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## The etiology of violence and the voice of the perpetrator.

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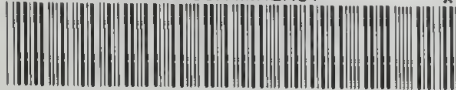
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THE ETIOLOGY OF VIOLENCE  
AND  
THE VOICE OF THE PERPETRATOR

A Dissertation Presented

by

JOANNA SCHOEN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1999

Department of Counseling Psychology

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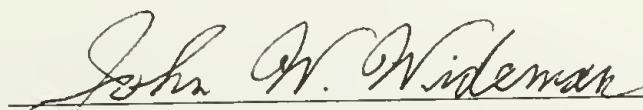
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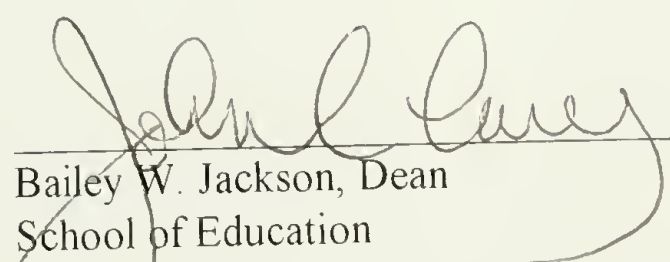
JOANNA SCHOEN

Approved as to style and content by:

  
John W. Wideman, Chair

  
Robert Colbert, Member

  
Roland Chilton, Member

  
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School of Education

Violence is *here*,  
In the world of the sane,  
And violence is a symptom.  
I hear it in the headlong weeping of men who have failed.  
I see it in the terrible dreams of boys  
Whose adolescence repeats all history.

And here is the pitiful moment when the weak  
Lose their loneliness:  
The young men with a cosh go in pairs  
Because brutality is their courage  
And their tongue-tied comradeship.

Here is the moment of the dispossessed,  
The sad anonymous  
Whose grudge is that the world's indifferent;  
Whom life has made a promise  
It has not fulfilled.

Jacob Bronowski

*Excerpted from  
The Face of Violence*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Jack Wideman has been a very important force in my life and it was only natural that he be the chairperson of this committee. His generous attention and ongoing support have taught me a great deal about being a good therapist and psychologist but most importantly about being a good human being. Since we met in 1990, I have been able to count on him to listen, empathize, advise, and stimulate. His dedication, enthusiasm, and patience provided me with the force I needed to complete this goal. The unwavering interest, acceptance, and kindness with which he treats others will continue to inspire me.

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I am indebted to my subjects, the twelve men who willingly shared their stories with me. I have been touched by their suffering and their sincerity and as much as possible, I have tried to bring their words to this study. I truly believe it is they who are the experts and it is their voice that should be heard.

I would like to acknowledge Jack Tokarz, Deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Correction, for granting me permission for this study. I am very grateful to Ida Terry of Osborn Correctional Institution, Richard Stratton of MacDougall Correctional Institution, and Susan Claps of Cheshire Correctional Institution for facilitating my entrance into these prisons. Everyone knows how hard it is to get out of prison but few realize that it is equally as difficult to get in.

Many thanks to my friends and extended family members for their understanding and encouragement. As I age, I realize how blessed I am to have so many good friends and such a supportive family.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my husband Jonathan Pepper for his steady support and enduring generosity. When, in my forties, I told him that I wanted to go back to school he said "Great. Why not?" He never once doubted that I would achieve my aim. Without his endorsement and encouragement, returning to school would not have been possible.

Last, but certainly not least, I offer my undying love and appreciation to my daughter Leah Pepper for her abiding beauty, goodness, and love. From the moment we first met, she has been the true light in my life. I hope she is as proud of me as I am of her.

## ABSTRACT

### THE ETIOLOGY OF VIOLENCE AND THE VOICE OF THE PERPETRATOR

FEBRUARY 1999

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The epidemic of violence now occurring in the United States constitutes one of the nation's most important social problems. Each year the boundaries of violence extend. Because its effects now touch all areas and populations, violence has been officially declared a major public health issue.

The intent of this study was to explore the root causes of violence as reported by the violent offender. The study contains a review of the literature which looks at violence from a historical, biological, psychological, sociological, and psycho-social point of view. However, because the majority of research does not include direct interview or the perspective of the perpetrator, this study was designed to gather this absent information present in their own voice.

Twelve men from three different correctional facilities were interviewed. Each interview was conducted face-to-face in a private setting within the prison. Each participant was asked to talk about their life experience, history of violence, understanding of their violent activities, and finally based on their insight, offer

recommendations for intervention. Additionally, they were asked to complete a powerlessness survey that queried their sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy at the time of their violent offense. In order to give the reader an opportunity to hear the voice of the participants, their stories are crafted in their own words and presented in narrative form.

A number of interconnected thematic characteristics emerged from the interviews and survey. In addition to illuminating and verifying many of the speculations presented in the literature review, the findings suggest the presence of deficient, inadequate, or damaging conditions which occurred during critical developmental periods in the lives of the participants. Commonality of experience was noted within the following areas: lack of safety, lack of stable relationships, lack of education, lack of power and resources, lack of respect, lack of self-esteem, lack of self-worth, lack of self-efficacy, lack of coping skills, and lack of meaning. In this study, these deficits appear as significant predictors of eventual violent behavior.

Based on the above findings, implications for clinical practice, programmatic development, and future research is suggested.

## PREFACE

There was a time when I did not think very deeply about violence and crime. I was aware that it existed and could quote the general statistics. I knew what horrors existed and what neighborhoods to avoid. Because the rate of recidivism was so high, I assumed that the majority of offenders were hopeless, could not be trusted, and needed to be separated from society. I was aware that desperate people would do desperate things in hopeless situations but this was as far as my thinking went. My reaction was one of fear and in truth, I preferred not to think about it. I rarely considered what might be at its root.

As time passed and I came in contact with more and more disenfranchised people, I became concerned about the injustice I witnessed. In the last thirty years I have been associated or worked with a variety of oppressed subcultures. It has become apparent that minorities and those of lower socioeconomic status have fewer resources and more stressors than the mainstream population. It is possible for one can still get ahead in this country but the odds are clearly not equal for all.

In the spring of 1990, I made plans to attend a three-day Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP)<sup>1</sup> workshop in a maximum security men's prison in Connecticut. I had no previous experience with this population but was interested in learning how to work with the escalating conflict and violence I was observing in our culture. Although I was

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<sup>1</sup> The Alternatives to Violence Program offers workshops and ongoing support activities to inmates in correctional facilities. Each workshop is an intensive, three-day interactive program limited to twenty participants. AVP works through a process of affirmation, communication, and cooperation to build a sense of community. The workshops leads into conflict resolution exercises in which the participants have an opportunity to role-play the real-life conflicts and develop a variety of skills.

free to ask questions prior to the workshop, I was minimally prepared. My instructions were to bring nothing inside except a picture ID, to dress comfortably but modestly, and to eat before entering. I was told that although the inmates might tell us, we never ask what they did or how long they were in for. The trainers let me know that they had been facilitating these workshops for a number of years and not to worry, the men would be respectful, everything would be fine. I knew nothing more and really did not know what else to ask.

The experience of going into a prison is very difficult to describe. It's not like any other institution that I have ever been in. It has its own distinct sights, sounds, and smells. Initially, I had to clear a sensitive metal detector at the door of the gatehouse. Nothing is allowed inside without written approval. The trainers were waiting for me inside the gatehouse and from this point we proceeded together. The next step in the entry procedure involves talking to your own reflection in a mirrored booth, passing your picture ID through a little window, and waiting. Waiting is a major component of the process. Eventually the visitor passes were issued and we were again instructed to wait.

Once our escort arrived, we began our journey through three sets of electric gates. The first of which had rows and rows of shiny razor fence on either side that extended around the periphery of the prison. At this point the glittering razor wire clearly marked the end of the free world and the beginning of the imprisoned one. After the third set of electric gates, we were deep inside. The place was huge, dark, loud, industrial, and filled with the echoes of men's voices. Groups of men in tan shirts and

pants were being herded up and down long corridors, returning from “chow.” I asked how many lived in this prison and was told 1,800 but that it was originally built for half that many. Correctional Officers and large German Shepherd dogs were the obvious authority. It felt subterranean. We were briskly guided to the school area and after passing through more locked doors we reached our destination. The trainers went to plan and I was left in a large empty room in which 25 chairs were set in a circle. Soon men in prison tans began straggling in. This was an awkward point. What to do or say? Are they dangerous? Should I sit near the door? I decided to take a seat and start up a conversation. I introduced myself to a random inmate and let him know that I was participating and that just like him I had no idea what to expect. He asked if I had ever been in prison before. I said “Nope.” and commented that I probably knew even less than he did since the prison experience was also unfamiliar to me. We made small talk and soon the rest of the inmates arrived, the trainers returned, and the workshop began. I spent the next three days (we left each night and returned early in the morning) with these twenty-two men and emerged with a significantly different understanding than when I entered.

This experience changed how I viewed the violent offender. I was struck by their intelligence and talent. They did not appear to be irretrievably defective members of society. I was left with the question of how did they get there? What lies beneath their crimes? What was it about these men that led them to take violent action? What should we be doing about it? What is the role of punishment? Does it work? What would work better?

In order to continue to explore these questions within a prison context, I became an AVP trainer. For the past eight years I have been facilitating AVP workshops and have come into contact with hundreds of violent offenders. I continue to learn from them. Each has a story and lends a unique perspective to my quest for understanding. Many are well acquainted with suffering and many have learned how to transform that suffering into insight and action. It is my association with these men that inspired this study.

The story which follows was written by an inmate who is a valued fellow AVP trainer. His story expresses one incident in his childhood that demonstrates the hurt, pain, frustration, lack of support, and hopelessness that creates the seeds of despair which often lie beneath many violent acts. This story is not presented as an excuse for his eventual violent action or as an overgeneralized explanation for the complex phenomena of antisocial behavior. It is presented simply with the hope that it helps the reader understand what it may have felt like to be this child. He speaks for many.

### The Final Frontier

I always wanted to soar high in the heavens  
Just to look down at people and show them  
I'm on top of the world looking down,  
None higher but God.  
Staring up into the sky,  
I would be cursing at the planes, helicopters, birds, hoping,  
Wishing I can go with them.  
Waiting.  
For a ladder to the sky.  
Maybe I would die and reincarnate as a bird,  
A bird of prey.  
I would fly down and talon my parents heads  
So they could understand and realize

I'm a kid with dreams.  
Dreams of success.  
Even a life.

Sitting in the bathroom of our tight-ass apartment in the south side of Brooklyn, I would take the box, cement blue, paints and brushes, a very large screw driver, all of which was stolen from the Marcy Ave. Woolworth's, and pulling the screwdriver out of the bag, I would wedge it into the door, run the water in the bathtub, and dump the bag with the stuff on the floor. Within minutes I'd have the model space shuttle Discovery half-way assembled. The constant banging on the door would not deter me from my journey. As I pick up the final piece of the model, my mind drifts with thoughts of astronomy, space, stars, aliens, and the quietness of the vast universe. Piloting my foreign craft into the virginal lanes of space, hoping to find what every astronaut is looking for, life other than our own. At least something better than this shit hole we call earth.

"All right" I yelled. "I'll be out in a minute."

While picking up my fantasy craft, I reached for the screwdriver that kept the door locked and as I removed it, the door was slammed into me and crashed into my masterpiece. It shattered into a thousand pieces like an exploding star. Shock hit me. Ignoring my bloody nose, I fell to my knees and tried to grab all the pieces. I looked up at the dastardly bastard who destroyed my craft and yelled, "You broke my fuckin' shuttle."

Before I finished the sentence the pain was swift and excruciating. Now I had a busted mouth to go along with the bloody nose. The bastard grabbed me by my shirt and proceeded to yell-spit in my face.

“You’ll never be a fuckin’ astronaut. When the fuck are you going to grow up!? You ain’t going to be shit, nothin’ but a little fuckin’ thief.”

Even with my face all bloody I couldn’t think of anything else but my getaway. My getaway was laying under his damn foot with my blood covering the white wings and the fuselage crushed. I cried. My dreams shattered again.

My stepfather let go of my shirt and started taking a piss in the toilet. At the same time he removed a wallet with rubber bands surrounding it. He carefully removed the bands and from the wallet popped out a large one like the ones doctor use to draw blood from you. He tied the large rubber band to his arm and removed the syringe from the wallet. It was next to the carbonized spoon used for cooking the substance inside the syringe which was loaded like a pistol ready for firing.

“What the fuck are you looking at? Go, get out and feed your sisters.”  
Slam. Dreams and reality stuck in the bathroom. I grabbed a napkin and wiped the blood from my face.

“C’mon out Jasmine, Melinda. I can see you. Peek-a-boo, I found you. Let’s go, we gotta eat. What do you want?”

They crawled out half smiling with a scared look. I smiled as hard as I could and didn’t even acknowledge the evils of the apartment. This was my life. Raising my sisters as every big brother in a poor Hispanic, drug-addicted family had to do. Never got

anywhere. Mr. Armstrong didn't even answer my stupid letter. He can go to the moon but can't write.

In secret I continued my pursuit of astronomy but became ever mindful of who I told about my interest. The year was 1979. Thirteen years old and in my mind a full fledged astronaut. My course teacher, Mr. W, JHS-25, downtown Manhattan. School, Marta Valle. Named after a very young and prominent Hispanic woman who lost her dreams when someone took her life. A career educator. The school not deserving of her name. Guns, knives, deaths, a constant happening in and out the school. I fought to stay in the programs. The rest of the kids would call me names and chase me home but I never gave up. My mom was working on my fifth step-father. But that's another story. My memories of Mr. W were of a black Carl Sagan, but less intense and sometimes goofy. His silliness always lightened up the confusion surrounding the universe. I continued to feel the dream of becoming an astronaut, a Hispanic astronaut, take form. I dreamt every night of space travel. These visions blocked out the noise of our apartment. Times Square is what it sounded like. But no one there was waiting for a train. They were traveling alright but their vehicle was a syringe.

Finally in June of 1979 I was graduating from junior high school with honors. I managed to stay in school, take care of my sisters, hold down a part-time job, duck from all the kids, stay out of the way of my step-dads fist, stay further away from the drugs, and graduate. I was proud of myself. My grandmother, who I loved very much, attended.

My mother managed to get away from her drug dealing to attend. I wanted to introduce her to the person that helped me, who never gave up on me, who always told me to reach for the stars. I grabbed his hand, pulled, practically dragged him to meet her.

“Mr. W. I want you to meet someone.”

“O.K.” he said.

“This is my - .”

“Sonia! What are you doing here?” he interrupted.

“How do you know my mother?!” I said, red-faced with anger.

“This is your mother?” he asked.

“How are you James?” she said. “I didn’t know you was a school teacher.”

They ignored me.

“Wait a minute! I asked you how the hell you know my mother?”

They both stood quiet for a moment. All of a sudden it hit me. My heart sank. Tears flooded my eyes.

“That’s why you’re always so silly, huh?!” I pushed him backwards.

“You stinking fuck! You’re one of my mother’s customers. All this time you told me to ‘reach for the stars, nothing is out of your reach, follow your dreams’ it’s all bullshit! You was always high.”

I violently wiped the tears from my face and with a dry, almost monsterish voice, looked at my mother and said, “You never stop do you? You are determined to fuck my whole life up. Fuck you!!”

I walked away with my grandmother. She didn't know English but she understood my pain. Outside of the building I told her I wanted to move with her to Connecticut and get away from this life.

That night while in the car of my grandfather, I looked from the rear window up to the sky which was night blue and clear, lit up with the brilliance of the stars. We passed the sign that said "Welcome to New York." Thoughts of my sisters flashed through my head. What will happen to them without me? Tears clouded my eyes and I felt guilt all in my throat. Once I wiped them and cleared my throat, I saw the flash of a moving ball in the sky. It had a long tail. It followed the path of the car and I swear it seemed to be following me. I recited a star wish poem.

Star light, star bright,  
First star I see tonight,  
I wish I may, I wish I might,  
Bring love and safety to my sisters tonight.

Fin.  
True story.  
*Pedro Delgado*

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Context of Problem

A day does not pass without some reference to violence. We are bombarded with violent impressions via the news and entertainment media. Murder, crime, terrorism, gang warfare, rape, domestic assault, violence in the work place, and violence in schools are day-to-day realities.

According to Geoffrey Canada (1995), a man who grew up on the streets of New York and has spent many years working with individuals from some of its most dangerous communities,

While violence has been a factor in our slums and ghettos for decades, never has it been so deadly. Today, children face the almost impossible task of making life or death decisions all alone, in a matter of minutes, some times seconds. Even those of us who have been lucky enough to survive enough violent encounters to have gained an amount of expertise in dealing with violence find the current codes so harsh, capricious, and variable that it makes it almost impossible to help young people cope with the everyday violence they face on the streets and in schools. Today many people grow up in a waking nightmare of sudden death around every corner. (p. 89)

The epidemic of violence now occurring in the United States constitutes one of the nation's most important social problems. Each year the boundaries of violence extend. Its effects touch all areas and populations. Violence has been officially declared a major public health issue.

What is being done? The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 is the largest crime bill in the country. In response to the demands of the public, legislators have competed with one another to propose the toughest anti-crime legislation. Prison population has soared. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics

Bulletin, at midyear 1997 an estimated 1,725,842 persons were incarcerated in the nation's prisons and jails. This represents an 5.9% change from 6/30/96 to 6/30/97 and a 6.5% annual average increase from 12/31/90 to 6/30/97. Local jails have shown a 9.4% increase in the last year. At the time of this report the number of these inmates rose to 96,124 or 1,849 inmates per week. Since 1990, the total custody population has risen to more than 577,100, the equivalent of 1,708 inmates per week.

To offset the increasing overcrowding over the past two decades, the prison industry has experienced a new boom and with the advent of privatization it has become big business. The United States has hosted the biggest prison construction growth in history, laying out \$37 billion, with \$5 billion more in the pipeline (Smolowe, 1994). The crime bill provided for 100,000 new police officers and \$9.7 billion in funding for more prisons.

Reportedly, crime is down. Data gathered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation from local law enforcement officials show that the nation's crime rate dropped by three percent in the first half of 1996, and the number of murders declined by seven percent. The largest drops in violent crime were in the big cities. However, Atlanta, Las Vegas, Miami, and Washington, D.C. registered increases in homicides.

### Statement of Problem

While incarceration does serve some important functions, there is ample evidence that prisons do little to rehabilitate or deter violent offenders. Imprisonment does satisfy a societal need for retribution and does remove the offender from the culture (albeit temporarily) but, in many instances it may be compared to locking the barn door after the proverbial horse has escaped. Observable violence, violent behavior,

is inevitably the tip of the iceberg. If we focus on punishment as a means of modifying behavior without healing the underlying damage and pain, we are unlikely to be very successful, and probably more importantly, we participate in the collective social denial of the root causes of that behavior.

That our culture has not been successful in the prediction and prevention of violence are the ultimate reasons for developing a comprehensive understanding of the causes of violence. We have yet to look deeply at what is at the root of violence. Why do people erupt in violent behavior? What lies beneath the surface? What factors contribute to the violent potential of an individual?

### Statement of Purpose

Although existing research has identified a number of risk factors which might influence violent behavior, we still have not solved this social problem. This would suggest that we still do not understand what causes violence action enough to remedy it. Few studies involve direct interviews with perpetrators. The purpose of this study was to gather first-hand information about these risk factors and how they are perceived by the incarcerated perpetrator. What will the perpetrators tell us if we ask them? What information will be gained? Will they tell us something we do not know? Will they confirm what we suspect? Will they help provide significant empirical data?

The interview questions explore the effect of powerlessness and hopelessness as the result of racism, classism, abuse, and other environmental factors. Additionally, the following areas were probed:

Why did you take violent action?

What did you think it would achieve?

What is your experience of:

Power/powerlessness

Choices

Capacity for freedom

Competence/self-efficacy

Respect

Social economic potential

What would have enabled you to have made different choices?

How has your thinking changed?

In your experience, why do you think people take violent action?

Given your experience, what do you think should be done to prevent violence?

### Method

This study has been designed as a qualitative study. All participants are adult men, eighteen years old or older, incarcerated for violent acts. They were sought through contacts at Osborn, MacDougall, and Cheshire Correctional Facilities in Connecticut.

The treatment of all participants was in accordance with the American Psychological Association's Principles and Ethics. Before questionnaires and interviews commenced, this study was reviewed by the Human Subjects Review Committee at the School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

There were two basic criteria for a subject to be included in this study. The first is that they are incarcerated for a violent crime and the second is that they are considered to have some insight into their behavior and are able to articulate this perception.

The study is composed of two parts: a questionnaire and an in-depth interview. The questionnaire gathers information on many of the risk factors appearing in previous studies and also allowed the participant to provide original information. Instrumentation

in the quantitative section consists of 1) Participant Questionnaire (Appendix C ); 2) Powerlessness Survey (Appendix D).

A number of quantitative variables are be addressed: demographic data, family structure, history of violence, exposure to violence, substance abuse, insights into the causes of violence, suggestions for intervention. The quantitative data are reported descriptively to measure the absence or presence of risk factors and to identify new perspectives.

The qualitative section includes the Participant Questionnaire and Powerlessness Survey but also includes an expanded question section. The interview was semi-structured and consisted of open ended questions designed to draw out the experience and insight of the participant.

In-depth interviewing is an important method of gathering information about an individuals experience. According to Seidman (1991), “Interviewing provides access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior” (p. 4).

All interviews were conducted in prison and were audiotaped and transcribed in order to preserve the accuracy of the participants narrative. Information from qualitative data is used to create a profile of the individual. Seidman (1991) goes on to state,

A profile in the words of the participant is the research product that I think is most consistent with the process of interviewing. We interview in order to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories. We learn from hearing and studying what the participants say. Although the interviewer can never be absent from the process, by crafting a profile in the participant’s own words the interviewer allows those words to reflect the person’s consciousness. (p. 91)

All data was analyzed to identify similarities and significant themes.

## Significance

This study is significant in that it will add phenomenological information to the existing literature by providing information that we can not obtain in any other manner. Because perpetrators are generally perceived as deserving punishment, few studies include their perspective. Information gathered from their personal history and life experience can help inform people at all levels of society and aid in the development of effective preventive strategies for children, youth, and families by drawing on a first-hand understanding and experience of the developmental and sociocultural risk factors leading to antisocial behavior. Because the perspective of the perpetrator is generally left out of the research, the intention is to seek information others have not thought to ask.

Existing antiviolence programs that have been evaluated and show promise include interventions aimed at reducing risk factors or at strengthening families to help them resist the effects of detrimental life circumstances. Since no one has asked those who are in a position to know from first hand experience what the causes of violence are and what might be done to prevent it, this approach will hopefully generate new constructive and authoritative information which will help support and expand existing intervention programs.

And perhaps, their words and stories will awaken our compassion. Many adult violent offenders needed structure, help, and guidance as children. It seems that treating violence with punishment only begets more violence and punishment. As a culture, we need to explore and implement alternative helping strategies.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE ETIOLOGICAL LITERATURE

A great deal has been written on the subject of violence and an in-depth report on each topic is beyond the scope of this paper. My aim is to provide a fair sampling of main ideas. This literature review will begin look at the etiology of violence in reference to the following perspectives with the intention of surveying the general thinking about this multifaceted problem.

#### Epidemiology and Phenomenology/Historical Context

Is violence endemic to the human condition? Violence between individuals and groups is as old as humankind. Archeological evidence indicates that we have been delivering lethal blows to one another for millennia. Genesis, the first book of the Bible is full of accounts murder, rape, people being stoned, betrayal, revenge, jealousy, and greed. In the early days of recorded history, violence was an accepted part of everyday life for the average Roman citizen. Aside from the foreign wars and domestic uprisings, the Roman games themselves were scenes of ritualized killing. The history of Britain and Europe contain many examples of extreme violence which ultimately had little or no political or economic purpose. Civil law evolved as a governmental attempt to control violence between individuals and in the thirteenth century, the initiative for criminal law was passed into Parliament. The specific definitions of levels of crime developed over the next several hundred years.

Warfare, an example of organized violence, is connected to the political and ideological history of most nations and there seems to be an accepted difference between violence emitted between individuals and small groups and the large scale of

war. Yet, warfare is a prime example of a major cause of human suffering, death, and injury. Accounts of "armies" and "battles" do not focus on the layer of individual violence. From this perspective, violence in society is minuscule compared to violence by society.

The United States is only one of many countries that owes its existence to a violent revolution. European settlers came from societies where conflict was firmly established. As casualties of religious and political persecution they were victims as well as perpetrators. The Revolutionary period is filled with numerous examples of ethnic, political, social, and economic conflict. Violent behavior has characterized our society throughout its history both domestically and in its relations with other countries. The American society has clearly demonstrated its propensity for human destruction through the massacre of Native Americans, the enslavement of African Americans, and the assault on the civilian populations of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Korea, Dresden, Vietnam, Chile, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and others. Pulitzer prize winning historian Arthur Schlesinger (1969) states,

We began, after all, as a people who killed red men and enslaved black men...no nation, however righteous its professions, could act as we did without burying deep in itself, in its customs, its institutions, its conditioned reflexes, and its psyche, a propensity towards violence. (p.10)

Violence still exists on an institutional level. Today, many of America's social institutions are organized around values that lead to the systematic debasement of human beings. The underclass is composed of the poor, ethnic minorities, women, children, the elderly, the disabled, etc. Many populations suffer from inequality, are

treated like second class citizens, and do not have access to the resources and choices of the mainstream. Many institutional policies support this structure.

As H. Rap Brown stated, "Violence is as American as cherry pie." In many instances violence is still seen as an appropriate means of settling disputes. If we hope to diminish its prevalence in our culture, we need to be aware of its meaning in our history and how violence has become embedded in our culture. This perspective can help us to critically assess where we are today and provide us with a first step towards finding ways to reduce our present degree of violence and hopefully, evolve beyond it. It is tempting to think that the violence of today is unique. Neither the form nor the extent is new. Much of the violence we encounter today has parallels in history. Violence has surged and waned throughout time. However, current statistics indicate that incidents of violence are at peak levels, particularly random acts of seemingly senseless violence. In this section I would like to present some statistics on violence and violent trends.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Louis J. Freeh, 14 million Crime Index offenses were reported to law enforcement across the nation in 1994. This represents a rate of 5,374 offenses for every 100,000 US inhabitants. Violent crime (murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) was reported at 754 violent crimes (murder 9, forcible rape 77, robbery 238, aggravated assault 430) for every 100,000 inhabitants (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1998).

The 1995 Uniform Crime Reporting Press Release of 10/13/96 indicated that 13.9 million offenses were reported across the nation. This total represents 5,278 offenses of every 100,000 United States inhabitants. According to this report, crimes are

down 1%, the crime rate has declined 2%, and violent crimes dropped 3% from the previous year. Although the numbers suggest a trend downwards, at this point, the change cannot be considered statistically significant. According to these figures, a criminal offense takes place every two seconds, with a violent crime every 18 seconds, a rape every five minutes, and a murder every 24 minutes.

The Statistical on Violence (Dobrin et al., 1995) reports an alarming increase in the homicide and aggravated assault rate from the 1960's to the 1990's. In 1960, New Haven reported six murders, four rapes, and 16 robberies. In 1990, the population was 14% smaller and reported 31 murders, 168 rapes, and 1784 robberies. In 1965, Milwaukee reported 27 murders, 33 rapes, and 214 robberies. In 1990 the city was smaller and reported 165 murders, 598 rapes, and 4,472 robberies. In 1951, New York had only 244 murders. Every year for more than a decade it has had nearly 2000 murders a year. Overall, the rates of violent crime are 40% higher today than they were even a decade ago. Given the increase in the last 30-40 years, a one-year decrease of 1 to 3% seems less than impressive.

The U. S. Department of Justice (1997) reports that the youth of America are turning to crime at such an alarming rate that juvenile arrests may double by the year 2010. Between 1983 and 1992 the rate of juvenile arrests for violent crime increased by 100% compared to a 60% increase for young adults. Juveniles are now responsible for one in five violent crimes. In 1995 law enforcement agencies made more than 2.7 million arrests of persons under the age of 18.

How we are dealing with this? Just as spending on the Armed Forces has risen to meet perceived threats from hostile nations, rising crime rates have generated the

need for an increase in police force. From 1970 to 1990 the violent crime rate soared. In the 1960's the US had 3.3 police officers for every violent crime reported. In 1993, the US had 3.47 violent crimes reported for every police officer. Title I of the 1994 Crime bill intends to add 100,000 police officers by the year 2000 (Walinsky, 1995). The reasoning behind this increase is to return to the ratio of police officers to violent crimes that gave us the peace and security of the '60's. It is clear that the ratio is inappropriate but to return to the proportion of the sixties, assuming the crime rate remains the same, we would need to add five million new police officers! This seems like an impossible solution.

Currently, many individuals and business owners have sought protection from the private sector. Private expenditures on security have increased from \$20 billion in 1980 to \$52 billion in 1990 (Robinson & Darley, 1995). Given the escalating trend of violent crime, continued privatization appears to be essential. However, this means of protection unavailable to the vast majority.

Another means of control is deterrence through imprisonment. In 1930 there were only 129,453 people incarcerated in the United States. In 1980, that rate had increased by approximately 200,00 to 329,821. By 1992 there were 883,656 inmates in state and federal prisons and 444,584 in local jails for a total of 1,328,240 incarcerated individuals. That means that out of every 100,000 residents of the United States, 518 were incarcerated. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 1995 the official number of incarcerated individuals has risen to 1.6 million. This data excludes a hundred thousand or so inmates who are awaiting trial and/or sentencing.

Presently, our primary treatment for violent behavior is punishment. While it does remove the individual from society, imprisonment does not appear to deter violence. A spokesperson for the American Civil Liberties National Prison Project said that public safety has not increased despite state and federal imprisonment. “We keep putting more and more people in prison and it’s not doing any good” (Gainsborough, 1995, p. A13).

Punishment places the blame in the individual and does not consider or even attempt to treat the underlying causes for violent behavior. It is clear that violence is and has been a critical aspect of the human experiment. If we are going to survive and thrive, or at least co-generate sustainable ways of living together, we must focus our attention not on the “badness” of the individual but on those factors the lie beneath and induce aggressive and violent behavior.

### The Biological Perspective

In the quest to understand causes of violence, many researchers have questioned whether violent behavior is based on biology. There has been an ongoing controversy regarding the possibility that there are genetic factors which might predispose humans toward violence.

Numerous ethologists have attempted to establish a theory of aggression based on a countless variety animal studies. Theories have run the gamut from claiming that an inborn aggressive drive similar to that of animals also occurs in humans to asserting that there is no innate urge for fighting within our species.

Cesar Lombroso, who lived more than a century ago, was one of the first to suggest that an individual was driven towards antisocial acts as the result of an inherited

atavistic makeup by attempting to compare animal aggressive behavior to human aggressive behavior. Animals resort to aggression to protect resources—territory, food, mates, and status. He maintained that when humans perceive any of these resources to be threatened, violence is more likely (Bromberg, 1965).

The theory of triune brain (Smith, 1993) has been a widely popular thesis. This theory claims that the vertebrate brain has evolved through three stages — protoreptilian, palaeomammalian, and neomammalian. These stages are represented by the basal nuclei, the limbic system, and the neocortex and thalamic structures. This theory of aggression implies that because we have evolved from lower animals, we have retained the tendency towards animal response.

Although there may be some basis for minimal comparison, animal/human comparison studies have been criticized on the following basis: human behavior is more complex; the human neocortex is highly developed and differentiated; humans have complex thoughts and feelings that make them different from instinct driven animals; the plasticity of the human brain allows for reasoning and creates a variety of options and choices; and humans have the ability to acquire social-ethical norms (Palermo, 1994). Studies which employ human subjects cannot recreate the spontaneity and impulsivity that underlie many of the violent acts in the natural environment. Theories of evolutionary psychologists, referred to later in the text, attempt to make meaning of these comparisons.

The Seville Statement on Violence was drafted by an international committee of scholars at the Sixth International Colloquium on The Brain and Aggression in May of 1986. The purpose of the statement was to dispel the belief that humans are inevitably

disposed to violence and that war was a result of innate, biologically determined, animal aggressive traits. The committee maintained that although war and violence may be inevitable, violent behavior was not determined from our innate animal nature (American Psychologist, 1990). Their conclusions were based on reviews and discussion of a vast range of relevant literature.

There is ample evidence to suggest that the dysfunctional interplay of brain structures will result in aggressive behavior. When lesions are present in the orbital frontal region, as pointed out by Luria (1969), the individual becomes impulsive, aggressive, prone to rage, and at times may exhibit a psychopathic type of behavior. Numerous other studies on brain activity and organic illness have corroborated these findings. Additionally, the DSM-IV (1994) cites a number of disorders in which a decompensating individual with poor impulse control may be at risk for perpetrating violence. It does appear that there are a number of physical and mental illnesses which have an organic component and therefore may predispose the individual toward violent behavior.

There is a complex biochemical component to aggression. The neurotransmitters noradrenalin, dopamine, and serotonin are associated with the neural transmission of motivated behavior in the bloodstream and nervous system. There has been much interest and federally funded research in the role that a neurotransmitter serotonin plays in violence. In the late 70's Frederick Goodwin and several colleagues stumbled on the connection between violence and serotonin while studying servicemen who were being observed for possible psychiatric discharge. Studies have indicated that on average, people with low serotonin levels are more inclined towards impulsive

violence that people with normal levels (Goodwin, 1990). Since that time, low serotonin has been found in other violent populations, such as children who torture animals, children who are unusually hostile, and people who score high for aggression on standardized tests. In laboratory settings, when serotonin levels were lowered, subjects were more likely to deliver electric shocks to others (Wright, 1995). Despite these findings, no simple one-to-one correspondence between any one neurotransmitter and aggressive emotion or violent behavior has been proven (Siann, 1985). It is not entirely clear whether serotonin influences aggression or simply impulse control, since low serotonin correlates also with impulsive arson and with attempted suicide (Gibbs, 1995). At best, they may provide a rough predictor of a tendency towards misbehavior.

It has been widely documented that men appear to show a greater propensity for violence than women. Data based on 1995 statistics demonstrate that 91% of the murder offenders were male (Uniform Crime Report, 1995). Sex hormones, namely the androgen testosterone and androstenedione, have been indicated to lower the threshold for angry, aggressive behavior. The speculations regarding the connection between hormones and aggression are based on studies that indicate, 1) abnormal prenatal levels of sex hormones are correlated with later levels of aggression; 2) castrated males are less aggressive; 3) levels of testosterone in men relate to levels of aggressive behavior (Dabbs, 1995).

Testosterone theories have been refuted by studies which demonstrate that high and low aggression individuals do not consistently differ in serum testosterone, and that aggression often does not change at puberty when testosterone levels increase (Albert, Walsh, & Jonik, 1993). These unidirectional relationships have been thrown into doubt

by additional variables. It has also been demonstrated that the secretion of male hormones are mediated by numerous social and environmental factors (Dabbs, in Gibbs, 1995). So, again, no one-to-one association can be made between any one class of hormones and behavior. Hormones may affect mood but how the mood is experienced and acted upon differs from individual to individual.

Another popular theory examines the possibility that genetic mechanisms may influence individual potential for antisocial behavior and juvenile delinquency. Chromosomal aberration was first studied by Jacobs and colleagues in 1965. Research revealed that many violent criminals had an extra Y chromosome. Soon, babies were being screened for this genetic marker. Subsequent studies indicated that although XYY men scored lower on IQ tests, they were not unusually aggressive. The Copenhagen study of Wilkin et al. (1976) provides the most well known contrasting evidence. Their research did not support a direct link but a resultant immaturity that may lead to an increased tendency toward impulsive behavior. Wilkin stated,

The data from the documentary records we have examined speak of society's legitimate concern about aggression among XYY and XXY men...even though no evidence has been found that men with either of these sex chromosomes complements are especially aggressive. (p. 547)

The link between chromosomes and violent tendencies continues to be studied. The current research of Kraus (1995) into the case of a male serial killer revealed a XYY karyotype with abnormally elevated urinary uroporphyrins, and brain injury. He maintains that criminal tendencies do have biological origins.

Twin studies attempt to compare the concordance rate for identical twins with the concordance rate for fraternal twins. To date there have been a dozen or so twin

studies which vary widely in terms of country of origin, age, sex, sample size, zygosity, and definition of crime and violence. The analyses indicate a greater concordance of criminality in monozygotic twins as opposed to dizygotic thus suggesting heritability (Raine, 1993). For example, the study of Coccaro, Berman, and Kavoussi (1997) examined the heritability of impulsiveness, irritability, and the inhibition of assertive or aggressive behavior in 71 to 74 pairs of monozygotic twins reared apart, 108 to 117 pairs of monozygotic twins reared together, 143 to 152 pairs of dizygotic twins reared apart, and 135 to 157 pairs of dizygotic twins reared together. Their results indicated a genetic, but not a shared environmental influence.

Adoption studies provide additional support for the heritable influences found in twin studies. Adoption studies concur that there appears to be some genetic predisposition toward crime. Several independent research groups have replicated these findings in various countries (Mednick & Gabrielli, 1984). Overall evidence does suggest a biological component in the predisposition to violence, however, genetic and biological studies have not shown indisputable correlations between organic factors and violence. The percentage of violent crimes that are committed by individuals with a neuro-physiological disposition has not been adequately studied. Too many variables exist. According to Palermo (1994),

It may be wiser to look at people as functional psychobiological units, with feelings generated by interpersonal encounters, idiosyncratic in their reactions. People should not be considered as cybernetic machines, but as a composite of an exquisite inherited substance influenced by an interplay of genetics, biology, and environment. (p. 20)

The controversy arises out of the understanding that behaviors are also subject to environmental influences or may in fact be linked to multiple genes. As yet, too many

unknowns are involved to clearly isolate a genetic marker.

We are genetically programmed to learn and persist in certain kinds of behavior much more readily than is the case with other possible behavior...this does not necessarily mean that a particular behavior is inheritable, rather than that heredity significantly affects the probability of it's development. Even animal studies reveal that tendencies toward aggression can be affected by experience, contextual cues, and the social environment ( Reiss & Roth, 1993, p. 23).

A September 1995 conference to discuss the Meaning and Significance of Research on Genetics and Criminal Behavior was held at the Aspen Institute in Queenstown, Maryland and attracted a variety of medical and social scientists. Dr. Evan S. Balaban of the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego took one side of the debate stating, "I have a strong opinion that biology doesn't have anything to contribute to public policy discussions about crime in society" (In Angier, 1995, p. C1). One school of thought takes the position that biology, plus the many other factors which influence us, all work together to create a human being and his or her behavioral responses. According to Dr. Gregory Carey, a behavioral geneticist at the University of Colorado, "They have a probalistic effect that makes us more likely to act one way or another, but that action is always done in conjunction with the environment" (p. C3 ). There are many people who would agree with Diana Fishbein, a criminologist for the Federal Department of Justice. She states, "there are areas where we can begin to incorporate biological approaches to fighting crime." She believes that medical treatment of violent criminals should be mandatory (p. C1). Many researchers continue to hope to isolate an organic marker. Stuart C. Yudofsky, chair of the psychiatry department at Baylor College of Medicine and editor of the Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences stated, "With the expected advances, we're going to be able to diagnose

many people who are biologically brain-prone to violence” (Gibbs, 1995, p. 100). Is this more medical model hubris? Is eugenics next?

As research continues to attempt to identify biological predictors of violence, one must question how these genetic markers will be used? What will be done with a child if these markers are found? Is there a difference between the chronic violent offender and the white collar criminal who may not physically hurt anyone but destroys people's lives? How could we guard against using these markers as new ammunition for racism and classism? Dr. Frederick Goodwin, currently the director of the Center on Neuroscience, Behavior and Society at George Washington University suggested that studies of monkey behavior in the jungle could further our understanding of pathologies found in the inner cities (Wright, 1995). Although his statement was misunderstood, it is easy to see how the underclass could be further exploited through this point of view. It is also suggested that environmental influences can also lower serotonin and thus a “biological” marker may in fact be an “environmental” marker. Poverty, family dysfunction, inconsistent parental supervision and discipline, deviant peers, physical and sexual abuse, drug use, poor schools and poor school performance, poor prenatal nutrition, and high levels of lead are a few of the many social forces that influence the behavior of a human being (Gibbs, 1995).

The genetic and biological explanations and biological markers are often criticized for their seemingly racist, Darwinian, and even Hitlerian overtones. There is reason to be concerned. Many ostensibly objective biological studies, blindly ignoring social and cultural differences, could misguidedly reinforce racial stereotypes and invite even greater injustice.

## The Psychological Perspective

There are several principal viewpoints which focus on a psychological explanation of violence. Each attempts to offer information on specific determinants of personality which might influence an individual to behave violently.

### Instinct Theory

More than a century ago, William James (1890) wrote that human behavior could be explained by understanding instinctive tendencies. Before speaking on the instinct theories of Freud and others, it is important to clarify what is meant by instinct. In animal life, instinct is related to those actions which promote or are necessary for survival. According to Palermo (1994),

In humans, it signifies the natural propensity of the individual to perform acts of behave in ways that usually are specific in themselves in order to achieve anticipated aims. In psychology, the characteristics of what we call instincts are that they are inborn, unchangeable and hereditary. Thus we have the survival, the material, and the sexual instincts. (p. 42)

As mentioned in the biological section, these instincts are less determinant of behavior in humans than in animals.

Freud (1923) theorized that human behavior is driven by two basic instincts: *eros* and *thanatos*, the Greek names for life and death. The former promotes life, and the latter seeks to destroy life in order to return the organism to its original, lifeless state. Freud claimed that in humans, a properly directed libidinal force (*eros*) is connected to harmonious functioning. Aggression is generated from the frustration of unsuccessful libidinal inclination. In his later years, Freud came to view human aggression as a displacement of the primary aggression (*thanatos*) against the self. Ultimately, Freud believed that humans are unable to escape their violent natures. He states,

...this instinct is at work within every living creature and is striving to bring it to ruin and to reduce life to its original condition of inanimate matter....The organism preserves its own life, so to say, by destroying an extraneous one. (In Strachey, 1955, p. 515)

Lorenz (1966, 1974) in his ethological theories, proposed that aggression stems from innate “fighting instincts” that have evolved over generations as an important survival tactic. Like Freud, he believed that if this innate aggression is not directed in a socially acceptable manner, it will eventually erupt in violent behavior.

