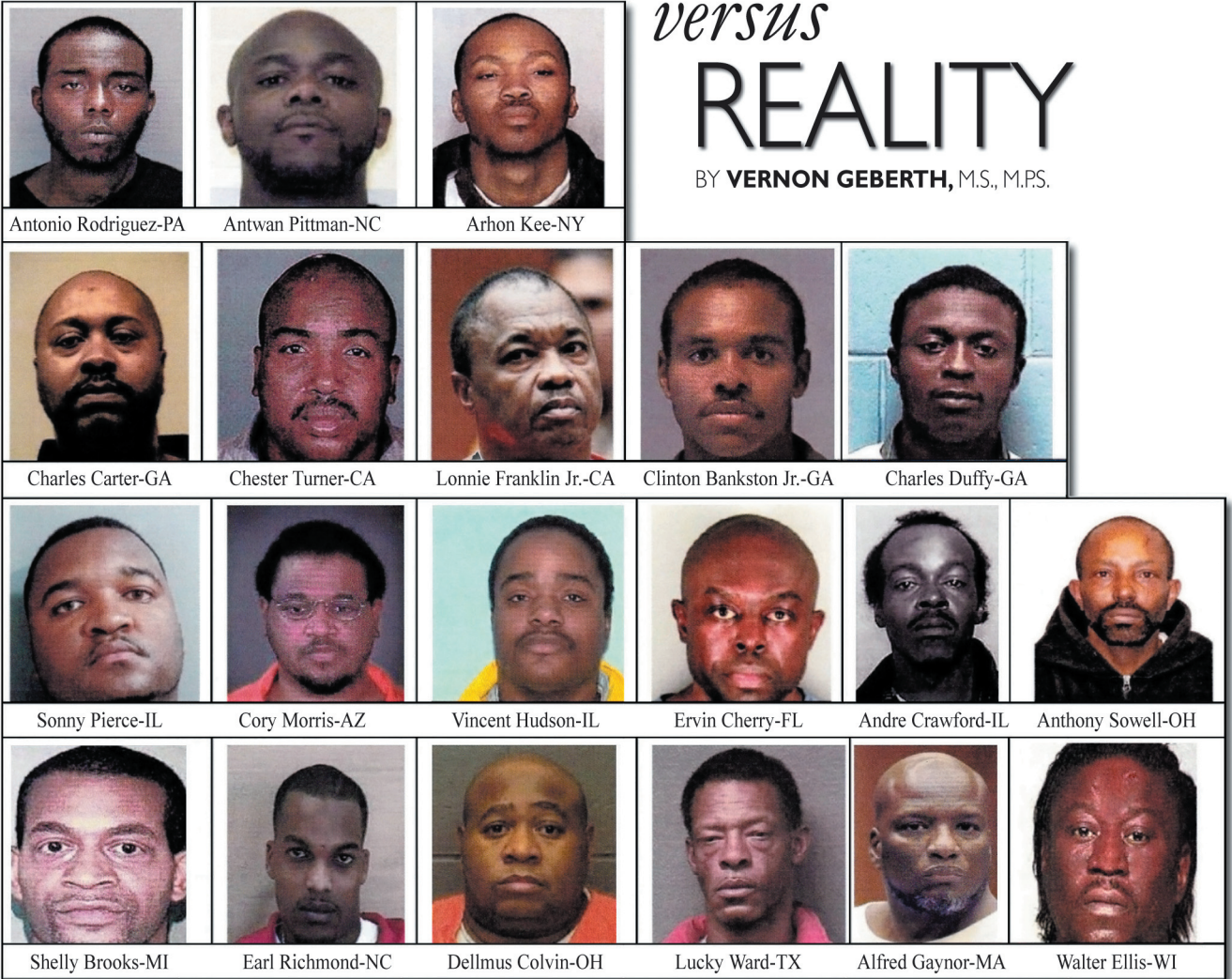


BLACK SERIAL KILLERS: *the* **PERCEPTION**

versus
REALITY

BY **VERNON GEBERTH, M.S., M.P.S.**



There is a false perception that Black¹ sexual serial killers are a rarity. The consequences of this mindset are that it makes it easier for them to go undetected for a longer period of time.

