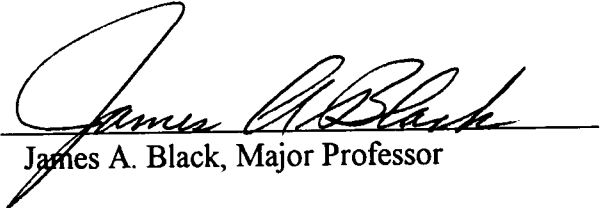
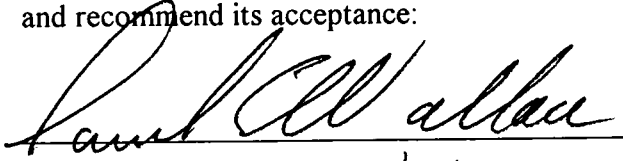
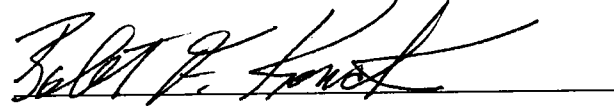


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Tricia M. York entitled "Media Perceptions of Murder-For-Hire Events." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Sociology.


James A. Black, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

**MEDIA PERCEPTIONS OF
MURDER-FOR-HIRE EVENTS**

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Tricia M. York
August 1998

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mom, Nancy York,
for all her love and encouragement and for always believing in me.

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ABSTRACT

The media have long been criticized for over-representing violent crimes in comparison to more prevalent non-violent property crimes and white-collar crimes. Homicide has been found to be the number one violent crime reported on by the media. There are questions as to whether the media represent murder-for-hire events as violent crimes. A content analysis of 157 newspaper articles covering 25 murder-for-hire events was conducted to determine how murder-for-hire events are depicted in the media. Contents of the newspaper articles were examined in terms of their coverage of the events, presentation of information on event demographics and circumstances, and style of reporting. Results indicate that murder-for-hire events are treated no differently than other violent crimes, in terms of reporting demographic information and circumstances surrounding the crime. The media were also found to offer rationales for the events, usually focusing on money and illicit love for explanations. The findings do show, however, the media tend to depict murder-for-hire in a non-violent, matter of fact way. The media also tended to depict the solicitor and the hitman differently. Implications of these findings are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on media depictions of murder-for-hire crimes. At question is whether the media may present murder-for-hire events as violent crimes or in a non-violent context. In many respects, the way the media depict murder-for-hire events may greatly influence the way average readers perceive this problem as one of violence.

This chapter discusses media and social perception, media generated awareness of crime, media and the typical homicide, murder-for-hire events, and the problem being addressed in this study.

Media and Social Perception

Garofalo (1981:319) defines the news media as "mechanisms for public presentation of entertainment, propaganda, and nonfiction information." The news media are used by many to obtain information and knowledge about areas of social life with which most have no direct contact (Barak, 1994; Chibnall, 1974; Sherizen, 1977). How the news media portray social phenomena may have a great effect on how people construct their own reality of social events. As Graber (1980:11) explains "from information that comes to their attention, average individuals form images of reality, along with evaluations and feelings about the world that exist in their minds." Surette (1998:6) explains individuals generally obtain their information about their world from basically four sources: personal experiences, significant others (friends and family), social groups and institutions (schools and churches) and the media. When it comes to obtaining information about crime, it appears the media

may be the dominant source for many. Researchers have found most people rarely have extensive, first-hand experience of crime and tend to rely on the media for their knowledge about such activities (Garofalo, 1981; Graber, 1980; Sherizen, 1977, Surette, 1998). In her study of the news media, Graber (1980:49) found that for 95 percent of her 164 respondents interviewed, news media were the primary source of crime knowledge.

The media are composed of several different components. These include, but are not limited to, print media such as newspapers, magazines, and books and audio/visual media such as television, radio, photography, film and video, and recordings (Surette, 1998). Robinson and Levy (1996:129) point out that "contrary to conventional wisdom, television is not the public's main source for routine news." Instead, they found "newspapers remain America's premier source of public affairs information" (Robinson and Levy, 1996:135). This includes crime news, which is "the third largest category of subjects covered by newspapers" (Sherizen, 1977:208). Bogart (1984:719) found that although the perceptions of viewing audiences showed television and newspapers news coverage "complement each other...newspapers' ability to cover the news of the area in detail and in depth remains a major advantage." Garofalo (1981:320) reported that "most content analyses of crime-related topics in the news media have focused on newspapers rather than television," claiming it was "more difficult to study the content of broadcast news." It is believed newspapers are able to offer more consistent coverage of crime news than other types of media components, particularly television, because they do not have to contend with the time limits that constrain television news broadcasts and are able to develop and report a news subject more fully.

Still, not all researchers support the view that the news media significantly influence

how society perceives crime. Smith (1984:292) argues the news media are responsible for creating only a broad awareness of crime and "the press probably does not determine in detail how this awareness is shaped in the public mind...it is the public who invest the news with any meaning or significance it might eventually hold." Sacco (1982:483) describes the relationship between the news media and public perception of crime as being more subtle than direct, claiming "media consumption is likely to be related to perception of crime only among those segments of the population already pre-disposed to express more negative perceptions of crime." But even research that questions the influence the news media have over-perceived fear of crime finds that there may still be a connection. In their study on fear of crime and the media, Liska and Baccaglini (1990:371-372) found that fear of crime was related to whether or not the crime was local or non-local. Local stories had a positive effect on fear of crime while non-local stories actually had a negative effect on fear of crime. Their findings suggest the reports of crimes in other communities actually make people feel safer by comparison in their own communities. The argument remains viable that, since much of the information people obtain about crime comes from the mass media, the images the mass media produce do affect the way many perceive crime.

Media Generated Awareness of Crime

Assuming that most people obtain their information and knowledge about crime through the news media, it is important that the media portray crime as accurately as possible. Conklin (1975:17) feels that "people react to their perception of social problems rather than to the problems themselves." Combs and Slovic (1979:837) explain that since "a substantial part of our experience comes indirectly, through various forms of media

exposure. If media reporting is biased, then much of our experience will be biased, too." Unfortunately, newspapers do not come with warning labels. Although the media may be considered by some to be "a poor source of information about the distribution of crime and the likelihood of victimization" (Antunes and Hurley, 1977:756), many readers are not aware of this. A typical newspaper reader may not have enough knowledge about crime to question what he or she reads on the subject, accepting what is printed about crime without pause.

Conklin (1975:22) believes the problem of distortion lies mainly with the news media. As he explains:

The total flow of information is greater today than a few decades ago. People are now aware of the news more quickly, which makes them better informed but also more apprehensive about events such as crimes and riots. The media have increased the number of threat messages through the reporting of crime and violence. They usually report only the most dramatic, hence the most threatening crimes. This gives people an unbalanced picture of crime....Media reporting of crime is immediate, dramatic, and free of historical perspective and therefore leads to exaggerated public fear of crime.

