

# Harold shipman - the doctor who turned a serial killer who, by injection of heroi...

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The paper "The Doctor Who Turned a Serial Killer" is a thrilling variant of a case study on social science. Harold Shipman the doctor who turned a serial killer When one makes a visit to the doctor, they entrust their health with the doctor. The relatives and friends of a patient expect that the doctor will get the patient's life on track; not end it. Doctor Harold Shipman turned to be Britain's most dreaded serial killer. The lives of at least 215 patients entrusted under his care came to an end.

There is a certain behavior associated with serial killers and in fact, according to research one can tell if a child will turn to be a serial killer in adulthood. In this essay, I shall discuss the crimes he committed and the evidence that was used by the prosecution that led to his conviction.

Doctor Shipman began his budding career as a medical doctor at the age of 25. In his childhood, Doctor Shipman had not had a cordial relationship with his father but was quite close to his mother. The mother died while he was seventeen years, and instead of the death affecting him emotionally, he did not express remorse (Gunn 2010). In 1975 after being admitted to the practice, Shipman began abusing pethidine. He tried to get the help of his partners to access the drug, and when this was unsuccessful, he resigned.

He was later charged, fined, and his case was referred to the General Medical Council. The council suspended him but after hearing the case by the psychiatrists, he reinstated him. In 1992, he quit general practice and set

up his independent practice. Having created a good relationship with patients in the group practice, his clients' base grew very fast making him very popular in Hyde.

He had perfected the art of killing patients. When a patient went to him for consultations, he would tell the patient that they needed further examination. He would then send the patient home and promise to visit them. Ongoing to the patient's home, he would inject the patient with a lethal dose of heroin. Upon the patient's death, Doctor Shipman would convince the relatives that the patient had died from a heart attack. There are times that he would even leave the deceased only for them to be found dead by a neighbor. To cover his tracks and avoid being found out, Shipman would convince the relatives to cremate the body of the deceased. It is not all people who did according to what he suggested.

One general practitioner became suspicious when she became overwhelmed by the number of cremation forms she had to countersign. This was in February 1998, but her concerns were ignored. It was not until July 1998 that the police began investigations. These investigations started after the police found out that the will of one of the patients who died under his care was forged. The forged will had bequeathed a large part of the deceased's estate to him apparently for the good work he had done for the people of Hyde (Soothill 688). This opened Pandora's Box in a series of murders that Shipman had committed.

According to Dame Janette Smith, a member of one of the committees set to investigate the case of Shipman, the doctor killed at least one patient every ten days. Statistics show that most of his victims were elderly women. When the investigations commenced, it was discovered that upon the death of a patient, he would sign the death certificates and forge medical records to show that the patients had been in poor health. To facilitate the investigations, several bodies of patients who had died under his care were exhumed. The tests done on the exhumed bodies showed that all patients had died as a result of a diamorphine injection.

His trial began on 5th October 1999 where he was charged with the murder of fourteen patients whom he had murdered between 1995 and 1998 including Kathleen Grundy his last victim (Parker 264). Most people could not believe that Doctor Shipman was capable of such heinous crimes. Even his wife Primrose defended him saying that he was not capable of such crimes.

Although he vehemently defended himself and insisted that he was innocent, the jury found guilty of all the counts of murder. The trial judge sentenced to fifteen years for each murder case. The judge further recommended that Shipman should not be released due to the seriousness of the crimes he had committed.

Shipman did not complete his term of imprisonment. On January 13, 2004,

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the officials at Wakefield prison released a statement that Shipman had hanged himself. The news about his suicide was received in the celebration by most residents of Hyde as well as the nation. Other serial killers were also urged to do the same. There are those people who did not get satisfied that he committed suicide. They felt that he should have first admitted having committed the crimes before death. No one can tell exactly the reason Doctor Shipman turned to a serial killer. There are those who feel that signs like withdrawal indicated that he would turn out to be a serial killer. Some state that if he had had a better relationship with his father, it would not have got the level of him becoming a serial killer. There are also those who feel that his mother's painful death after the doctor administered morphine changed him.