Storr (1968) attempted to fuse the instinct theories of Freud and Lorenz and proposed that aggressive behavior stems from a biologically determined instinctive impulse, which seeks discharge before reaching critical levels. He adds that just as drives are important in determining violent behavior, so are emotions and that the way in which an individual manifests aggression is the result of unconscious motivations derived from childhood experiences. Instincts are usually thought to be under the control of the emotions. When emotions are irrational and out of control, instincts have more power.

Howells and Hollin (1989) criticize instinct theories for their conceptual ambiguities and lack of empirical documentation.

### Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary theorists attempt to explain aggression as a combination of the innate and the environmental. Evolutionary theory has been classically applied to the study of species development and tracing human roots in the wider context of the animal kingdom. The focus of evolutionary psychology has been on anatomical structures and physiological processes, rather than social behavior. However, adaptation is one of the key concepts of this theory. It is important to consider the adaptive purpose

of aggression and violent behavior. Evolutionary psychology is not interested in genetic differences among individuals or groups. Their object of study is special typical mental adaptations more commonly referred to as human nature.

Lorenz (1966) states “human behavior, particularly human social behavior, far from being determined by reason and cultural tradition alone, is still subject to all the laws prevailing in all phylogenically adapted instinctive behavior” (p. 87). Zillman (1979) suggested that aggression should be viewed as the force behind preservation of the self and species. For example, their approach to fighting behavior would be concerned both with why fighting occurs in a particular instance and how such fighting behavior affects both the individual concerned and the symbolic survival value of the species.

Two experts on human violence within evolutionary psychology are Martin Daly and Margo Wilson of McMaster University in Ontario. Their 1988 book *Homicide* is barely known outside of Darwinian-social-science circles but is considered a classic within them. They state,

Selection shapes behavioral control mechanisms—including the human psyche—so as to make behaving organisms effective reproductive competitors and nepotists. Species-typical motives have evolved to promote genetic posterity; it follows that our most basic human perceptions of self-interest are evolved tokens of the probable fitness consequences of alternative courses of action in historical environments. We therefore expect that two individuals will perceive themselves to be in conflict when the promotion of one’s expected fitness entails the diminution of the other’s. (Daly & Wilson, 1988, p. 39)

Evolutionary psychologists respect the power of the environment. They state that the human mind has been designed to adjust to social circumstances. It is their belief in the power of the family milieu, cultural milieu, and social happenstance that supports

variation in human behavior, from person to person, and from group to group without concluding that the explanation lies in genetic variation. (Wright, 1995).

### Drive Theory

As the concept of innate aggressive instinct fell from favor it was replaced by the notion of reactive drives. These reactive drives were seen as motivating aggressive behavior, including violence, and rather than being innate, they were the result of experience. Dollard and collaborators (1939) explained aggression as stimulated by frustration. That is, frustration of goals creates aggression and may progress to hostility and violence.

In 1974, Berkowitz reexamined this theory and suggested that frustration leads to anger, and it is the “anger-eliciting cue” that creates the potential for violence. Berkowitz proposed that the easy availability of guns may act as a stimulus for violence. For example, he states that “The finger pulls the trigger; but the trigger may also be pulling the finger.” Howells and Hollin (1989) felt this theory “lacked explanatory power” and once this hypotheses was tested experimentally, it too fell from favor.

### Neo-Freudian Theory

Theories on the psychological development of the infant attempt to explain aggressive behavior. Kohut (1971) hypothesized that a child attains self-worth and individuation when he/she is able to grow beyond the “archaic transitional self object that is required for the maintenance of a narcissistic homeostasis.” If there is a narcissistic wounding in infancy or in very early childhood, the child may not be able to progress towards natural developmental maturation. In 1978, Leaff stated that “ we are dealing with a qualitative and quantitative problem with aggressive impulses and with

their lack of integration into the emotional life of the child” (p. 87). He further states that the individual who displays hostile and aggressive tendencies “must be omnipotent, unable to invest in or depend upon others. His inner world of objects is that of dark shadowy persecutors, a world of danger and paranoid fears” (p. 98). Kohut conceptualized selfobjects (objects we experience as part of our self) and their appropriate mirroring as essential for the development of self. “Faulty interaction between the child and his selfobjects result in a damaged self” (Kohut & Wolf, 1978, p. 414). They describe the self of the individual with this type of wounding as having a “specific vulnerability: their self-esteem is usually labile, and in particular, they are extremely sensitive to failures, disappointments and slights” (p. 110). Of course a continuum must exist.

Mahler (1972) postulated that the child, through a process of individuation, achieves intrapsychic autonomy and with the separation from its mother achieves “differentiation, distancing, boundary structuring and disengagement.” The potential for this autonomy was based on the emotional availability of the care-giver. Problems arise when the child is frustrated in the effort to force the mother to become an extension of the omnipotent self or fears being reincorporated. Overall, Mahler believed that the foundations for aggression and violence are laid down in a child’s psyche during the period of early infancy. The history of many offenders indicates mothers in the position of both maternal and paternal roles resulting in ambivalent attachment and frustrated dependency.

Kernberg (1975) proposed three main levels of instinctual development: a high functioning level at which genital primacy has been attained; an intermediate level at

which pregenital and oral regression and fixation points predominate; and a level in which a pathological reduction of genital and pregenital instinctual strivings take place with a predominance of pregenital aggression. Kernberg interprets the rage of the borderline patient as the result of the lowest level of instinctual development and views the self of the borderline as being even less integrated than in the narcissistic personality. He also describes the emptiness, sadness and often rage of these personality types as representative of a longing for object relations.

Leaff (1978) writes that,

Antisocial characters whose early lives have been characterized by intense aggression and ambivalence are marked on the one hand by paranoid features (an untrusting suspicious attitude toward the world), and on the other hand by a sense of emptiness and aloneness, so that the world appears empty, bleak and devoid of meaning. (p. 110)

Alice Miller (1986) proposes that children are abused and neglected for adults' needs to a greater extent than people realize. She states, "Kohut's concept of the selfobject is particularly helpful in explaining this combination if we give due weight to the widespread phenomenon that children are very often used as substitutes for the self-objects their parents lacked." (p. 123)

### Jungian Theory

Jung viewed humans as having both instinctual and archetypal elements that work destructively within themselves. The archetype known as the *anima* is the personification of the feminine nature of a man's unconscious and the masculine nature of a woman's and is critical in the understanding of aggressive behavior. Jung (1934) wrote,

Every man carries within him the eternal image of a woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definitive feminine image. This image is fundamentally unconscious, a hereditary factor of primordial origin engraved in the living organic system of the man, an imprint or 'archetype'. (p. 198)

According to Hillman (1974), a loss of anima results in the loss of a personal sense of being and is diagnosed as clinical depersonalization.

Jungian theory views the *anima* function as supporting the ego in the development of personal identification and looks at the adolescent period as a critical developmental period for those lacking *anima*. During this period, Jung notes the activation of what he calls archetypal evil or archetypal shadow in which young people experiment, take risks and become irresponsible and possibly reckless. This contact with the inner capacity for destruction provides the friction from which moral choice might develop.

Talley (1978) concurs and states that the young person that has grown up without this choice "projects his inner destructiveness onto the world, society and its institutions and he rages against them." He further states,

For the psychopathic personality...it is this inner life which is lost and with it the capacity for relationship. Anima development has been arrested at some point. There is a loss of soul. All of the antisocial behavior of the psychopath can be explained by this loss of anima. It is a defense against facing the inner emptiness of his life. What is lost pertains to the feminine, one must suspect the parental, especially the mother, experience in some way. I would speculate that the child not only lacked nurturing, but experienced very early life as withholding, lacking affirmation, and possibly as actually cruel, harsh and violent. Whatever the circumstances, the world—his world—was evil. (p. 127)

In some circumstances, aggression and violence may be considered a defense reaction against experiencing the inner void.

## Dependency Needs Theory

Dependency needs are implied in many theories. Maslow (1962) viewed individuals as being motivated by an array of needs “which are species wide, apparently unchanging, and genetic or instinctual in origin.” In his hierarchical schema, the dependency need is one of the basic, lower order needs. This basic needs must be satisfied before the individual can move on to intimacy and love. Maslow suggested that unmet dependency needs might lead to aggression, hostility, and violence.

In Erikson’s (1963) epigenetic chart of the eight stages of development, he states that movement through the first four stages (basic trust vs. basic mistrust; autonomy vs. shame and doubt; initiative vs. guilt; and industry vs. inferiority) occurs when one is most dependent on others. The friction involved in the resolution of these stages can lead to hostile or benign behavior. If basic needs are not met, the individual becomes “a great potential danger to his own ego—and to that of his fellow man.”

## Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory assumes that aggression and violence are behaviors that are learned and suggests that the acquisition of specific behaviors are learned through the process of social modeling—either through direct experience or through observation. Dollard and Miller (1950) describe this process as “the behavior which is widely felt to characterize man as a rational being or as a member of a particular nation or social class is learned rather than innate.” Bandura (1977) has reported that basic aggression is learned by imitating role models and that repeated exposure to any stimulus promotes a positive attraction to it. For example, studies showed that children who watched others mistreating and being violent towards a large doll would behave in

a similar manner (Bandura, 1973). He broke down aggression into three crucial steps: the acquisition of the aggressive behavior, the process wherein the aggression is acted out, and the conditions which maintain aggression. The first step is often tightly interwoven with anticipated outcome—the product of previous learning. The second and third steps were also found to be affected by aversive environmental conditions (high temperatures, over crowding, etc.) because of increased emotional arousal.

Laboratory based research takes a narrow approach in the examination of learning theory. It is difficult to replicate the many variables that occur in day-to-day life and impact aggression. Siann (1985) suggests that aggression might be considered a social phenomenon and best studied “in the real world of perceived and actual inequalities, environmental stress, and political conflict.” She implies that human aggression is inevitable and essentially positive but with unfavorable social and emotional influences it can become destructive.

### Cognitive Theory

The cognitive theories of Beck and Ellis indicate that emotions and moods are created by thoughts and cognitions. Anger arousal and consequent aggression was studied by Novaco (1975) and largely based on the Rational Emotive Therapy model of Ellis. Novaco conceptualized anger as serving one of six or a combination of six functions: energizing behavior, disrupting ongoing behavior, expressing negative feelings, defending against vulnerability, instigating antagonism, and classifying and event as a provocation. The intention is to recondition the self to change destructive patterns of thinking and reacting, in order to change their self-defeating behaviors.

Many treatment programs incorporate this notion and attempt to restructure thinking patterns.

### Existential Theory

Rollo May's classic book *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Causes of Violence* (1972), discusses the human need for power and significance and cites hopelessness and powerlessness as the root cause of violence. He proposes that within every human's life, there are five levels of power that exist as potentialities: the power to be, self-affirmation, self-assertion, aggression, and violence. It is when the basic need to affirm one's own being is not met that the individual tries harder to assert themselves. When this assertion is blocked, behavior becomes stronger and more aggressive. This action is intensified by a reaction to attack. Finally, when all aggressive efforts prove ineffective, violence erupts. May describes these stages as ontological ones and states that,

If the other phases of behavior are blocked, then explosion, into violence may be the only way individuals or groups can get release from unbearable tension and achieve a sense of significance. We often speak of the tendency toward violence as building up *inside* the individual, but it is also the response to outside conditions. The source of violence must be seen in both its internal and external manifestations, a response to a *situation* which is felt to block off all other ways of response. (p. 44)

The desire for self-esteem, recognition, significance is an undeniable human need yet many people are born into situations where fulfillment of these needs are nearly impossible to achieve. In the words of Hannah Arendt (1989), "Violence is the expression of impotence."

Looking backwards at the variety of psychological perspectives, of note is the movement of focus from the determinants that originate within the individual to the effects of outer conditions on one's inner state.

### The Sociological Perspective

Most authors writing on the subject of violence will agree that violence is multifactorial in origin and cite many variables which might influence a person towards violent behavior. Animal studies on aggression and their correlation to human behavior stimulated the curiosity of social scientists. Many psychological studies noted environmental factors that appeared to predispose an individual towards violent action. Sociologists have not been inclined to write about violence and aggression as single themes. Instead, they tend to regard violence as an aspect of behavior that is involved in a way of life characterized by law breaking. By doing so, they inquire into the significance and relationship of culture and violent behavior.

Aggression and violence are aspects of social interaction rather than unique categories of social behavior. In this light, violence is viewed as a form of social communication for "violence is presumed to share with other forms of social behavior the properties of rationality, motive and meaning" (Downes, 1982). Over the last several decades, theorists have proposed a variety of interpretations of this form of communication.

As the literature on social conditions is vast and far reaching, this section will provide a surface overview of the primary factors currently thought to influence aggression and violent behavior from a sociocultural point of view. Many of the following topics are interrelated.

## Parent/Child Relationship and Family Structure

It is commonly felt that a positive and healthy bond of love between a child and his/her parents/caregivers is the foundation for a psychologically integrated and emotionally stable adult. This relationship is thought to provide a template of sorts and condition the individual to relate to fellow human beings in a socially respectable manner. According to Palermo (1994),

It is within the boundaries of the child-parent relationship, the first microcosmal inter-relationship, usually occurring in that primary social agency that we call the family, that the child grows into acceptable, mature social behavior in accordance with the expectations of his parents and the dictates of the society at large. It is within the dyadic relationship between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* and their continuous interplay that the child shapes his social self and hopefully achieves the integration of his psychological self and his social persona. (p. 74)

Family structure has changed significantly. The U.S. Census Bureau (1998) provides the following statistics,

- ◆ The proportion of all households accounted for by two-parent families declined from 40% in 1970 to 26% in 1990.
- ◆ The number of unmarried couple households almost tripled between 1970 and 1980 and grew by 80% between 1980 and 1990, from 1.6 million to 2.9 million.
- ◆ The proportion of children under the age of 18 years of age living with two parents declined from 85% in 1970 to 73% in 1990, an estimated 15% of whom are stepchildren.
- ◆ In 1990, 19% of White, 62% of African American, and 30% of Hispanic children under the age of 18 lived with only one parent.

Many children who grow up in single parent households become fine, well-functioning adults. Yet, for others, the additional strain of a single parent household and

its ensuing reduction of resources, contributes another risk factor in determining future violent behavior.

Raine et al. (1996) looked at early life risk factors for future criminal and violent behavior. Subjects were measured on the following variables: mothers' pre-natal care and problems with pregnancy; birth complications and conditions; physical condition at birth; neurological status at day 1 and 5; motor development at 1 year; early maternal rejection; social, economic, educational, employment and living status of parents; domestic conflict; family instability; and parental crime. Results showed that crime rates were highest among those who had both biological and psychosocial risk factors.

The realm of family violence (domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and assaults on elders) is enormous and thought to be substantially under reported. Unlike victims and offenders who are strangers, victims and offenders in family violence have a continuing relationship. Being an abused or neglected as a child increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53%, as an adult 38%, and for a violent crime by 38% (National Institute of Justice, 1992).

### Gangs

When family bonding fails, many individuals turn to gangs. Gang culture normally originates in poor neighborhoods where the chances of legitimate success in life seem out of reach. All gangs are tight family units and in fact refer to themselves as families. The thinking is to always put the family first, even before death. Membership usually consists of individuals from the same ethnic background.

In the 1970's and 1980's gangs had their specific trademarks. For example, the Hoovers of Los Angeles were known for their gang rapes, the Eight-Tray Gangster

Crips were associated with stealing guns and cars, the Rollin' Sixties are still legendary for their ruthless hit men. Today, the Gangster Disciples (GDs) are an odd lot-part street gang, part mystical cult, with a personality split between thuggery and social activism.

Unlike the California-based Crips and Bloods and the country's other huge gang federations, the GDs all worship a single leader, the charismatic Hoover. They claim to be struggling for social justice, with a special emphasis on kids. They've put candidates on Chicago election ballots and marched on City Hall to support funding for schools and public-health clinics.

The extent of criminal activity by street gangs has varied greatly in the United States since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. As long as a specific ethnic group or neighborhood was impoverished, the gangs could remain violent. What crime there was stayed mostly within the neighborhoods. Once a neighborhood or a sizable portion of its residents began to prosper, gang activity usually diminished. The chief exceptions were in Black and Hispanic neighborhoods, where the normal upward slope to prosperity did not always occur.

The fairly widespread use of drugs among all classes of the population - including marijuana, heroin, hallucinogens, PCP (or angel dust), cocaine, and crack - effectively brought youth gangs in American cities into the most lucrative criminal enterprise since Prohibition. As the gangs grew rich from drug dealing, they gained a permanence and structure that earlier youth gangs did not have. Youthful street gangs sometimes became organized crime gangs. A notable example is the El Rukins of Chicago. This gang has developed into a major organization, with complex power structures complete with health insurance benefits. Because these gangs have become

mainly business organizations, members tend to live longer and remain active well beyond youth.

The numbers can be staggering. For example, in 1990 in Los Angeles, there were an estimated 70,000 gang members (Canada, 1995). Prisons have entire cell blocks of the “affiliated” and the Illinois prison system is reported to have countless cell blocks of GDs.

In his book *Monster* (1993), Kody Scott, a.k.a. Sanyika Shakur, presents an inside view of gang life. Scott, still known on the streets of South Central Los Angeles as Monster, wrote *Monster* while incarcerated in the infamous Pelican Bay State Prison in northern California, where he served out his seven-year sentence in near total isolation. His book has been described as the most remarkable book on the African American experience since Eldridge Cleaver’s *Soul on Ice* and George Jackson’s *Soledad Brother*. In his preface, Monster Cody writes, “There are no other gang experts but participants. Our lives, mores, customs, and philosophies remain as mysterious and untouched as those of any ‘uncivilized’ tribe in Afrika.” He describes murder, brutal assaults, automobile hit-and-run attacks, robberies, and drug dealing as the business of the day and states that, “to be in a gang when I joined is the equivalent of growing up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, and going to college: everyone does it.” Also of note in the book are the backgrounds and early family histories of the gang members —poverty, child abuse, broken families, substance abuse, dysfunctional homes, or no homes at all. Status and respect are at the heart of gang values. And if the position of an individual or gang challenged, the result is most always violent. According to Short (1990) ,

Gang conflict often occurs when a gang believes that its status or reputation, its turf, or its resources (e.g. its share of a drug market) are threatened by another

gang. Even a member who feels his status within the gang is threatened may react aggressively. (p. 5)

Social context theories are social and interactive and suggest a number of environmental factors and antecedents which might impact conduct. Toch (1989) describes various uses of violence, such as alleviating tension in awkward social situations or defending reputations. In this model, violence often occurs when someone is perceived as a threat and some action is taken to respond to the threat.

There is substantial research and controversy regarding how and why gangs form, why youths join gangs, and how gang presence and membership affect youths' development. However, most clinical studies and accounts of gang members agree on the pervasive need for belonging, status, power, protection, and a means of survival. It has been speculated by numerous sources that this antisocial behavior is a conscious or subconscious act against the system which is perceived as having abandoned them. However, their violence is primarily perpetrated within their own neighborhoods and instead resembles a form of socially assisted suicide.

Gangs are not exclusively an urban problem. Gang activity has spread into suburbia and smaller cities. New gangs often have direct ties to a nearby city base.

### Guns

According to the FBI (1995 Crime Statistics) the surge in violent crime in the United States during the past decade has corresponded with a significant rise in the use of firearms by criminals. The 387-page report by the federal law enforcement agency found that firearm-related offenses were responsible for a 42% jump in murders,

robberies, and aggravated assaults from 1985 through 1994. Assaults showed the greatest gain, soaring to 76%.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) estimates that from 1899 to 1993 about 223 million guns became available in the United States, including 79 million rifles, 77 million handguns, and 86 million shotguns. Currently, licensed firearms dealers sell an estimated 7.5 million guns per year, including 3.5 million handguns. A new handgun is produced every 20 seconds. There are an estimated one million semi-automatic assault weapons in private hands throughout the U.S. In 1992, handguns were used to murder 36 people in Sweden, 97 in Switzerland, 60 in Japan, 128 in Canada, 33 in Great Britain, 13 in Australia, and 13, 495 in the United States.

Firearms may not make people violent, but they do facilitate violence. They can provide deadly power to anyone, weak or strong, and have the greatest appeal to the powerless and the frightened.

### Alcohol and Drugs

Research on the effects of alcohol and crime and violent behavior often shows alcohol consumption to be positively related to antisocial behavior. Welte and Miller (1987) examined a criminal group and found the amount of alcohol consumption to be four times that of the general population. The criminals were predominantly violent offenders and 46.2% reported having committed their crime while under the influence of alcohol. Recent interviews with 268 homicide offenders incarcerated in New York State correctional facilities for homicides that occurred in 1984 indicated that alcohol and drugs appeared to be positively correlated to violent behavior (Spunt et al., 1994). And in 1989, according to the Drug Use Forecasting program, 59% of males and 53% of

females arrested for violent Uniform Crime Reports index offenses reported alcohol use. Alcohol is thought to be associated with aggressive emotion and violent behavior for a number of indirect reasons: thought processes are distorted, moral and social inhibitions are lowered, and impulse control is diminished..

Pihl and Peterson (1995) state that different drugs alter basic physiological and motivational processes which directly and indirectly alter the likelihood of aggressive behavior and that these processes represent an evolutionary legacy that is often blocked in the present societal context. They state, “During the course of socialization, most individuals develop anxiety as a reaction to cues to become aggressive. When drugs and alcohol inhibit this anxiety, the individual is more likely to dangerous activities” (p. 146). Alcohol consumption has been shown to lead to violence within the context of poverty and may also interfere with an individual’s ability to correctly interpret the behavior of others (Parker, 1993).

Research of the last few decades has concluded that violent human behavior is either decreased or unaffected by cannabis use. In fact, marijuana or opiates, including heroin, appear to temporarily inhibit aggression. However, amphetamines, cocaine, LSD, and PCP have all been linked to violent behavior. Small doses of these drugs increase competitiveness and volubility within socially acceptable limits. Larger doses may cause disorganized behavior including violent outbursts in some individuals. Long-term frequent use may alter the nervous system (Moss & Tarter, 1993).

### Gender

The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) of the FBI have no separation of crimes by sex. In order to get some idea about the gender of the perpetrators, one must look at data

on arrests. Statistically, most acts of violence (89%) are committed by men and the arrest accounts for violent crimes clearly show this relationship (Statistical Handbook on Violence, 1996).

Many of the structures and values in our society are influential. Myriam Miedzian (1991) philosopher and clinical social worker, links aggressive and violent behaviors to the masculine cultural stereotypes of toughness, repression of empathy, and competitiveness.

Most research has been focused on males. Although long out of date, *Five Hundred Delinquent Women* (Gluek & Gluek, 1934) provided a fascinating account of five hundred women ending parole at a Massachusetts reformatory between 1921 and 1925. Their life histories were analyzed and they were followed after release. The factors that were thought to predispose them towards crime were: poverty, desertion, childhood behavioral problems, low intelligence, low self-esteem, and emotional instability. The Glueks said, "The women are themselves on the whole a sorry lot. Burdened with feeble-mindedness, psychopathic instability, and marked emotional instability, a large proportion of them found it difficult to survive by legitimate means." Recent studies confirm these findings (Grant, 1995; Maden et al., 1994). Women commit crimes for the same reasons men do but they commit far less of them and do not appear to be as prone towards violence as men.

### Age

Are different age groups more prone to violence? Age is one thing that public policy cannot do anything about but because it is a criminogenic trait, it is useful to know if, how, or why it affects behavior. A common maxim states that the greatest

predictor of future violence is past violence and some continuity between indicators of childhood aggression and adult violence has been demonstrated. Many studies suggest that violent and criminal behavior depends as much on age as on any other variable.

The Uniform Crime Reports of 1995 stated that the highest percentage of violent crimes are perpetrated by individuals 30 and under. The percentage drops as perpetrators climb into their 30's and 40's. Even when the age distribution in the population is taken into account for per capita comparisons, violence is clearly a youthful behavior.

According to Palermo (1994),

..statistics usually support the contention that violent crime is usually perpetrated by individuals ranging in age from mid teens to mid thirties with a concentration in the mid and late twenties. Age itself does not have any direct causality for violence, but since the majority of violent offenders in the high rate brackets are obviously in that period of their lives where one is generally considered to be stronger and more resilient physically, it may facilitate the perpetration of violent offenses. (p. 78)

Another perspective is offered by Wilson and Herrnstein (1985).

Younger people at any given time belong to criminally more active cohorts. In addition, the decline with age occurs because people who will commit only one of a few offenses during their lifetimes tend to do so early. Consequently, the offenders at older ages will tend to commit more, and, as it turns out, more serious crimes. The life cycle of criminal behavior for these hard-core offenders no doubt also declines with age, but the decline is postponed by at least a decade and perhaps by more than many instances. (p. 139)

## Race

*Deadly Consequences* (Prothrow-Stith, 1991) speaks out about the epidemic of violence that appears to be killing off a generation of young African-American men. Homicide is the major cause of death within this population. Prothrow-Stith, assistant dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, criticizes psychological approaches to

violence as being too individualistic. Many powerful social factors are at play. Children in inner cities regularly witness violence in their day-to-day lives. Studies by Carl Bell, director of Chicago's Community Mental Health Council states that by the age of eleven four out of five children see someone beaten up either on the street or at home. One out of three had seen a shooting or a stabbing. One out of four had witnessed a killing. Hundreds of children each year are present at the murder of a parent (in Prothrow-Stith, 1991, p. 69). When parents are unable to provide basic safety and protection, it seems clear that aggression is one way to fight back. Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) speculated that a subculture of violence developed out of the African-American experience. Membership in this subculture required the use of violence in the resolution of everyday experience.

Psychologist Louis Ramey states,

Black males living in poverty are awash in what he calls "free-floating anger". This generalized anger, accompanied by feelings of frustration and helplessness, results from a feeling that the deck is stacked against them—that the double whammy of class and race places them so far outside economic and social mainstream that they can never find a place inside. Disenfranchised, they are perpetually irritable. (in Prothrow-Stith, 1991, p. 6)

In a study on domestic homicide conducted by Centerwall (1995), the socioeconomic status of the victim was measured as well as related rates of household crowding. Sixfold differences between rates of domestic homicide between African Americans and Whites were entirely accounted for by differences in socioeconomic status.

Evan Stark (1993) refutes the myth of Black violence and the negative stereotype of young inner-city African Americans and suggests that stereotyping is

reflected in how the law is enforced. He states,

Arrests of Black people are 100% higher than their crime rate, despite national statistics of victims' reports showing that Whites are the assailants 66% of the time....In positing the inevitability of violence among Black males, society misses the opportunity to reduce interpersonal violence through intermediate steps and instead feeds hopelessness and cynicism back to the younger generation of Black Americans, thus reinforcing the lure of the streets. (p. 486)

The African-American experience has been one of continued oppression. It is essential to note that a major determinant of violent behavior is low socio-economic status and its resultant powerlessness. These are issues of caste. They are not the result of race, that is, of biology. Studies rarely focus on African-Americans who have not been involved with violence or crime and whose parents worked, educated themselves and their children—this too is the African American experience. The association of race and crime and violence is unfortunate.

### Influences of Media

In the last few decades, the amount of visual violence in the movies and on television has skyrocketed necessitating rating systems for movies and video games. On television, people are routinely kidnaped, assaulted, raped, tortured, and murdered. A number of questions have been proposed: does exposing children to violence in films, television programs, music videos, and video games make them behave more aggressively or violently? Do observers come to believe that violent action is an appropriate means of resolving conflict? Does watching violence that subjects are told is real create more physiological arousal than watching violence subjects are told is fiction? Are subjects desensitized to violence?

As previously mentioned in this paper (social learning theory), an early study by Bandura (1966) exposed 66 nursery school children to one of three five-minute films on

a TV screen. In all films the children witnessed an adult delivering a series of verbal and physical attacks on a large inflatable doll with a painted face and a weighted base (Bobo). One group of children observed the adult rewarded with candy and soft drinks. A second group saw the adult punished with verbal rebukes and spanking for being aggressive. The third group saw only the aggressive and violent behavior without consequences. The children were then allowed to play for ten minutes in a room of toys that also included Bobo. Spontaneous behavior was greatest in the groups that had seen the adult rewarded and in the group that had seen no consequences for negative behavior. The children were then told they would receive fruit juices and picture books if they would imitate the behaviors seen in the film. All children were equally able to duplicate the aggressive performance.

A 1970's a special panel commissioned by the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior determined that there was a direct causal link between exposure to television violence and subsequent aggressive behavior (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1973).

In the last two decades, extensive research has been conducted on the effects of violence in the mass media and after hundreds of studies, social scientists are almost unanimous in their agreement that portrayed violence increases aggressive behavior.

Specifically, the finding that observing violence tends to facilitate behaving violently or aggressively is explained in terms of learning theory, modeling, and incentive inducement, in terms of the conditioning of aggressive responses, and in terms of arousal enhancement. It appears that when people observe violence they ascribe meaning to its effects. Attribution theory indicates that observing violence that appears

to be more justified is more facilitative of violent behavior and the extent to which observers identify with protagonists affects how aggressively they will behave. For example, Snyder and Sickmund (1995) discuss juvenile delinquency and the historical significance of movies since the 1930's. He states that many films which portray youth and crime reinforce the idea of instant gratification and respect through intimidation, violence and other antisocial activities and devalue hard work and self-sacrifice.

In 1986, the American child typically watched television for more than 27 hours each week. At that time, by age 16 the average child witnessed 200,000 acts of violence and 50,000 attempted murders (Goldstein, 1986). Regulation of violence in the media has not been forthcoming from the broadcast industry. Networks claim that they would not present violent programming if they did not receive such high Nielson ratings. Precisely the sentiment revealed in a recent conversation with a 12-year-old boy. He said, "If it doesn't have violence in it, it's not worth watching."

Under growing public and government pressure, networks have adopted warning labels for violent programs. The tainted fruit theory posits that warning labels will decrease interest in violent programs. Research of Bushman and Stack (1996) revealed that warning labels increased interest especially when the labeling source was authoritative.

Felson (1996) takes an opposing view. In his review of the literature on long- and short-term effects of exposure to media violence on aggressive behavior he states,

Exposure to violence in laboratory and field experiments is as likely to affect nonaggressive antisocial behavior as aggressive behavior. The observed pattern is consistent with a sponsor effect: an experimenter who shows violent films creates a permissive atmosphere. The message that it is learned from the media about when it is legitimate to use violence is not much different from the

message learned from other sources, except that illegitimate violence is more likely to be punished in media presentation. (p. 126)

Although the majority of research clearly suggests a significant correlation between exposure to violence and aggressive behavior, most studies do not take the specific characteristics and risk factors of the individual into consideration in a scientific and systematic manner. Bushman (1995) conducted studies and concluded that high trait aggressive individuals are more affected by violent media than low trait aggressive individuals.

### Poverty

Anyone who spends any significant time with violent incarcerated men can't help but be awakened to the world of extreme poverty and discrimination in which they lived and continue to live. As they recount the events of their lives, the truth of Ghandi's statement that violence is the deadliest form of poverty is readily apparent. Any study that focuses on the individual in prison without looking at the structured violence in society perpetuates this violence. According to Gilligan (1996) structured violence is,

The increased rates of death and disability suffered by those who occupy the bottom rungs of society, as contrasted with the relatively lower death rates experiences by those above them. Those excess deaths (or at least a demonstrably large proportion of them) are a function of class structure; and that structure is itself a product of society's collective human choices, concerning how to distribute the collective wealth of society. (p. 192)

The underclass has been dying younger and at a greater rate than others since the beginning of civilization. Is this the fault of the individual or do structured social and economic factors impact the death rate?

In a recent study conducted by the U.S. Public health Service, Center of Disease Control, it was concluded that only one-third of the deaths of African Americans aged thirty-five to fifty-four were the result of usual health risks (smoking, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cancer, alcohol consumption, etc.). The remaining two-thirds were explained by factors that are the result of the effect of low socio-economic status such as lack of health care, pathogenic stresses, etc.

Although ethnic minorities are often at the bottom of the economic hierarchy, the effects of structured poverty impact poor whites as well. Class systems exist all cultures. The statistical studies of Gilligan (1996) reveal that,

Every fifteen years, on the average, as many people die because of relative poverty as would be killed in a nuclear war that caused 232 million deaths; and every single year, two to three times as many people die from poverty throughout the world as were killed by the Nazi genocide of the Jews over a six-year period. This is, in effect, the equivalent of an ongoing, unending, in fact accelerating, thermonuclear war, or genocide, perpetrated on the weak and poor every year of every decade, throughout the world. (p. 196)

Yet structured violence is not defined as criminal.

Although structured violence causes more deaths than behavioral violence, the two are directly related. Merton (1969) in his study of delinquent adolescents, proposed the theory that because of growing materialism and consumerism, self-worth and social respectability is based on what an individual possesses. If this cannot be achieved, then social respectability is found in toughness of behavior and immediate gratification of desires. Violent behavior was often necessary to overcome the reality of economic failure.

Deprivation is not only about material possessions. The sense of lack is internalized. Sennet and Cobb (1972) write, "The terrible thing about class in our

society is that it sets up a contest for dignity.” The “hidden injury” is shame. This is echoed by Rubin (1976) in her study of the working class family.

For men, their self-esteem was on the line every time they brought a pay check that was inadequate to meet the bills or, worse yet, failed to bring one home at all....For women, whose self-esteem and status are so intimately tied to their husbands' accomplishments, the issue became one of 'husband-esteem.' ...parents and children live in a society where respect is accorded to the financially successful, where the mark of ability is represented by one's annual income. Such parents, believing they haven't 'made it', feel unsure of themselves, their worth, and their wisdom—a perception that is often shared by their children. (p. 91)

Although much of the literature of the 1970's and 1980's alluded to the connection between poverty and crime, the direct relationship was not studied. The research of Hsieh and Pugh (1993) reported on violent crime, poverty, and income inequality. The studies described a total of 76 zero-order correlation coefficients for all measures of violent crime with either poverty or income inequality. Of the 76, 97% were positive. It was concluded that poverty and income inequality are each associated with violent crime.

White-collar crimes are often not viewed as criminal. Many involve torts and infractions of civil law rather than criminal law. While there might be historical reasons to distinguish between the two, what is the psychological justification to do so? Many white-collar crimes are actions that ultimately injure other people. The more subtle and often more harmful type crimes—manufacturing unsafe products, building lethal dams, operating fatal coal mines, and other practices that exploit the poor are rarely the focus.

The experience of oppression and lack of resources can influence an individual's world view and sense of expectation. Forest (1995) explored the association between critical life events and world view (mistrust, anomie, and belief in a just world) using

survey data from 829 adults of varying social classes. Events that had the greatest negative impact on world view were those that represent individual vulnerability to uncontrollable circumstances. Having a higher education and income and being White and male were directly related to positive beliefs about the world and therefore a more positive expectation of fulfillment of needs.

### Psycho-Social Theory

James Gilligan has attempted to integrate some aspects of psychological and social perspectives by combining intrapsychic theory and social context theory. Gilligan references insights found in the Bible, religious myths, the works of Shakespeare, and other literary classics in order to describe how violence has been intertwined with all aspects of our culture. He also includes the work of modern theorists such as Freud, Erikson, Fanon, and Arendt. However, the essence of his knowledge comes from his clinical work with violent offenders over the last 25 years. After listening to the inmates' horror stories he began to feel that the behavior he was seeing was not incomprehensible. He concludes,

Human violence is much more complicated, ambiguous and, most of all, tragic, than is commonly realized or acknowledged. Much of what has been written about violence, even by those experts who study it—criminologists, criminal lawyers, forensic psychiatrists, moral philosophers, political scientists, and historians—comes only from the point of view of their own specialties, which tend to preclude the tragic dimensions of violence. But those who deal with individual violence on a daily basis, judges and lawyers, criminologists and forensic psychologists, law-enforcement professionals and prison administrators, are fully aware of how tragic violence is, not only for the victims but also for the perpetrators. (Gilligan 1996, p. 5)

He attempts to interpret the messages within violent action and sees violent behavior as the “Rosetta stone” for decoding the mythology, the tragedy, and the

understanding of the violent individual (Gilligan, 1991). He feels very strongly that violence is not instinctual, hereditary, or caused by drugs and alcohol. He states that it's too often the consequence of relative poverty and all the humiliations that go along with it and therefore caused by personal, social, and environmental conditions. In the underclass, there is a lack of opportunity for achievement of nonviolent alternatives and for building self-esteem—such as education, social status, and professional achievement.

The violent individual often has a long history of lack of respect. There is much talk about habitual criminals as “antisocial”, against society. But, after hearing many of the inmates' stories, he says,

If you think about the life experiences these people have had since the time they were born, what could they say except that society was against them. Most of the seriously violent inmates were in prison because they had been so humiliated and shamed by the whole human world that they had undergone what I can only call ‘a death of self.’ (Gilligan, in Fain 1996, p. 60)

In his multicausal theory of violence, although he looks at many factors, he feels that the biological influences, speculations about age, gender, etc. are less defined than the psychological and social influences. His book is filled with examples of men who when asked why they behaved violently responded with “Because he disrespected me.” So common is this term that it has been abbreviated to “dis-”, as in, “he dis'ed me.” Gilligan describes a very disorganized man who is typical of the difficult, violent offender. He was in constant self-defeating power struggles with authorities and was in a vicious cycle of violent behavior and punishment. The more harshly he was punished the more violent he became. When Gilligan asked him “What do you want so badly that you would sacrifice everything else to get it?” the inmate responded with clarity, “Pride.

Dignity. Self-esteem.” According to Gilligan (1996),

People feel incomparably more alarmed by a threat to the psyche or the soul or the self than they are by a threat to the body. People will willingly sacrifice their bodies if they perceive it as the only way to avoid “losing their souls,” “losing their minds,” or “losing face.” (p. 96)

Shame and guilt are frequently conceptualized together. However, they do refer to different experiences and processes. Guilt is often associated with the enactment of a crime or the violation of a specific taboo. It refers to an act that has been committed that one is guilty of or feels guilt for. There is the expectation that penance can occur and that restitution is possible. Shame is more self-referential than guilt. Rather than the experience of, “I did bad” it is the feeling of “I am bad” that shame evokes. Helen Lynd (1958) describes shame as,

a wound to one’s self-esteem, a painful feeling or sense of degradation of having done something unworthy of one’s previous idea of one’s own excellence. It is, also, a peculiarly painful situation of being in a situation that incurs the scorn or contempt of others. (p. 24)

The experience of shame demolishes one’s sense of competence, capacity, worth, and agency. This wounding is suffered internally in the very recesses of our being and externally in relationship to and in sight of others. Shame is at the core of disrespect. This sense of being dis’ed from within is what creates such vulnerability to being dis’ed from without. Shame is the withdrawal of respect that potentiates violence as an extreme expression of agency.

For men in a patriarchal society, being placed in a passive, dependent position is humiliating and harmful. This state in and of itself already is punishment. From this point of view, violence can be viewed as the attempt to try to restore self-esteem, both in the self and in the nation. When insulted or treated with disrespect, we attack.

The development of self and the achievement of goals is a slow path requiring talent, education, and time. Violence, as an alternative, is immediate. Those groups most exposed to shame exhibit high rates of homicide, while social groups that have access to resources and can attain even moderate social prestige, are much less likely to be homicidal.

Gilligan uses his experience with and knowledge of the most extreme forms of violence to help us understand the more subtle forms of violence in average people in the same way as Freud analyzed extreme mental disorders as a basis for helping those who were exhibiting pathological behaviors in every day life. Gilligan's message is that we can learn about humanity from inhumanity.

#### Punishment - The Violence of Society

The way a society treats those who have transgressed against it is evidence of the essential character of that society.

*Warren Burger*

The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.

*Epigraph—Memoirs from House of the Dead, Dostoevsky*

Punishment is the treatment of choice for today's violent offender yet it has little direct effectiveness in deterring violent behavior or criminal action. It is a surprising and perhaps shocking fact that our present day scientific and technical society is engaged in the punishment of more than a million and a half human beings. Arguments against punishment cite its essentially vindictive and peremptorily negative nature. Its effects are viewed as perhaps even stimulating violent behavior.

Five years ago, before the current panic, 82% of those polled in one study believed that crime was getting worse and 34% felt truly desperate about rising crime

(Robinson and Darley, 1995). Currently, legislators continue to compete with one another to propose the toughest anti-crime legislation. The \$30 billion federal anti-crime bill got strong support in the midst of a deficit reduction drive. In many states “three strikes you’re out” proposals are trumped by “two strike” proposals. The plan is for more law enforcement, more prisons, more and tougher punishment. We are in a panic over crime.

In terms of punishment, this worsening trend of violence and crime is not the result of previous inattention. In early societies punishment for a crime was left to the person wronged or to his or her kin, clan or tribe. The punishments inflicted were characteristically cruel and by modern standards, out of proportion to the offense committed. Torture, mutilation, and capital punishment, prevalent early forms of punishment, evolved largely from old beliefs in vengeance (Von Hentig, 1973). With the growing complexity of society and the centralization of governments, the right to punish was taken from the offended party and vested in the state. At the end of the 18th century, punishment came to be thought of not only as express vindication but as a means of protecting the laws from abuse by individual members of society. Deterrence and separation from society, rather than revenge, became the principal purposes of punishment with the degree of penalty adjusted to reflect the nature of the crime (Thomas, 1988).

In the United States, two models of soon emerged. The first system began in New York state where prisoners worked together in total silence during the day but were housed separately at night. Strict discipline was enforced and violators were subjected to severe reprisals. The second model was in Pennsylvania and was based on solitary

confinement for convicts by day and night (Andenaes, 1984). The word penitentiary was coined with the intent of describing a place where the prisoner had the time and opportunity to repent his sins (alone with only self and bible) and could resolve to live a more socially acceptable life upon release (Tullock, 1984). This penitent system focused on the hope of rehabilitation. The New York system was criticized as being virtual slavery because the prisoners were put to work for private entrepreneurs and were never paid (Becker, 1968). Not surprisingly though, most states found the argument based on profit irresistible and adopted the New York model.