Many researchers have pointed out that even though there are far more property and white-collar crimes committed, violent crimes receive far more emphasis in the news media (Antunes and Hurley, 1977; Chermak, 1994 and 1997; Evans and Lundman, 1983; Garofalo, 1981; Gorelick, 1989; Graber, 1980; Humphries, 1981; Liska and Baccaglini, 1990; Marsh, 1991; and Randall, Lee-Sammons, and Hagner, 1988). Not only do the media tend to over-emphasize violent street crime over more prevalent non-violent property crimes and white-collar crimes, they also routinely distort the violent events themselves. Nowhere can this be better seen than in the media's favorite crime stories, homicides, where the media have been accused of depicting the "rare rather than commonplace characteristics of homicides"

(Johnstone, Hawkins, and Michener, 1994:865).

Media and the Typical Homicide

Homicide stories have historically been staples for newspapers. "With the possible exception of kidnapping or treason, intentional homicide traditionally has ranked as the most newsworthy of crime stories" (Johnstone et al. 1994:861). In their study of two Houston dailies, Antunes and Hurley (1977) found homicide stories dominated Houston papers. With homicides making up only 0.24 percent of index crimes known to police, 50 percent of crime coverage in the Houston *Chronicle* was devoted to homicide stories. In her study on the news media, Graber (1980:39) found similar results: while murder constituted "0.2 percent of all crimes records in the police index...it constitutes 26.2 percent of all crime mentioned" in the *Chicago Tribune*. By comparison, theft equaled 47 percent of index crimes known to the police but constituted only 4 percent of all crime mentioned in the same paper. In two recent content analysis of newspaper and television reporting, Chermak (1994 and 1997) found murder stories still dominate media news coverage.

Why are homicides over-emphasized by the media? Chermak (1994:570) believes it is because "murders are more serious than other crimes, both by law and in public perception. Because news space is limited, news organizations focus on the crimes that are most serious and are thought by the media to be most interesting to the public." Combs and Slovic (1979:843) contend homicides are over-reported by the media because "these hazards represent sources of societal vulnerability about which people need to be informed so that they can take precautions or institute appropriate controls" against being victims.

Despite their popularity with the media, Chermak (1994:570) points out, "not all

homicides are important news, and some never become stories because the news media recognize that not all have entertainment value." Johnstone et al., (1994:860) found in their study of homicide reporting in two Chicago dailies, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times* "of 684 homicides investigated in 1987 by the Chicago police, 212 were reported in one or both of the dailies." Since less than half of all homicides are being reported on in the newspapers, the media obviously have certain criteria they are following to decide which homicide stories make the paper. Johnstone et al., (1994:862) described four different aspects of a homicide story which may make it newsworthy enough for print, in what they describe is a "human interest" tradition of storytelling:

- a. a socially "prominent" or "respectable" citizen is involved either as a victim or offender
- b. the victim is an innocent or overmatched target, perhaps a woman, child, or elderly person
- c. the murder...was either particularly shocking or brutal, involved multiple victims or offenders, or perhaps employed an unusual method of killing.
- d. the narrative generates mystery, suspense, or drama, as when at-large killer claims still another victim.

Any homicide story that contains one or more of these elements may have a greater chance of being reported on, rather than being ignored, by the news media. Despite the need for having to meet certain criteria to be considered newsworthy, the content of homicide news stories follows general patterns. The stories that result lack human characters with real problems and motivations.

In her book on crime and the media, Graber (1980:47) explains how crime stories are usually handled by the media:

Most of the crime stories read like police blotter reports, peopled by remote, impersonal, motiveless figures. One rarely encounters flesh-and-blood human beings

who are involved in the drama of crime and victimization. The human conditions surrounding the crime are usually skipped, except when the crime is a freakish one or involves an unlikely victim or a socially prominent person.

When an ordinary man is accused of killing his wife and burning the house to hide the crime, this is only a routine matter, covered inconspicuously and insipidly....The story contains the stock elements, and little else: name, age, and occupation of the victim, place of crime, the name, age, and occupation of the suspect or suspects, a few facts about the crime, and the work done by the police.

Humphries (1981) found the media favors using basic demographic information (age, sex, race and employment status) to describe offenders and victims in crime stories. The same, aside from identifying the race of the individuals, is true today for homicide stories. Johnstone et al., (1994:863) found "the most frequently available items in newspaper stories were the victim's name, age and gender, and the date and location of the incident. Race routinely was *not* reported." In general, homicide news reports are dominated by selected demographic information for both offenders and police interpretations of the event. Little is said about the transaction between offender and victim which ultimately lead to the death of the victim.

Media generated images of homicide rarely have anything in common with the social realities of homicide. The media represent homicides as dangerous, uncontrollable aberrations. Contrary to media portrayals, homicides are not normally random acts of violence involving complete strangers. Holmes and Holmes (1994:7) explain "the common perception of homicide as a stranger-perpetrated crime does not appear to be accurate. In most cases, murder occurs between people who know each other. In almost 78% of cases, homicides occur between person who are relatives or personal acquaintances." Luckenbill (1977:1985) believes that criminal homicides are the result of an intense personal transaction

between offenders and victims, both of whom are usually in agreement that violence is an acceptable end to their problem. As he explains "criminal homicide does not appear as a one-sided event with unwitting victims assuming a passive, noncontributory role. Rather, murder is the outcome of a dynamic interchange between an offender, victim, and in many cases, bystanders."

The media have also been criticized for distorting the image of people most at risk for being victims of homicide. Johnstone et al., (1990:865) found murders were "more likely to be reported when they claim victims from the dominant social group, or take place in more affluent areas of the city. Deaths of women or children also remain newsworthy." As Johnstone et al., (1990:869) explain the problem:

By focusing on the unusual and the bizarre, the media frame the homicide problem in terms of individual rather than social pathologies. The high homicide rates of inner cities are presented as neither systematic nor patterned, the impression the reader gets is that all population groups are equally vulnerable to victimization. Indeed, if one were completely dependent on newspaper accounts, one might conclude the population groups with the lowest rates of homicide are among those at much greater risk. In the long run, this fosters distorted images of the nature of homicide, and also produces a public opinion that essentially ignores the economic and social underpinnings of the problem.

Murder-for-Hire Events

What happens to a homicide crime story when it deviates from the typical homicide, such as a serial killing, random assassination, or murder-for-hire? Do the news media treat these types of homicide any differently than typical homicide stories? Looking at one of these types of violence, murder-for-hire, how do the media depict these events? Murder-for-hire events not only include a hitman and a target, but an additional participant, the solicitor. Murder-for-hire homicides are planned, calculated events in which someone arranges for the

killing of another individual by a third party.

Murder-for-hire events can be defined as " a continuous sequence of interactions by one or more persons in which one person(s) (solicitor) solicits another person(s) (hitman) to have someone else (target) killed for gain, monetary or otherwise. An event begins with the initial exploration of the possibility of having someone killed and terminates with a murder, attempted murder, or police intervention." (Black and Corsaro, 1997:3). Murder-for-hire events have been identified as violent acts mainly because "irrespective of whether murders are actually committed, they carry the very real threat of murder" (Black and Corsaro, 1997:2).

