VOLUME 53 ■ ISSUE 4 ■ SEPTEMBER 2025

ACJS today

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Newsletter

ACJS Presidential Update

Six months ago, I had the honor of taking office as ACJS President. It has been an exciting and busy time and I cannot wait to see what the next six months will bring. As I enter the second half of my presidency, I want to take the opportunity to update our membership on recent efforts and plans moving forward.

I had the opportunity to represent ACJS at two international meetings this summer -- the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (UNCCPCJ) in Vienna and the Stockholm Criminology Symposium in Stockholm, Sweden. In Vienna, I moderated the ACJS side-event which explored the connection between the activities of NGOs like ACJS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). I also had productive meetings with UNODC officials from the research, transnational crime and civil society divisions. I continue to be in contact with the UNODC personnel regarding enhancing ties between ACJS and UNODC as well as their participation in our 2026 Annual meeting.

At the Stockholm Symposium -- along with Program Co-Chair Aimee Delaney -- I was honored to be able to attend the Jury Dinner held the night before the conference. In addition, ACJS was well-represented at the Gala Prize Dinner Honors Tables. I was able to share this inspiring event with Dr. Delaney, Past President Janice Joseph, Secretary Camille Gibson, Dr. Lorna Grant, and Dr. Marika Dawkins. These events provided visibility for ACJS in the international arena. As well, I was able to engage in fruitful conversations with the Co-Chair of the Prize Jury Lawrence Sherman and the Interim Director of Sweden's National

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Council on Crime Prevention, Jonas Troll. The National Council is responsible for putting on the Symposium. I have followed up these meetings with discussions about increasing ties between ACJS and the Symposium.

This month I will also have the chance to attend the meetings of our Southern and Midwestern regions (Charleston, SC and Chicago, IL, respectively). This will be my first time attending both conferences. I am looking forward to meeting the regions' leadership and connecting with friends and colleagues new and old. In October, I will be attending the Western regional meeting in Lake Tahoe, while Region IV Trustee Erin Orrick will be representing me at the Southwestern regional meeting that takes place at the same time.

The Executive Board will be holding its mid-year meeting in Philadelphia on the 20th of this month, where we will tour the site of the 2026 meeting in Philadelphia, as well as address any issues or action items raised by our committees, sections, and/or membership. I would once again like to send my utmost gratitude to all and thank all the members who have agreed to serve on these committees, as well as conduct all the hard work of our Sections. Space does not allow me to list everyone here, but your efforts and energy is what allows ACJS work to fulfill its mission. You can find a full list of committee members and Section leadership on the ACJS website www.acjs.org.

Come one, come all! The submission system and registration are now open for the 63rd Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA March 3-7, 2026. I am happy to invite everyone to join in the panels, events, and festivities. The final submission date is October 10 and early-bird registration rates run until February 6. Registration is also available for our workshops on Assessment and Academic Leadership to be held Tuesday March 3. In addition, we are offering a new workshop on identifying and investigating cryptocurrency crimes geared to both researchers and practitioners. Join us for this exciting and practical look at one of the most challenging 21st century crimes. More information is available on the ACJS website. For more in the cyber space, keep an eye out for JCJE-sponsored panels based on two special issues dealing with artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. A tour of Eastern State Penitentiary is also in the works. And don't forget to bring your dancing shoes for the Presidential Reception, and all of your trivia knowledge for Late Night Trivia on Thursday March 5 after the receptions.

One of the best things about ACJS is that it provides a welcoming space for academics and practitioners and can serve as a professional home for both. This is reflected in the number of practitioners that serve at both the sectional and national levels and by the connections they are making with practitioner organizations. Over the next six months, I will continue to promote this important aspect of ACJS by:

- Working with the practitioners serving on the 2026 Program Committee to develop panels that bring together practitioners and academics.

- Working with our sections to explore and expand connections to practitioner organizations.

I invite all of our practitioner and academic members to propose and join in on panels that highlight the vital connections between practice and research that effective and compassionate criminal justice policies require. In addition, check out the opportunities with the Mentoring Committee for practitioners to serve as mentors and for graduate students who are looking at alternatives to academia to find mentors.

Before I close, I would like to thank the members of

the Executive Board for their hard work, dedication, and the energy they devote to ACJS. I consider myself lucky to be working with all of them. A huge thank you to our National Office staff -- Letiscia Perrin, Debra Grandy, and John Worrall -- as well as our social media coordinator Melissa Swancy-Coleman.

I state the obvious when I say that the mission of ACJS -- *"transforming criminal justice through research, education, and practice."* -- is going to be especially challenging this coming AY year. Those of us in education and public service are facing obstacles and uncertainties, some of which we have dealt with for decades, and some of which we could not have predicted even six months ago. It is a frightening time for many of us both personally and professionally. I have no easy answers or predictions. But I still find myself optimistic -- and dare I say certain -- of the ability of ACJS to successfully navigate whatever comes our way this year and in years to come. That optimism stems from the people I have met and the ACJS friends I have made over the years. The dedication, passion, and compassion for what we do is inspiring. Every day our members strive to make a difference in their communities large and small, and that will never change.

An External Program Review Coming Up?

ACJS can help and provide recognition for your program

Jay Albanese, Chair, ACJS Academic Review Committee
Michele P. Bratina, Deputy Chair

Once every 5 to 10 years, you will be informed that your Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's degree programs must undergo external review, as required by the state or regional accrediting body.

This requires your program to carry out **three time-consuming tasks**:

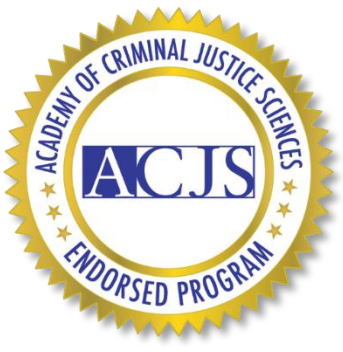
1. The program must write a comprehensive self-study on trends and current status of program mission, program history, faculty, students, student outcomes, and support.
2. The university brings in external reviewers expected to take an objective look at the program, interviewing students, faculty, and administrators, and write up an assessment with recommendations moving forward.
3. The university administration and program discuss the findings and make a plan of action for the next several years. So, *the typical review of your program starts internally and ends there.*

Program reviews provide a crucial opportunity for an expert in the field to assess the program's strengths and communicate to the administration the necessary steps for its future success. The unfortunate truth is that administrators are often more likely to listen to outside voices than they are to their own faculty. Once a qualified outsider verifies what the faculty has usually been saying about the program for years, there is a better chance that the university will be responsive and maybe even provide some resources.

Below are three important contributions that ACJS can make:

A. ACJS is the only academic body that has written **Quality Standards** for academic programs in criminology and criminal justice. The standards were adopted by ACJS membership, and they have been updated multiple times by the Academic Review Committee (ARC) to keep up with the modernization of college education. The purpose of the standards is to distinguish programs that are delivering an excellent collective educational experience in an increasingly competitive academic marketplace. https://www.acjs.org/academic-program-review/

B. Having trained ACJS reviewers perform your external review can result in an **ACJS Endorsement** of your academic program. This endorsement seal (pictured here) enables you to transform your internal review process into an external marketing tool, showcasing your academic program as an excellent one among peer institutions. ACJS accomplishes this by recognizing programs that meet most of the ACJS Quality Standards. ACJS provides special recognition to AA/AS, BA/BS and MA/MS programs that undergo program review using the Quality



Standards with at least one ACJS Certified Reviewer and meet at least 85% of the standards (including mandatory standard C.4). ACJS has trained reviewers from all regions who have review experience to match your institution's needs.
https://www.acjs.org/certified-reviewers/

C. **Consider ACJS Endorsement for several reasons:** First, an ACJS review doesn't cost anything beyond what your program would ordinarily pay for an external review. Your university negotiates the external reviewer fee with the individual ACJS reviewers, just as administrations do with all their program reviews. Second, the ACJS Standards are comprehensive and include all the components typically found in college and university self-study templates. Most administrators do not object to programs using the disciplinary standard for their reviews, as is done for many other academic departments.