In the 1950's, ensuing reforms eventually emphasized rehabilitation for the good of society and the individual and we again became interested in rehabilitating criminals, in treating their "disease" (Thomas, 1988). This trend was short lived. Sociologist Robert Martinson (1974) concluded,

I am bound to say that these data, involving over two hundred studies and hundreds of thousands of individuals as they do, are the best available and give us very little reason to hope that we have in fact found a sure way of reducing recidivism through rehabilitation. (p. 23)

Although the definitions of positive and constructive rehabilitation were limited and hardly exhausted, and, many of the studies were statistically primitive, deterrence through punishment once again became the popular alternative (Plattner, 1984). Many scholars believed that punishment would deter crime (Tullock, 1984). Potential offenders would be dissuaded from committing offenses by the threat of serious penalties—punishment through imprisonment and rehabilitation through punishment. Economists joined in began turning their attention to the problem of deterrence and

concluded that if you increase the cost of something, less will be consumed. Thus, if you increase the cost of committing a crime, there will be fewer crimes (Becker, 1968).

As mentioned earlier, prison industry is experiencing a new boom over the past two decades. The U.S. has hosted the biggest prison-construction growth in history. The advent of the supermax prison does not even pretend to offer rehabilitation. There are no programs and no opportunities for structured rehabilitation. Inmates are in solitary confinement twenty-three and one half hours a day. We have reverted to the vengeance model. Reverend Sidney Smith in the early 1800's wrote,

A prison should be a place of punishment, from which men recoil with horror—a place of real suffering painful to the memory, terrible to the imagination...a place of sorrow and wailing, which should be entered with horror and quitted with earnest resolution never to return to such misery. (p.17)

Many inmates live with no hope of ever seeing the light of day or breathing a breath of free air again. However, the majority are eventually paroled. Without education and programs to rehabilitate, they are so damaged by the effects of punitive incarceration, that they are unable to adapt and function normally. They have no marketable skills and their powerlessness is complete thus increasing their likelihood of returning to prison.

There are many rumors about prisons. One hears that it's an easy life. Everyone has a color TV, air conditioning, all their material needs are provided. They just lie around, watch soaps, work out, and take it easy while hard working Americans pick up the tab. Perhaps this is true in the country club prisons that house the middle-class and white-collar offender but those prisons that incarcerate the vast majority are a violent predator/prey environment and institutes of torture. According to one inmate, "It is like

being in a small cage with about 100 hungry lions—and all of them are hungry and horny as hell.”

Public sentiment exclaims, “Well why not? Isn’t that what they deserve? That will show them. They’ll think twice the next time.” Our culture is very invested in punishment and believes it has a right to punish. This value is deeply embedded in our society from religion to family life (Zilboorg, 1968). We hold fast to the belief that people are afraid of punishment and that delinquent behavior is halted *ex timore poenae*. In this justification there is also more than a small quantity of vengeance. Does anyone really believe that we gave up revenge?

Does determinism rule out the concept of personal responsibility? What is the point of punishing an offender for crimes they were doomed to commit? Behaviorists might argue that since behavior is determined by consequences, punishment should only be used to alter the consequences in ways that the least cost to society will reduce the probability of crimes being committed. For example, society might wish to alter the expected value of a robbery by either increasing its costs (more certain, swift, or severe punishment) or increasing the alternatives to robbery (more jobs, better economic opportunities).

Certainty of punishment is another factor that is misrepresented. Many would not commit crime if they really thought they would get caught. Potential offenders think that the threat of capture and punishment applies to others but not to them. Unlike the other guy, they will take the necessary precautions (Robinson and Darley, 1995). Also, in the heat of a violent moment, the threat of punishment is not an issue. A test of the deterrence doctrine in a laboratory experiment using 80 male college students studied

certainty, severity, and celerity of punishment and the situations of general deterrence (threatened punishment) and specific deterrence (actual punishment). Only absolute conscious certainty of punishment showed any significance (Miranne & Gray, 1987).

Consequences of the use of punishment by parents and teachers has been studied. Over 90% of surveyed American parents of children aged 3-4 used physical punishment to correct misbehavior. Findings support that although punishment may produce conformity in the immediate situation, in the longer run it tended to increase the probability of deviance (especially the use of physical punishment) including delinquency in adolescence and violent crime as an adult (Straus, 1991).

The findings of countless studies argue against using punishment and rewards to motivate, maintaining that, although at best penalties and prizes may change behavior in the short term, they do not help individuals become responsible decision makers in the long term (Kohn, 1994).

Punishment in the Correctional System is defined as any lawfully imposed pain, suffering or loss of otherwise available rights experienced by an individual as a consequence of his or her culpable criminal action or inaction (Thomas, 1988). Its primary purpose in simplified terms, is to incapacitate further retribution, utilitarianism, and rehabilitation. The retributionist point of view suggests that punishment is what the offender deserves. The moral and ethical questions regarding this viewpoint are endless. Utilitarians believe that humans are amoral creatures who are primarily motivated by self interest and who, given their inherent ability to evaluate the probable consequences of their behavior will choose behavioral options that are expected to bring the greatest benefits at the lowest cost. Therefore the solution is to convince everyone that “crime

does not pay.” Incarceration gets them off the streets and eliminates their opportunities to go against the law. It is thought by some that rehabilitation miraculously occurs through punishment (Andenaes, 1984).

Studies on capital punishment, the ultimate punishment, posited that neither the existence of a provision for capital punishment at the state level nor the use of the provision, nor the enactment of the provision as demonstrated by the actual number of executions since 1976, would have an effect of deterring violent crime. Nearly 300 matched pairs of counties in the U.S. that share 45% or more of their borders across a state line were examined. Data from the 1988 County and City Books were then used to examine social, demographic, and economic differences within these matched pairs, with the difference in the violent crime rate in each pair employed as the dependent variable. The capital punishment variables did not account for any significant portion of the differences in the violent crime rate, and, contrary to deterrence theory, what effects these variables did have were positive indicating that the crime rate was increasing rather than decreasing (Cheatwood, 1993).

Wilkes (1987) also found that the death penalty does not deter crime. He based his findings on a ten year international study of criminal violence drawing on statistics from 110 nations and 44 of their cosmopolitan cities.

What of the class-structured nature of punishment in American society? The fact that prisons are overwhelmingly filled with the poor and a vastly disproportionate number of minority offenders is well known and perhaps even rationalized by some who believe that it is primarily the poor and minorities who commit the crimes. They do commit a disproportionate number of street-crime offenses but they do not have a

monopoly. As previously mentioned, the impact of poverty, income disparity, unemployment, and racism on crime should not be overlooked. It is an established fact that most persons arrested, convicted, and sentenced to prison are from the lower social strata. They are least likely to be represented by private attorneys, most likely to be convicted of “serious” crimes, and most likely sentenced to imprisonment and death row. As inequality in society mounts, the rate of crime is likely to increase. The relationship between social inequality and what is considered serious crime is widely recognized by social scientists as holding a key to the process of criminogenesis. Thus, this inequality also plays a major role in who receives punishment (Braithwaite, 1982).

One of the primary ideas of deterrence is to keep the prison conditions more miserable than the life styles of the lowest free class. The most elementary concept of punishment is that it involves deprivation of valued states and social relationships. If utilitarian assumptions about general deterrent effects are correct, then as socially valued states and relationships increase in the population (as the standard of living is raised) less punishment or deprivation should be necessary to achieve a comparable degree of general deterrence. If this is true then there is a further contradiction tied to the use of punishment to control crime. The value of criminal punishment is highest when crime rates are likely to be low. Additionally, because of the lowered standard of living of the poor, the value of punishment would be considered lower than in the “ordinary population” so according to utilitarian doctrine, more punishment is necessary for offenders from these groups than is warranted for those from the middle or upper classes (Rideau, 1994). In effect, punishment is being doled out on top of the punishment for being poor. No matter how you slice it, classism abounds.

The white-collar crime committed by the well-to-do and the well-connected is eleven times more costly than street crime. The two crimes that kill the most Americans and steal the largest sums of money from us (drunken driving and white-collar crime) rarely result in prison confinement (Umbreit, 1985). It is considered less threatening because it is removed from our everyday lives yet this very power differential contributes to the factors that precipitate crime and violence. We must begin to look at the social fabric of our culture and how economics impact on the sense of powerlessness and ensuing crime and violence.

The law enforcement system can never be made large enough to solve the crime problem. By some estimates, roughly a fifth of all crimes result in arrest, only half of those end in conviction, and less than five per cent of those bring a jail term (Reiss & Roth, 1993 ). Social science studies have focused on populations rather than on individuals. One of their most consistent findings is that a very small amount of criminals are responsible for most of the violence. One study tracked 10,000 males born in Philadelphia in 1945 for 27 years. It found that just 6% of this group committed 71% of the homicides, 73% of the rapes, and 69% of the aggravated assaults (Gibbs, 1995).

Even with the building boom, there are still not enough cells to go around. The 80's zeal for harsh drug penalties has pushed the U.S. incarceration rate in 1993 up to 455 per 100,000 citizens, approximately 1.4 million, and ran up an unprecedented annual tab of \$21 billion for the construction of prisons and maintenance of inmates. (Smolowe, 1994). It seems that building more prisons to address crime is like building more graveyards to address a fatal disease.

To the extent that scientists can explain why people commit crimes, the case for punishment is weak. If a person breaks the law because they were abused as a child, is addicted to heroin, is genetically inclined to drink without restraint, or as a result of antisocial aggression, then putting them in jail for having broken the law may seem as pointless and cruel as jailing them for having developed hay fever or being schizophrenic. Society will still want to protect other people from the criminal tendencies of these people but it should seem obvious that it should do this in ways different from how it goes about protecting others from a person carrying smallpox.

There is a story that when Ghandi was asked what he thought of western civilization he responded, "I think it would be a good idea." The moral surcharge of punishment is inappropriate in a civilized society. In the words of Karl Menninger (1968).

And just so long as the spirit of vengeance has the slightest vestige of respectability, so long as it pervades the public mind and infuses its evil upon the statute books of the law, we will make no headway toward the control of crime. We cannot assess the most appropriate and effective penalties so long as we seek to inflict retaliation. (p. 218)

Presently, punishment is useful for incapacitation in that it does physically separate the convicted offender from the public. Ultimate deterrence, moral education, and retribution are only occasional by products of this method.

Preventive intervention programs do not as yet reach deep enough. Behavioral programs that concentrated on teaching job skills and rewarding prosocial attitudes cut rearrest rates to about 35%. "Scared straight" and boot camp programs do tend to increase recidivism. Patrick Tolan of the University of Illinois at Chicago has recently published an empirical review of delinquency programs. He has found that family

interventions have repeatedly shown efficacy for reducing antisocial behavior and appear to be among the most promising interventions to date. Experiments in Eugene Oregon showed that teaching parents better monitoring and more consistent, less coercive discipline techniques reduces their kids' misbehavior (Gibbs, 1995). "We should make parenting skills classes compulsory for high school students" (Raine, 1993). The fact that we need to begin with our children isn't exactly rocket science. Unfortunately, family intervention is difficult and rarely attempted. The most common kinds of programs—counseling by social workers, peer mediation, and neighborhood antiviolence initiatives are hardly ever examined to see whether they produce lasting benefits.

Could punishment lead to more violence? Punishment of any kind elevates arousal and increases the vigor of responding. Physical punishment administered by a socializing agent can have an undesirable, long-term side effect in the form of aggression produced by imitation of the socializing agent (Walters & Grusec, 1987).

Until we attack the root causes of violence and criminal behavior, there is no hope for significant change. Fighting violence with violence and treating punishment with punishment only increases the behavior we wish to decrease.

#### Bureau of Justice Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities

In 1991, 13,986 inmates (population 711, 643) in 277 State facilities (total 1,239) were surveyed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. This survey of inmates is an important source of demographic and background information about persons held in prison in our nation. These surveys were conducted in 1974, 1979, 1986, and 1991. The State prison population increased 58% between 1986 and 1991 but remained mostly

male, minority, and young. The following data is excerpted from the 1991 survey and will present statistics on demographics and selected risk factors.

The survey findings represent a sample of the State prison population only. At that time, inmates in State prisons accounted for 17% of the total adult correctional population. These inmates have usually committed the most serious offenses and often have the most extensive criminal records.

Table 1. Bureau of Justice Survey of State Prison Inmates (1991)

Male	95%	Female public-order	6%
Female	5%	Life/death sentence	9%
White	35%	Previous drug use	79%
Black	46%	Drug use at time of offense	31%
Other	2%	Alcohol at time of offense	49%
Hispanic	17%	Previous incarceration	62%
18-24	21%	Previous incarceration/ probation	81%
25-34	46%	Single parent household	43%
35-44	23%	No parent household	14%
45-54	7%	Parents/substance abuse	26%
55-64	2%	Physical abuse (female)	33%
65 and up	1%	Sexual abuse (female)	33%
Married	18%	Physical/sexual abuse (female)	40%
Widowed	2%	Incarcerated family member	37%
Divorced	19%	Employed before arrest	67%
Separated	6%	Weapons possession	46%
Never married	55%	Gang membership	6-12%
8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less	19%	HIV tested	51.2%
Some high school	46%	HIV+	2.2%
High school graduate	22%	Children of male inmates under 18	770,000
GED	25%	Children of female inmates under 18	56,000
High school or equiv	59%		
Some college or more	12%		
Employed	67%		
Not employed	33%		
Veterans	16%		
Nonveterans	84%		
Male violent crime	47%		
Male property crime	25%		
Male drug	21%		
Male public-order	7%		
Female violent crime	32%		
Female property crime	29%		
Female drug	33%		

## Conclusion

When taken as a whole, the biological, psychological and sociological evidence is compelling. It is logical that biological risk factors plus environmental stressors increase the likelihood that an individual will behave violently. Many of the risk factors are clearly interrelated and stem from the powerlessness of low socioeconomic status, its effects on the family unit, and resultant patterns of thinking. Being born into a life of violence with limited resources is directly correlated to the propensity towards perpetrating violence.

The theories in this paper in no way intend to justify those who seem unwilling to direct their efforts towards developing themselves and towards positive aims. My intention was to show that there are a number of variables that can combine and stimulate violent behavior but as yet, no one single description can capture all susceptibilities, traits, or other random influences that place people at risk for perpetrating violence. There are many individuals who appear to have many of the risk factors that would make them prone to violence, yet they do not exhibit violent behavior.

We cannot predict with certainty. The threat of violence frightens us and in our fear, we are quick to place blame and attack. It seems that because we cannot easily predict, protect, or prevent, we are left with punishment as our only course of reaction. Many regard the violent offender as an evil monster. Monsters do exist but our prisons are not filled with the evil or the criminally insane. In my experience, they are filled with the poor and oppressed. My aim was also to shift the focus from the individual to the conditions within society that contribute to the development of violence.

Violent behavior is a display of a human's aggressive instinct. Without that instinct, which he (and she) shares with the rest of the animal kingdom, the human species would not survive. This same characteristic which urges a human being to defend his/her family, fellow, or God, at the cost of their life, has other consequences.

When individuals feel that they are backed to the wall and that there is no escape, they become violent. Depending on the environmental conditions and their perception of those conditions, individuals aggress against others, against the social system, or against themselves. When their roles are taken from them, their humanity is mutilated. Social controls to arrest the violent behavior and to prevent its recurrence often increase the problem they are designed to reduce and lead to more frustration and thus more aggression.

Part of what we must do is change the way we think about violence. Trying to catch and punish people after they have committed a violent act won't deter violence in the least. In life on the street, it's better to go to jail than be killed, better to act quickly and decisively even if you risk the certainty of being caught. (Canada, 1995, p. 159)

If we hope to impact the violent trend in America, we must look at the root causes and develop strategies that will address the conditions that influence an individual to resort to violent means. Just as the child is cradled by the family into which it is born, the family rests within and is influenced by the culture at large. We can investigate brain chemistry, continue to theorize about a multitude of factors, hire a million more police officers, and build more prisons, but unless we address the underlying powerlessness, we are doing nothing to impact the core issues.

To understand power and the source of violence, we must ask more profound questions than is customary. We must probe the problem of what it means to be

a human being...Violence has a breeding ground in impotence and apathy. As we make people powerless, we promote their violence rather than its control (May, 1972, p. 23).

In the words of Gilligan (1996),

The fundamental challenge for our time, I believe, is to break the link between civilization and patriarchy so that we can continue to receive the benefits of the former without having to pay the costs of the latter. If humanity is to evolve beyond the propensity toward violence that now threatens our very survival as a species, then it can only do so by recognizing the extent to which the patriarchal code of honor and shame generates and obligates male violence. (p. 267)

The capacity for violence exists as part of the human potential—as does the capacity for kindness. Neither is primary or predominant. Genes create potentials but they do not determine social patterns. We, as a culture, create social patterns. Through evolution we have been freed of the limiting constraint of instinct. Human beings have the capacity to grow beyond violence but society must work to create the social conditions which activate this capacity. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk who has dedicated his life to teaching peace, states that each person is born with both the seeds of violence and the seeds of nonviolence within. By this he means that as humans we all share the capacity for awareness and the capacity for anger and aggression. The behavior a person manifests is often the result of which seeds are watered (personal conversation, 1994).

With all we think we know, we still do not know why one person resorts to violence and another who has been subjected to the same conditions, develops clarity and possibly even wisdom. We need to look deeper. It seems that it would be to our advantage to ask the ontological expert, the violent offender.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Design

The purpose of this study is to explore the root causes of violent behavior as reported by the perpetrators and as such this research has been designed as a phenomenological inquiry into their experience and perceptions. If we are to truly affect the incidence of violent behavior we must ascertain its source. A review of the literature provides numerous hypotheses based on various theories and risk factors yet the existing literature contains minimal information gathered from direct interview.

Jorgenson (1989) suggests that a qualitative approach can support the “holistic examination of a phenomenon” and “avoid the separation of components from the larger context to which these matters may be related.” This study attempts to add to the existing information through listening to the direct experience of the participants. In-depth interviewing allows the participants to present their behaviors in the context of their lives rather than in the context of violent phenomena. Seidman (1991) states:

Interviewing provides access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior. A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make or their experience affects the way they carry out that experience. (p. 4)

Bender (1985) concurs that the focus of qualitative research is to understand human experience and to share that understanding in manner that can inform and direct others towards positive change. According to Merriam (1988) this type of research is “exploratory, inductive and emphasizes processes rather than ends...there are no predetermined hypotheses, no treatments and no restrictions on the end product. One does not manipulate variables or administer a treatment.” He goes onto state that

"discovery, insight and understanding from the perspective of the those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions."

McCracken (1988) concurs that the open ended in-depth interview may support the discovery of new information by allowing the researcher,

into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world. It can also take us into the life world of the individual, to see the content of daily experience, to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do. (p. 9)

Qualitative phenomenological research often serves to generate hypotheses rather than measure them. According to Schatzman and Strauss (1973), "Qualitative data are exceedingly complex, and not readily convertible into standard measurable units of objects seen and heard" (p. 108). This study does not intend to over generalize or to be statistically empirical. Its aim is to generate new perspectives, to set the stage for further studies using larger samples, and ultimately to help develop constructive modes of prevention and rehabilitation.

The participants in this study are the most disenfranchised in our culture. The word inmate or convict generally evokes feelings of fear, contempt, hatred, and evil. We immediately want them to pay for their crime, to be punished. Once someone has committed a crime we write them off and expect the worst. Murphy (1998) states that once an individual has entered the prison system,

The central moral assumptions are precisely the opposite of those of everyday life. Where as 'on the street' we expect the oncoming car to remain on its side of the road, the store patron to make his purchases and depart and the babysitter to care fondly for our child, the functioning of the criminal justice system is organized around the constant probability of evil. (p. 51)

We rarely ask why the perpetrator took violent action. Not the immediate why, but what conditioned them towards this end? What was underlying? What was the purpose of their behavior in the context of their lives? My experience with violent offenders has shown me that they are not all evil and they may in fact have important information to share. What will they tell us if we ask them?

Marshall and Rossman (1995) note, "The most important aspect of the interviewer's approach concerns conveying an attitude of acceptance-that the participant's information is valuable and useful" (p. 80). The intention of the interviews is not to imply acceptance their behavior, but to suspend judgement in order to provide the participants with an opportunity to speak about their lives, their crimes, and their perceptions of how and why the violent action occurred. This process also serves to empower the individual by suggesting that they perhaps might have something of value to offer.

### Participants

Twelve prison inmates, currently incarcerated in maximum security correctional facilities, were selected as a research population. The wardens and their designees of Osborn, MacDougall, and Cheshire Correctional Institutions in Connecticut facilitated my entrance and provided subjects. I presented my criteria for inclusion and except for two inmates, relied on these contacts within the prisons to select the participants. All participants met the following criteria: 1)they were incarcerated for a violent crime; 2)they were thought to have insight into their behavior; 3)they were thought to be articulate enough to express their perceptions.

Violent offenders are persons convicted of homicide, kidnaping, forcible rape, sexual assault, robbery, assault, or other crimes involving the threat or imposition of harm upon the victim. This includes extortion, intimidation, reckless endangerment, hit-and-run driving with injury, and child abuse.

Each participant volunteered without expectation of benefit or gain. The rights of each research participant were considered in accordance with current standards of research practice.

Of the twelve participants, four were of African-American heritage, two were of Hispanic heritage, four were of Caucasian heritage, one was of mixed Hispanic and Caucasian heritage, and one was of Mexican and Native American heritage. Chapter four includes more detailed demographic information on the participants.

#### Procedure

Prior to the interview, the participant was given a Statement of Purpose for the Participant (Appendix A) to familiarize him with my intent. Each participant was interviewed individually in a private setting within the prison. No correctional officers or other prison personnel were present. Each interview began with a description of the study, how I became interested in this topic, and a brief rapport building period.

Informed consent sheets (Appendix B) were collected and I explained that I would be asking them to disclose very personal details of their life and would not be seeing them again. I communicated my regret, stated that this was not my preferred means of gathering information, and explained that due to the difficulty of coming into a prison, these were the limitations. They were reminded that the interview would last for 90 minutes. The participants were encouraged to be as communicative as possible and to

ask questions, or make comments and suggestions whenever they felt it was appropriate. It was stressed that although I would be guiding the interview by asking questions, they were free to speak about whatever they felt was most important regarding the root causes of their violent actions. They were thanked for their willingness to participate.

I found that it was very important to be aware of rapport. Lewis (1998) notes, if studying homicidal individuals is a science, communicating with them is an art. To do the former requires the latter. The following are essentials: (1) the temperament to avoid locking horns; (2) the restraint at crucial moments to keep one's mouth shut; (3) the sensitivity to discern when to break a silence; and (4) the sensitivity to sense when to end an interview. (p. 7)

After the interview, the inmates were given the option of being presented with a pseudonym in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

### Data Collection and Recording

Once the participants were familiarized with the tape recorder and microphone, they were asked if they felt ready to begin. Each interview began by gathering demographic and background information and then moved on to the more open-ended questions listed in the Interview Guide (Appendix C). I encouraged the participants to speak about anything they felt was pertinent and used my skills as a therapist to engage them and facilitate conversation. At the conclusion of the interview, each participant was asked to complete a survey (Appendix D) based on their state of mind, sense of self-worth, and self-efficacy prior to incarceration. It is important to note that four of the participants felt uncomfortable disclosing information about crimes they had committed but had not been convicted of while tape recording. In one instance, the participant was awaiting trial regarding a specific violent offense and was advised by his lawyer not to

discuss it. They were more willing to speak about these matters “off the record.” A separate section will be created to contain this data.

### The Interview Guide

The interview guide begins by collecting background information but once this is accomplished, the participant was encouraged to talk about their life experience. Since so little information has been gathered directly from inmates, the interview guide was developed based on the assumption that the participants could provide a source of original data. The intent was to facilitate the telling of their stories with minimal interference. Although the questions served as a guide, the information was not gathered in a linear manner. However, because the interview format was intended to determine the impact, if any, that specific risk factors might have had on his development, the participant was asked to provide information in specific areas, if he did not spontaneously do so. The participants were queried about the relative importance of these risk factors in one form or another.

### Analysis

Data for this research project consists of the participants’ responses to the interview questions and information obtained from the Powerlessness Survey. Each interview was audio taped and transcribed to ensure accuracy. Profiles were constructed for each participant. Seidman (1991) states:

A profile in the words of the participant is the research product that I think is the most consistent with the process of interviewing. We interview in order to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories. We learn from hearing and studying what the participants say. Although the interviewer can never be absent from the process, by crafting a profile in the participant’s own words, the interviewer allows those words to reflect the person’s consciousness. (p. 91)

Providing others with direct exposure to the perpetrators' accounts is an important aspect and a primary purpose of the methodology of this project. During the interview, the participant was guided but allowed to express their story in their own way. The exact words of the participant are presented with the hope that the reader will be able to formulate their own opinion. Although it is their words that appear, in most instances I have changed the order and condensed the interview data to allow their story to flow in a more linear manner.

A number of themes were generated from the amassed data and an alternate yet equally important task was to identify and categorize the prevalent patterns in the interview material. Rather than beginning with a preconceived notion, my process of discovery grew out of the data. Patton (1990) supports this rationale by noting, "Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis."

The following will be identified and presented.

- Criminal data

- Demographic and background data

- Participant profiles

- Descriptive measures of risk factors

- Emergent themes and thematic interrelationship

- Trends from Powerlessness Survey

### Limitations

This study is designed to be a preliminary investigation into the risk factors reported by the perpetrator and contains limitations. These limitations should influence how the reader interprets and uses the findings of this study.

1. The number of participants is small and therefore not absolutely representative of all violent offenders.
2. All participants are incarcerated. They are a small sample of those who have been caught and convicted and therefore are not a random sample.
3. Participants are currently incarcerated in the Connecticut Department of Corrections and therefore only one region is represented.
4. Those selected to participate in the interview section of this study were chosen because they were thought to have had time to reflect on their past and the ability to articulate their insights. This selection was made by individuals unknown to the researcher and other factors could have influenced their selection.
5. All participants are fluent in English but English may be a second language for those of Hispanic descent.
6. Although every effort was made to interview men of diverse heritages, the data is not representative of all individuals from these ethnic backgrounds.
7. This study does not intend to comment on those who have been diagnosed with Axis II mental health disorders.
8. The Powerlessness Survey is not based on a normed scoring criteria and does not propose to provide empirical data. It instead attempts to suggest trends in the experience of self-efficacy. Its retrospective nature may be subject to inaccuracy.

9. All participants were men.
10. The research methodology presents an account of a complex phenomenon and was not designed to be predictive.
11. Participants may have withheld information and therefore findings may be based on an incomplete presentation of data.
12. Given the number of violent offenders I have worked with in a positive program, my own experience may have influenced my perception.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the life experience of the violent offender. Twelve men from three different correctional facilities were interviewed. In order to give the reader an opportunity to hear the voice of the participants, their stories are crafted in their own words and presented in narrative form. Each interview was conducted face-to-face in a private setting within the prison. Each participant was asked to talk about their life experiences, their history of violence, their understanding of their violent activities, and finally, based on their insight, their recommendations for intervention. Each participant made a point of stating that their stories and words were not meant to minimize or excuse their violent behaviors. They all commented that this was just the story of their lives, no more, no less.

Following the interview, participants were asked to complete the Powerlessness Survey which attempted to assess their experience of self-efficacy during their violent periods. The intent of this chapter is to present the findings that were obtained from the questionnaire, the interview, and from the survey.

In order to provide some context in which to view the participants, tables which include a summary of criminal data, subject demographics, and risk factors will be presented.

Table 2. Criminal data

Subject	Current Conviction	Sentence	Time Served to Date	Previous Conviction	Previous Probation	Previous Incarceration
Pedro	Murder	20 yrs	8 yrs	yes	yes	no
Domingo	Aggr Robbery Assault	35 yrs	15+ yrs	yes	yes	yes
Joseph	Murder	30 yrs	12 yrs	no	no	no
Taylor	Murder	30 yrs	10 yrs	yes	yes	no
John	Assault	12 yrs	3 yrs	yes	yes	yes
Carlton	Assault Kidnaping	life	20 yrs	no	no	no
Tiger	Assault	18 yrs	4 yrs	yes	yes	yes
Pete	Murder	30 yrs	5 yrs	yes	yes	yes
Hector	Assault	20 yrs	3 yrs	yes	yes	yes
Martin	Murder	65 yrs	7 yrs	yes	yes	yes
Ron	Rape Kidnaping	25 yrs	2 yrs	no	no	no
Lou	Murder	life	20 yrs	yes	yes	no

Table 3. Demographic and background data

Subject	Age	Ethnicity/ Race	Current Education	Religious Bkgd/Cur	Marital Status	# of Children
Pedro	32	H	GED/college	C	M	2
Domingo	40	H/W	GED/AA	C	S	0
Joseph	39	W	GED	C	D	2
Taylor	29	AA	GED/college	P	M	1
John	53	NA	GED	C	M	4
Carlton	41	AA	GED	P/M	S	2
Tiger	41	AA	GED	P	D	1
Pete	38	W	GED	C/NA	M	1
Hector	26	H	GED	C	S	1
Martin	41	AA	10	none	M	3
Ron	61	W	HS	none/P	D	2
Lou	39	W	GED/college	none/NA	S	0
		AA - African American NA - Native American W - White H - Hispanic			Catholic P-Protestant M-Muslim	M-Married D-Divorced S-Single

## Participant Profiles

### Profile 1 - Pedro

I am a person. I am a living human person and I have feelings. I wasn't taught how to use these feelings. I mean, when someone is not taught how to use them you learn on your own. The way you learn is the right way until you're taught another way. I am not a monster. I was not born to commit this crime. Still, nothing I have said is an excuse. I took a life. I was responsible

My mother came for me when I was seven. Prior to that, I had been living with my grandparents in Connecticut. She practically had to drag me out of the house screaming and crying. I had to go with her. I had no choice in the matter. She came for me so I could start raising my sisters. All of my sisters are younger. We have five different fathers. I got four sisters from different fathers. Me and my brother are from the same father. We all looked out for each other because it was a constant war zone. Different stepfathers all of the time and they all were always brutal in one way or the other. They were abusive to all of us pretty much. I was beaten with electrical cords and made to kneel down for hours. To my sisters not as much because then they had to deal with me or my little brother jumping on them and that would take the attention away from my sisters. I would do that all of the time, deflect. There was constant violence in the house. My mother was always getting beat up. Once my brother stabbed my stepfather. They were low-life men. I think even for them to be in a relationship with my mother that there is no way that their lives would be any different. They know what she was into and they were definitely into it themselves.

My mother took me away from an environment where I was allowed to be a child and brought me to an environment where I had to be a man. At seven I would be forced to see things and shut up. Whatever you see and whatever is going on you know that is not something you talk about. After my mother came for me, I lived in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. My mother used to deal prescription drugs and other things so we used to move a lot. When things got hot, we moved. Now that's the way it is. That was the part of having to be quiet at school and everywhere else. It was hard when you went to school and they were teaching you about not doing drugs and this and that and showing you pictures. I used to think, "Why are you showing me that? I know more about drugs than you do." I liked school. I just didn't have too much opportunity. I was always home taking care of my sisters or moving around a lot. I was shy. I was embarrassed to bring anybody to my house. My mother had a block, a whole block that was her drug dealing spot which was across the street from my school. So, she runs this block and she is very well known and I am her son. I'm in school and everybody is looking at me. Everybody knows, my teachers know. I didn't even want to be there. I'm the son of a drug dealing mom that runs a block.

A lot of the things I did even when I was younger were violent. Even though at that time I didn't think so, like burning buildings down, kicking the crap out of the dogs in the house. There were times I used to yell at my sisters for just being alive. I used to blame them sometimes for not being able to leave.

Basically, the only guy I used to love was this old man I used to fly pigeons for. His name was Sonny, an old Italian guy. I had loved him. He was a father to me but I never told him that. He taught me responsibility. He taught me how to not keep my head

down. He taught me how to go out there and work for my stuff. He used to make me spend money on myself because the money he used to pay me for flying, taking care of the pigeons, and feeding them and all, I used to go buy clothes for my sisters. And, my brother used to take it sometimes. I would give it to him so he wouldn't go stealing. My mother used to take it too. I never bought stuff for me. Sonny was a great guy. I respected him because he gave me responsibilities, you know, real responsibilities but they were voluntary. When I used to go down to the little club everybody there were like older gentlemen. I was the only young guy there. I would come in there with all of these pigeons that I caught from someone else and I was the little pride of them. It's like a war. You have two hundred pigeons. A guy two blocks away has four hundred pigeons. If you trained your pigeons they always they come back home. The whole purpose, the whole game is to make some of his pigeons come with yours. Then you bring them down to the shop and you brag about them. That's it. You brag about it, give them back to the guy, and the guy is all upset. He is mad at his birds you know. I used to go down there with all of these birds and they used to be like look at this little kid. The little kid got your pigeons. Them pigeons are stupid. You might as well just close your coop down. It made me feel like I had some value, like I was doing some good or something. I honestly thought that these people you know cared about me. Sometimes I wished that they would have had the strength. Sonny could not get involved with my life because if he got involved that would have meant that he had to hurt somebody and he mentioned that to me more than once. He knew that when I used to go up there with a busted face from my stepfather, you know, he used to just flip his top. It started to get to a point that even my brother was doing it. So, you know he would get upset and want to go down

there. When I used to talk crazy things he used to tell me, you know, this will be over some day and this and that. That is when I started talking about stupid things that I wanted to do, like runaway, you know what I mean.

I used to think that hopefully they would die on the bridge. I used to have fantasies they are falling off the bridge. Me collecting the insurance and me taking my sisters and raising them. I had all kinds of crazy thoughts. It was a constant thing. Constant, constant, constant, you know, and I was surprised I managed to go at it that long.

Once we left Brooklyn I never saw Sonny again. It was weird because in Brooklyn we lived on one side of the river. When we lived on the other side in Manhattan we were right by the river. My stepfather had a pigeon coup so I used to see him from roof to roof. I swear it was him because he is the only one that would be up there. Now I was on this side of the river and it always felt like I was a million miles away. I couldn't face him once I started getting in trouble.

I started drinking when I was seven and was doing marijuana, cocaine, and alcohol regularly from age thirteen to twenty-three. The alcohol most of the time used to make me feel like Superman. I would always start with drinking a little of alcohol and since I know that cocaine mixed alcohol kills the drunkenness, I could drink as much as I want and not get so drunk. That was my underdog days. Once I drank and did a little cocaine there was nothing that could stop me. I would feel bold. That was I wouldn't bite my tongue for nobody and I always managed to take on the biggest person in the club. I could be the life of the party where normally I was shy.

I didn't like running around with a bunch of people. I just wasn't into it. Wasn't into having all of those people around. I was a fast mover. I was in and out of places and my mind was constantly moving. I didn't like to have to rely on nobody. Plus when I used to steal cars I would have certain places where I would leave cars. Because if I had to run this way, I would have a car there and if I had to run that way, I would have a car there. I hate to say it but a lot of people were uh, dumb. If you got a fifty thousand-dollar car you should know better than to just leave it with the keys sitting there. Also, the rental places had a drop box. The drop box would have a panel on the bottom. I would take the panel out, open that box, get the keys, use the car for the weekend, and then bring it back. Drop the keys back and so it wasn't a stolen car. I would just borrow it. It would have a lot of miles on it though.

Sometimes I would steal cars and there would be weapons in them. I would get rid of them. I stole a handgun from Alcohol Tobacco Firearms, right out from under their noses. Them guys were sitting there eating donuts and I walked right by them. That was an achievement. I loved the weapons but I got rid of them. It's just that I knew what I was going to do with them. I would sell them quick. I would get them out of my hands as fast as I could. Because I knew if I start letting my mind take over, I would be walking around with a handgun. I knew that it would be quicker for me to pull the trigger than to do something else. If I were to fight or to use a knife, it takes physical action. You can lose. With a handgun the only way you lose is if you get caught. Most of the time, ninety percent of the time, the other person is the one that loses. Weapons were a part of me all of my life but I had knives. I used to go to the boys club on 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Manhattan. I would always have what they call a 007 in my back pocket. It

was a wooden handle and what I call a flick blade. You just flick it with your thumb and it would pop open. Always, always, always, my whole life I carried it. Yeah, I used it, I used them before but the thing about it was that, that uh, it requires up close personal contact. A gun you could shoot a block away and not even see what happens.

When I was fourteen, I moved back with my grandmother. I had a lot of anger in me. During this time I read things that fueled more of the anger. I actually read Ted Bundy's book *The Only Living Witness* while I was on the street, before this thing happened. I'm not going to put blame on it. It didn't give me ideas. But it always kept something in my mind that made me aware of a process of compartmentalization. Getting high, drinking, and reading this book. It didn't help me. I didn't think of him as a hero. I thought of him as, you know, just as bad. But, it fed that need to see or hear about more violence. Because now here in Connecticut I wasn't seeing the violence that I was seeing in New York. Violence had become a big part of my life.

When I was seventeen or eighteen I started living with my wife. She was the sunshine in my life. I was living with her when I got arrested. I had gotten into a couple of fights before this last arrest. I was in bad shape. I was doing things in my house that were crazy. Once, in the middle of the winter, I broke all of the windows in my house. I had this thing about people who I thought cared about me. Every time they cared or showed too much love I would do something so they would be scared of me or that they wouldn't love me or something like that. I used to scare the hell out of my wife. I was afraid. I was always afraid. I was always terrified. Whenever I got terrified about something, I would act out on something. I was frightened that if I cared about somebody so much and then let myself go and then all of a sudden they say I don't love

you any more or anything. To avoid this, I just wouldn't get into that situation period. I didn't allow myself to have these feelings.

At the time of my offense, I was running. That whole weekend I was drinking and getting high. I was hanging with a certain individual that weekend and we were drinking and everything. It seemed to me that he touched me in a way where, I mean I don't know, I can't ever be sure if it was in any type of a sexual way or anything, but the way it felt to me didn't feel right. It was only a touch on the leg. But to me, at that moment, it didn't feel right. When the guy first did that, I think I hit him. He reacted by grabbing me by the throat. We were both drunk and this guy was huge. There was a knife on the table. The irony of there just happens to be a knife on the table. I'd had these fights before. We were exhausted and just fell to the floor to just go at each other. I stabbed him. I stabbed him about fifteen times. It was weird because he was back in the chair. He like sat back down in the chair and I sat back down and continued to drink. I was upset. I was pissed off because I thought he made me do that. So, I'm sitting there drinking and I'm talking to him. I knew what I did but I didn't believe it. When the body started moving, I got some cord and tied him up because I thought he was going to get back up and come after me. I was afraid that this guy was going to get up and hurt me. I sat there and little by little things started coming and I said I gotta leave. I gotta go. It was his apartment. He was dead when I left.

I called my wife up and I told her. She didn't believe me. I didn't blame her. So many times I had called home and bullshitted so much and she hung up. I called her again and this time she believed me. I was preparing to leave. I wanted to leave. I was sobering up. You know, so little by little I thought about it and thought about it and I

thought about my son and I thought about her and I said if I run I gotta run for the rest of my life. They would have figured out who killed him. There were finger prints and I was seen with this person more than once or twice. One, two, three, four about seven or eight times. It was just a matter of time. It would have been a few days before they found the body. I didn't want to run. I told my wife to meet me in the train station. My intentions were to just talk with her and pretty much say I screwed up and I don't know what to do. This is it. She was trying to help me. She called my Probation Officer. I was on Federal Probation for that gun and that bullet proof vest I stole. They gave me two years probation for that. You know, even when I was on that probation I was still drinking and getting high and taking their urines. They never violated me or anything. All dirty urines for six months. They never violated me. Anyway, my wife had talked with my Probation Officer and they set her up. They followed her they told her don't worry about it, it's probably nothing. They followed her to me and when she got to me I gave her a hug and when I saw them I felt I had been betrayed. One thing led to another and at first I didn't want to tell them nothing because I was angry and scared. I wasn't going to leave town. I already made my mind up about that. But I wanted to get a lawyer. I felt miserable. The next morning an officer threw the newspaper in my cell. There it was on the front page. When I went in a couple of pages there was my face with the officers arresting me. You know, that is when reality hit. In all honesty it took me a long time to get the thinking out of me about that he deserved it. That what I did what was right. That he looked for it. He knew the rules. That was my first reaction, my first defense. It took me a long time to get that out of my system. I'm glad I did. Nobody deserves that.

I had years of anger, built, I mean really built and the drinking used to let it out. It's the pain combined with what you are capable of. But you never know until you do it and when it's done and you realize that you're capable of taking another persons life it changes the whole game. It changes everything. It makes you feel dirty. It didn't make me feel Godlike. I felt a lot of shame. I felt a lot of remorse and sadness for his kids. It was weird, the second year I met my wife, I told my wife that if I ever go to jail its going to be for something like that. So, in a way I guess I knew what I was capable of and I prophesied my own demise.

I have been in prison for eight years. I got married in prison. So many years I spent on the street and I said marry me and she said no. Now I come to jail and she marries me. I think I gotta be something special because why would she come up here and give me another child. My wife is very special. She doesn't deserve all of this. She knows me, the person I am. She has met my mother, she has met my whole family, she knows a lot of the things. I think me and her are pretty equal except that the difference in our lives was that she always had a family. What my mom did to me I did to her. So that all of the stuff that I felt, I made her feel. That is something I always regret because why should I put somebody through the same thing I went through. That was all I had been taught. Now the roles are a bit reversed and I allow myself to be her punching bag. I know I can be able to deal with it. I want to deal with it now than wait to I get home and find out I can't. Because if I know that I can't deal with these kind of things then there is no sense in me going to my children and going to my wife and to bring all my anger back again. A lot of people in here are bitter. I'm not bitter about what I'm going through I'm just bitter about what I'm putting her through and my kids. It was time. It

was time for me to face the consequences. It's the only process available to allows me to take responsibilities for the thing that I've done.