Problem

How media generated stories about murder-for-hire crimes portray these events is the problem being studied in this thesis. With more participants (solicitor, hit man, and target) involved in murder-for-hire events in different ways, the assumptions guiding the typical offender-victim homicide story are seriously challenged. This raises questions about the focus of the contents of murder-for-hire news stories. Are they, as other violence stories, distorted? If so, in what ways? Do murder-for-hire stories include basic demographic and circumstance information? What rationales are offered for murder-for-hire events? How is responsibility for these crimes assigned? Is the "societal vulnerability" of the crime central to the story or does it take some other directions (eg: comical, quasi-fictional)?

One way to determine how the media depict murder-for-hire events is by doing a content analysis of newspapers articles that pertain to these events. By working with data from an ongoing larger project on murder-for-hire events, newspaper stories about 25

different murder-for-hire events in Tennessee were examined.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examined how newspapers depict murder-for-hire events. Several questions were addressed. What kind of coverage do murder-for-hire crimes receive? Do news stories include basic demographic information about the participants in murder-for-hire events (Graber, 1980; Humphries, 1981; Johnstone et al., 1994)? If so, are there any significant differences in amount of coverage between the participants? Do newspapers report the circumstances (date and place) of the crime (Graber, 1980; Johnstone et al., 1994)? What is the style of reporting for these events? Do articles offer rationales about why the events took place (Lofquist, 1997)? Do news stories place responsibility for the crime on one or both the solicitor and the hitman? Is there an overall tone of societal vulnerability of the articles (Combs and Slovic, 1979)? Do articles report the crimes in a matter of fact tone, a violent tone, or a murder-for-hire tone?

To effectively address these questions, a content analysis of newspaper articles about murder-for-hire events has been conducted. This chapter details the methods chosen to answer the research questions, including: a) the steps taken to select the articles; b) the strategies used to review their contents; c) the analytical procedures employed to obtain answers to the research questions.

Procedures for Selection of Articles

A number of steps were taken to identify the newspaper articles used for this study.

First, murder-for-hire events were selected for inclusion in the study from a list of murder-for-hire events generated by the Murder-For-Hire Project. Court data from the Murder-For-Hire Project contained information on the county in which each event occurred. Newspapers for the counties where the events took place were then identified from the *1998 Working Press of the Nation: Newspaper Directory* (1998). Copies of the newspapers were available in the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Those used in the study included: *The Chattanooga Times*, the *Johnson City Press*, the *Polk County News*, *The Newport Plain Talk*, the *Standard Banner*, the *Roane County News*, *The Commercial Appeal*, *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, *The Expositor*, *The Leaf-Chronicle*, the *Wayne County News*, the *State Gazette*, the *Jackson County Sentinel*, *The Daily Post-Athenian*, the *Fayette County Review*, the *Herald-Citizen*, the *Lauderdale County Enterprise*, *The Voice*, *The Tennessean* and the *Nashville Banner*.

Procedures for Determining Coverage

Articles for each event were found by, first, identifying important dates for each event, when available, in the Murder-For-Hire Project court documents. Dates relied on were: offense date, arrest date, Grand Jury indictment date, conviction date, and sentencing date. Once as many of these dates as could be found for an event were identified, the newspapers from the county in which the event occurred were reviewed for those dates to locate the articles included in the study. A total of 157 articles were located and reviewed covering 25 murder-for-hire events. For the remainder of the events in the project, information about the dates needed to identify articles were unavailable due to time constraints and difficulty in locating newspapers.

Once articles for the events were located, coverage was determined by the number

of articles found, extent of coverage for the event (complete, partial, or minimal), number of articles for different types of outcomes (murder/attempted murder versus agent intervention), and types of newspaper (weekly or daily) used. Complete coverage refers to events that included articles which covered the following dates: offense date, arrest date, Grand Jury indictment date, conviction date, and sentencing date (for both the solicitor and the hitman). Partial coverage refers to events that were missing some of these dates, such as arrest dates of solicitors. Minimal coverage refers to events that included coverage of only one of these dates, such as the arrest or the trial.

Procedures for Determining Demographics and Circumstances

With respect to demographic information, in *Crime and News and the Public*, Doris A. Graber (1980:48) detailed what a typical homicide story for the *Chicago Tribune* consisted of:

1. Victim Information: Name, Age, and Occupation
2. Suspect Information: Name, Age, and Occupation
3. Details of Crime: Time, Place, and Witnesses
4. Details of Police Action: Arrest, Suspect's Claims, and Disposition

Following Graber's findings, demographic information was measured by the number of articles that identified participants' name, age, and occupation. Participant categories followed the terminology of the Murder-For-Hire Project.

Circumstance information was determined by the number of articles that identified the date and place of the crime, the outcome, the weapon used, and mention of a contract. (See Appendix A for coding procedures for demographics and circumstances.)

Procedures for Determining Styles of Reporting

Once the basic coverage of murder-for-hire events was examined, the research turned to how the media actually depicted the events in the newspaper articles. The style of reporting was determined by noting the types of rationales offered by the media, determining on whom the media focused responsibility for the crime and on detecting tones of societal vulnerability. (See Appendix A for coding procedures for style of reporting categories).

Rationale

Lofquist (1997:256) argues the "media create and reproduce hegemonic understandings of events." Do the media attempt to make understandings of murder-for-hire events? If so, what are they? Rationale was determined by the number of articles that offered a rationale, reported a rationale for the crime was not known, or did not report any type of rationale.

Responsibility

When there are two different types of offenders, there is the possibility the media may depict one offender as being more responsible for the crime than the other. Evans and Lundman (1983:538) found the media devoted more attention to criminal wrongdoing of individuals over criminal actions of wealthy corporations, "thus helping to preserve the reputations of corporate actors." Do the media, perhaps, focus on the responsibility of one participant over the other, thereby possibly "preserving the reputation" of the other participant? Responsibility was determined by the number of articles in which responsibility for the crime was assigned to either the solicitor, the hitman, or both. Only non-agent events were analyzed. Types of responsibility were divided into two categories: planning the crime

and participating in the crime.

Tone of societal vulnerability

Sherizen (1977:215) argues that for readers who absorb the imagery of homicide in the news, the "crime appears to be violent, probably rampant, out of control, and likely to strike physically at any moment." Do murder-for-hire events invoke the same images? Tone of societal vulnerability was determined in two ways: by the number of articles that mention community fear and by the number of times the events were discussed in either violent, matter-of-fact, or murder-for-hire terms.

Concluding Remarks

This study relied on the events in the Murder-For-Hire Project and no generalizations can be made beyond the articles about these 25 events to other murder-for-hire articles. There was also no inter-coder reliability check done on the coding procedures used to determine the style of reporting in the news articles. However, Chermak (1994) contends that research has shown the transformation process (putting contents into categories) provides a crude reliability check. Content analyses of crime stories have also been noted for their consistency. In his review of literature on crime and the media, Garofalo (1981:321) found

the results of content analyses of crime-related topics in the news media have shown a high degree of consistency - across time periods and geographic areas; in the amount of news and images projects; and even among studies that vary somewhat in their operational definitions and measurement rules.