Statistically speaking, most serial murderers in the United States are White, but current research indicates that the percentage of Black serial killers has nearly doubled since the

1980s. Yet the myth that there are no Black serial killers still exists, most likely based on media coverage or Hollywood movies like "Silence of the Lambs" and "Hannibal" which focused exclusively on White serial killers. The media has either ignored Black sexual serial killers or opted not to focus on the race of the serial killer due to some illogical interpretation of political correctness.

Serial killers can be from any ethnic group, White, Black, Hispanic, Asian and/or Native American. They come from all races, cultures, nationalities, educational and economic levels, genders and sexual orientation.

Serial killers of any race get away with their crimes for longer periods of time because there is no connection between the offender and victim. In most homicides, people kill those with whom they have a relationship. It could be a spouse, a friend or an acquaintance. In serial homicide cases the killers target strangers. Prostitutes and drug abusers are easy targets because they have high-risk jobs and they are less likely to be missed.

THE PERCEPTION

Obsessive media attention on some of the infamous serial killers such as Ted Bundy, John Wayne Gacy, William Bonin (Freeway Killer), Kenneth Bianchi and Angelo Bouno (Hillside Stranglers), David Berkowitz (Son of Sam), Richard Ramirez (Night Stalker) and Dennis Rader, the “BTK Killer” created the perception that all serial killers are White males.

Most of the FBI profiles for serial murder have described the unknown serial murderers as being a White male, 20 to 30 or 25 to 35 or 20 to 40 years of age who reside in the area. The FBI research concluded that serial murders were committed intraracially (within the same race) as opposed to interracial.

When the Atlanta child killings of 1979 into 1981 were initially recognized as a pattern, it was suggested that the offender would be a White male based upon the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit’s research in which 36 convicted, incarcerated sexual murderers were examined. It wasn’t until their agents went to the Atlanta area where the killings occurred that they realized a White male couldn’t have perpetrated the murders in such a predominantly Black area.

The arrest of Wayne Williams was considered an anomaly. The media covered this event as though there had never been any Black serial killers prior to 1980.

However, even after the Wayne Williams case, the standard FBI profiles still focused on the UNSUB (unknown subject/suspect) White male and the belief that serial offenders usually target victims within their own race. This resulted in linkage blindness² and a major embarrassment for law enforcement in the Timothy Wilson Spencer case in Virginia and the George Waterfield Russell case in Washington State. Spencer and Russell were both Black.

In Louisiana, the Multi-Agency Task Force was bogged down

for almost a year looking for the UNSUB White male described in the FBI profile on the Baton Rouge serial killer case. The task force had linked the unknown killer to six murders through DNA/STR. They sent the evidence to a private lab that performed a Biographical Ancestry Analysis that indicated authorities should be looking for a Black male. When a suspect was identified, he was, indeed, Black.

Only recently has the media reported on Black sexual serial killers including the arrest and conviction of Anthony Sowell, the “Cleveland Strangler”, who had killed eleven women between 2005 and 2009, and Lonnie David Franklin, the “Grim Sleeper” in Los Angeles who killed ten women between 1985 and 2007. Franklin was identified through Familial DNA Analysis when his DNA matched evidence from all of the crime scenes.³

THE REALITY

Using a dataset listing of 476 serial killers in the U.S. as of August 2011, and describing “Sexual Serial Murder” as an individual who, acting alone or with another, commits two or more sex-related homicides over a period of time, with time breaks between each event, I have developed information of importance to a PI working a case where a serial killer is known or suspected to be involved.

Data:

- Serial killings with motivations such as racial, thrill, black widow, robbery, etc. were extracted from the list.
- Spree killers were not included, resulting in a dataset of 409 sexual serial killers that represented 86% of all serial murderers.
- 153 Black sexual serial killers were identified within the 409 total.
- The 153 Black sexual serial killers from the 409 total represented 37.4% of all the sexual serial murders in the U.S. as of August 2011.

“...current research indicates that the percentage of Black serial killers has nearly doubled since the 1980’s”

- Prior to 1981, Black sexual serial killers accounted for approximately 21.8% of the murders. 37.4% is a significant increase from the 1980s.

The data, shown on the following table, was divided chronologically, beginning with cases that occurred prior to 1981 up to 2011.