Programs that successfully undergo review by ACJS Certified Reviewers (by meeting the published ACJS Quality Standards) will be recognized as an **ACJS Endorsed Program**. ACJS Endorsed programs are listed on the ACJS website as endorsed, and they can market themselves both on their websites and promotional materials as such for the next seven years.
https://www.acjs.org/acjs-endorsed-programs/

Please feel free **contact us** with any questions about this process.

Congratulations to the Academic Programs that have recently earned ACJS Program Endorsement!

University of Massachusetts – Lowell
Bachelor's and Master's degree programs

Virginia Commonwealth University
Bachelor's and Master's degree programs

North Carolina Central University
Bachelor's and Master's degree programs

Creating a "Civil" Police Force on American College Campuses (1960-1980)

By: John J. Sloan III

Introduction

More than 90% of public and 40% of private U.S. post-secondary institutions (PSIs) with more than 2,500 students currently employ sworn and uniformed police officers authorized to use firearms, chemical weapons, and batons, and to perform patrols and make arrests both on and beyond campus boundaries (Reaves, 2015). Their presence introduces the logics of the carceral state to campus communities, including surveillance, control, arrest, and sanction (Lopez, 2022). The objective is to engage, manage, and sanction individuals identified during routine patrol as violating physical, social, or symbolic boundaries. Under the guise of "campus safety," the logics of campus policing support increasingly corporatized institutional branding efforts and serve as tools for student recruitment and retention (Lee et al., 2021).

Although campus police have been extensively studied, existing literature often lacks historical context and tends to be descriptive and applied. Research on their origins and integration into higher education during the 1960s and 1970s is notably absent. This essay seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the factors that led to the establishment of campus police departments, how these factors influenced the chosen policing model, and the processes through which campus policing became institutionalized.

Creating Campus Police Departments

In the 1960s and 1970s, American higher education changed significantly due to the end of *parental university* framework, campus unrest, and state responses to them. This section examines these issues.

The Parental University and Its Demise

For much of its history, American higher education was built on a foundation that included common law principles of *parens patriae* ("parent of the homeland"; see Platt, 1969) and in *loco parentis* ("in place of the parents"; Lee, 2011) and the widely held belief that college students are not children, but neither are they mature adults (Forrest, 2020). As a result, they need structure and discipline in their lives in what Goffman (1961) would identify as a "total institution" setting.1 Collectively, these principles and assumptions constituted the parental university (Lake, 2013).

According to Forrest (2020), under the parental university college students' lives were closely monitored as they were considered legal wards of the college. Faculty masters managed students' class hours and assignments and evaluated their progress through in-class recitation. Students' personal freedoms, including speech and association, were limited and colleges could expel them without notice or hearing. Campus security was primarily handled by faculty, with local constables occasionally involved for serious crimes (Sloan, 1992).

Beginning in the 1950s, colleges relaxed their rules and experimented with new curricula. This era also saw dramatic increases in both the number and type of PSIs operating and in student enrollments

[1] Katz (2021) makes the intriguing argument that residential colleges fit Goffman's definition of total institutions.

(Thelin, 2019), leading to the "massification" of American higher education (Trow, 2010).[2] Uniformed security guards gradually replaced "watchmen" who had previously provided campus security in the post-Civil War era (Sloan, 1992).

Between 1961 and 1971, courts overturned the legal framework of the parental university, beginning with *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education*.[3] The 1971 passage of the 26th Amendment lowered the age of majority to 18 and ended the parental university. This period also witnessed protests and demonstrations on campus as students, freed from the constraints of the parental university, found their voices and demanded change to the status quo.

Days of Rage

As college students gained independence from parental university constraints, they began protesting perceived injustices (Gitlin, 2013). The 1964 Free Speech Movement at UC Berkeley initiated broader student demands to end segregation, American imperialism, sexism, and police brutality. Occasionally, protests turned violent; there were bombings at the University of Wisconsin and forced occupation of administrative offices at Columbia. Many protests resulted in damage to the campus infrastructure. In response, PSI administrators sought assistance from local and state police and, at times, National Guard units. The presence of these authorities often led to further violence as they aggressively suppressed protests (Gieg & Miller, 2016).

PSI administrators quickly found it unwise to rely on external police and National Guard units to restore campus order (Suriel, 2024). Recognizing the need to both address the protests and maintain their authority, college administrators decided to establish their own police departments (Miller, 2024). By creating a campus police force under institutional control and staffed with officers drawn from the campus community, school administrators aimed to enforce rules and manage disturbances more effectively without escalating tensions (Sloan, 1992). They also envisioned this move as a step toward forming a new, more effective/efficient parental university—with formal ties to the burgeoning carceral state (Sloan, 2024).

PSI administrators faced a significant challenge, however, as they lacked both the power and authority to establish and operate campus police departments. This issue was ultimately resolved through political channels, when state legislators and attorneys general agreed to help (Bordner & Peterson, 1986). As a result of state support, campus police departments emerged and proliferated.

The Police Power of the States

The word police is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. Chief Justice John Marshall introduced the idea that states have a "police power" in the 1827 case of *Brown v. Maryland*.[4] In this case, Marshall explained that police power relates to the legislative authority of the states and originates in the 10th Amendment. For Marshall, the state's police power generally included all powers not delegated by the states to the federal government and specifically included the authority to enact laws relating to public health, safety, and morals (Legarre, 2007).

[2] Massification occurs when 15% of the adult population either has earned or is pursuing a college degree (Trow, 2010).

[3] *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* (294 F.2d 150 (1961)) was a landmark case that significantly shaped the due process rights of students in public universities: They could no longer be expelled without a formal hearing.

[4] 25 U.S. 12 Wheat. 419 (1827).

The police power of the states thus enabled higher education officials to establish and make operational a formal system of social control on college campuses. This system manifested via state-level passage of enabling legislation that gave PSIs the power to do so (Miller, 2024). This system, which became more common as higher education became increasingly integrated within the broader social structure, safeguarded state investments of both human and material capital in higher education and penalized behavior that challenged the established order.

Making Operational and Maintaining a "Civil" Police Force on College Campuses

The model adopted by higher education for campus policing was the American municipal police whose origins are traceable to the London Metropolitan Police (LMP) established in 1829 through the efforts of Sir Robert Peel (Harris, 2004). According to Go (2024), Peel envisioned the LMP as a "civil" police force to address crime and disorder by serving as an alternative to the military in a domestic setting. He selected the term civil to imply a force operated by and composed of civilians, not soldiers. The term civil also conveyed a sense of civility, indicating politeness and peace, in contrast to the force and violence associated with soldiers during war.

Americanization of the model began in the 19th century when Boston, New York, and Philadelphia established municipal police departments. As Walker and Katz (2021) note, these civilian-administered departments did not adopt military-style uniforms, issue firearms, or use military training or equipment. However, these early departments were also inefficient and corrupt, and they focused more on managing public disorders associated with the nascent labor movement's use of strikes to disrupt commerce.

During the early 20th century, American policing entered the "Progressive Era" (Walker & Katz, 2021). Led by August Vollmer, the City of Berkeley's first chief of police, significant reforms occurred in municipal policing. Departments reorganized, operations were centralized, officers were professionalized, new training regimens were implemented, and new technologies and tactics were adopted (Oliver, 2017). Policing shifted from maintaining order to crime control and prevention. Municipal police also became militarized.