The study does, however, accurately reflect the newspaper coverage of the 25 events in the larger project.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

In this chapter, findings from the content analysis of murder-for-hire articles are presented. They are categorized into three broad areas: coverage, demographics and circumstances, and styles of reporting (responsibility, rationales, and tone of societal vulnerability).

Coverage

Figure 1¹ and Tables 1 through 3 summarize the findings which represent the coverage of the murder-for-hire crimes. Figure 1 shows the number of articles found per event. As shown, the number varies considerably across events, ranging from a high of 13 articles for three events to two articles for four events. The total number of articles located for the study was 157. (See Appendix C for complete event information.)

Table 1 shows there was extensive coverage of the events. Seventy-two percent (18) of the events had complete information found in the news articles, 20 percent (5) had partial information and 8 percent (2) had only minimal information. Those with minimal coverage included one event in which only trial coverage of the participants was located and another event in which only arrest coverage of the solicitor was located.

Given the fact that the events were extensively covered by newspapers and the coverage included complete information concerning most of the events, what accounted for the widespread difference found in the number of articles per event? Table 2 shows the

¹Figure and all tables can be found in Appendix B

number of articles found by event outcome. Sixty percent (15) of the events resulted in a murder or attempted murder. Forty percent (10) of the events resulted in an agent intervention by undercover law enforcement officials. Events that resulted in murder or an attempted murder received more newspaper coverage than events terminated by an agent. Eighty percent (126) of the articles were devoted to 60 percent (15) of the events that included a murder or attempted murder. Agent intervention events were only covered by 20 percent (31) of the articles. This suggests a murder or attempted murder had a heavy influence on the amount of coverage the newspapers devote to these events.

Another possible influence on the difference in coverage can be found in the type of newspaper the event was covered by: daily or weekly. Table 3 shows the number of articles by weekly and daily newspapers. Forty-eight percent (12) of the events were covered by daily newspapers and 52 percent (13) of the events were covered by weekly newspapers. Sixty-one percent (96) of the total articles came from daily newspapers and 39 percent (61) came from weekly newspapers. So while daily newspapers covered slightly less than half of the events, they devoted 20 percent more articles to covering the events.

Demographics and Circumstances

Tables 4 through 6 deal with demographic information of the participants. Initial results found in Table 4 show name of victim as being the most identified demographic at 98 percent (154), followed by name of solicitor, 83 percent (130), and finally name of hitman, 70 percent (110). These results were expected. Johnstone et al. (1994:863) found the most common demographic information found in homicide stories was the name and age of the victim. They connected this to the fact "in 32 percent of the cases the offenders were

unknown to the police, at least at the time the incident was recorded, and the newspaper accounts therefore lacked any information about them."

The differences found in Table 4 disappear after only articles in which the media identified the participants as being involved in the events were analyzed. Tables 5 and 6 are a breakdown, by event type, of the demographic information found for articles in which all participants are identified. As seen, there is very little difference found in the reporting of the participant demographics, except for a decrease in the number of times the victim's age was reported compared to the reporting of the solicitor's and hitmen's ages for both non-agent and agent events. These findings illustrate the importance of relying on several different event dates in content analysis of murder-for-hire events.

Tables 7, 8 and 9 deal with the circumstances of the events. Date of the crime was the most reported circumstance for both non-agent, 90 percent (110), and agent, 87 percent (27), events. Non-agent articles covered the place of the crime, 82 percent (103), more often than agent articles, 58 percent (18). Non-agent articles covered the murder (or attempt) of the victim 88 percent (112) of the time. Weapon used was only mentioned 43 percent (54) of the time for non-agent articles.

Table 9 addresses the number of events which include articles that mention a contract. Results show that 53 percent (8) of the non-agent events had articles that mentioned a contract, compared to 90 percent (9) of the agent events. This difference is also seen in the amount of coverage devoted to contracts. Seventy-seven percent (24) of the agent event articles covered a contract, compared to only 21 percent (27) of the non-agent event articles.

Styles of Reporting

Styles of reporting are summarized in Tables 10 through 15. Styles of reporting were determined by analyzing rationales, responsibility, and tone of social vulnerability.

Rationale

Table 10 addresses the number of articles that reported a rationale. More than half of the articles, 62 percent (97), reported a rationale for the event. Seven percent (11) of the articles reported that a rationale was not known and 31 percent (49) of the articles did not report any rationale at all.

Although rationales were varied to some degree, there were some definite themes that repeated themselves throughout the different articles. The two largest themes were related to money and love affairs. Killing for insurance money played a large part in many of the events, 13 in total. Divorce, marital problems and love affairs followed a close second with a total of 12 events. There were also themes of abuse (three events), child custody (three events), business rivals (two events), resuming gospel singing career (one event), and parental control (two events). Some examples of rationales offered for the events are as follows:

Event #2: "Sharon Hurt planned to murder her husband and use his \$280,000 in life insurance benefits to resume her dormant gospel singing career" (*The Tennessean*, 7-25-95).

Event #9: "Several possible motives for the killing came out during testimony and cross-examinations: insurance money, love, meanness, sexual abuse, and Grady's attempt to keep the two apart" (*Polk County News*, 8-7-91).

Event #11: "The state's theory of the case is that Kathy Ball wanted her husband dead because of a sexual affair she was having with James Murray, Ball's co-worker at a Morristown Plant. She hoped to collect on two life insurance policies totaling

\$33,000, pay her debts, and marry Murray" (*The Newport Plain Talk*, 2-17-95).

"This plan was laid out because of greed - because of an illicit love between a brother and a sister" (*The Newport Plain Talk*, 2-17-95).

Event #6: "Barnett said the shootings were rooted in the Sanjines' bitter 1990 divorce and the ensuing custody battle over the couple's three young children" (*The Chattanooga Times*, 3-19-94).

Rationales for two of the events changed during the coverage of the events. In the articles covering Event 1, when a man was found shot to death in the garage where he worked as a mechanic, initial coverage of the death mentioned robbery as a possible motive. Shortly after the killing, the hitman was arrested. Subsequent reportings did not include any mention of rationale until after the trial coverage began, when rationales leaned toward insurance money and a love triangle between the solicitor and the hitman.

Event #1:

Rationale #1: "Authorities believe robbery was the motive in the shooting death of a Roberts Brothers Motors employee whose body was found lying outside the door of the business early Thursday morning" (*The Daily Post-Athenian*, 11-3-89).

Rationale #2: "Prosecutors alleged during the first trial Mrs. Peeler and Richard Perkinson were having an affair and that the two planned to have Gilbert Peeler killed to collect on his life insurance policy" (*The Daily Post-Athenian*, 6-2-93).

Another event, a stabbing of a young mother in a mall parking lot, early articles reported a rationale was not known, then reported the stabbing was the result of a rejection of love for the killer, and ended up changing rationales at the trial of the solicitor, the victim's husband, to one of marital problems and insurance money.

Event #5:

Rationale not known: "But neither the warrant nor police sources could shed much light on Nelson's alleged motive in the killing" (*Herald Citizen*, 7-15-88).

Rationale #1: "Nelson says rejection his reason for stabbing. (Victim called him a 'fool')" (*Herald Citizen*, 7-28-89).