BLACK SEXUAL SERIAL KILLERS BY RACE

NAME	STATE	NUMBER KILLED	VICTIM RACE	DATES	METHOD
ABLES, Tony	FL	4	W (HI)**	1983-1992	STRANGLE
ALLEN, Howard Arthur	IN	3	W (HI)**	1974-87	BEAT/Stab
ANDERSON, Joshue Julius	OK	5	B	2006-07	SHOT/BURN
ATKINS, Benjamin T.	MI	11	B	1991-92	STRANGLE
BALAAM, Anthony	NJ	4	B W (Pros)	1994-96	STRANGLE
BARNES, James Antonio	NY	4	B	1988	SHOT
BAXTER, Patrick	NY	3	W	1987-90	STRANGLE
BELCHER, Howard Milton*	GA	3	B	2002	STRANGLE
BEST, Alonzo	MD	5	B	1986-87	STRANGLE/BEAT/STAB
BIRD, Jake	WA	33	W (HI)**	1947	AXED
BIXLER, Rodney Troy	TN	3	B W	2000	STRANGLE
BLAIR, Terry	MO	7	B	1982-04	STRANGLE
BOMAR, Arthur	PA/NV	4	W	1990-96	BEAT
BORDERS, Eugene	NC	3	W	2003-04	BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA
BOYD, Lucious	FL	10	B W	1993-99	BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA
BRITT, Eugene Victor	IN	3	B	1995	STRANGLE
BROGSDALE, Rickey	D.C.	4	B W	1987	SHOT
BROOKS, Shelley Andre	MI	7	B W (Pros)	2001-06	BEAT/BLUNT FORCE
BROWN, Curtis	TX	12	W (HI)**	1984-86	STRANGLE
BROWN, Debra	IL	9	B	1984	w/Coleman - TEAM
BROWN, Raymond	AL	5	B	1960-87	STAB/CHOKE
BROWN, Vernon	IN	3	B	1980-86	STRANGLE/STAB/TORTURE
BULLOCK, David*	NY	6	B W (Pros)	1981-82	SHOT
BURGESS, Jermaine	PA	4	W (HI)**	2001-09	STAB/BEAT/SUFFOCATE
CARTER, Charles Lendell	GA	4	B W	2004-06	STRANGLE/STAB
CATOE, Jarvis R.	D.C.	9	B W	1935-41	STRANGLE
CHERRY, Ervin	FL	3	B	1993-94	STRANGLE
CHESTER, Elroy	TX	5	W (HI)**	1996-98	SHOT
CLEPPER, Gregory	IL	8	B	1991-96	STRANGLE
CODE, Nathaniel R.	LA	8	B (HI)**	1981-87	STRANGLE/SHOT/STAB
COLEMAN, Alton	IL	9	B	1984	BEAT/SHOT/STAB
COLVIN, Dellmus	OH	7	W (Pros)	2000-05	STRANGLE
COUSINS, Clifford	OH	2	B	1988-89	STRANGLE
CRAIG, Donald Dondie	OH	2	B	1995-96	STRANGLE
CRAINE, Louis	CA	4	B (Pros)	1985-87	STRANGLE
CRAWFORD, Andre	IL	10	B (Pros)	1997-00	STRANGLE
DAUGHTREY, Earl L.	GA	3	W (HI)**	1971-87	STRANGLE/SHOT
DAVIS, Brian Ranard	TX	6	B	2006-08	BEAT/BURN
DAVIS, Gregory	MS	3	B (HI)**	1986-87	STRANGLE/MUTILATE
DENNIS, Jerome	NJ	5	B	1967	STRANGLE
DUFFY, Charles Lee	GA	3	B W	1997	STRANGLE
DUROSSEAU, Paul	FL	7	B	1997-03	STRANGLE
ELLIS Walter E	WI	8	B (Pros)	1986-07	STRANGLE
FAYNE, Lorenzo	IL/WI	8	B	1989-94	BEAT
FRANCOIS, Kendall	NY	8	B W (Pros)	1996-98	STRANGLE
FRANKLIN Jr., Lonnie	CA	13	B	1985-88	STRANGLE/SHOOT
GARY, Carlton	GA	9	W (HI)**	1977-78	STRANGLE
GAYNOR, Alfred	MA	8	B	1990-97	STRANGLE
GILYARD, Lorenzo J	MO	12	B W (Pros)	1980-90	STRANGLE
GOUDEAU, Mark	AZ	9	B W H	2005-06	SHOT
GRAHAM, Harrison	PA	7	B	1983-87	STRANGLE