I am supposed to go before the parole board in the middle of '99. I am hoping for it. I am hoping because I feel that I've done everything they have asked me to do. I've done their programs. I have practically no disciplinary history. I got one ticket back in '92 when I was running with the gang. I was running with the Kings. As soon as I caught that ticket I was on the terms of getting out but I had to wait for the proper time because I didn't want to get hurt. Things all depend on who is running it. I earned enough respect in those five years for them to tell them to let me go. They thought I was smart and all. I was what they call a philosopher and secretary. I used to make everyone go to school and get their GED. That was my power trip. I could have used my position for violence. I could have sent these people, wherever I choose but I made them go and get their GED's. When there were people that I could trust, I use to tell them to get out. You know. Resign, retire. That's better then getting jumped out. Then we let you go because that always leaves the door open. Somewhere along the line you can get your butt kicked or you know I mean they wouldn't let me out. I don't have no dealings with them whatsoever and they respect that. They respect me and they the only problems that I have is making sure that everyone else in the prison understood that. They understood that they know that I'm not running with no crew. So that when something happens between families here. Don't come after me, because I'm not down with that no more. I am proud of what I did because I never had to pick up a hand to hurt anybody else. I'm not going to say I never will. I might have to in the proper situation, in the right situation, where you have no choice. See the only difference with me now, I will seek

some sort of resolution. I will use that law that they have here about deadly force that is only justified if you have exhausted all of your options. It means if I have the chance to open that door and leave, I'm gonna take that option. More importantly, I'm not going to put myself in them situations. I blame myself for being in them situations. I put myself there. Given my life history, I'm aware of what I am capable of.

If our society is to prevent violence it needs to intervene very early in children's lives. The first thing that comes to my mind is everything that generated me was not having the opportunity to live a regular normal life. To have a family. To have a mom and pop. I don't care about the problems that we would have had. I don't care about the peer pressure. I didn't care about anything else but at least I could have someone to call mom and pop. You know, family. You need it. All of the pressures of living poor makes families fall apart. I don't think my mother even passed sixth or seventh grade in school. I can't believe what kind of job my mom could have got, but I know she could have got a job.

Poverty, that's a definite cause of violence. That's right off the top. And racism. You have a Hispanic female coming to the States. She was nineteen years old when she had me. So she was seventeen when she had my brother. So you figure she's sixteen alone out here. What is she going to do? She can't even speak English. That's where it starts. If she was able to learn English, able to learn about family things. She started dealing drugs to make money but she lost the reasons why she was doing it. I'm pretty sure that when she first started doing illegal things or making a living one way or the other was because she was seventeen years old and pregnant. My father's in prison. She doesn't have anything else to do. Now, she has to survive. So she started doing these

things to survive. But she lost it then. She lost the purpose. When you are kicked to the curb then you lost your purpose.

That's the only way I have been able to come to terms with why my mother wasn't my mother. That's the only way that I can. I can't say I can forgive her. I tried. I can't. I could say that it is not her fault. Not entirely her fault. You know, it is not something she wanted to do. I see her in my trailers. That took a big step. She is in New York. She's only doing so-so right about now. I'm trying to reach out and help her now. She's been an addict for over twenty years. She is a life time methadone user. She had another baby when she was in here forties. She found a guy who is real cool who cares about her and takes care of things but reverts to his old ways to get money for the house. He just got busted again. After ten years but he couldn't see them going without food. Eight months ago, the last visit that she came that I could see the pain that I was still putting on her. I just let it go then. It has to end somewhere. The pain has to stop somewhere. At least now I am aware of some of the reasons.

Right now my brother is in a hospital almost like a hospice in New York. He is dying of aids. I saw him six months ago on a video that my wife brought on a trailer. I couldn't deal with it. That is not the brother that I saw last. What's ironic about it, the same place that he caught that habit is the same place that he's going to die at. The building he is in used to be a community college and we lived right across the street. That's where this murder here took place that's where a lot of the violence and a lot of the things I seen took place. My mother made my brother what he is. He didn't have a chance. She had my brother go out when she couldn't go out anymore to pick up her drugs. I knew eventually that he was going to get curious. This is what I called the cycle.

It is a generational cycle. Because of the pain I have passed on to my wife and children, I am continuing it. Never physical pain though that was the only difference. I never got physical with her but I passed the pain to her. She is not directly passing it to my son. We both are. Me being in prison and her suffering like she is. I try to make it up to my son. There isn't a day that doesn't pass that I don't tell him that I love him. There isn't a day that doesn't pass that I don't apologize to him. I also make sure that he knows that I'm not jealous that he is in the young marines now. I see it as very good because he has those figures that he needs in his life. The discipline. You know, I'm not going to tell him no because I feel insecure. I hate the point that he is always looking out for me. My son is eleven years old and he is always looking out for me. He knows what to say to me. He will fight anybody and argue with anybody that says something bad about me. I hate that. I don't like that he has to defend his pops all of the time. You know. So, I am trying to give him that avenue that he doesn't have to be like that because he is holding a lot in. I know he is. Yea, he's got a lot of strength but he is holding a lot of pain in. I can feel it because he is the little man of the house. I know he doesn't want to be. I was the little man in the house and I didn't want to be. My daughter is going to be three next month. She is going to get the other side of me. She is going to get all of the treatment and all of the things that my wife was supposed to have gotten.

I have learned so much but it is very hard to be here and to try to heal the pain and anger. I have been wanting to for so long to write my feeling out but the thing is I still get angry or scared. I hate pulling those demons out because I got to face them. There is not a lot of help or support in here. I try to explain to my wife when I tell her at least you have the children to hug. When the children see a tear and they pat you in the

face and it feels so good. In here you just have to hold it in. When I have days like that you can't just sit there and cry, you can't just go and speak to someone no not with confidence you can't. This is not a good place to give people details of your life. Someone might use it against you or joke about it later on down the road. I keep working though. I keep trying to better myself.

I would love to see something positive about myself. Because the last time I saw something was a psychiatric evaluation they did on me in 1990. They told me to be honest. I was honest. There were two females and a video camera. I felt very good. I thought they wanted to help. It brought nightmares, it hurt, it was painful. When they wrote that thing up. I was angry. I was very angry. I mean if your being honest and whatever. I take criticism easily as I can take a pat on the back. But, these people put me so far down. They told me my IQ was so damn low, only 85. That's way below average.

Everyone should have a responsibility of the kids, of the children. Society needs to get involved instead of turning a deaf ear and turning away and thinking it's not my problem, it's not my fault, I don't give a damn. It's true what they say. It takes a village. I grew up in a bad village. I see all of these guys in here. I saw a kid this past summer, he is in here for manslaughter and he doesn't even know how to play baseball. Baseball is an American pastime. That's the first thing I ever learned in my life was to play baseball. It bothers me, he doesn't know. Someone could have took the time out. The problem is the villagers that are bringing them up, I'm going to say "us" up, is a bad village. It's not being led by anyone. Them against the world. Kill or be killed and that's it. There is not enough caring in this village. Children need to be cared for.

## Profile 2 - Domingo

My story is not about excuses. But, when I was a child I was going through issues and looking back at it now with my own training (I've worked in Sesame Street and the Cabbage Patch and a few other children's programs and I now work in this COPS program here where we talk to kids that come in), I've learned a lot about child psychology and human dynamics and development.

I grew up in Bridgeport, Connecticut in a multi-cultural neighborhood. I remember that things first started changing for me when I was around ten years old. I would say maybe eight to ten years old only because earlier than that I don't see a lot of issues. There was no sexual issues with me growing up. So I can't attribute any of my behavior on those types of types of things. There was a lot of physical and emotional abuse though.

At that time, I had a brother who was emotionally retarded. He wasn't mentally retarded but he, you know, had emotional problems. I'm the oldest and he was under me. He didn't live at home and my parents never talked about it. He lived in the country on the outskirts of Bridgeport. He didn't live with us. He lived with a foster family and they owned a farm with animals. This couple took in kids with similar types of issues or whatever problems. He would come over and visit us for a short period of time or we would go to the farm where he lived at. And so we would interact, he and I. And I knew he was different because he couldn't communicate clearly. He was somewhat slow and I felt very protective of him. And when he would be taken away from me I would be frustrated and angry and confused. And my parents wouldn't tell me much. He was killed in a car accident in 1968 on the day that Robert Kennedy was assassinated. He

was delivering newspapers and a guy hit him from behind. He didn't have reflectors on his bike. I was ten years old.

Around this time I started playing with matches at home and different things like that. There was a fire in the apartment and we had to move out. They never knew how it really started. I'm not a psychologist but looking back at it now I understand all this was because I was crying out for help and attention. At the very least, it would have been a good time to intervene. My father's way of helping me was the old discipline. Kneeling in the corner, he would use an extension cord on me. He never hit me in the face. For some reason I respected him for that. He didn't hit me because he was just drunk or because he just came home. There were things that happened. I would be expelled from school or suspended. I would steal something from an area and somebody contacted him and he would discipline me. He used to do things like make me kneel on rice and metal potato graters. My mother was in the picture and she would always degrade me and humiliate me. I believe that they thought it was a way to enhance me. Of course unfortunately, I thought about how I wished my parents were dead. I don't know if that's a popular thing but that's what I thought. I mean after you get whipped with the extension cord and you know kids can hear you screaming and then later on they would taunt you. I would cry to get him to stop beating me. But never other than that. Then afterwards, I would go back and rub salt on the back of my legs to make sure that I can endure that degree of pain and discomfort. I didn't want to give him the satisfaction knowing that he broke me. The same thing with the rice. I looked at that as my rite of passage. Excuse my language, I would think "Fuck my father, he ain't gonna break me." And I would kneel until my knees would, you know, show a little blood, not a whole lot

because you gotta move around. It was a form of torture but I endured it as a way of saying you can't break me. And that's when I felt that I wished they would die. I wanted people that were less emotional, more loving. I mean it's okay if you're in the Marine Corps and they wanna break you down to build you up but that's a tough way to go when you're ten years old trying to find yourself.

And of course I would be angry. And we didn't communicate a great deal so then I would go back out into the community and I would throw bottles through people's windows, break somebody's car window. I did my usual vandalism. Well, I say usual maybe it wasn't usual. But for me I thought it was. I would break into the schools that I went to and specifically vandalize the teacher's office that I didn't like and was angry at. Just random acts of violence. I ran away from home and I set other fires. So committing crimes and vandalism came easy. Because if I can endure that punishment and humiliation at home well this stuff was no big deal, no big deal. I didn't really care if I got caught.

There was also a racial component. My mother's Italian, my father's Puerto Rican. So you come up from that type of cultural environment and you endure some degree of racial taunts because of being Puerto Rican and White. In the early '60's it was you know whatever, half-and-half, White boy, or Spic, you know, whatever fitted the people. As kids, we accepted each other. It was the adults that fueled the fire in society, saying well you're this or you're that. How come your name's that but you can't speak Spanish. Well my father didn't speak it at home. Then I had to endure that degree of criticism. When I would go visit my grandparents they would really hammer us with racial tones. My two other brothers, one has since died in 1980 but they were darker,

they were typical Hispanic looking, dark complexion, dark hair. And when we would go and visit my mother's parents and her two sisters, that's all we would hear. Puerto Rican. Not always directly at us, but you know, Spics, whatever other words they would use, Chardonese, or whatever other racial epithets that they would just kind of go around in the household. Coons are real good runners or whatever you know. So you grew up listening to that and you know I've got friends that are Black and I'm like, they ain't that bad. I knew it affected me as a Puerto Rican because I knew I came from another race. That hurts from people that you're supposed to love and respect, which I did. My father's family treated us great, no problem there. They were very tolerant. I would love to visit them. It was a safe place for me.

I was an alter boy in at church. My mother made me be an alter boy. It was expected. My mother and father would say we have to go to church but they didn't go on Sunday. I'd say, "Mom, why do I gotta go." She'd say, "Shut up and go." And my father would just get up and start you know whaling on me and that was his way of communicating. So I didn't like that. And I didn't understand it actually.

I began to have anger at God because the priest was a strict disciplinarian. It was no different than home. He belittled us, he degraded us. I stole from that church. I broke into cars right in that parking lot. I was supposed to do mass and I would make an excuse for not being there and I'd be breaking into people's cars. People that were friends of my parents. I was angry. I didn't need the money, you know. In the '60's the economy was different. A dollar could go a long way.

I wasn't thinking of a life of a productive citizen. I wouldn't mind holding up an armored car with my thoughts. My mind was inundated with wild fantasies of quick

money. Anything to get away from home. And I did run away from home and I lived in a few abandoned buildings. Eventually I went home and after about a week I was just, you know, stealing from the stores and stuff like that.

Around the same time, my mother was a volunteer for the Salvation Army and this little organization down where we lived. I was a bell ringer. But you know I only rang the bell so I could help put the money together so I could steal it later that evening. I broke into that place and vandalized it. And kicked the dog. They found out it was me. So after I got out of the juvenile facility, it only took a couple of months. I was arrested on some other charge and then they hit me with a bench warrant for possession of sales of heroin. I was sent to Cheshire Reformatory because I had committed some burglaries. The burglaries were really violence related, vandalism, destructive stuff. After I would take people's stuff I would break up the house and when I got caught I had done a couple of those burglaries and some stolen cars. I got caught because I made the mistake of selling heroin to an undercover agent. But, generally by the time you've gotten caught there's a number of things you've gotten away with.

I was using drugs and as I was experimenting, I fell into heroin use at the age of 15 and I liked it. It took me away from everything. It took me away from everything and I was very free with selling someone else's heroin to anyone that came around. I used a lot of hallucinogenics when I was growing up. Marijuana too but I didn't like it because it made me too critical and analytical of things. I had to analyze myself and I didn't like what I saw as a teenager. But I liked hallucinogenics. I liked acid, canabinol, THC, whatever was available in the early '70's I used. I was very experimental. I was a hyper guy. With the acid I could delve into another part of my mind or see things that I wanted

to see that was different. And I've been on some bad acid trips and my mother saw me. I would have to stay away from her for a number of hours but in the process my mother and I became very close. I was like a surrogate husband because her own relationship with my father wasn't too great. My father had extramarital relationships with other women and he fathered a daughter. My father drank so I would never touch it because I didn't want to get like him. He would drink and he would just start ballin', crying uncontrollably and I always thought that was a sign of weakness to do that. I didn't like the way alcohol made me feel. I couldn't do anything.

In 1974 or '75, somehow myself and a couple of guys, as we were getting bigger as teenagers, we knew that we had the ability to intimidate people. We were bigger now. And the bull shit that we had to take at home, you know, we weren't gonna take anymore from anyone. And we would pick on other people. Not necessarily kids, but other people. If we took somebody's money we had to compound it with beatin' the guy up. And we would continue to throw bottles through people's windows. There were people in my neighborhood that liked to enforce the rules and so on. Everybody wanted to keep their area clean. Well, I didn't like that because my father had me do it. So I'll remember where you live. And if you're watching TV that Sunday night then a bottle would come through your window. And so that was anger and violence coming out in that respect. And then we would commit crimes, purse snatching. We held up a couple of Subways, you know, used a tire iron, baseball bat, beat up the guy. And then I found the gun. Broke in a house, a cop's house. I didn't know it until afterward. A guy around the neighborhood said he wanted his gun back. It wasn't getting back from me. You know the kids knew I had the gun and they didn't bother me. No one had guns then. I

mean in 1975 to have a gun was big time. So the kids knew I had it. No one would bother me because they knew that I was ready to use it. I wasn't always angry but you didn't know what I was gonna do. On the one hand I was a friend talking to you, the next hand I just could go off. I would pull the gun out and I would just point it you. I knew there was bullets in there. And one day I let a friend of mine look at it and we were at his house and I was eating rice out of his pot. His mother had made some rice that was supposed to be for him. And he didn't like that. So he put the gun to my head and he said, "If you keep eatin' I'll shoot you in the head." And so I just said, "No you won't." and I just kept eating. I just, at that point I didn't really care. It didn't make a difference. He gave me the gun back and he just said, "Fuck you, you're angry, you're crazy." And we held up a couple of establishments. And I started to become associated with more aggressive men, guys that were from other parts of the city that I knew growing up, you know, we committed crimes. You steal cars and you go here and there and you meet people. Men that would readily assault an innocent victim before they would get the money. They would just go in there and I liked being with them guys. I liked the power. Even though I had a gun I would have the other guy, he would go in first and I would control the area with the gun and he would just start beating up the attendants and then I would get the money. He's now doing 40 years in Louisbourg. He killed somebody too. There were bouts of guilt. I didn't like some of the things I would do.

It was 1975 year of the rehabilitation and they said, okay send him to a drug program. And you know the drug program was just like home, they yelled at me, belittled me. They berated me. And one of their most demeaning ways to break the residents was to get them to clean. That was the worst thing they could do for that I

think. It didn't do anything. More punishment but at the same time it was something I relished and enjoyed because I would do such a good job to show them that they couldn't break me. And I there were times I really wanted to get my life together but I wasn't ready to stop getting high. I was trying to hide the pain and discomfort and to self-medicate.

And I broke the rules in the program frequently and they couldn't understand why was I such a hard head. You know they'd say Domingo you're not a bad guy. But why do you keep doing this, this and that. We have to punish you because you broke the rules. I'd say okay. Eventually I was discharged from the program in 1977. I was sent to Cheshire. I spent some time there and then I was sent to a half-way house. Well they had us move the stuff in the half-way house. And after we were all done they told me to go back and make sure that there was nothing left in the place. There was some hanging lights and I jumped up, pulled the lights down off the ceiling and there was bars on the pipes were protruding. I grabbed them out of the wall and the walls were plastic and I broke and I punched holes in the wall. There was paint there. I threw paint on the wall. I guess I was I was angry. I was just supposed to make sure everything was okay. So when they went back in a couple of days. They said what happened. Ask Domingo. He was the last guy here maybe he knows. I lied.

Substance abuse, drugs, and more robberies were involved in my particular offense now. I would go around when I was using drugs and I hold up people and establishments. I was very self-destructive in that I would go into a high-risk area like a department store where there was a lot of people and rob it and control other people. I mean you don't expect one person to go in there and try to maintain control of 50 people

and possibly, you're going into a suicide type of situation. Something is gonna go wrong. And there were a few instances that there were some people that tried to flee the store and I discharged a gun in the place. I regret it afterward, but initially ... This charge is for robbery and unlawful discharge of a fire arm. I pled guilty and got 35 years. There were about 12 offenses that occurred in those robberies. I'm a repeat offender so I got a lot of time I was very anti-social. I was more comfortable in a correctional setting because there was control, it was safe. It was easy to think I'll go to prison. I knew that it was no big deal. There were a lot of people that I knew that were in prison anyway.

I'm looking back at it all these years now and I identify how hurt I was and how much I wanted to strike out from that hurt and hurt. People did reach out to me. I had a godfather. I, you know, as I indicated, there were some attempts to save me. I have two godfathers, one from Baptism and one from Confirmation. And they are both extreme opposites than my parents or my father. And they're both Puerto Rican and they're very loving, caring, compassionate. They tried to help me and I would admire them and I would respect them. I think they were role models for me in some ways because when I would be around them and my cousins and they talked to me like I was their brother or something. What are you doing now? How come you keep gettin' arrested? When are you gonna stop usin' drugs? I would feel guilty. They would show me respect and caring but it wasn't enough at that point. It was getting too late. I think I had a conscience there somewhere. I mean it sounds strange but as I indicated to you once I found the power of the gun, the handgun, it took a while to get back to my conscience. I got all that anger and adrenalin. It took a lot of adrenalin but it got all that anger and

frustration out. I felt satisfied after I tore some place up. Of course I felt ashamed when I would get caught at it. If I didn't get caught I was okay. It took a while.

I graduated from elementary school. But after that all my education came in the correctional system. I was always relatively smart having general basic mental capabilities. Some of it was personal. I knew if you played the game even in a correctional environment years ago, they leave you alone. You know you kinda coddle up to the right psychologist or the right whatever. You learn. That's survival. I mean you look back at history and they say that's how a lot of people survived. The Jews in the concentration camps or whomever. So I came gradually educated in the system and so then you compound that with social skills, I was able to master manipulation especially, I did well. So I was able to lie my way through a lot of close calls

I didn't feel that I really had anything going for me in my life. And only recently have I begun to understand that I am someone, that I do have redeemable qualities. I'm okay. I'm not a bad person. I only just came to this maybe around the age of 30. Even when I first came back in 1984 I was using drugs here in the facility. And it took me about five years to come around. And part of it was because of my mother just always coming up here and visiting and I felt guilty. I said, damn, I gotta get my life together. And I didn't wanna go out as another statistic.

I went back to my grandparents many years later. In 1977 when I got out of the drug program because my guilt bothered me, my conscience. I had to make amends to them and ask their forgiveness. And I went back and I talked to them. And so they explained things to me and we were able to reconcile. So when they died I was okay with that and I've been very lucky that other than the anger for my father at times and

I'm trying to get closer to him, I've been very fortunate that through the correctional system I have been able to help myself.

But, I have not yet been able to forgive myself. I still have moments of maybe anger or frustration at certain things but I've learned to know that it's gonna happen and you're gonna get frustrated about something but don't let it eat at you. Don't let it build into that unresolved anger. Or why are you angry? You know, maybe it's something that clicks in my mind that has to do with my father and so I have to take that time to sort that out. I know you can be too over analytical of yourself and I'm not a Ph.D. major or any of that stuff but I do understand the basics of asking for help. See I grew up in a household where we could never ask for help. And I know now that's one of the things that has helped me greatly is just to talk with people, communication, and also to say that I'm having problems and I need to learn new skills.

My sister has children and I've obligated myself to them. My nephew has attention deficit so he's really acting out at school. And I'm trying to reach out to him and it's probably difficult from here but I know he hears me. And my niece, she's pregnant. She's 16.

As long as they have that ability to recognize their own faults in themselves they can progress. Some people are not at that point. I'm lucky. I've been very lucky in a lot of respects. I mean just the fact that I'm trying to make amends with my father on my own. But I get consultation from other staff be it Ms. T or whomever in addiction services or the MHU or you know other professionals. Then I apply that to my life and say hey, let me try this. I'm motivated.

I think people resort to violent behavior for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it's unresolved anger. I know that for a fact. I do groups in the addiction services program and some men have confided in me. They feel powerless and have been profoundly disrespected. Usually most of the men that are violent are generally undereducated. Generally. Don't get me wrong now. They'll become educated in the system. But there's a difference. Maybe when he's arrested he's either illiterate, semi-illiterate, or functionally illiterate. But now when he's been incarcerated for 20 years he acquires his associates and bachelors. It has worked for me. And the fact that I've attended a lot of different groups, workshops, cultural events, getting to know people, but sometimes people are violent toward each other just because of racial issues. Fear is another reason.

Let me recall the incident when I discharged the firearm. I went into the establishment. There was only two people there so I felt very powerful I guess. I controlled the situation. There was only two people and they were both in the corner. And one was a woman. She stood up. She wanted to leave. I says you're not leaving. She says, "I'll get the manager" or something crazy. I already had the money. I says, "You're not getting the manager. Go sit back down." Now I'm trying to leave. I'm trying to avoid that violence at that time because I was afraid of what I was gonna do, I knew. And she still persisted and she confronted me. As close as you are and so I realized I could go off and I said, "Get the fuck away from me." And I turned to the other guy and I said, "If you don't get this bitch away from me I'm gonna shoot you and her." He got up and then he grabbed her and then I had to discharge the gun into some soda cans. She crossed the line. And I on one hand I didn't wanna really hurt her but on the other hand she was pushing me and I knew I had to do something. I was angry. It was a threat to my power.

I worked up a lot of adrenaline. If I was to work myself into a state of frenzy now I don't know if I could because I worked on a lot of issues and maybe if I thought about the CO's I could probably do a good job of breaking this place up. It looks pretty secure here but I would put a lot of energy into this room.

Most importantly, if you're talking about working with adult people or offenders, it's gonna require a lot of work at that point, okay, because we're already adults. We're entrenched in our thinking. I believe the key is to try to reach the younger kids and teach them some skills. I'm not saying it's a fool-proof idea but it works okay because I have worked in these different kids' programs and I've seen the kids respond to me. I hadn't been around kids in along time. After I started to get arrested my life changed. I was not the innocent, sensitive kid anymore. I mean I was but I was learning to suppress it. So once I started getting arrested and going to juvenile facilities and using drugs and doing other crazy things like that I was not the kid I was I guess prior to my brother's death in 1968 and I say that because it was a significant time in my life.

I think that Domingo didn't have to do a lot of the things he did. Some of the things he might not have had as much emotional control over. But some of the things I intentionally and knowingly did. I enjoyed it. I believe that I did initiate some of that stuff. I could have just said no. I didn't have to do some of the crazy things that I did. I take responsibility for it. But punishment doesn't work. Kids need nurturing.

Finally, as an adult, I got tired of looking at what I saw. And losing a lot of family members that I did love. My grandparents did pass away since I've been here. I had two uncles that died. My mother, brother and sister died. A lot of loss but that's the way it goes right.

1989. I remember it as significant. I almost got caught for getting high on the block, by a captain. And after that I said man, I gotta give this shit a break. And I just wanted to change my life for the moment. I didn't know if it was gonna be long term. But I knew there was something inside me, it was just buried. I knew that about myself. I knew I wasn't a dummy. I said Domingo, you can do better. You know, you're not a bad person. I used to talk to myself a lot. Sometimes I still do now, it helps to motivate me you know. And I would say man you're not a bad guy you know, come on give yourself a break. There was always something deep inside new I had some potential and I think that survived only because there were people in my life from time to time that showed me.

The first time I came here I got in a in the laundry with a gentleman that stole my shirt. It was sort of a senseless violence in a way because I just reacted. Somebody told me he stole my shirt and the guy didn't seem to think nothing of it and so I went over to where the guy was doing something, I called him. He turned and I punched in the face and grabbed him and just started wrestling him to the ground. And at that point they were putting hot water inside the washing machine and I was trying to force him in there because I had anger in me. He stole something from me and I knew I had to make an example out of him or else they would continue to steal from me. After that I actually went to the desk and told the CO to check my name off for attendance, he did. I was scared but knew that dynamic of prison was important. I had to set an example. I felt I had to do it that I had no choice. I don't put myself in those situations anymore. If a guy is negative and angry and whatever, I stay out of his way.

The most important thing we can do in our society is to have patience and understanding. I know it sounds like a real broad description. And it is tough because once you get an adult that has committed ... I'm not saying give up on the generation that we have now in this country or society but we could reach the youth or the children. I mean you turn on the news they just had an incident recently in Connecticut with a guy stabbing his father. Why? I mean I know why. I was angry at my father. I probably could of did the same. Now kids are more desensitized to violence. Add to a child growing up experiencing emotional turmoil in their life and then you turn on the news and you got all this crazy stuff on TV. So we're saying it's okay in American society. We as adults got to get beyond this money issue in America. What's happened to a lot of our basic values? As I've indicated or you've probably been able to hear even through all my craziness in life, there was always some values there somewhere. I didn't always listen to them.

I've done a lot. I've grown and I've done a lot of other program things that are sort of quote unquote required while an incarcerated inmate. But if you look in between the lines I've done a lot of positive stuff and maybe one day I'll send to you at the AVP address. I mean I've gotten my Associates Degree. I've worked on Sesame Street. I've worked in the Cabbage Patch. I've done cultural affairs. A lot of guys don't do that. They don't get that opportunity. Maybe the system doesn't give them that opportunity or they don't take advantage. See, sometimes you have to understand too that the system is very protective and selective. Unless you as an inmate can sell yourself and say that you have certain qualities that the system is looking for, then you're gonna be another pea in the pod. I get around because I communicate well, I know this. I also have some degree of

influence with a lot of men, younger, whatever, because of my vast correctional experience. I know how it works in the system. I know what the system's looking for. It's looking for things to run smooth. So if an inmate can help to facilitate that, let's use them. But, everyone does not have this opportunity.

I've learned a great deal. I feel I am beginning to turn some things around. I'm going continue to work hard.

### Profile 3 - Joseph

Growing up was pretty rough. There was always violence. My dad used to be mean. His violence started out with my mom. He never trusted my mom. Every time he came back from work he would threatened my mom. He would accuse her of cheatin' on him and he'd make her strip and check her to see if she had been with anyone else. He beat her up all the time. He pushed her down the stairs, broke her legs. Even after he broke her legs and she was on crutches, he dragged her up the stairs and threatened what he's gonna do to her and demanded what he wants sexually. He used to do stuff like that in front of us kids. He'd be smackin' and punchin' her and that's when I would try to pull him off and then I'd get it. I was the oldest. Every time I intervened, to try to save her, I'd get it. And my sister would get it and I'd intervene and I'd get it again. And it just kept going on.

He would hit back-handed, fist, belt, anyway you wanna call it. It depends on what kind of mood he was in. I remember one time I got hurt bad when I went to see him where he worked. I wore a Halloween costume and was dressed up as a bride. My mom dressed me up and we won first prize—a camera. He beat me up because she

dressed me up like a girl, a sissy. I was eight or nine. He did it at work in front of everybody cause he didn't want me to be a sissy. He was sober a lot of these times too.

I got beat up but I never was punished like normal. We were never sent to our room. We used to go to our room and hide cause we were scared. My brother went through a wall from my dad and my dad killed my baby brother. Well, he wasn't really my baby brother. My mother was nine months pregnant and he beat her and kicked her in the stomach and she had the baby and three days later he died. He took my brother and slammed him through windows and walls and he went deaf.

My sister and I were also sexually abused. He'd start off by showin' us these X-rated cards. I was not penetrated but my sister was. He raped her and she was taken to the emergency room. My mother tried killing my dad after that. She went after him with a butcher knife and he picked up a foot stool and that's what saved him. My dad used to grease my leg and hump me. He used to make me go down on him, made me do a lot of other things. I was also molested by someone from the Big Brother Association in the neighborhood.

My grandparents on my father's side were alcoholics and they used to beat each other. Everybody in town was afraid of my father. His parents were well off and knew a lot of people. His family knew the detectives; they knew the chief of police. If my father got arrested, he got out of it. You know even when the baby died my father got out of it.

I was always nervous or scared. And, you know going home, what I'd expect to see. I couldn't hold my bowels until I was in 8th grade. It was embarrassing at school. I mean how can you hide it. Excuse my French but I shit in my pants all the time. It's kind of hard for people not to know.

They separated when I was around nine years old. My father used to come around for a while, get her drunk, get her in bed, and then take off. My mom started all her stuff after that. She was drinkin' and druggin' and so was he. She was into prescription drugs, Darvons, Percodans and stuff like that. So was my dad, he was into drinkin' and druggin'. But he was more into hard liquor.

Then he was finally out of the picture. I was the oldest. I lost my childhood, cause I had to work. I took jobs as a kid. I used to work as a garbage man because my mother used to take the checks, her welfare checks, and spend them on her bills and drinkin' and druggin'. The first and the 16th check day I used to go with my mother, stay out of school, we used to go shopping, get some food. You know, cause we knew the money wouldn't last you know. So I used to have to get lunch money up for the kids. I became a little father. I used to send 'em to school. Make sure they got home. I kind of just became in role of a parent. I always had that one motive you know to take care of my brothers and sisters and try to water down all my mother's liquor and throw away her pills.

I did have an ally. I had her mother, my grandmother. She used to bring the kids over her house and help with the kids clothes too. She'd get all our clothes the night before so we'd have school clothes ready for the next day. My mother would get angry if she interfered. So I'd meet her down the street and get the clothes. When we were hungry I could call my grandmother and tell her what's going on. She was my ally. That's how I grew up.

I started drinking at about 11 or 12. With my mother being an alcoholic and a drug user and her being whacked out and out of sync with what was going on I was able

to take what I wanted from her. Even though I tried a lot to stop her from drinkin' , I kind of went into the role and started experimenting with her stuff. Between gettin' a joint here or there from her and the roaches that were left, wine and beer...she used to send me to bootleggers in the projects. For five dollars you can get a nice half pint and the bootleggers didn't care who we were, you know, as long as you got the money. If a bottle was \$2.50 you are charged \$5.00 because it's after hours on Sunday and a kid's buying it. So it don't matter who you are, who it was for. My mother always sent me. So it got to the habit where these people knew me. White Irish Rose was the first thing I started drinkin' and me and my friends would get drunk all the time. I brought a friend home from school but then they're seeing my mother in bed with two people you know. Or seeing her sprawled out naked and drunk and blood everywhere. The blood would be either from either her wrist or her face because she didn't like herself no more. I never brought anybody home after that. The violence she received from my father turned, like it did with me at the end, toward herself and she tried killing herself a lot, slashing her wrists, slashing her face, taking pills and OD'ing, setting the bed on fire with cigarettes and stuff. My sister used to save her life you know. Call 911, it wasn't 911 it was New Britain Police at the time. They'd rush her to the hospital, pump her stomach, stitch her up.

I felt like an adult. I was doing the adult thing, I had to. It's pretty weird when your mother's passed out and the kids are sleeping and I'm sittin' on the back porch smokin' a cigarette. I'm only 11 or 12 years old but it was like a relief, you know, everybody settled in for the night. But then it got out of hand because I started neglecting them a little bit and started going off into my own.

I think I used to have temper tantrums all my life. I was put on Ritalin when I was a kid. I was seeing a psychologist because they couldn't control me. I'd go off. I set the whole back of the projects, all the fields on fire. I lashed out at my mother's boyfriends all the time, at their cars and stuff. They brought me to Shelburne Clinic in New Britain for a while. It was at my mom's convenience when she brought me and then she just got tired of bringin' me.

My mother finally lost the kids because the state just had enough of her and said that's it. They sent us to foster care. It was me and Steve and the youngest one went to foster care and my sister and Johnny went with my grandmother cause she could only take two. And then my uncle, couldn't stand that any more and took some of us. Then finally my grandmother took us all.

I took care of everyone until my grandmother took over. When she got all the kids it changed. I was free but then I became the black sheep of the family. I felt resented and hated by my grandmother. She made all the other kids feel special and she left me out in the cold all the time. She'd take them places and just left me kind of hanging. I was happy for them but I felt rejected. I always asked her why she hated me. She was emotionally abusive and used to beat me up with the broom. I was very hurt. I couldn't please my grandmother. Every thing I did was wrong.

So I kept acting out. I felt there was no thanks for all I had done. I had temper tantrums and you know kicking doors, putting my fists through doors. This was at 14-15 years old. And getting drunk. I had a beard, you know, and a receding hair line when I was 15 so I could buy in package stores and I could sit in the bar. I used to smoke a lot of pot, do a lot of pills, speed, mescaline, hash oil, and marijuana.

Before she died she apologized. We cleared everything, cleared the air you know. She was sincere about being sorry. I loved her. I always wanted to ask her all these years why she did that to me. She said she always considered me to be like my father. I am his spittin' image. So I think that made a difference. She said, "You reminded me so much of your father and that's why I reacted to you the way I did." When I finally found out and it was like a burden off of me because I always thought it was something I did and all I was trying to do was the right thing all the time. She blamed herself a little. It took a little guilt and responsibility of why I'm here. She blamed some of that on her too. She took a lot of that with her to the grave I think.

I continued the violence. Disorderly conduct, a lot of fights. I got away with a lot of things. Like I'd fight and have a three hour cool down period in jail and they let you go. Mostly all drug and alcohol related violence. I have been married twice and I abused my both wives.

I can relate a lot of things to how I took on my father's personality and the way he treated my mother. I always said to myself I'll never be like him. And you know I turned right into him. The way he treated my mother, I treated my wife. Not as drastic though. I saw the possessiveness, the dominating, the woman's place is in the bedroom and kitchen. I was very abusive to her emotionally. I'd play head games with her. I made her feel like she had to need me you know and she couldn't survive without me—to make sure she would never leave me. I had to be a knight in shining armor to protect her, to provide for her. Everything she needed to have was by me and nobody else in this world. I became very jealous. I never thought I was good enough. I had to change my looks. I had to wear a hat because I was bald. I didn't think anything I did was good

enough. I always thought that if she went out without me you know she'd find someone else. Even though I trusted her to go out. My fear of loss was greater.

Our marriage broke up. It was devastating. Then I met this other girl and I moved in with her to get my wife jealous. I made this woman miserable. I used to go out for two or three days and come back drunk and just really treat her bad. I used her. She hates me to this day. I tried writin' to her to apologize but she wanted nothin' to do with me. I can't blame her.

I moved in with other women. Then I met my second wife. I fell in love with her. I didn't rush it. She trusted me. I think that's what really got me attracted to her. She trusted me to be with her and she trusted me to be with her son. And that flipped me out. Then she got me to stop wearing a hat. She got me to start thinking about myself. She started to make me feel good about myself. Then we got married. And that was beautiful that relationship for a while. Then I was afraid I would lose her and I became dominating and possessive. We got into our games. We drank and drugged. We had a lot of problems. We were both unhealthy. Then I slowed my drinkin' and she slowed what she was doin' and then my daughter was born. We had we had a nice apartment, first floor, big yard in the back you know, pretty good neighborhood, good job, picket fence around the house, a boy, younger daughter. Everything was perfect. The drugs, the drinkin', under control, no fightin' no arguments. She picks up and leaves. I still don't really know the reason to this day.

That destroyed me and that's when I went right down. That's when I tried committin' suicide. Things just got way out of hand after that.

Well I'm here for murder. I picked up a female prostitute. It wasn't intentional but yet I killed her. I stabbed her. Before the murder, the violence was more toward myself. I was trying to commit suicide for nine days straight. And every day that I failed or chickened out, I called the Help Line. And each time I got more drunk, more wasted and I thought it would be a lot easier. My wife just left me two weeks before that and she took both kids and it ran me down. I couldn't handle it no more. I lost it, yeah. I picked up this girl. And we started partying and I kind of flipped out. And she got scared. I wouldn't let her leave. I was on my knees holding her legs and she couldn't go. I had the knife, I had it stickin' up by the cushion in the couch. I kept diving but I kept catching her and just holding her. One time I missed and then she got scared. She got the knife and attacked me. We struggled and first she kept saying I'm not your wife. I wouldn't let her leave and I stabbed her. I thought my wife was supposed to be over that night and we were supposed to talk about reconciliation and it just never happened.

I turned myself in. I guess they were closing in on me anyway. They came to my house and I guess somebody saw my car. It was just a matter of time, so I went to a lawyer. At the time I didn't really remember it but I do now. So my lawyer said they did have an arrest warrant on me but he thought it would be better that we go to the police station. I pled guilt under the Alfred Doctrine and got 30 years.

Once I got sentenced, I ended up under Connecticut Statute 17 240 45. I was at Whiting for four years and because they said that I had a mental defect. They said I had a chemical, organic imbalance in my brain, explosive type, and some personality disorder. It wasn't anti-social. Something explosive. I forget which personality disorder. Whiting tested me, put me on meds—Tegretol, Lithium, Thorazine, and Trival. At the

end of that statute, in some cases the judge has the power to release on probation, parole, or sentence accordance to conviction. Whiting recommended I be released because they thought I was not a danger to myself or others. They took me off meds and they tested me for two years. Once they took me off they said I rejuvenated, I don't know. It worked. I haven't taken anything since 1990 and I haven't had one explosive outburst. I was the first one that they ever recommended be released back to society. But the judge said he had no power in his decisions to do that. And my lawyer appealed it. And the Appeals Court said that because I pled guilty they couldn't change his decision.

Looking back I see that I never had any safety. I was repeatin' the violence that I learned. My only role model was my dad - 'til me.

I took a life and that's what woke me up. I don't know how, I gotta be honest, I don't know how far I would of went with my wife. I wouldn't know how far I would of went with my kids. I wouldn't know where I would have drawn the line if I didn't take someone else's life. That is so tragic.

I don't like it here but I am in a lot of programs that help me. I was in AVP, I'm a paramentor in a drug program. I work in mental health. I'm using everything I can get. We just started co-counseling and anything that's offered I take. This way maybe I can give back. I did an article for the Daily News about the OJ on domestic violence. I was interviewed over the phone.

My last confession, real confession, was up here. My hometown priest came up. I wouldn't talk to nobody else but him. We had it in here and it was kind of different. He was in his 80's and he came up. That's when I asked him for forgiveness of my crime. Even though I asked for forgiveness I still had trouble with God and all that. I still

blamed him for what happened to me all my life and it still wondered why I was put here on this earth you know...everything I did. So I had a lot of trouble in my 12 step recovery program when it came to God issues. With a Higher Power, I found a more personal belief.

What has helped me come to terms with all this is knowing that maybe now I'm doing something for somebody else. Knowing that I'm here, now I can express myself, I do a lot of groups and a lot of peer mentioning services. I work in a mental health unit here and you know so I was able to give back to people other than myself that needed it and I learned that maybe I was here for a reason.

I don't know if you ever heard of St. Francis Assisi's prayer *The Charnel of Peace*. It says it's always better to give than to receive. You give love before you receive it. The same with faith, honesty. Once I found that I believe in that prayer, then I found an inner peace. I think that's what happened and that's when everything changed for me. I just started and was at peace with myself.

Another thing that helped is I met somebody. Just somebody who believed in me. Believed in things I did, believed in everything about me, trusted me for who I was, and knew my past. It wasn't romantic but it was an intimate relationship. It was a real relationship for what it was worth. When she believed in me and accepted me, I think that's when I believed in myself. I mean she didn't give me no will or power to believe in myself, I think she just opened my eyes to what was there. She saw something in me that I wasn't really aware of. Maybe I was aware of it but I didn't feel it. She helped me figure out what I was feeling and then I became more aware. She was my therapist, and a friend. I worked in her unit for the last four years. It was a special human relationship

She's gone now and she doesn't work here no more. Sometimes when she calls the staff they let me know. And they'd say she called and this and that and asked how you doin'.

So I now I have that inside. I didn't take her for granted. I didn't expect anything. Everything just came naturally. I knew what her limits were. I never crossed the inmate and staff boundaries. It was healthy and there was no ulterior motives in my mind for her. I never had a real relationship before, that's why everything I learned is on the street. I never learned anything from anybody except for what I grew up with and what I saw. No one taught me how to drive. No one taught me about sex. No one talked to me about school. No one talked to me about anything. That's why I had that God thing. Thinking all these years He put me through all this hell and continued to put me through hell. Without the basics of loving and nurturing. I never got that.

