cultures viewed mental illness.

Past cultures viewed mental illness as demonic, thinking that those individuals were possessed or controlled by some sort of evil spirit. This lead to the stoning and killing of individuals who were mentally insane, but because of the lack of knowledge back then were unable to determine such things. This can still be found today in very desolate areas throughout the world.

3. Discuss lycanthropy. What period can it be traced back to?

Lycanthropy, “The transformation of people into wolves, can be traced back to at least 600 B.C (Hickey, 2013).” Lycanthropy, “from Greek meaning lykos, “wolf”; anthropos, “man” (Lycanthropy, 2014),” or Werewolves is an old folk lore from mainly Europe, this can also be linked to mental disorders and those who believe animals to be of symbolic nature. These individuals also believe in reincarnation and coming back in the form of strong animal figures such as wolves, bears, leopards or tigers.

4. Why is the notion of evil so difficult to define? How do scholars try to define it? How do you define it? Does your definition agree with those of the scholars? Why or why not?

Evil is difficult define due to the fact that my definition of evil will differ greatly from another. What I might see as a bad habit may be considered evil by somebody else. There is no fixed definition or standard on what evil really is. Scholars try to define evil by the act itself or the person, “Erich Fromm refers to human evil as a process that includes the principle of agency or choice (Hickey, 2013).” I would probably define evil based off the bible, if it is not claimed to be good by God in the bible, then it is evil. If I can’t find anything in the bible to support a decision or course of action then it is evil. I do not see my definition of evil agreeing with the scholars in our textbook, because I am a Christian, everything I do I try to refer back to the bible. People themselves are not evil it is Satan and how he tempts those people through their sins. Satan tempts me differently than he does my wife, everybody struggles with different sins and overcoming those sins. But people can change, through the grace and mercy of God people can change. I have drastically changed since becoming a believer and these individuals who unfortunately commit these crimes can too. Our textbook gives three great examples at the end of chapter two, of how individuals can become believers and you can see or hear how their hearts change.

5. Discuss the nine pronouncements in LaVey’s “The Satanic Bible.”
The nine pronouncements of the “The Satanic Bible” by LaVey are:
1. Indulgence, instead of abstinence – this refers to sexual relationships and being the exact opposite of what the Holy Bible teaches
2. Vital existence, instead of spiritual pipe dreams – my understanding of this is that it refers to the present and our current existence in the world, not focused on the afterlife. Focusing on duties and what they can do here and now on earth.
3. Undefiled wisdom instead of hypocritical self-deceit
4. Kindness to those who deserve it, instead of love wasted on ingrates – My first question with this is how do they justify and define this. Also I am surprised at the fact of them giving kindness to others.
5. Vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek – This is basically saying that the punishment should fit the crime.
6. Responsibility, instead of concern for the psychic vampires
7. Man as just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse, than those who walk on all fours, who because of his divine and intellectual development has become the most vicious of all
8. All of the so-called sins, as they lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification – This just focuses on personal desires, getting what you want as an individual
9. The best friend the church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years

These nine pronouncements are just the opposite of the Ten Commandments of the Holy Bible, that’s all they basically are. Which to me seems simple, that’s all LaVey did is just wrote the opposite of the Ten Commandments in order to give his followers some sort of purpose and guidance to follow. But here is the problem, he wrote them! They were not given to him by a hierarchy or Satan, it is his own religion he created.

References