Rationale #2: "Hershell Kinnaird was furious because his wife was planning to divorce him and that he also hoped to collect \$100,000 in life insurance he had just taken out on Mrs. Kinnaird" (*Herald Citizen*, 8-17-89).

"Averitt testified yesterday that Hershell Kinnaird solicited him to kill Pamela Kinnaird and said Kinnaird told him "she wasn't much of a mother,"

"He said she wouldn't cook or clean the house, that she would just lay around all the time and he had to take the kids shopping if they got any clothes" (*Herald Citizen*, 8-17-89).

For another event where the articles reported no motive was known yet, there was much discussion of what the crime did not appear to be. The fact that the victim's clothes were not removed and nothing appeared to be stolen from her home was discussed. As one article about this event states, the paper was unable to find a rationale for the killing:

Event #3: "For the most part, murder in the Tri-Cities occurs as a result of a crime of passion or is linked to drug dealing. The killing of Judy Feels doesn't appear to fit into either category" (*The Johnson City Press*, 9-14-94).

After the arrest of the victim's husband for hiring his roommate to kill his wife, tales of insurance money surfaced and were reported throughout subsequent coverage of the event.

Event #3: "Kenny and Harris told investigators Feels wanted his wife killed so he could collect about \$220,000 in life insurance" (*The Johnson City Press*, 2-4-95).

Responsibility

Tables 11 and 12 address responsibility. Table 11 shows the articles depicted solicitors as being individually responsible for the crime in 70 percent (70) of the articles and hitmen in 72 percent (72) of the articles. They were depicted as jointly responsible in 34 percent (34) of the articles. In 8 percent (8) of the articles, responsibility was not assigned.

Table 12 shows the type of responsibility assigned to the participants in the articles. As seen, in the articles that assigned responsibility to the solicitors, 84 percent (59) depicted them as planning the event while only 16 percent (11) depicting them as being responsible for the actual killing. By contrast, in the articles that assigned responsibility to the hitmen, 18 percent (13) depicted them as planners and 82 percent (59) depicted them as responsible for the actual killing. When the news media depicted both the solicitor and the hitman as being responsible, they generally showed them more often than not as planning the event together, 71 percent (24), rather than killing together, 29 percent (10).

Newspaper stories clearly distinguished between responsibility for planning the event and responsibility for the actual killing. The following are examples of the media assigning responsibility for the crime to the solicitors and the hitmen.

Event #3:

Hitman Responsibility:

"Kenny told Brown he held Mrs. Freels while she was stabbed. Harris told the judge he stabbed the woman in the stomach" (*The Johnson City Press*, 2-4-95).

Solicitor Responsibility:

"We believe Russell Freels to be the chief actor, the chief motivator and mover of this crime" (*The Johnson City Press*, 2-4-95).

Event #6:**Hitman Responsibility:**

"Ingram was the trigger man...He got \$10,000" (*The Chattanooga Times*, 3-19-94).

Solicitor Responsibility:

"Sanjines masterminded the slaying and paid Ingram \$10,000 to kill the couple" (*The Chattanooga Times*, 3-22-94).

Event #7:**Hitman Responsibility:**

"In a statement to police, the two said the victim's wife let them in the house and that during a fight, they killed Frank Miles Jr., 26, with two pistols, a butcher knife, a meat cleaver and Miles's 1982 Chrysler" (*The Commercial Appeal*, 8-20-92).

Solicitor Responsibility:

"Police contend the murder was set up by Andrea Miles, possibly because of abuse in the marriage" (*The Commercial Appeal*, 8-20-92).

Tone of societal vulnerability

Tables 13 through 15 address the tone of the articles. The articles referred to the tone of the event 365 times in non-agent events and 68 times in agent events. There were some differences found in the tone between non-agent and agent event articles. Table 13 shows that, in non-agent events, the crime was referred to in a matter-of-fact way 85 percent (311) of the time. This compares to results in Table 14 that show for agent events, the crime was referred to in a matter-of-fact way 57 percent (39) of the time. Agent event articles referred to the crime more often using murder-for-hire terms, 35 percent (24) of the time, compared to non-agent events, 10 percent (37) of the time. Articles about both types of events seldom referred to the crime in a violent way, 5 percent (17) for non-agent event and

8 percent (5) for agent event articles.

Table 15 shows there was very little mention of community fear reported. Only 2 percent (3) of the articles made mention of community fear for the crime. All three of these were for non-agent events in which the outcome was murder. And all three mentioned community fear prior to the event being identified as a murder-for-hire event.

Occasionally, events were depicted in terms of dialogues that did not seem to fit the violent reality that is a part of most of these events. One article described the event and its participants in the following way:

Event #1: "A plot hatched in the bowels of Hell will not have angels as its players" (*The Daily Post-Athenian*, 2-5-91).

Another article discussed the participants as :

Event #2: "The cast of characters in the alleged murder conspiracy" (*The Tennessean* 7-26-95).

making them sound like actors in a play rather than murderers planning a violent death. One article did make the following Hollywood reference about the event:

Event #8: "It's got all the makings of a TV movie - sex, drugs, murder, and betrayal - but this scenario is real" (*Leaf Chronicle* 4-19-95).

The findings are summarized and their implications explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This has been a content analysis of newspaper articles' portrayal of murder-for-hire events. The findings show extensive coverage for most of the articles included complete information (event, arrests, trial/pleas, sentencing) for all the participants of the events. Amount of coverage differed according to whether the event included a murder or attempted murder and whether the event was covered by a daily or a weekly newspaper. Events with murder and attempted murder outcomes were covered more extensively as where events covered by daily newspapers.

With respect to demographic and circumstance information, the study supports previous research (Graber, 1980; Humphries, 1981; Johnstone et al., 1994). Homicide stories include demographic information for offenders and victims and mentions the circumstances of the crime. Findings show the name of the participants as being most frequently reported, followed by age and occupation. The date and place of the events was also covered by the articles. Contracts were mentioned more often in agent event articles than in non-agent event articles. Perhaps with no death to make it a "newsworthy" homicide story, the media increased focus on contracts in agent intervention events in an attempt to increase the story's news potential. Overall, murder-for-hire event articles do not appear any different from other violent crime stories in terms of demographics and circumstances.

The media do offer rationales for these events, as Lofquist (1997:258) study suggested they would. As he explains:

Stories do not tell themselves. Rather, the aftermath of unanticipated events includes a period in which the definition of the situation is fluid. During this period, efforts at social construction are most active, entailing aggressive attempts to apply a stable and favorable understanding to the event in question.

More than half of the articles had some type of explanation for why the event happened. It became clear the media liked to focus on certain types of rationales. Most frequently cited as rationales were insurance money and illicit love affairs. Divorce, child custody, and abuse were also mentioned. Some of the rationales were rather comical: articles from one event heavily focused on one woman's supposed intent to kill her husband in hopes of getting his insurance money to resume her gospel singing career. Articles pertaining to another event focused heavily on one man's bitter divorce and child custody battle with his ex-wife that included charges of satanic worshipping.