My mom and I have a good relationship now. She's whacked out in her mind a little bit, you know. She's 57 and she looks like she's 80. She's on all kinds of medicines. And to me I mean I look at her on my trailer visits and it looks like she's dying. She was a drug addict for many years. She's been very, very supportive these last ten years.

I haven't seen my father since 1981. At that time I figured I give him a shot and try to reconcile with him and try to make some kind of life with him. But as soon as I left him alone, as soon as he knew where I lived he went to my house and made a pass at my wife. And I had all that rage and anger built up. I thought I'd try but it was a disaster.

My sister and me are very close. We can't talk about my father or anything like that. I have two other brothers. One won't come into the prison but I call him all the time. If I need money, if I need anything he's right there. He renews my TV guide every

year. My brother he ended up like me with the drinkin' and druggin' I think and this violent rage. My sister used to drink but she stopped.

My last wife and I are in touch. We talk on the phone. We've got to limit our phone calls because we talk for two hours at a time. I wrote her a hundred and fifty page letter to try to explain what happened, how I felt. She never knew about my childhood, she never knew about my life. And she was the only person I needed to explain things to. I really felt that.

We have a bond. She visits with the kids on and off. Every time she gets a boyfriend she don't see me. I see the kids on trailer visits every 60 days, my mother brings them up. My other daughter is in Brooklyn Learning clinic because my first wife couldn't handle her. We just had a trailer visit with her too in October. It was the first time in four years we were together. It was a hard one. She is very hurt and angry and was very disrespectful. My mom won't bring her up for a while cause my mom felt really hurt. I will continue to try with her.

I think people learn to be violent. Thinking that has a lot to do with nine years of therapy of knowing where I came from, why I did what I did. But, I think the violence came from bein' treated violently and bein' isolated and alone. I was responsible then and I brought all of these traits that I learned and I reflected them on other people. What would have helped me was not being alone and knowing that I had some safety. Safety had a lot to do with it. When I was out there I was alone. What was being done in the home and the family was quiet.

Society has progressed some. We now know about the violence and abuse that happens in families. Kids need to know they're not alone out there and it's okay to tell

people. It's okay if you're abused, if you're gettin' beatin' or if you're this or that. You can tell someone. It's alright to go to these people and you're not gonna have to worry about comin' home and your dad's gonna be there you know. But we still need to stop the abuse, not just protect kids from it.

To a certain extent it is about power and powerlessness. If you're powerless you have to prove somethin' and I think a lot of violence might come through that. If someone else is made powerless, you become more powerful.

I know I can definitely be without violence. But I know I gotta follow through what I know. Not just say it. This is with hindsight of everything I learned now. I need to stay away from the drugs and the drinkin' and I also need some kind of support system. I need to definitely have a plan I used to let everything build and not release the anger or the hurt or isolation. Before there was no plan. I have some skills now.

I'm not healed, there's no such word as healed. I can't change the past so I gotta live it. I gotta keep it with me. It's difficult. I can be laughin' now one minute and I'll but then when I remember all this other stuff I stop laughin'. Some people say yeah, let it go. I can't. What if I let it go and then I forget. I can't forget what I did. But yet, I can't let it deter me from movin' on. I don't wanna die anymore. And I don't wanna see anybody else die. I wanna go home but I feel guilty when I say that. I hear these guys talk about parole and goin' home and I always say yeah I can't wait to go home but then I get this guilt feeling. Like am I allowed to go home, is it right? And that's when I feel unforgiven. I have a lot of shame.

Everybody forgets about that one other person and her people. It's like sure I got all these things together now, that's why I'm strivin'. But it's like I'm strivin' with

someone pullin' me with a rope. I wanna give something back and I will continue giving back to somebody. When I help it's like I'm doin' something to get that rope a little bit less. Self-esteem and self-worth still seem far away. I'm not there yet. I know there's good in me. I know that. I'm tryin', don't get me wrong.

I still don't know what the purpose of my life is. I hope we know when we get outta here. I used to think the purpose of my life so far was to die. I'm learning to live without wanting to suicide. I'm finally learnin' to live without fear. I know now there's a purpose or somethin' about me. Maybe this interview was the purpose.

#### Profile 4-Taylor

I grew up in the Hartford area. I got three sisters. We moved around a lot but where we lived was mostly black and other minorities. One thing I told somebody they didn't believe me was that I probably saw a white person, but I didn't recognize a white person until I was around 12 or 13. It didn't occur to me to even know what that was. I didn't see them but on TV. I lived in a black world so I actually didn't know white and black. When I did notice it felt ugly. Because when I did start to notice, I started seein' a lot of the racism. I was a part of it. White people would come driven' up on the avenue from downtown goin' to Avon and Bloomfield and kids would throw bricks at their cars. I used to go along with it. Racism is an ugly thing but there are lots of ugly things in this world. But, none of this is an excuse. I believe I got what I deserved. I don't believe that nobody did nothin' to me that I didn't do to myself.

My mother, she was strict. When you come home from school, you had to do your homework. And then after you do your homework you could either watch TV or go outside. Then you had to be in bed by 8, 8:30. So it was like that. My dad was a truck

driver. When I was younger he used to take me on the road with him and we used to be gone for weeks. Then he told me I couldn't go with him no more cause I gotta go to school.

I hated school. It's crazy. I hated it then but now I love it. When I got my GED it inspired me so much I went and did a year and a half on computers and now I been in college for two years, for two years! I guess it wasn't that I didn't have the mind for it, it was just that there so much other stuff doin' on. When I was in school I got in lots of trouble. Talking back, fightin', stealin' and all of that. I didn't got to school after the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I quit. But before that I used to go to school. I hated it and skipped a lot but I had to go because I would get a beatin' if I didn't. It wasn't really a drug issue then. It was more just bein' lazy. I mean I was gettin' high but I don't think that really made a difference. I really don't know what was goin' on in my head. Partly I got high because I was trying to numb out. I was a real shy individual. I didn't never feel like I fitted in. Never. All the way up until now, since I been clean. No lie. Even when I was at Somers. It always felt like even if I was in a room with somebody and we knew each other and all, I still felt uncomfortable. It was hard to feel connected.

I started drinking when I was 12. My first experiment was with hard liquor. I used to steal it from my father. I used to rob his little cabinet. And then I started smoking reefer. And then when I was 16 I started using harder drugs, cocaine and all. It was around that age that I really became rebellious, more or less.

My father was a violent man. He went to prison before I was born. He shot somebody. He was a big, huge man. My father would beat up my mother and there was a lot of domestic violence when I was growing up. I hated seeing my father hit my

mother. It happened often. My father was an alcoholic back then and he would get violent when he would come home drunk. That's when he got most violent. He drank every day. My mother did drink. But I don't think she was alcoholic. She probably only drank once a month. Sometimes she would hit him back and I would witness that too.

Yeah, he beat everybody. It was torture. He beat you with everything and he was a strong dude. He beat my sisters too. I can remember a lot of times it was it was real scary. We'd probably be in our room, cause back then we all shared one room. I almost said cell. I been in jail a long time. And he'd come home. If the dishes wasn't done right he would go off. Before he came home we'd be in our room and we'd be scared because we know somebody gonna get a beatin' for somethin'. For somethin' you know, something. That's how it would be. He would use switches, belts, extension cords. He used to make us go and get the switches ourselves. That was the worst I think. That was torture.

My older sister was out on the street. She was out there since she was 15 I remember when she was young she went to New York on a trip and she never came back. Put out a missing person report and all. Then she popped up one day and she was an addict. She had a habit. When she did come back a year later my family tried to help her. I mean my family's trying to help her now. Back then we was poor. And you know, people didn't know what to do. So her life just went straight to hell She is 34 now and has been on the streets for over 15 years. She started young, really young. She's been incarcerated for crack, prostitution. For many things.

Growing up, I felt my sisters were favored over me. My mother would spend a lot of money on my two sisters but not me. Like they would go shopping for me at K-

Mart. They'd go shopping for my other two sisters downtown in Hartford. My older sister, she was you know prostitutin' and everything, so she would buy me the good stuff. Me and her, we look alike. I really didn't feel as important as the others even though I know I was now. As I grew up in prison I realized that I was just as important. My family, my mother and father just wanted me to be a man and work harder for what I did. Cause that's what my father did. They were doing what they thought was best.

At the time, I thought I had everything, you know. I hated the fact that he would beat my mother and after he beat me that would go away. Because he provided for the house, you know what I'm sayin'? He was a father, he was, even though he wasn't there at times. But when he was there his presence was known. I lived with fear when his presence was known. When he would come home I was in fear cause I gotta make sure I ain't doin' nothing wrong. And the entire time he there I got to be sure I ain't doin' nothin' wrong so he won't beat me. I tried to be perfect. I don't want no beatin's. I lived in fear. Up to that point I really feel even though even with the abuse of my mother and the beatin's of me and my sisters, they call that abuse now, but I didn't know it was. I hated everything. And I never felt safe.

Anyway, the only time used to be good at home was when everybody was out and I would skip school and stay home. It was quiet and I felt safe for a brief moment. I had this ACOA group and we drew out our apartment that we lived in and we were supposed to pick a safe spot in your home. I never had one. I never had a safe space as a kid. I don't know about right now.

The safety came if he was gone. When he was away, I didn't feel that urge to stay in my room or to stay outta of his sight. See, like I tell him today he never talked to me.

All he did was beat me. And then he expected me to talk to him. You don't beat no kid and then say we gonna talk in an hour. After I calm down and you wanna come talk. Just beatin' the living doodles outta me. You know what I'm saying? He never never talked, never. I didn't feel like I could go talk to him about anything because if I would go say oh daddy I had sex with this girl he would give me a beatin'. I know he would of. Cause he didn't allow females to come over home anyway. So I'm gonna talk to him about relationships? You know what I'm sayin'? So everything that happened I would keep in to myself. I try to do different with my son today. I try to talk to him, you know. Cause beatin's ain't the answer. I tell my father that today. You never talk to none of your kids and I think that's where a lot of things went wrong because of that. When it came down to it, you know, there wasn't no real relationship. But he was tryin' to do the best he could. I know he love me now. At the time though I don't know. I don't think I felt, I don't believe I felt he loved me because mostly because of the beatin's and because of the abuse that he was givin' my mother. But like I said, I really don't blame him. I don't blame nobody. Now I understand that's what he was taught. That's what he learnt from his father. I couldn't see that when I was younger.

Back then I was angry but I didn't want to feel it. It wasn't allowed. Used to punch walls and everything. A lot. I punched my hand through the window, through the wall, through the door. Anything. I did it. From when I was around that age, 16. One day my father punched me all in the face and everything. He used his fists and I couldn't take it no more. That's when I decided to rebel. I felt it would hurt him. I really did. I wanted him to feel a lot of pain. All of it you know. Course I learnt that the only person I hurt was myself. The one that I hurted the most. I didn't want his attention, I

just wanted to hurt him. It was my way of beatin' him back. One day I decided that I was gonna do everything my father said not to do. Whatever my father told me to do, I was gonna do the opposite. I remember making that decision so, that's why I'm sittin' here now and am in here today. I personally believe I chose to be here.

My first conviction was at 16 for drugs. I got caught with some reefer. And that's the about the time of my life when things really went haywire. I started hatin' him even more and I couldn't stand whenever I seen him and I stayed away from him. I would run away or whatever because he would come home and argue at me. I figured to hurt him back by doin' things. I could not hit him back. He might kill me. Of course I thought about it. I see him hittin' my mother and stuff. Yeah, it was a bad idea. He was huge. He used to pick me up with one arm and beat me.

My most violent time was from 16 to 18. I did so much violence on the streets that I mean it became addictive. There is a lot of violence in robbin', sellin' drugs.

People did try to help me. My mother did. She tried. They put me in a special school. I went to Job Corps in Chicopee, Mass. I went to another school on Park Street. She tried to take me to a psychiatrist. She took me there and when I went in there first thing the guy tell me is if you don't wanna be here you could leave. I got up and left. You know. I got up and left. He told me I could leave and then I walked home. He gave me some power and I took it. I don't know if he didn't want to see me or what. But, at the time I sure didn't feel very powerful. But I didn't understand. I didn't know what power or powerless was. But now that I look at it I guess you would say that livin' in fear will make you powerless.

I wasn't thinkin'. Along that time I had met my wife and so I kinda figured I was gonna be with her. I wasn't I wasn't livin' life on life's terms. I was livin' life day-by-day. Whatever happened today is what I was...I didn't think about livin'. I wasn't thinkin' about growin' up. I was livin' just for today. I didn't feel that I had any respect inside my house or power. I guess I didn't think life or my life was worth much.

When I was 18 I caught a murder. It happened over drugs basically. Somebody tried to rob me, well they did rob me, and I shot 'em. After that a lot more violence followed. I was incarcerated for this case but I got out on bond. And while I was out there I started catching a whole of more cases and beatin' up people and robbin' people. I mean it was like I just didn't care about them anymore because I just knew I was comin' back to prison one day. I stayed out on bond for eight months and I probably got rearrested five times.

When I got out on bond my father went to the prosecutor and told the prosecutor to pull my bond. And I hated him for a lot of years for that also. I realize today that it was for my better interest.

The reason why I ended up with so much time is because I went to trial. At the time, I didn't think I should get convicted for murder. I felt it was justified. I should of pleaded out. But I was on some almighty thing where you know I was bein' robbed so I shouldn't be held responsible. After I got in trouble with the murder, I felt that the other person had got what he deserved. I did. Because you know, I didn't go lookin' for anything even though I was dealin' drugs and leadin' the life. I didn't go lookin'. They came lookin' for me, to rob me and that's how I caught it. That was my thinkin'.

I came to prison at 18 and I've done a lot of growing up since. I'm 30 now. I got into heroin. I was a gang member (20 Love), and a leader of a gang when I first came to this prison. I was at Gardner before here. Finally, I started recognizing that I had a drug problem because my drug problem came here with me. I've been clean over two and a half years and I've been outta the gang a little over a year. I was lucky getting out, because of who I am, you know, by me bein' in prison so long. There's a whole bunch of new guys in jail, so most of the time they fear you anyway because you been at it a while and then because I had a lot of friends from bein' in prison, there was really no one to interfere. It'd be harder gettin' out on the streets or even in another prison.

I think a lot of people, most people do violence because they feel they have no other choices. They don't know they have options. I could see me gettin' out doin' the same thing if I wanted to. I know it's all about the decisions that I make. By not making a decision to behave differently, I make a decision to do those things that will take me down. I honestly believe that. I have learned some of what set me off and what I need to do differently. If you don't have the skills to make a different decision, you remain powerless. When my father punched me in the eye I didn't know I had options. I figured okay he punched me in the eye now I'm gonna hurt him back because he did that. I thought that was my only option.

It's real good that people talk to people, you know. Talk to people like psychiatrists and counselors because they give you options. They show you that you have other options. They help you find a different of lookin' at things.

These are terrible times but I think a lot could be done. You could take kids from 9, 10, 11 younger if necessary, and let them see prisons. First show 'em a video of how it

is to be locked up all day, you know, let them feel it. And then let them see how they get their visits, how they can only see their kids in the visitin' room, how they can't hold their parents, you know what I'm sayin'? Let them see things and feel them. And then take them inside a prison and lock 'em up in a cell. Let 'em experience the consequences of their bad decisions. If they don't see it they don't know.

But you got to teach 'em that they have decisions to make. You can teach them that you can't change the world, bad stuff is gonna happen, but you can respond differently. You gotta get kids right when they start really thinkin' for their self and help them learn new ways to deal with things. Make sure they have somebody that they can go and talk to. They need a counselor. I know money is something that the state isn't ready to spend on kids. But that's what needs to happen. By not helping them when they are young, the state is throwin' them away. Get to them when they are young, as young as possible. If they learn violence in their homes, teach them how to cope and to make different choices. I honestly believe that would of helped me to a certain extent.

Maybe you can't know who's gonna be bad. But you gotta get 'em right when the patterns start, when you can see where a kid is headed. This is where I feel you have to snatch him up real quick. If you got a troubled kid, if you got somebody 15, its more difficult. His mind is made up, his or her mind. Once a kid get older and he start realizing he can think for his self, then all he seein' is negative, he's gonna decide to go with the negative.

Kids need more opportunities. You can't just show them that they can't have, you can't say okay, if you go here this is what's gonna happen. But they're thrown back out into the street. You got to show them what they can have.

By the time I was offered help it was too late. I didn't take advantage of it. Durin' that time I was too angry, too negative. I had already decided what I where I was gonna go with this. When I was at Job Corps, you had to earn your passes to go home on weekends. I never wanted to go home. Because bein' up there, bein' in a new state, bein' around people from all over that state, that particular area, all over Connecticut, Bridgeport, and I had never heard of these places. Some was even from Providence. And livin' like that, you know, if that school wasn't for bad people, for bad kids, I think I would of made a good turn with my life in there. But because that was for bad kids, mostly, they didn't tell you that but when you got there and you see guys that sent there from court and you know everything like that you got to see. So then you got a whole bunch of bad, what's gonna happen is bad, you know.

So basically it didn't work for me because it was too late and because it was a whole bunch of bad. Everything was negative. Everybody was there for somethin' negative, you know.

But today, you know, for the last year, I been clean. It has not just been about cleanin' my body but it's also about cleanin' my mind, the way I think, you know. And I came to the realization that I wasn't supposed to take anybody's life. And that's why now I always pray for forgiveness. So see I don't look at it as so negative anymore, you know.

I can choose different things. Like education. Now I'm doing Algebra I. It's kickin' my butt. But I'm tryin'. I got a B on my last test. I did computers for a year and a half. I'm gonna do it again. When I got my GED they told me I could go to computer class and so I was like, OK I go. I went and I finished it. I want to go on with it again

probably like in June. I was goin' to groups every day and goin' to computer class every day and goin' to college at night. I had a lot of other volunteer meetings that I was doin'. Like the Jaycees and I was just doin' a whole lot of stuff at that time. And then when I finished computer class I was still doin' all that other stuff.

I am a little worried about maintaining once I get out. I need to always go to meetings. I try to talk to people about it because I wanna know what's it like out there. I'm not racist but I wanna know why there's racist people in the groups. I'm in this program and I have a lot of faith in NA and AA. That's the only way I make it is through NA and I don't wanna go to the meetin's and deal with racism. I hate racism, you know. I hate to be somewhere and I feel that you don't like me because of the color of my skin, you know. And I be talkin' to people from the outside when they come up about that, you know. Is there racism in the program, you know? I hear that it is in some places and it isn't in other places. I don't wanna go and say that okay for me to go to programs I have to go to programs in the ghetto or in the minority neighborhoods. I wanna be able to go to programs, wherever. You figure with programs, that they are about a change in thinkin' and behavior. Then you got to change your assumptions and that means racism, you know what I'm sayin', prejudices.

In the future, I wanna own my own business. That's my goal. My father, he owned tractor trailers. And so I wanna take them when I get there. Hopefully start somethin' with that. I'd like to get my business degree.

I'm changin'. I'm growin' up a lot. I do get a lot of respect in here it's because mostly because I've been in prison so long. But I don't wanna be soundin' like a hypocrite or anything but I don't need somebody in here respectin' me. I need the world

to respect me, you know. And that's how I look at it now, you know. And so all of my decisions I make today aren't wants. It's more or less needs, you know, to grow.

#### Profile 5-John

I am 52 years old. My father is a Mattachina Indian and my mother's Comanche. I'm not classified on my birth certificate. I'm classified as White. But I know who I am. I'm Native American. I grew up in Houston. My father was a concrete mason. He's the one that taught us that trade. I've worked in this trade for the past 29 years.

My home life was okay. My father, he drank. You could say he was an occasional drinker. He never believed in beatin' us up though. He would sit down and talk to us. My mother used to give us some spankings. Usually with a little branch. That didn't happen too often cause we knew better. Hell nobody wanted them damn welts in the butt from that little branch. You say, hey, once is enough. My brother, Tony, that's a couple of years older than me, he's the one that used to get it. He used to do bad things just to get a whoopin' from my mother. And my mother be sayin', "What is wrong with you Tony?" He was a crazy one I guess. He used to like it. Up to this age he's just like I said. Tony's gonna be 55 and he's still talks crazy. We had our average ups and downs as a family but I felt loved and they showed it too. My father used to take us fishin', huntin', swimmin', to the park. That was his thing on weekends. He used to love to take us to the park. He had my mother get us all dressed up and he'd take us to the park, the zoo, the carnival.

He died in 1977. I still miss him. He died a real sad death. He died from emphysema. He smoked a lot of Camels. It still hurts when I think of it. I seen him suffer all them weeks before his death. When I used to see him he they had him tied

down and they had him on a life support machine. He used to ask me to pull the switch. I said I can't do that. That hurted me more to go in and see him cause I knew what he was gonna ask me to throw the switch. He was tired of suffering. He knew he was gonna die eventually and he wanted somebody to stop the sufferin' for him. When he passed, when he died in 1977 in Texas, the family couldn't choose to have the machine disconnected or not. It was so sad to see my father doin' through that sufferin'.

I always carried a knife since I was a kid. I was in the cub scouts and boy scouts. It was just a habit I guess. It seemed like everything goin' on growin' up in the city. A lot of time you meet other people, gangs, well not gangs, but groups, well you could call 'em gangs. They would come in from other neighborhoods, and try to pick fights. Actually our neighborhood really wasn't that rough. It was people that would come from other rough neighborhoods into our neighborhood and try to rough up the people that lived in the neighborhood. We used to fight them.

I used to love school. I used to cry when I see my brothers go to school and I still wasn't of age to go. And later on when I started goin', I guess to kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, I liked it and when I went into the sixth grade, I kinda lost interest in it. I got kicked out when I was barely turned 14 because of a fight in the gym. This kid hit me with a basketball and I ignored it. Then he kept on and kept on and he kept provoking. And eventually I says okay, you don't wanna listen. Okay, it's time for you to learn your lesson. I got a hold of the ball and the first chance I had I threw it at him and I hit him in the face and broke his nose. I was expelled. I was expelled cause I refused pops from the gym teacher and I refused pops from the principal. The pops, you

know, they wanted to hit me. I says oh you crazy. I says he started it why should I have to end up payin'. Well you broke his nose. There was more to it than that.

Back then, see I grew up in a racial environment. That's what started a lot of the fights I was in. It was a constant thing. I had to choose either for me to go into the colored bathroom or to the White bathroom. A lot of times I would get told to go into the other bathroom. As a kid I used to ask my mother, "Mamma how come I have to do that?" I couldn't understand why. I couldn't understand why at the time I was growin' up. I says, "Why I gotta go? That White man over there told me to get on here into the other bathroom you know. Said that I had no business in there." It was kinda confusing. She said, "Well, that's the way it is." The school that I went to it was public school and there was mostly no Black kids in that school. They called me greaser, Mexican. And here I am a Native American.

Even up to the day before I got arrested I used to get so mad cause I used to take my wife out and we usually went to a bar and grill type setting. You see a lot families in there with their kids and wives, eating grinders. My wife is Naragansett and Pequot. People over there in the town Norwich throw racial remarks at me and my wife. I used to get so mad and it was just like goin' back to them old days you know when I was growin' up. Well, like I was sayin', I got kicked out of school. My father said okay, so this has happened. You're not gonna live in this house, not havin' a job and just stayin' here. You went and screwed up. You are the blame of it to a certain degree. You are going to have to go to work. You're not gonna lay around in here and me support you. He used to give me everything to go to school. So he took me to the Labor Union and got me in and got me a job and the next day I started working with my father in

construction as a helper. And that's how it started. My life as a kid, as a teenager stopped at a very young age. In other words I deprived myself of that.

I was already married when I was 16 years old. My first wife she was 14 and I was 15 we started having, you know, sexual intercourse and she got pregnant. I felt that it was my responsibility because that's the way my father brought us up was, hey, you do something buddy, you better take the responsibility. So, I looked at it as my responsibility. So here I am at 16 with a wife and family.

I started drinking when I was about 14 years old. I later became an alcoholic. I used to use heroin and cocaine for about six years. Lots of trouble came from that too. I was arrested for an auto theft and was given ten years probation. It was somethin' that we did, something stupid, real stupid. It was me and my brother-in-law. We were out drinkin' and I says, "Come on Joe let's go here to the hotel" cause it was a famous hotel in Houston and all the cabbies used to be parked outside. I says, "Hey Joe let's go over here and catch a cab." He said, "No, man, I'll go get us a car." I was yeah, yeah, you know. I was kinda stupid in a way cause I didn't know what he was talkin' about. Go get us a car? And I didn't put no more attention to mind in what he was sayin' and a few minutes later he shows up and says, "Hey come on, jump in." And I like the big old jerk jump in. He took off racin' and cops seen him and they started chasin' us. We got arrested for it. I was an accomplice. He went to prison and I was given ten years probation.

I wasn't really exposed to violence at home. It was mostly on the street. My activities was violent. Fightin' all the time. Mostly because of my drinkin' really. I guess if I was to have stopped drinkin' I wouldn't have put myself in them kind of positions. I

would have had more control. I don't believe I could be truly classified as a violent person but I was involved in violence. It seems as though I was always the ideal person to be picked on, as far as fights. When I used to go out bar hopping, it never failed. I would be minding my own business away from the party. I knew a lot of the people and the fights always used to come to me. I would try to ignore it cause my mother used to tell me and the kids growin' up, it's always better to have one crazy person than two. As long as he doesn't put his hands on you, just walk away, ignore him. A lot of times you gotta swallow. You gotta use common sense. Judge for yourself. But a lot of times it got to the point where I had no choice but to respond, react to whatever went down. I had several arrests. I've had quite a few head injuries. Bottles, beer bottles broken here and there.

I was in the military and got my GED there. I was in the Vietnam War. The training that they gave us was intense. In the military the order of the day was "What's the good word?" At first we didn't know what he was talkin' about. Then he told us "What's wrong are you stupid? Don't you get it? What's the good word? To kill. Don't be stupid." And then he would say "What's a better word?" And we would say, "I guess to kill." He says "No stupid, to kill 'em all. Kill you know who." They were brainwashin' this into us. That was the name of the game. That's how combat works.

I wasn't used to what they taught us. I just wasn't used to it. I thought how in the hell am I gonna kill people? Who the hell is? I used to question my own self and I said who in the hell are these people man? What is this crap all about? My mind was just in a total chaos. I didn't know what to absorb. Eventually I had to, I didn't have no choice. I had no choice except to absorb. They said listen up bunch of knuckleheads. If you don't

listen to me now, you're gonna regret it later on when you're in the war zone. So don't go to sleep on me if you wanna see what tomorrow's gonna look like.

I didn't want to go to Vietnam but I felt that it was my duty. I never talk about it to anyone. At age 22 I was thrown into hell and told to do hellish things to people. There was suffering and unbelievable horror all around me and I was told and taught not to feel anything but to get the job done. All that, it's just bein' stored away. The only outlet that I would look forward to is to get high and try to forget about it.

A lot of people when we came back, that is the fortunate ones that did, couldn't understand how to fit back in. We were not welcomed home. It was hard. I've had the nightmares and all ever since. Up to this day I can see stuff on TV and in the movies and it brings tears to my eyes, and it still hurts bad. Even here right now talkin' about it, it's hard. I don't want to get into anymore of it. Too many bad memories. There's no where to go with this. I don't qualify or classify for any benefits cause with a dishonorable discharge all my benefits were taken away.

I'm a combat veteran but I was dishonorably discharged for a crime I committed in the military. I murdered another fellow soldier. It was a big controversy. They said I was tryin' to rob him and he was killed in the process. But that's not the way it went down?

Well the thing is that me and this guy had words in the chow hall prior. I was already processing to be released in the service. I had about three days left. And he threw a piece of meat on my plate and it got gravy all over my fatigues and I told him what was wrong with him and he says what's your problem, stuff like that. And then we got into some pretty hard words. And I told him, "Come on man." I said, "I just been in

the United States two days and you're already throwing food in my plate." I said, "What the hell's wrong with you." And he says, "Get out of my face, you greaser." I says, "Greaser, who you think you're callin' greaser, punk?" And he says, "You don't like it do something about it." He was provoking a fight. I was just gonna let it go. But he kept it up and I just reached in snatched him from behind the steam table and we started fighting. And some other soldiers, fellow soldiers, they were in the same process I was, they broke it up because a cop was comin' into the chow hall. And left it at that. And later on that night I had to pull CQ and a day went by. And the following day I took off into Tacoma, Washington with some other friends. We started drinkin' and we had smoked some pot that I had brought back with me from Vietnam. And we were just havin' a good time. Relaxin' and all sayin' hey man I'm gettin' more short than you are, and all that. When you're short you shouldn't say nothin', watch yourself till you know you're outta it, out of the service because you don't know what could happen. So we came back on base and went to the Enfield Club and that same cook was there. A really young man too, younger than me. I was 24 at the time. And he started mouthing off. He was a Black person, he was a Black soldier. And he was with six or seven of his friends and he said, "There he is right there, that greaser." I just kept ignorin' him and ignorin' him until finally he came over and I says, "What?" And my other friend said na, leave it alone. I said, "I ain't scared of nobody man. Especially that weasel there. If what he aimed to do was get his butt shipped to Nam and find out what this war is really all about, he wouldn't be runnin' his mouth like that." And I went and confronted him. I said, "What seems to be your problem man? Why don't you just back off and leave it at that." He started usin' the "f" word and cussin' me out. I said, "You ain't worth it now."

So, actually what he did, him and his friends he left the club and I guess they waited for me til I came by. And when I came by he jumped out from behind some hedges and tried to stab me. He stabbed me clear through my arm. I jumped back up and grabbed the knife and I pulled it out. I says, "You wanna play them kind of games, let's play 'em." It was just like my mind blanked out. I killed him. At the time I was high on alcohol and drugs and pot. And to me the just the shock of the knife goin' through me ... it was like a flashback. I was back in Vietnam and he was the enemy and he was tryin' to kill me. But the funny part about it is after this whole ordeal, after I was doctored and cured, I didn't I didn't say nothin' in my own behalf to defend myself. I was 24 years old at the time and I was given a natural life sentence. I had one day left in the military when this happened.

I ended up serving six years. I had some grounds that I could bring up against the army. Our involvement in Vietnam had a lot to do with it. And at the time Lt. William L. Cally, of the My Lai massacre, he was there with us. And he was in the same building where I lived. We used to talk all the time and we exchanged information about combat. And he says, "Hey, wait a minute. Were you in a certain, certain spot?" We were talkin' about different parts of the country we were in. I said, "Yeah. They had us go to do this and this and that." He says, "You did?" He says, "Don't you know you can use that to get outta here?" I says, "Come on." He says, "It's for real. What do you think I'm doin'?" I was just a scape goat for this. The thing is, this thing came down they weren't about to convict General Westmoreland of My Lai massacres or the president of the United States because that's who gave the order."

So he says do the same thing he did. At that time, I was in charge of the radio room in the prison where we piped the music into the castle, that's what it's called, the castle, the cell blocks. And when the Secretary of the Army came by on a tour of the of the barracks, I confronted him and told him about what I had for him. I told him I would give it to the tabloids if he didn't give me some consideration. So I kept at it and eventually I got some consideration. And in a matter of three years I was outta there and had my life sentence dismissed.

Afterwards, I used to fear that somebody would make me some do somethin' to 'em that I would regret. I say damn why do these people do this and it would only happen when they were drunk, my brothers and these people. And it would be over a stupid thing that didn't amount to nothin' and I mean, they would back me up into a corner to where either you would fight or... I was like a scape goat for them. It was like let's pick on him today. Let's pick on him today and let's pick on him for the rest of his life. And I've never been able to understand this.

It was rough with my brothers. There's not a day that wouldn't go by that they wouldn't pick on me. All this took place grown up after I was released from prison. You see these scars right here? My brother did that to me. The one that passed away. He was drunk and he cut me. When he did this it was like my mind was just boom, erased. Like it just stopped. I seen the knife comin' again. I was sittin' down just like this and he came from behind on a birthday of mine, my birthday too. I learned later that he was mad at me because I had told my other brother something he had done. He came all the way from across town to disrupt my birthday party. When I first got there he says, "Eat!" He said, "I like to take 'em when they're full." I said, "Junior what are you talkin'

about?" I says, "Get outta here, go on back to, go to your house. You're already drunk."

And he went inside my mother's house and went and got a kitchen knife. And I was talkin' to this friend and his wife and his son was sittin' down next to me. When he came back out, like from no where he just pulled the knife out of his pocket and stabbed me. I didn't even know what was goin' on until I seen blood and then my friend jumped up and screamed Johnny. He said Junior what are you doin' Junior? Are you crazy? And he went to grab him. Ah Jesus. It was my fortieth birthday and I'm all cut up.

I end up running outta my mother's yard and went to these neighbor's house. They were, I mean illegal people that lived here in the United States. I knew they always had guns cause wherever they were at they had guns. I went and got a gun from one of 'em. That was kinda of horrible. I came back and I just opened up and unloaded the whole gun at him. Thanks to God I didn't hit him. So it was just like, it was just a reaction and it all happened in a flash without thinkin'. Later on, he was livin' up in Massachusetts, Lawrence, and he came up here to Norwich to stay with me and my wife to apologize for what he had done. And I had to go out of town one day and when I came back him and one of my wife's nephews were at the house and they were drunk and I ran him off. Told him to get out, never come back. He came to apologize and I didn't let him do that. I found out about it later. Then about a year and a half later he passed away.

You know what I think? I think we need to do something about what causes the violence. In general I think what we need is to initiate programs to get people to understand, to get to the root of the problem. What starts it, what made you do what you did. Look into poverty, joblessness, homelessness, racial problems, addiction. How

people believe they have no choices. The powerlessness that come from oppression I think would be a big factor. The feeling of self-powerlessness. Trying to get to the root of it. I was lucky I always had a job. My father, like I said he brought me into a trade at a young age. He always taught us that this is how you make good money. To where you don't have to go around takin' nothin' from nobody. It's a start at self-respect. But you gotta get it from others too. Like I said, before I came to Connecticut, the respect that I was gettin' from my brother and from others, there was none. There was times I would feel that I was bein' disrespected by people that I knew, people that were close to me. They would get violent and I would just try to ignore 'em and that's it. In the military there is no personal respect. I was just another body count. I was just another body that replaced another body.

As far as my current crime, I'm just gonna say this real quick. I was very, very disrespected. They were my wife's nephews. I gave 'em money to get me some pot and they took it and didn't come back. Then he came back and I gave him some more money and he took it and didn't return it. That was a lot of disrespect regardless for what it was for. And then when I seen him at a bar I confronted him and I told him, where was my money or the stuff? And he gave me a big "f". I said, "Okay, leave it at that if you wanna be Mr. Macho Man go ahead. You're way younger than I am. But don't let that fool you either. I said I'm gonna give you the benefit of the doubt. Don't you ever, ever step in our home. I says cause your aunt will back me up on that one. She doesn't know what it's for. But I know she'll back me up." I said, "I don't want nothin' to do with you. My wife warned me about you people. But I didn't believe her. Now I know that you people are no good. Now I know what she was trying to tell me, warn me way before

ahead of time. And I note her warning.” And later they both came to my house and they tried to pick up where they had left off. And this one he pulled out a knife again and it was just like poof. You know I blanked up behind. Like it was just another knife attack. The bad part about it is that it happened on the same day, same month, that I had killed the first guy. Is that a coincidence? Or is that a flashback? Or what?

It has been important to me to be able to relate my story. For once in my life I wanted to come clean and be honest and actually tell my side of the story. I don't know if I've made any sense or not. Because of my druggin' and alcohol, and my past convictions on my record it was like my word just didn't mean nothin'. They said come on get outta here. Even though I'm the only one that knows exactly how it went down and why, and the reason why it went down. It's as though I was a I was a victim to a certain degree and it's like if I was screamin' my head off and nobody could hear me.

It seems that some people just don't have no respect for other human persons, for life. I've seen a lot of that. A lack of respect in general, period. Cause I seen it happen to me.

When I first came here I had a lot of hurt and fear. I had a lot of hatred towards the government because I believed they had destroyed my life to a certain degree. I used to blame them for me and my first wife breakin' up. For all they did to me when I was in the war. I used to blame 'em for everything that had gone bad sour in my life. I didn't even know that I had an alcohol problem or why. I was in complete total denial all these years. I just wanted to block all of it out.

I guess a lot of this hatred that I had towards the government and a lot of the animosities that I had inside of me that were just stored up and they were just brewin' up

and I look at it now that I was trying to drink my problems away instead of seekin' help. I was the type of macho person that would say I don't need nothin' from nobody. Cause I was brought up more or less like that once I learned the trade. I believed I can do it all on my own. And I couldn't. Cause I was, powerless really. Powerless to deal with things in a different way. Powerless to ask for help. That's the way it was. Cause like I said I lost all my teenagehood and childhood and all and became a man at the age of 15 when my first daughter was born. And I accepted all the responsibility. I feel that I cheated myself out of all that. And then the war happened.

I understand myself better now and I am tryin' to look forward instead of behind. My hopes are to eventually get outta here and live a alcohol and drug- free life. Live a good Christian life. Put the war behind me and enjoy the years that I've got left. I believe in myself and I believe that I am a person of worth. I don't think that most people are born bad. I think they do bad because they are out of control and they either have been taught the wrong responses or have not been taught useful ones. It's like having the wrong tool for the job. I guess if you're introduced into a hard core life real at a young age, maybe sometime during the course of that life your heart starts getting hardened up. You start loosin' feeling I guess. Like I said I used to blame it all on others. Especially on the effects of combat. But I gotta move on from that. It will always be there but I gotta make new decisions. Use different tools. One tool is asking for help. A lot of times I try not to let the past interfere with my daily life here. Still in prison you see a lot of the stupid things that go on and for the past over two years that I've been in confinement I never been wrote up for any major offenses. I am in more control of myself now. I am in an alcohol program and I have learned better coping skills. I go about my way and I

ignore what goes on in here. And I will continue to turn away from violence as much as possible no matter who I believe provokes it. Now, I want to try to enjoy seeing my grandchildren grow up and knowing what I know now, try to help steer them in the right direction. It's gotta start young.

#### Profile 6-Carlton

I grew up in Chicago in the Cabrini Green housing projects. I didn't really know my father. I knew who he was, but we did not have a relationship. My mother was everything to me. We were very poor and we lived poor. We didn't have a TV and in many ways, we lived in our own insulated world. I didn't even know there were White people until I was around ten or 11. As in all areas of extreme poverty, it was a very rough place to live. People were desperate, always living on the edge, and violence was embedded in the life style. Actually, it was not unlike prison life.

Even though I grew up to be a very tall man, I was a scrawny little kid. This was very disadvantageous at the time. I was easy prey. It must be some law of nature that negativity trickles down and is directed at the weakest. For this is how it was. For the first two years of school my teacher would walk me home, in order to offer me protection. She knew that I was often beat up and hurt by others. She never made a big deal about it but treated me like I was her friend and she enjoyed walking me. Then at the end of the second grade, she was murdered. Someone walked into the classroom during school hours and shot her in the head. I was too young to know what it was about but I do remember the incident. It left a vivid impression.

Even at that tender age I was no stranger to violence. As I said, poverty is violence. There were other episodes both major and minor. The minor would only be

considered so relative to the major. For example, hearing the screams of the victims of domestic violence and observing it in my own home is in the minor category.

Witnessing murders would fall into the major. As for the former, domestic violence was a way of life.

My stepfather drank, as did most people. I think it gave them what seemed like an escape from the reality of day-to-day life. Of course it didn't really, it only magnified and complicated their problems. My stepfather would beat my mother and us kids. Once, she tried to set him on fire and he did get burned. Things calmed down somewhat after that. As to the latter, witnessing murder seems to affect one's perspective forever. I see this in retrospect of course. It was almost surreal. The fear was not surreal, however. Anyway, when I was eight, the year after my teacher was killed, I was at my cousins. Men came in and locked me and my two cousins in the closet. They proceeded to break the place up and kill the adults. We could hear the violence and then, everything was quiet. We stayed locked in the closet for many hours. When we were finally freed, we came out into the light to the sight of chaos and destruction. The adults had all been told to kneel down with their backs to their attackers and they had been shot in the back of the head, execution style. There were brains on the walls and blood was everywhere. I will never forget the odor. Evidently, they had been dealing drugs and they were robbed of the drugs and their cash and then shot.

Expecting the worst and often having this negative expectation verified, became the rule. I'm still not sure if the expectation influenced the outcome or not but life was dark. There was really no one to turn to. My mother tried but she had her hands full. I am the oldest and she had several more children after me.

As I grew I adopted my own tough guy persona. You couldn't tell me anything. I had it down or so I thought. You had to walk right and talk right. Everything was about position. If you didn't have it down, you could be history. Fear ruled. But you didn't expose yourself as fearful. Clearly, school wasn't a priority. Survival was. The older I got, the more bitter I became. I wanted nice things, I wanted opportunities, but my choices, I believed, were limited. I ended up quitting school and getting into other things. Like prostitution. I turned out a few girls and was making money off them. Dealing in drugs and doing whatever I could. I did not have a clear life plan. It was day-to-day. The pimping did not go well. For all my bravado, I was really no match for the competition. There ended up being a issue about territory and the competition began murdering some of my girls. I ended up out of the business. I was overpowered.

By the time I committed the crime I am doing time for, I had fathered two children. I was working at a menial labor job and came home from work early because I was sick and found my woman in bed with another man. I was crazed. I have always been jealous and possessive. Never having, always losing, and not having anything firm within to hold on to can result in that. I have grown a great deal but I still see that I have that tendency in me. Anyway, I took off. I decided to steal a car. I did this at a MacDonald's by threatening someone with an Afropick. Sounds pretty stupid doesn't it? I held it in my jacket pocket like a gun and demanded the car. I was taking off to points unknown. I'm sure I had a plan but it was a totally irrational one. The occupants of the car wouldn't give the car up so I took them along, backhanding them in the face when they gave me any trouble. Well, I certainly made a lot of mistakes but a major one was crossing a state line. This set me up for a kidnaping charge which holds a life

sentence. I was charged with Aggravated Kidnaping and Robbery. I had a court appointed attorney and soon learned the meaning of the word railroaded. Not that I was innocent. I don't mean to imply that but being poor, Black, and an arrogant punk in Kansas, did not help my image. I was quickly sentenced to life imprisonment. I was 19 years old.