Militarization of Municipal Police

Go (2024) recently showed how American municipal policing became militarized during the Reform Era rather than more recently, as some have claimed (Balko, 2021; Kraska, 2001). According to Go (2024), police militarization was influenced by the American imperial-military regime through imperial importers and imperial feedback. Police reformers like Vollmer, who were ex-military and had been stationed in colonies overseas, returned home and took important positions in police departments. They served as imperial importers by incorporating militaristic methods derived from imperial and colonial contexts into their domestic activities. This process is described by Go (2024) as imperial feedback. The reforms integrated not only military equipment but also military tactics, technologies, frameworks, and training protocols into policing. Additionally, reformers imported what Stoughton (2015) describes as the "warrior worldview," in which police officers are trained to view every individual as a potential armed threat and every situation as potentially involving deadly force (see Sierra-Arévalo, 2024).

Go (2024) concludes that local civilian policing in the United States was militarized very early in 20th century due to imperial military influences and the application of racial analogies from overseas to domestic spaces. This militarization led to the

suppression of people of color and converted social problems into military problems, with favored solutions being rapid, expensive, and lethal, in contrast to more innovative alternatives. This became the model for campus policing.

Organizational Isomorphism and Campus Police Departments

PSI administrators, inexperienced in setting up police departments, recruited command-level staff from municipal forces to undertake this unprecedented task. Organizational isomorphism influenced much of what they did.

In their influential study on organizational homogenization in the late 20th century, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified forces contributing to increased similarity among organizations over time. They referred to these dynamics as isomorphism and proposed three mechanisms affecting it: coercive, mimetic, and normative. These mechanisms offer insights into why the model adopted for campus police was based on municipal policing and how this choice led to the gradual convergence of campus and municipal police in terms of organizational characteristics, administrative processes, and tactical operations over time.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explain that coercive isomorphism arises from political influence, legitimacy concerns, and pressures from essential sources. The adoption of a civil police model by PSIs was influenced by political pressure from governors, media, and public opinion to address campus disorders. Additionally, the model would address legitimacy concerns. PSI officials indicated that the new department would be managed by civilians and staffed by trained police officers, some of whom were alumni. Departments would also receive funding through public appropriations to higher education, ensuring operational functionality and long-term stability.

The establishment of a new campus police department involved significant uncertainty. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) propose that new organizations address this by modeling themselves on existing ones to reduce uncertainty and gain legitimacy. Leaders of new campus police departments chose to model municipal police departments, adopting their structure, processes, and tactics. This provided familiarity for them and legitimacy for the community due to the public's exposure to municipal police operations through popular media, especially television dramas (Tracy, 2022).

Campus police leaders encountered significant challenges related to normative concerns regarding working conditions for both civilian and sworn staff, as well as strategies for achieving departmental objectives. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 152) attribute these normative pressures to professionalization, defined as "the collective effort of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work . . . and establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy" and its impact. Furthermore, they note that professional associations act as "vehicles for the definition and dissemination of normative rules about organizational and professional behavior" (p. 154).

To address the normative pressures they faced, new campus police department administrators recruited experienced patrol officers and supervisors from municipal and other law enforcement agencies to serve similar roles within the new department. These line officers contributed institutional memory and valuable experience, along with a professional outlook aligned with that of their superiors. By doing so, department leaders ensured the new department was consistent with municipal

departments. Administrators also sought guidance from the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) to validate the legitimacy of the rules they were establishing and define "professional behavior" for departmental hires (Watkins, 2020).

Conclusion

Campus police originated as a response to crises experienced by American higher education with the demise of the parental university and the security implications that its demise created. By modeling an already militarized municipal police, campus officials not only regained the authority they feared they had lost, but imported the carceral state to the campus to help them maintain it. It remains to be seen whether recent efforts at abolition will prove successful.

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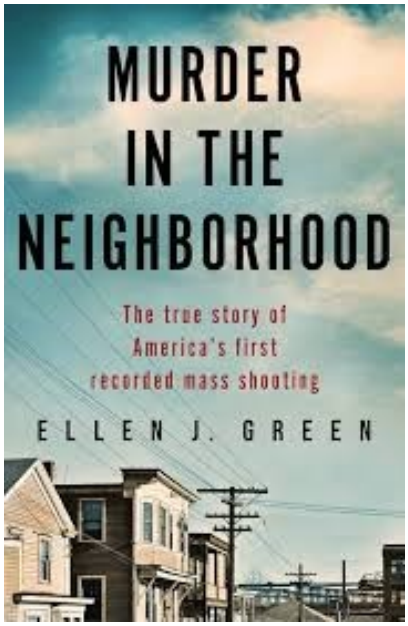
Ellen J. Green

Murder in the Neighborhood: The True Story of America's First Recorded Mass Shooting

Thread Books
ISBN: 1800198078



Review by Joshua N. Longmire
Lamar University

Introduction

Ellen J. Green's *Murder in the Neighborhood: The True Story of America's First Recorded Mass Shooting* (2022) is an account of the 1949 "Walk of Death" perpetrated by Howard Barton Unruh in Camden, New Jersey. Over the span of fewer than 12 minutes on September 6, 1949, Unruh, a 28-year-old World War II veteran, took 13 lives as he moved methodically through his East Camden neighborhood. Green guides readers through the incident's build-up and aftermath by centering the voices of those who witnessed or were directly affected: a 12-year-old boy who saw the carnage unfold, Unruh's mother grappling with her son's actions, and others whose lives were forever altered. Green sets the stage by examining the first recorded mass shooting in American history to analyze how an ostensibly "quiet, gentle man" became a mass murderer. Green's study is essential for scholars who are exploring the origins and evolution of serial and mass murder in the United States.

Literature Review

Research on serial and mass murder has expanded substantially in recent years, offering insights that contextualize Green's account of the Unruh case. A key distinction in the literature is between serial murder and mass murder, concepts often conflated in popular discourse but defined differently by scholars. Serial murder typically refers to a series of killings separated by "cooling-off" periods, whereas mass murder involves multiple victims killed in a single event. Petherick et al. (2021) observe that despite an "impressive research corpus" on serial murder, there remains debate over fundamental definitions, including the number of victims and time intervals required to classify a murderer as serial. Indeed, the term serial killer itself only entered widespread use in the late 20th century, popularized by FBI profilers like Robert Ressler in the 1970s. Modern scholarship seeks to clarify these definitions; for example, Williams (2023) notes that experts have never reached a consistent definition of serial homicide, with disagreements about minimum victim thresholds and motives. In contrast, mass murder is commonly defined (following the FBI and Congressional Research Service) as a single incident with four or more victims killed in one location or in close proximity. Unruh's 1949 shooting falls into the latter category of a mass murder and predates the contemporary definitional debates that Petherick et al. (2021) and Williams (2023) highlight.

Recent studies also examine the psychological

profiles and motivations of serial and mass murderers, challenging stereotypes. One prevalent assumption is that perpetrators of mass killings are typically mentally ill or psychotic, but empirical evidence complicates this view. Flynn et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive study of multiple-victim homicides in England and Wales and found that most offenders did not have diagnosable mental health conditions at the time of the offense. Specifically, 94% of mass murderers and 90% of serial killers in their sample showed no evidence of mental disorder, a finding that "challenges commonly held views" linking multiple homicides to mental illness. Similarly, research from the Columbia Mass Murder Database indicates that severe psychotic illness is absent in most mass shooters. Girgis et al. (2022) reported that in mass murders at schools and universities, more than 80% of perpetrators of firearm-involved cases had no history of psychosis. These findings underscore that although mental illness can play a role in individual cases, it is not a universal explanation for mass or serial murder. The Unruh case, as described by Green, reflects this complexity: Unruh was reportedly a "quiet, gentle man" and war veteran, raising questions about his mental state and whether societal factors (such as war trauma or personal grievances) were more salient in his violent outburst than any overt diagnosable illness.