Articles assigned responsibility to solicitors and hitmen in different ways. Solicitors were depicted more as planners while the hitmen were depicted as killers. This raises serious moral responsibility issues. If the media are able to protect wealthy corporation reputations by focusing on the wrongdoing of individuals over wrongdoing of corporations in white-collar offending (Evans and Lundman, 1983), how are the media shielding solicitors when they remove them from blame for the most violent aspect of these murder-for-hire crimes? Perhaps the same factors that affect media coverage of white collar criminals operate to shield solicitors in murder-for-hire crimes. This line of explanation deserves more extensive exploration.

The findings also lend no support to the contention that the media report on murder-for-hire homicides because it is a way to warn people of their societal vulnerability (Combs

and Slovic, 1979). Only three articles mentioned any type of community fear after the events took place. Once the events were identified by the media as a murder-for-hire there was no mention of societal vulnerability. Events were reported on in a matter-of-fact tone, downplaying their violent nature.

All of this raises questions of the seriousness newspaper articles place on these events, and how the public is perceiving the problem based on these constructions. The *1995 Report of the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation* (1995:14) addresses the "need to know how violence in the media influences public discussion about violence in real life, changing and distorting people's views of the prevalence and location of violent crimes and of who is being hurt by it." Since the media are not portraying these events as violent crimes, there seems little hope that readers will perceive them that way.

Using this content analysis as a base, future research on murder-for-hire events and the media should focus on what Surette (1998) describes as entertainment media, such as movies and fictional and non-fictional literature. There is every reason to believe distortion of crime not only happen in newspaper articles, but in the entertainment media as well. As Surette (1998:47) explains:

The entertainment media's pattern with regard to portraying crime and justice can be summarized as follows: Whatever the media show is the opposite of what is true. In every subject category - crimes, criminals, crime fighters, the investigation of crime, arrests, the processing and disposition of cases - the entertainment media present a world of crime and justice that is not found in reality. Whatever the truth about crime and violence and the criminal justice system in America, the entertainment media seem determined to project the opposite.

Social realities are constructed by the media and passed on to the public. Murder-for-

hire events are no different. As the results of this study show, newspapers fall short constructing the reality of murder-for-hire events as violent crimes. The consequences are far-reaching. Will the public start to look at murder-for-events as a flaw of a greedy society that affects only its participants rather than as a social issue that affects everyone? Until such time that murder-for-hire offending is viewed as a violent crime with potentially lethal outcomes in media generated stories, public views seem destined to be informed by distorted reporting.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CODING

Demographic:

Solicitor: Name, Age, Occupation

Hitmen: Name, Age, Occupation

Victims: Name, Age, Occupation

Circumstances:

Date and Place of crime/meeting between agent and solicitor

The attempt or actual killing of the victim for cases without an agent involved

Weapon used in crime

Contract offered

Rationale:

Reasons given throughout the articles on why it is believed crime happened.

Code words: motivation, crime happened because, linked to, murdered for, reasons
were etc.

Responsibility:

Who is being blamed for the event?

Code words:

Planned crime: masterminded, plotted, planned, schemed, paid, arranged, hired

Participated in crime: shot, killed, triggerman, stabbed, etc.

Tone:

Any mention of community fear/harm?

Are these events depicted as violent?

Violent: brutal, bloody, horrible, grisly, horrendous, etc.

Matter of fact: slaying, shooting, stabbing, murder

Murder for hire: murder for hire, contract killing, plot, scheme, etc.

APPENDIX B

FIGURE AND TABLES

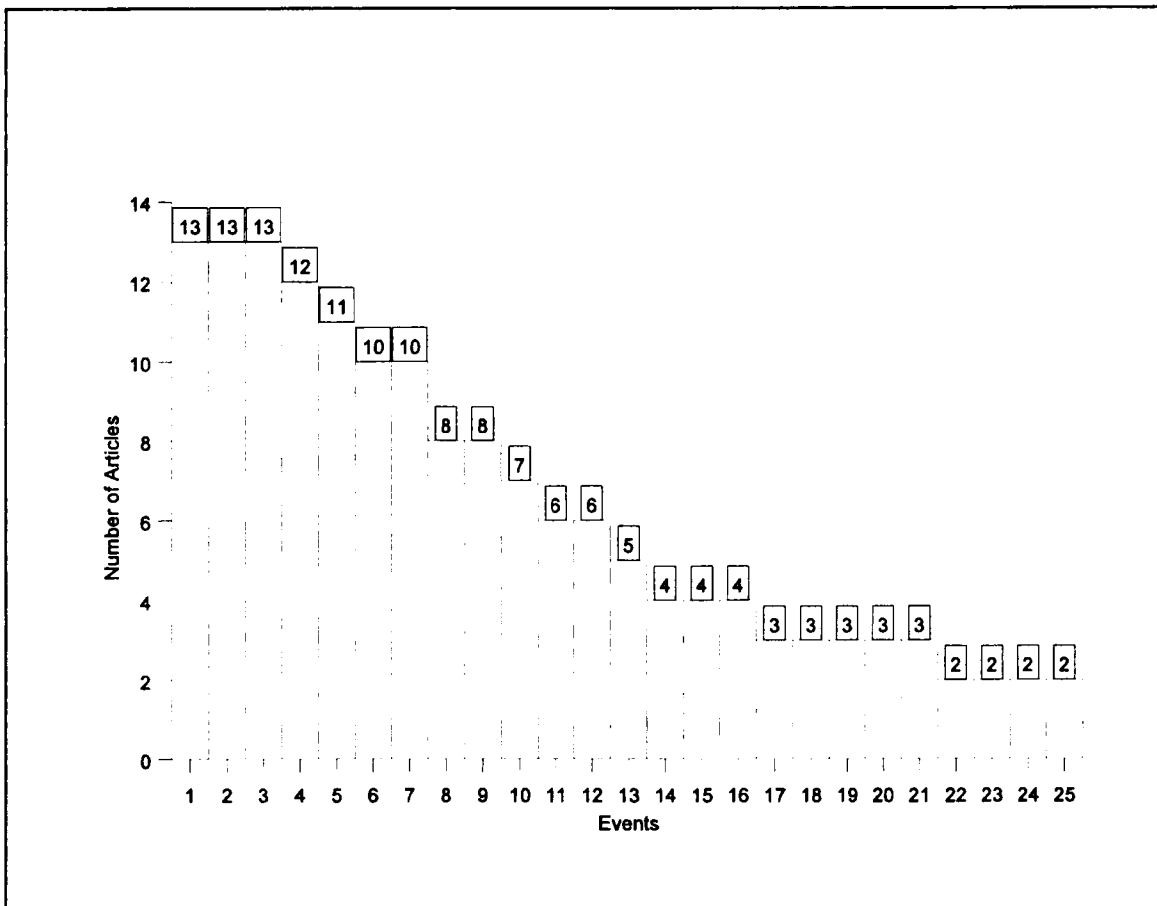


Figure 1. Number of Articles by Event.

