



# Deviant Men, Prostitution, and the Internet: A Qualitative analysis of Men who killed Prostitutes whom they met online

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## Abstract

*Prostitutes are frequently victims of violence due to the dangerous nature of their work. Some prostitutes have even been murdered in the process of conducting business. Many sex workers are advertising on the Internet to extend their client base. Online advertising leads to fewer prostitutes, which challenges law enforcement to change how the crime is patrolled (Ross, 2011). In this study, we analyze news articles discussing men who killed prostitutes whom they met on websites, such as Craigslist.com. We analyze descriptions of the offenders, looking for characteristics that may be similar to sexual killers who had not used the Internet to find their victims. Our findings indicate that the Internet may be creating a typical offender, but more research is unquestionably needed on this area.*

Keywords: Prostitution, cybersex, deviance, homicide, life course theory.

## Introduction

The Internet offers endless opportunities to whet the appetite of a sexually deviant person. Components of the Internet offer easy, limitless access to the sex industry including cyber sex chatrooms, pornography and websites dedicated solely to escort services and prostitution, e.g., backpage.com. Because each interest can be pursued with perceived anonymity, the likelihood of deviant sexual experimentation increases (Bell & Lyall, 2000). The types of people that are drawn to sexually deviant Internet content may enjoy sadomasochism. Because sadomasochistic fantasies and behaviors have become more common, it is possible that the number of sexually-driven crimes has increased. Studies of criminal sadists have found serious psychopathic tendencies in addition to sadistic sexual preferences. Substance abuse and personality disorders are also common in these individuals (Forensic Panel Letter, 2001). Studies of serial sexual murderers have shown deviant sexual interests and deviant sexual fantasies (Forensic Panel Letter, 2001).

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The purpose of this study is to analyze men who have preyed on prostitutes and determine if similarities exist between the offenders who used the Internet to find sexual partners with sexual killers who did not utilize the Internet. Our research will answer multiple questions. First: Is the Internet enabling dangerous sexual behaviors by acting as the medium through which sexually-deviant individuals are able to connect with vulnerable women, i.e., prostitutes? Second: Is there a correlation between men who are obsessed with violent or obscene pornography and those who browse the Internet to contact prostitutes to act out desires? Third: Has the Internet created a new type of offender? We will use life course theory to examine newspaper articles that describe the offenders, their cases, and their life histories in order to assess their sexual pasts and compare them to sexual killers who have not used the Internet. First, we review the literature on prostitution and violence, men who buy sex, and paraphillias and their causes.

## **Literature Review**

### *Prostitution and Violence*

Violence is commonly associated with prostitution. Homicide, then, is unsurprisingly the leading cause of death of prostitutes (Brewer et al., 2006). Between the years 1967 and 1999 prostitutes who worked in Colorado were found to have the highest homicide victimization rate of any other set of women ever studied, with nearly all of the homicides occurring on the job (Potterat et al., 2004). Clients committed about 65% of prostitute homicides in Canada and the United Kingdom (Kinnell, 2001). Although little research has been conducted on violence against prostitutes, one study by Brewer et al. (2006) discovered that between the late 1980s and early 1990s, large increases in prostitute homicides occurred, with lone perpetrators accounting for the majority of these murders.

Violence against sex workers is executed by a small proportion of exceedingly violent men (Lowman & Atchison, 2006). Men target prostitutes because they perceive them as vulnerable and available (Egger, 2002). Due to the fact that prostitution is illegal, the men have a perceived anonymity; believing law enforcement will not notice when the victim is murdered. However, it is still unknown if the slaying of prostitutes occurs because of the profession itself, i.e., hatred of prostitutes (women), or if it is a crime grounded solely on availability-meeting-opportunity, or the combination of a convenient time and location that helps to avoid detection and thus increase offending (Salfati et al., 2008). Many men select prostitutes due to the fact they will not be reported as missing (Quinet, 2011).

