

Examining the criminal histories of single victim homicide offenders



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A study looking at the criminal background of offenders who commit crime against a single victim. The process of offender profiling is used, an approach which aims to trace connections between an offender's characteristics and crime scene behaviour. Deriving from psychology, the discipline developed during the 20th century, particularly in the USA's Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The study first discusses the history of criminal profiling, then explains how it seeks to link criminal behaviour and offender characteristics. Relevant empirical studies in the area are noted. The study next considers existing academic research, including empirical studies and theoretical works, on homicide offenders. The expressive / instrumental framework is explored, as it offers a way of understanding single victim homicide behaviour in terms of a dichotomy between two types of aggression, instrumental and hostile (expressive).

This framework also offers the advantage of understanding single victim homicides in terms of the relationship between offender and victim. The idea that there is 'specialisation' in terms of the type of offences or victims that an offender selects is also analysed. Finally, the ways in which offender behaviour is linked to the crime scene is discussed.

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