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SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN WHO KILL

**A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Criminal Justice**

**by
Maria Guadalupe Venegas**

March 1995

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A Thesis
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ABSTRACT

The broad problem which this thesis will address is that of women and violence. There is an increasing concern in this area of crime as evidenced by the media attention to cases such as those of Warnos, Bobbit, and Broderick.

Although rates of female violence have not increased over time, the literature reveals trends in the type of violence that results in murder. For example, 75% of all female homicide arrests were successfully convicted in California in 1992. Thus, the specific problem this thesis will explore is women who commit murder.

Another major concern this thesis will address is the manner by which crime committed by women is explained, specifically murder. Often, confusion is produced when theorists try to define female criminality.

This thesis focuses upon female murder offenders in order to examine their demographic and criminological situational contexts. The purpose is to describe and discuss the situations in which women killed and to suggest social changes which might alleviate these situations. A major concern is to examine the relationship between domestic violence and murder as it relates to the battered woman defense.

The general public shares a common perception with many scholars. They feel that the battered woman defense is an over-employed defense when a murder is committed. In reality, the courts deny this defense in more than half of the cases, as will be demonstrated in this thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The topic of female criminality had not been addressed until about forty years ago. One reason for this neglect was that women were not believed to be seriously involved in criminal activity. Their behavior was dependent on their surrounding environment as they were deeply involved in domestic activities. Also, the majority of criminologists were male.

It is also interesting to note how the mass media influences the community in its views of crime and justice. An individual's perceptions of the criminal justice system may be dependent on the media's portrayal of crime and justice. The public relies on the media for information. In reality, the entertainment media distorts sources of crime and justice information images, historically and consistently reversing the real world of crime and justice (Surrette, 1992). This indicates that the public is a victim of the media and its portrayal of crime in the United States. The media, for example, has portrayed females as highly involved criminals.

However, crime is a production of both males and females. Statistics show that crime has grown at a rapid rate throughout the years, especially crime perpetrated by females. Based on United States Bureau of Census (1953), in 1950, there were 157,255 men and 6,087 women under state and federal prison authority in the United States. In 1990, the number of males under this authority increased by 444% or 698,410. The figure for women increased by 665% or 40,484 (1992). Although criminal activity perpetrated by males is more rampant, these numbers denote that the rate of female

criminality is quickly surpassing male criminality. Freda Adler (1975) noted, "although males continue to commit the greater absolute number of offenses, it is women who are committing those same crimes at yearly rates of increase now running as high as six an seven times faster than males." More importantly, women are becoming more widely involved in serious and violent crimes.

Women's arrest rates for serious crimes is increasing at an alarming pace. For example, in 1967, 140,405 women in the United States were arrested for serious crimes. In 1987, 489,809 women were arrested in the same category, an increase of 349% in a 20 year period (Simon and Landis, 1991).

The increase also holds for violent crimes. Crimes included in the violent crime category include criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault. In 1967, 140,549 women in the United States were arrested for violent crimes. In 20 years, this figure increased by 348%, or 489,557 (Simon and Landis, 1991). However, if one narrows these figures to women arrested for murder in California between 1987-1992, the findings shift. Based on the 1987-1991 Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS) five year period, murder committed by women in California fluctuated. For example, in 1987, (161) women were arrested for homicide; in 1988, (135); in 1989, (148); in 1990, (130); in 1991 (145); and in 1992 (181) women in California were arrested for homicide. One may discern from these figures that murder exhibited by women fluctuated year after year, with an increase in the last two years.

The results of female felony arrests in 1992 for homicide in California will be presented (see appendix figures 1 and 2). Based on

the OBTS 1992, 181 homicides arrests were made. Of these, 160 went to court where two were acquitted, 21 were dismissed, and 137 were convicted. This has been the highest arrest rate within the last five years. Based on the convictions, one female was sentenced to death; one went to jail; two received probation; two went to CYA (California Youth Authority); 28 received probation with jail; and 103 were sentenced to prison. In summary, 75% of female homicide arrests were successfully convicted in California in 1992. This may suggest an increase in a crime primarily dominated by males.

When a social phenomenon begins, in this matter, crime, there are individuals who attempt to develop theories for people's criminal behavior. These individuals are known as "theorists." Are they really theorists when they are accosted by others who try to disprove them by presenting their own reasoning to why people behave in a criminal behavior? Their explanations are unclear when they only discuss half of the population, ignoring the female component of society. A large element of the problem is that the etiology of female criminality has not been developed in theories that discuss criminal behavior.

In 1982, Eileen B. Leonard challenged these scholars by presenting questions and offering explanations as to why their theories could not be applied to women. She challenged them to compose integral theories, i.e., theories which could be applied freely without questioning applicability to either gender.

Leonard began her work by analyzing Differential association, a theory which is lacking in defining female criminality. The nine principles of Differential association try to offer viable reasons for

explaining criminality. The most significant of the nine principles states that "criminality increases because there is an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law than adherence to law." Therefore, Leonard asserts that Edwin Sutherland stipulated that male associations forgive if a crime is committed, which contributes to the perpetration of such activities (Leonard, 1982). In spite of the fact that men and women may have common acquaintances, Sutherland did not convey why women commit less crime than men.

In addition to Differential association, the Marxist approach is a theory which also obliterated women in its discussion. Marx and Engels stipulated that crime occurs as a result of the powerful's efforts. The powerful sustain crime because it creates jobs. The powerless and the oppressed are those who produce the work for those in positions of power (Leonard, 1982). Both these scholars underestimated the issue that many of the powerless and oppressed are women.

Defining women and their production of crime is an intricate task. The preceding summary presented two theories in today's literature that do not satisfy one's inquiries when discussing female criminality. It is still more intriguing to determine why women commit murder. Some women kill their companions after years of psychological, physical, and/or sexual abuse. Many women in the case study sample were victims of spousal abuse.

The battered woman is often confronted with callousness once she exposes her situation to her family, friends, police and other agents of the criminal justice system. The situation was worse prior to the 1970's. Unless the police saw the abuse take place, the officer

was not authorized to arrest a woman's husband on a misdemeanor charge in spite of the fact that there was physical evidence of abuse (Brown and Williams, 1989). A woman's dignity is not the only thing that the abuser strips from her. He also abolishes her right to have friends.

Oftentimes, the aggressor's mission is to be secretive of the abuse that exists in the home. He accomplishes this by isolating the female from family or friends. This produces a lasting relationship where he is free to perpetrate the abuse. His objective is not yet successfully met.

The male also controls all family income. If his female companion is employed, she must turnover her wages to him and does so in hopes of avoiding any quarrels. This produce a more isolating environment. After considering this, many ask themselves why she does not abandon her mate? The answer is not a simple one for battered women.

Many battered women do not possess working skills, and if they determine that leaving the relationship would be the wisest choice, they would have to cope with having little means to provide for their family. This is another reason why abusers are convinced that they will preserve their companion forever. Women continue to bear the abuse for another binding reason.

When battered women gain the courage to disclose this often daily occurrence, their family and friends are reluctant to believe it. The fact that abused women have never disclosed that information, makes their acquaintances disbelieving. Rather than gaining compassion, understanding, and support, they encounter negative

feedback. They are often blamed for the abuse they have created in their home and are simply advised to be "a better wife."

Fear is the most significant reason for withstanding the abuse. Their male companions often threaten them during and after the abuse. They are advised that they can never hide from them and if they leave, it will make matters worse. This prolongs their stay and as a result, they continue enduring physical and mental assaults.

However, there are some women who call the authorities. They assume that they can attain the support they could not achieve from their friends or family by calling the police. In actuality the police, as well as the rest of the criminal justice system, play a similar role as their acquaintances.

Usually women who have teenagers call the police. There is therefore, a sizable percentage that are very unlikely to call them. Battered women perceive officers as authority figures and virtually base their decisions on what the officers have advised. If they discern positive feedback from the police they will continue their search to end their abuse. If the officers view the situation as insignificant, the battered woman discontinue from pursuing the matter further. It is not unusual to find this when officers perceive the situation as dangerous (Ewing, 1990). In fact, when officers determine that the situation is serious, they will go through the elementary task of conducting informal mediation (Ewing, 1990). This reluctance is also shared by another element of society.

When women finally decide to file formal complaints, prosecutors are often reluctant to pursue the matter. In fact, affidavits have been put on hold for "cooling off periods (Ford, 1983)."

Prosecutors act in this behavior expecting that women will reconsider the matter. They obliterate the possibility that women may be seriously hurt or killed at the hands of their oppressors within the so called "cooling off period." If formal complaints are filed, they do not guarantee the abuse will cease.

If a complaint is successfully achieved and both parties are summoned to court, the defendants are often given slaps on the hand. For example, they are given small fines which can be easily paid. This can produce a more dangerous environment for the abused when the offender returns to the home. In instances where abusers are convicted, they are given probation or are directed to attend counseling. Judges are very sympathetic with abusers by allowing them to reside with their partners during their probationary or counseling period. Victims of spousal abuse feel they only have two options; bear the abuse and the possibility of being murdered, or murder their aggressor.

CHAPTER TWO

Problem Statement

The literature currently available on female crime does not explain why women commit certain crimes, specifically, murder. Due to this, the researcher chose to study women who commit murder so that the image of a female murderer would be clarified.

The previous chapter introduced the arguments of Eileen B. Leonard (1982). She argued that much of this confusion was due to lack of incorporating women in explaining crime by male theorists. Following the norm established by these theorists, many continue to neglect women in discussions of crime. Women are not treated as a separate entity. Rather, they are assimilated into one large conglomeration of criminals. Oftentimes, they kill for very different reasons. Usually, involving crimes of passion.

Understanding women and murder is important, and the research will attempt to address the confusion which currently exists among scholars who try to explain why women commit murder. Murder is perceived as a crime which is predominantly conducted by males. For example, in California, 653 males and 111 females were convicted for murder in Superior Courts in 1967 (Simon and Landis, 1991). These figures demonstrate that women are also murder perpetrators. Scholars continue to explain murder committed by females in the same fashion they explain murder committed by men.

This research will explore theories that attempt to explain criminal behavior. It will also present criticisms of each theory and reasons for their irrelevancy when applying them to women murderers. This review is an attempt to challenge theorists to

incorporate women in their theories. In doing so, it will outline the dilemma of battered women. The literature shows that women who kill do so after years of abuse (Ewing, 1990). It will highlight the episodes women endure when domestic violence exist in their homes. This may assist theorists in developing more comprehensive theories and simultaneously eliminate questions that currently exist regarding women who murder. The research will also expose the sources abused women exhaust before they take matters into their own hands, especially focusing on the role the legal system takes in matters of domestic violence.

The legal system will be examined and the backwardness that exists in matters of domestic violence. The research will address the stages women undergo when they finally gain the capacity and courage to challenge their aggressors through the legal system.

This is one of the most important elements of the research because it will describe how the legal system is an "accessory" to the murders females commit. This inquiry will show that the system is responsible for a large amount of unnecessary murders committed by battered females, due to the lack of developing more accessible avenues for women.

The research will also describe characteristics of female killers, demonstrated by those interviewed as well as how they view themselves. This research may aid in destroying misconceptions people possess about female killers as well as determining whether there is a profile of a murderess.

It is also important to list what will not be presented in the research. A theory will not be developed on women and crime. The

purpose is to encourage scholars to develop an inclusive theory, and abolish theories that currently exist. This research is not meant to develop a theory on women who murder. The inquiry will not present a defense for women who kill in response to a battering relationship. Rather, it will explore the options they have, including murder.

The research will not provide the police with a new method of dealing with battered women. This work will hopefully challenge them to reevaluate the methods currently used to manage domestic violence calls. It may also provide them with a more empathetic outlook when confronted with victims of domestic violence.

The research will not outline a new style of handling battered women through the legal system. Rather it will disclose the negativity that the legal system has promoted and still continues to endorse against battered women. This research will produce an awareness through which the legal system could approach victims of domestic violence. Hence, this work is meant to challenge the legal system to reformulate a new approach and generate a more effective means for battered women to lawfully end their situation.

Another focus of interest is to determine whether female juvenile delinquents are likely candidates for committing murder as they mature, and how the legal system processes juvenile delinquents. Perhaps it will assist the juvenile courts as they increasingly deal with more violent young women.

This topic needs to be examined beyond this research. A consensus must be reached on why women commit murder. It may be difficult to achieve because stereotypes of women portray them

as being compassionate, nurturing, loving and forgiving. However, there are women who supposedly have these virtues, yet they decide to kill.

This research may enlighten other scholars to research this topic and influence legislators to provide avenues not only to women, but also to men, before they kill. Legislators can then coordinate alternatives for those who feel that killing is their only option. This may ultimately reduce the murder rate in this country.

The case study approach has several limitations. Generalization was limited because the research was conducted using volunteers at one prison site. The prison administration stated that there were approximately 60 women who were imprisoned for murder. The researcher interviewed 16 of those 60. The research, therefore, is a self-selected group given the limits of sample size.

Given the limits of sample size, it was decided to additionally interview incarcerated juvenile delinquents in order to compare their demographic characteristics. Questions were aimed to possibly acquire common trends in childhood and adolescent delinquent tendencies. Based on previous research, the following hypotheses are sought to be answered through the research.

It was not until the 1970's that the battered woman was identified as a major issue worthy of attention (Ewing, 1990). According to Lenore Walker, a battered women is "one who is repeatedly subjected to any forceful physical or psychological behavior by a man in order to coerce her to do something he wants her to do without concern for her rights (Ewing, 1990)." Research indicates that many women who are battered do not report it to the

proper authorities until after many beatings (Ewing, 1990). Many times victims of spousal abuse tend to ask for help when their teenage children get involved (Gelles, 1987). This may indicate that a large percentage of battered women do not request assistance. If physical abuse is not involved in the violent outbursts, women often fear the threat of violence (Ewing, 1990). Based on the preceding research, it was thought necessary to examine the environmental circumstances of women who kill. Therefore the following question was proposed:

1. Did women convicted of murder have a history of spousal abuse? The following research also presented an important aspect of a females upbringing.

In many delinquent homes, education is not an important factor in an individuals upbringing. The school and home environment contradict each other, where a young female suddenly finds that books exist in her life, were it was non existent in the past. According to Simon and Landis (1991), 29.1% of women in federal prisons completed high school. In addition, research indicates that delinquent females boast about their incorrigibility (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1991). This may imply that some delinquent's self-esteem is established by making themselves look favorable about something negative. Their trickery is more important to them. Chesney Lind and Sheldon (1991) found that girls boasted about their toughness, daring and keen trickery. Based on the previous research, the following question was asked:

2. Did women convicted of murder have discipline problems in school during adolescence?

Many crimes committed by females tend to be of an economic nature. A high proportion of females are arrested for larceny, primarily shoplifting (Adler, 1975). This may demonstrate that women's offenses are as a result of their low economic attainment. Many of them do not possess meaningful jobs or earn low wages (Ewing, 1990). Their criminal patterns also extend to prostitution. Interestingly, they are often arrested for prostitution, a crime that is often perpetrated by males (Adler & Simon, 1979). Females also tend to be involved in offenses associated with drugs and public drunkenness (Pollack, 1950). These offenses consist of "victimless crimes. The majority of incarcerated women have been imprisoned for victimless crimes, such as drug or alcohol violation and prostitution (Mann, 1984).

However, when females are involved in offenses against members of the community, they tend to take a passive role. Women are often charged with an offense in the first degree even if the male companion planned the offense without her knowledge. Once the criminal action began, they were forced to be involved because they accompanied the conspirator (Adler & Simon, 1979). Based on this research, the following hypothesis was proposed:

3. Did women convicted of murder have criminal backgrounds?

The cycle of violence and criminal activity may extend to the entire family. According to Rosenbaum (1989), a poor relationship between parents and children is highly influential in a child's subsequent delinquency. Unfortunately, more violent acts are being committed by adolescents, and are now being treated as adults in the court system. This may be an indication that parents are not

establishing meaningful relationships with their children. In addition, parental frequency of control may also influence delinquent patterns (Wells & Rankin, 1988). This may imply that consistency in effective discipline is a possible deterrent to delinquent activities. The gender of one's child and parental attachment may also be dependent on delinquency. Hindelang (1972) found that parental attachment is more of a deterrent to delinquency for males than for females. The above research set for the following question:

4. Do women convicted of murder have delinquent children?

Experts in criminology continually attempt to define and dissect the mind of a criminal. This research may further assist experts in the field to determine whether a female killer truly exists. The preceding research may assist in determining whether there are factors that precede a female killer. Therefore, it was determined wise to examine the above aspects of a female's life to find any common threads. The following hypothesis was posed:

5. Are there specific characteristics of female killers?

CHAPTER THREE Literature Review

Many people often ask themselves what provokes a woman to pull the trigger, swing a bat with intentions to kill or hire a "hit-man? The tendency is to respond in a manner which is neither realistic nor empathetic toward the assailant. Perhaps women who have been and are currently incarcerated for murder found that it was the only manner to disengage themselves from a violent relationship. This is not meant to condone the act of murder, because it should not be taken lightly. Rather, one often thinks that the "victim" was at a disadvantage without questioning the victim's role. This issue may seem elementary and unimportant.

The literature on women and murder is quite vague. Perhaps a reason for the vagueness is that many male scholars try to explain something which is and will probably always be foreign to them: the actions and behaviors of females. Female scholars have emerged and challenged their male counterparts by offering more accurate assessments. This study will sharpen the image of the female killer.

The literature currently available on women's participation in crime, deduces that women commit crimes ranging from the most menial criminal activities such as shoplifting to more serious crimes such as murder. Male scholars try to reason women's participation in criminal activity through traditional theories which have little applicability to women.

One individual who has criticized such theorists is Eileen B. Leonard, in her work Woman, Crime and Society. The following is a summary of two theories which may be relevant to explaining

female criminality. In addition, liberal feminist theories will also be presented. The theory will be presented as it applies to women.

Differential Association

Differential association was Edwin Sutherland's contribution to criminological theories. It is based on male behavior that is learned through acting out others behavior (Leonard, 1982). When this theory is applied to criminality, it stipulates that individuals are affected by group associations and thus, criminal behavior is learned through group interaction.

Sutherland developed differential association by integrating nine principles. The most important principle stipulates that "criminality increases because there is an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law than adherence to law (Leonard, 1982)." For example, a drug dealer probably perceives his chances of being apprehended to be very slim, and therefore, continues dealing because grossing money is perceived more favorably when he compares it to his possibilities of being arrested. This individual understands his activity as being perfectly acceptable because others (such as his peers) are also involved in this activity.