Another theme in contemporary literature is the motivation and social context of serial and mass murder, including the role of grievance, ideology, or fame-seeking. Although classic serial killers often exhibit motives of personal gratification, control, or sexual compulsion, mass shooters frequently act on feelings of anger or resentment toward their community or society. Scholars have identified typologies such as the "pseudocommando" mass murderer, a perpetrator who arms himself heavily and executes a planned attack as a form of retaliation or retribution, often expecting to die in the process (Knoll, 2010, as cited in later analyses). Although Knoll's work predates 2020, recent research builds on similar concepts. Silva and Lankford (2022) explore fame-seeking as a motivation in mass shootings, suggesting a globalization of the American mass shooting phenomenon driven partly by perpetrators' desire for infamy. Their study in the International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice found that some mass shooters explicitly reference previous killers and seek widespread media attention, indicating that social contagion and fame can influence these crimes (Silva & Lankford, 2022). In the late 1940s, however, the context was different; media was less pervasive and the concept of a "mass shooter celebrity" did not exist. Unruh's case, as America's first recorded mass shooting, thus occurred in a relative vacuum of cultural scripts for such violence. Green's book illustrates that Unruh's motivations might have been rooted in local grievances, disputes with neighbors, and perhaps untreated war trauma, rather than a quest for notoriety. This contrasts with modern patterns and offers a historical baseline to understand how mass murder motives may evolve over time.

Moreover, literature on mass violence highlights the ripple effects on communities and preventative implications. Although mass shootings account for less than 1% of all homicides, their societal impact is disproportionately large. The trauma inflicted on survivors, families, and neighborhoods can last decades. Lowe and Galea (2017) have documented the enduring psychological toll of such incidents on communities (as cited in Hendley et al., 2025). In Green's account, the East Camden community's reaction—schools and stores shutting down, children unable to sleep from fear—exemplifies these profound impacts. Contemporary researchers like Peterson and Densley (2019, 2023) also emphasize the importance of understanding precursors and prevention. For instance, many mass shooters exhibit identifiable

warning signs or "leakage" of intent beforehand (e.g., threats, writings), which aligns with the notion that upstream interventions could thwart some attacks (Peterson & Densley, 2019). Green's narrative subtly raises the question, "Could he have been prevented?", a question that is pertinent to contemporary prevention discourse. Although the literature calls for multi-disciplinary public health approaches to violence reduction, the Unruh case from 1949 underscores how, even in an era with fewer precedents, the warning signs (if any) were poorly understood. Thus, the book's historical perspective complements modern research by illustrating what was known and, more often, not known about preventing such rampages in mid-20th-century America.

In summary, the scholarly literature provides a framework of definitions, psychological findings, and societal insights that inform our understanding of cases like Murder in the Neighborhood. Definitions of serial vs. mass murder set the stage for classifying Unruh's crime. Empirical studies challenge simplistic attributions of these crimes to mental illness (Flynn et al., 2024; Girgis et al., 2022). Research on offender motivation and the effects on communities further situate Green's historical account within broader criminological and psychological contexts (Silva & Lankford, 2022).

Analysis

Green presents a nuanced historical case study that both supports and challenges contemporary theories of serial and mass murder. A significant contribution of the book is its detailed examination of Unruh's background and the immediate triggers of his rampage, shedding light on aspects of offender psychology and motive. According to Green's account, Unruh was a decorated WWII veteran struggling to adjust to civilian life, harboring simmering resentments against neighbors on his block over minor slights and disputes. This portrayal aligns with the concept of the "disgruntled citizen" mass murderer, an ordinary individual whose accumulated grievances turn lethal. Criminological theories on mass murder often cite perceived injustice, social isolation, and aggrieved entitlement as catalysts for rampage shootings (Kimmel, 2018). Green's narrative evidenced these elements: Unruh kept a meticulous diary of grudges (according to case archives), suggesting a long-brewing sense of persecution. In this way, the book corroborates modern research that many mass shooters externalize blame onto others for their misfortunes, rather than acting out of pure psychosis. Unruh's methodical targeting of people he believed had wronged him mirrors contemporary findings that revenge and personal vendetta can be primary drivers in mass killings, distinct from the motives of serial killers who often target strangers for personal gratification.

At the same time, the text challenges certain stereotypes about serial or mass killers, prompting a reevaluation of existing theories. Unlike the popular image of a calculating serial predator who evades capture for years, Unruh's violence was a one-time explosion—a mass shooting with no clear precedent in his prior behavior. This case, therefore, tests the generalizability of theories developed primarily around serial killers (such as organized vs. disorganized offender profiles or lust killer typologies) to a different phenomenon of mass murder. Green's detailed recounting of Unruh's post-war deterioration and abrupt snapping suggests that traditional serial killer frameworks (which emphasize patterns like a "cooling-off" period and specific victim selection criteria) may not apply to spontaneous mass murder events. Indeed, Unruh's profile as a quiet war veteran who suddenly commits mass murder invites comparisons to later spree killers, yet even the term spree killer was not in use in 1949. By presenting this anomaly of a case, Green's work implicitly questions whether

serial murder theories sufficiently account for spree or mass murder. For example, theories focusing on psychopathy or sadistic drives (often applied to serial killers) seem inadequate to explain Unruh's behavior, which was more akin to an eruption of rage. This book, therefore, supports the scholarly argument that serial murder and mass murder should be conceptually separated, as Petherick et al. (2021) and others have argued, given the differing psychological dynamics at play.

Green's book also contributes to discussions on the historical evolution of mass violence. The Unruh case predates infamous events like Charles Whitman's 1966 Texas Tower shooting or the string of late-20th-century serial killers, yet it exhibits a template of community trauma and media shock that has become all too familiar in America. By revisiting 1949 Camden, Green provides evidence that mass shootings are not solely a modern phenomenon fueled by contemporary culture but have deeper roots. This challenges any theory positing that factors unique to the late 20th or 21st century (such as violent video games or Internet radicalization) are necessary precursors for mass murder. Unruh had none of those influences; his case suggests that the capacity for mass violence lies in the intersection of individual pathology and social environment in any era. In doing so, Green's narrative reinforces a point made by Flynn et al. (2024): that we must be cautious about attributing mass murder to single causes like mental illness. Unruh's rampage might better be understood through a multifactor lens, including personal history (combat experience and trauma), immediate environmental stressors, and access to firearms, rather than through one dominant theory. This multifaceted perspective is consistent with a public health approach recommended by recent research, which calls for examining social, psychological, and situational contributors to violence.

Furthermore, Murder in the Neighborhood adds qualitative depth to the impact on victims and communities, an area often quantified in academic studies but powerfully illustrated through narrative. Green follows survivors and family members in the aftermath, exploring themes of grief, stigma, and community cohesion. For instance, she describes how a young boy who survived by hiding in a closet grappled with trauma decades later. This humanizing detail complements scholarly findings that mass shootings inflict long-lasting psychological harm beyond the immediate fatalities (Lowe & Galea, 2017, as referenced in recent literature). By integrating such personal stories, the book challenges theorists to remember that behind statistical analyses of serial and mass murder are real lives and societal scars. It thus bridges the gap between academic theory and lived experience, reinforcing the importance of survivor narratives in fully understanding the consequences of mass violence.

Green's analytical and compassionate treatment of the Unruh case extends and questions the body of knowledge on multiple homicide. It demonstrates that the first recorded mass shooting in the U.S. both conforms to some contemporary patterns—grievance-based motive, lack of acute psychosis, community devastation—and deviates from others, such as modern fame-seeking or serial predation. By doing so, the book serves as a case study that enriches theoretical discourse, reminding scholars that any comprehensive theory of serial or mass murder must account for outliers and historical antecedents like Unruh's rampage.

Conclusion

Murder in the Neighborhood stands as a valuable resource for criminologists, psychologists, and historians alike. It bridges a gap between historical narrative and contemporary theory, ensuring that the lessons of 1949 Camden inform our current

understanding of why individuals commit serial or mass murder and how such events reverberate through society. Green's work ultimately prompts reflection on an enduring question: How well do we really know those around us, and are we ever truly safe?In grappling with this question, the book not only tells a compelling story but also reinforces and nuances scholarly conversations about the darkest aspects of human behavior.