Examining prostitute homicides committed by clients reveals unclear motives (Brewer et al., 2006). However, various motives may include arguments over the sex/money exchange, victim's attempted robbery of the client, verbal insults, demands or requests by the victim, clientele misogyny, clientele hatred of prostitutes, client's sadism, client's psychopathology, a combination of these factors, or no precipitating factor whatsoever (Brewer et al., 2006).

### *Men who buy sex*

Before examining the causes of violence against prostitutes, it is important to understand the motivations of the men who solicit them. An ABC news report from 2010 discussed interviews that various psychologists conducted with 700 johns from all over the world. The goal of these interviews was to understand why men pay for sex; many of these men were married. One man stated, "prostitution is like masturbating without having to use your hand"; another explained, "I feel sorry for these girls but this is what I

want” (Cox, 2010, p. 1-2). Even more telling, one john believed, “prostitution is a last resort to unfulfilled sexual desires. Rape would be less safe, or if you're forced to hurt someone or if you're so frustrated you jack off all day,” (Cox, 2010, p. 1).

Farley (2011) argues that men who purchase sex often dehumanize women, view them with anger and contempt, and lack empathy for their suffering. Sex-buyers are able to separate sex from emotions and are aware that they are objectifying women. Farley's subjects were found to have gained their sex education predominantly from pornography. With continued and increasing use of pornographic materials, men may become more sexually aggressive, causing inclination to more sadomasochistic sexual behaviors. These men also take pleasure in their ability to inflict pain and humiliation on the woman (Bennetts, 2011). Men who seek out prostitutes also enjoy the absence of emotional involvement as well as the submissiveness of the prostitute. Farley's (2011, p. 61) study concludes that “prostitution treats women as objects and not humans.” A separate study of sex offenders by criminologist David Wilson revealed that violent pornography can lead people to act out on fantasies when social inhibitors, such as a spouse or family member, are not present (Gadher & Dowling, 2011).

Behaviors such as bestiality, cross-dressing, sadomasochism, and transgenderism are more frequently encountered on the Internet today. The images often found on the Internet may be considered by many to be immoral as well as harmful. As will be explained, the perpetrators of such images require psychological or social-psychological analyzing. The boundary between what is considered normal vs. abnormal sexual behavior is uncertain. For example, prostitution and homosexual subcultures are distinguished from the mainstream population's sexual social structures just as soft core and hard core pornography are distinct as well (Quinn & Forsyth, 2005). The problem arises when assessing where to draw the line in terms of legal images and if the Internet should be allowed to present sexually violent or other types of deviant images that may provoke violent behavior. The increasing availability of deviant images has a normalizing effect, and may lead to serious consequences for vulnerable women.

### *Sexual Killers before the Internet*

As efforts to understand sexual killers increased during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brittain (1970) aimed to identify characteristics of sadistic murderers and found sexual homicide offenders to be withdrawn, isolated, and feel set apart from others. These offenders have conflicting relationships with their mothers, and are loners who practice paraphilia (transvestism in particular). Brittain (1970) also noted that the killers' offenses are usually hands on and may be fueled by a perceived jolt to his self-esteem. Furthermore, traits found by Nicole and Proulx (2007) are that sexual killers are more likely to be habitual liars, maintain extensive collections of pornography, act carelessly, and have been victims of both incest and physical violence. A history of truancy, temper tantrums, and stealing were common traits discovered by Langevin et al. (1998). Sexual killers were found not to be considered part of a peer group as well as having experienced social isolation during childhood (Grubin, 1994; Nicole & Proulx, 2007). Additionally, few sexual relationships, high rates of transvestism, and other paraphilic behaviors were found (Grubin, 1994; Langevin et al., 1988). Sex offenses and sexual assault were found to be common traits among sexual killers. What is not known is if men who use the Internet to find their prey are similar to other sexual killers.

### *Sexual Deviance: Definitions and Explanations*

Researchers have noted several mechanisms that may lead to the Internet promoting more sexually-related offenses (Carnes, 2003; Russell & Purcell, 2006). Endless pictures and videos of virtually any form of sexual behavior are available and may trigger sexual deviance within an individual that was otherwise absent. Sadomasochism, defined as interactions involving the infliction of physical pain and/or mental suffering on another person who also derives pleasure from experiencing pain (sadism and masochism combined), plays a role in pornography and sexual fantasies. Before focusing on sadomasochism specifically, it is important to understand sexual deviance in general.