This theory may not be appropriate when applying it to female criminality. It is understood that crime is predominantly conducted by males. When differential association attempts to explain crime, it does not emphasize that what is communicated to male and females conveys a different meaning to the subjects, which is, in reality, why we see more males involved in criminal conduct. Traditionally, women have been more closely knit to the family than males. In addition women's behavior is more strictly controlled and supervised

because of the close network that the family practices (Leonard, 1982). This limits negative interaction, swaying them away from copying criminal behaviors. Sutherland neglected to mention that women lack access to negative peer groups because of the family's pressure. Diversified social roles explain the difference between male and female crime, a point which Sutherland also neglected to mention.

The fourth principle indicates that "criminal behavior involves learning both the techniques of crime and certain attitudes, motives, and rationalizations regarding crime (Leonard, 1982)." A deviant activity that women highly participate in is shoplifting (Leonard, 1982). When applying Sutherland's reasoning, women should have learned to shoplift from past associations and experiences. He contradicts himself, because if the family protects the female, then they would not have access to shoplifting. This point explains how the theory is ineffective when explaining female deviance.

Principle five asserts that individuals learn to define the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable (Leonard, 1982). Due to social rank, gender, and race, individuals have different norms. The associations women have are different from those of men. The fact that class and race play a role in being law abiding also changes the pattern of adherence to law. Lower class and black women are more susceptible to breaking the law than higher class females because they are less protected and controlled according to this theory. This allows these individuals favorable reasons to violate the law as they are not as strictly controlled as higher class females.

The sixth principle stipulates that "a person becomes more delinquent because of excessive contact with criminal patterns as opposed to non criminal patterns (Leonard, 1982)." In reality women are supervised more closely than men, therefore, they should behave in a less criminal fashion. Sutherland grossly attempts to define "getting pregnant outside of marriage" as a criminal act. Leonard contests this supposition by stating that this is a deeply rooted social idea as Sutherland reflected socially constructed attitudes regarding males and females. She further notes that pregnancy is an issue concerning both genders because a woman cannot become pregnant on her own and becoming pregnant should not be criminally classified.

That criminal and non criminal associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity is the seventh proposition Sutherland offers. He further explains that crime varies because of social position. Therefore, those living in lower class neighborhoods would be more susceptible to committing criminal acts than higher class individuals. If this was applied to females, it would state that lower class females would also contribute to criminality. Rather, as Leonard pointed out, women are more strictly supervised by the family than men and, therefore, this determines the frequency of positive behaviors and deters them from committing delinquent acts.

Principle eight states that no unique process is involved in learning criminal or non criminal behavior patterns (Leonard, 1982). Leonard stated that males and females are exposed to different learning experiences which results in different behavior. Here again the theory fails to explain the criminality of women.

The last of his principles is, "that while criminal behavior is not explained in terms of general needs and values, it is not explained by those general needs and values since non criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values (Leonard, 1982)." This could influence law abiding as well as law breaking behavior. Low crime rate among females can be explained in terms of their positive associations. For example, women may be happier than men because they may receive more positive reinforcement simply because they are more intertwined in the family than men are. Men do not receive this because of their absence from the home and in turn, maintain their happiness through negative reinforces, such as their criminal peers.

Differential Association is restricted to male criminality. We never learn why the family has such a tight control on the female and why it is so positive. One must also consider the problems that battered women endure when such family control is applied. Differential Association does not elaborate on why males are less strictly controlled.

Marxist Approach

Marx and Engels explain crime in terms of economics. Those in power, maintain the force in ameliorating the amount of crime. They imply that it is to the powerful's disadvantage to decrease crime because it would eliminate jobs especially those related to crime control. These include law enforcement, judges, attorneys, etc. Those in power, such as government agents have immeasurable control over crime.

People die at the hands of employers who are equally guilty of producing crime when a recession occurs. People live comfortably while they have a form of subsistence, but crime ensues when jobs are lacking. This produces an environment where the former employee and law abiding citizen have little regard for the law. For example, the need to feed the family forces individuals to steal. It then becomes easier to steal a second time. Poverty produces criminality and Engels adds, that the criminal has little to offer and does not fear the law (Leonard, 1982).

In 1916, Willem Bonger adapted a sociological perspective in explaining crime. He said that people are born with social instincts which are represented in the altruism present in earlier societies. In those societies people do not desire wealth, simply having what is necessary to subsist is enough. The capitalist society adopted a different stance which produced criminal individuals simply interested in money producing and competition with their neighbor. This produces attitudes of losing compassion and sympathy for other people. Thus, the goal of this society is primarily directed by greed and desire for power.

If Marx observed class differences, he should have also noted gender differences. Leonard writes, "he fails to explain the lack of criminality among women, a group who is surely as powerless and oppressed as any within capitalism (Leonard, 1982)." Leonard continues by noting that Engels did not examine the demoralization capitalism produces in females. Engels states that the poor have no reason not to steal but does not include the fact that women have composed much of the poor throughout history. According to Engels'

analysis about criminality of the poor, women would be deeply involved in this activity. Leonard notes that "he neglects to explain why women are basically uninvolved in crime (Leonard, 1982).

However, Bonger asserts that when women commit economic offenses, they are less motivated than men to commit the crime (Leonard, 1982). He stated that their sense of empathy may deter their participation in illegitimate conduct. Since women are more enmeshed in the family, they are less likely to produce crime. This type of "oppression" also sways them from committing crimes of a political nature, due to this, they are spared of committing illegal acts (Leonard, 1982). He adds, that as women gain status equal to that of men, they will also produce an equal amount of crime. Leonard disputes Bonger's statements that women are less involved in crimes of vengeance. Current literature shows that women are now resisting attacks from abusive mates. This is seen by women who murder their abusive mates. He falls short in explaining female criminality within a capitalistic society.

To reach a theory that is compatible to both genders, sexism must be eliminated. Leonard challenges other scholars to consider females in future research by using the above to establish that women are ignored in the development of theories, and simultaneously attempts to persuade others to integrate women in their arguments. If one is to develop a thorough theory, it should consider both genders. She also implies that in order to reach this, women must be researched (Leonard, 1982).

Liberal Feminism

Research conducted by liberal feminist's may be a source of independent research. Liberal feminism argues that the women's movement caused an increase in female crime because of the changing roles and employment patterns of women taking place in society (Muraskin & Alleman, 1993). For example, Freda Adler notes that as women move into more competitive roles, they become more aggressive (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). They are much like men, as they express violent traits. On the other hand, Rita Simon theorizes that as women move out of the home, they will have more opportunities to commit crime (Alleman & Muraskin, 1991). As women move into the work force, people's goods and money will be more accessible to them, producing more opportunities to commit crimes.

Socialist-Feminist

A different view on women and their participation in crime production is that of the Socialist-feminist perspective. They argue that female crime occurs as a result of class and patriarchal oppression. A main focus is that women have been oppressed at the hands of males throughout history as seen through their dependency on men for survival during and after childbirth. This created a division of labor, where mothers care for their young, rather than fathers. It further explains that from this division of labor, women maintain a lower status in the economic field. This is further exemplified in prostitution, where men (pimps) control and manipulate women's actions as well as their money.

There needs to be a clear understanding of the relationship which exists between genders, so that issues related with female criminality may be properly addressed. If this is not accurately considered, ineffective methods of treating women accused and convicted of criminal activity in capitalistic, patriarchal societies will occur (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). In considering the relationship between genders, history proves that men established "control" over women, and therefore, acts of violence such as, rape and domestic violence are directed toward women today.

Radical Feminism

A very controversial perspective on the origins of violence against females is that of the radical feminist perspective. It denotes that males are the creators of all ills. This theory is an evident attack on males and anything that belong to men, including their genitalia, as it is seen as a symbol of male superiority (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). The relationship that exists between men and women is condemned, because it continually oppresses women.

A central concern of the radical feminist perspective is violence against women. They have been successful at demonstrating that when addressing rape, wife abuse, and sexual harassment, the law and its application has been male-dominated, male-centered, and male serving (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). Until the early 1970's, rape was not considered an act of violence, but rather, a sexual one.

Marxist-Feminism

Although the previous theories addressed women as victims, the Marxist-feminist perspective interprets females as perpetrators

of crime. It argues that capitalism produces female crime. Much like men, women are economically oppressed, but women are enslaved by their domesticity. However, women commit less crime than men because they are isolated from the means of production and their lack of participation in the public sphere (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). It is similar to that of the liberal feminist argument in that, if women have opportunities to commit crimes, they will, but due to their domestic roles, according to the Marxist-feminist perspective, they commit less crime because of slim opportunities (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). When women commit crimes, according to these theorists, they tend to be of an economic nature.

The Marxist-feminist perspective illustrates that given women's isolation in the home, their crimes are reflective of the powerlessness and economic marginality resulting from their unique place as women in a capitalist, patriarchal system (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). It is not unusual to see them commit "victimless crimes" such as shoplifting and petty theft. This theory further contends that when women commit violent crimes, they are reflective of their alienation and frustration rather than being acts of aggression and domination (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). In these aggressive acts, they tend to employ weapons related to the kitchen, and act violent as a result of marital disputes.

The theories that have been developed to date as well as the ones discussed above have not addressed the motivation of female killers. They neglect to mention the extent to which those women are victims of domestic violence. For example, many women who commit murder endure psychological, sexual, and physical abuse for

lengthy periods. There may be a distinction from those women abused for the first time to those who endured abuse for years. Further, the theories do not address domestic violence and its relationship with women who murder.

Research Analysis

In the analysis portion of the research many women who were interviewed were victims of domestic violence. It is necessary, therefore, to incorporate a discussion of "the battered woman" into the research so that one will have a better understanding of domestic violence and murder.

Prior to the 1970's, women who killed their mates found it almost impossible to acquire support from the legal system. If her husband assaulted her, the police could not arrest him on a misdemeanor unless the officer observed it (Browne & Williams, 1989). This demonstrates discrimination because if the same male assaulted another person on the street, he would be charged with a felony in addition to spending the night in local jail (Brown and Williams, 1989). As a result of this, the female had one of two alternatives; kill her mate, or continue enduring the abuse.

The following explores the circumstances which lead battered females to kill their aggressors and examines the criminal justice system's response to victims of spousal abuse. Recognizing how subtle the abuse is from the beginning of the relationship is important. At the beginning of a violent relationship, women fail to realize the potential for violence because their partners tend to be very caring and attentive. However, the abusive mate operates in a very manipulative and peculiar manner. In many relationships, the

male socially isolates the female from society. This creates an environment where the female is totally dependent on him. Typically the male is very jealous and does not allow his mate to have friends. If her partner is aware that she has been associating with other people, he becomes enraged. Ewing (1987) found that these women are frequently accused of infidelity, subjected to insults and other forms of verbal degradation in public, and not allowed to work outside the home.

The male also isolates the female from any financial sources. He limits his checking and savings account solely to himself, depriving her of spending money ignoring that she may have earned it herself. Batterers frequently demand that they be given total control over their wives earnings (Ewing, 1987). Their companions accept their requests to avoid future quarrels. If their partners interprets the rules lightly, they may expect an additional beating.

In an attempt to answer the popular question "why doesn't she leave?," one must consider the barriers which eliminate the possibilities of abandoning the relationship. Economics is a major factor contributing toward her endurance. Many women lack working skills or have never held a meaningful job. This option is not feasible because women would have to put her children and herself in an indigent situation. Typically, women who leave an abusive mate experience a 74 percent drop in income (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993).

Another factor that contributes to her living arrangements is perceived limited support from her friends and family. The support she anticipated is "met with resistance, if not hostility from her

family and friends (Ewing, 1987)." Typically, they respond in a surprised manner because the female had never exposed her predicament. Often, they do not believe the pleading women and will ultimately advise her to be a "better wife."

A third response to why she does not leave is because she fears her battering mate will find and kill her. Research indicates that many women attempt to leave their partners but in retaliation they are confronted with more serious threats or attacks. (Brown and Williams, 1989).

When the female finally realizes that the abuse will not stop, she summons the police for help. This is done when the rest of her alternatives have been exhausted, besides the one of killing her abuser. For many victims of spousal abuse, the only known point of entry into the criminal justice system is through the police (Ford, 1983). Many do not know any other alternatives. Few battered women have education beyond the high school level, making them ignorant of resources available to them. Research suggests that those who call the police tend to have teenage children. Wives reported that they started calling the police when their son or daughter was old enough to get embroiled in the physical conflicts (Gelles, 1987). This finding may indicate that women who have younger children or no children, refrain from asking for help.

The initial minutes in which the police interact with the female are the most crucial moments that may either influence her to seek further help or refrain from doing so. Her decisions throughout the criminal justice process depends, in part, on her expectations of the

criminal justice system as shaped throughout her interaction with police officers (Ford, 1983).

The woman may find that she is very lucky if, indeed, a police officer arrives at the scene. If the dispatcher feels it is not necessary to request an officer's assistance, the female may only receive advice on filing a complaint at the prosecutors office. If the police fail to respond to a victim's call, she might be left entirely outside the criminal justice system, regardless of her needs or ultimate intent (Ford, 1983).

The legal response to these situations has been very negative. The police are the first element of the criminal justice system that is introduced into these circumstances. Oftentimes, law enforcement agencies do not know how to handle domestic violence calls because they lack training in family violence. Generally, the police respond to battering incidents by attempting to calm the batterer, and in some instances, conduct informal mediation (Ewing, 1990). This may stop the immediate abuse, but as soon as the police leave, the abuse may continue. In addition, many officers are very unlikely to make an arrest when the offender has used violence against his wife (Dobash & Dobash, 1981.) Law enforcement officials feel that the law should not intervene in family matters.

Another aspect that the female must challenge is the officer's perception of the severity of the abuse. The criminal justice system allows the police to use discretion in these situations. Victims are oftentimes confronted with reluctant civil servants whose interest in avoiding the situation outweigh their concern for the victim, an

attitude reflected in the quality of information, if any, that is volunteered on how to prosecute (Ford, 1983).

Many are ignorant that the police plays an incisive role in the situation. The woman's decision is extremely dependent on the police officer's attitude. There are some instances in which police respond in disbelief and doubt whether such abuse is/has been taking place and then proceed to sympathize with the offender. There are also few who advise her to file criminal charges. In addition, when some officers are asked by woman to arrest the batterer, they will not do it unless she goes to the prosecutors office and files a formal criminal charge or goes to court and obtains a restraining order, where she must face further obstacles if she decides to prosecute (Ewing, 1987).

Many women go through numerous beatings and much psychological abuse before they decide to file a complaint at the prosecutor's office. When they do, they are received with reluctance, their requests are discredited, and they are advised of possible consequences. Prosecutors are reluctant to pursue criminal complaints filed by battered women. They view the situation as insignificant, or they anticipate that the woman will change her mind and drop the charges before the case goes to court (Ewing, 1987). This was the circumstance of women who filed charges in Indiana. If a woman was still living with her companion, and the prosecutor did not view the situation as serious, the affidavit was put on hold for three days of cooling off, after which the woman had to return and sign it (Ford, 1983). This may not be of assistance to the female who has been threatened by her mate that he will harm her in a more

severe manner if she informs anyone of their situation. The prosecutor's office is an additional institution which has further abused victims of domestic violence.

A formal complaint does not guarantee that the abuse will cease. If the complaint is successfully filed and the prosecutor decides to prosecute, the abuser is likely to receive a simple reprimand. If the batterer is formally charged and arrested, he will likely be freed on bail pending further court action (Ewing, 1987). This gives the batterer another opportunity to continue the abuse. A female's legal counsel also presents little security.

The public defenders appointed to their case are typically beginning their legal practice and lack the experience they need to reach a successful outcome (Alleman & Muraskin, 1993). Usually they have their own biases and will not represent women effectively. Oftentimes, defense attorneys do not understand the actions of a defendant and will not present self-defense issues to the court. This produces a tendency to plea bargain which is interpreted as a victory by the public defender.

Additionally, judges are not sympathetic toward battered women. If the judge feels that the jury has been unduly sympathetic with the abused, he exercises his discretion on the side of the abuser (Jones, 1980). In the event that the batterer is convicted, his punishment usually consists of probation (where he can reside in the home) or is mandated to go through counseling (Ewing, 1987). These reprimands unquestionably permit more abuse to ensue.

The legislative system is another element of the legal system that is not attentive to battered women. It offers few alternatives to

women who constantly undergo repetitive abuse. In a male legal system, it is likely that the male abuser will be favored. As one author stated, "the body of law, made by men, for men and amassed down through history on their behalf, codifies masculine bias and systematically discriminates against women by ignoring the woman's point of view (Jones, 1980)." Many legislators believe that, if they pass laws favoring women, "a man's home will never be his castle." This was represented in an attempt to pass "The Domestic Violence Act of 1978" which never passed in the House of Representatives (Jones, 1980).

Women who plead guilty and use psychological self-defense as justification for a homicide, generally get convicted of murder or manslaughter. Ewing (1990) found that expert psychological and sociological testimony was offered in 44 cases and only admitted in 26 of the 85 cases which went to trial. In 17 of the 26 cases which the jury allowed to hear the expert testimony, the defendant was convicted.

Currently, battered women have very limited choices. The criminal justice system virtually closes its doors to victims of domestic violence. Moreover, the system neglects to consider what women have endured before they decide to "bring it to their attention" in a manner which the system sees as criminal, i.e., murder. When women determine that they will have some refuge in the law, it victimizes them one more time.

Battered women's alternatives are very limited and it appears that each time they seek help, they are victims of the criminal justice system. Some believe that if they had more alternatives, women

would not kill their battering companion. Browne and Williams (1989) found that "the rate of spousal homicide is lower in those states in which domestic violence legislation and other resources for abused women are available." These scholars argue that if there were more shelters, more attentive police officers, and more representatives in their favor, women would not terminate their abusive mate's life.

Police, prosecutors and judges need to recognize the battered woman syndrome before they make assumptions about the female "who killed in cold blood." They need to recognize the psychological reasons which lead women to act in a deadly fashion. If the system continues to base their decisions solely on the murder "the abused women" committed, without regard to their reasons, violence aimed toward women may continue. This, will produce a society in which abused women will do what they think is right. If criminal law operates on "the assumption of free will-that normal people choose to behave the way they do and, thus, are both personally and criminally responsible for unlawful actions," then it should also recognize that "normal individuals are not fully the product of free will and thus, should not subject them to criminal responsibility (Ewing, 1990).

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

The research that follows is qualitative in nature. This research method allowed for interpretations and discovering underlying meanings of the collected data. Thus, a case study approach using original data was thought to be more interesting and challenging rather than researching data that had already been collected by other individuals.

Initial plans were to interview a volunteer population of women imprisoned for murder at the California Institution for Women (CIW). However, certain barriers were raised, thus, warranting a different approach. It was determined that the research would be presented in the form of "the evolution of a murderess."

The researcher met various individuals that assisted in making the research possible as a result of completing an internship through the California Department of Corrections. Contacts were made with the California Department of Corrections Research Division through letters from Dr. Coles, the chairperson of the thesis committee as well as through letters from the researcher.