*Alleged Homosexual **Home Invasion

BLACK SEXUAL SERIAL KILLERS BY RACE

NAME	STATE	NUMBER KILLED	VICTIM RACE	DATES	METHOD
GRAY, Ronald Adrian	NC	5	W (HI)**	1986-87	STAB
GREENWOOD, Vaughn Orrin*	CA	8	B W NA	1974-75	STAB
GRIFFIN, Geoffrey	IL	6	B (Pros)	2000	STRANGLE
GRISSOM, Richard	KS	3	W (HI)**	1989-90	BEATEN/STABBED/MUT
GROVES, Vincent Darrell	CO	10	B W NA	1978-96	STRANGLE
GUILLORY, Jeffery Lee	LA	3	B	1999-02	STRANGLE/BEAT
HALEY, Kevin	CA	8	W (HI)**	1979-84	w/Brother Reginald - TEAM
HALEY, Reginald	CA	8	W (HI)**	1979-84	STRANGLE/BEAT
HAMPTON, Kevin L.	IN	3	W	2000-05	STRANGLE
HANCE, William H.	GA	3	B W	1977-78	BEAT
HARRIS, Dewayne Lee	WA	3	B W	1998	STRANGLE/BONDAGE
HARRIS, Michael Darnell	MI	10	W (HI)**	1980-81	STRANGLE
HARRISON, Lester	IL	5	W	1951-73	BEAT/STAB
HARWELL, Joseph	OH	2	B	1990-97	STRANGLE
HILL, Clarence	NJ	6	W	1938-42	SHOT
HILL, Ivan J.	CA	9	B W (Pros)	1993-94	STRANGLE
HODGES, Willie James	FL	3	W (HI)**	2001-03	SHOT/STAB
HOLMES, James Edward	MD	3	B	1973	STRANGLE/BEAT/STAB
HUDSON, Vincent	IL	7	B W (Pros)	2004-05	STRANGLE/BEAT
HUNTER, Richard L.	GA	4	W (HI)**	1986	SUFFOCATE
JACKSON, Anthony	MA	8	W	1972	STRANGLE/STAB/SUFFOC.
JACKSON, Calvin	NY	9	W	1973-74	STRANGLE/SUFFOCATE
JACKSON, Charles Junior	CA	6	W	1978-82	STRANGLE
JACKSON, Elton Manning*	VA	12	B	1996-98	SUFFOCATE
JACKSON, Ray Shawn	MO	6	B (Pros)	1989-90	STRANGLE
JAMES, Eugene H	MD	2	W	1947-48	STAB
JENNINGS, Wilbur Lee	CA	5	B (Pros)	1983-84	BEAT/DROWN
JOHNSON, Alvin	CA	3	W (HI)**	1977-80	w/Jennings - TEAM
JOHNSON, Johnny Ray	TX	3	B	1994-95	STRANGLE
JOHNSON, Lonnie Earl	TX	3	W	1990	BEAT/STAB
JOHNSON, Melvin	IL	4	B	1985-88	STRANGLE
JOHNSON, Michael	IL	3	B	2008-10	STRANGLE
JOHNSON, Milton	IL	14	B W	1983-84	SHOT/STAB
JOHNSON, Vincent	NY	6	B	1999-00	STRANGLE/BIND
JONES, Daniel O.	MO	3	B	1998-99	STAB
JOYNER, Anthony	PA	6	W	1983	STRANGLE
KEE, Arhon Malik	NY	4	B	1990-99	STRANGLE
KELLY, Horace	CA	3	B W	1984	SHOT
KIRKLAND, Anthony	OH	4	B W	1987-09	STRANGLE/Burn Body
LASKEY, Postea Jr.	OH	7	W (HI)**	1965-66	STRANGLE/BEAT
LEE, Derrick Todd	LA	6	W	2002-03	STRANGLE
LeGRAND, Devernon	NY	9	B	1975	STRANGLE/DISEMBER
LeGRAND, Stephen	NY	4	B	1975	w/DeVernon TEAM
LOCKETT, Will	KY	4	B W	1912-20	STAB/CHOKE
MACON, Matthew Emanuel	MI	6	W (HI)**	2004-07	BLUNT FORCE/STAB
MARCUS, Jerry	MS	15	B	1971-87	STRANGLE/DROWN
MARSHALL, Lamont Waldron	MI	2	W	1975-77	STRANGLE
McGREGOR, Edward George	TX	4	B W (HI)**	1990-2006	STRANGLE
McKNIGHT, Anthony	CA	7	B W (Pros)	1985-86	STRANGLE/BEAT/STAB
McKNIGHT, Gregory	OH	3	W	2000	SHOT
McWILLIAMS, LaMarques	TX	6	B	2001-05	STABBED/BEAT