Paraphilia is defined as a group of psychosexual disorders characterized by sexual fantasies involving either a nonhuman object, or a non-consenting partner, or pain and/or humiliation of oneself or one's partner (sadomasochism) (Arrigo & Purcell 2001). Paraphilics commonly have maternal attachment problems and experience traumatic events during childhood that lead to peculiar coping mechanisms (i.e. weaving a sexual fantasy around the experience to accept the event). Occasionally, the individual is genetically sexually aroused. According to the experts, paraphilias rarely occur in women (sexual masochism excluded, with the ratio being 20:1) (Blum, 2001). Interestingly, those with paraphilias are likely to develop other sexual disorders such as hypoactive sexual desire and erectile disorder. Half of men with paraphilias are married, many claim to not have sex with their wives, and many often resort to hiring prostitutes. Specific behaviors noted by a former FBI agent and his colleagues (Blum, 2001, p. 18) stated that their subjects had early childhood abuse, dysfunctional family issues, and antisocial tendencies.

Besides being more common among men, paraphilic tendencies are found among a variety of intelligence levels, sexual orientation preferences, and ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Seligman & Hardenburg, 2000). The prevalence of paraphilia is difficult to determine due to the fact people do not seek treatment because of the stigma associated with this disorder (Berlin et al., 1995, Seligman, 1998). People with paraphilias develop a tolerance and eventually a need to increase the frequency and intensity of the behavior. Other addictions may accompany paraphilia as well, e.g., substance use and pathological gambling (Goodman, 1993). Common fetishes are also likely to supplement paraphilias including obsessions with women's undergarments (Money, 1988). Common personality traits of those with paraphilias include a sense of vulnerability, lack of self-esteem, little empathy, poor social skills, inadequate attachment to parents, loneliness, anger, and self-centeredness (Fisher & Howells, 1993).

Similar to traits of paraphilia, sexual sadism is a brain disease that affects the centers of the brain responsible for sexual arousal, mating behavior, and reproduction of the species (Money, 1990). Listed causes of sexual sadism include heredity, hormonal functioning (sparseness of body hair is indicative), pathological relationships, sexual abuse, a combination of personality disorders, or head injury (Money, 1990). To summarize, paraphilia is difficult to research, although psychoanalysts have theorized that maternal attachment issues are almost always present, as well as traumatic events leading to peculiar sexual coping mechanisms. These individuals are prone to develop sadistic or masochistic sexual fantasies that can lead to actual conduct (Blum, 2001). The difference in paraphilias and sexual sadism appears to be level of severity. All in all, it appears that numerous psychological and sociological characteristics that are present throughout one's life may indicate propensity towards sexual violence.

### *Life Course Theory and Sexual Deviance*

Developed by Sampson and Laub (1990), life course theory asserts that there are various life events (particularly those during childhood and adolescence) that affect one's risk of offending. Various developmental stages associate offending patterns with age. Key variables assessed in research on the life course include antisocial behavior, intelligence, and income level (Belknap, 2007), evaluating whether antisocial behavior is continuous or if there are sporadic periods of antisocial behavior in the individual's life. Life course research examines pathways and different life stages, turning points, and transitions in individuals' lives, therefore; this research is longitudinal.

Sampson and Laub (1990) identify two hypotheses: (1) childhood antisocial behaviors predict problems in adult development and (2) social bonds to work and family during adulthood explain changes in crime and development over the life span. They further argue that trajectories (particular courses or routes) relate to an individual's development over the life span, while transitions are specific events embedded within the trajectories. Trajectories can include work life, marriage, parenthood, and criminal behavior. Criminal behavior may occur when the individual's social inhibitors are removed, i.e., positive social bonds to family or work no longer exist.

