

Serial killer research

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



The Insanity Of Killers Serial murder is a psychological crime in many aspects. It is a planned, thought out action. The crimes themselves are often committed in order for the killer to gain a sense of power, control, and domination. There must be psychological desires and/or perceived needs that are otherwise lacking in his or her life. Are serial killers insane? Not by legal standards. The legal definition of insanity is based on the 19th century M'Naghten Rules: Does the offender understand the difference between right and wrong?

If he flees or makes any attempt to hide the crime, then the offender is not insane, because his actions show that he understood that what he was doing was wrong. Yet what person in their right mind would filet young children and write letters to the parents, glorifying over what a fine meal their child made? In the case of Albert Fish, the jury found him " insane, but he deserved to die anyway. " A formal definition of legal insanity first was adopted in 1843 and is called the M'Naghten test; its basic form still is used today.

The test outlines that the defense must clearly prove that the accused person was so impaired psychologically as to not understand that the crime was wrong when he or she committed it. Most crime experts believe that serial killers are not insane and are fully aware of their actions at the time that they commit murders. What's more, serial murderers commit several crimes, so it would follow that they should be proved as insane when planning and committing all the crimes they're charged with.

Some serial killers have been diagnosed as psychopaths, or people who act with total disregard for the rights of others; they can tell the difference

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between right and wrong, however, so psychopaths aren't considered insane. Society believes that the insanity defense is used far more often than it actually is and people believe that the defense is used as a tactic to avoid punishment. People perceive serial killers as inhumane and question how they could ever commit the crimes that they do.

Some think it is inhumane to put a killer to death, but isn't it even more inhumane to kill as many people as that killer did? One of the most predictable attempts to shift the blame is by creating an evil dark side, or alter ego. Fabricating an alter ego is a convenient way to pin the guilt on another, even if that other is within. It's a psychological variation of "the devil made me do it." But diabolical alter egos are usually clumsy constructions that fall apart under scrutiny. At best, a legitimate split personality could hope for a mental institution instead of death row.

But authentic cases are exceptionally rare. The motives of serial killers can be placed into five different categories: visionary, missionary, hedonistic, gain motivated, power and control. Visionary is like having that little voice in your head telling you to do something, so the killer listens and even sometimes tries to shift the blame on to the voice and claiming to be insane. So-called missionary killers believe that their acts are justified on the basis that they are getting rid of a certain type of person and thus doing society a favor.

The hedonistic type kills for the sheer pleasure of it, although what aspect they enjoy varies. This is the most common type of serial killer depicted in slasher and horror movies, psychological thrillers, and so on. Gain motivated, most criminals who commit multiple murders for material ends (such as <https://assignbuster.com/serial-killer-research/>

Mafia hit men) are not classed as serial killers, because they are motivated by economic gain rather than psychopathological compulsion. Power and control, their main objective for killing is to gain and exert power over their victim.

Such killers are sometimes abused as children, leaving them with feelings of powerlessness and inadequacy as adults. They must be insane, what normal person could slaughter another human, for the sheer pleasure of it? Yet the most chilling fact about serial killers is that they are rational and calculating. As the " British Jeffrey Dahmer" Dennis Nilsen put it, " a mind can be evil without being abnormal. " Serial Killer-Psychopathic or Psychotic Differences between the two. What is a serial killer? A serial killer is a person who attacks and kills victims one by one in a series of incidents.

Some characteristics of a serial killer is that they have a minimum of three to four victims, usually with a " cooling off period" in between. The killer usually is likely to victimize a stranger than they are to victimize someone that they know. The serial killer has a sadistic urge to dominate there victims, they do not profit, except for psychological satisfaction. The serial killer usually looks for victims that are vulnerable. The majority of serial killers are white males, in there late 20's to early 30's, but some have been known to be a lot older.

Serial killers usually come from lower to middle classfamilybackgrounds and they usually have at least an average intelligence. There are two types of serial killers, the psychotic and the psychopath. The psychotic serial killer is one who is legally insane, they cannot tell the difference between right and wrong, they may hear voices, see visions and sometimes may have hallucinations prior to committing the murders. " The son of Sam" aka David
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Berkowitz is a great example of a psychotic serial killer. The second type of serial killer is the psychopathic serial killer.

The psychopathic serial killer does not suffer from hallucinations, they know the difference between right and wrong, and are in touch with reality, they just do not care what they are doing is not right. Psychopathic serial killers lack one very important trait and that is that they do not have a conscience, or that their conscience is too weak to stop the violent behavior. A psychopathic serial killer does not feel any guilt, nor are they sorry for their actions. There are numerous theories as to whether a person is born with the predisposition to kill; some theories suggest that the psychopath is a product of his/her environment.

It is possible that it is a combination of both genetics and the person's environment. The worst part of a psychopathic serial killer is his/her ability to blend in with their environment. They will act normal, but underneath their persona, lies two uncontrollable traits; sexual abnormality and a consuming need for power. The killing satisfies both the ultimate control over life and death. Simply, killing gives them pleasure, they will because they want to and because they enjoy doing so.

The only thing that stops a serial killer from committing these types of killings is either they are arrested or they die. Works Cited Debswood, . " Serial Killer - Psychopathic or Psychotic. " Scienceray. 19 2008. Web. 2 Nov 2012. . Ward, Daniel. " The M'Naghten Rule: A Re-evaluation. " Marquette Law Review. Marquette Law Scholarly Commons, n. d. Web. 4 Nov 2012. . Bardsley, Marilyn. " Albert Fish. " Trutv-Crime Library. A Time Warner

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