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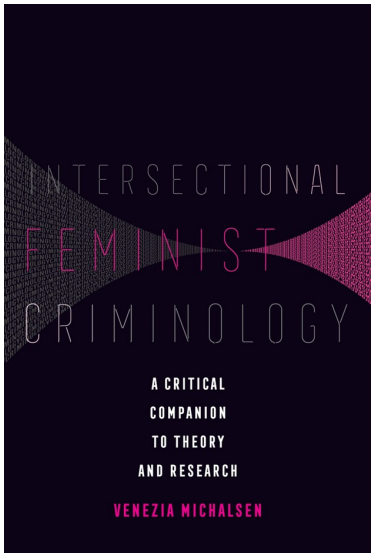
Membership Accomplishments



Venezia Michalsen published "Intersectional Feminist Criminology: A Critical Companion to Theory and Research" with UCPress. "This pathbreaking book brings to bear a sweeping body of contemporary intersectional feminist work to disrupt the entire discipline of criminology, from theory and research to policy and practice. Fresh and conversational, Intersectional Feminist Criminology critiques the field's dominant theories by analyzing gendered patterns of perpetration and victimization and challenging traditional criminological perspectives on characteristics such as race and queerness. A rebuttal to traditional criminology textbooks, the book ultimately lays out a clear abolitionist vision as an alternative to the American criminal legal system."

Michalsen wrote it in a way that is accessible to a lay reader, but its main purpose is to be assigned in combination with a traditional Criminology textbook in an intro class to provide a critical perspective to each topic.

Michael L. Perlin, and colleagues published the following articles:

Perlin M. L., & Dorfman, D. A. (2025). "It don't matter anyhow": How the Americans with Disabilities Act has become (mostly) irrelevant to the criminal trial process. *SSRN.*

Perlin, M., Roitberg Harmon, T., Geiger, M., & Henning, C. (2025). "Tolling for the outcast": A therapeutic jurisprudence consideration of the relationship between the Americans with Disabilities Act, death row conditions, and capital punishment.

Beth J. Sanborn, Ph.D., spoke at the University of Cambridge on School Resource Officers on August 18, 2025 in London England. On August 24, 2025 in Parker, C.O., she participated in a TEDxCherryCreekHS talk entitled "The Small Habit that Transforms School Safety". Currently, Sanborn is working on a research project examining factors considered by SROs prior to effectuating arrest.

Yunhan Zhao and **Steven F. Messner** published a recently released book, which can be found at https://titles.cognella.com/markets-politics-and-crime-in-contemporary-china-9798823309653#

Zhao, Y., & Messner, S. F. (2025). *Markets, politics, and crime in contemporary China.* Cognella.

Craig D. Uchida and colleague published the following article:

Uchida, C. D., & Swatt, M. L. (2025). Understanding the impact of forensic evidence on homicide clearance: An analysis of Los Angeles homicide cases, 1990-2010. *Justice Quarterly,* 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2025.2506487

Stephen L. Sherwin, Ph.D., has published two books. One, co-authored - *AI and The Future of Law Enforcement* - in April 2025, and the second as a solo publication - *A Guide to Mediation Training* - published in August 2025.

Ronald Weitzer, published the following article:

Weitzer, R. (2025). Flawed research on the impact of law reform: The case of legal prostitution and sex trafficking, a research note. *Criminology, 63*(2), 557-569. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12407

Martin Alan Greenberg's newest book "Engaging Underprivileged Youth in the Nation's Capital: The Officer Oliver Cowan Story" will be published by Bloomsbury in a few months. The study considers the history of the organization Officer Cowan founded--the Junior Police and Citizens Corps as well as Cowan's career as a public servant who was devoted to improving the lives of at-risk youth throughout the District of Columbia. The complete story is placed in the context of the various eras in which the Corps operated, including WWII, the Cold War, and the civil rights movement. More information about the Junior Police Corps can be found at: https://www.instagram.com/notboredindc/reel/CzhLiXwxpbQ

Article

Promoting Cross-Methods Research

By Rosheka Faulkner

Both qualitative and quantitative ways of knowing are instrumental in advancing the field of criminology. Although scholarships from both these areas are sometimes pitted against each other, our discipline cannot afford these types of contention. The goal of any scientific endeavor is to describe, explain, predict, and control behavior, goals that both qualitative and quantitative work can achieve (Wright et al., 2017). This article covers two different studies, one using qualitative data and the other using quantitative data. I aim to describe how each could be improved through the strengths of cross-methods research. There were no specific reasons why these articles were selected over others, other than that they captured the writer's interest.

I start with the quantitative article first. Stansfield and Mowen (2019) published a piece in the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* that explored how the relationship between religion and recidivism is complicated by macro-level factors in the environment to which an individual returns after a term of incarceration. One thousand three hundred and sixty-two men who were incarcerated for 1 to 5 years starting in 2004 were included in the study. Each had at least 8 years of post-release follow-up by the year 2017. Their humanist, spiritual, or religious (HSR) practice history was provided by the Oregon Department of Corrections. This information was then combined with social ecology data from the 2010 Census and county religious practice data from the 2010 U.S. Region Census: Religious Congregations and Membership Study. Recidivism risk is measured by the Automated Criminal Risk Score (ACRS) provided by the Oregon Department of Corrections. Results reported that a higher level of HSR involvement in prison was associated with a reduced likelihood of recidivism at 3 years post-incarceration but not at 5 or 8 years. In addition, greater economic disadvantage in a county was associated with higher individual recidivism, but community religious adherence was not related to recidivism. County disadvantage interacts with an individual's religious practices to affect recidivism, but community religious engagements did not interact with individual HSR engagement to affect recidivism. Although these results are instrumental, the use of qualitative methods could further increase our understanding in this area.

The study findings propose that religious practice affects recidivism, but it is likely that all HSR customs are not created equal, and some practices have an even more substantial effect on recidivism than others. Observing variations in faith practices, coupled with ethnographic observations and interviews with HSR community members, can help create clear categories of HSR traditions, facilitating research into the relative effectiveness of different practices in reducing recidivism. The project uses HSR involvement to help measure future recidivism. Considering the unique ways that the criminal legal system operates compared to the free society, it is important to understand the ways that HSR practices inside prison are different from practices outside prison. This could be done in a variety of ways: (1) conduct an ethnographic study of individuals as they participate in HSR services inside and continue observations after release, (2) observe religious practices inside and outside of prisons, (3) interview volunteers who lead prison HSR programs and are members of HSR communities outside of the prison context to describe the differences they observe between both, or (4) interview individuals who participated in HSR services both inside and outside of prisons to describe their experiences.

Future studies could advance this topic by having clearer ways of defining moral communities and individual HSR involvement. Stansfield and Mowen (2019) define the prevalence of county religious practice based on the number of congregations in the county. This way of measuring moral communities is incomplete, as a formal congregation is not the only way one can be part of an HSR community. To move this field of research forward, it would be beneficial to have a thick description of what a faith-based community is and how it might be different from the traditional way of measuring a moral community. Because it could be hard to identify some religious, humanist, or spiritual groups, qualitative research that uses snowball interviews or observation methods could help us uncover more about HSR communities that are hard to identify. These types of studies could help us better measure the presence of HSR communities in a given area.

Stansfield and Mowen (2019) determine religious involvement by the number of times in a month that an individual attended HSR services while in prison. Ending our definition here leave some aspects of HSR communities unknown. For example, a person might not attend HSR-recognized services frequently but might have other informal ways of practicing their faith (e.g., maybe they read a religious book and review it with their cellmate multiple times per week. Maybe they say a prayer with their mother whenever she visits or calls). Those who don't regularly participate in prison HSR programs might not attend because they principally reject prison HSR programs (e.g., they might think it represents a co-opting of their faith practice by the criminal legal system). The point is that there are different degrees of religious involvement that might not be reflected in attendance at HSR services. Qualitative work can explore different ways people engage in faith practice. It can help create more detailed descriptions of what adherence can look like outside of HSR attendance in prison.