It is possible that many individuals have sadomasochistic fantasies yet do not act them out. Fischer (2008) concluded that individuals who act upon sadomasochistic fantasies have psychopathologies. According to Arrigo and Purcell (2001) the "normal" paraphilic can function sexually without sadistic stimuli or fantasy. The "abnormal" paraphilic needs and depends on the fantasy to achieve sexual arousal and gratification. Abnormal paraphilia leads to addiction and may be the result of childhood trauma. Arrigo and Purcell (2001) conclude that patterns of sadistic fantasies propel the sexual deviant into compulsive acts—first just in fantasy form and then in actual conduct. Erotophonophilia, or "lust murder", is the most extreme end of the paraphilic continuum. Identifying specific personality traits in individuals early on can lead to appropriate interventions, preventing deaths of would-be victims. Law enforcement officials could better recognize offenders if they were able to differentiate between affective and predatory sexual offenders.

### **Methodology**

Our research is exploratory. We obtained the data using Lexis Nexus to gather newspaper articles from around the world. We searched for 'murdered prostitutes', with the terms 'Internet', and 'Craiglist', and narrowed down the results to articles that were directly related to the research. For example, some articles only briefly mentioned "the Craiglist killer" or provided social commentary, rather than discussing the case or the alleged offender. We selected only the articles that discussed the case or the offender in some detail. We also weeded out repetitive articles, as some newspapers would reprint an article from another entity. The results of the search located 9 relevant articles related to the case of Kylan Laurent, 55 articles related to the case of Vincent Tabak, 7 articles about the case of Cody Legebokoff, and 10 articles on Philip Markoff. Two of the killers committed suicide, thus ending those particular cases prematurely and limiting the news coverage. Below is an overview of the cases of the four men.

### *Overview of Cases*

Craiglist, frequently used for contacting escorts, is a popular website that was launched in 1995 by Craig Newmark. Law enforcement officials and attorneys from Illinois,

Connecticut, and Missouri argued that Craigslist needed to clean up its website after multiple cases of homicides began surfacing. This led to the site dropping the 'erotic services' category that law enforcement officials called a front for prostitution. They replaced the category with a fee-based adult category that would be monitored by site employees. A particular case occurred when Philip Markoff, a 23 year old white male, former medical student, was charged with one murder and two attacks on women he met through Craigslist. He became known as "the Craigslist killer" (Swartz, 2009), although he pleaded not guilty to both the fatal shooting of Julissa Brisman and the armed robbery of a Las Vegas woman. Both incidences took place at Boston hotels and occurred within four days of each other. Markoff was also accused of attacking a stripper that same week. Markoff was engaged at the time of these events. Later he committed suicide in the Boston jail where he was held (Singer, 2010).

In August 2011, two prostitutes were strangled and murdered in New Orleans, LA and a third was choked inside a hotel. Both of the women who were killed met their assailant, Kylan Laurent, on the Internet. Laurent, a 22-year-old African American, was last seen jumping into a river and presumed dead (Ross, 2011).

Thousands of text messages linked the accused Cody Legebokoff, 21, to the murders of four women in Northern British Columbia. Three of the four victims were found in an area frequented by prostitutes, and a fourth victim is yet to be discovered. Legebokoff apparently used social media and online dating sites to meet women. Three of the victims were mothers working in the sex trade. Legebokoff is one of the youngest serial killers in Canadian history.

Vincent Tabak, a 32 year-old white male, Dutch engineer, who was obsessed with prostitutes and extreme pornography, was charged with the murder of a non-prostitute, Joanna Yeates, in October 2011 in London. According to reports, in December 2010 Tabak checked into a cheap motel under a false name. A few hours earlier, he contacted an online prostitute who went by the name 'Asian hot sexy girl' through an escort agency website. Soon after this alleged encounter, Tabak, went back to his hotel (paid for by his company) and called his fiancée, Tanja Morson. Morson had no idea of his double life (Gadher & Dowling, 2011).