While the research was pending approval by the chairperson of the Research Department in Sacramento, phone calls were made to Kuiper Youth Center in San Bernardino, California, a youth facility which houses juvenile female offenders. The researcher did not initially consider interviewing female juvenile delinquents, however, because approval of the inquiry was pending. However, it was determined that the study would be presented in a manner which

defined the evolution of the adult murderess, by employing the juvenile counterpart as an introduction. Perhaps a correlation between juvenile offenders and adult females convicted of murder would be found. The presentation of this thesis will discuss female juvenile delinquents followed by data on adult females convicted of murder.

After three months, permission was granted to conduct the research at CIW.

Method of Gathering Data

As previously mentioned, contacts were made to the Director of Kuiper Youth Center in San Bernardino. She was very helpful and granted permission to begin the research. Of the 18 juveniles that were housed at the youth center, the director determined that two subjects would be the most useful in the research, based on the criteria that were given to her. Three months later, three more female juveniles were interviewed. Although it was a small sample, some valuable data was gathered.

The interviews took place in the directors office and were scheduled during their class time, therefore, a tape recorder was allowed to complete the interviews more quickly. They were interviewed in pairs, with the exception of the fifth subject. The first two subjects were an African-American and a Latina female. They appeared to be comfortable with each other as they did not hesitate to answer any of the questions. However, this may have some bearing on the responses they gave. The interview questions began in the general format.

The beginning of the interview consisted of demographic questions such as age, family, school, drug use, followed by the most serious questions at the end of the interview (please see Appendix B). Each interview session lasted about an hour each.

During the second interview session, three females were interviewed. One was African-American and the other two were Latinas. The sessions lasted 45 minutes to an hour. The data gathered from the interviews was much different from what the researcher expected. It was expected that the data gathered from the juveniles would be similar to the data compiled from adult women convicted of murder.

Interviews at CIW were completed in two consecutive days beginning each morning from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Some inmates were more sociable, therefore, the interviews ranged from 20 minutes to one hour. The research coordinator came in unannounced various times to verify if everything was progressing smoothly. Furthermore, the interviewing environment was very casual, no handcuffs nor officers were present.

Research Method

As a researcher, one needs to evaluate possible research designs before deciding which research method is best. After surveying possible methods, it was decided that a case study approach would be most appropriate. A case study may be accomplished in a variety of ways. One has the option to select self-administered questionnaires, phone surveys, and personal interviews.

Self-administered questionnaires require time and money, something which was not easily accessible to the researcher. To possibly achieve a high response rate, the researcher must write a letter of intent (purpose of the questionnaire) and mail the questionnaire along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to the possible subject. If one does not receive the questionnaires, one needs to submit follow-up mailings to the respondents and again, the researcher must send another self-addressed stamped envelope and the questionnaire if one expects a possibility of receiving it. Many times the respondent may neglect to complete the questionnaire because it may be too time consuming or unclear. Oftentimes, a respondent may be baffled by a question which is unclear and as a result, leave the question unanswered. One may also expect incomplete questionnaires for reasons the researcher may not account for.

A researcher should consider developing a study which will produce an adequate response rate. The fact that this project addressed a very serious and personal aspect of a woman's life would probably make the respondent very uneasy and possibly, not complete the questionnaire. These are just a few disadvantages of using self-administered questionnaires.

Phone survey is another option a researcher has to complete a study. If this is employed, it is difficult to establish trust when interviewing over the phone. It is also difficult to probe and gain confidence in each individual. Conducting phone interviews gives the researcher lesser flexibility when noting the responses. In face-to-face interviews, a respondent may slow down and continue when

the interviewer has completed writing. This is obviously not feasible during a phone interview. Additionally, one may obstruct the course of the interview if one keeps interrupting the respondent. After examining these two methods of case study, it was concluded that face-to-face interviews would be the best method to complete the inquiry.

Personal interviews attain a higher response rate than mail surveys (Babbie, 1989). In interviews, one eliminates incomplete questionnaires, and unanswered questions by clarifying anything which seems unclear to the respondent. As an interviewer, one is allowed to observe the race of the individual as well as their demeanor, such as noting hostility or lying, something which is not accessible in mail questionnaires or phone surveys. In face-to-face interviews, one can probe for responses which can be used in the analytical portion of one's research. This is similar to the methodology outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967). They proposed that one may develop a theory through direct observation, a form of inductive reasoning. Therefore, this specific research design allows one to develop certain principles through direct observation (interview) of the subject.

Generalizability is an important issue to consider. In the current study, limitations were present because of sample size. The fact that some women felt that they did not have adequate representation in court may have impacted their current position. In any analysis, one must be careful when generalizing. For example, many women may have claimed self-defense, but due to poor legal representation, they were found guilty.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results

The purpose of the research was to examine why women commit murder and their perceptions of it. Furthermore, this inquiry was done for purposes of clarifying the image of a murderess. This research may aid in discerning whether there is a definition of a murderess. In order to define adult female killers, it was thought necessary to interview female juvenile convicted of violent personal offenses.

The following data was compiled after interviewing five juvenile delinquents, each will be referred as subjects "A-B," etc. Subsequently, the data on 16 women incarcerated for murder will be presented.

Juvenile Parent Data

Who subject was raised by

Of the five girls that were interviewed, "A" grew up with her maternal grandmother; "B" was raised by her aunt; "C" was raised by her mother after her parents separated; "D" was adopted by a couple when she was ten as a result of her mother's death. In addition, this individual did not know her biological father. "E" was the only individual who was raised by both parents and whose family was currently intact.

Age of parents at time of subject birth

The parents ages at the time of the subject's birth were: "A's" mother was 18 when she was born, the mother of "B" was 25 who married her father who was "a little bit older;" "C's" mother was 25; "D's" parent was 17 when the subject was born; and "E's" parents

were 15 and 16 whom consequently, married at the onset of the pregnancy.

Parent education level

Subject "A" did not know her parent's education level . "B's" mother completed tenth grade and her father graduated from high school. "C's" mother acquired a vocational nurse license. Subject "D's" mother completed high school and obtained a welding certificate. "E's" father completed high school and her mother dropped out in tenth grade.

Parent occupation

Subject "A" did not know what her mother did for a living. "B" also did not know what her mother did; her father worked for the military. Both of "C's" parents were currently unemployed. "D's" mother owned a hotel. "E's" mother is a secretary and her father is an executive for a uniform and linen business.

Parent drug use

Subject "A" was exposed to her mother's consistent use of drugs since she was three. Subject "B" was unclear if her guardian used drugs but recalled that when she was 11 she was aware of drug use in her home. Both of "C's" parents smoked and continue to smoke marijuana. "D's" mother is a heroine addict and smokes marijuana. "E's" father smoked marijuana.

Parent arrest record

After questioning whether the subject's parents/guardians had ever been arrested, the following was found: Subject "A" did not know whether her mother was ever arrested or in trouble with the law. She stated that she assumed her mother had been arrested

because of her drug addiction. Subject "B's" mother was arrested for "under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and for possession of firearms." Consequently, she served two years in prison for those charges. Subject "C's" mother was arrested for failing to disclose information to the subject's probation officer and was in jail for four days. "D's" mother was arrested for prostitution, possession for sale, counterfeiting, and assault with a deadly weapon. She served nine months in county jail for those offenses. Subject "E's" parents have never been arrested or in trouble with the law.

Juvenile Sibling Data

Sibling drug use

They were asked whether their siblings used drugs: Subject "A" assumed her brothers used drugs. Subject "B" said that her sisters have smoked marijuana and her eldest sister has used speed. Subject "C" said that all her siblings smoke marijuana. Subject "E" said that her brother does not use drugs.

Sibling arrest record

The subjects were asked if their siblings were ever in trouble with the law (arrested) and if they served any custody time for their crimes. Subject "A" stated that she had twin brothers (13) who were in gangs, and one sister. Subject "B" had three sisters between the ages of 12-20 and one brother who was ten. She did not say whether they had ever been in trouble. Subject "C" has a brother (13) who has been arrested for grand theft auto. He consequently served two days in juvenile hall. Subject "D" has no siblings. Subject "E" has a 15 year old brother who has shoplifted and stolen a bike, but has never been arrested or in trouble with the law.

Juvenile Subject Data

Age

The ages of the five subjects were: two were 15 years, two were 16, and one was 17.

Grade Completed/Drop out?

One subject was in fifth grade when she was expelled. Following that her school attendance fluctuated until she was put in placement. Subject "B" completed ninth grade. Subject "C" got pregnant in the eleventh grade, as a result, she moved and continued attending school. Subject "D" also got pregnant but decided to participate in home study where she completed eleventh grade. Subject "E" dropped out in seventh grade but returned and completed tenth grade.

Disciplinary school problems

Subject "A" was expelled from school in fifth grade because she threatened to stab a harassing boy. Subject "B" was expelled from two counties when she was in ninth grade for taking firearms on campus. She recalled that she was 11 when she initially took a .357 magnum to school. Subject "C" often found herself taking knives to school, fighting, and was expelled from Catholic school in the first grade for failing to wear the school uniform. In public school she fought with boys and threw a chair at a teacher. When subject "D" was in junior high, she was often disruptive in class, fought, and damaged school property. Subject "E" was suspended and expelled from school for spitting on a teacher, fighting and for taking a knife to school.

Physical/Psychological/Sexual abuse

Subjects were asked whether they were abused physically, psychologically, or sexually. One said she was psychologically abused by her peers when she was younger. Another said she had been physically and psychologically abused by her mother. She was also sexually molested by her uncles when she was seven. A third subject said that her father was physically abusive towards her.

Children?

None of the subjects were married but two had children. One subject was 15 when she had a child and another had her baby adopted. A third subject chose to have an abortion.

Drug use/Alcohol use

The subjects were asked whether they used drugs, if so, what? and if they drank alcohol and how much?

Subject "A" stated she had used every drug, but only mentioned "rock, acid, and cocaine." She also said she drank anything with alcohol in it. Subject "B" has used marijuana and drinks alcohol. "C" stated she has used drugs including, marijuana, PCP, and drinks about 160 oz. of alcohol everyday. "D" has used marijuana and drinks about 80 oz. of alcohol every weekend. Subject "E" said she has recently experimented with speed, cocaine and marijuana. She added that she does not like alcohol.

Cause of first arrest/Conviction/Time served?

The subjects were asked what was the cause for their initial arrest and if they were convicted? If so, how much time did they serve? They were additionally asked whether they would do it again.

Subject "A" was initially arrested for possession for sale and was placed on house arrest. Subsequently, the police executed a

drug raid at her home and she served four years for the same charge. She was unsure whether she would do it again.

Subject "B" was initially arrested for possession but was not convicted until the fifth time. She stated she has been in placement since then. She hopes to stay out of trouble and be successful at "dealing" by evading the law when she is released from placement. "C" was initially arrested for possession for sale and GTA. She was convicted on those charges and served two months. She added that she would do it again "for fun and adventure."

Subject "D" was first arrested for GTA, kidnapping, and endangering a minor. She was convicted and is serving a nine month sentence. She said she would not do it again because "the punishment was not worth it."

Subject "E" was initially arrested and convicted for GTA. She escaped (AWOL) from juvenile hall and has been "in and out of it for the past three years." She advised that upon her release she will not steal cars because her father purchased one for her, and therefore, "has no need to do so." She added that if she was in the same circumstances, she would not do it again "because there is more to life than stealing cars."

Unlawful acts not arrested for?

Another question was whether they had ever done anything else which was unlawful and were not arrested. Subject "A, C, and D" have been arrested for all the unlawful acts they have committed. Subject "B" was never arrested for a drive-by shooting she was involved in. She added, "I never want to find out if I killed

somebody in the drive-by." Subject "E" has burglarized homes, stolen cars, and mugged people for jewelry.

Current conviction/Treated fairly?

They were asked why they were placed at the center and whether they felt the Criminal Justice System (CJS) treated them fairly.

Subject "A" is serving time for under the influence in public, and failing to appear in court. She felt she should only be serving a six month sentence, rather than the nine months that she received.

"B" is serving extended time for escaping from a detention center and she felt she was treated "fairly, even lightly" given her criminal history. "C" is currently serving time for an array of charges: assault and battery, assault on a peace officer, gang affiliation, possession for sale, GTA, receiving stolen property, burglary, violation of probation, and under the influence, she added, "this all happened in a matter of one hour." Although all these crimes were committed, she felt she should have been released because "my brother did the same thing and he was released."

Subject "D" is serving time for endangering a minor, kidnapping, and GTA and felt the CJS did not treat her fairly by giving her a nine month sentence. She felt she should have been given six months. Subject "E" is also serving time for GTA but feels the CJS "gave me a lot of chances because I have been locked up 15 times. They were soft on me by giving me only 6 months."

Plans when released?

They were asked what they planned to do upon release. Subject "A" said, "I want to find a job, do well in school, and make

my grandmother proud. I want to get my high school diploma." "B" wants to go to school and does not know whether she will retreat to her gang lifestyle. She added, "I more than likely will." She also wants to get a job, and plans to do what she had been doing (delinquent activity) but will change one aspect, "not get arrested."

Subject "C" wants to earn her high school diploma and work at juvenile hall. Although she wants to do this by the time she is 22, she felt she would accomplish it by not hanging around her friends. In spite of the previous statement, she said, "I will still go with my friends if they invite me to do something lawless." "D" wants to get her General Education Degree., enroll in the Job Corporation, and take some vocational classes. Subject "E" wants to get her high school diploma and find a job so she can pay for her car insurance. She plans to change her lifestyle by not associating with her gang friends. Her parents moved to help her "straighten out her life."

Women's Liberation

Questions relating to women's liberation were asked. All five subjects felt that a woman's place is not the home. Some comments were: "Men should stay home and take care of the kids, everyone has equal rights."

All five felt that women should work. Some of the comments were: "a woman should work outside the home if she wants to; A woman should not rely on welfare or a male for her survival; Women should work and not rely on welfare, get an education!"

The five agreed that women should have access to birth control and abortion. They added: "women should have rights to abortion

and birth control, it's their body; If a women is not ready to support a child, she should have an abortion if that's what she wants."

They were also asked, do you think men have the same responsibility to take care of their children as women have done so in the past? One stated, "men should take care of the kids and women should work." The other four felt it was an equal responsibility.

Another question was, after a divorce, do you think men should pay for child support? Four said they should. A fifth said, "the person who makes the most money should pay for child support."

Adult Parent Data

Sixteen women convicted of murder were interviewed at the California Institution for Women. The interviews were conducted by a personal interview during a two day process.

Who subject was raised by

Eleven subjects were raised by both parents. Three subjects were not raised by both parents. One was raised by her mother, after the family was abandoned by her father when she was six. Another was raised by her mother, never meeting her father. A third subject was raised by both parents until her father's death when she was three. Following that, she periodically lived with her mother.

Two subjects grew up in foster families. One was placed in foster care because her mother needed to complete her schooling, Subsequently, her maternal grandmother was given custody. She grew up believing her father died. In reality, her mother got pregnant out of wedlock.

Parent occupation/Education level

Subjects were asked what grade their parents completed and what their occupations were.

Subject "A's" father completed sixth grade and worked in construction. Her mother completed high school and was a bookkeeper.

Subject "B's" mother completed graduate school and was an anesthetist.

Both of "C's" parents completed high school. Her mother was a housewife, and her father owned a service station.

Subject "D's" parents completed high school. Her mother was a social worker and did not know what her father was.

Subject "E's" biological mother and father completed high school. Her biological father was a "stunt-man," her foster mother a nurse, and her foster father was an auto parts dealer.

Subject "F" did not know what grade her parents completed. Her mother was a housewife. Subject "G" also did not know the grade her parents completed. Her father was a professional fisherman and her mother was a housewife.

Subject "H's" father was raised on an Indian reservation, was self-taught, and eventually worked as a general manager for Royal Crown Cola. Her mother completed eighth grade and was a cake decorator.

Subject "I's" parent completed high school; her mother additionally completed two years of college. Her father was a refinery worker for Shell and her mother worked as a seamstress, a nurse's aide, and as a college secretary.

Both of "J's" parents completed high school. Her father worked for Southern California Gas Company and her mother was a secretary.

Both of "K's" parents acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration. Her father owned his own business and her mother was Head Loan Officer for Wells Fargo Bank.

Subject "L's" mother completed tenth grade, and her father completed seventh grade. Her mother was a housewife, and her father was a commercial fisherman.

Subject "M's" mother completed junior high and worked as a secretary. Her father received his teaching credential and was subsequently a school principal.

Subject "N's" father completed high school and she assumed that her mother had completed tenth grade. Her father was a mechanic for the army and her mother was a housewife.

Both of "O's" parents completed high school. Her mother worked for California Rehabilitation Center and her father conducted rodeos.

Subject "P's" mother completed high school and her father completed ninth grade. Her mother was a glass plant packer and her father was a mold maker.

In summary, four subject's mothers were housewives. Four parents acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree or beyond. Six parents had professional or semi-professional jobs although one subject said her mother completed high school, but worked as a social worker (assuming education beyond high school level was needed). Sixteen parents had blue collar jobs.

Home environment/Family violence

Some subjects had problems at home stemming from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Others often felt abandoned. Subject "D" said, "it was difficult to live (in terms of finance) after my father abandoned us." She felt her father was responsible for her difficult childhood.

Some subjects blamed their mother for their unhappy childhood as several were sexually assaulted by family members aside from being physically abused. Subject "G" claimed her mother attempted to murder her. "I did not look like any of them. My mother abused me ever since I was in the crib. My father physically, psychologically, and sexually abused me since I was a baby." Her father continued this behavior until he died when she was 14. Subsequently, her brother continued molesting her. "I felt like I did not belong in the family. The abuse was always directed towards me (she had two other siblings)." Subject "K" said, "I had a happy childhood with the exception of the incest. My brother molested me and my family was in denial. He was also very physically abusive towards my other two sisters."

Physical and mental abuse seemed to be rampant in some homes. Five were physically abused, five were sexually abused, and 4 were psychologically abused. Subject "F" said she received a lot of physical and mental abuse from her mother. "My mother was abusive towards me among. It's my mom's fault I did not have a good childhood." Subject "M" had a very demanding father who was often physically and mentally abusive towards her. "I often felt stupid and I felt I would make him mad, so I tried to avoid him. My sister would also hide from my father so she could not anger him."

Many times "M" would stand up to him which worsened the situation. Subject "P" recalled having a happy childhood, but when she was a teenager her mother became psychologically and physically abusive towards her. "That is one of the reasons why I married so soon."

Four subjects grew up with alcoholic parents. Subject "C" said, "my mother was an alcoholic and I was sexually molested by my uncles and by my brother's friend." As a result the relationship with her mother was strained. She recalled her childhood as a happy one, with the exception of the molestation incidents. Subject "I" said her father was an alcoholic. He sexually and physically assaulted the four children, recalling her childhood as an unhappy one. Subject "H" said her father was an alcoholic. She recalled having a happy childhood because "my father lavished me with material things." She believed he did that because he molested her since she was two. She also felt her mother participated as, "she did not stop it." Subject "N" advised that although her mother turned alcoholic after her father's death, she had a happy childhood, as her mother never abused her.