As mentioned previously, this study did not find a relationship between prison HSR attendance and long-term desistance. The authors argued this could mean there are religious and non-religious challenges that individuals face after release that are currently not accounted for in the literature. Here again, qualitative ways of knowing can help. We could use observational research strategies to identify potential religious challenges that individuals face after release that affect recidivism. Though the study does not identify long-term impact of HSR practices in prison, the authors offer that religion plays a role in making prison tolerable, but more theoretical work is needed to help us

understand why HSR programs have such an impact. Qualitative research can be used to identify why religious practices are an effective coping mechanism in prisons. What are the spiritual meanings that people attach to seemingly simple religious actions? Qualitative work embedded in the principles of narrative criminology could help us understand why religious practices are impactful.

The qualitative piece under review was published in the *Criminology and Criminal Justice Journal* by Willis (2018) and explores the ways that social class comes to matter in restorative justice participation and outcome. To test this hypothesis, the author conducted an ethnographic study in a working-class English town where they volunteered in two restorative justice programs in the local area. Data collection methods ranged from observations, notes on unobserved cases, and interviews with all participants in the restorative justice process. Cases presenting for restorative justice conferencing included offenses against a person, criminal damages, theft, and neighborhood disputes. It finds that restorative justice practice is not class neutral as it values middle-class forms of communicating. In this study, middle-class individuals were able to describe their victimization in a way that garnered empathy and support and relayed that they were actively engaged in the conferencing process. Conversely, working-class individuals communicated in a way that was assumed by facilitators to mean they were not interested in the intervention. Their communication method was also less likely to clearly describe the victimization they experienced in a way that could garner empathy. Due to this disparity, middle-class individuals are more prepared to participate in restorative justice conferencing, to tell their stories, and to get their voices heard.

This study suggests that there might be consequences of prioritizing middle-class ways of communicating, but it does not explore whether these consequences exist and what they are. Quantitative ways of knowing can expand this research area by testing this assumption. Researchers could review restorative justice program outcomes based on an individual's economic status. Data could be collected through survey questions that ask individuals about their family household income and their case outcome. Restorative justice outcomes could be measured in a variety of ways, such as measuring victim satisfaction or recidivism among people who cause harm (PCH). Along with answering the question of whether middle-class victims get better restorative justice outcomes on average than working-class participants, this data could answer additional questions, like (1) How does a working-class victim fare when the PCH is also of the working class? (2) How do working-class victims fare when the perpetrator is of the middle class? (3) How do middle-class victims fare when the PCH is also a member of the middle class? If there appear to be negative consequences for working-class families, future quantitative research could explore the extent of those negative impacts. This could be done through a comparative analysis of programs that have decided to change their practice (based on evidence-based findings against prioritizing middle-class language) and those that have not. This could help us understand the significance of the impact of restorative justice practices that center middle-class communication methods.

The author mentions that the findings of this study are not generalizable. That is one area where the strengths of quantitative findings to produce generalizable results can come in handy. A large random sample of restorative justice conferencing data could be analyzed to provide findings that can be extrapolated to other contexts. The small sample of this study limits generalizability, and so does the limited type of restorative justice conferencing that was observed. There are a variety of restorative justice programs. This study

only observed one type of restorative justice program, so these findings might not be applicable to other projects. Quantitative studies could also measure whether these results carry over to other types of restorative justice conferencing by studying other types of programs. A final note about generalizability is that studying this phenomenon in a variety of different locations could also tell us whether there are geographical factors at play. For example, are restorative justice legislations in New York different from those in New Jersey, thus resulting in restorative justice practices that have more widespread social class disparity in New Jersey than there is in New York?

One additional question could be, what are the results of restorative justice participation for individuals who blur the class lines (e.g., between lower middle class or upper middle class)? Because of the potential subtly in these differences, small nuances in experience might be more challenging to observe and describe through qualitative means. However, a quantitative study might have an easier time describing whether one group has a statistically significant different experience compared to another group, even if that difference is small. Finally, future research could also focus on including more than two class categories. Quantitative research could answer questions such as, How do upper-class individuals fare in restorative justice programs compared to the middle class and the working class?

Both quantitative and qualitative research make unique and instrumental contributions to criminology. This piece described two examples of work in leading criminology journals that can be advanced by using the other method. Cross-method research allows one research strategy to build on the other, and when they both work in a symbiotic relationship, the discipline will be better for it.

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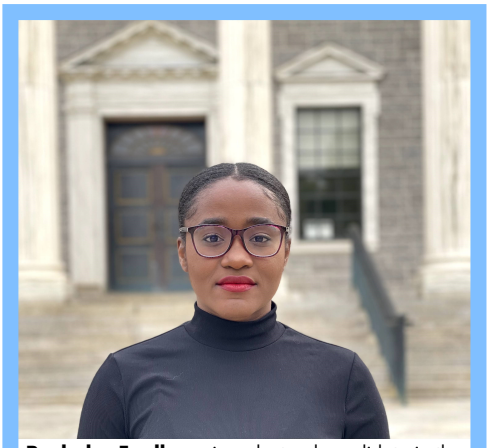

Rosheka Faulkner is a doctoral candidate in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University–Newark. Her dissertation explores the intersection of religion and restorative justice through a case study of a Black faith-rooted organization, examining how their theological frameworks shape their engagement with restorative justice practices. Her research interests span implementation science, critical criminology, restorative justice and alternatives to incarceration, the intersection of faith and justice, and individual's perceptions of the criminal legal system.

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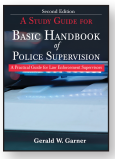

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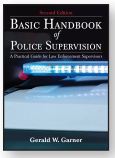

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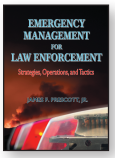

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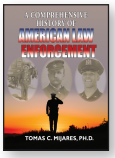

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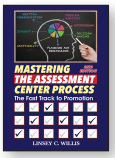

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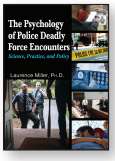

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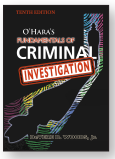

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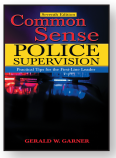

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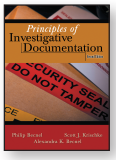

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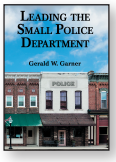

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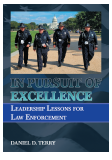

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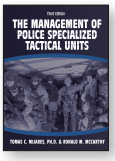

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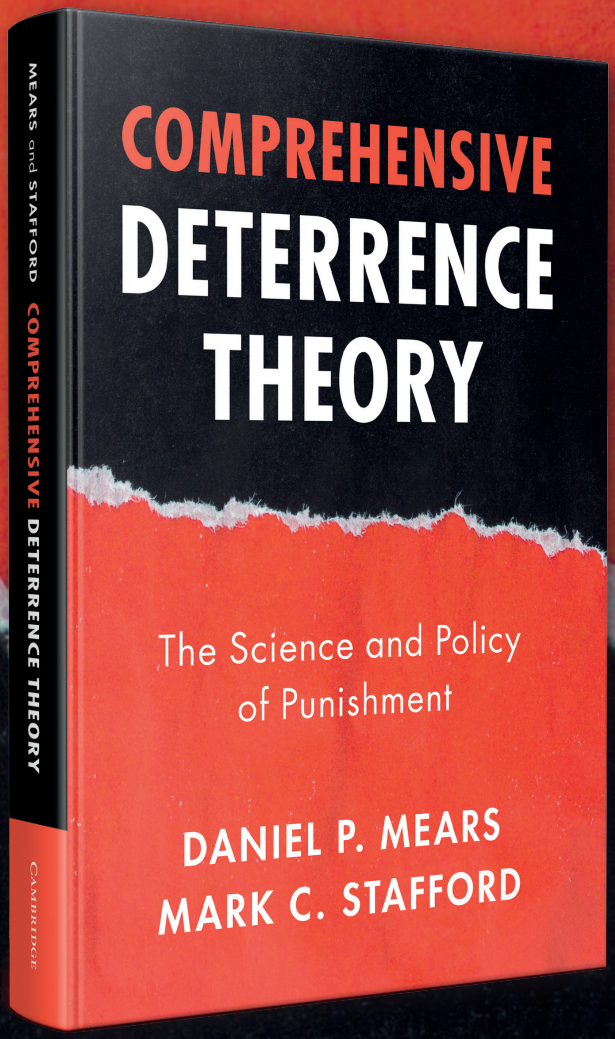