Let me clear up that there are several kinds of life sentences. There is natural life, where you serve your entire life in prison with no release or parole date. The life sentence I am serving is similar in that the DOC can keep me in prison my entire life but it's different in that I do have the possibility of gaining my freedom through parole. In this type of life sentence, if you have no additional offenses after incarceration, you first come up for parole in 15 years. They always pass you on the first parole date. You are then reviewed every three years, providing you have no tickets. Even with this second kind of life sentence, you can never count on being freed. Because of other charges, I came up at eighteen years and was passed. I come up again in '99.

Going to prison was like doing post graduate work in violence. I have been in some of the toughest and worst prisons in the country. My first ten years was total insanity. I served about a year before I became violent. I watched many prisoners fall from murderous attacks. I watched how men would be raped and then killed if they didn't submit. I've seen wars where prisoners would use strategic violent measures to win a battle that had developed from a small and insignificant misunderstanding.

By comparison to where I am today, I see that during my first ten years of prison, I was completely lost. I had no direction, no intentions, no desires of being a true person. I was extremely violent and disruptive. I killed on more than one occasion. The

first was in self defense. If I don't kill him, he will kill me. Simple as that. I wish I could say there was more to it. But imagine yourself on a savannah in the wild. You are approached by a wild animal challenging you for dominance. There is no escape; it is either you or him. That's the all of it. The only out is not having come to that savannah in the first place. And, I brought myself there. The next occurred just like you read about or see in the movies. It was classic. I was still pretty green in the system. My celly was a seasoned convict and was mentally torturing me. Telling me every night that soon he was going to make me his wife, that time was running out. The control game in prison is very precise. He worked me. And got great pleasure from it. To him it was foreplay. Then one night he said this is it. I had been preparing for this time and had make a shank. In prison, shanks are made out of anything that is not tied down. You might spend hours, days, weeks, sharpening your creation so as to be ready to defend your life...or your manhood as the case may be. So my celly was in my face, roughing me up a bit. He pushed me down on my bed "to take" me. I had my shank ready and I killed him. I am reporting this in a matter of fact way but at the time I was consumed with fear. My state would fluctuate from intense fear to dissociation from all feeling to simply being out of it.

So, after a short time in prison, I had developed a profile of a very violent prisoner. This is bad for the obvious reasons but in terms of prison culture, taking me down or out would be like getting a trophy to another inmate. You are then sought after by the gladiators of the prison world. I lived with this constant challenge. At one point, I made myself a vest from old magazines that I hoped would deflect or minimize a shank attack. I sewed it all together. The CO's knew what was up because when they would

pat me down, they would feel it and know what it was. I couldn't get away wearing it between areas that required a pat down. I was always on guard. The interesting thing about a tough prison is that no matter who you are, no matter how gentle, violent, educated, ignorant you are or how much money or muscle you have you are subject to manipulation.

In all honesty though, I did not always use violent action in self-defense. In here, violence is viewed as an act of strength. I finally got so deep into the culture and currency of violence I felt I couldn't change. It had become my name, my identity. I was attached to my iron force. I was so violent for a ten year period that I could not conceive of any other way of representing myself. This violent rage became so deep in my mind and heart that no one wanted to be in my company. I loved the power. At least what I at the time interpreted as power. This persona made me feel like I was a special person. I stabbed inmates and correctional officers so that I could keep my well known status. It was an infamous status but it was a status.

I was in a gang. The El Rukins. I was quite active and spent many years in this gang. I finally retired as a OG, that is an Old Gangster. In this position you function as a consultant and philosopher/advisor.

My prison profile is of a very violent offender. I spent many years in segregation. This means alone, often naked, in a cold empty cell. In my prison career I have spent nine to ten years on and off in seg. It is an experience. All you have is yourself. The prison system makes it as difficult as possible for you because short of execution it is considered the ultimate form of punishment. There is no contact with the outside. Some CO's put animal droppings in your food and devise many other ways to torture you.

Some men become very primitive in this environment and never come fully back. It was torture but strangely enough in some ways I felt safe there.

The losses of my life are many. In the last twenty years. I have lost my youth, my children, and many loved ones through death. I first lost my maternal grandmother. She was my heart, my second mom. She was the major link of the chain that held everyone together. This happened early in my sentence. I couldn't see her at the end of her life or visit her grave site. The second was the death of my sister. She was killed by her husband. This sister was a special support to me. The third death was the most devastating and the most painful thing I have ever experienced. This death came as a shock in the night and was without warning or preparation.

The night was quiet and cold. At the time I was in a new supermax prison in El Dorado, Kansas. There were only about 50 inmates in the prison at the time. I woke up at 2 a.m. and was uncomfortable. I tossed and turned for the next couple of hours. I was then startled by the sounds of the electric gate opening and closing. It was unusual at this hour. In the distance I saw a Chaplin, dressed in black walking down the cell block corridor and knew he was here to tell someone they had lost someone precious to them. He disappeared inside the CO's office and I tried to go back to sleep. Next, I was roused by a light being shined in my face and was told to get dressed, that someone was here to see me. I was immediately tossed into a bag of fear and shaken nerves. I dressed and was placed in full restraints. I didn't want to meet the eyes of any of the officers because I didn't want to read what might be written there. Because of the leg irons and belly chains and my height, I had to take short steps. It took me a little while to walk to the office. With every step I was aware that I was going to meet the messenger of death.

When I arrived, the Chaplin gave me a sorry and sad look and asked if my mother's name was Ellie Edwards. I hesitated thinking that if I didn't answer maybe she could be alive a minute longer. I was told she had died at 1:45 am of a heart attack. She was only 58 years old. This reality brought the most searing pain of my life and I think I lost consciousness. For the next two weeks I couldn't eat, sleep, or think. My mother was everything to me and I had feared this loss every day of my life. I even thought that I should kill myself to be with her.

I was not allowed to go to my mother's funeral. I was considered to be too high of a security risk. I couldn't accept this and blamed everyone, even Allah. I was given the opportunity to see her again in a photo. I received a photo of her in her casket. I couldn't bear to look at it. I still can't. In fact, I have a difficult time looking at any photo of my mother. I have never gotten over this loss. There has never been any real closure.

The loss of my mother really shook my world. I vowed I would leave prison one day in order to visit her grave and truly say goodbye to her. Slowly, I began to wake up and open my life up to growth. I began to see two different roads. One was of ever escalating degradation, and the other was using my experiences as opportunities to work on myself. This didn't of course happen overnight. As I searched for answers, I finally began to understand where my faults were. I was the fault. I had nearly destroyed my own life by being closed to growth and maturity. I regret that I was a man who blamed my parents and society for my life being taken. When I was younger I never believed that men and women like me could be independent and productive in society. In these past years I have learned some important things about life and in some ways, perhaps I

have even experienced some of what my victims may have felt - the ways a person can fear losing his or her privacy and right to live in a sense of safety. I often wonder what would it be like to face my victims now? I don't think I could without being embarrassed and fully ashamed. Empathy was new for me.

I've been in prison for 20 years now. I don't want to continue to list the bad times and painful times I have spent since my arrival. Instead, I want to admit and share the growth that has come of incarceration and the benefits I have harvested.

I came to Connecticut from Kansas on the Interstate Compact. I came here to try to break with my past character. Becoming a part of the Connecticut prison system has brought about a complete change in my incarcerated life and I have several achievements that are very positive when compared to my past. Since I have been in Connecticut, I have completed my GED, enrolled in college courses, completed the Alternatives to Violence Program, completed an Anger and Aggression Program, and held a job as a teachers aid in Special Education. In this job, in addition to the academic work, I focused on working with gang members in the hope of reaching them and helping them change into non-gang members. I have started and been involved in a number of other programs and continue to work on myself.

One thing I did was replace the violence with education, awareness, and productivity. I tried to build myself from the inside. After a long time, the reaction of others began to change from fear to respect. Of course this came about from my respecting others.

At this time, I am 40 years old and I have been in prison for over 20 years, half of my life. I have grown a lot during this time and have outgrown any tendency towards

the kind of violence that prison life evokes. I try to pass on what I have learned and I take every opportunity to sit down and listen to younger inmates talk about their adversities and hardships. My intention in this endeavor is to both help the individual and to improve the larger prison community. Hopefully they will take this with them into the outside community.

I know how important freedom is to an inmate. I have experienced the lowest form of prison life and the deepest depths of segregation. During the years of my incarceration I have lost all that I once held dear, my mother, grandmother, sister, and my children. When I listen to other inmates talk about being a Level III inmate or being released so carelessly, I become confused and depressed as to how that inmate can take the steps to freedom for granted. For some inmates, these steps never come. I have had to discover an inner freedom. One that exists regardless of external circumstances. This type of freedom requires constant cultivation.

I have come to recognize violence as a desperate act of anger and frustration. Although it appears offensive, it is really defensive. In some ways, violence is a sort of illness. It is a sickness that you catch from the surroundings in which you live or socialize. But it can be cured, or at least controlled. It must start with the individual. He or she must decide to take control of their life. True control comes from inner strength, not from outer force.

I become somewhat confused though when I think about how we might reduce the violence in our society. It seems to me that the family is a basic unit. If the family is not well then the individual will have a difficult time being well. And, just as the individual rests within its family, the family is held by the community. I do not believe

that our communities, towns, cities, states, and nations are well. It is all connected. As long as there is poverty, class oppression, racism, sexism and all the other factors that hurt people and render them powerless, there will be violence. For these things are violence and if I have learned anything it is that violence begets violence. I do know that we can't let that be an excuse. "Oh I couldn't help it because I was oppressed" is not useful here. I think it is true in a manner of speaking but it is not a useful mind set. But what the ultimate action is, I don't know.

I do know that intervention needs to begin when children are very young. They need to feel empowered and feel like they have worth and potential. That is terribly difficult in the ghettos of this country and by the way. I haven't met a lot of middle-class white guys in my prison career. This isn't to say that they do not commit crimes, they do. It's just that prison is based on a class system as well. Many people do rise out of poverty, abuse, and oppression. But, the odds are against you. So, early on children need more safety and less fear.

There are many bad men in this prison. But they each have a story. Perhaps a small percentage were born defective. The majority though were shaped, or allowed themselves to be shaped. There is so much intelligence, talent, and potential locked up that I refuse to believe they would not have flourished if they had been in the proper conditions for growth.

I trust and pray that through my sincere words, you will have heard and understood my message of remorse, of strength, and of sincerity. You and I are not as different as we might look. We both came into this world needing love...and we still need it. We need to feel that we have a purpose in this life and that we have a place. It is

a basic need. So many of us in here never had these basic needs met. Again, this is not an excuse. It is just my opinion and experience. I now believe that you can overcome anything. Or you should at least die trying. It is far better than to live trying to die.

The pain, the oppression, the loss of family, the violence, the depression all played a part in rehabilitating my life. I feel I have learned what I needed to learn to become an honest and responsible man. Now, with all this behind me, what I want more than ever, is to continue to grow and to have the opportunity to become respected and loved by and in the world I never knew.

I am responsible for my rehabilitation. It occurred in spite of the prison system. Of course, I am only rehabilitated within this environment. I have grown and adapted in this world. I have conquered my fear. But, if I make parole and gain entry into the free world I suspect that fear will return. I will be returning to a world that doesn't want me and that I am ill equipped to function well within. People will no doubt view me as a large Black Ex-con with a history of violence. I have no real marketable skills. It is all so unknown to me. Imagine yourself back in 1978. That was the time I left. I do watch TV and read the papers and I try to keep up with the changes but I will probably be afraid if the wind blows on me. That probably seems kind of silly to you but remember, I have hardly even been outdoors in the last 20 years. I will work my hardest to do the right thing but I admit I am frightened. A part of me would rather eat leaves and drink the rain than spend one more night in prison but another part of me has no understanding what it will be like to be free. I can say that I don't feel there is any violence left in me. I don't even kill bugs anymore. I put them out my cell window. But

I fear becoming a puppet of desperation again. But it is time to try. I have paid my debt with each heartbeat of the last 20 years. At this point, I am just taking up space

#### Profile 7 - Tiger

All my charges have been second degree assaults. This time I got a second degree assault along with a spousal sexual assault and unlawful restraint. I think there was another charge or two in there that I'm not sure of because I don't care to look at it. It's either a 15 or an 18 year bid. See the reason why I say why I don't know what my charges are or the reason why I say that I don't know what kind of time I got here, 15 or 18, is I don't know and I haven't bothered to check because I really don't care. I don't care because I've been violent in my past and I've served time for it. This time around, however, I'm not at fault.

My wife, the one that I just had, I got involved with her because I was protecting my supply. See she works in the massage parlors and she, you know what I'm sayin', she does that type of work. I've been with her for like six years. She used me and I didn't know it. I used her and I didn't know it. She used me to gain position in her line of work because the owners of these places always gave her the assistant manager job, the power to hire or fire the other girls and keep them in line all and that occurred because of me. They knew that I was a bar room bouncer. I would get a phone call down at the bar where I was at and it would be her and she'd be working like ten minutes away and she would tell me to come down. We lived next to the Navy base in Groton and there'd be a lot of the Navy guys come down there to the massage parlors. She'd tell me there's somebody down there and you know he's drunk out of his mind. Maureen didn't wanna go in with him and do this or whatever. Now he's throwin' the furniture around and all

this other. So, could you come down? I'd ask her why don't you call Danny? He's who was the owner who owns these places. Why don't you call him because I figured even though everybody knows what goes on inside them places it's still a legal place. Why don't you call the police, you know. She tells me she did call Danny. He told her to call me. See so he'd rather have me go down there. I get down there and I'm pullin' in and this guy's poundin'. I don't know how they got the guy outside the door. But he's poundin' on the door. I was used like that in a sense. I decided that I wanted to get out of that. I was sick of that. I was tired.

I was still addicted which I didn't know at the time and I didn't wanna live like that no more. I'm sittin' in this beautiful apartment with the nice furniture. None of this came from me with my own blood, sweat, and tears. I didn't work a job for none of this. I didn't work. If it wasn't for her I wouldn't be sittin' in this apartment with all this. I wouldn't even be sittin' in the apartment. And I started wonderin' what it would be like to have my own, to pay my own phone bill. These girls bought everything. They paid for everything. They owned everything. And I started wantin' my own. The more I thought about it the more distant we got. And that's when we split up a couple of times, broke it off a couple of times but accordin' to her I was bought and paid for. I was startin' to feel like I wasn't a man I started feeling guilty and embarrassed. I'm drivin' around in these nice cars and I got more money than people that go to work and work full-time jobs I don't work. And even though I got all this I'm startin' to feel not good about it. Not good about myself. She hands me a hundred and fifty, two hundred dollars. And the bills bein' so crispy that you swear you gonna cut yourself if you didn't handle them the right way. I always accepted the money but it got to the point where I started lookin' at it like it was

poisoned. You know what I'm sayin', like disgusted. Like, with how she got it you know. I know how she got that. Oh man, I could go on. Like I'm sittin' out in front of this parkin' lot waitin' for her to come out and it's closin' time and all the other girls are comin' out leavin' and she doesn't come out. And then another girl comes out into the car and tells me she's gonna be a little late she had a late customer come in. So now I'm sittin' in this parkin' lot, two o'clock in the morning, watchin' the door, waitin' for her to come out. Smoke a cigarette or a joint or whatever. And then here comes the guy that she was just with comin' out and I watch and he walks down the stairs and out around the corner because they park up the street. Then she comes out. And I'm like you know, damn. But make a long short, I decided it was time for me to get out of that and get away from that and get away from her. I got my own place. She came over to my apartment one night. She kicked the door in. And that was where I made my mistake. I didn't call the cops. I should of called the cops but I didn't. That was the first time. The second time she comes in you know, she doesn't call, she doesn't nothing. She comes up the stairs and I get into an argument with her. And I tell her I'm callin' the cops. After about five minutes, ten minutes of arguin' she just start screamin' and runs out of the house. So I go to my sister's house. Cause it's like two o'clock in the morning. And I'm like oh man, she's runnin' down the road. She's screamin'. She hasn't got no car. She left her coat. It's December, two o'clock in the morning, it's cold out there. Oh man, the neighborhood. She's white, I'm Black. We're in a bad neighborhood. You know what I'm sayin'? I'm like oh my God. You know that old thinkin' comes back. I gotta get up outta here you know what I'm sayin'? So I leave. I go back upstairs. I get my coat and I go out and I go down to my sister's house. Knock on the door she lets me in. I stay there for

like two or three days. I finally come out and I'm walkin' downtown Norwich with my nephew. The cops turn around and tell me to get on the ground, I'm arrested. Goin' to the jail, goin' to the police department they tell me what'd you do to your wife? Did you pull the gun on her? Did you shoot her? What'd you do? I don't know what they're talkin' about obviously. The story that she gave them was that I had snatched the hallway bannister off the wall and beat her down with it. And she claims that she took six to eight blows to the back of the head. She didn't have a scratch or dent, no stitches, no nothin'. After she told the police they took her to the hospital. And they gave her a thorough check. And they didn't find nothin'. I mean I'm weighin' 320 pounds right there. If I had hit her with anything it would have injured her. I'm a barroom bouncer, I know what I'm doin'. I said, "If I'd a hit her in the head with the bannister six or eight times in her head she'd be dead." It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out. They told me I was also charged with sexual assault. So I go to jail and I'm waitin'. The public defender guy tells me well you either get bonded out or you gotta sit here for two months until we get the medical report back. I said that I'll sit. I knew what the medical report's gonna say. Sure enough it says what I know it was gonna say. They did 17 separate tests on her, besides checkin' her head for injuries, this rape kit thing that they do. Came up with nothin'. Then later the public defender comes to the jail where I'm still sittin' there and he tells me they want you to do five years for second degree assault and they're gonna drop out all the other charges. I said, "Second degree assault for what? I didn't do it. The medical report proves I didn't do it. You got it right there in front of you." He says, "Well they want you to do five years." I told him to kiss my ass and I told him to tell the judge and the prosecutor to kiss my ass. And then I told him the hell with

it I'll tell 'em. And that's that's what I did. I guess I appeared pretty violent I'm standin' over here with like five sheriffs around me and my public defender's standin' over there defendin' me but he won't come close cause I already told him what I'm gonna do, if I catch him, if he comes within range. And now instead of doin' the five years I'm sittin' here doin' 18. Or 15, or whatever they gave me. This was one of the modern day lynchin's. It was the injustice of it all that really pissed me off.

I had a record and had been incarcerated before. I'd been in county jail about 20 times. And then did state time. I separate the two. The first state one I did a two to four. The second around was like a three to seven. Mostly from different assaults. One came from a burglary. And now I'm doin' a 15 or 18.

Some sentences ran concurrent. We call it a trip around the world. You go from the county jail to Somers. And then from there you go to Enfield and then from there you go to Carl Robinson and then from there you go back to your county jail where you came from and then you're released from there.

I started fighting people when I was in elementary school. On the bus, bus stop fights, and stuff like that. We all did it. It was nothin'. I've been into many fights, many fights as a kid and eventually I worked at the bar so I could fight legally. It was normal to me.

I think the first time I recognized a role model was the neighborhood drug dealer. I was 11 or 12 years old at the time. I'm walkin' from a friend's house from across town. There was a corner where all the Black guys hung out at on the west side down by the package store. I'm walkin' down there and I see this guy. There's like five or six police cars around him and they're swingin' their little black billy clubs at him. And

he's duckin' them and dodgin' 'em. He's out there fightin' 'em and I walked right in the middle of it. I could almost touch him. I wasn't payin' attention. I'm seein' this guy. He's out there battlin' the police and he's, you know what I'm sayin', holdin' his own. And I'm like, oh, you know, wow. He's the first guy in town that's got one of those big black Eldorado's with the diamond in the back. He's got all these rabbit ear antennas when all this came out. The white walls and he's, you know what I'm sayin', he's looking powerful and successful. He was all that. We're up in the pool hall where everybody's lookin' down and seein' him. This guy, had it goin' on. All the best, all the women. He was dealin' heroin and all that. I didn't know that either. But I knew he was somethin'. He was runnin' the after hours joint in the illegal pool halls and you know then he had his boys that was down with him. And that at the time that looked pretty cool to me. He was a negative role model but a role model.

I think my drug of choice was marijuana. I started back when I was about 13 or 14. It didn't make me violent but it wasn't right I wasn't thinkin' clear when I was on it that's for sure. I don't drink, never did. The cocaine came when I started the relationship with the massage parlor girls. They introduced me to the cocaine. And that's and then eventually that overtook the marijuana because that's how that stuff works, you know. And then it was that. And then I went to smokin' it. Everything I did evolved around that, gettin' it. What I had to do to get it, you know. I'm in NA now.

My parents didn't drink or do drugs. There was nine of us, nine kids in the family. I got five other brothers besides me. I'm not the oldest, nor am I the youngest. And actually, I'm not the biggest. I'm in the middle. Only a couple of my siblings have had problems with drugs, violence, or incarceration. Most of them are doing pretty

good. We were close. Close-knit. Every everything was okay there. It was stable. Both my parents worked. We owned our own property up on the top of the hill. Never knew what it was like to want. See, like now that I'm here and my eyes are open I hear a lot of the guys talk about where they came from, the projects, and the ghettos and how they didn't have, and there's no father there or you know comin' home from school and they got nothin' to eat. I never knew that that stuff existed. I thought every kid got bikes and shit for Christmas. I thought every kid went to drive-in movies with their parents. I thought all the kids signed up for little league and midget football and you know, marched in drum corps. I thought all the kids did. I thought everybody did that. I had no idea that people were strugglin'.

At home Moms did the beatin's. But I'll tell ya. We got what we deserved. She used a belt. I always heard about the extension cord and all that. But I never seen that. We just got the belt. Maybe an open hand or somethin' once in a while dependin' on, you know, what it was. I don't have a problem with that today as I think about it. My moms was good with everybody. The whole community, you know what I mean? I have five brothers and three sisters. Now, you figure each one of us was bringin' home at any different time ten friends. So everybody got to know my mother. She knew everybody's kids. And then like I said we're marchin' in the drum corps and we're doin' this and we're doin' that. So sleep-overs was always at our house cause we got this huge house. We could come and five or six of us just go downstairs, eat til we got full and didn't have to worry about moms gettin' mad or none of that. I was fortunate.

Growin' up I never felt discriminated against. I lived in a mostly White neighborhood. I think there was one other Black family where we lived at. Never knew

what that feelin' was. I think I ran into it once or twice but it was never nothin'. The school was mostly White. The kids didn't treat me like I was different. I didn't look at them like they were different. They didn't look at me like I was different. High school was when I started seein' that there was a difference in the race. Blacks fought the Whites. And because you were Black this was the side you was on. And one or two of them started fightin' the others came. It was like that. I seen it then, yeah, I seen it. I didn't think about it at the time. It was just somethin' we had to do.

I stopped goin' to school by 16. I didn't like school. I didn't do well in school. The funny thing about that is that back when I was goin' to school I cut every time I got a chance. When I was there I never paid attention. Never did my homework. Never did nothin'. But come to find out I learnt somethin' because I write. Everybody complements my penmanship and I write stories for the paper. I've organized a chess club here at MacDougall. But somehow I didn't like school. I didn't take to it when I was comin' up. Didn't get into any big trouble. Loosin' my temper, yes, I did that. I can remember a couple of times I did that. But talkin' back or stayin' after school, none of that. The best I can say is when somebody did somethin' to you, you kicked their ass. It was the law of the streets. Somebody said somethin' that you didn't like, or maybe you might wanna back them, hell you could fight for a buddy that got his ass kicked. It was an activity. I would fight somebody today and tomorrow we're hangin' out. I used to get into fights and at a certain time I started gettin' arrested for this. When I started gettin' arrested for this I figured every time I ball up my fist I'm gettin' arrested. So the logic that I used was if I work this job, then I can kick ass for free. I liked it. I was good at it and I liked the fact that I was good at it. And I liked the fact that other people knew that I was good at

it. It gave me an identity and a status although I didn't realize it at the time. I feel stupid about it now, I really do.

But that's what happened. That's what happened. I mean because of my size everybody would see me and say damn, you should be payin' pro football. You should be this or you should be this or you should be that. And when they saw me you know they were like you know, ah man there's just so much you know. So much.

There is lots of violence around drugs. The first that I got in behind drugs was not my drugs. I was at this bar where I sold my weed and there was a couple of other guys that sold their stuff there and then there was another guy that sold cocaine. He was with a girl we know, so we ain't goin' to bother him and he's not step in' on our toes in no way cause we're sellin' weed and he's sellin' the other stuff. So, he can stay. And one day some guys came down ripped him off. The guys that he deals with comes down to rip him off. So they come into the bar and they stab him with a screw driver to rip him off. I'm there and I heard what was goin' on. So I went back there and you know we handled it. He went to the hospital for three or four days and then he came out and he came back down to the bar where I was at and he told us you know that he appreciated, you know, what we did for him. And the next thing you know now he's a part of the crew. Even though I didn't know him, he's been here with us for so long and these other guys don't know them from no where and then you know they're anxious to come down here and take his stuff you know what I'm sayin'? How you gonna take his stuff without payin' for it? What are you trying to rob him or something? Besides, it's our territory.

Now when I think about my becomin' violent I see it was because of an error in thinkin'. My problem was that I thought that this was the way that I made myself

important, this was the way that I got known. My reputation was everything. And that was who I thought I was. Somehow I had got the reputation that I was some type of bad-ass. The majority of people feared me. I don't remember accumulatin' this reputation I don't remember building it. I never built up to say I'm gonna be like this. It just happened. And the stories would grow. The rumors started and cause I was in such a small area, somebody would tell this one about what happened and then when he told it somethin' changed and then the next thing you know I'm this bad guy.

I'm told my wife that the people that are tellin' these things don't really know me. All they know about is what they heard and all that. I got a chance to prove it to her one day. We're down in the city one day and we're off in the corner smokin' a joint with the guy that sold us the bag. And we're talkin' and he's tellin' me how he knows all the guys in the neighborhood. And he says yeah I know Tacky ... and I know Lenny ... and I know this guy. And I says is that right?. And I says do you know Tiger ...? And he says yeah, yeah, we used to drink cases of beer together, Budweiser. We used to drink all the time. We used to hang out all the time. I didn't say nothin' then. But after we left I told her you see, cause she knows I don't drink, never did. I says now you see, here's a guy, he was talkin' to Tiger ... and he didn't even know it. But yet, but yet he's tellin' us how he used to drink beers.

I felt the need to protect what I get, to protect what I got, you know what I mean. I can't have people goin' around half thinkin' that I'm easy or a wimp or get pushed around or somethin' like that. I don't go lookin' for fights, never did. But I won't run from 'em either. I'll try to talk my way out of it and walk away. But I'll be damned if I'll

run. Even today I won't run. If I have to fight, I'll fight. And when I fight I'm gonna do as much damage as I can possibly do. No question.

Now, I don't wanna fight no more. I don't wanna hurt nobody anymore. Since then I have hurt people a lot. Even though I'm a kind of a large individual, if I don't have to fight you with my hands I won't. I'd rather use a pipe or somethin', a bat or somethin' and get it over with as quick as possible. I don't wanna dance. I just wanna do this and be on my way. I've broken arms, legs, concussions, stuff like that. I've whacked guys with a pipe til he wasn't movin' no more. There was another time where this guy sucker punched me so I commenced to beatin' him down after I was done beatin' him down I went and got a knife and came back and stuck him a couple of times. Why did I do that? Because he made me do this. I gave him every opportunity to leave. I told him three or four times, leave, leave. And he wouldn't leave. He just stood there. This was my thinkin'.

I did think about consequences. I came to find out that every time I get into a fight, I'm the one that's gotta go to jail regardless of what happens. I'm realizing that if I'm in an apartment buildin' with like apartments upstairs, downstairs, all sides, two o'clock in the morning again, and here we are, this guy's almost the size of me. So if we start rumblin' in here, somebody's gonna hear it. Somebody's gonna call the cops. And I gotta go to jail.

I think people are violent because sometimes it can't be helped. A person can only take so much. You can't just let somebody do somethin' to you and get away you know. Sometimes you're backed up against a wall. Sometimes somebody will back you up against a wall and there's nothing for you, there's nothin' left.

Some people grow up with disrespect. The disrespect that they have for their parents, the disrespect that they have for other people, the disrespect that they have for other people's property and all that. The way they don't have no morals or no values and they just go out and they just start shootin' up everything. You know what I'm sayin'?

Other times I think they're not clear in their thinkin', they're not clear in their reasoning and it's mostly due to the drugs and alcohol and that way you're not clear. Just because you don't take a hit today it doesn't mean that you're clear in mind and all that. You're still under the influence. I don't care what they say how long it stays in your system. If you're active in it, then your mind is warped. And that's that's a big problem, well I think that's a that was a big problem with me. If I knew what I knew today I would of never snapped in the courtroom. I would of never called the judge a homo or the prosecutor, you know what I'm sayin'? I ended up with 18 years, I think. They know I didn't do this. They had the medical report right in front of 'em. The rape charge, 17 tests all came back negative. No bruises to the head. No nothin'. They took it and pushed it aside and they never gave it to the jury. Because if they'd of gave it to the jury then the jury would of seen that this never happened and I wouldn't be here talkin' to you right now.

People need to learn different skills. I think I think that the Alternative to Violence Programs, the Cage-Your-Rage Programs, and I think NA and AA should be instilled in schools, the elementary schools, as is readin', writin' and arithmetic, and all that science. You should learn, these skills and basically I think that's the big problem. Somewhere we learn not to drink bleach. And I think that if they would have instilled

the dangers of alcohol and drugs back then, I don't think that a lot of this stuff wouldn't be happening you know.

You need to get to kids early. The schools could start teachin' the kids. You can teach the kids about the drugs and alcohol and the violence and that there's other ways that they can grow up. I think that would come down a whole lot.

I always felt scared. Before I was violent, during, and after. I'm scared. Believe it or not, I'm scared. I'm scared of gettin' beat up. Back when I was a kid it was never a good thing to get beat up because I think okay, maybe the kids who got teased they got beat up. And I never wanted to be one of those that got teased or got beat up. It happened to me one time. As a kid I felt the fear, I've seen the fear of gettin' being called a punk. See, a punk back then isn't what a punk is now. Back then a punk was somebody who couldn't handle, couldn't take care of their self. Gotta have that respect. That's the most important thing.

I think now it was I was thinkin' that I had to please people. In other words they saw me as bein' this big bad tough guy that could do their dirty work for 'em or whatever, and they made me out to be what they wanted me to be. Because as I say I'm a bouncer in a bar, I shouldn't be goin' to some place that you own, collect the rent for you because you can't get the people to collect the rent. And because I was stupid, I'd go do it. I was bein' used again. Just like the guy that owned the massage parlor. And it was about a kind of identity, status, respect, and a sense of power. I didn't think I could do anything else.

Now I want to do what I never did. Work a job, pay bills, own my own place. I want to come home and stick my own key in my own place. And go to work eight hours

a day. Do the things that normal people do, you know what I'm sayin'? Without sellin' the drugs or bein' in that type of thing, you know. I don't wanna do that.

#### Profile 8- Pete

I am here for murder. Basically it was about a friend of mine. This guy was givin' her a lot of problems. It was about some money and cocaine or somethin'. She was a good friend of mine and he was causin' her a lot of problems with her parents. She asked me to speak to him. I was talkin' to him and we got into a fight in the car. He pulled out a knife on me and I shot him. Simple as that. I went to talk to him, it turned into a fight, he tried to stab me, and I shot him to death. I shot him nine times. After the second shot it was just like a reaction. I don't know if adrenaline kicked in or what you wanna call it. I didn't know this guy from Adam so I didn't know what to expect from him. So naturally I went there to protect myself above all else.

Mainly I was violent for what felt like self-preservation. And then once I started it was like I was afraid not to just finish him off cause I just got out of jail a year before and I didn't wanna go back to jail for shootin' somebody. I mean that's assault one with a deadly weapon or attempted murder maybe. I admit it was not a well thought out thing. It was crazy. I ended up coppin' out because my lawyer said that it would be best.

It was in his car and when they found his body they connected him to the girl that I was trying to help and she in turn gave a statement against me. She was there when it happened and another girl was with her. They were gonna charge her with the murder. It was a problem from the beginning, too many people knew about it.

At the time I was trying to have a life. I was doin' mason work with a friend of mine. He was payin' me twelve dollars an hour and on the side I was trying to start my

own little business, you know. But I was using drugs sporadically and that night I was drinkin' everything from A to Z.

I started drinkin' early in my life probably. Maybe nine or ten. Liquor was prevalent in my family. All my life I drank on and off. I probably didn't start usin' drugs until I was about 12, 13 years old. For a long time my drug of choice was heroin. When I did my own robberies, that's what it was for. I was a serious addict for a good seven years. I used to deal cocaine. My first sentence was for cocaine.

Being involved in drugs and alcohol put me in situations that I was in the night I killed this guy. I mean because this girl was involved with alcohol and drugs, particularly drugs, cocaine for her, I was tryin' to be a nice guy and do a friend a favor. And it just went bad. I didn't go there to kill him but when you're livin' on the edge and in that life style, that's part of the lifestyle and you have to you have to expect it or be at least be ready for it. There was violence all around.

In 1980 I contracted HIV. So I stopped usin' heroin. I smoked pot once in a while, I'm not gonna lie. But I wasn't druggin' druggin'. My drug of choice was heroin. I'm a down freak you know. I had to stop for my health because I'd be dead if I if I didn't. I was diagnosed in 1987. I'm feeling pretty good and I'm on the cocktail. Actually I've only been on medication for about six years now and I've been positive for 18 years. My wife is negative as far as I know.

I'm doing okay. Just had open heart surgery last June. To have a mitral valve replaced. I got a pig valve. I've had several head injuries. I've been in a few car accidents. I went through the windshield two times. That's why I have no teeth now. I have dentures but I don't wear 'em. They don't fit right because they're state made. But I

mean they're just too hard to eat with. I mean they're okay to wear to visits and to take pictures. But just for everyday it's too much of a problem.

My father died in 1988 of cancer. Just turned 65. My father was an electroplater machinist. He was a drinker, yeah. My mother waitressed sometimes. For the most part she was a housewife. But when we needed extra money she waitressed. She worked doin' circuit boards somewhere before I was born. When I was little she drank. But my mom stopped drinkin' real early in my childhood. I think she saw that it was a problem between her and my father. They fought a lot and he would hit her when they were both drinkin'. I witnessed all of that.

I had three brothers and two sisters. Growin' up I took my share of beatin's. Some deserved some maybe not so deserved, you know. I truly believe that I brought anything that I that I got with very few exceptions. My father would use a strap on me and on all my siblings as a matter of fact. I mean it wasn't like it was just me. The only one that never got a taste of my father was my little brother. He was everybody's favorite. He was the baby so we protected him. My father would hit us on the ass and the legs. And as we got older, I mean, it graduated. I mean it went from the strap and as you got older he started usin' open hands on you, you know. Then when you got to be in your teens and he started usin' fists, closed fists. It would be a significant beating.

One brother died in '91. I am five out of six. My sister had a bad alcohol problem for a long time. As far as I know I've been told that she doesn't drink anymore. But I don't know. Her and I don't speak. We haven't spoken for several years. I'm in touch with my younger brother, my older sister, and my mother.

My sister and I had a falling out around the time that my father passed away. She said some things to my father about me that weren't true and it hurt me because my father went to his grave believin' what she said. And that hurt me and I felt betrayed by her. So ever since then her and I haven't spoken.

I guess maybe the only role model I had must have been my father because if I didn't learn anything else I learned how to work, you know. I always kept a job from the time I was 14 years old. I always kept a job. And I like to work. So I mean if I had a role model it must of been my father cause he worked constantly. He worked two jobs all my life. I think that's what he used to attribute his drinkin' to. One of his jobs was at the factory during the day and then at night he managed a bar. Hence he drank.

I liked school okay but I wasn't crazy about math or English. History I was real fond of and one history teacher that really left an impression on me. I probably did the best in history out of all my subjects. History and shop.

I got in my share of trouble in school. I mean like I got in I got in fights now and then you know. Skipping was what most of my trouble was. Hung around with my friends, smoked pot, did pills. They called it THC but I found out later that it was probably actually microdot acid. And this stuff was I mean if it's not real what we call clean in the drug world, it's very jittery, speedy, you know, like almost an amphetamine high. And if it's real clean acid like mushrooms or good liquid 25, LSD, lysergic acid 25 you can tell the difference. And the hallucinogenic properties are totally different. I mean but these little pills they used to call them double barrel THCs and I think they were double hits of micro dot acid.

I was either in eighth or ninth grade. So I was about 14 maybe. I ran away a few times. Sometimes because I couldn't get my way. Once it was because my mother and father were fightin' and I guess my father was thinkin' about leavin' home and I wasn't havin' that. I just didn't want him to leave. I love my father. I mean it was really disillusioning to me because I mean growing up I mean I thought I had a pretty good household. You know my father always provided for us. We always had everything we needed.

I got beat up a couple of times by people I didn't know for I don't know what reason. Sorry to say they were Black, yes. I grew up with kind of a tainted view on Afro Americans. But for the most part all my life I got along with everybody because I grew up in the city you know. I mean I lived with everybody.

I quit at 16. My parents weren't thrilled about it but they knew I was quittin' to go to work so it was okay, I guess, you know. It was extra money in the house.

Well, I've had a lot of time to reflect on everything, especially about my crime. I feel very bad for the kid that I killed because he was only 26 years old. Had his whole life ahead of him. There was absolutely no reason for him to die. And I feel bad for him and for his family. I truly regret that. But that's life. I mean he made his decision that night. I made mine. I have to live with my decision and he had to die for his. I regret that. I've had a lot of time to think about the role that my addictions played in that night. And probably more than even drugs and alcohol my addiction to women was stronger than anything. I've been married for 20 years and I don't know why. My wife has no reason to stay with me. I was pretty much a dirt bag throughout my marriage. I was never faithful. I wanted to be where they were you know. I wanted to be with different

women all the time. I was never satisfied being with one person you know. And if I had to snort cocaine to be with you then that was okay. Or if I had to sit and watch you snort cocaine that was okay. I definitely had a sex addiction. I was talking to my celly about that the other day because it came up in some meeting we were talkin' about sexual addictions or somethin' like that or it came up in one of the readings. And I said, I said I can relate to that.

I don't have the opportunity so now I see it more. I mean I guess I didn't want to admit that there was a problem before. It's not so much that I don't crave it as much but I know that the problem exists now. Just like I know that the problem with my alcohol and drug addiction exists. For some reason I got a personality where if I decided if I put my mind to stop somethin', I can do it. Just like I did with shootin' heroin. I know though that addiction is very patient and it waits for you. I've learned some new skills. A lot of it was communication too. I mean I never communicated my needs to my wife I don't think. I probably never listened to hers either. Therefore I had to seek the attentions I needed other places. My wife was addicted to heroin with me for a time.

I got my drug and alcohol problem under control I think. But I'll always be an addict. I just have to maintain my work on it. I can't let up. It's not like going to school you know. Once you get your diploma you're done. You're never done bein' an addict. I know I'm gonna be an addict until the day I die. It's just whether I choose to be an active addict or not. There's the difference.

Why do I think I'm an addict? Because my first thought is always when somethin' goes wrong my first thought is to drown my pain in a substance or in a woman. I didn't have other coping skills. When my father died, I was in prison. My first

thought was to go out on the compound and buy some heroin and get wasted. But I didn't. I went and I stayed in NA in AA meetings. They helped me through my father's death. I didn't use and that was my aim. Because I had just found out I was HIV positive at the time. And I really didn't wanna use. But I did wanna use. I mean I was hurtin'. Because my father and I had a real rocky relationship growin' up. And then after I left home it was like we were two different people and all of a sudden we were friends now. Like I said I did stuff wrong and my father took it to my ass. Plain and simple. Sometimes maybe I lookin' back at it now maybe I think my behavior was a cry for attention. I never got any attention from anybody when I was doin' good.

Why do I think people act violently? I could give you a couple of reasons just off the top of my head. One is the way they're brought up with it. It's definitely a learned behavior. I don't think anybody is born evil or violent. You have to learn to be violent, because violence is usually a reaction to a violent action. It's one way to get what you want but it's it's a learned behavior. I mean people react violently to violent situations. People react violently to get what they want when they want it. Also, some people are inherently mentally deficient and they don't know any better. I think some people are violent for that reason because that's all they know. They react to everything violently because of their mental deficiencies. They are wired wrong. I've come across a few of them in my time. People you say hello to them and they snap for no reason.

What kinds of things should be done to prevent violence? I think better education. I think teachers should be more in tune with how a child feels from the time they are very little. You can see it in people by the way they carry themselves. By the aura that they project. I think there should be more programs for drug and alcohol

addiction for the people who are less fortunate, for the more poverty stricken people. I mean people who really need the help. Right now government is all about making money for the big businesses. Because that's who backs their campaigns. The under classes need to be helped.

I've had a lot of time to look back on a lot of parts of my life. I never got any recognition for the good things I did, you know. I mean when I was in little league, I played little league for four years. The only thing my father ever did was take me to the physical. I was a year younger than I was supposed to be and he knew the coach that happened to pick me at try outs and he was able to finagle me into the league a year early. But other than that, nobody ever came except for my sister came to a couple of my games. Nobody ever came to see me play in four years. I was not paid attention to and I didn't feel seen or heard. I guess I felt like well if they don't care, then why should I care, you know. And I think that's where a lot of my attitudes came from. Once I was old enough to take care of myself, once I didn't need a baby sitter anymore, I felt like nobody cared about me anymore you know. Now we gotta look out for Bobby who was my little brother. Now everybody was worried about him, cause now he's the baby. I came from a fairly good size family and the only ones that seemed to matter in my family were my two sisters and my little brother. Me and my older brother were kinda, you know, in limbo. My brother just he buried himself in work, you know. Me, I chose to bury myself in gettin' high and gettin' laid, point blank. I was probably more depressed than I would admit or that I knew. Because I was always self-medicated.