Two subjects grew up in foster care. Subject "E" said, "it was difficult to establish a relationship with my foster mother because she was much older and very strict. I felt like an intruder simply living there for lack of another home. Although there was no family violence, it was enough feeling lonely." Subject "B" grew up in a foster family, "even though family violence was non-existent during my childhood, I felt very lonely. I felt as if I was in a dysfunctional family. I resorted to my pet kittens for companionship and friendship."

Subject "L" recalled having a happy and loving childhood. "The only thing that annoyed me was that I was brought up in a very conservative environment. I was not allowed to date, attend parties, have sleep-overs. I felt as if I missed a lot of my teenage years."

Of the 16 subjects, four claimed to have a happy childhood, five were sexually molested, four were psychologically abused, five were physically abused. Four grew up with an alcoholic parent.

Parent arrest

The subjects were asked if either parent had ever been arrested or in trouble with the law. Subject "H" said her father was on probation for shooting at peace officers and for another issue she did not disclose. He was also arrested for beating his wife and for shooting at the subject.

Subject "I" said her father was arrested for driving under the influence and assumed that he probably paid a fine. Subject "N" also said that her mother was arrested for drunk driving and was placed in county jail for an undisclosed amount of time.

In summary, two parents were arrested on misdemeanor charges (drunk charges), another parent was arrested for more serious crimes.

Parent drug/Alcohol use

Subjects were asked if their parents used any drugs; if so, what? and how often? Some parents died from problems associated with alcoholism. Subject "H" said, "I was not aware that my parents used drugs until I was 18. My father smoked marijuana and eventually died of alcoholism. My mother used morphine, Demerol, and cocaine. She later died of cancer." Subject "I" said her father

died of complications associated with alcoholism. After her father's death, her mother became an alcoholic and eventually died of the same disease. Subject "N's" mother also became an alcoholic after the death of "N's" father.

Subject "C" said, "my mother used uppers and eventually died of an overdose." Subject "E" said she was aware that her biological father smoked marijuana, but did not know how much or how often.

In summary, four parents used drugs and three parents were alcoholics.

Sibling trouble with law

The subjects were asked whether they had siblings who had ever been in trouble with the law and if so, what was their punishment?

Some answers may appear insignificant, but they will be presented because the subjects felt they were a problem. Subject "A" has three sisters and one brother. She said her brother was rebellious and a runaway, but he never had any trouble with the law. Subject "C" has two brothers and one sister. Her brother was discharged from the service because he hit an officer. Subject "J," who has two brothers and one sister also advised that her brother was dishonorably discharged.

The following were more serious issues. Subject "E" had a foster brother who was a juvenile delinquent and is currently in prison on burglary and drug charges. Subject "I" has one sister and two brothers. One is currently in prison for burglary, robbery, under the influence, and possession for sale charges. Subject "N" has two sisters. One served county time for drinking in public and for drug

charges. She was subsequently arrested for shooting a male but was found innocent for reason of self-defense. Subject "P" has two brothers and two sisters. Her oldest brother was arrested for drunk driving and the other was in juvenile hall and detentions centers since he was 16. He has also been in prison repeatedly throughout his life and is currently in prison for burglary and weapons charges.

Overall, four subjects had siblings who were in trouble with the law or incarcerated.

Adult Subject Data

Age

The women's ages ranged from 26 to 58 years. Most women were between 42-49 years.

Grade completed

The women were asked if they dropped out, if so why? Ten dropped out because.....two of them got pregnant and then married. One was in eleventh grade, the other was in tenth grade.

Five dropped out and got married. One was 14, a second got married when she was 16, two completed eleventh grade and then married. Another dropped out because her soon to be husband asked her to do so, promising her that she would be allowed to return to school after they married.

Another woman was "forced to drop out" because she was sent to youth authority. One dropped out because the family environment was very negative. One female dropped out in the ninth grade because she felt she knew more than the teachers. She eventually returned to school five years later.

Disciplinary problems in school

Five women had disciplinary problems in school. The extent of their problems included: skipping class, unruliness, and fighting.

Two subjects were truants. One was involved in a car accident while she was skipping class. Two subjects often fought with boys in school. Another said, because of the medication she was given to control her weight, she was a very "excitable person." She often caused disorder in class and was considered a troubled child.

Drug/Alcohol use

Subject "C" admitted to having taken amphetamines, marijuana, LSD, "uppers and downers" and drank alcohol everyday. Subject "F" drank alcohol beyond the social level. Subject "G" used heroine one time a week and drank heavily since she was 15. Subject "H" used marijuana, LSD, "mushrooms, speed, and cocaine." She drank periodically and vomited with either alcohol or drugs. Subject "I" used valium, and had three drug overdoses. She called herself a "weekend drinker." When subject "J" was 25, she used speed and cocaine once a week during a six month period. Subject "M" would either take heroine, valium, or secanol everyday between the ages of 20 and 29. After her drug use, she resorted to drinking alcohol. Subject "P" drank alcohol everyday since she was 30.

Some subjects simply found themselves experimenting with either substance. Subject "E" experimented with amphetamines, marijuana, crack, and alcohol between 12-14 years. Subject "N" said she used speed and drank occasionally.

Based on the above, seven women drank heavily (considered themselves alcoholic) and six used drugs extensively to the point of addiction. Two were simply experimenting with drugs or alcohol.

Military

No one served in the military.

Children

The subjects were asked whether they had any abortions or children and if so, how old were they when they had their first child. They were also asked to describe the relationship with them.

Subject "A" never had an abortion and she was 17 years old when she had her first child. She has a daughter (30) and two sons who are 27 and 18. She felt she had a very close relationship with them.

Subjects "B and K" both had one abortion and did not have any children. Subject "K" was 16 when she had an abortion.

Subject "C" had one son, who is 36, when she was 18 and never had an abortion. She said her son felt abandoned because of her drug use. Since her imprisonment, the relationship has improved.

Subject "D" had one abortion and had two sons whom are 24 and 26. She had her first son when she was 23 years old and has a good relationship with them.

Subject "E" never had an abortion and was 15 years old when she had a son, who is 11, and a daughter who is 9. Due to the murder she committed, guardianship was awarded to their fraternal grandmother and she does not have a relationship with them.

Subject "F" believed that she had a couple of miscarriages before she married. Her mother made her drink pepper tea, which she believed induced the miscarriages. She had her first daughter, who is 28, when she was 21. She also had another daughter, who is 22, and a son who is 27. She has a good relationship with the

youngest children but does not have a relationship with her eldest daughter.

Subject "G" never had an abortion and has a good relationship with her 22 year old daughter who she had at age 20.

Subject "H" had three abortions, having her first child at 13 years of age. She has five children between the ages of 18-32 and has a very close relationship with her three youngest children, as she did not raise the older two.

Subject "I" had two abortions before she was 16 years. She also had six children whom are now between the ages of 32 and 42, having the first child when she was 16. She felt she was not prepared to be a parent and felt that was the cause for not having a good relationship with her children. She often spanked them with sticks and belts and never showed any affection. Since her imprisonment, the relationships have improved.

Subject "J" did not have any abortions and was 16 years when she had her first child. She had three daughters whom are 15, 12, and 9 and has a very good relationship with them. They live with their maternal grandmother.

Subject "L" did not have any abortions and was 26 when she had her first daughter who is 23. She also has another daughter who is 20 and has a very good relationship with them.

Subject "M" had one abortion before her first child was born. She was 18 when she gave birth to her 26 year old daughter and also has a 25 year old son. Their father took them away when her daughter was two years and the baby was nine months old.

Consequently, she met her daughter when she was 18. They write each other but her son refrains from having a relationship with her.

Subject "N" did not have any abortions. She had her first child when she was 17 and has a great relationship with her 27 year old daughter and her 23 year old son.

Subject "O" has a very close relationship with her 37 year old son and 35 year old daughter. She did not have any abortions.

Subject "P" had two abortions. One before and after the birth of her 20 year old daughter. She was 16 when she had her daughter.

In summary, eight subjects had one or more abortions. Nine said they had a good to great relationship with their children. Two stipulated they did not have a relationship with one or more of their children. One was not allowed to have a relationship with her children due to the murder she committed.

Trouble with children

The subjects were asked if their children had any disciplinary problems or trouble with the law.

Subject "D" said both of her sons had disciplinary problems. One was arrested for preserving marijuana and was on probation until he turned 21. The other child was very rebellious.

Due to the fact that subject "E" was not allowed to have contact with her children, she was not aware of any problems but did not think her children had any trouble with the law.

Subject "H's" children had disciplinary problems. Her second son was an alcoholic and a drug user. Her two youngest children were both runaways and had a terrible dislike for authority figures. Another son was arrested for drunk driving, and another for

possession for sale. Although they were arrested, they did not serve any custody time for their crimes.

All of subject "T's" children had disciplinary problems. When her oldest son was young, he hung a dog on a clothesline, hid his younger siblings from his mother to scare her, was involved in fights, and molested his two sisters. Her oldest daughter was also involved in many fights and formed her own gang. She got married at 18 and because of her heroine addiction she is now HIV positive.

Her oldest daughter was eventually arrested for assaulting her sister-in-law (stabbed her in the throat), robbery (purse snatching), and was imprisoned for a year. Her eldest son had periodically been in training schools and youth camps and was eventually arrested and convicted for attempted rape, receiving a six year sentence. Another son was in youth camps periodically for drug and weapon charges. A younger daughter has been in CIW two times.

Although subject "N's" children did not have any disciplinary problems, since her incarceration, her 27 year old daughter was arrested for burglary and served three and a half months in county jail. Her son was arrested for possession of drugs and served one week in county jail.

Ten subjects said their child(ren) did not have any disciplinary problems. One child eventually had problems with the law and served county time. Five subjects said one or more of their children had trouble with the law, three either received probation, or served county or state time.

First arrest

The subjects were asked what was the cause for their first arrest. Subject "H" was initially arrested for possession for sale and served 90 days in county jail. Subsequently, she was romantically involved with her counselor who sexually assaulted her five year old son. Consequently, she pled guilty to incest so that her son would not have to go to trial.

Some subjects were previously arrested for "petty crimes." Subject "I" was arrested 18 years ago for writing an insufficient check, receiving five years probation and paying a \$1,000 fine. She also stole from her job (did not disclose the amount). Although Subject "N" is currently serving time for her first offense, she admitted to purchasing drugs for other people, tax evasion, and drunk driving.

The following subjects committed more serious offenses. Subject "C" was initially arrested for smuggling marijuana across the border. She was placed on probation and was subsequently arrested for "public drunkenness" in which case, she paid a fine. She also admitted to having been involved in prostitution, drug dealing and shop-lifted but was never arrested. Subject "M" was initially arrested for drug charges and served six months in county jail. She was also arrested for having drug paraphernalia. Furthermore, she admitted to committing robberies and burglaries when she was on drugs.

Some subjects had criminal backgrounds as juveniles. Subject "E" had been arrested for petty theft as a minor and was in juvenile hall regularly. She also shoplifted groceries for her children, getting arrested on the third time. Subject "G" was arrested when she was

14 for kidnapping and served a sentence of five years in Youth Authority. When she was 13, she began committing burglaries by stealing food from the victim's refrigerators because her mother did not feed her. She also stole rings and guns which she later sold, but was never arrested.

Criminal activity was not present in nine circumstances. In two events, criminal offenses were petty crimes, such as insufficient funds, and tax evasion. Four women had criminal backgrounds prior to their current conviction. Two began their criminal activity as juveniles. Also, two were involved in either prostitution, robberies, and burglaries prior to their current crime.

The Murder

Relationship to the victim

The subjects were asked what relationship they had with the victim. Victims of Subjects "A, D, E, J, L," were husbands. The victims of subject "C" were her husband, two step-children, and a friend of the children. The victim of "I" was her "common law husband" of eight years. Subjects "F, G, H, K, O and P's" victims were their boyfriends. Subject "B" did not know the two victims. "G's" landlord was her victim. The victim of "M" was a female companion of her "common law husband." Subject "N's" victim was her best friend.

Six victims were husbands, and six were boyfriends. One subject did not know the two victims, another killed her "common-law husband's" lover. Furthermore, one victim was the subject's best friend. There were also three children that were victims of one subject.

Circumstances of the murder

The following are narratives of the circumstances of the murders. These are the explanations that were given and should be interpreted with discretion, as they may not necessarily be what was determined by the courts.

Subject "A" explained that her husband had a bail bond business and was a drug dealer. It was alleged that the murder was planned. The victim was alleged to have been in subject's office. She feared that her life and the life of her children were at stake (for an undisclosed reason) and then proceeded to kill her husband. The subject was convicted of Murder I (conspiracy to commit murder). She received a sentence of 7 years to life, of which she has served 11.

Subject "B's" account is a rather complicated one. A coin dealer had asked the subject to locate some people. As she was looking for them she was taking notes on their locality. On the day of the murder, she was in the coin dealer's store at which time a robbery was occurring. She was convicted of Vicarious Liability (Murder I) due to the notes she had. She does not know who killed the two victims. The subject advised that she felt that the coin dealer "had set her up." She received a sentence of 25 years to life of which she has served 8 years.

Subject "C's" intentions were to commit suicide. She took nine pills and lit three cigarettes which she placed on the bed. She eventually fell asleep and when she awoke, the house was infested with smoke. Her husband, two step-children, and a friend of the children died of smoke inhalation. She was convicted of three

counts of First Degree Murder (Murder I) and is serving a 7 year to life sentence, of which she has served 16 years.

Subject "D" stated that she had been subjected to emotional abuse perpetrated by her husband. On the day of the murder, he had been abusing her and she proceeded to call 911. While waiting for help, she "snapped" and killed him. She also stated that although she had known him for four years, the abuse begun after the first year of knowing him. She was convicted of Murder I and is serving a sentence of 25 years to life of which she has served 2 years.

Subject "E" was also exposed to psychological and physical abuse along with impoverishment and spousal jealousy by her husband. They lived in remote area where he financially provided for the family and "kept the money to himself." No one was aware of the abuse as he did not let her visit anyone.

On the night of the incident, two friends were visiting them. To her amazement, he began fighting with her in front of them. A male friend interceded on her behalf and in the meantime, she took possession of a knife. Her spouse had taught her how to use it, "make sure you use it properly or else the victim will take it and use it against you." In the meantime, her husband said, "see, she wants us to fight over her." She kept her husband's advice and proceeded to stab him in the heart. She thought he would stab her and asked him, "aren't you going to stab me?" She also wanted to die and she believed that things would occur in the manner he had told her (the other will take the knife and use it against you). After, she called for help but when it arrived, he was already dead. She was convicted of

Murder II and is serving a sentence of 16 years to life. She has served four years so far.

Subject "F" was living with her boyfriend (separated from her husband) who had physically and emotionally abused her in the previous three months of the relationship. On the day of the murder, she requested he return some money that he had stolen from her. She anticipated that he was going to leave her because he was packing his belongings. When her request was not met she killed him and was convicted of Murder I. She has served seven years of a 27 year to life sentence.

Subject "G" was assaulted by her landlord, who wanted to show her "what a real man was," by attempting to rape her. He began "touching me all over," and she proceeded to physically beat him to death. She stated "I had already been raped two times and I was not going to allow it another time." She was convicted of Murder I and has served 16 years of her seven years to life sentence.

Subject "H" was going to leave her boyfriend on the day of the murder. Her boyfriend was drunk and threatened her that "if I cannot have you, no one can." A quarrel ensued and he stated he was going to kill both of them. The victim went toward the subject in a threatening manner but, she took possession of a gun and killed him. She was convicted of Murder II and is serving a sentence of 25 years to life, of which she has served seven years.

Subject "I" had been living with her physically and emotionally abusive boyfriend of eight years. She decided to confront her boyfriend about his infidelity, at his girlfriend's home, who consented to it. He became enraged because she defied him and

stated "one of you is going to lose and it is going to be you." She proceeded to shoot him in the head. The subject added, that after he died, she saw him proceeding towards her, which was in reality, a hallucination, and shot him once more. She was convicted of Murder I and is serving a sentence of 17 years to life, of which she has served 11 years.

Subject "J" stated she was often subjected to mental and physical abuse by her husband. She was hospitalized for severe beatings several times. On the day of the murder, she endured several beatings throughout the day as her husband was drunk and on drugs. The subject stated "these beating were different from the prior ones because they were filled with rage." After he beat her, he "passed out" from the drugs and alcohol. She took possession of a gun and killed him. She was convicted for Murder II and is serving a sentence of 15 years to life, of which she has served six.

Subject "K" was having a nine month affair with her physically and psychologically abusive boyfriend. She had been in the hospital two times from injuries she sustained from previous beatings. The subject stated that her parents "did not want to intervene" when she told them about the incidents.

On the day of the murder, her boyfriend was in a fight with a mutual friend. She proceeded to take him to the hospital and on their way home they argued over him not being able to trust her. When they arrived to their home, she stabbed him in the chest. She proceeded to call 911 and he died two hours later from a heart injury. She was convicted of Murder II and has served five years of her 15 years to life sentence.

Subject "L" lived with her emotionally abusive, and controlling husband. She learned to take control of her own life as a result of her Al-Onon participation. Her husband felt threatened, and he threatened her many times that he would kill her and her parents, and would kidnap their children. She often wanted to leave, but her children kept her from leaving.

The subject later fell in love with an employee of their store. He advised her to hire a "hit-man," which she did not agree with. On the day the murder was to occur, she called her husband to advise him of it. When the phone call was made, "the hit-man answered and stated it was too late." She was convicted of Murder I and is serving a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole plus six years (murder for hire).

Subject "M" was separated from her boyfriend of five years. On the day of the murder, the subject confronted the victim (who had been intervening in their relationship) at the home that the subject and boyfriend shared. She had been alcoholic since the separation from her boyfriend. The subject and the other woman began quarreling and she only recalled the stabbing. She was convicted of Murder II and has served 11 years of her 15 years to life sentence.

Subject "N's" home was burglarized and she believed she knew who was responsible. The subject took a gun to her girlfriend's home (where assumed "thief" was staying at) for intimidation purposes. Her female friend and "presumed thief" were in bed and the subject accused her best friend of being a thief, shooting two bullets into the ground. The victim's sister intervened and in doing so, she pushed

the subject. The gun fired, hitting her best friend. The subject stated, "I did not have intentions to kill anyone." She was convicted of Murder II and is serving a sentence of 17 years to life, of which she has served 5 years.