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Mitchell Roth's

Man With the Killer Smile: The Life and Crimes of a Serial Mass Murderer

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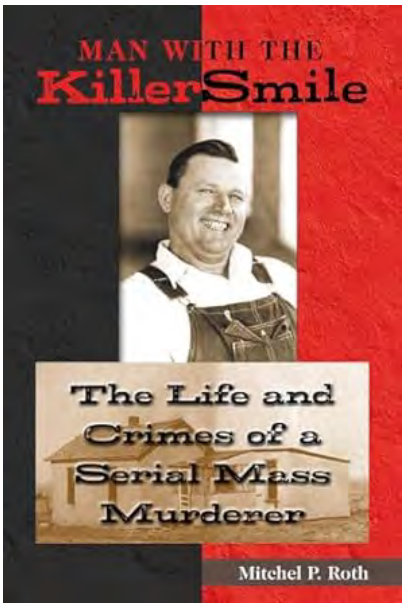

Review by Matthew Jahngen
Lamar University

Serial killers have had a hold on society in many ways for decades. The likes of infamous killers such as Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, and even Jack the Ripper have become not only a part of people's worst fears but a part of popular culture. A number of these killers live on in popular culture due to the shocking nature of their crimes or the notoriety they receive from media outlets, while others become all but forgotten in the pages of history. Written by Michael P. Roth, Man with the Killer Smile: The Life and Crimes of a Serial Mass Murderer is a detailed account of one such killer who, by all measures, should be well known in popular culture but is a name few may recognize. This book tells the story of George Hassell, a killer who was responsible for taking the lives of 13 individuals in the early part of the 20th century, all of whom were members of his own family. Not only is this book an account of these gruesome murders committed by Hassell, but it is also an account of what is known about his life and what could have led him to murder the members of his own family on two separate occasions. An introduction sets the foundation for this unique tale of murder and explains the research involved by the author in acquiring the information to tell it in such detail. The author then begins with a look at the early life of George Hassell and moves on to the life and times of the adult Hassell. While the murders of 13 family members are highlighted in detail, Roth also takes the reader on a journey through Hassell's early life, arrest, trial, conviction, prison time, and execution. Roth closes out this fascinating tale of a killer, relatively unknown in modern times, with an epilogue that emphasizes the unique and significant nature of Hassell's crimes and the man who committed them.

The life of George Hassell would not seem to have been unique on the surface for a man in the early 20th century. Hassell was raised on a farm and worked a number of jobs in his life to make ends meet before settling as a tenant farmer himself, like so many others in the Texas panhandle in the early 20th century (Roth, 2022). Roth explains that on the surface, Hassell was viewed as a charismatic man who was likeable according to many individuals and had a way with the fairer sex. As this true crime tale unfolds, though, the reader will see the dark side of Hassell, a man with a love for alcohol and the opposite sex, which help reveal his true nature, a man with violent tendencies, a lack of concern for others, and no remorse for any of his actions. The crimes committed by Hassell, especially murder, and his apparent lack of remorse are horrific enough to leave a lasting impression on anyone who may come to learn of them. George Hassell, in three separate incidents over a 9-year period, killed 13 people, leaving in

his wake the bodies of two women, 10 children, and one adult child. His crimes were separated by 9 years and were committed in two different states, California and Texas. The death toll alone would be enough to shock the conscience, but these victims were not strangers; they were his own family members.

The author provides readers with an educational analysis of George Hassell's crimes and how they fit with varying types or definitions of murder. Perhaps one of the more intriguing aspects of George Hassell and the crimes he committed is that they are not easily filed away under one definition of murder. The most likely label that would be given to George Hassell at the outset by most individuals would be "serial killer." Roth (2022) explains that Hassell easily fits the definition of a serial killer based on several common variations of the definition. The definition of a serial killer, or serial murder, has a history of inconsistency with scholars and law enforcement professionals, often with disagreements on what factors specifically constitute serial murder. Many would likely agree that there should be a minimum number of victims involved, as well as some type of cooling off period between the instances of murder (Williams, 2023). However, the minimum number of victims and the length or meaning of a cooling off period are two of the factors often debated when defining serial murder. In 2005, the FBI updated their definition of a serial killer, or serial murder, to reflect the killing of two or more individuals occurring in separate events (Williams, 2023). Prior to this, the definition included a minimum victim count of three. Petherick et al. (2022) examined the history of serial murder definitions, the debate over how this phrase should be defined, and proposed that it should constitute at least two victims by the same offender, at two separate locations with a cooling off period, or a period of not offending between the murders. Additionally, there should be a personal motive for the killings, which would separate serial murder from other types of murder such as murders from organized crime (Petherick et al., 2022). George Hassell killed his first four victims in the year 1917 and then killed his next nine victims in the year 1926. He killed the ninth victim in 1926 three days after he killed the first eight. Clearly, Hassell killed multiple victims in events that were obviously separate from each other, with a significant cooling off period between them. Williams (2023), on the other hand, argues for a definition of serial murder that sets a minimum victim count of three rather than two, citing empirical evidence that there are important differences identified in the behavior of offenders when there are three or more victims as opposed to two by the same killer. Even when examining the various definitions of serial murder, George Hassell fits the definition of a serial murderer in every way.

The author describes how, in addition to being a serial killer, George Hassell could also be considered a mass murderer by modern standards. Although the two concepts may seem interchangeable to a lot of people, they are different. Roth (2022) explains that mass murder occurs when, at the same place, an individual kills four or more victims in the same incident. Duwe (2020), when defining mass murder, advises that the killings in mass murder should take place within a 24-hour period and can be accomplished with any type of weapon. Based on these explanations of mass murder, George Hassell also falls easily into this category. His last series of murders, for example, fit this category, consisting of eight victims in one single incident. Serial murder and mass murder are not new, but the concepts and definitions for them are relatively modern. Prior to the late 1970s and 1980s, mass murder was used to describe all cases of what are now known separately as serial murder and mass murder (Duwe, 2020). A rise in serial killings during this time brought in the concept of serial murder as being a separate concept from mass murder

(Duwe, 2020). Roth (2022) explains that George Hassell is an exceptional rarity by not only committing two mass murders but fitting the profile of a serial killer at the same time.

More than just a mere serial killer or mass murderer, George Hassell was guilty of killing his own family members on two separate occasions. Roth (2022) refers to Hassell as a family annihilator, or someone who kills their entire family. Familicide, which can be considered a subset of mass murder, is known as the act of killing a spouse or intimate partner, along with one, or all, of the children within a family (Frei & Ilic, 2020). George Hassell accomplished this not once, but twice. He murdered his common law wife and three adopted children in 1917, and then his wife and eight stepchildren in 1926 (Roth, 2022). Even though public forms of mass murder grab most of the media attention with sensational headlines, the act of familicide is the most common form of mass murder (Frei & Ilic, 2020). A common occurrence seen in family annihilation or familicide has been the suicide of the offender. Frei and Ilic (2020) studied the occurrence of mass murder in Switzerland between 1972 and 2015, uncovering 20 cases of familicide. Of the 20 cases of familicide, 19 offenders were found to have been suicidal, while 15 of the 20 offenders did commit suicide (Frei & Ilic, 2020). George Hassell was somewhat an exception in this respect as well. Three weeks after his 1926 murders he was hospitalized for an apparent suicide attempt; however, he was unsuccessful, and it could be argued that his attempt was not serious (Roth, 2022). This, of course, is speculation, and even though suicide and suicidal ideations are common for family annihilators, there are cases in which the offender did not commit suicide or was not suicidal. By providing this detailed analysis of George Hassell as a family annihilator, the author makes a more convincing case than he was a one-of-a-kind killer by being a serial killer, a mass murderer, as well as a family annihilator. This sort of scholarly analysis is apparent throughout the book, helping facilitate a better understanding of the varying forms of multiple murderers.