### **Coding scheme**

In order to perform our analysis, it is important to take into account previous literature gathered on prostitute homicide offenders and sexually-related killers. Salfati et al.(2008) reported that prostitute homicide offenders had previously been convicted for a violent offense; this differs from the current cases. Furthermore, Salfati et al. (2008) also found the mean age range of prostitute homicide offenders to be between 35 and 37 years of age. The prostitute homicide offender was also most likely to be a stranger to the victim, which may be similar to the current cases (Salfati et al., 2008). Interestingly, Salfati et al. (2008) found that when the homicide was not sexually-related the offender was more likely to be or have been in a relationship with the victim, occurring in 76% of the cases. When the homicide was sexual in nature, the offender was likely to be an acquaintance of the victim. Nearly 44% of prostitute offenders were unemployed at the time of the offense and 25% were married or cohabitating.

The most intriguing discovery and its relationship to our research is that prostitute homicide offenders appeared to have considerably higher numbers of previous convictions than the general clientele population. As will be expressed in the following pages, the

homicide offenders that used the Internet to contact their victims did not have prior convictions (Salfati et al., 2008). In analyzing the news articles we looked for similar characteristics in the online predators, assessing age, relationship to victim, and employment status and marital status of the offender. As directed by Life Course Theory, prior criminal past, pornography use, and past history of sexual behaviors was assessed. We also examined the articles for events from the offenders' pasts that may predict sexually violent behaviors, identifying past antisocial behaviors or weak social bonds.

### **Case Studies**

#### *Vincent Tabak*

Tabak was born in 1978, raised in Holland, and was the youngest of his siblings. Scant information exists about his parents, and his father died when Tabak was 16 years old. Throughout his life Tabak struggled to fit in and make friends in school. Analyzing the documentation of Tabak's personality reveals that he was predominantly introverted, often displaying anti-social behavior. A former neighbor of Tabak remembered him preferring to be alone while another spoke of him being a latecomer. He did not play with children in the neighborhood; "he was very on his own" (Maguire, 2011). Furthermore, Tabak's parents were much older than average (Maguire, 2011). Other colleagues of Tabak reiterated that Tabak did not socialize much, remaining quiet and serious most of the time. The majority of Tabak's social group was stunned about the murder accusation. A former associate spoke of Tabak being an ordinary guy. However, Tabak's secret double life was exposed through examination of his laptop files.

Supposedly Tabak was a naïve, sexually inexperienced individual with an excellent brain. He excelled in school and in his career, succeeding in obtaining a doctorate (Gadher & Dowling, 2011). He spent five years studying engineering at Eindhoven University of Technology. According to a detective of the case, Tabak was not comfortable around women or in social environments. After receiving his doctorate, Tabak moved to Britain to work as a 'people flow analyst' at an international engineering consultancy. Upon his move to Britain, Tabak chose to live in an apartment overlooking the red-light district. One year later he met the woman who would become his first girlfriend, Tanja Morson, on a dating website called *Soul mates*. The two eventually were engaged and Morson remained unaware that her fiancé frequently met and chatted with prostitutes online.

During a work-related trip in 2010 Tabak made payments to a website called Adultwork.com where he located contact numbers for escort agencies in the Northeast. Later that same year, Tabak traveled to California and searched online for more strippers and prostitutes on websites such as LAexoticgirls.com, Exotic-Review.com, and Redtube.com (Gadher & Dowling, 2011). It was discovered that Tabak was hooked on violent pornography featuring women being choked and strangled during intercourse. In fact, strangulation was prevalent in the pornography discovered on his computer. He kept this obsession well-hidden both from his fiancée and her parents, who believed that Vincent was "quite lovely" (Evans et al., 2011, p. 4-5).

The day Joanna Yeates was killed, Tabak had been accessing pornography on the Internet both prior and after the murder. According to the documentation, Tabak had been searching for Ms. Yeates name on the Internet the morning of the murder and switched to a porn site one minute later. Also, some images resembling Yeates were discovered on his computer and they were in the same pose when her body was

discovered. Joanna Yeates died from strangulation, although Tabak claimed it was unintentional.