Subject "O" was dating a man who owned many weapons and was often speaking about death. He was very jealous and often stated, "If I cannot have you no one can." On the day of the incident, they were visiting the subject's parents. The victim was drunk and fell asleep. The subject went to see if he was all right and noticed that three guns were by his side. He awoke and said "it is time." They both reached for a gun, and she shot first. She was convicted of Murder II and is serving a 25 year to life sentence, of which she has served nine months.

Subject "P" was separated from her abusive husband and began dating a man who had initially advised her to get out of the relationship. He was also very abusive. On the night of the incident, she called the police who conducted immediate "counseling" and made him leave. She advised the police that he had several guns, but they simply advised her to leave. Her boyfriend returned and she chose to leave. They struggled and then he proceeded to give her a rose. She immediately thought that he was trying to reconcile but when they reached their home, he began to beat her. She took possession of a gun and shot him in the buttocks. He bled to death before help arrived. She was convicted of Murder I and received a sentence of 25 years to life, of which she has served five years. She was convicted of Murder I because it was premeditated, reason being, the police had previously advised her to leave.

In summary, nine women were convicted of Murder I, one of which had a special circumstance of Vicarious Liability. Also one received life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Seven women were convicted of Murder II.

Feelings about the murder

The subjects were asked if they were in a similar circumstance would they proceed in the same manner, and what they felt about the crime. Their responses varied according to the circumstance.

Subject "A" said she would not do it again and would do anything to turn time back.

Subject "B" said she would not do it again. She stated that she was not bitter about the murder but is upset about the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

Subject "C" said, "I would never attempt this again or try to commit suicide." She felt devastated about the murders she committed as well as extremely guilty.

Subject "D" said, "it is hard to say whether I would do this again under the same circumstances," and was sorry the murder occurred.

Subject "E" said she would never do it again, "it was mind blowing." She also added, " it was hard to believe. At first I was angry, was going through denial, and was very suicidal." She felt she was never given an opportunity to deal with his death, "I did not get to attend his funeral." She also felt badly because she has not been a parent to her children, which is her biggest loss. She wished her husband left her before the murder happened, that way she would not have killed him.

Subject "F" said she would not do it again. She felt she lost everything, her life, family, home, car and money. She added that she does not like the idea that she killed her boyfriend and wished it never happened. She is still in denial and cannot believe her boyfriend is dead.

Subject "G" said if she was in the same circumstance she would "kill her aggressor." She was really surprised by her landlords behavior, "he was a nice guy."

Subject "H" said "if I was in the same situation, I would not want to do that," but she was glad she survived; mainly for her kids. She added "I would give anything if it could have ended in another way, but the abuse had been going on for 18 months."

Subject "I" said, "I would not do it again because I would have to live with the guilt for the rest of my life." She felt very guilty and she wished she was the person she is now when that occurred.

Subject "J" said, "if my life was in danger I would do it again." She felt very guilty and bad for taking a life, "but I had no other choice, it was either my life or his."

Subject "K" said, "that was a tragic thing that happened in my life and I would not do it again. No one listened to me, and when they found out, they offered me help, but I did not take it. I am a different person now."

Subject "L" said, "I would never think of doing this (hiring a hit-man) as I never did." She does not feel responsible for the murder because she did not plan it.

Subject "M" said "I would never do it again, or be in a relationship again. I do not need others to make me happy." She regretted doing what she did and felt no one deserves to die.

Subject "N" said " I would proceed to take a baseball bat instead of a gun (she thought, that way she would not have the possibility of killing someone)." She felt completely accountable for what she did and is very angry at herself. She stated she had too much emotional pain and felt very bad for the victim's mother and children.

Subject "O" said, "if I was in the same circumstance I would do it again to save my life." She wished the murder never happened and did not want to see her boyfriend die.

Subject "P" said she would never do it again. She did not think that she would ever do that. Sometimes she wishes he would have killed her first.

Eleven women said they would not do it again if they were faced with a similar situation. Three women said if their life was in danger, they would kill. In addition, two women did not know whether they would do it again. Also, 13 women mentioned feelings of remorse, while one of them had no feelings of guilt.

Feelings about the Criminal Justice System (CJS)

The subjects were asked if they thought the CJS treated them fairly.

Subject "A" said she accepted full responsibility for what she did. She also added, that she does not blame her parents for what she did, "that excuse is used too often."

Subject "B" felt that there was a lot of corruption in the CJS and women are not treated fairly, "up to this point, I do not understand the CJS."

Subject "C" said she felt the CJS treated her fairly and "feels very fortunate."

Subject "D" felt the CJS should have convicted her of voluntary manslaughter and felt it was unjust.

Subject "E" felt the CJS did not treat her fairly. She added that the District Attorney later said she should have been convicted of manslaughter.

Subject "F" felt the CJS did not treat her fairly. She felt she was denied her rights; right to testimony, expert testimony was not allowed, cross-examination was not conducted, and the Battered Woman Syndrome was not allowed.

Subject "G" said she did not have a fair trial because she was on psycho tropic drugs.

Subject "H" felt she did not have a fair trial because she was "drugged" while she testified.

Subject "I" said, "I was raped by the CJS. I was never given Miranda rights, and the court used a statement I made, which should not have been allowed. In addition, my lawyer manipulated my statement. They dismissed my witnesses and the Battered Woman Syndrome was not allowed. There was an illegal search of my home and I was never allowed to plea bargain. I was also drugged during my trial."

Subject "J" said the CJS should have convicted her of manslaughter, not Murder II.

Subject "K" felt the CJS did not treat her fairly. "They kept lying and it was filled with racial and political bigotry. My boyfriend was black and I did not have a competent lawyer."

Subject "L" also felt the CJS did not treat her fairly. No circumstances of her relationship were admitted nor was the Battered Woman Syndrome allowed. She felt "the system is the pits and money talks." She added, "women are disadvantaged because they are not aware of the law."

Subject "M" felt the CJS treated her fairly.

Subject "N" felt the CJS did not give her a fair trial. "The court did not hear all evidence (it was withheld) and other eyewitnesses did not testify." She added, "I was drugged during my trial."

Subject "O" felt she had an unfair trial. Her first lawyer died in a car accident and felt her new lawyer did not have enough time to prepare for the case.

Subject "P" felt she did not have a fair trial. "My lawyer was terrible, and I was drugged while on trial." Testimony was not allowed from nurses or police officers that treated her when she was beaten.

Based on the above, one discerns that various statements were repeated. Overall, only three women felt they had a fair trial. Thirteen women felt the CJS did not give them a fair trial. Five stipulated that they were drugged during their trial.

Plans when released

The subjects were asked what their plans were upon release. They were also asked if they would change their previous lifestyle in

any manner and whether they would encourage other women, who were in the same situation, to do what they did.

Subject "A" hopes to acquire a clerical or word processing job when she is released, as she has learned the skill since in prison. She stated, "I never want to write another bond again." She added, to succeed, she will not associate with the same people she frequented before she went to prison. Regarding the murder, she said, "it is a judgment call, the murder could have been prevented."

Subject "B" had the desire to adopt "a prison project for the California Institute for Women and make legislators listen to her." She wanted to let them know the California Department of Corrections absorbed a lot of money for no worthy purpose. "Women who are here for murder do not belong in here. It was a one shot deal." When she is released she plans to cherish life. People with freedom take life for granted such as having a pet, grocery shopping etc. She commented, "I should have known something bad was going to happen when I got involved with the coin dealer." Therefore, she feels that other women would have known and would perceive to get out of the situation.

Subject "C" wants to work for a prison fellowship/ministry and get a job through a temporary agency. She plans to live with her family, stay out of romantic relationships, and cease taking drugs. She would not advise other women to do what she did.

Subject "D" wants to work if she is able to, as well as live in Florida, rather than California. She would definitely not encourage other's to do to what she did.

Subject "E" plans to acquire work through a temporary agency and eventually work as a legal assistant for a law office. She plans to go to college and acquire her law degree. When she is released she wants to be a mother for her children and would not encourage other women to do what she did "not the way things are now."

Subject "F" wants to work helping other people. She plans to change her lifestyle by not letting another man in her life and by going to church. She would not advise other women to do what she did because "there is too much to lose."

Subject "G" has a unique dream. She plans to buy a ranch and teach girls how to do things men usually do such as, repair houses and vehicles. She wants to teach girls how to become independent human beings and plans to change her lifestyle by becoming a productive human being. "Women lose their rights, dignity, and sense of self-worth when they commit a murder, and is why they should not do it. "

Subject "H" has a veterinarian technician license and wants to use it when she is released. She would not advise others to do what she did. Rather, "save your life, and act conscientiously, not on instinct."

Subject "I" wants to enjoy life when she is released. She also wants to get her social science degree and help children read. She plans to change her life by using some skills she has learned in prison such as, business education, word processing and legal transcribing. She would advise other women in the same situation to "get the hell out, run, and don't look back."

Subject "J" said a position is being held for her at an embroidery company and plans to work with battered women. She plans to change her lifestyle by continuing to build her self-esteem, since her husband did not allow her to be herself.

Subject "K" plans to acquire her General Education Degree when she is released and wants work with children. She added that since she has been in prison, she has reconciled with her husband who has been very supportive and plans to stay with him. She added, "murder is not the answer."

When subject "L" is released she wants to spoil her grandchildren, manage a store, and work with battered women. If she had a choice of living the way she lived before (beautiful house, car, anything a women could want) she would rather live in a shack. She added that she would tell domestic violence victims to "get out," and invite them to her home.

Subject "M" wants to go to a community college, take computer courses and eventually work in radiology. She also wants to win her family back. She would advise other women who are beaten or cheated on, to simply leave the man.

Subject "N" wants to do research on battered women who are imprisoned as well as work with them. She feels that because she has matured in prison it will help her change her life. She would advise other women to "throw rocks at police officer's houses to get their attention," because they did not help her with the burglary that took place in her house.

Subject "O" wants to work at a ranch when she is released. She plans to live in the same lifestyle she was living in prior to the

murder (without men). This subject said she would not encourage other women to do what she did.

Subject "P" wants to be with her daughter and father. She also has vocational skills and wants to "try her mind at it." She wants to go to the beach and buy her own groceries and plans to change her lifestyle by not drinking anymore saying, "there is too much guilt involved (in committing a murder) and it cannot be remedied."

In summary, three women wanted to find a job, four hope to find a job and continue their education. Two women want to work in the legal field. One wants to reach legislators on behalf of women imprisoned for killing in self-defense. Five want to continue working with battered women, and two definitely do not want anything to do with romantic relationships.

Although none of the women would encourage or advise other women to kill if they were in similar circumstances, only 14 firmly said they would not. Two were uncertain but would not admit advising them to kill.

Women's Liberation

As with the female juvenile delinquents, the adult women were questioned about issues concerning women's liberation. The first question was, do you think a woman's place is the home?

Some of the comments were as follows:

"Women should be where they feel most comfortable." (Subject "A")

Another said in a laughing manner, "women should be at home and in the senate." (B)

"Women should work if they want to." (C)

"If a woman chooses to be at home, that is her prerogative." (E)

"Women need to be at home and be committed to wifely and motherly duties first." (F)

"A woman's place should not necessarily be to stay at home." (H)

"A woman should be allowed to make her own choices." (J)

"Do not let a man control your life." (P)

Although only one adamantly said women belong in the home, only four specifically said women do not belong in the home. Most of them agreed that women should be where they want to be.

The next question was, do you think women should work? Some said.....

"Women should work if their husbands agree. (A)

"Women should work if they want to." (F, H and J)

"Children have a possibility of suffering if the mother works." (I)

"A woman should work because it boost's her self-esteem." (K)

"Women should work, that is the reason why there is so much trouble (lack of female employment)." (M)

No one said women should not work, although one expressed her concern about children suffering if their mothers worked. Ten were forthright and said women should work. Most agreed that women should work.

The next question was, do you think women should have rights to use birth control or have access to abortions? These were the results:

"Abortion is a matter of choice, and women should have access to birth control." (C)

"A woman should not have rights to an abortion, and her form of birth control should be to close her legs." (F)

"There are pros and cons to the issue of abortion. The idea bothers me, but it is the woman's body." (I)

"They should have access to birth control, not abortion. (M)

Thirteen said women should have access to birth control and abortion. Two said they should not have rights to abortions, one saying they should have rights to birth control, and the other saying "they should close their legs." One was unsure about abortions.

They were also asked if men have the same responsibility to take care for their children as women have done in the past. Fifteen subjects said men have an equal responsibility to take care of their children. Subject "F" said, "they help make them, they should have the same amount of responsibility, " and subject "I" said, "if a male helps make a child, then he should help raise it." Subject "H" expressed concern about men raising children, "I do not think men are capable of nurturing children."

The last question concerning women's liberation was, after a divorce, do you think men should pay for child support?

Twelve women agreed that men should pay for child support after a divorce. Subject "I" said, "men should pay for child support after a divorce, but they should not take all their money."

Three subjects thought about the circumstances of both parties. Subject "L" said, "if the father has not had a relationship with the child, then the mother should assume full responsibility." Subject "O" said, "if men are in a position to do so, then they should pay for child support." Subject "E" said, "depends on the circumstances of the male. Many times men get the raw deal when it comes to child support." Subject "K" was the only one that said, "it is an equal

responsibility. Women should depend on themselves for subsistence."

CHAPTER SIX

Summary and Conclusion

The research explored various facets of female criminality. It explored theories that define crime as well as presented criticisms to each on its inapplicability when explaining female crime, specifically murder committed by females. In addition, it presented characteristics exhibited by female killers by the women interviewed. As one learned, over 50% of them were victims of domestic violence.

The inquiry manifested the turmoil battered women undergo at home and in the legal system. Often, women are battered twice; by their abusers and by the legal system. Current research indicates that options currently available to battered women are of little condolence (Browne & William, 1989). The system often exercises sympathy with the abuser when he is brought forth to the authorities. The research also found that the treatment juvenile females receive in the court system is very similar to that of adult women.

By presenting the phases juvenile and adult females go through, one may deduce that the criminal justice system serves as another source of abuse. Often, elements of the criminal justice system are negligent to matters of female victimology.

The problem with female criminality is that scholars have not reached a consensus for explaining it. Each one offers some information and view their theory as a comprehensive one, while others approach the matter with different and often conflicting ideas. Therefore, the problem is that philosophers have not agreed on one

theory, which creates more turmoil within the legal system. This, in reality, demonstrates that women who kill is not yet understood. Having this in mind, the methodology employed in the research will be summarized.

Once the evaluations of the research options were completed, a case study was selected to conduct the inquiry. Field research and unobtrusive research were methods which would not allow first hand looks at women who killed. Both of these methods were not practical.

Field research is a method which requires the researcher to be present at the time of occurrence. As one may note, this was not suitable for the type of data that was being investigated. Being able to gather data on why women commit murder would not successfully be attained in this manner.

Unobtrusive research, in this matter, denies one the opportunity to acquire a personal look at murder exercised by females. Although literature was analyzed, divulging what had already been researched by others was not the purpose of this inquiry. In addition to the literature analysis, informing others of what a murderess really consists of was a main focus of this study. Thereby, refuting any existing misconceptions of a murderess.

Personal interviews, a form of case study, was judged the best method to complete the research. By using this method a high response rate could be acquired, as one can often explain the question to the subject if confusion exists. Probing for anything else which the researcher feels to be important in each individual

circumstance could also be conducted. Lastly, case study is useful in describing characteristics of populations (Babbie, 1989).

As previously mentioned, the methodology employed was qualitative. Five volunteer female juveniles were interviewed while in placement at a youth center. Subsequently, a selection of volunteer adult women incarcerated for murder at one prison site were interviewed. They were asked the same questions as the juveniles, in addition to the circumstances of the murder.

Response Significance

Based on the subject's responses, only one of five juvenile females was raised by both parents with an intact family. Whereas, 11 adult women were raised by both parents. One juvenile was raised by her maternal grandmother, and another by an aunt. Although the sample was quite small for juvenile delinquents, one may discern that currently, many juvenile delinquents come from broken homes where the father figure is virtually invisible. In 1988, Van Vooris et al. found that delinquency does exist between status offenses and broken homes. The research also indicates that most juvenile girls are arrested for status offenses such as running away, truancy, or incorrigibility (Chesney-Lind & Randall, 1992). Extensive studies have been conducted to discern whether being raised in a broken home is a factor contributing toward juvenile delinquency.

Despite all the studies that attempt to demonstrate that broken homes are a factor of delinquency, the majority of them show that there is a weak association between the two. Rather, when it is combined with other factors it becomes more significant (Rosen, 1985). These factors may include parental control, family violence, or

peer associations. This may have been true for the juvenile delinquents in this study.

On the other hand, Canter (1982) found that youths from broken homes engage in significantly more delinquent acts than youths from intact homes. Furthermore, Wells and Rankin (1991) found in a meta-analysis, that a correlation between broken homes and juvenile delinquency was stronger for minor forms of juvenile misconduct, status offenses, and weakest for serious forms of criminal behavior such as theft and interpersonal violence. This demonstrates that some researchers are finding that broken homes do have a notable effect on delinquency. However, broken homes and delinquency remains puzzling due to the contrary findings in current literature.

In addition to broken homes, some subjects had little contact with their fathers or did not know them at all. One juvenile and one adult female did not know who their biological fathers were. Another adult grew up believing her father died. Her mother had actually become pregnant out of wedlock. In homes like these, "men hardly exist, or they exist as occasional intruders in the family (Konopka, 1966)." Data concerning delinquent women has found that fathers are often inefficient, irregular workers who could barely support their families (Adler & Simon 1979).

A factor that may have impacted the majority of intact homes of adult women (68%) when they were growing up, as compared with the juvenile counterparts, is that of a generation gap. Thirty years ago the family was more stable than it is today. That may be a reason for the difference found in this study between juvenile

delinquents and adult women when family composition is considered.

The educational attainment of the parent's of juveniles was virtually very low. Only one had gone beyond the high school level. Consequently, two of them did not know what their mothers did for a living, as they were not raised by either biological parent. Another subject said that both of her parents were currently unemployed. Due to their low educational attainment, these parents had menial jobs, if they had any at all. One father worked in the military and one mother owned a hotel, which will later be discussed as to its purpose. The juvenile whose parents were still married, held more significant jobs. Her mother was a secretary and her father was an executive for a business. Adler and Simon (1979) cited a study of 500 delinquent women, conducted by Eleanor and Sheldon Glueck, which indicated that parents of delinquent women were of low mentality and in a large measure, illiterate.

The educational level and occupations of the adult women's parents were a little more enlightening. Four of the parents acquired a Bachelor of Arts. or beyond. Six had professional or semi-professional jobs. Not surprising, 16 of the parents had "blue-collar" jobs. None of the adult women stated that their parents were unemployed thus, four mothers were dedicated to the home. Currently, California has about an 8% unemployment rate. Whereas, unemployment was virtually non-existent in families of adult women.