* Alleged Homosexual **Home Invasion

BLACK SEXUAL SERIAL KILLERS BY RACE

NAME	STATE	NUMBER KILLED	VICTIM RACE	DATES	METHOD
MIDDELTON, David	CO/FL	3	W	1993-96	STRANGLE/TORTURE
MILLER, Benjamin	CT	5	B W (Pros)	1967-71	STRANGLE
MITCHELL, Roy	TX	6	B W	1922-23	SHOT/BEAT/AX
MORRIS, Cory	AZ	5	B W H	2002-03	STRANGLE
MOSELEY, Winston	NY	3	W	1963-64	STAB/SHOT
MOSLEY, Barry Wendell	CA	3	B	1999-2000	STRANGLE/BEAT
MOSLEY, Eddie Lee	FL	16	B	1973-87	STRANGLE
PAGE, Ivan	MI	3	B (Pros)	1998-2001	STRANGLE
PARKER, Gerald	CA	5	W (HI)**	1970-1979	BEAT
PERKINS, Reginald Wendell	TX	5	B	1980-91	STRANGLE
PIERCE, Sonny	IL	3	B	2009	STRANGLE
PITMAN, Antwan	NC	6	B	2005-08	STRANGLE
PRICE, Craig	RI	3	W (HI)**	1987-89	STABBED
PRINCE, Cleophus	CA	6	W (HI)**	1990-91	STAB
RICHMOND, Earl Jr.	NC	3	B W	1991	STRANGLE
RISSELL, Monte R.	VA	5	B W	1975-76	STRANGLE/STAB
ROBERTS, David James	IN	4	B W	1972	ARSON/SLAYED
ROBINSON, Alfred Lee	FL	4	B W	1991	STRANGLE
RODRIGUEZ, Antonio	PA	3	W	2009-11	STRANGLE
RUSSELL, George W.	WA	3	W (HI)**	1990-91	STRANGLE/MUTILATE
SCHEANETTE, Dale Devon	TX	2	W O (HI)**	1998-99	STRANGLE
SCOTT, Jason Thomas	MD	4	B (HI)**	2009	SHOT/ARSON
SIMMONS, Beoria Abraham	KY	3	W	1981-83	SHOT/STABBED
SIMMS, Ray Dell	CA	5	W H	1974-76	BEAT
SMALLWOOD, Robert Franklin	KY	3	B W	1996-2006	STRANGLE/BEAT
SMITH, Lemuel W.	NY	6	W	1958-81	STRANGLE/BEAT/TORTURE
SOLOMON Jr, Morris	CA	7	B	1987	STRANGLE
SOWELL, Anthony	OH	10	B	2005-09	STRANGLE
SPELLS, Lonnie V.	PA	17	B	1976-92	STRANGLE
SPENCER, Timothy Wilson	VA	5	W (HI)**	1985-87	STRANGLE/TORTURE
SPRAGGINS, Jerry Jerome	NJ	3	B W (HI)**	1981-85	SUFFOCATE
SURRATT, Edward	PA	18	W (HI)**	1977-78	SHOT/BLUNT TRAUMA
TAYLOR, Kevin	IL	4	B	2001	STRANGLE
TERRY, Michael*	GA	5	B	1985-86	SHOT/STAB
THOLMER, Brandon	CA	34	W (HI)**	1975-84	STRANGLE
THOMAS, John Floyd	CA	30	B	1970-89	STRANGLE
TRAVIS, Maury	IL	22	B	2000-02	STRANGLE
TURNER, Chester Dewayne	CA	15	B	1987-98	STRANGLE
WALKER, Clarence	OH	14	B W	1965	STAB/MUTILATE
WALLACE, Henry Louis	NC	11	B	1992-94	STRANGLE
WARD, Lucky	TX	5	B W H	2009-10	STRANGLE
WATTS, Coral Eugene	TX	22	W	1979-82	STRANGLE/STAB/DROWN
WEBB, Emanuel Lovell	CT	4	B	1990-93	STRANGLE
WEST, Kenneth	NY	2	B W	1983-86	STRANGLE
WHITE, Nathaniel	NY	6	B W	1991-92	STRANGLE/STAB
WILEY, Nicholas Lee	NY	3	B W (Pros)	2004	STABBED
WILKINS, Edward Charles	GA	3	B	1999-2000	SHOT
WILLIAMS, John Jr.	NC	5	B	1995-96	STRANGLE
WILLIAMS, Wayne B.*	GA	27	B	1978-79	STRANGLE
WIMBERLY, Anthony	CA	3	W (HI)**	1984-85	SHOT
YOUNGE, Jr., Donald Eugene	IL/UT	4	W (HI)**	1999-2000	BEAT/STABBED