I can honestly say that sittin' here talkin' to you now I've thought about things and things have come up that I haven't thought about for a long time. It was hard feelin'

like I didn't matter. I think that growin' up feelin' valued would help a lot in a lot of situations. A lot of the cases are compounded by lots of stresses. And then being poor and Black or poor and Hispanic is even worse. I mean it was bad for me being semi poor and White and I didn't have to deal with the additional racism.

But I have to say when I think about all of this that I've felt powerless. My violence felt like a matter of self-preservation. I mean everybody on the face of this planet will do what they have to do to live. Well not even not even so much to live because you don't have to kill anybody to live but to survive. If somebody's tryin' to off you or you think somebody's tryin' to harm you, you're gonna do what you have to do to come out on top. That's just the law of nature.

In the past I was never afraid of anything because I was too stupid to be afraid of everything. I was always too medicated. I was always too self-involved about what Pete is doin' about Pete. Or what Pete is doin' for Pete. I never let myself feel it. I always pushed it down or medicated it. I covered it up. It was there anyway. That's probably why I did a lot of what I did cause I was afraid. I was afraid I didn't wanna be alone which is probably why I sought out the attention of women. I was afraid I wouldn't have friends which is probably why I dealt drugs and used drugs and alcohol because where there's drugs and alcohol there's people. And if you share a common interest, you're gonna be a friends.

I think it's important for people to know that regardless of what somebody does people can change. Whether it's whether they kill somebody or they steal something or they use drugs and alcohol, people can change. But it's up to the individual. They have to wanna change. And people have to be able to see that people wanna change. And

particularly in the department of corrections it's like, they send out the people that they know are gonna come back. You know and the people that are less likely to reoffend are the ones that they crucify it seems like. It is better for business. Prison is big business. I mean nobody will admit that up front. I've been doin' it for twenty years. I know it.

I'm not eligible for trailer visits. I gotta a class A ticket back in 1994 for weapons. I've gotten other tickets since then but I mean they were stupid tickets. The Class A one put the squash on my trailer visits so I don't get to spend time with my wife. Now the only fear I have is that because of my disease that I won't live long enough to be free again and spend some quality time with my wife and give her back a little of what she's given me in the last twenty years.

#### Profile 9-Martin

Getting involved with violence I guess it had a lot to do with the environment I was livin' around. I lived in a in a project, a housing project. And a lot of stuff goes on in a housing project. Like lots of drug activity. I used to be around a lot of drug dealers and I have dealt drugs but not big time. Made a little money and you know mainly I was around a lot of that activity and a lot of bad people. It's a crazy life. The drug life was a way of life. To try to, I guess, call yourself to move up. I didn't have no job. I had no means of havin' an income. I mean no further than the city welfare or something like that. And that wasn't enough. It was no kind of life but it was the only one I knew. So, I start dealin' drugs, doin' drugs. And that's what got me into the violence, you know. Growin' up the role models were the drug dealers and they were into the violent life.

The other role models were athletes. As far as basketball, I always liked Michael Jordan. He's a good player. And I play myself right now. I still play and at 41 and I'm

just as good as I ever was. We just finished up a league. We just came outside in the beginnin' of June. And when we was indoors for the winter we had a little four-on-four teams, you know, of about ten teams, four-on-four. Four guys from each team played each other. And we won. We won all the games. We didn't lose.

But the role models that were closer to me growin' up were the drug dealers. I used to try to be in the fast life and try to do what other people do. I seen people makin' money and I wanted to be like that. I just let myself go to the wrong things at the wrong time. I quit school. I could say I was doin' good in school but I quit. I'm waitin' to go to school right now as we speak. I done sign up and everything. I'm gonna get my GED here, yeah.

I never was in a gang. I was always solo. I was me and my family, mainly. I didn't have that many friends. If I did I wouldn't know it right today because since I been in jail I haven't seen a letter or nothin', or a note or anything. So really I never had any friends. They was always jealous of me because I used to, some way or another, get things for my family. Like I used to deal my little drugs, I used to work little odds and ends jobs, whatever. Whatever I did to make money, to make my family to have things, I did that. You know, to have nice cars. Like I said I lived in the projects. People don't get very much livin' in the projects but I did because I worked at it. The people, they was jealous and they didn't like me that well. Me and my wife, they didn't care about us too much. Cause they was always mad because they didn't have the things. One time the police came knocked on my door cause we was sellin' drugs. Somebody told you know. One of the neighbors told. The police came and they confiscated a few bags of marijuana, but no more. It was no big deal. In a way, I was smart. I wasn't like the

average drug dealer that would take their money and hold it and build it up and let it build and build. I spent. Every time I made a profit I spent it. I spent it on my family. Like my kids' clothes. Furniture. New, everything new, you know. Stuff that I needed for the house, or myself.

Some people are just drawn to havin' guns. I wasn't like that. I have had weapons around me, like when I used to sell drugs or something I you know for protection. I needed one at the time cause out there you never know. Somebody try to rob you or...you need it. They try and break in your house. I always had a little small pistol or somethin'. A .25 automatic or somethin'.

I did use it on my best, well he wasn't my best friend because if he was a friend he wouldn't a went and did what he did to me. He used to come over my house all the time. I used to let him stay in my house. I usually tried to help him out. I was doin' good. He wasn't doin' too good. Tried to help him out and he was on drugs. And one night he broke into my car. I had just painted my car and got a new stereo. He broke in my car and took my stereo. And I just went crazy. I was in love with the stereo and plus you know my wife was tryin' to tell me, you know, to forget about it. And for some reason I couldn't forget about it. I kept boostin' myself up by drinkin' and drinkin' and drinkin' until I seen him to confront him. And I seen him the next day. I confronted him asked him about it and he lied and say he didn't do it. So I just started shootin'. Somethin' went off in me when he said he didn't do it which I know he did it because I had bought it back from the person he stole it from. So that ticked me off. I got him in the leg.

Basically what got me into the life of violence was by bein' around the wrong people. Just bein' around the wrong people because I wasn't really a violent person you

know. I just seen it, I try to do what other people did and I got caught up in it. Tryin' to do thing that I saw other people do it. At the time It made me feel very powerful. It made me feel like somebody. I had money. I had cars, clothes, whatever. That was the things that I was lookin' for in life. Try to climb up the ladder but I was doin' it the wrong way and I didn't realize it until I got caught. The drugs played a big part in it too. Because then I started doin' drugs and when you're doin' drugs you don't think. I never thought about nothin' like that. I just did it and you know without any hesitation or thinkin' about what I was doin', you know. But now that I think about it, no, it was no power.

I'm here for felony murder and assault. I got 65 years. When I was arrested, the law was at least fifty percent. I've been down seven years. I done time before for assault, mainly assault charges. My last bid on assault I did 18 months. That was back in the '80's something like that. And then in the '70's for little minor offenses. Breach of peace, trespassing, you know. Stuff like that. Did a little, 30 days here, 60 days there.

This crime was a robbery that went bad. I went to rob this place and they pulled a gun out on me. There was two people. I was wrestling for the gun and the gun went off. One of the guys got shot in the shoulder. The other guy was hittin' me with the phone and we was fighting and when I got finally got the gun loose, I shot him. I wasn't no good at robberies. I think this was the first one. I never did robberies. But I did plenty of other things. I was into the drug life and this person that was very close to me owed some money for drugs. I was trying to get some money to pay this person's drug deal drug debt. And that's what happened. They were with me at the time. I was doin' a little drugs here and there. But not like this person was. I was doin' marijuana, heroin, sniffin', coke, cocaine. Yeah, those three. Once in a while a Valium or downer.

They wouldn't take no plea bargains or nothin'. If I really wanted to I could of got a plea bargain because I wasn't alone. But I never I never said anything to this day. Nobody knows. So I took it to trial. I had no choice. But, well, if I knew that this person was gonna be the way that this person is today, I would of told. That way that person would be in jail now. But that person was somebody very, very close to me and I'm not a snitch, plus like I said the person was very close to me. And I thought things was gonna be different by me not sayin' anything. But it turned out it wasn't. I've had some regrets that I wish I would of said somethin' then maybe I wouldn't have no 65 year bid, you know. Cause to get somebody else they would make a deal.

Me and my wife isn't talking right now. I guess we kinda broke up. I talk to her now and then on the phone when I call my daughter. Right now my daughter is livin' with my wife. Last time I heard my wife was into really big drugs. She's in a different state of mind. After I got locked up, she stuck with me for a few years. Then she started gettin' deeper and deeper into drugs. Deeper and deeper. We had been together over 20 years, but we've only been married 12. So I guess I was the only one that was ever there for her as far as being a couple was concerned. And she kind of took it hard and I heard that she was doin' drugs real hard. She almost OD'ed, over dosed. It hurts me to hear that. I really thought that she would be there for my children. That's the main thing. My wife not only let me down, she let them down as well because she was the only one out there for them. She didn't have the strength to do what was right, to take care of things. That even though this had happened and I'm not there no more, okay, it's bad, go through your emotions and straighten up. It's time to realize that I'm not there and it's time to get yourself together and go on. I always told her that. But for some reason she was very

weak. Low self-esteem. I used to do everything for her. She wasn't used to doin'. I used to have to go shopping with her, even to the laundry mat. She couldn't even balance her money. When she was on the state, she would give me the money and I would give her what she needed to pay the bills and everything. I did this for years. So she was never used to doin' this. She just fell apart.

It kind of hurt me a lot that she always said she's gonna try to clean up. I always tried to talk to her and tell her look you gotta go on and don't you know you can't keep goin' on like this. But addiction is real hard. I know it's hard because I was on heroin before I came in here, before I got arrested. I was on a methadone program for these five six years maybe more. When I came in here they wouldn't give me nothin'. I was sick for days. I had to detox by myself. And it was painful, terrible. You got to lay in the bed curled up and I didn't eat or nothin'. I mean it was just terrible. Sweatin' and you know. You know the tremors. I think it took me maybe a week, I went through this a week. I thought I was gonna die. And then once my body was cleansed and I and I it was over. Never no more. I mean I can get drugs any time I want, believe me. I do not mess with it no more. As a matter of fact I joined a NA program. Narcotics Anonymous.

My wife introduced me to heroin back in the '70's when we first met. She was married when she met me and her husband was a really big drug dealer. I mean a big drug dealer. He used to go to Thailand and get his drugs. He was an importer. I was on it for years and then the methadone. I tried to get myself together. I did too. I was maintainin' for a while, you know. It was hard to do. I was holdin' a job. I was workin' construction. I was makin' fifteen dollars an hour. I had just bought a brand new car. I never bought new before. Now I bought this with my real money. It wasn't no drug

money. This really made me feel good about myself. They gave me credit. It was a brand new 1988 Pontiac LeMans. I never finished payin' it off of course. I had it repossessed. But I did good for a while and then I started messin' around again. But I can pat myself you know on the back and say that I tried, you know. I did, I tried. I never just stopped and just went down. I always picked myself back up and tried to climb up and then I go back down and then I climb back up.

I drank a little, yeah. I used to go to bars and drink Barcardi and rum. I wasn't really a strong drinker, a hard drinker though. It kinda pushed me over the edge a little at times. It depends on what the circumstance was, you know. Like when I drank I would go home and either pass out or sometimes I go and get in arguments with my wife or you know.

My son, he's in jail. He's 16. My son is locked up. He's in county jail for drug dealin'. He got shot last year. My daughter, she's doin' good. I speak with my daughter. Through all this, I'm surprised that she's kept up a positive attitude about things. Everything that we had all went through, that she's seen her father go through, she loves her father. She's very close to me. She's still in school. She'll be graduatin' next year from high school. She has a job. She's had a job for a couple of years now. And she's doin' good. But her mother's out there still dippin' and dabbin' into drugs. I talked to her about a couple of weeks ago and she was tellin' me that her mother checked into an in-patient program. Some kind of rehab or somethin'. I don't know how that went or if she's still there or not.

I worry about my children, my kids out there. Mainly my daughter. I shouldn't be because she's doin' so well. I just think in the back of my mind at any time things could

change around because she's around a drug environment. I'm not there to help her. My daughter, I think that's the only reason I want to live because maybe if it wasn't for her...I don't know. I must be there for her, because she needs me. Whether I'm here or not, whether I'm in here or out there she needs me. I write her all the time. I send her cards. I do hankychiefs. I trace all kinds of cartoon things on it, put her name on it. I send her my love. She cares about me. She comes visit. We used to have family visits here. They just took that away a few months ago. That's so bad. I mean that was supposed to keep your family together. That's what the program is for. And they said there wasn't enough people gettin' them. Which I agree there wasn't enough people gettin' them. But, they had a criteria that was outta this world, that you had to meet in order to get 'em. You can't be married, in jail. You can't have no tickets within the time that they started this program. That was back in '92 or '93. You can't have anything after that time that it started you have one ticket you can't get 'em. And if you do get a ticket while you're having the family visits you cannot get 'em no more. And not only here, in any other institutions. So they kinda like made it hard for inmates to have 'em. The highest number was 35 people gettin' family visits here. And it dropped down to about ten. So far as I know because they gettin' them at MacDougall, Suffield. They gettin' them there. They have over a hundred people on the list. It's real hard now that I don't see her. That was once every three months.

My parents are still living. They on disability, my father and mother. My father drinks on and off. There were nine of us kids. I'm the oldest. Three brothers, one died. He had got into this accident where he got cut, this is back in the '70's and they wasn't screenin' blood then and he died of AIDS. Very sad. That was another time that I wish it

was me instead of him. Because he didn't do drugs. He was into churches. He was a church boy. All he did was go to church. He didn't do drugs. He didn't smoke. He didn't do anything bad. I have another brother that's been incarcerated. I have four sisters too. One died. She died real small. I don't hear from my brothers. I'm in touch with my two sisters. One's my twin. All I hear from is my daughter, my mom, my father, and my two sisters. Other than that, that's it. I don't hear from them, the rest of the family.

When I was a kid I used to run away from home a lot. I guess I didn't wanna live by the rules. If you can't live by the rules then you gotta go. I was hard-headed and didn't wanna listen. I would get punished. My mother would keep me in the house or take something that from me that I liked to do. Or sometimes I would get whippin's. My father mainly did that. He would use belts. Sometimes switch. I used to have to go pick my own sometimes. You would get a switch and you'd peel it and you'd skin the switch. I used to run away from home to prevent it. I thought I was preventin' it by runnin' away.

Things were tough at home. One time I took a butter knife and put it on the stove and got it real hot. My sister was asleep and I went in her room and stuck it to her arm because they used to stick matches on me while I was asleep. They would put matches in my toes and they light 'em and run. It was real wild at home. I used to fight with my brothers and stuff. He threw my shoes out the window one time. I went out and got 'em and then knocked on the door. He opened the door. I hit him up side the head. There was a lot of stress at home. Plus my father, he used to drink. You never knew what his mood would be.

I'm not blaming them. They tried to provide the best they could for us. It was a lot of mouths to feed. I can't really say I got any attention. I can't say I did because there

was so many of us, you know. But they tried to do the best they could for all of us. You know, I can say that. They were not my downfall. I always told 'em that I don't blame them for anything because it was my fault . I was a hard-headed. I didn't do things like I was supposed to. If I was told to do something I would do the opposite. I wanted my own power. I just screwed up my life. They didn't have anything to do with it. I can't blame 'em for anything.

I have a lot of hopes and a lot of dreams. I gotta just keep my head and hope that I get through this. Yeah, because it's day-by-day in here, you know. It's hard. And you never know anything could happen.

I'm in pretty good physical shape now. I had an injury in Somers back in '93. I put my head through the window by accident. It was an accident. I was lookin' at a basketball game and this fly kept botherin' me and I seen him on the window and I tried to get it and my head went through the window when it came back, when it, that's when I pulled it back that's when it you know I got a few stitches there.

I don't know about my mental health though. I 've been depressed, plenty. And sometimes I still get depressed a lot. I have been really depressed at times. Some times I been so depressed that I couldn't care if I lived or died, you know for real. In here, bein' in here, it varies. Some days I get up with an attitude. I don't wanna be bothered by no one. Just by me bein' in here because I know I made a stupid mistake. I did something real stupid and dumb. And that haunts me. That bothers me a lot. Not only bein' remorseful. I'm very remorseful because you know I shouldn't of that shouldn't of happened. And just you know the circumstances surroundin' all the whole thing. It just bothers me a lot and you know sometimes I just wished that I wasn't around. I wish it

was me instead of the victim. I still feel that way. I wish it was me instead of the victim. I really do. It bothers me. I think about it all the time. I try to block it out. About this crime, here, you know. And about my life, period, you know. And, I try. I have a lot of regrets and shame. I'm hopin' that God will forgive me then that way I can forgive myself. I'm workin' on it you know. I wanna. Another thing that I wanna get into... you know my celly, he's a Christian now. He just started in the last six, seven months. Me and him talk sometime and you know I wanna get in the same kind of group that he's in and try to get doin' the same thing that he's doin'. He reads the Bible. He don't do anything. All he does is read his Bible and go to his Bible studies. We talk about me gettin' into it. But you know I told him that I am goin' to join him, but it's when I'm ready. When I feel ready. I see a lot of guys runnin' around here callin' themselves a Christian and a Muslim and it's just a show. They're not true to it. I feel that I'm not gonna put myself in and do something that I'm really not, just to make things look good. When I do it I wanna be true to it. I wanna do this. I don't wanna back slide or none of these things like they be doin'. So, you know, in time, I will start goin' to church.

For now, I try to keep busy, keep my mind occupied you know. Sometimes everything is good because I'm workin' around good people. Like secretary to the deputy warden. They all good people.

A few CO's that's in here that's good, that's alright. I work, I'm a janitor. I used to work in the trailer you know. Plus I got a little garden out in the back that I been doin' for the last few years. I grow tomatoes. Tomatoes, squash, cucumbers. Hot peppers. The CO's eat it and me. I'm the grower. I'm the green thumb. When I finish my work in the offices, I go in and empty the trash and when I finish that and I have nothin' to do they

let me go out there do the garden. I didn't know anything about the garden until somebody in the kitchen here helped me. He came out and showed me. Now I do it by myself. It's a pretty big size garden too.

Well, about me, I can't answer for other people's violence but I know for myself that I'm really not a violent person. It's just what made me violent. It's got a lot to do with the drugs cause it changed me. It really changed me you know. And it made me violent. I always thought that I could handle it. You know how people say "Oh it's no big deal I can handle it." But that's not true, you know. You think you can handle it. But it's a different story down the line.

I think people turn to violence for power, out of jealousy. There's a lot of reasons you can say that people are violent. For some, for some maybe it works. For me, no. It doesn't get me any power at all. Now that I can sit down and think about it. It's just that at the time that you are involved you feel that you on top of the world. You know you can do whatever you wanna do. It's the drugs really. It's gotta lot to do with the drugs. I mean when you do drugs, you don't think, you don't think about the things that you do. You just do it.

It's hard to know what to do about this. Because you still gots drugs all over the place, People turn to drugs out of oppression, for attention, for all kinds of things.

What maybe would have helped me was a good place to live, a good environment. A home. You know an environment with no drugs around. No drug dealers. Now you know I would like to live a decent life. That's what I feel that I didn't get. We was poor you know. We was in a poor neighborhood and I was tryin' to you know make money, trying to get outta that neighborhood you know. Trying to you know

get things that I never had that parents couldn't give me cause with eight kids, nine kids, you know, they didn't have the money to do or to give us what we really wanted. We just barely got by. My basic needs wasn't met, no, as far as having what I really wanted in life. I felt that I didn't have a choice. None. It felt like I didn't have no choice at all.

Now what's important for me is to try to maintain myself and try to do whatever I can to get outta here as far as bein' with my family. Trying to get with my family and do the right thing. I want another chance. I don't think I'll ever go back to that life. I've learned a lot since I've been in, this little time already. And I don't think that I would ever mess with drugs again because I'm not doin' it now. People seem to think that because you're locked up you don't have no access to different things. But that's not true. That's not true. I see it all the time. It's around and if I want it I can get it. I have no intentions of messin' with any drugs because that screwed up my life. And I realize that now and I don't wanna have anything to do with it.

#### Profile 10-Hector

I'm here for assault first, conspiracy to commit assault first, and carrying a pistol. Everything is running concurrent so I got twenty years. I was 24 when I came in and I've only been down about two and some change. I am under an older law and get time off my sentence every month so outta the twenty I'll probably be pullin' about 12 to 11 years. But I go to parole in 10. So hopefully everything'll work out.

I've got prior convictions. I got convicted of reckless endangerment gun charges when I was 20. There was kids around so that's where the reckless came. They gave me a year and a half, I did eight months, discharged in '94 of November, two days after Thanksgiving of '94. That was my first bid but I had been on probation a couple of times,

back-to-back. Mostly drug charges. They would just keep kickin' me to probation. I guess my time ran out. Earlier, I was under the youthful offender laws that's why I think they never give me no time, they give me probation until I got of age.

I'd been involved with lots of violence on the streets, fightin', shootin'. That was the mentality. When I first came into jail up in the county, and bein' new and everything, back then there was always a racial thing. I mean like if you Hispanic you stuck with your group. Like you stuck with your own if you were White. I was in the county jail and something had happened that some kid was tryin' to start like a little war between the Spanish and the Blacks. So, when we went outside and the kids were like oh, we need you to take care of this kid for us. I said alright, fine. I had just come in from the street, bein' incarcerated like only a couple of months, I still had that street mentality. Like yo, I don't like nobody to disrespect me or disrespect my homies. So, I just came and kicked the kid, kicked him in the face, broke his nose. It was bleedin'. You know, the kid tried to get up and was blinded. A friend of mine hit him with a with a belt with a big lock on it. And we beat him up. Afterward I looked down and I said oh man. And my friend said forget about him. I mean he shouldn't of done what he did. He was supposedly makin' knives and shanks and passin' 'em back and forth and sayin' this and that and that's what started the little problem between the two races. So the guys said well, instead of fighting with each other we're gonna fix him. We took care of him because he was startin' trouble. That's the mentality. I mean, when I was on the street, when I was younger, I would not hesitate to like pull out a gun on nobody and shoot at 'em. You got to stop the trouble before it starts. That's how the thinkin' goes.

My mom always tried to have a strong hold on us. I got five other brothers besides me. So we're all boys. I'm the oldest. My mom didn't drink. I never seen my dad drunk. Never *seen* him drunk. I mean he must have hidden it. My father never put a hand on me. My mom was the one that hit us. Bad, bad. The memory hurts. My mother used to do the dirty work. Broom sticks and all. It was just her way of discipline. But she never hit me in my face.

I'm the oldest but some of my other brothers been in trouble. One was dealin' drugs with me. He got busted. He came to jail and it was like the jail scared the daylights outta him cause he's never been back. And I am proud of him. He did a couple of months and it seemed jail was rough on him. He came out, you know, hurt. And I looked at him and I said you don't know how to survive kid. He's got a couple kids. He's got his girlfriend. Then one of my younger brothers did about five years. Got out on parole and he has an apartment now with his girlfriend and everything but he still dealing drugs, you know what I mean. I told him I said oh man if you get caught now there's this new law you gotta pull 85%. So what's the problem? The one that follows him just got arrested the other day. My mother told me. And he's still young so my parents had to come to get him. And my mother's like yo, your father tried to get him out but he kept mouthin'. So like for every bad word that he was sayin' to them, they would keep him like an extra five minutes and an extra five minutes. And they kept him there like all night I think. The youngest brother, that's my mom's little pride and joy. He's fifteen and he got his working papers. My mother said he wants to come and get a job, because he said that he wants to start sending me money. I said no, that'll be alright. And then and I spoke to him. And he's like no man, you're my big brother, I love you man. I used to

lookout for him. When I was out there, every time I smoked or anything I would give him money and say go to the store. Go somewhere. And he say, "Why?" Because I didn't want him seeing things, you know what I mean? And he knew it. I mean, but he never actually seen them, you know what I mean.

My mom had a hold of me until I was around 13. She used to always tell me to become a teacher. My father wasn't always there and she would teach us how to cook, sew so you don't gotta depend on no woman. I mean so that's the mentality that I got brought up taught me about always being dependent. I started goin' out to parties. I remember sneakin' out, sneakin' into clubs. Using my older friends' IDs or birth certificate to get into clubs. I always had facial hair and so they used to let me in and that's where I started hangin', you know, hangin' out with the guys. I wanna be cool. Come on let's go have a couple of beers. I remember my cousin driving me home, me bein' drunk. And my parents havin' a heart attack. I mean now that I'm an adult I can look back and say sure there was a lot of peer pressure to be cool. But back then and I wouldn't of admitted it. Yeah, cool like to be with the older guys. It felt very powerful in a way that I could do what I wanted.

I was more likely to be aggressive if I was drinkin'. Like if I was sober I mean if I wasn't drinkin', if somebody might say something to me and the first time around I might brush it off. I mean but now I've learned that you can talk all you want as long as you don't put your hands on me. I mean now you put your hands on me now that's a whole different ball game. But before, if I had a couple of beers in me and I was just chillin' and you would comin' and try to say somethin', you know somethin' really messed up. Yeah, it would result to violence.

The drugs started then too. Yeah, well, once I started hangin' in the projects. I never lived in projects but I used to always hang in 'em. Especially when I went to high school. I started at one high school, then my parents took me out and they put me in some other high school, supposedly like a good high school. They teach you biology or oceanography, a nice decent high school. But I wasn't interested in all that. I was a straight A student up to high school. Then when they moved me I had a couple of fights, started skipping school, lost my temper, talked back, destroyed stuff, windows. I just wanted my freedom. I just you know like, I'm my own man. I was interested in being with my friends, runnin' track, payin' basketball. So that's when I used to rebel. I just leave my house early in the morning, go take the bus downtown, and then just go hang out. Instead of going to school, I would go like hang in the mall, go hang in the park, go back to the projects, sell a little bit of drugs, maybe go smoke some weed. My parents caught on in the long run cause the teachers started sending notes and everything. They tried to punish me but I was very, very rebellious, you know what I mean.

If you're hanging in the projects you need to have a gun It's the lifestyle. I mean you could be out there and somebody pull a gun on you and you go oh, I ain't got none. That's one of the main rules. It's understood that if you gotta a gun and you pull it out on somebody, you gotta use it. I mean even if you just shoot 'em in the leg or whatever. If you don't then the person will be well this guy's bluffing, you know what I mean. It's no threat. I grew up in the era of guns. It was best to have a gun and get it over with. There was constant violence in the community and shootings down the street.

As far as dealing, heroin is where the money was at. Heroin is dope on the street. At the age of 17 I was makin' so much money that I was out there with new sneakers

everyday, new clothing. And that's what really attracted me. Just makin' the money. I was makin' maybe like about fifteen hundred a week. I mean at that age. I'm thinkin' some people work at Dunkin' Donuts where you make like a hundred dollars a week and you killin' yourself. Here I'm just standin' on the corner and I'm makin' money.

When I was in that state, like I was makin' money and with all that money you start gettin' cocky. I always had a gun on me. Now I mean, smokin' weed and let's gonna say that I'm standin' out there, makin' my money. I'm hangin' with the fellows. Like somebody comes by, even gives me a look, whatever. I mean my first train of thought is he is disrespecting me in front of my friends, on my block. I mean what's the problem you know what I mean. I got to do something cause it's either he do it to me or I do it to him. It's the law of the jungle. That's what most people don't understand. They think no, he's a hard core killer. Well he's doin' this, he doin' that. But they don't know that they've built up to that certain point. You know what I mean. You don't just react and just do somethin'. Like I said I could be standin' out there mindin' my own business you know what I mean. Course I am living in the thick of it. I got a gun. But as long as I'm not provoked then I don't have to pull it out. And so the people just think oh no he just walked by and you go and shoot 'em. That's a stereotype. Here in this town they always sayin' on the news how we're like a level four facility, that it's supposed to be like the hardest prison, and they don't wanna take anybody out, afraid we will just snap.

There is a lot of violence associated with this lifestyle. Of course if you make money then somebody's gonna see you make money and they gonna try to come over there and take it from you. Hey no way. This is my money. My corner. My territory.

Back then it was like no, this is mine cause I started this. So there's shootin'. Got to take care of the threat that's botherin' me at the moment.

I was kind of conservative. My favorite gun was a 9 millimeter 380. I used to love the tech 9. It used to jam up a lot but I used to like 'em. I had so many weapons if I wanted to, I could of started my own militia. I even had like military guns. I had like a 25. It looked like a 9 millimeter but it was a 25. I used to like the MP 25, you know. And a military issue, you know what I mean. They were easy to come by. I used to check on the projects and I mean people trying to buy drugs, they would probably steal the guns and ask what you give me for this. I give them like five dollars. It wasn't a lot to me but it was drugs to them. So like all day people used to come used to come with big ass big TVS, gold chains. I give them two bags of dope for it. That's the economics of the place. Once I got caught with a sawed-off shot gun. And it was maybe like 12, 13 inches. I used a little compact on the on the pistol grip. The police found it in my car and they were so intrigued by it that the gun didn't show up until like a day later and only because I pushed the issue. So when I got arrested and got charged with the gun but then the gun never showed up. I said well, well now you charge me, bring the gun to court. Bring the gun. It showed up a day later. They ain't gonna keep it. I'd rather have it melt it down and do whatever, you know what I mean?

On the street I experimented with like weed and coke. I tried like all other kinds of drugs. I mean I never shot up drugs because like I don't like needles period. The only drug that really attracted my attraction has been weed. But it depends what kind of weed you smoke too, yeah. They got that new kind of weed that they spray. It's been out for a while. I never done crack. I done coke. I done acid. I done weed. I done heroin. Not what

you call crack, but I used to like smoking, Newports menthol, put coke in it, then smoke it. I liked that. They say it's something like crack. Weed's not the same.

So back on the streets you are surrounded by violence. There is the gang thing too. How it works is when one group or the other gets in a certain mood of like a dominance that's when things really start to get out of control. Or like once, like the odds are like against you that's when things really get try to get really. It's like if there's five on five, they're calm, no problem, friends everything. Once it's ten on five, their equals goes to the moon and they're tryin' to get like a sense of authority. And that's when conflicts really start. Cause out there and in here it's basically about respect. I mean respect and your word is bond. I mean if you give me your word, I'm gonna follow up on your word. If your word's not good then it reflects on you and your people. If you give me your word, then that's your word. Let's say you belong to a certain family and you give me your word. You say listen, nothin's gonna happen. Then straight away two days later something happens. I mean now your word is not worth nothin' to me. Never again will I take your word, and then that reflects on the family. And you don't speak just to anybody. You just can't do nothin' outta context here cause there's a lot of repercussions behind all that. The gang stuff goes on in here too. There has got be some kind of authority. How do you think that this place really maintains itself? It's not the CO's in here. It's just like a day-to-day livin' and in this you gotta have some sort of authority, some short of structure in order for you to survive daily in here.

When I when I was 17, I met the mother of my kids. I mean then I would go stay with her and forget ya all. I mean by the time I was like 18 I had my own apartment and everything. I was working. And then I had my daughter. Basically, like I made the

decision to be on my own. In a way, even though they were always there for me, I was always on my own.

The mother of my daughter hates my guts. I've not seen her since '95 or seen my daughter. I called her a year ago on my birthday. Yeah, revenge. But she says no. But you can see it. I mean it's almost like the clearest picture that you can see. I mean cause when I was out there I would have to come from Rhode Island to see my daughter. And she would give me like a hard time then but she would let me see her I mean cause she didn't have a choice. I would come down put my foot down. I'd say I don't care if your boyfriend's there or not. I mean I'm not here for you. I'm here for my daughter. You know what I mean. And that's what started all the conflicts too you know what I mean.

She said that her son is mine too. But I doubt it very much. I told her she ruined my life and she got real upset. I said now if I have a son, I can't give him my name cause you're gonna ruin my name. I said why don't you take my name off the little boy and give him another name and if he's mine then we can change it again. She said no. So I said well give me a blood test. She say no.

I'm kind of beginning to mellow out. But to tell you the truth I don't really know how. I guess I have matured. I guess I'm lookin' forward to somethin' now. That's all I know right now. A lot of the kids here, my fellow inmates, and they look at me now and say damn, I mean you really different now. It makes me feel better to be off the violence because I see like if they notice the difference then I know that I'm changin'. Because before I said first comin' in here at my age, I had to get my respect and also let 'em know I mean that I'm not here for no little petty crime.

I used to get into revenge. That's what a lot of people know about me, I always made that real clear to them. Now I mean you do somethin' to me I might not get you today but you gotta remember tomorrow, you know what I mean. If I can't get you, I'll get somebody close to you. Well, I believed an eye for an eye sometimes. But it's like I said it depends on certain circumstances. Now, I'm really like laid back. I try to look at the big picture. I don't react so quickly. But I don't let them take advantage. I let 'em know real quick like don't take my kindness for a weakness cause I could be your best friend but I could also be your worst enemy. Doesn't mean you can't be kind. But there's always a fine line.

But now I'm into my program, I completed tier one, tier two, Threshold next week. I'm trying to get into the ongoing Threshold. And then I told 'em I said well I would like to go into tier three and tier four and other kind of program to help me better myself.

Even though I'm mellowin', things get on my nerves sometimes. My ex-teacher tells me well you fight it, that's your problem. You fight everything. You're too much into your rebellion that you don't see.

I'm thinkin' about a lot of things. I wrote to the school here and I told 'em that I'm interested in goin' to college. Used to be I wasn't like interested in goin' to school, like no, no, forget school. So then they said take the pre-test and if you fail it then we'll give you a job. So I said alright. I took the pre-test goin' crazy and said I'm not gonna fail this. I scored a 252 on my pre-GED test. And they looked at me and they said but why don't you wanna take your test. I said because I'm not interested in school. I mean so I took the GED test. I passed it. Literature and arts. That's where my highest scores are.

Discrimination, oh yeah. People say, oh how you know? But you got that strange feeling. Yeah I mean there's like a sixth sense. This sounds not right and why. You definitely see discrimination in here. I mean constantly. You could see four or five White dudes over here, right. The police will walk by 'em, go by, and say hi to 'em. No problem. You'll see four or five Black dudes over there, the police'll do the same thing, walk by 'em because they fall back on that on that Islam thing. Now you see four or five Hispanics and they got the camera on you. They walk by. And as soon as you break the group up they're comin' up to you oh what you done, what's gone on with your meeting. They are more suspicious of Hispanics than they are of anything else. And like for me to move into a cell with another Hispanic kid, I gotta through like the warden almost. Ever since I been down I only had one Hispanic celly and it's because the captain that moved me was another like Hispanic. They do White with White and Black with Black though.

I try to communicate with the CO's. If something happens, I try to deal with it direct. I apologize if I disrespect you in any way. Sometimes they can say that too. Then I says see, now you're showing me that you're human now, you know what I mean. Now we can relate, you know what I mean. Up in here some officers do try to look at you like oh like I'm here and you're not here. You're so you're not even worth it to speak to me. Like, I'm a man just like you. I mean you could bleed just like I can bleed. On the street you're like equals. Here, there's that boundary where you can't be an equal with nobody. Now, I look at it and sometimes like I be ignorant to it you know what I mean but that's because they like push me. Some CO's harass me, talk trash and all. The other day I stopped and I said, "Listen, let me ask you a question. Do I intimidate you? Do I scare you or something? You know I mean, I mean, tell me. Let's work out the problem." And

he didn't like know how to answer me. "No, no, you don't scare me." "Then why the constant harassment." I talked to him, point blank. I have a long way to go but I am trying to communicate.

Why do I think I was violent? I think I was driven to it. By my emotions, by the situations at hand. Stress built up, anger, fear maybe. I did feel powerless. Powerless not knowing what to expect. You know what I mean.

Lookin' around me and lookin' at the world I think I feel that for one there's too much drugs out there. Kids got too much power over their parents too. And not enough maturity. I mean cause when I was growin' up, picture me calling the cops on my parents. You know what I'm sayin'. After the cops left, my parents would beat my ass again, you know what I mean. And all these new laws and all this other things goin' on I mean they actually like it's callin' for violence. And in here, you know, when it finally comes, like I said, when somebody feels really like disrespected, when somebody thinks that they've been like violated to the point where they got to where they got to do something. Respect is everything. Violence comes from being disrespected in some way.

I been in fights. Got jumped a couple of times. Been shot at. That's a fact of just bein' out there. The CO's beat me up. My ribs all swollen. My lip all busted up. I was handcuffed so tight that my veins were like poppin' out.

I wish I had another chance. I mean I feel what I know now, will help me. I feel that it will take me like a little longer to get to like how I used to be and I ain't ever gonna be like anything snapped. I mean no, I won't react like I reacted before. But you never can say you will never be violent again. I could just be walkin' down the hall and somebody punch me in my face. I mean I'm not gonna just stand there and say I'm sorry.

I do think that people are driven to do violence. It feels to them like they are defendin' themselves. Some of it is in the characters. How you brought up maybe determines how far you are willing to take it.

What would I change? For those locked up, if I was put in that position and especially to deal with the prison systems, first of all in terms of locked down situations I would eliminate all that because that's what really stresses everyone. Right now they look at it like oh the more locked up that they are then the more the more better they'll get. Not knowing that whatever you locked him up for, he's still thinking about. He's thinking about it in his head. It's going through his head the whole time. As soon as you let him free of course he's gonna react because he still has that locked up with him. And you had him in a six by nine cell. Him and his emotions. So I would put more programs in jails, build like more houses on the street for when they are released and they have some type of place to go and some type of counseling or whatever. Teach them how to cope. How to think different. In the prisons, give 'em a little bit more freedom. Give 'em more programs. And I let them know that they are somebody you know what I mean. I mean, you know, just because you're like incarcerated I mean doesn't mean that you're all that bad. You still need respect. You especially need respect. Punishment doesn't achieve that.

I probably became violent just like to let 'em know that they just can't come mess with me. When I was violent I would cause fear. Basically, because like if you show somebody fear and that person got power to go over you I mean so you can't show fear I mean. If that's what you call respect, then I guess that's it.

But, to prevent it before it happens, people need attention. When I was little I wanted more attention and more respect. I had plenty of attention especially when I was out there sellin' drugs. And I you know, you know how you make friends quick. But that was after the fact. And, it was the wrong kind of attention and respect..

#### Profile 11 - Ron

I'm here for two counts of sexual assault, one count of kidnaping, with a weapon involved. I was 59 at the time of my crime. The four charges added up to twenty-five years suspended after thirteen. Which means I'll be eligible for parole in eleven. I chose to plead no contest. It's as simple as that. After the rape, my victim was spirited off to college in Virginia and though my lawyer wanted to bring her back and he would of tore her up on the stand, I would not allow it. So I chose to plea bargain. And then after I was in here and they served me with a civil suit for a million dollars, I did the same thing. I would not let him bring her back from Virginia. I felt there was nothin' to be gained by chewin' up an 18 year old kid on the stand.

My only previous offenses were two seat belt violations. That isn't to say that I wasn't violent, I was. I was married twice and I was violent in different ways in both my marriages. My first marriage was terribly dysfunctional and that's where most of the violence was. This marriage was totally dysfunctional just as my parents' marriage was totally dysfunctional. And even when my mother remarried, her second marriage was totally dysfunctional. So I had a lot of good training for being violent.

I was a batterer and a batteree in the first one. In looking a back if you made a list of each individual act of violence I committed, it would be a long list. I struck my first wife on numerous occasions. And I struck my children on numerous occasions. There

was slapping, pushing, shoving up against the wall and all. Definitely inflicting pain on her and the kids, both physical and emotional. And in defense, if I'm allowed that, I think it was because that's what I saw. I think it was accepted when I was growin' up. I thought it was definitely acceptable to beat your wife and to beat your kids cause that's what I saw.

I was married to my first wife for 23 years. She put up with a lot of shit. It's plain and simple. This went on the whole time. Finally she said enough. But not until I said enough. She was gonna go for the divorce. And then she came to me one last time and she wanted us to stay together. And I just couldn't see it, there was no sense to it. And I had no other woman on the side or anything at that time. She said, "Would you like to give it one more try?" and I said, "I feel like it's crazy. We just can't. You're gonna keep gettin' hurt and hurt and hurt." So then she filed the papers on me.

I hit the kids mainly by hand. My first wife used to beat 'em with sticks. We had an older house. We used to have sticks to hold up the windows. She was always takin' a stick out of the window and beatin' the crap of 'em with that. Or coat hangers.

I had a violent temper. I had no patience whatsoever. I had temper tantrums. I'd be working on a piece of equipment and if it didn't go right I was just liable to pick up a hammer and just beat it into nothingness and release my tensions and whatever in that way. Today I'm very patient and where my patience has come from I don't know. Agin' I think.

I remarried about two years after the divorce. I met my second wife the day, or the evening that the sheriff served the papers on me for the first divorce in '82. He served the papers and that night I went camping. That's where I met my second wife. We

were together right up until the offense. We were divorced only last summer. I never hit her. During the second marriage the violence was strictly emotional toward my second wife. Never laid a hand on her. So it was better in that respect. As I grew older, I mellowed. And I saw my father mellow too the same way.

But with the second wife, I was foolin' around on her, yeah. I'm ashamed. I had fooled around with several women working in the greenhouse over the years but never with a young person. At the time the girl was 17 years old. She had been workin' for me. I had been supplying her liquor. She never earned over fifty dollars a week and yet at the end of the week I would give her a check for whatever she earned then I would give her a fifty dollar bill or a hundred dollar bill. Sometimes two hundred dollar bills, for foolin' around. And it got to a point where foolin' around led to more foolin' around and like a stupid male, she said no, I said yes. And here I am. It was rape. It was two charges of sexual assault because I touched her say in one room, then took her into another room, and touched her again. To the state that is two counts of rape and kidnaping. I had a weapon. It was a little a little automatic .22 revolver and here again, and why I even bother sayin' it anymore I don't know because nothin' will ever come of it, the weapon was empty. But, when the charges and everything were read, the weapon had a bullet in it. I've been around weapons all my life. And that weapon was empty, I swear to God. They could behead me and I'd still say that weapon was empty. A bullet was put in the weapon after the fact.