Upon hearing of the accusation, Tabak's brother believed Tabak had been made a scapegoat who had no aggressiveness in his personality, stating, "He is very gentle and social. He could never be a killer" (Bingham & Kramer, 2011 p. 3). Perhaps all of this perceived gentleness was due to Tabak's highly introverted and antisocial behavior. One Dutch pal stated "I know Vincent is innocent. The Pink Panther (Tabak's nickname) is a pussycat who couldn't hurt a mouse," (Lawton, 2011 p. 1).

However, a prostitute told newspaper reporters of the *Sun* in England about a time, just a few nights before he strangled Joanna Yeates, that Vincent begged her to let him massage her neck. She stated, "the same hands that were around my throat strangled poor Jo. It's terrifying what he might have done to me," (O'Shea, 2011 p. 21). This prostitute, known as Princess Butterfly, said that Tabak told her that he was single. She indicated that he had his hands around her throat, digging his thumbs into her neck and rubbing her neck for about ten minutes. He said that her skin "was nice" (O'Shea, 2011 p. 21). Another night Tabak checked into a hotel under the fake name of 'Francis' Tabak, paying \$66.00 for one night with his own credit card, to meet with more prostitutes.

Although Yeates body was discovered covered in injuries, Tabak continuously stated he could not remember what happened (Gadher & Dowling, 2011). Tabak denied murder but eventually did admit to manslaughter, insisting that he misread her flirty signals and simply placed his hands over her mouth when she screamed after he tried to kiss her. Other articles state that he killed Yeates after she resisted his sexual advances so that he did not lose his fiancée, Tanja Morson.

As stated previously, Professor David Wilson, a criminologist, argued that violent pornography can lead people to act out fantasies if social inhibitors are removed. One of Tabak's inhibitors was apparently the presence of his fiancée (Gadher & Dowling, 2011). When she left for a period of time, Tabak shifted into fantasy and went next door to see Joanna Yeates and, presumably, act out his fantasies. While Tabak did not murder any of the prostitutes he met, he did have an unhealthy obsession of viewing women being throttled. The only childhood trauma reported in the articles about Tabak was the death of his father when he was 16. Perhaps this lack of a father figure played a role in his behavior, but more research is necessary to come to a conclusion in this regard.

### *Philip Markoff*

Similar to Vincent Tabak, Philip Markoff was an intelligent man working on his medical degree at Boston University when he was accused as the "Craigslist Killer". A few friends and family members were surprised—his fiancée believed "Philip is a beautiful person inside and out and could not hurt a fly" (Bone, 2009, p. 31). Markoff, at this time, had no criminal record and was set to wed his former university classmate later that year. A former neighbor of Markoff told reporters that he was a normal guy and that he could not imagine Markoff doing something of this nature (Bone, 2009, p. 31). Other classmates, however, spoke of Markoff's mood swings; apparently Markoff's mood changed quickly from depressed and suicidal one minute to warm and friendly the next. Markoff's former medical school lab partner was not surprised when she heard that he was the prime suspect in the murders, remembering his mood swings. Markoff appeared so troubled that his lab partner considered alerting school counselors that he may be suicidal.



Markoff's parents divorced when he was young. He was raised by his mother, who worked in a casino, and his stepfather. His older brother lived with his biological father, a dentist. Markoff was somewhat of a recluse during his school years and preferred to focus on his studies, displaying antisocial traits. Antisocial behavior is a component of life course theory and is considered imperative to predicting future behavior problems, i.e., offending. Classmates from college remember him as either reserved or arrogant, and uncomfortable around women. Megan McAlister, who was two years older than Markoff and from a wealthy family, initiated the relationship (McPhee, 2010).

Law enforcement discovered Markoff was living a double life. A search of his home and personal computer revealed his fetishes such as membership to an alternative lifestyle website called Alt.com. It was discovered that Markoff had clicked on the category labeled 'transvestitism' and had given himself the screen name "sexaddict53885." He described himself as submissive and a "first-timer." His profile further stated that he was a graduate student looking to experiment with the BDSM (bondage, domination and sadomasochism) lifestyle and that he was very interested in being dominated and forced to perform various acts, including anal sex (McPhee, 2010 p. 114). All of this occurred while Markoff was in a serious relationship with his soon-to-be-fiancée, McAlister. She was dumbfounded by the accusations against Markoff, remaining oblivious to his dark side.