Parent drug abuse and arrest records were also explored. The juveniles were all exposed to drug use by their parents/guardians at

a young age; some as young as three years. One subject recalled "I remember my mother heating the drug on a spoon ever since I was four." A quite different environment was exposed to adult women.

Drug use by parents of adult women was very minor. Only five subjects advised that their parents either used drugs or drank heavily. Three parents died from complications associated with alcoholism. One mother died of a drug overdose. Adler and Simon (1979) reported that drug dependency within delinquent families has increased. Families in which alcoholism or another type of substance dependency is exercised in a family, creates an environment where other members of the family are very likely to use drugs or alcohol. This will subsequently be discussed if this holds true for the present sample.

Arrest records of the juvenile's parents were considerable. Three advised that their mothers had been arrested. One mother was arrested for a petty charge; failing to disclose information about the minor to a probation officer. Another was arrested for drug charges and possession of firearms. More serious arrests consisted of prostitution, possession for sale, counterfeit and assault with a deadly weapon. These charges were imposed to the mother who owned a hotel. She was using it as a brothel and for drug dissemination. One subject, who was not raised by her mother, felt that her mother had probably been arrested because of her drug addiction. If one recalls, most of the juveniles did not have a father figure, consequently, they did not know if their fathers had ever been arrested.

Arrest records for the adult women's parents were significantly lower. One subject disclosed that her father was placed on probation for shooting at peace officers, beating his wife and for shooting at the subject. Two other parents were arrested for driving under the influence. Although arrests rates for parents of adult women were slight, research indicates that criminality within delinquent families, as seen with the present juvenile sample, are exhibited. Rosenbaum (1989) found that parental criminal activity ranged from fairly minor offenses to serious violent offenses in a study of female criminality. Many of the offenses were for narcotics or welfare violations. She additionally found that about 30% of known birth parents had served time in state prison. Fathers were often involved with alcohol which led them to produce assaults and other criminal behavior (Rosenbaum, 1989). We learn that two parents of adult women were arrested for driving under the influence charges. The juvenile's parents crimes were more serious. Pollack (1950) stated that parental criminality highly influences their offspring's delinquency, therefore, creating a delinquent atmosphere for their children.

Juvenile subjects answered questions concerning sibling drug use. Three juveniles asserted that their siblings had used drugs and one of them assumed it. Adler and Simon (1979) cited a study in which 40% of a sample of delinquent women had a close relative who abused drugs, usually a parent or a sibling. Furthermore, if a woman is not addicted to a controlled substance, they are introduced to them by another family member and thus, encouraged to abuse them (Adler & Simon 1979). Due to family environment, it may become very difficult to avoid using drugs, because usually they are

introduced to them by an older family member. One subject, who had a full brother and several half-brothers and sisters, indicated that all her siblings smoked marijuana. Consequently, before her arrest she was using PCP, marijuana and was drinking a lot. Whereas, a subject who had a younger brother, said that he did not use drugs. She further admitted experimenting with drugs.

Sibling trouble with the law and arrests were also present within the families. One juvenile said that her 13 year old brother had been arrested for GTA (grand theft auto) and had served two days in juvenile hall. The subject with the younger brother advised that he had shoplifted but had never been arrested. Another subject had 13 year old twin brothers who were in gangs.

Adult women had siblings who had also been in trouble with the law or had been previously arrested. These responses may seem awkward and should be interpreted with discretion. Subject "I" has a sibling who is currently imprisoned for burglary, robbery, under the influence and possession for sale. Subject "N" has a sister who served county time for drinking in public and for drug charges. She also said that the aforementioned sister was found innocent from shooting at a male for reasons of self-defense. Subject "P" has two brothers who also encountered some troubles. Her older brother was arrested for drunk driving. Another brother has been in juvenile hall and detention centers from the age of 16. He is currently imprisoned for burglary and weapons charges.

Although sibling trouble with the law or arrests may appear insignificant, research suggests that in families of female delinquents, brothers and/or sisters were in placement at a youth authority while

others were in jail or prison (Rosenbaum, 1989). Similarly, research consistently suggests that oldest children tend to be least delinquent (Wilkinson et. al, 1982). Although this did not hold true for juveniles, it held true for 63%, or ten, adult women in the present study. Delinquent activities of parents and siblings were also combined with family violence.

Physical, sexual, and psychological abuse were instituted in various homes. One juvenile had been physically and psychologically abused by her mother. She was also molested by her maternal uncles when she was seven. A second subject indicated that her father was physically abusive towards her when she was young. A large proportion of girls in correctional institutions exhibit physical abuse. Similarly, about 54.3% of them undergo sexual abuse (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1992). The abuse was more rampant and appeared to be more severe in the homes of adult women.

Some adult women placed most of the responsibility for the abuse they endured on their mothers. Subject "F" was exposed to physical and mental abuse by her mother. Subject "G" claimed that her mother attempted to murder her. She further said, "I did not look like any of them (other family members) and my mother abused me since I was a baby." She was also physically, psychologically, and sexually abused by her father. After her father died, her brother continued to molest her. Subject "K" was molested by her brother. Not surprisingly, her family was in denial. Subject "M" often tried to avoid her father because he became irritated very easily. He became physically and mentally violent toward her and her sister. Subject "P" got married very young to avoid her mother's

psychological and physical abuse. Alcoholism also appeared to be a big factor in the production of family violence.

When either parent was alcoholic, the family environment was very abusive. Subject "C" felt that because of her mother's alcoholism, she was molested by her uncles and a brother's friend. Thus, her mother was ignorant that the abuse was occurring because she was consistently drunk. Subject "I" recalled her childhood as an unhappy one because her father was a drunkard who sexually and physically assaulted her and the three other children. Subject "H" said her father compensated her with gifts when he molested her. He too, was often drunk. She additionally blamed her mother for the incest, because she was an active participant avoiding the matter. We learn through these accounts that family violence impacted these females in a negative manner.

Effects of delinquency have been widely researched by scholars. Findings reveal that some form of family violence is often exhibited in delinquent females. Wells and Rankin (1991) found that direct controls (discipline) consistently occurred across various indicators of delinquency, even though they were not large. They further asserted, "punishment that is too strict, frequent, or severe can lead to a greater probability of delinquency regardless of parental attachment (strong child bond). Punishment will have the same adverse impact on delinquency, in spite of the fact that the child is strongly or weakly attached to the parent (1991)." They found a similar result in an earlier study of parental control and delinquency. The study revealed that more vigorous (frequent or severe) punishment is associated with higher levels of delinquency

(Wells & Rankin, 1988). Fifty percent (50%) of the present sample were exposed to physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse.

Abuse also appears to increase in single parent homes. Gelles (1989) found that single parent households are at higher risks for subjecting children to physical abuse. Three adult women and four juveniles were raised in what would be considered "single parent families." Of the women raised in single parent households, one was subjected to physical abuse, and another said that the environment was always hostile, even though there was no physical abuse. One juvenile, who was raised by her mother, was physically and psychologically abused by her mother, and sexually molested by her uncles. The other three juveniles who were raised in single parent households were exposed to negative atmospheres consisting of gangs, drugs, and crime. Overall, 30% of the sample, raised in single parent households were exposed to physical, psychological, or sexual abuse. Moreover, research indicates that intrafamilial violence occurs more often in lower-class or working class families (Gelles, 1987). If one recalls, 16 of the parents in this sample were working class.

The issues previously discussed were related to the subject's families. This was conducted for the purpose of exposing their family environment. The following is personal data of the subjects such as educational level, drug use, children, arrest record etc.

Educational attainment of the juvenile sample was very low; none of them successfully completed high school. Subject "A" who is 15, was initially expelled in fifth grade. Her school attendance fluctuated until she was placed in the youth center. Subject "B" also

15, completed ninth grade. She was expelled from two counties for taking firearms to school. Subject "C" got pregnant in the eleventh grade when she was 16. Subject "D" who is 17, also became pregnant and only completed eleventh grade. Subject "E" who is 16, dropped out when she was in seventh grade because she wanted to be with her friends.

Educational history of adult women virtually mirrored that of the juveniles. Ten dropped out before completing high school. Most of them dropped out because they got pregnant or got married before graduating. One, was placed in youth authority, where she completed her General Education Degree. Another, dropped out in ninth grade because she felt she knew more than her instructors. In delinquent homes, education is not valued. In 1980, only 29.1% of women in federal prisons successfully completed four years of high school (Simon & Landis, 1991). Whereas, 75% of the adult sample in the current study did not acquire their high school diploma.

School represents a game to many females. School and home environment contradict each other. Books represent learning, something which is foreign to them at home. The family views education as unimportant, subsequently, school and home have no relationship (Konopka, 1966). Konopka (1966) found that delinquent girls have low expectations of themselves. A subsequent study conducted by Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, revealed that popularity was more important. They accomplish this by fighting, toughness, and drug using (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1991). This is perhaps why one juvenile often took weapons to school. Whereas, if students perceive advancing educationally, delinquency is less likely to occur.

Michael Hindelang (1972) disclosed that those who have a stake in school performance, an investment which delinquent behavior may jeopardize, and are less inclined to engage in delinquent conduct. This is perhaps why juveniles in this study dropped out or were not interested in school. If one recalls, one adult woman said she dropped out because she felt she knew more than her instructors. Moreover, adolescents know when their parents place importance in school activities. Therefore, their continuance in school is closely related to parental expectations. Furthermore, disciplinary school problems may be closely associated with delinquency.

All the juvenile subjects had disciplinary problems throughout their education. Three were expelled from school; one, for threatening to stab a boy, a second for taking firearms to school, and the third for spitting on an instructor, fighting, and taking a knife to school. A fourth subject often took knives to school and was consistently fighting with boys. She also threw a chair at a teacher. The fifth subject fought and damaged school property.

The adult sample had similar problems to a lesser extent. Five had "intolerable behavior" by parent and school administration. Two subjects were often truant. One of them was involved in a car accident when she was skipping school. Two subjects often fought with boys and another was very disruptive due to the medication she was taking for her weight problem. Following that, she became stigmatized because her teachers often referred to her as intolerable. 31.2% of the adult sample had disciplinary problems in school (see appendix figure 3). When females describe their disruptive

behavior they often perceive it in a positive note. Chesney-Lind and Sheldon (1991) found that girls boasted about their toughness, daring, and their keen trickery. This was found true with the juveniles. During the interview, they felt proud and often smiled about their escapades. One recalled "people did not mess with me" referring to herself when she took weapons to school. Overall, 50% of the sample had discipline problems during their school days.

Early pregnancy and sexuality was another issue highly represented by those interviewed. None of the juveniles were married but two of them had children. One subject had a baby when she was 15. Her mother is raising the child but the subject asserted that she will raise it when she is released. A 17 year old placed her baby for adoption. A third subject, who was 15, chose to have an abortion. Adult women also had abortions and children at a young age.

Adult abortions were rampant among the sample. 50% of the sample had abortions at a young age, most of them before the age of 18. One subject recalled very bitterly, that her mother made her drink pepper tea when her mother discovered she was pregnant, which she believed, induced several miscarriages. One subject had three abortions having her first child at 13 years. Another, had two abortions before she was 16. Aside from the abortions, 14 women had one or more children.

In this sample, sexual experience began at a very young age. Chesney-Lind and Sheldon (1991) found that the average age of first sexual experience was at 13.8 years in their study of female delinquency. This is very similar to the findings in this study.

According to many, girls do not perceive unwed pregnancy as they did earlier. Konopka (1966) noted that girls feel violated when others try to dissuade them from having a baby. Often they feel the need to be a mother. Further, family members view the unwed mother as selfish. The adult subject who had several miscarriages by drinking pepper tea, thought that her mother viewed her as such. Sexuality among delinquents is often viewed as a illicit indulgence.

Sexual encounters were viewed as criminal acts among young females. A study, conducted by the Gluecks, and cited by Adler and Simon (1979) referred to early sexual experiences as, "illicit sexuality, was practically simultaneous with the onset of other forms of delinquency and with unstabilizing environmental experiences." The encounters were often casual. Most of the juvenile respondents in this inquiry, no longer associated with the individuals they became pregnant by. It appears, that sexual intercourse was accomplished for a sense of belonging and proving "one's love to a partner." Konopka (1966) found that girls will often take abuse from their boyfriends in order to maintain companionship. Konopka (1966) found that some girls insisted that it was better than having nobody, while others rebelled and said they would not take any abuse.

Having children at a young age created negative problems for some adult women. Some of the subject's children were involved in criminal activity, but it did not appear as if crime was a generational issue within the families. Five women had children who had trouble with the law. The crimes they committed ranged from preservation of marijuana, to more serious crimes, such as assault and attempted rape. One subject recalled that she was not prepared to be a parent

and felt that was why all her children (6) were involved in criminal activities, "I should have known that my son needed help when he hung a dog on the clothesline. He basically grew up in youth camps and training schools and was eventually arrested for attempted rape." However, most of the women's children were arrested for drug and alcohol offenses.

Many subjects said that their children were often rebellious. One son was arrested for preserving marijuana, and was placed on probation until he was 21. Another individual was arrested for drunk driving, and two others for possession for sale. These criminal actions may have a bearing on lack of parental attachment. Research indicates that a poor relationship between parents and children is highly influential in children's subsequent criminal delinquency (Rosenbaum, 1989). This is also closely related to parental controls.

Too much or too little parental controls leads to greater frequency of criminal behavior (Wells & Rankin, 1988). Research supports the assertion that males have a greater involvement in property and violent crimes (Canter, 1982). However, some female children of the adult women were involved in burglaries, robberies and assaults. It is also quite peculiar that parental attachment is more of a deterrent to delinquency for males than for females (Hindelang, 1972). If this is true, male children of the adult sample may have perceived little attachment to their parents, since they were more highly involved in criminal activities. This is further reinforced by one subject, whose children were all delinquent, "I wished I had a better relationship with them sooner, ever since my imprisonment, the relationships have improved."

After exploring the criminal activity of the women's offspring, other crimes and arrests committed by the sample will be exposed. The juvenile sample had an array of crimes, some of which they were never arrested for. Subject "A" and "B" were initially arrested for possession for sale. "A" subsequently served four years for the same charge and is currently serving a nine month sentence for public drunkenness and failing to appear in court. "B" also admitted to having been involved in a drive by shooting, which she was not arrested for and is currently serving an extended sentence for escaping from a detention center. "C" was also convicted of possession for sale and GTA. She is now serving time for assault and battery, assault on a peace officer, gang affiliation, possession for sale, GTA, receiving stolen property, burglary, violation of probation, and under the influence. "D's" first arrest and current conviction consisted of GTA, endangering a minor, and kidnapping. Subject "E" was initially arrested for GTA and is currently serving a six month sentence for the same offense.

Based on the above data, the juvenile sample were habitual criminals. "E" had been in placement periodically in the previous three years. Moreover, drug use was extensive and may have been a factor in their delinquent careers.

Drug and alcohol use was widely exhibited in the sample. All the juveniles admitted to drinking alcohol and/or taking drugs. "E" said she did not like alcohol. Two others boasted about the quantity of alcohol they drank; "C" said she drank 160 oz. of alcohol everyday and "D" said she drank 80 oz. every weekend. Drug use among the

juvenile sample made them appear as "professional users" since they had experienced widely with different drugs.

Subject "E" was the only one who said that she had used drugs in an experimental sense. The other four had used "rock, acid, coke," and/or PCP. They appeared to be proud of their drug use, as one explained, "I have used every drug there is." Half of the adult sample also admitted to taking drugs and/or drinking alcohol.

Some of the adult respondents took drugs and drank alcohol simultaneously. Subject "C" said she drank alcohol every day and had used amphetamines, marijuana, LSD, and "uppers and downers." Subject "G" drank heavily and used heroine once a week since she was 15. "H" drank periodically, and was accustomed to vomiting with either drugs or alcohol. Others called themselves "weekend drinkers." Valium, secanol, amphetamines, and crack were other drugs that they admitted to taking. Overall, 50% of the adult sample had used drugs before their conviction (see appendix A, figure 4). One confessed to having three drug overdoses; while none of them committed the murder while on drugs. Similarly, seven subjects would be considered alcoholics.

Drugs are initially taken for curiosity. Both juveniles and adult subjects admitted to initially experimenting with drugs. Today, it is believed that female addiction is somehow connected with male addiction, which is seen as the "greatest predisposing factor" (Mann, 1984). Women are presumed to try narcotics out of curiosity and either find themselves liking it, or they become addicted, or both experiences occur (Mann, 1984). According to Mann (1984), females are far more likely to be admitted to hospital emergency rooms for

psychotherapeutic drug problems and for drug overdoses. Recall that one adult subject had three drug overdoses.

Initially, girls use drugs to escape from their existing condition. Furthermore, their drinking problems serve as a method to forget their situation (Konopka, 1966). Konopka (1966) explained that self-destruction may be expressed in excessive drinking -a "forgetting" of existence, a move into stupor. In her study of female delinquency, the girls reported that drinking heightened their consciousness of being alive. Eventually, they proceeded to take drugs because they wanted to be "away" from everything (Konopka, 1966). Chesney-Lind & Sheldon (1992) asserted that "eventually drug use itself becomes a problem, forcing users further into criminal behavior."

One juvenile subject, in the current study recalled, "when I was selling cocaine, I began smoking weed, because if you use and sell, you will become your best customer, and that will get you into more trouble" (criminal trouble). An enlightening note is that research suggests that girls' official delinquent careers are shorter and involve less serious offenses than do the careers of boys (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1992). This, of course, may be dependent on their feelings about the crimes they committed.

Two juveniles wanted to change their criminal lifestyles. One learned that there was more to life than stealing cars. She also expressed concern over her younger brother, who wanted to be just like her. She planned to disassociate from her old friends as she did not want to set a more profound negative example for him. A second girl reported that it was not worth it (committing the GTA). On the other hand, three girls planned to continue their criminal activity.

One said, "I don't know whether I will go back to my gang lifestyle, I more than likely will. I plan to change my lifestyle by getting better at it (committing crime) by not getting caught." Another said, "I will still go with my friends, if they invite me to do something lawless." A third said, "I will still do it for fun and adventure."

It appeared that delinquent behavior heightened their self-esteem. Furthermore, their activities did not appear criminal to them. In the study conducted by Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, the girls thought it was unfair to be tagged as criminal (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1992). Similar findings were exposed in the current study by comments some subjects made regarding their sentence time. Most of them felt that they were given too much time. One reasoned this by saying that her brother committed the same crimes and he received less time. This brings forth the belief that juvenile courts have practiced unequal treatment between genders; females receiving tougher punishments.