For a long time, scholars have attempted to uncover what drives an individual to commit crime, especially crimes that are particularly horrendous such as murder and multiple murders. Roth (2022) explores the life of George Hassell for indicators that may explain why he would commit the atrocities he is now known for. Roth, in describing the personality traits and background of George Hassell, notes that he fits the profile for psychopathy. Psychopathy refers to the affective, personal, behavioral, and lifestyle characteristics of an individual, such as arrogance, deceit, manipulation, lack of remorse or guilt, lack of empathy, irresponsibility, and other traits commonly leading to antisocial behavior and criminal activity (Millspaugh et al., 2022). Psychopathic individuals possess these otherwise common personality traits typically in combinations and at extreme levels compared with other individuals. Roth refers to George Hassell as being one who possessed several of the traits of psychopathic behavior such as his charm, which was not believed to be genuine, pathological lying, and lack of remorse for his actions. He had the ability to carry on with his relationships and be perceived as a loving person, all the while not having any deep attachment to those individuals he claimed to love. People who have a high degree of psychopathy, such as Hassell, have been found to commit a disproportionate share of crime (Millspaugh et al., 2022). Hassell was also no stranger to crime, having spent some time in prison even before he was found to have murdered his family. Exploring the life of Hassell even further reveals he likely bent the truth on several occasions, another trait of psychopathic individuals. Some of Hassell's reports of his own life events, such as when his parents died, were easily found to conflict with historical

records, and much of what Hassell told investigators and reporters about his life was met with skepticism. Throughout the chapters of the book, the author regularly reminds readers of how George Hassell fits the profile of a psychopathic individual.

Looking back at the history of George Hassell, there are other signs that, in hindsight, point to a life of crime and becoming a killer. Abuse of a child early in life has been shown to increase the likelihood that the individual will be more prone to violence and aggression (Marono et al., 2020). Research has also shown in the profiles of serial murderers, abuse is often found to be present in their early years (Marono et al., 2020). Even though a lot of information was gathered from interviews with Hassell himself, his self-reported background revealed a troubled young man. Hassell recounted that his father punished him often and that he ran away from home at least once because of a brutal beating (Roth, 2022). Abuse of a child can come in the form of sexual abuse, psychological abuse, or physical abuse, including neglect, with physical abuse referring to actual physical harm and psychological abuse being anything that has a negative emotional effect on a child (Marono et al., 2020). If George Hassell was even being partially honest regarding his upbringing and the abuse he suffered, he would fit cleanly into the profiles of other serial murderers who also suffered abuse in their early years. Roth does not go into too much detail about George Hassell's claims of abuse, perhaps out of skepticism. However, these claims are worth mentioning when analyzing his life and some of the facts that may have driven him to be such a brutal killer because childhood abuse is commonly seen in serial killers.

The author provides readers with a gripping tale of murder, sparing no known details, but he also goes beyond detailing just these criminals acts by providing background and context to each discussion. Roth provides readers with an informative discussion of the people, places, times, and policies of the era in which Hassell lived and goes into detail discussing issues surrounding the saga of George Hassell, such as the current and historical state of the death penalty in Texas, and topics such as psychopathy. By doing so, the reader not only will get immersed in a chilling tale of multiple murders but receive an informative lesson on each person, place, or topic being discussed. Roth takes the time to not only detail the background of George Hassell, but he also provides as much information as possible about the lives of others such as the jurors involved in the case, the sheriff of Parmer County where Hassell lived, and even the background of the reporters telling Hassell's tale. Such detail immerses a reader completely in the story with a complete understanding of the people, places, and times. These details tell a great story but also provide an exceptional scholarly analysis. Such an analysis can add to the growing body of literature on serial murder, providing researchers with valuable insight into a killer about whom little had previously been written.

This book is an eye-opening tale of a brutal killer arguably unknown to most individuals in the modern world. His charismatic personality made him a likeable person, and it was said that he did not have trouble with the ladies. On the surface, a man such as Hassell would never be perceived as much of a threat, but this was just the deceiving quality which almost helped him get away with murder. Research into serial murder is important in helping not only criminal investigations with identifying those responsible but in attempting to discover the etiology of serial murder. Rather than examine modern killers emerging since the popularization of serial killers in the media, Roth takes a deep dive into history with an extraordinary tale of serial murder that would otherwise be forgotten. Roth's analysis of George Hassell's life and crimes would

would surely be a benefit to researchers of serial murder. Any fan of true crime, or any student of criminology or history, would be well served to read this book for both the enjoyment of Roth's storytelling and the educational content within. As long as serial killers and mass murderers exist, books such as this will help contribute to the research and understanding of these brutal individuals.

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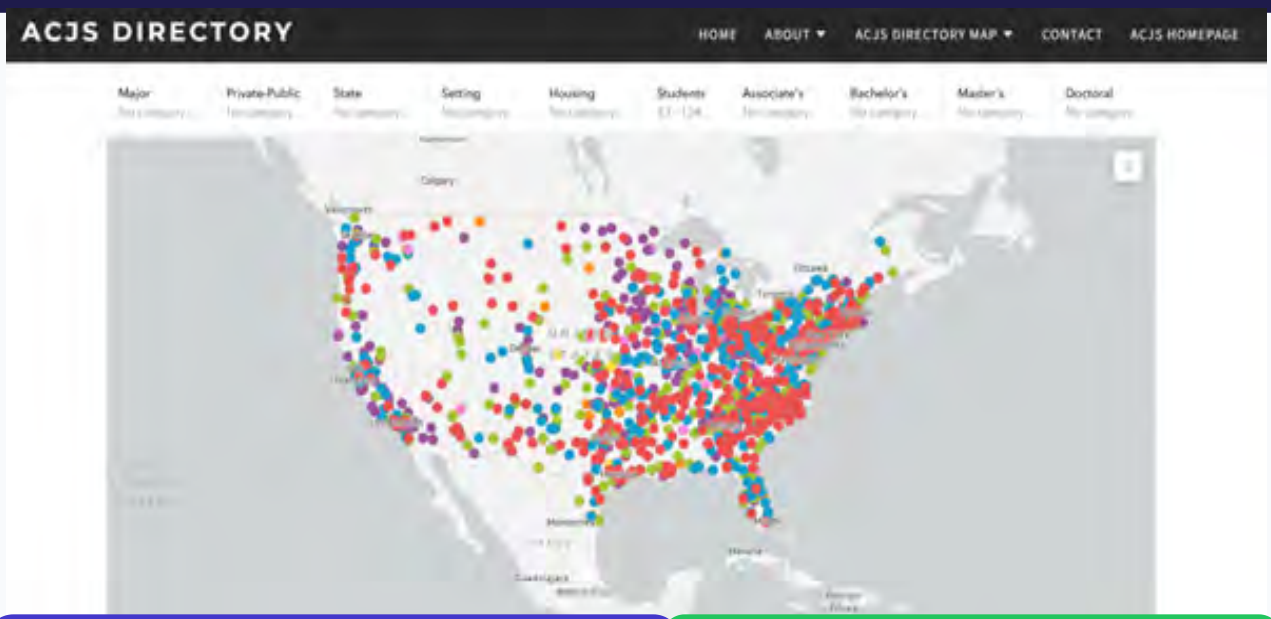

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