The woman murdered was Julissa Brisman of New York City, (a masseuse) that Markoff arranged to meet through online postings. Brisman was found struck on the head and shot three times at close range. Her injuries revealed that Julissa put up a struggle. In addition to this attack, Markoff was charged with kidnapping a prostitute in another Boston hotel. The victim, Trisha Leffler, lived to tell the story. She stated that when she let Markoff into the hotel room, he immediately asked her to turn around and ordered her to the ground where he tied her wrists together with zip ties. He then spent 20 minutes searching her belongings and stole \$800.00. Before Markoff left the scene he taped her mouth shut and tied her to a doorknob so she was unable to escape. Police also believed Markoff was responsible for a third assault on an exotic dancer at a Rhode Island hotel the week prior to this event. All of the victims advertised on Craigslist (Ford & Kennedy, 2009).

Markoff had a gambling addiction of which his family, including his fiancée, was unaware. During the month of April he lost the equivalent of over half a month's rent. Ten days later Markoff gambled again, losing another \$550.00 at a blackjack table—totaling over \$3,400.00 in two weeks (McPhee, 2010). The \$800.00 he stole from Leffler was likely miniscule in comparison to his normal gambling cash. Ultimately, Markoff was convicted and committed suicide (after multiple attempts) in prison during 2010.

Similar to Tabak, Markoff grew up without a father figure. Philip's older brother did not live at home; he lived with his biological father. The lack of a father-son relationship, coupled with Philip's antisocial behavior, may have contributed to Philip's deviant interests, eventually leading to his offending behavior

### *Kylan Laurent*

Very few articles have been written about the case of Kylan Laurent. Laurent, a twenty-two year old African American, was being pursued by police when he abruptly jumped into the Mississippi river and drowned in August, 2011. Each victim of Laurent was found strangled in a motel room; a third victim was choked, but survived. The Internet was used to establish each of these meetings. Because Laurent is deceased,

secondary material about the case is considerably rare. Nevertheless, his case does exemplify how perpetrators are using the Internet to prowl for prostitutes.

Questions arise as to why so few articles were written on Laurent. Noted by the literature, the majority of sexual killers and sexual sadists are middle-aged, white men (Carter & Hollin, 2009). Even though Laurent committed suicide, police believed more victims would eventually surface (WDSU, 2011). Laurent served time in the military from 2008–2009 and it is believed that many of his victims have yet to be discovered. Twenty-two cell phones were found in his vehicle. Currently, law enforcement officials are gathering information from Laurent's friends and family to find out more about his past. The lack of Laurent's prior criminal history, according to criminologist Peter Scharf, is not uncommon. (WDSU, 2011).

### *Cody Legebokoff*

Legebokoff had no criminal record prior to the current accusations. Due to the fact Legebokoff is currently awaiting a trial date, there is a temporary ban on publications regarding his case. His hearing with the Supreme Court of British Columbia occurred in November of 2011. Although family and friends claim the accusations to be “totally out of character” for Legebokoff, FBI profiler Mary Ellen O’Toole, stated there had to be warning signs, because this type of behavior does not occur all of a sudden. Comparisons of Legebokoff to psychopaths were made via interviews with Criminologist Ray Corrado by CTV news (2011). Corrado stated that psychopaths do not always become serial killers, however, there are always warning signs, e.g., callousness towards people or animals (2011). These signs, according to Corrado, may be visible as early as two years of age. Psychopaths do not empathize and if they become serial killers they carefully plan their attacks, selecting individuals that will not be missed immediately, e.g., prostitutes. Legebokoff used the Internet to contact his victim—three of which were mothers working in the sex trade. Although an avid Internet user, Legebokoff had no prior relationships that would suggest future criminal behavior.