* Alleged Homosexual **Home Invasion

BLACK SEX-RELATED SERIAL KILLERS IN THE U.S.

Years by Decade	Total Sexual Serial Murders	Total Black Serial Killers	Percentage of Black Killers
Prior to 1981	133	29	21.8%
1981 to 1990	148	48	32.4%
1991 to 2000	84	42	50%
2001 to 2011	44	34	77.2%
TOTALS	409	153	37.4%

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

- The research showed an increase in male Black serial killers, most of whom had a history of rape and/or other sexual assaults. These offenders killed to prevent identification.
- There were 409 sexual serial killers with 3517 victims.
- The 153 Black sexual serial killers, 37.4% of the total, murdered 1012 victims.
- The most frequent modality of victims' death was strangulation (67% of cases).
- Black sexual serial killers targeted more White female victims than White sexual serial killers targeted Black females, with the exception of prostitute and homosexual serial killings.
- 30% of the cases involved White victims.
- 43% of the cases involved Black victims.
- 27% of the cases involved Black, White, Hispanic or other victims.
- 22% of the Black sexual serial killers engaged in home invasion murders involving 210 White female victims and 22 Black female victims.

INVESTIGATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

A PI may contract a wrongful death investigation based upon a law enforcement error in not linking a case to a Black serial killer in time, which resulted in the death of a victim due to linkage blindness.

The four main criteria used to link serial murders are:

- Physical evidence.
- Offender description.
- Victimology.
- Crime scene behavior.

The evaluation of forensic evidence (which may identify the race of the suspect), the geographic and racial make-up of the

community where the serial killer is operating is paramount in any profile.

The PI investigating a series of sex-related homicides in major urban areas and cities with a predominantly Black population must consider that the serial murder suspect will be Black, rather than White as most profiles would indicate. **PI**

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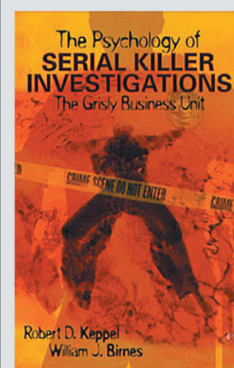
ENDNOTES

¹The term "Black" is used rather than "African-American" in this article because not all persons who are Black are African-American.

²Linkage blindness is defined as an investigative failure to recognize a pattern which "links" one crime with another crime in a series of cases through victimology, geographic region or area of events, the "signature" of the offender, similar M.O., and a review of autopsy protocols. (Geberth, 2006, p. 823) This occurs when someone who attempts to conduct a "Linkage Analysis" fails to take into consideration all of the factors necessary to link and identify patterns.

³The media did report on the controversy about Familial DNA Analysis, indicating that the use is a violation of privacy. Civil rights groups have argued against its use. Critics claim it's a form of racial profiling because the CODIS databank is disproportionately filled with African-Americans. Proponents state it will help identify suspects who wouldn't otherwise be in the system. The FBI has resisted collecting Familial DNA for fear of a backlash from privacy groups. However, several states have embraced the new technology which has been used in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Britain for years. (For more about Familial DNA Analysis, see the April 2010 issue of PI Magazine).

SUGGESTED READING:



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SERIAL KILLER INVESTIGATIONS

By Robert D. Keppel,
William J. Birnes

This is the first book of its kind that combines state-of-the-art psychological assessment experience with the expertise of a homicide investigator who has tracked some of this country's most notorious serial killers. The author also brings to the book hands-on best practices gleaned from the experience of other task forces.

*Retail: \$57.95 **PI Store: \$44.95**

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