The juvenile justice system may be reflecting the traditional family beliefs; one which involves a double standard of treatment. Rosenbaum (1989) found that female run-aways were victims of their families and of the criminal justice system. Often, they run away to escape their often violent family environment. Consequently, they are arrested for status offenses and sentenced to youth authorities (Rosenbaum, 1989). Often parents cannot control their daughters, thus, they enforce a stricter control on their daughters than on their sons. When their daughters become unmanageable, they seek the courts help. There is a consensus that a main reason for girls presence in juvenile court is because their

parents insisted on their arrests (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1992). Furthermore, police are exhibiting similar sentiments to female status offenders as compared to boys. Police officers and court officials often feel "if it's equality they want, equality they'll get" (Simon & Landis, 1991). In reality, girls are more harshly processed in the courts than boys are.

Perhaps even before 1929, females were exposed to unequal treatment by the justice system (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1992). This was initially demonstrated by physical searches females had to undergo if they were suspected of being sexually permissive once they reached the court house. Doctors were called upon to provide gynecological examinations in most "girl cases" (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon 1992). More recently vaginal searches have been conducted (Chesney- Lind & Sheldon, 1992). This double standard of justice is not exercised on their male counterparts. In the current study, juveniles were counseled on options of birth control. This was initially done at their arrival at the youth center. Although they were not forced to select an option, one subject stated, "they often talk to us about birth control until we have made a decision." Females are made to feel totally responsible for their sexual practices, not mentioning their male companion. Gynecological exams, and counseling sessions on birth control represent covert double standards practiced by the justice system.

Chesney-Lind & Sheldon (1992) found that girls charged with status offenses were often more harshly treated than their male counterpart. Girls suspected of status offenses were more likely than their male counterparts to be referred to juvenile court (Chesney-

Lind & Sheldon, 1992). The authors found that 31.9% of all females referred to court were charged with status offenses, compared with only 12.1% of males. Similarly, in 1982, in the index property category, 65% of females, and 34.6% of males were charged with shoplifting (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1992). This data implies that the courts have created an atmosphere where females are being labeled "criminal" for running away, truancy, and incorrigibility. This is probably why many girls do not perceive themselves as criminal; their crimes are not serious and do not produce a specific victim.

An enlightening note is that generally, status offenders do not escalate into serious criminal offenders. If status offenders return to court, it is usually for another status offense (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1992). A negative note is that females are becoming stigmatized by being criminally labeled for committing non-criminal acts. This may produce a society in which "delinquent girls" will continue their delinquent behavior but become "better at it" a statement which was demonstrated by one of the juvenile subjects, "I plan to do what I have been doing, but becoming better, by not getting caught."

The previous explanation presented an issue mostly composed of paternalistic ideas. The family exposes females to more tighter controls than boys, and if they refrain from succumbing, they are introduced to the criminal justice system. They either run away, or their parents call the courts for help in controlling their "incorrigible child." The girls then discover an increased paternalism at court.

The courts feel they have to protect the child from promiscuity, and do so by incarceration.

The criminal background of the adult sample is more condensed and less serious than that of the juvenile sample. Their crimes range from writing a check for insufficient funds to incest.

Previous criminal activity was present in the background of seven adult subjects. From that activity, 37.5% of the sample was arrested previous to their present crime (see appendix A, figure 5). Two subjects had delinquent activities as juveniles. Subject "E" was arrested for petty theft and had been in juvenile hall periodically. She was also involved in shop-lifting groceries for her children, and was arrested on the third attempt. "G" began committing burglaries by stealing food from her victims refrigerators when she was 13. She was eventually sentenced to five years at California Youth Authority for kidnapping. She was never arrested for stealing jewelry and guns.

The criminal activity of five other women consisted of writing checks without insufficient funds, stealing money from employers, tax evasion, shoplifting, possession for sale, drunk driving, public drunkenness, prostitution, robberies, burglaries, and incest. Although the crimes appear to be numerous, most of them were crimes of an economic nature. Men still continue to commit the majority of crimes, and the highest proportion of females are arrested for larceny, primarily shoplifting (Adler, 1975).

Shoplifting is a crime that women dominate (Adler, 1975. Many consider it the "traditional female crime." "Shoplifting is an ancient art of females, one which the goods have changed, but not the

techniques of stealing them" (Adler, 1975). This statement has everything to do with the fact that women are more grossly involved in shopping; food and other household items. Therefore, opportunities to shoplift are higher for women than they are for men. Two subjects admitted to stealing food, which constituted their entrance into criminal activity. Adler (1975) stated that most shoplifters are petty pilferers rather than professionals. They engage in this type of behavior over many years, are respectable individuals, who typically steal merchandise under \$15.

Prostitution is another crime related to economics and most recently, is a social crime. Although it is over-powered by men, women are arrested for it. Prostitutes are made to believe that their pimps are available for protection. They "protect" their territory by driving out other prostitutes that have no pimps (Adler & Simon, 1979). In reality, men are their primary exploiters. Arresting a pimp is usually difficult, police may try to get the pimp by repeatedly arresting one or more of his "ladies" (Adler & Simon, 1979). Pimps further exploit their "ladies" by using them to evade police officers. Prostitutes conversely "protect" their pimps to continue gaining "their protection."

The social context of prostitution is a complex one. While prostitution continues to be a crime for which a significant number of women are arrested every year, the number of male arrested for consorting with prostitutes is so small that it does not even merit a special category in the Uniform Crime Reports (Adler, 1975). This demonstrates another unequal aspect of the criminal justice system

in which a double standard continues to incriminate females, where males constitute a large component of the problem.

Other offenses which women are arrested for are drunkenness and drug offenses. In the past, research suggested that although drunkenness was high among the offenses for which women were arrested, it ranked even higher among the offenses for which men were proceeded against (Pollack, 1950). It is inspiring to note that drunkenness arrest among women has decreased sharply (Adler & Simon, 1979). However, women are still highly involved in drug selling. Three women admitted to selling drugs at one time or another. Violation of narcotic drug laws have shown a higher relative liability of women than of men (Pollack, 1950). Burglaries and robberies were also exercised by the adult sample.

Two women, in the current study admitted to committing robberies and/or burglaries. Although the circumstances of the crimes were not discussed, women usually act out the role of conspirator, accessory, or partner (Adler & Simon, 1979). In some cases, the women are with someone else who actually planned the crime without her knowledge, but they are charged with the offense in the first degree because once the criminal action began they participated actively (Adler & Simon, 1979). The authors additionally noted that the crimes were conducted for the purpose of economic or psychological reasons (1979). We further see, as in the juvenile sample, that these crimes heightened their perception of themselves when committed for psychological reasons. Recall the statement made by one juvenile, "I'll do (crime) for fun and adventure." In summary, the majority of incarcerated women have been imprisoned

for victimless crimes such as drug or alcohol violations and prostitution (Mann, 1984). Whereas, society and media portray women as violent individuals. In reality women continue to participate in "victimless crimes."

After discussing female perpetrated crimes, the research will briefly discuss the circumstances of the murders. Since domestic violence and the women's position against it has already been discussed, the following discussion will be very concise. Overall, 56.2% of the women were victims of domestic violence (see appendix A figure 6). The victims consisted of three children, six husbands, seven boyfriends, two unknown individuals, a female friend, and a male landlord.

Most women in this sample, murdered in "self-defense." One would have been a victim of rape, but she fought, and killed her aggressor. Another female felt that her life and her children's lives were in danger because of her husband, and she decided to take his life. Almost always when violence is used to settle a problem, the problem has been large enough to distort the individual's judgment (Adler & Simon, 1979). Premeditation was not an issue in any of the murders; they occurred on "spur-of-the-moment." One subject had called for help when her mate began to abuse her, but before help arrived, she "snapped" (as the subject described it) and killed her aggressor. The murders occurred suddenly. This is represented by the following comments: "I never meant it to end that way; I wish he would have killed me first; I would do anything to turn back time." These comments may be indications of guilt and frustration they were/are going through after the murders.

Women who deliberately kill, after careful planning, are rare (Adler & Simon, 1979). None of the subjects admitted to planning the murders. In addition, most of the subjects did not understand why they were convicted of Murder I and II. They asserted that the murder was committed in self-defense.

Most of the subjects were unhappy about their processing into the Criminal Justice System. Some subjects felt they should have been convicted of voluntary manslaughter. Others said that they did not have adequate representation, and was the reason for being convicted of Murder I. When race is considered, white women are less likely to be jailed before or after conviction than black women, but they are also less likely to have a lawyer. Likewise, white women are less likely to be non-indigent, and thereby ineligible for court appointed counsel (Adler & Simon, 1979). Although the circumstances of the trial were not discussed in the interview, the previous statement may have been a reflection of their trial outcome. 81% of the sample were white, and many of them said they did not have adequate representation. Furthermore, research suggests that there are two thought processes that determine how a woman is treated in the system; one consists of a preferential treatment, the second consists of a more punitive measure (Adler & Simon, 1979).

Most observers feel that women receive preferential treatment, which means, that they are less likely than men to be convicted for the same type of offense; if they are convicted, they are less likely to be sentenced; and if they are sentenced, they are likely to receive milder sentences (Simon & Landis, 1991). These ideas stem from a paternalistic view. They dictate that women should be protected

from the ills of society. The ills being, prisons. Apparently, judges view female defendants as if they were their mothers, and consequently treat them lightly. Only three of the subjects were content about the trial process and the end result. One subject stated "I feel very fortunate." This was in response to the fact that she survived the turmoil, (of abuse) not her victim.

The second treatment view is a more punitive one. This entails placing more severe penalties on the females because "they are not conforming to their nature given behavior." Judges are more than likely to throw the book at female defendants because there is a greater discrepancy between behavior expected of women than there is between the behavior expected of male defendants (Simon & Landis, 1991). This idea is largely based on the premise that crime is a male's nature. When reviewing the circumstances of the murders, many were committed because they could not tolerate further abuse.

Aside from not having adequate representation, a peculiar issue arose from the interviews. 31.2% of the sample stated that they were drugged through their trial (see appendix A, figure 7). They stated that while in jail, they were given psycho tropic drugs, which considerably impeded them from defending themselves during the trial process. Apparently, administration of these drugs is widely practiced among institutions. Tranquilizer and mood elevators, which are commonly used as a means of social control in some institutions, are sometimes forced on rebellious or upset women (Mann, 1984). One subject's account was, "I was so upset, that during my trial I did not even know who I was. I was like a zombie. I had hallucinations and perceived the jury as monsters, as a result of

taking the drugs." Not surprising, the drugs were administered against their will. Another subject recalled that prison officials made sure she swallowed the drug before they left. This may be a method which the system employs to further victimize female defendants. Although the murder and the trial aspect of their lives were negative aspects of their lives, the subjects maintained a positive outlook.

Upon their release, a large number of women want to work in social services. They demonstrated a great desire to help other women and children. Five women wanted to work with victims of domestic violence. Two women wanted to work in the legal system. One of them mentioned making legislators listen, "women who are here (prison) for murder do not belong in here. It was a one shot deal." Four wanted to continue their education and acquire a job. Unquestionably, two women said they definitely did not want anything to do with romantic relationships.

The sample was also asked to comment on issues of Women's Liberation. The juveniles were very liberal. All the juveniles agreed that a woman's place is not the home, women should work if they want to, and they should have rights to birth control and abortion. In addition, they felt that men have the same responsibility to take care of their children, as women have done so in the past. There was also one subject who said, "the person who makes the most money should pay for child support," when they were asked who should pay for child support. There were only a few adult women who had a few conservative ideas.

Mostly all the women agreed with the juveniles opinions regarding a female's position and choices. There were a few who

made some antiquated statements: "women need to be at home and be committed to wifely and motherly duties first; Children have the possibility of suffering if the mother works; A woman should not have rights to an abortion and her form of birth control should be to close her legs; They should have access to birth control, not abortion."

Comments regarding the rearing of children consisted of: "I do not think men are capable of nurturing children; If the father has not had a relationship with the child, then the mother should assume full (economic) responsibility for the child; Many times men get the raw deal when it comes to child support."

Based on the previous comments, there were only a couple of adult women who had conservative ideas about birth control and men's responsibility toward raising children. A few subjects were very sympathetic with men, when questions about divorce and child support were asked. Overall, the divergent comments made by juveniles and adult women may be indications of a generation gap. Adults being more conservative than juveniles.

Conclusion

This study attempted to redefine how theorists and the justice system treat women in their involvement in crime. Theorists endeavor to apply their one-sided views of how crime and murder, conducted by both genders, can be rationalized in the same manner. In reality, their justifications do not satisfactorily apply to women and crime. Additionally, most theorists have not reached the threshold of understanding their environment, and the psychological state that produces a female to kill.

Researchers have a great influencing power on constituents of the justice system as well as on the public's perception of female murderers. Therefore, they possess a responsibility of informing them, not only about the negative attributes of these individuals, but also of the humane characteristics they possess. Descriptions of murderesses depict them as being inhumane individuals.

Although the sample was small, it produced findings which were inconsistent with the general view of female juvenile delinquents and female killers. Likewise, the study limited one when making generalizations because of its size. Furthermore, case study may have produced superficial answers. Social desirability may have caused respondents to answer according to what they thought others wanted to hear. Also, by using standardized questionnaires, important issues may have been neglected.

Several limitations were present in the research design. In spite of that, exploring the initial hypotheses was not obstructed. The hypotheses were as follows:

1. Did women convicted of murder have a history of spousal abuse?

56.2% of the sample were victims of spousal abuse. If their background is considered, many of them endured physical and/or mental abuse for lengthy periods of time before they called the authorities or committed the murder. Research suggests that battered women live in constant fear of violence (Ewing, 1990). Many of the women in the sample did indeed live in constant fear for their lives throughout their relationship. Some were glad that they lived, while others regretted the murders.

2. Did women convicted of murder have discipline problems in school during adolescence?

Five subjects were involved in truancy, unruliness, and fighting while they were enrolled in school. They were considered disruptive and incorrigible by their parents or school officials. Currently, school officials are dealing with this phenomena on a daily basis. However, thirty years ago, teachers did not deal with weapons, drugs, or gangs as often as they do today. The activities that those interviewed were involved in would not be considered serious. Consequently, this hypothesis was not factual as only 31% were believed to have discipline problems. These problems consisted of incorrigible behavior.

3. Did women convicted of murder have a criminal background?

This hypothesis was proven untrue. Only two of the sixteen women interviewed were delinquent as juveniles. One was arrested for petty theft and the other was convicted of kidnapping. The kidnapping charge was of a serious nature and may have been an indication that the individual was more likely to be involved in subsequent serious crimes.

As adults, 37.5% of the sample had been arrested. Most of their crimes were of an economic nature. Women are often seen as petty pilferers, continually committing crimes involving money (Adler, 1975).

4. Do women convicted of murder have delinquent children?

Five women (31%), indicated that they had delinquent children. Their offenses included drug offenses, drunk driving, cruelty to animals, robbery, gang affiliation, and burglary. Some women felt

that a poor relationship with their children contributed to their delinquency. Based on this research, women convicted of murder do not have delinquent children, consequently this hypothesis was unfounded. They may have been somewhat effective parents in their children's upbringing, as too much or too little control may lead to delinquency (Wells & Rankin, 1988).

5. Are there specific characteristics of female killers?

According to the background and characteristics of these women, defining a murderess was proven arduous. Consequently, a specific profile of a murderess was unfound. Some were drug and alcohol users, others were not; some had previous arrests, while most of them did not. Most arrests consisted of "victimless crimes," with a few exceptions. Each inmate had (positive) attributes which are related to the rest of society. Thus, they had virtues that law-abiding individuals possess. It was difficult to define a murderess as evidenced by the above unfounded hypotheses. This may show that a criminal female's background continues to baffle the criminological community.

This study was conducted for the purpose of exploring the circumstances which induce females to kill. The fact that they manifested "nurturing attributes" conveyed the idea that their options were futile. Many had distressing options; continue bearing physical, and/or psychological abuse, be killed, or kill. Therefore, they were faced with selecting the "lesser of two evils."

Women are victims of the system when theorist ignore their feelings on the crime that was committed, especially if the murder was conducted in self-defense. Researchers need to reassess their

performance and provide society with more inclusive theories of women and crime. Moreover, when murder is committed by a female, the circumstances that preceded it are ignored.

If the criminal justice system recognized the violence that women who kill endure, then perhaps it could offer more viable alternatives to females, and in essence, prevent murders. If realistic options were available, perhaps abusive males would be deterred from committing further abuse on their partners. The law must be more responsive and effective toward women who murder. As of late, it has been very ineffective in assisting women's problems. To see social change, society must begin to change its pattern of thinking and reconstruct the current legal system.

This study presented the inconsistencies that embody the legal system and the unfavorable treatment females receive when they are processed for crimes they committed, especially for murder. To further understand female criminality, researchers must produce studies that extend beyond this one. Perhaps the groundwork for subsequent studies on this topic has been established by this inquiry. The future holds a challenge for the legal system. Society, and most importantly, victims of spousal abuse, deserve a viable and diligent response.