## **Discussion**

Based on the information available, the offenders discussed may be grouped into two categories: serial killer and non-serial killer. Laurent and Legebokoff are similar in age to the average serial killer and each killed at least 3 women. Tabak and Markoff, on the other hand, are older, highly intelligent, introverted, and each killed only one woman. The latter two men also appeared ashamed when they were caught and were able to hide their perverse interests for some time. Further distinguishing the men, Legebokoff stands out because he was labeled specifically as cheerful, outgoing, athletic, and coming from a good home, unlike the other offenders. Markoff and Tabak came from broken homes, were not close with their families, and were not characterized as cheerful or outgoing. In fact, Markoff was described as being disturbed.

Our findings reveal that Legebokoff may be placed in the category of a psychopath. Psychopaths are often described as charming and lacking empathy for others—Legebokoff was well-liked by his classmates and teachers, and described as charming. The combination of psychopathy and sexual deviance is also associated with higher rates of sexual re-offending—explaining Legebokoff's repeated murders (Blum, 2001). As stated previously, signs of psychopathy may be visible as early as two years of age. Legebokoff is the youngest serial killer in Canadian history. Psychopaths do not empathize and if they

become serial killers, they carefully plan their attacks, remaining unnoticed. Personality disorders often accompany those with sadistic sexual preferences, especially psychopathy (Blum, 2001). The combination of psychopathy and sexual deviance is also associated with higher rates of sexual reoffending—explaining Legebokoff's repeated murders (Blum, 2001). Whether or not Laurent had psychopathic traits is yet to be determined because information on his case is scarce. Nevertheless, the results of our research support the claim that the Internet is creating a different type of offender: provoking one offender to seek and injure numerous victims (women, for the current study) or provoking another to become sexually-aroused and kill. It is our belief that the difference between serial killers and non-serial killers is significant, as the characteristics of serial killers undoubtedly avoid detection. The Internet seems to aid this lack of detection.

Interestingly, none of the offenders we analyzed used drugs. Among the previous sexual killers studied, drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines, and intoxication at the time of offense were found to be common (Carter & Hollin, 2010). According to the information we gathered, neither drugs nor alcohol were used by the offenders. The fact that none of the killers used drugs is significant and further supports the use of life course theory. Other differences noted include the deviant sexual interests. A plethora of disturbing images and videos were discovered in Markoff and Tabak's belongings. Yet, so far, no deviant images have been discovered from belongings of Legebokoff or Laurent. This could indicate that both Markoff and Tabak suffered from paraphilia while Laurent and Legebokoff did not. Paraphilic traits, according to Goodman (1993), often include behavioral patterns such as impulse-control disorders, e.g., bulimia nervosa and pathological gambling. Additionally, lacking sexual knowledge, engaging in excessive masturbation, infatuation with prostitutes, pornography, and computer and telephone sex are characteristic of those with paraphilias. Markoff and Tabak exhibited many of these traits.

## Conclusion

There are specific personality traits that, when coupled with traumatic events, result in seeking deviant sexual media which can lead to violence against individuals. Patrolling media images on the Internet may help prevent criminal behavior, but the difficulty is figuring out which images are correlated with violent behavior. Of course, this is also a free speech issue, as most individuals who view violent pornography do not commit murder. Because the business of prostitution has changed due to the Internet, law enforcement faces a struggle in patrolling prostitution and associated crimes. Nevertheless, it can be reasoned that images and videos combining sex and extreme violence are not only abnormal behaviors, but also exceedingly detrimental for young viewers growing up in the Internet era.

Some ideas for preventing these offenses include: (1) blocking pornographic websites from being viewed by minors, (2) ensuring that websites such as Craigslist are prohibiting and continuously patrolling for prostitution, and (3) enforcing punishment for both parties caught engaging in prostitution. As stated, the Internet is acting as the medium through which at least some sexually-deviant individuals' act out hidden aggressions and desires, and some of these individuals may not become violent without the assistance of the Internet. Men who are obsessed with obscene sexual materials are also more likely to seek prostitutes in general—especially via Internet. It is challenging to estimate the number of individuals' who are likely to commit sexually-driven crimes instigated by the Internet because of the freedom one has when online, as it is equally difficult to determine the total

number of murdered prostitutes. Regardless, without some changes in the methods by which the Internet is patrolled, it is likely that the types of crimes discussed here will continue.

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