Total number of events = 25

Total number of articles = 157

Table 1. Extent of Coverage

Extent of Coverage	Number of Events	%
Complete information available	18	72%
Partial information available	5	20%
Minimal information available	2	8%
Totals	25	100 %

Table 2. Number of Articles by Outcome of Event

Type of outcome	Number of Events		Number of Articles	
Murder or attempted murder	15	(60%)	126	(80%)
Agent intervention	10	(40%)	31	(20%)
Totals	25	(100%)	157	(100%)

Table 3. Number of Articles by Type of Newspapers

Type of Newspaper	Number of Events		Number of Articles	
Daily	12	(48%)	96	(61%)
Weekly	13	(52%)	61	(39%)
Totals	25		157	

Table 4. Demographic Information²

Participant	Number of Articles identifying	% of Articles
Solicitor		
Name	130	83%
Age	83	53%
Occupation	31	20%
Hitman		
Name	110	70%
Age	72	46%
Occupation	27	17%
Victim		
Name	154	98%
Age	59	38%
Occupation	45	29%

² *Note(s):* Information for all 157 articles.

Table 5. Demographic Information for Fifteen Non-Agent Events³

Participant	Number of Articles Identifying	% of Articles
Solicitor		
Name	99	99%
Age	59	59%
Occupation	27	27%
Hitman		
Name	96	96%
Age	63	63%
Occupation	22	22%
Victim		
Name	98	98%
Age	33	33%
Occupation	32	32%

³ *Note(s)*: Only articles that identified all participants were used. Total number of articles = 100.

Table 6. Demographic Information for Ten Agent Events⁴

Participant	Number of Articles identifying	% of Articles
Solicitor		
Name	31	100%
Age	24	77%
Occupation	4	3%
Victim		
Name	28	90%
Age	5	16%
Occupation	4	3%

⁴*Note(s):* Only articles that identified all participants were used. Total number of articles = 31.

Table 7. Circumstances for Fifteen Non-Agent Events⁵

Circumstance	Number of Articles	%
Date	113	90%
Place	103	82%
How/attempted killed	112	88%
Weapon Used	54	43%
Contract	27	21%

⁵*Note(s):* Total number of articles = 126.

Table 8. Circumstances for Ten Agent Events⁶

Circumstance	Number of Articles	%
Date	27	87%
Place	18	58%
Contract	24	77%

⁶*Note(s):* Total number of articles = 31.

Table 9. Mention of Contracts

	Contract Mentioned		Contract Not Mentioned		Totals	
Non-Agent	8	(53%)	7	(47%)	15	(100%)
Agent	9	(90%)	1	(10%)	10	(100%)

Table 10. Rationale

Type of Article	Number of Articles	%
Articles which reported a rationale	97	62%
Articles which reported a rationale was not known	11	7%
Articles which did not report any type of rationale	49	31%
Totals	157	100 %

Table 11. Responsibility for 15 Non-Agent Events⁷

Participant	Number of Articles (out of 100 possible)	%
Solicitor Responsible	70	70%
Hitman Responsible	72	72%
Both Responsible	34	34%
Responsibility not reported on	8	8%

⁷*Note(s):* Only articles that identified both the solicitor and the hitman were used. Total number of articles = 100.

Table 12. Assignment of Responsibility

Participant	Total # of articles	Planned the crime		Participated in the crime	
Solicitor	70	59	(84%)	11	(16%)
Hitman	72	13	(18%)	59	(82%)
Both	34	24	(71%)	10	(29%)

Table 13. Tone for 15 Non-Agent Events

Tone	Number of times mentioned	%
Matter of Fact	311	85%
Violent	17	5%
Murder-for-Hire	37	10%
Total	365	100%

Table 14. Tone for 10 Agent Events

Tone	Number of time mentioned	%
Matter of Fact	39	57%
Violent	5	8%
Murder-For-Hire	24	35%
Totals	68	100%

Table 15. Fear of the Community

Community Fear Mentioned	Number of Articles	%
Yes	3	2%
No	154	98%
Totals	157	100%

APPENDIX C
EVENT COVERAGE

Event 1

Participants:

Lila Peeler, Rick Perkinson, and Gilbert Peeler

Newspaper: *The Daily Post-Athenian* - a daily newspaper 11-3-89, 2-1-90, 2-2-90, 2-6-90, 2-4-91, 2-5-91, 2-6-91, 2-7-91, 2-8-91, 2-11-91, 3-15-91, 6-2-93, 6-3-93.

Total number of articles: 13

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, the arrest of the hitman, the trial and sentencing of the solicitor and hitman, and the pleas for the solicitor and the hitman. (Case had been overturned by appeals court and was due for retrial.)

Event 2

Participants:

Sharon Hurt, Leonard Rowe, Marcie Murray, James Murray, and Don Hurt

Newspaper: *The Tennessean* (daily paper): 7-17-94, 7-21-95, 7-22-95, 7-25-95, 7-26-95, 7-29-95, 8-1-95, 8-2-95, 8-3-95, 8-4-95, 11-4-95
The Nashville Banner (daily paper): 7-26-95, 8-1-95

Total number of articles: 13

Coverage: Includes the trial and sentencing for solicitors and for hitmen.

Event 3

Participants:

Russell Freels, Claude Kenny, Ray Harris, and Judy Freels

Newspaper: *The Johnson City Press* (daily paper) - 9-8-94, 9-9-94, 9-10-94, 9-14-94, 9-19-94, 9-20-94, 9-21-94, 9-25-94, 11-3-94, 11-24-94, 2-4-95, 4-14-95, 4-22-95

Total number of articles: 13

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, the arrests of the solicitor and hitmen, and the pleas and sentences for the solicitor and hitmen.

Event 4

Participants:

Diane Oakley, David Britt, and Kenny Oakley

Newspaper: *Fayette County Review* (Weekly paper) 10-4-89, 10-11-89, 10-18-89, 10-18-89, 11-8-89, 11-22-89, 11-29-89, 12-6-89, 12-20-89, 4-11-90, 9-5-90

Total number of articles: 11

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, the arrest of both solicitor and hitman, and the pleas/sentencing for both has arrest of both solicitor and hitman, and pleas/sentencing

Event 5

Participants:

Hershell Kinnaird, Donnie Ray Nelson, and Pamela Kinnaird

Newspaper: *Herald Citizen* (daily paper): 7-14-88, 7-15-88, 7-17-88, 7-18-88, 7-19-88, 7-20-88, 7-28-88, 8-16-89, 8-17-89, 8-18-89, 8-19-89

Total number of articles: 11

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, the arrest of the hitman, and the trial/sentencing of the solicitor. Does not have arrest of solicitor or plea/sentencing of the hitman.

Event 6

Participants:

Jorge Sanjines, Amy Marcum, Jeremy Ingram, Gina Sanjines, and Virgil Schrag

Newspapers: *The Chattanooga Times*: 3-7-94, 3-16-94, 3-19-94, 3-22-94, 3-25-94, 3-25-94, 4-1-94, 2-2-95, 2-11-95, 5-16-95

Total number of articles: 10

Coverage: Includes the death and attempted murder of the victims, the arrests of the solicitors and hitman, and the pleas and sentences for solicitors and hitman.