APPENDIX A: FIGURES

Figure 1

1992 Female Felony Arrest Dispositions

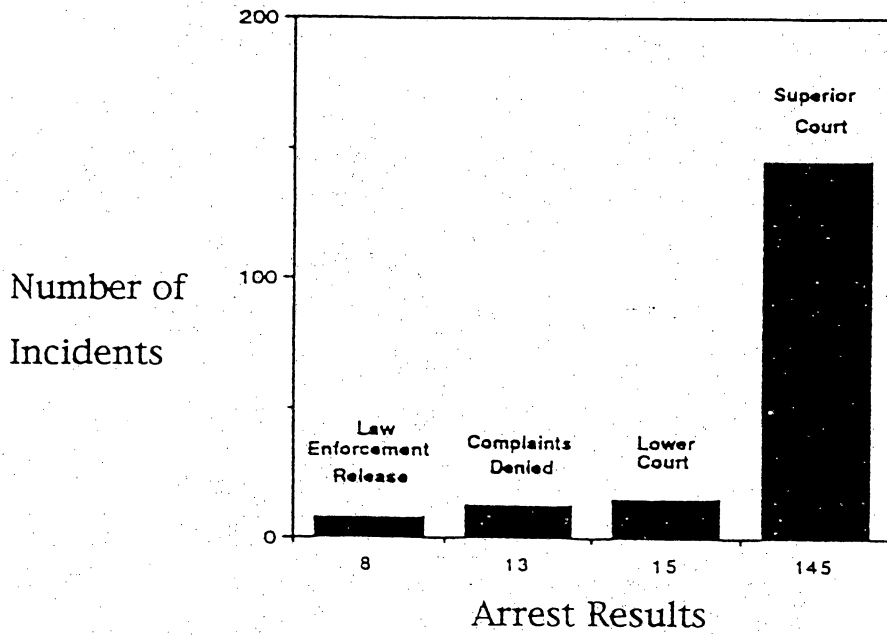


Figure 2

1992 Female Murder Court Cases

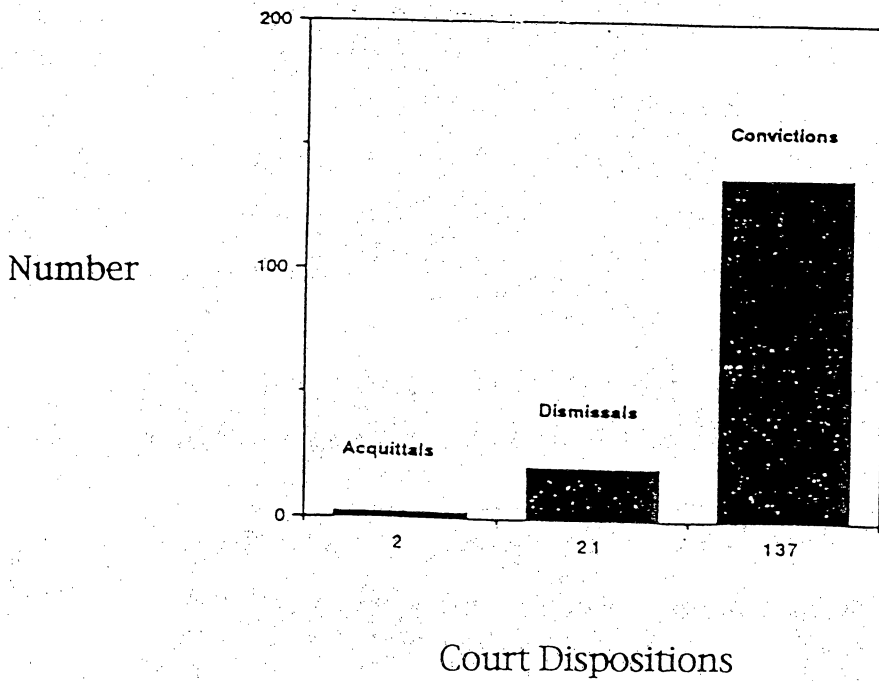


Figure 3
Disciplinary School Problems

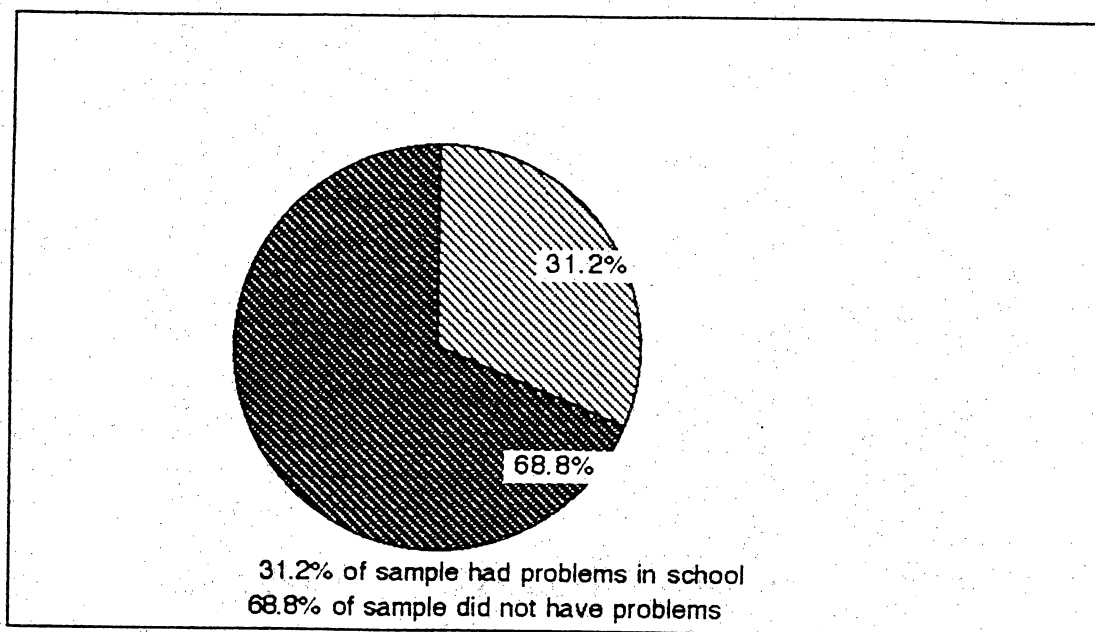


Figure 4
Drug Use

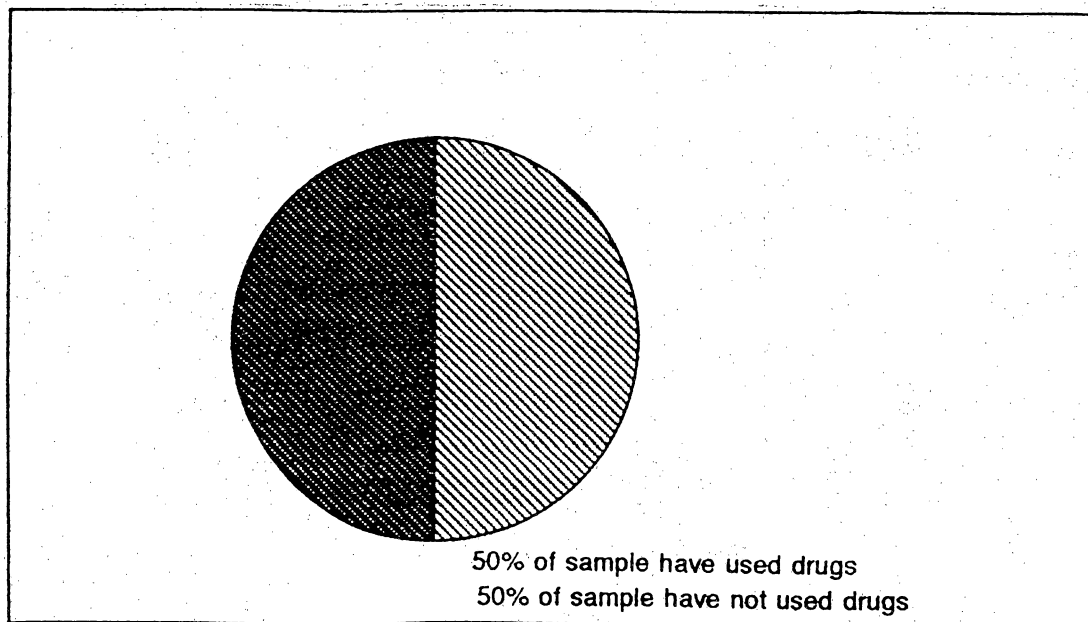


Figure 5
Previous Arrests

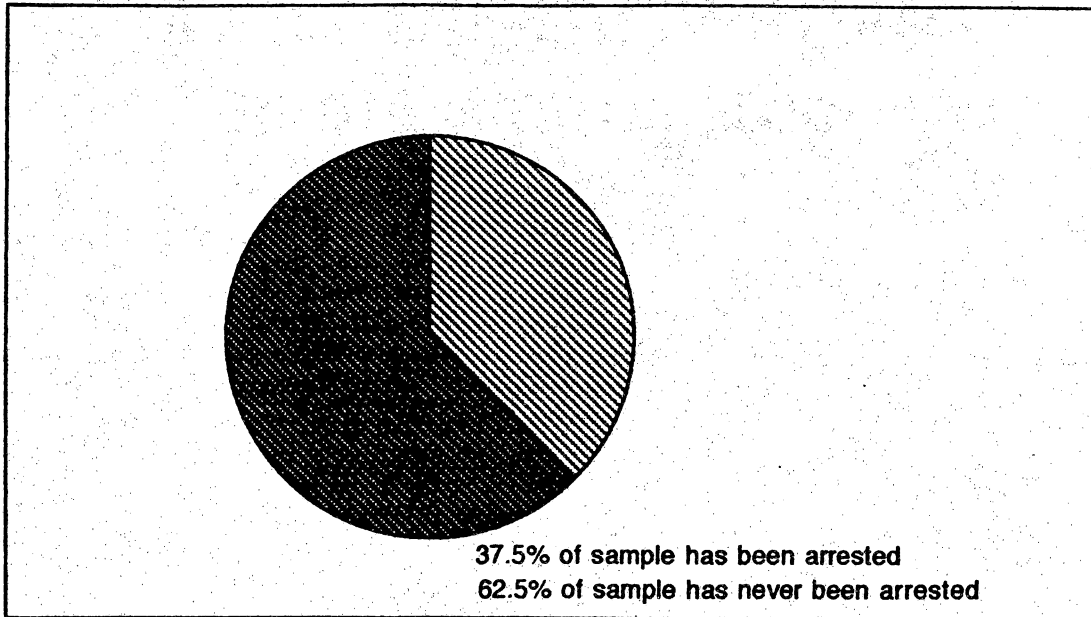


Figure 6
Battered Women

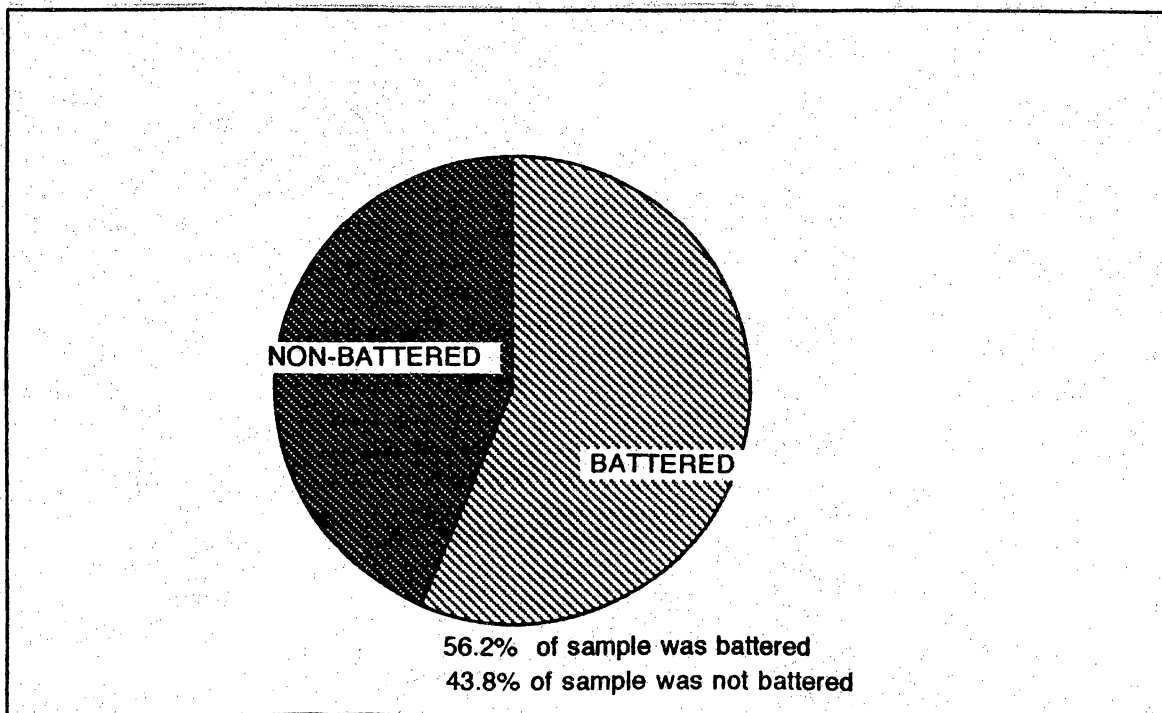
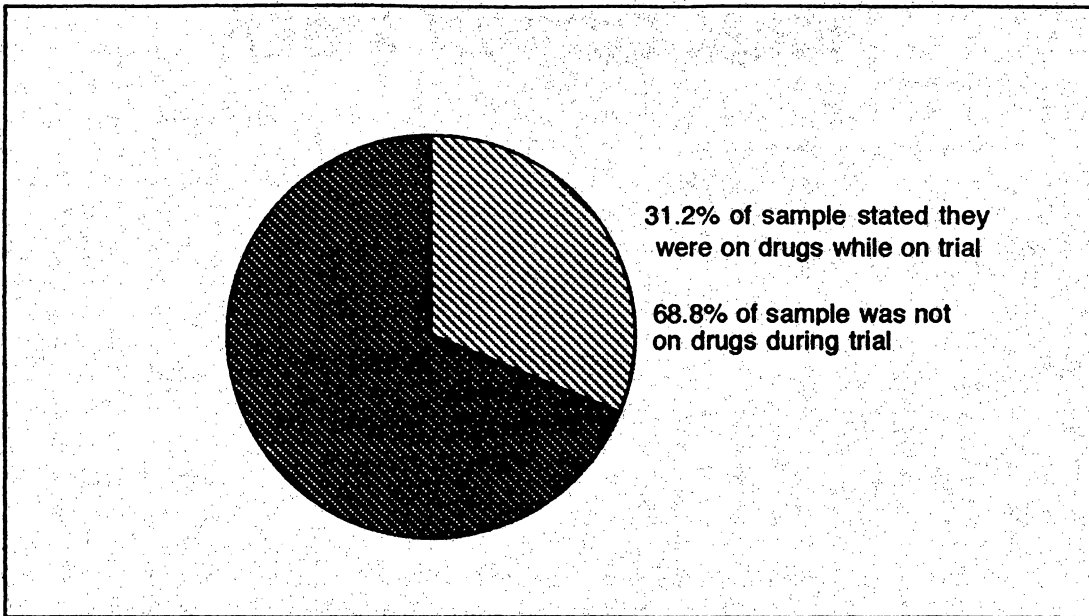


Figure 7
Drugged on Trial



APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRES

Juvenile Questionnaire

1. How old are you?
2. Do you have any other brothers or sisters?
 - a. what are their ages?
 - b. have they ever been arrested or in trouble? for what?
 - c. did they serve time in prison juvenile detentions jail or probation?
3. What grade did you complete in school?
 - a. () elementary
 - b. () jr. high
 - c. () high school
 - d. () college?
4. Did you drop out? Why?
5. Did you have any disciplinary problems in school
 - a. What kind?
 - b. How old were you?
 - c. What was the result?
6. What problems did you have as you were growing up?
 - a. With your parents?
 - b. with you friends?
 - c. others?
7. Have you ever been abused physically, mentally or sexually?
8. Are you married?
9. Do you have any children?
 - a. How old?
 - b. How is your relationship with them? (positive, negative)?
10. Did you grow up with both of your parents?
 - a. if not why?
 - b. where was the other parent?
11. How old were your parents when you were born?
12. What grade did they complete?
 - a. () elementary
 - b. () jr. high?
 - c. () high school?
 - d. () college?
13. What is their occupation?
14. Have they ever been arrested or in trouble?
 - a. For what?
 - b. Have they ever served time in prison, jail, juvenile detentions, or probation
 - c. How long?

15. Have your parents used drugs?
 - a. If yes, how old were you when you found out?
 - b. Are they still using drugs?
16. Do your siblings use drugs?
17. Have any of your siblings ever been arrested or in trouble?
 - a. For what?
 - b. Have they ever served time in juvenile detention, prison, jail or probation?
 - c. How long?
18. Have you ever done anything else which is illegal and you were not arrested for?
19. Do you use drugs?
 - a. what kind?
 - b. how many times (a day, week, month)?
20. Do you drink alcohol?
 - a. When?
 - b. How much?
21. Have you served in the military?
22. What was the cause for the first offense for which you were arrested?
23. Did you get convicted?
 - a. how much time did you serve?
24. Would you do it again?
25. What were you arrested for the present conviction?
26. Under the same circumstances would you do it again?
27. Do you think the criminal justice system treated you fairly?
28. What will you do when you get out?
 - a. do you consider education?
 - b. will you search for a job?
29. Do you plan to live in the same style you were living prior to your conviction?
 - a. If not, how will you change?
 - b. do you plan to associate with the same people as you did prior to your conviction?
30. Would you encourage other women who are in the same circumstances to do what you did?
 - a. why? why not?
31. Do you think a woman's place is in the home?
32. Do you think woman should work?
33. Do you think woman should have rights to use birth control or have an abortion?
34. Do you think men have the same responsibility to care for their children as women have done so in the past?

35. After a divorce do you think men should pay for child support?

Female Adult Questionnaire

1. How old are you?
 - a. 18-21
 - b. 22-24
 - c. 25-30
 - d. 31-35
 - e. 36-45
 - f. 46 or older
2. What grade did you complete in school?
 - a. elementary?
 - b. jr. high?
 - c. high school?
 - d. college?
3. Did you drop out? Why?
4. Did you have any disciplinary problems in school?
 - a. what kind?
 - b. how old were you?
 - c. what was the result?
5. What problems did you have as you were growing up?
 - a. with your parents?
 - b. with your friends?
 - c. others?
6. Are you married?
7. Do you have any children?
 - a. how old are they?
 - b. describe your relationship with them?
8. How old were you when you had your first child?
9. Did you ever have any abortions?
10. Did your child(ren) have any disciplinary problems growing up?
11. Have they ever had any trouble with the law?
 - a. what kind
 - b. what was the result?
12. Have they ever served time in detention centers, jail, prison or probation?
13. Did you grow up with both of your parents?
 - a. if not why?
 - b. where was the other parent?
14. How old were your parents when you were born?
15. Did you have a happy childhood?
16. Was there any family violence present during your childhood?
17. What grade did your parents complete in school?
18. What is (was) their occupation when you lived at home?

19. Have they ever been arrested or in trouble?
 - a. for what?
 - b. have they ever served time in prison, jail, or detention centers?
20. Did your parents use drugs?
 - a. what kind?
 - b. how often?
21. Do you have any brothers or sisters? How old are they?
22. Did they have any problems as they were growing up?
 - a. with parents?
 - b. friends?
 - c. school?
 - d. others?
 - a. what kind?
 - b. how often?
23. Did they ever serve time in jail, prison, detention centers, or probation?
24. Have you ever done anything else which is illegal and you were not arrested for?
25. Do you use drugs?
 - a. what kind?
 - b. how often?
26. Do you drink alcohol?
 - a. how often?
 - b. how much?
27. Have you served in the military?
28. What was the cause for the first offense for which you were arrested for?
29. Did you get convicted?
 - a. how much time did you serve?
30. What happened previous to the homicide?
31. What relationship did you have with the victim?
32. How did it happen?
33. Were you convicted of murder I, murder II, voluntary manslaughter or involuntary manslaughter?
34. Under the same circumstances would you do it again?
35. How do you feel about the homicide you committed?
36. Do you think the criminal justice system treated you fairly?
37. What will you do when you get out?
 - a. have you considered education?
 - b. will you look for a job?
38. Do you plan to live in the same style you were living in prior to your conviction?

- a. if not how will you change it?
 - b. do you plan to associate with the same people?
39. Would you encourage other women who are in the same circumstances to do what you did?
40. Do you think a women's place is in the home?
41. Do you think women should work?
42. Do you think women should have rights to use birth control or access to an abortion?
43. Do you think men have the same responsibility to care for their children as women?
44. After a divorce, do you think men should pay for child support?

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