Event 7

Participants:

Andrea Miles, Shanny Leverett, Daris Barrett, and Frank Miles

Newspapers: *Commercial Appeal* (daily newspaper) 8-6-92, 8-7-92, 8-8-92, 8-20-92,
10-20-94, 10-21-94, 10-22-94, 8-10-95, 8-11-95, 8-12-95

Total number of articles: 10

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, arrests of the solicitors and hitmen, trials for
solicitor and one of the hitmen.

Event 8

Participants:

Elizabeth Ortiz, Dmitri Johnson, and Blaine Watson

Newspaper: *Leaf Chronicle* (daily paper) : 4-20-94, 4-21-94, 4-18-95, 4-19-95, 4-20-
95, 4-21-95, 4-22-95, 5-20-95

Total number of articles: 8

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, arrest of the hitman, trial for solicitor and
both solicitor and hitman's sentencing.

Event 9

Participants

Melissa Barnett, David Honey, and Grady Barnett

Newspaper: *The Polk County News* (weekly papers) 12-19-90, 1-2-91, 1-9-91, 1-23-91,
2-6-91, 2-20-91, 7-31-91, 8-7-91

Total number of articles: 8

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, arrests of solicitor and hitman, and trial of
solicitor and hitman. accounts.

Event 10

Participants:

Ella Mae Shelfer, Tommy L Dockery, and Andy Shelfer

Newspaper *Polk County News* (weekly newspaper): 9-2-92, 9-9-92, 9-23-92, 12-9-92,
5-26-93, 6-30-93

Chattanooga Times (daily newspaper): 5-21-93

Total number of articles: 7

Coverage: Includes the attempted murder of the victim, the arrest of both solicitor and
hitman, plea and sentencing of hitman, and trial and sentencing of solicitor.

Event 11

Participants:

Kathy Ball, Timothy Fox, and Harlan Ball.

Newspaper *The Newport Plain Talk* (weekly paper): 9-22-93, 9-24-93, 9-29-93, 9-14-94, 9-16-94, 2-17-95

Total number of articles: 6

Coverage: Includes the attempted murder of the victim, arrests for both solicitor and hitman, and two trials for solicitor (first trial ended in a hung jury).

Event 12

Participants:

Jonathan Stephenson, Ralph Thompson, and Lisa Stephenson

Newspaper: *The Newport Plain Talk* (weekly paper): 12-6-89, 10-17-90, 10-19-90, 1-9-91, 1-11-91

Total number of articles: 5

Coverage: Includes death of victim, arrests of both solicitor and hitman, and trial/sentencing for both solicitor and hitman.

Event 13

Participants:

Tommy Strickland, Carolyn Strickland, and Thomas Strickland

Newspaper: *Jackson County Sentinel* (weekly paper)- 12-19-90, 12-26-91, 3-4-92, 3-11-92

Total number of articles: 4

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, the arrest and trial of the hitman. Nothing on the solicitor.

Event 14

Participants:

Patricia Hall, Tony Snyder, and Jo Ann Hinson and her young son

Newspaper: *Standard Banner* (weekly paper): 1-9-92, 2-6-92, 7-9-92

Total number of articles: 3

Coverage: Includes the attempted murder of the victims, the arrests of the solicitor and hitman, guilty plea of solicitor, and trial/sentencing of hitman.

Event 15

Participants:

Sarah Richardson, Vernon Long, William Fincher, and Max Richardson

Newspaper: *The Voice* (weekly paper) 2-21-90

Lauderdale County Enterprise (weekly paper) 7-4-91, 10-24-91

Total number of articles: 3

Coverage: Includes the death of the victim, arrest and conviction of hitman and conviction of one of the solicitor.

Event 16

Participants:

Jeffery Latham and Frank Cooper

Agent event: ATF Agent

Newspaper: *The Knoxville News-Sentinel* (daily paper) 7-19-91, 11-14-91, 5-28-92, 5-29-92, 8-11-92, 8-12-92

Total number of articles: 6

Coverage: Includes the arrest and two trials of solicitor. First trial resulted in hung jury. Nothing on sentencing.

Event 17

Participants:

William Dotson and Alex Crowell

Agent Event: THP Agent

Newspaper: *The Wayne County News*: (weekly paper): 112-9-92, 12-16-92, 5-26-93,
7-7-93

Total number of articles: 4

Coverage: Includes arrest, plea and sentencing of solicitor.

Event 18

Participants:

Mark Grimsley and Pat and Ed Street

Agent Event: TBI Agent

Newspaper: *Chattanooga Times* (daily paper) 5-17-94, 5-18-94, 5-19-94, 1-9-95

Total number of articles: 4

Coverage: Includes arrest and guilty plea of solicitor.

Event 19

Participants:

Anna Petty, Jerry and Terry Rice, and William Petty

Agent Event: THP Agent

: *Roane County News* (weekly paper): 7-27-92, 3-5-93, 6-25-93

Total number of articles: 3

Coverage: Includes arrest of three solicitor, Petty's trial and sentencing.

Event 20

Participants:

Ricky Tate and Pamela Tate

Agent Event: TBI Agent

Newspaper: *Johnson City Press* (daily paper) 7-4-93, 4-23-94, 6-2-94

Total number of articles: 3

Coverage: Includes arrest, guilty plea, and sentencing of solicitor.

Event 21

Participants:

John Garrison and Charles Coward

Agent Event: TBI Agent

Newspaper: *The Knoxville News-Sentinel* 10-16-93, May 1994, 2-28-98

Total number of articles: 3

Coverage: Includes solicitor's indictment, sentencing, and appeal decision.

Event 22

Participants:

Scott Montgomery and Danny Wright

Agent Event: Undercover agents from Roane County

Newspaper: *Roane County News* (weekly paper): 9-7-92, 7-9-93

Total number of articles: 2

Coverage: Includes solicitor's arrest, plea and sentencing hearing.

Event 23

Participants:

Charles Young, Sylvia Young, and Randy Young

Agent Event: Ricky Young- informant for sheriff's department.

Newspaper: *The Expositor* (weekly paper) - 9-30-93, 9-14-94

Total number of articles: 2

Coverage: Includes arrest and conviction of solicitor.

Event 24

Participants:

Theresa Hannah and Michael Hannah

Agent Event: Undercover Shelby County deputy

Newspaper: *Commercial Appeal* (Daily paper): 6-22-93

Chattanooga Times(Daily Paper): 6-23-93

Total number of articles: 2

Coverage: Includes arrest of solicitor.

Event 25

Participants:

Richard Wilkerson and Cheryl Wilkerson

Agent Event: ATF Agent

Newspaper: *State Gazette* (weekly paper) 12-15-92, 3-22-93

Total number of articles: 2

Coverage: Includes arrest, guilty plea and sentencing of solicitor.

VITA

Tricia York was born in Joliet, Illinois on September 14, 1970. She attended school in Lockport, Illinois; Greenwood, South Carolina; and Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where she graduated in 1988 from Oak Ridge High School. She attended East Tennessee State University from 1988 through 1992 and received a degree of Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology. She started work as a correctional counselor at Morgan County Correctional Facility, where she is still presently employed. In August 1996, she entered the Master's program in Sociology at the University of Tennessee. The master's degree was received August 1998.