When they found me, I was so remorseful I had ingested a bottle of 24 Valium pills, washed it down with a water glass full of a good Chivas Scotch, laid down on the bed with a gun, put it to my temple and when I woke up I was in the hospital. I figured

that I was gonna take the pills and wash 'em down with the Scotch and shoot myself and...I fell asleep.

I can't say that I didn't think no meant no. I'm intelligent. I may have only graduated from high school but I'm intelligent. It was lust. Plain simple lust. Maybe mental illness. Don't you think that anybody who does somethin' like this has a screw loose? I do. When they called me to see you today I was in a sex offender class. I love it. Since I've been goin' to that class I have come so far. It's been a matter of just a couple of months now. It's gonna go for 48 weeks, I love it. I was tear ass that they pulled me outta of that class until I found out I was comin' to see you which is probably just as good. I'll talk to you all day if you want. But, I was gonna ask at the end of the class when we had a talk session, why after all these weeks have I never heard mental illness raised? You gotta be crazy to do something like that. To think like that.

I don't think that many people in here know why I am here. They try to keep it to the point where everybody doesn't know. But I think as time goes by everybody does know. But to those who know me, I've gotta very good reputation both with the inmates and the staff, I'm Pops. I'm very fair, very honest. And I like to think that's why they chose me to be one of the people you're interviewing. I guess I do know something about violence. I have been around it my whole life. And in here, I am around a lot of violent men. This is probably the worst prison in the state. Is that why you chose it? They use Cheshire as a threat. This is a hole. We have our fair share of murderers and molesters and rapists and whatever. The guy I bunk with is a killer, a murderer of some sort. But I never asked him to share with me.

My mother was a house wife and my father as a shoe shop foreman. And when the shoe shop failed he went to his real love which was painting interiors of houses. He drank. I don't know that he was an alcoholic because he could go long periods of time without drink until an occasion, say a holiday or one of his friends would come up, and then he would drink a lot. There was a lot of violence in the house. In those days the violence was usually kept inside the house. My father was very violent towards my mother and towards us kids. My mother was violent too. Toward the old man it was defensive violence. Toward us kids it was offensive violence, definitely.

There were five of us from my mother's first marriage. I was the youngest. As soon as I was old enough to fall down they started beatin' on me. It was not just me it was it was all of us. We were all beat, yeah. Hand, back hand for the most part or open hand. I don't recall ever bein' hit with a weapon or a stick or anything. If you were sitting at the table, we had a long table, we were all sittin' around, the old man, the old lady, and if you reached for somethin', or said somethin', did somethin' wrong, whap, that was it. Back hand. You and the chair went over on the floor. Everybody else just kept right on eatin'. Pick yourself up and go back to eatin'. Try to suppress the tears and the pain. If you did something away from the table, and the table isn't set and you did somethin', you could get it any place. The place of choice was—I wanna stand up and show you this—this would be the chimney in the house and over here was a closet and a little cubby hole. They used to love to push you, push you in the corner, and just keep slapping you. Now if you were really smart, right away you'd say well why didn't you fall down? As soon as you fall down supposedly the beating is over. But we learned that if you fell down too quick they picked you back up again. So you had to take a reasonable

amount of beatin' before you fell down. And that was just understood. We became good at it. All the kids did. And I know damn right well that's where I got the violence was from the beatin's.

A lot of people think that when you talk about your childhood it is an excuse. There is no excuse for what I did but there are some clues to why. Everyone doesn't do things like this so there has got to be reasons. But I don't want you to think that I am blaming or not taking responsibility. I am sorry for my crime. I would give or do anything to change it, to change myself at that time. Anything.

I truly think when the violence started being rained down on me is when I started striking out at people and kids. Something went wrong in my thinking. It wasn't in school but it was after school or at recess that I had a hard time. Nothing to the point where I wanted to kill anybody. But, I usually ended up getting the crap beat out of me. I didn't really fight at home. Only one time I did ever come anywhere near violence with my older brother. And that was when I was a teenager. Other than that, the violence was my mother and father against us.

They finally got divorced when I was around 8. My mother ran off with the with the oil man. I bounced back and forth all my life. From the second grade until I graduated from high school. Massachusetts, Connecticut. Massachusetts, Connecticut. I was the only one that bounced like that. The two girls, they were mother's girls the way we felt, so they moved to Connecticut and they stayed out here. Brother Bob, who is still alive, he moved out to Connecticut but he didn't stay with her. He got a job and an apartment. Then he went in the Marines. When he come out he got married real quick. And my other brother used to never come to Connecticut. He stayed in Massachusetts

with the old man. The old lady used to love to swear at us. Little bastard this, or son-of-a-bitch that as she was beatin' on us. And yet it was funny because after she moved to Connecticut I missed the hell out of her. I missed her big time, you know. I'd spend say two or three weeks in the summer, maybe spend the whole summer. Then they'd bring me home. They'd drop me off at the family homestead. Then they'd go back to the other end of town which was maybe three or four miles away to my step father's family home where his father was still alive. And it was funny. As soon as they dropped me off at one place I'd go in and say hi to the old man and his wife Gladie and then I'd miss my mother and I'd run into town to see my mother and say good-bye to her again. And yet when I was out here for any length of time, I wanted to go back home to Massachusetts. All my life.

The standing joke in the family was all those years she was runnin' around the old man would say I still had to pay for the God damn oil. That's what the old man's joke was. She got married, remarried, moved to Connecticut here and we used to visit for holidays and all. And after my step father died we would still go for Christmas, Thanksgiving, whatever, and we'd always get into these family discussions. And somebody, one of us would always bring up that the old man was tear- assed because all those years that she was screwin' around with the oil man and we still had to pay for the oil.

My step-father wasn't violent to people. My mother, I know that you people don't like to hear this, but my mother knew where his buttons where and how to push 'em. She used to push his buttons. She would get him so mad. I don't think he ever striked her, my step father. But he would destroy the house. I recall one time when she pushed his

buttons to the point where he picked up a log from the stove, and he threw it through a window like that. But it had like six panes of glass. Just totally destroyed it. He'd say, "God damn it look what you made me do now." He says, "I'm goin' up town to get some glass to fix it." So he'd get in his car and he drove up town and he got the stuff. And he came back. And he fixed, spent the whole day fixin' it. Didn't she start right in on him again? Picked up another log and threw it right through the same son of a bitchin' window. That was one of the funniest things I ever saw in my life. I was getting old enough that I could see what was happening. And she knew, she knew, she knew. That's when I realized that all of the violence from with the first marriage with my father was not just the old man. I'm not sayin' she was to blame. But she knew how to push his buttons and she did it. But still, my step-father didn't beat us. He brought a butter knife down on my finger one day for reachin' across the table for something but other than that he wasn't violent to people just to things and animals. I saw him beat our horse, kick the dog, and stuff like this. But not toward he kids. It was nothing compared with the old man.

My mother had one more child and he is gayer than shit. That's the only way I can describe my brother. I love him to pieces and we are very close but he's gayer than shit. The rest of us tended to pick on him and that wasn't right. We didn't make him gay. My mother and my step father made him gay. They wanted a girl. They wanted a girl from day one. And when they didn't have a girl they dressed him in girl's clothes right from the day they brought him home from the hospital he wore pink. And he never had a boy's toy in his life. All he had was girl's toys. Little kitchen sets and stuff. Always girls. Never had a set of trucks or anything. They did that surer than shit, I know they did. And

we all agree on that one. He wouldn't agree on that though. I guess no one really knows but this is what I think from first-hand experience.

When I got to be about 12 years old, I had role models. They were greenhouse owners. People that owned greenhouses, gardeners. People like this. From then those were my role models. It was what I always wanted to do, what I wanted to be. How it actually started, where the seed was planted, what I wanted to do I don't know. But I know from about 12 years old I wanted to have a greenhouse and I wanted to grow plants. And then I started becoming friendly with these different people in town that owned greenhouses and I just went in that direction. By the time I was in the 8th grade I had greenhouses in my backyard in Massachusetts. That was my love.

I did good in school. Never had a problem. My grades were always good. I didn't have to do a whole bunch of homework. My memory thing at that time worked really good. And I graduated from high school with honors and I also had a an award from the Long Bar Corporation. I coulda had a job there as a tool and die maker but I refused it. I knew what I wanted to do. At the time I graduated, I had a greenhouse in the backyard and a hobby shop in my barn.

At the time there really wasn't violence in the community, just in the home. Somebody murdered somebody that was big news. The violence in me as far as I'm concerned, was just inbred from my parents, from what I saw and what I felt. It was okay. It was always done. My parents beat me. I beat my kids. My father beat my mother. I beat my first wife. My kids are not violent. I hope that it's ended. I told them that maybe a month after I was arrested when they came to see me. It was over the phone. And there was no open visits there. And the first time in my whole life I was able

to tell my kids I love 'em. I could break down cryin' right now. First time in my life. I never told my wife or any other woman that I loved her. I couldn't do it. And don't ask me why. My theory and my brother's theory is we never had a show of affection in the house. The old man and the old lady never kissed or hugged or anything. It was never "I love you" or "hon" or anything like that. It was backhands and forehands and stuff like this. There was never a show of affection. And it took me until after I was arrested to tell my kids that I love 'em. And now every Sunday night when I talk to my daughter, we end up with I tell her I love her. She says she loves me. So, there it is. In a way, something good has come of getting locked up.

Besides that, I always took care of my kids. When we had the business, both of them worked for me, and I took care of them. Now they're both out on their own and they're doin' good. And if it hadn't of happened, I wouldn't a lost the business, I woulda kept takin' care of 'em. They never would of known what independence was. All they had to do was ask 'could I, could I, can I, will ya'. Automatic yes. I was loving them in my own way. And I wonder, what was I doin'? Buyin' them? I don't know. I was limited. My thinking was screwed up, I didn't have any coping mechanisms, I didn't know I was bipolar.

I'm manic depressive. I'm on Tegretol as a mood evener. That's why they gave me the mood evener. I feel different now that I take this. I was diagnosed right after I was arrested and that was by the state, not by my own psychiatrist. I used to go from here to here in minutes. I thought I could do anything and I did achieve a hell of a lot. I was always over extended. But I grew a hell of a business in 37 years. But I was always,

always reaching, trying to get a little bit bigger, a little bit better. Then I would get worried about the money situation and how the hell did I ever over extend myself.

Don't think this is an excuse but sometimes I wonder why the Christ didn't someone discover that I was bi-polar earlier when it could of helped me? I'm very emotional right now. When I was on the outside I was very religious privately. Since I've been inside I have honed it to a fine edge and every night when I pray I ask forgiveness for all the bad things that I have done. All the people, anything that I ever did wrong. I feel so bad about all the things I've done in my life to anybody or anything that I ever hurt cause in a way, I didn't know any better. I am so sorry and I will be sorry forever.

I had another suicide attempt in early '82 and then it was with Librium. I had had 'em for years. I just hung onto 'em. At different times when I had these bouts of depression which were my lows. My doctor would prescribe the Librium and I would take whatever I needed and I would save the rest. I ended up being hospitalized for a couple of weeks. They called it a breakdown. It was a good vacation. I came right back and did the same thing all over again, went right back to my same life, didn't do anything to change. But by the end of that summer the divorce idea had been around for a while and we decided that we were gonna go ahead with it.

I don't think I wanted to die that time, but I did want help. It was different with the Valium. I'll be honest with you. Quite frankly, if I had known that 24 pills was not enough I would of waited a while, conned my doctor out of another 24, maybe that would of been enough. At that time, yeah, I really wanted to do it. The second attempt was very, very genuine. It was the most peaceful sleep I ever had in my life. And at the time, I wish it had just continued.

Now is different. One thing about right now, I pretty much made up my mind that one day I'm gonna walk out of either this facility or a Level 3 facility. I'm gonna end up goin' home whether home is a cardboard box under a bridge or if one of my kids'll have me or whatever. That I will end up having another life. I still see another life for me. But then there's other times when you say to yourself, well nine more years that's a hell of a long time. I'll be 70 hopefully when I get out. And my celly will be at least 85 before he's eligible for parole. And there's other guys in here, young kids that'll never get out. I'm intelligent enough to know that. I try to focus on the days not the years. The days zip by and the weeks zip by. We have a hard time with the years. But I think if I can get out at 70, I still got a good 10, maybe 15 years. That's ten or 15 Christmases. I love Christmas. And that's what I live for is Christmas.

I'm in better health than most 50 year olds in here. I live on the second tier and I make it up to the second tier, three steps at a time. And I do that all the time and I people say, oh you gotta slow down. When I slow down then I'm old. And I'm not old yet, bullshit. I'm in good health. The only thing that ever happened to me, I gotta dent right here where a guy dropped a brick on my head one day when I was probably ten or 11 years old. I was climbin' up a tree in my yard of all things. And this kid was way up in a tree and he had a brick in his hand and he said, "Don't come up the tree, I'm gonna drop the brick on your head." I says, "Hey, this is my tree and my yard. I'm climbin' the tree." He said, "Don't do it. Don't come up any further." And I said, "Bullshit. I'm comin' up the tree." And the next thing I knew I was flat on my back wakin' up. He dropped a brick on my head. Put a neat dent in my head. But other than that, nothing.

I never got into drugs. I tried a marijuana cigarette one time. One of the girls that worked for me at the greenhouse kept after me after me after me to try one. I tried it. Never liked it.

I drank socially but it never led to violence except on the one occasion when I backhanded my wife and it brought her to the emergency room with these two black eyes. I think after is when I started mellowin' out and I cut way back on the drinkin'. I also would drink to self-medicate I think. I was in probably 17 or 18 years old when I started drinkin', usually on the weekend. When I was a kid, all my family drank beer and beer didn't interest me at all. So I tried hard liquors. During the first marriage I settled on gin, Tanqueray. And when I didn't wanna listen to my wife I used to put earphones on and plug it into my stereo, listen to Johnny Rivers and drink gin mixed drinks. And that was it then. I finally only settled on Chivas, good Chivas, good scotch, in 1982. And then in 1982, I started drinking Scotch when I started serious camping. I'd camp and sing and pick. I play country music. And was camping down at Williams Lake here in the state and for some reason I hit on scotch and I liked it and that's been that ever since.

In the sex offender course, one of the things they ask us is do you think you'll ever do it again. And right away you say no, no. I'll never do anything like that again. They say, well you don't know. You don't know. And maybe she's right. And so I take the class faithfully and if it wasn't for the stares of people lookin' at us when we go out. They call it mental health group. They say release your inmates for a mental health group, but everybody knows where we're goin'. And of course everything is black and white to an inmate in here. There's no grey areas, no off-whites. We're all pedophiles and tree jumpers. We're all Chesters and the world feels this way too. I'd never let myself be

in the position where I could ever do anything again. All I wanna do, I wanna get out. I wanna live. That's my simple thing that I wanna do. I wanna live for however many years I have left. I wanna fish. I wanna garden. I wanna live. And that's it, you know.

For now, I look forward to those classes. I really do. And every week when I come outta there I feel better. I can't wait for Wednesday. I live for Wednesday, nine o'clock. I would go three or four days a week. I been waitin' for you, damn it. The only thing I was unhappy with was that when I just found out within the last week it was only gonna be an hour and a half session. How the hell are we gonna get anything done in an hour and a half. Every time I've had a session with a psychologist or psychiatrist since I've been locked up, I've come away feeling better about myself.

The first few weeks in the class I was still what you people call minimizing. I try to not minimize any more. I don't deny anymore. If I could, if that girl was sitting right there, I would fall down on my knees, cry and beg her forgiveness. That's all. That would mean a lot. Forgiveness is big time for me which I'll never get of course.

I believe it is possible for people to change. I wish people on the outside believed that, but they don't. I'm stereotyped for life. And nothing I say or do...I could jump into the water 19 times and save 19 kids and I'm still a rapist for the rest of my life.

People can change some but in my humble opinion, it's hard to change an adult. It has to start in kindergarten or before. It's like the Black and White thing. Black and White adults today, this generation, don't like each other. I don't care what they show on TV or what they say in the signs and the parades and, that's all bull shit too. You gotta start black kids likin' white kids. If Black kindergarten kids like White kindergarten kids they'll grow up likin' each other. You can't take an adult and teach them to like one

another. And by the same token as far as violence is concerned, if these little kids see no violence, they'll be no violence. And the TV and the movies and the music are all bad all along, all along. That's it. None of that influenced me. My influence I honestly believe is from the beatin's. The violence was bred into my brain and but I really believe if they could just start these kids lovin' one another. I really believe that. Everybody from the youngest on up. If they learn to feel good about themselves and they don't know anything about hatin' Blacks or beatin' their wives or beatin' another kids then they have a better chance. If you start 'em early that's that's the only way you're gonna make a change. Kids need to feel respected. They need the basics.

There was someone good in my life. My step-mother was a peach. She was better to me overall than my mother. She started, me turning around. She showed me love. She never hollered, screamed, or anything. I had my own room there and lived there off and on until I was 22 years old. It was always referred to a my room. That used to piss my brother off to no end. She was good because she never had any kids of her own and she just felt that I was her kid. And if I went outta the house at night, and say I was 16, 17, all the way up til I got married, she asked what time you comin' home? I say well ten or 11 or 12. That's when I was home. Yeah, having that room really stands out and being treated good.

#### Profile 12- Lou

I am thirty-nine years old and have been incarcerated for twenty-one years. At the age of eighteen I was convicted of murder, assault, sexual assault, burglary, and breaking and entering. I was given a life sentence. At that time, I was totally out of control. I didn't trust anyone. When I look back I can see that I was on a suicide mission.

Whoever or whatever I took down along the way was incidental. I didn't care about anyone or anything.

My earliest memories of violence are of my parents fighting. I was about five or six. They had many physical fights when I was young. They both drank and my mother abused prescription drugs. I remember feeling scared a lot. I thought my mother might die and I worried about who would take care of me. When she got drunk or took pills she would look and act so out of it. It was like she became a different person. I got used to this I guess. As much as anyone could get used to that kind of uncertainty. I never really knew which mother she would be from day-to-day. My father was no different. He drank a lot. He did manage to hold down a job and support us though. Between working and drinking there wasn't any time or energy left over for anything else. Things were way out of balance on the home front. I have four siblings and although we were not poor, there was a poverty of attention. We were not taken care of and had to take care of ourselves as best we could. Now I don't blame my parents. I know that in their own way they loved us. They had their own problems and they were trying to cope with them as best they could. But at the time I was just a little kid and I hated my life. Also, even though I grew up in a very affluent town, living in that town and not having a rich family always made me feel like an outsider. I never felt I fit or belonged anywhere.

When I was eight I was in a sledding accident. I crashed into a tree head first. I was riding with my brother and he ducked, I didn't. I was knocked unconscious and for four or five years after the accident, I suffered blackouts. When I was going through this recovery period, I attempted suicide three times and was put in a mental institution each time. It felt like I was being warehoused, punished. There were some kind people but I

was already distrustful. It never felt like my parents could take control of the situation and somehow I believed that if they couldn't then no one could.

I started taking violent action around age eleven or twelve. I would throw tantrums, break windows, get in fights, and break and enter. At this time I would lash out at just about anything and destruction made me feel powerful and alive. Of course there was no where for this feeling of aliveness to go but into more destructive behavior. The attention I got was a sick form of relationship but, it was the only kind of attention and focus from others that was available to me. When I was young I acted out for the attention. In addition to the attention, stuff like breaking windows and breaking into houses gave me a rush of energy. Other things like the murder made me feel upset, sad, and guilty.

I started smoking pot at age eleven and moved on to acid, pills, peyote, and alcohol. I seemed to be more willing to react with violence when I was under the influence of alcohol. What little impulse control I had was not available to me. My drinking was a mix of trying to numb my feelings and on another level, a way to seek out violence. Part of me knew that I was more likely to act out when I was drunk. Alcohol gave me courage, reckless courage.

For a period of time I was sexually abused by older guys. I don't really want to go way into this but I am not a large man as you can see. I was easily taken advantage of when I was a preteen and teen. I hated myself as well and this activity was one more way to punish myself, to degrade myself. And, this was another distorted form of relationship.

I see now that I was very confused. I didn't know how to communicate my problems. I needed help and I didn't know how to go about getting it. My main problem was that I did not trust. I always expected the worst to happen. People did try to help me but I didn't trust them. I needed help trusting before I could move to other problems. Once as an adolescent I was sent to a psychiatrist and he said, "You don't have to be here if you don't want to." I said, "does that mean I can leave?" He said, "Yes." So I left in the first fifteen seconds of our meeting. That was that. I definitely felt empowered but I didn't allow him to help me. I don't know if he could have helped me or not but I didn't give him the chance.

One thing I needed that I didn't have was friendship. I needed someone to talk with and to just be with. I needed a relationship with my father. A grandfather. Someone I could trust. I didn't have any role models. My role models and heros at that time were movie actors. People like John Wayne and Clint Eastwood. I viewed them as strong men who could take care of any situation. I longed for that. Someone to take care of things. To take care of me. To bring some control into my environment. My experience was that everything always was on the verge of spinning out of control.

I always liked school and did very well academically. I did get into lots of trouble though. I was easily annoyed and got angry, lost my temper, talked back, got into fights, destroyed property, stole things, skipped school, and ran away from home. I did all these things and got into trouble at home and at school for these behaviors. Again, I see now that I didn't know how to communicate. All these actions were a type of communication. The actions were saying that I felt so angry at the lack of connection and nurturing in my life that I couldn't hold all this rage inside. I had to destroy everything outside myself or

the pain inside would kill me. Of course I couldn't articulate this at the time. I also felt totally unlovable and filled with self-loathing.

I suffered so much disrespect. I didn't think that there was anything good in me or available to me in the world. I was inadequate, less than, defective. I used to feel totally powerless over most aspects of life. I did not know myself. I did not have a self or any hope of finding a self. I was made up of pain and fear of more pain.

For the first thirteen years that I was incarcerated I was still on this track. I did drugs nearly every day and I lived as I did on the streets. I had less opportunity to commit violence but nothing had really changed.

At age thirty one I began to awaken. It was a gradual awakening. It was like I was called by some small primordial cell of consciousness that had been lying dormant or obscured. Once I slowed and stopped drinking/drugging this cell began to divide and multiply. It has been a very long road but I can honestly say that I am now a person. I am still becoming but now there is something for my future growth to build on. I feel there is someone who is central within me. This central self is what I always longed for. Now I believe that I have found my true power within myself. I now understand anger and fear to be part of the human package and because I am able to view it from a more central place, I am able to cope with it. Before all I was made up of was fear and anger. Now I am more.

As I said this took place gradually and with practice. It was like I watched the molecules grow day by day. I became in touch with a universalist type of philosophy. I am involved with a number of religious/spiritual programs - the Native American practice, Buddhism, AA/NA, the healing blanket project which is Christian. I read a

great deal. I read anything and anyone that has a positive message. I continue to watch those molecules grow. I realize that I am responsible for tending them. My awareness is the catalyst.

I have pain even bitterness inside me at times but I accept it. At least I try to. I have tremendous remorse but I try to accept that too. My effort is to be nonjudgmental and to take in the emotions that are more difficult in the same way I experience the positive ones. With gratitude. With curiosity. I have now learned how to earn respect by showing and giving respect. Respect to others. Respect to myself.

Will I commit an act of violence in the future? This is one of those questions where all answers are equally correct. We are not allowed to know the future until we get there and then it's not the future any more it's the present. I strive to remain conscious of any violent thought and remind myself of alternatives. I have learned many valuable coping skills. I am a different person than I was and I will never return. The odds are different in terms of violence. But, my focus is on the present. I truly don't think that we can know the future. I do know that I am working as hard as I can in the present to live a life that is without violence. This is all I can do. I hope it paves the way for a nonviolent future but I'm not sure how providence works. However, I am serious about education. I give 100% to whatever I am doing. My intention is to be honest and maintain high ethical standards. I am involved in many positive programs and will continue to reach for what is higher.

I think some people act violently for attention. Violent behavior is a confused form of expression. Violence erupts from not learning how to communicate and to trust others. Understanding human nature means learning how to cope with anger and fear. If

you have no one to talk to, no one to learn from, then you have never been taught another way of coping. I don't think I am at risk for that any longer.

It is possible to be non-violent. All it takes is an understanding of choice. All the variables that bring a person to the choice and all the variables that come after the choice are too great to know but the choice is always there for consideration. Our culture needs to teach, make available, and support positive choices. Kids need mentors and real role models. Everyone needs to live nonviolently and show the way to others.

Right now to prevent violence our culture needs to stop glorifying it. Instead we need to support and promote the many efforts designed to reveal and reduce violence. If we were talking about tomatoes, no one would find this hard to understand. If you planted tomato seedlings in bad soil, bad light, forgot to water them, exposed them to diseases, etc. and they turned out stunted and inedible who would be surprised? People do have choices but children don't. Not to the extent that it is needed to overcome some pretty negative influences. Our society needs to start by protecting the seedling.

#### Off the Record

Although I was fairly well known by two participants, the other ten men had never met me and had no reason to trust or distrust my motives for the interview. Four of the twelve participants noted that it was difficult and probably unwise to speak about crimes they had committed but were not charged with. One participant was appealing his current conviction and was advised not to speak about it. Off the record, these participants spoke about murders, stabbings, assaults, and other acts of violence that they had committed and had never been charged with. One participant noted that he had no idea how many people he had killed and that at one point in his lifestyle, he was so

involved with violence that he was unable to even estimate. Another participant stated that he had left several people for dead and that he did not know nor did he want to know if they had lived or died.

Gang membership was also a delicate subject. Some participants did admit to being in gangs but others said they preferred not to discuss it while the tape was running. Some of the participants admitted to extensive gang activity off the record. Being “affiliated” in prison is a serious matter. If you are suspected of being affiliated, you can lose privileges, your job assignment, or even be transferred to a different cell block or prison.

And finally, many of the participants stated that they felt bad speaking about the abuse they experienced as a child. For some, it was a disturbing reminder of pain and powerlessness. Others felt uncomfortable speaking out about their parents.

Table 4. Descriptive measure of risk factors

Subject	Childhood Abuse	Domestic Violence	Parent Substance Abuse	Parents Divorced	Subject Substance Abuse	Racism	Economic Hardship
Pedro	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Domingo	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Joseph	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Taylor	+	+	+	0	+	+	0
John	0	0	0	0	+	+	0
Carlton	+	+	+	+	0	+	+
Tiger	+	+	0	0	+	+	0
Pete	+	+	+	0	+	0	0
Hector	+	?	+	0	+	+	0
Martin	+	?	+	0	+	+	+
Ron	+	+	+	+	+	0	0
Lou	+	+	+	0	+	0	0

## Powerlessness Survey

Although this measure has not been formally normed, responses to the questions on this survey present a general indication of how each participant viewed himself and his environment prior to incarceration. A number of factors that constitute aspects of empowerment as well as values of power of were measured. The survey gathered information on the following areas:

Self-worth - self-esteem, belief in self

Self-efficacy -ability to do, to affect the environment, to get what they need

Trust in others - to help, to care, to provide relationship

Opportunity - is help available?

Lot in life - attitude towards life's circumstances

Level of frustration and frustration tolerance

Values of power - money, force

These categories constitute important aspects of the experience of powerlessness.

If an individual does not feel good about himself, believe that he is able to get ahead or affect his environment in a positive manner, trust others, believe that opportunity and help is available, and experiences his life circumstances as being skewed in a negative direction, he is likely to feel powerless and frustrated. The participants responded to the questions found in Appendix D. On a scale from one to five, one indicates the low end of the presence of trait or belief in that trait or value and five represents the high end.

Questions which fell into the above categories were grouped and the scores presented in Table 5 represent an average within each category.

Table 5. Powerlessness survey

Subject	Self-worth	Self-efficacy	Trust	Opportunity	Lot in Life	Level Frustration	Values of Power Money	Force
Pedro	2	1.6	2.2	2.3	2.25	4.5	5	5
Domingo	2.25	1.4	2.2	1.6	1	5	5	5
Joseph	1.75	1.6	2.2	1.6	2	4.5	5	4
Taylor	1.75	2	2.2	2.3	1	4.5	4	4
John	4.5	4.8	3.6	4.3	3	1	2	1
Carlton	1.75	1.6	2.2	1.6	4.5	4.5	5	5
Tiger	2.75	2.2	2.2	1	1	4	5	4.5
Pete	2.75	2.6	2.2	1.6	2	4	5	4
Hector	5	5	3.6	4.6	2.5	1.5	5	4.5
Martin	3	3	3	3	3.5	3	5	3
Ron	3	3.4	1.8	2.3	2	3.5	4	4.5
Lou	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.6	2.5	5	5	4
Aver	2.6	2.03	2.4	2.45	2	3.75	4.58	3.95

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This study presents the life experiences and insights of twelve men who are currently incarcerated for committing a violent crime. Each was asked to share the circumstances of his life, possible explanations for his violent actions, and finally, to suggest possible interventions which might effect change by addressing the roots of violence in our society.

It is important to note that ten of the twelve men were strangers to me at the time of the interview. The men had nothing to gain by participating in this study and it is my belief that they responded with honesty. In fact, in some cases I believe they may have minimized the negative conditions of their lives or the extent of their criminal or violent behavior. It is also essential to state that although each man has recognized and reported possible mitigating influences within his life that may have contributed to his violent actions, the participants did not believe that these factors excused their behavior or their crimes.

In many ways, the stories of these men speak for themselves. Although the reader was not able to hear their tone or the sincerity in their voices, the concrete facts of their lives are significant and stand on their own. At this point, I can summarize the emergent themes I see as critical elements in their development as violent offenders, however, the profiles were presented in the words of the participants to enable the reader to hear these words directly. In doing so, it is expected that you will derive your own meaning, develop your own understanding, and draw your own conclusions.

Aside from illuminating and verifying many of the speculations presented in the literature review, the findings suggest deficient, inadequate, or damaging conditions in the processes of human development. The themes that have been abstracted from the interviews and survey involve many of the critical components required for healthy child development. Although an awareness of these themes does provide a sense of humanity to the existing theories presented in Chapter II, my intention is to reveal the critical developmental deficits embedded within the lives and experiences of the participants.

The emergent themes which follow are presented in a linear manner yet each is part of an interconnected developmental sequence. Issues associated with one theme may predominate at specific stages but ultimately, there is a simultaneity and pervasiveness of effect. Figures 1 and 2 attempt to illustrate this interrelationship.

### Themes

A number of shared thematic characteristics emerged from the interviews and will be the focus of this analysis. Within their collective experience, nearly all touched on a variety of risk factors and at least through implication, commented on how these factors their resultant reactions impacted their criminal behavior.

Commonality of experience was noted within the following areas:

Lack of Safety, Exposure to Violence -> Fear and Distrust  
childhood abuse, domestic violence, violence as a learned response

Lack of Stable Relationships -> Interpersonal Chaos  
poor quality of family life, negative relationship with father, feeling isolated, sense of not belonging, responsibility within family, lack of positive role models, negative role models

Lack of Belonging -> Isolation

Lack of Education -> Limited Choices

Lack of Power and Resources ->Powerlessness  
racial and economic oppression

Lack of Respect ->Acute Reaction to Disrespect  
within the family, community, culture

Lack of Self-esteem, Self-worth, Self-efficacy -> Shame

Lack of Coping Skills ->Limited and Rigid Response Abilities  
poor communication, problem solving, decision, making and anger  
management skills, substance abuse

Lack of Meaning-> Anomie

Each theme is interrelated. Aspects of each deficit overlap and intersect with aspects of other deficits. Each theme is also influenced by biological, psychological, sociological, and psycho-social factors.

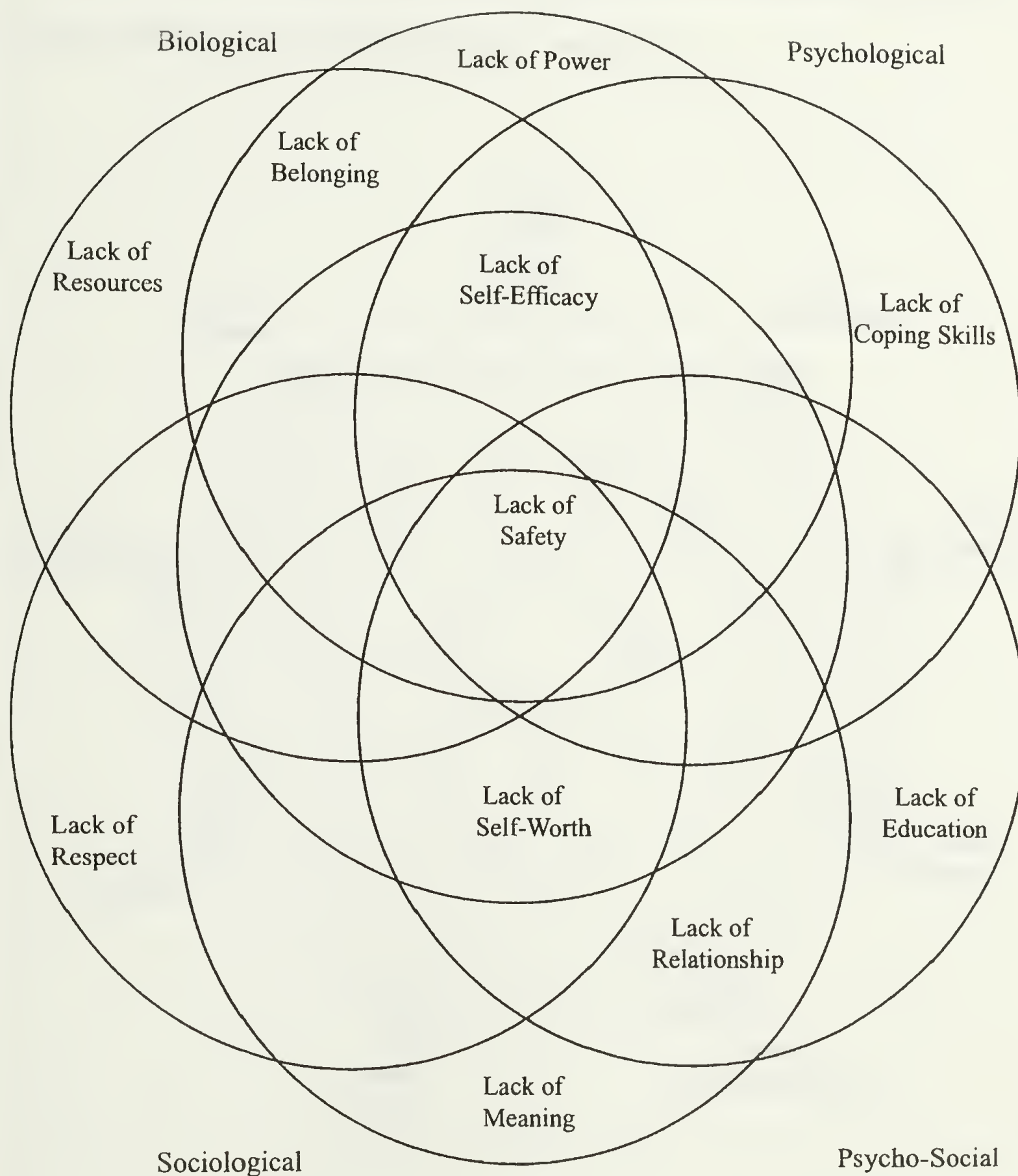


Figure 1. Thematic interrelationship

Figure 2 presents an alternate image and means of thematic depiction. The interrelationship of these deficits is weblike in that each theme is connected to the other and each shares similar causal effects and outcomes. For example the fear which results from lack of safety also impacts relationship, respect, etc. The shame which results from lack of self-esteem also influences belonging, meaning, etc.

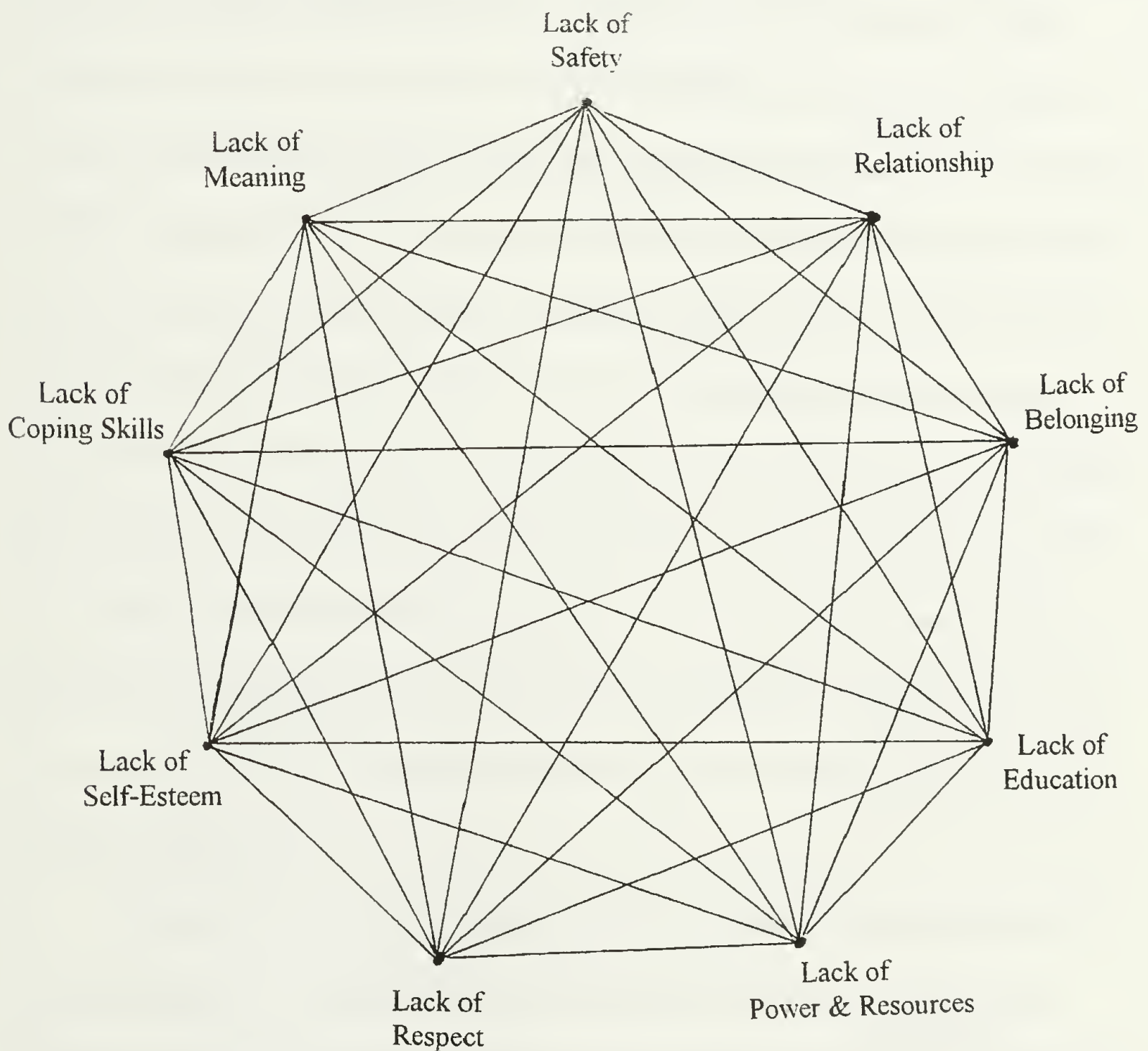


Figure 2. Thematic web

### Lack of Safety, Exposure to Violence- Fear and Distrust

Many of the participants experienced risk, threat, or the occurrence of physical and/or sexual violence within home, school, and neighborhood. Institutionalized violence such as racial and economic oppression also add to the experience of lack of safety.

Numerous studies comment on the large and ever growing percentage of children that have witnessed life threatening violence in their homes and communities. They witness physical and sexual assault, homicide, dead bodies, shootings, and stabbings. This is compounded by exposure to violence in the media. In many cases the threat these children experience is real. According to a 1996 study by the National Center of Child Abuse and Neglect, the annual incidence of reported child abuse doubled from 1986 to 1993. In 1993, the number of children known to be physically abused totaled over 600,000. The same study noted that 300,000 children were sexually abused in that same year. There has been an increase in recognized child sexual abuse of 600% from 1980 to 1993. Additionally, teenagers and young adults are more likely to become victims of violent crime than older persons. In 1996, about a third of all victims of violent crime were ages 12 to 19. Almost half of all victims of violence were under age 25.(National Institute of Justice, 1997).

Although every one who witnesses violence or experiences a trauma does not develop pathology, a range of disorders are associated with traumatic experiences. Specific symptom clusters have been documented in adults and children exposed to war, physical and sexual abuse, natural disasters, and other traumas. Symptoms are consistent with those found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (1994) of

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These symptoms include the experience of fear or horror, helplessness, intrusive thoughts and recollections, dissociative flashbacks, distress and exaggerated reaction to associated cues, isolation, feelings of estrangement from others, limited affect, expectation of short life span, difficulty concentrating, depression, psychosomatic disturbances, sleep disorders, and hypervigilance. Children may present with disorganized or agitated behavior. Other diagnoses which often accompany or precede PTSD are adjustment disorder, acute stress disorder, conduct disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, overanxious disorder of childhood, dysthymic disorder, and developmental disorders. It is difficult to address these symptoms while living in a day-to-day subculture of violence. Sadly, many of these traumatized children grow up to become wounded adults.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice Statistics (1997),

Preliminary findings from a study of 4,023 adolescents and their parents indicate a significant number of today's youthful population have been victims of sexual and physical abuse and have personally witnessed incidents of violence against others. For many, consequences of these experiences include Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and drug and alcohol abuse. Extrapolating the findings of this study to the national adolescent population as a whole suggests that of the 22.3 million adolescents ages 12-17 in the United States today, approximately 1.8 million have been victims of a serious sexual assault, 3.9 million have been victims of a serious physical assault, and almost 9 million have witnessed serious violence. Nearly 2 million have suffered (and over 1 million still suffer) from PTSD, and about 3.4 million have been drug or alcohol abusers as well. Analysis of the survey information indicates a strong correlation between drug abuse and delinquency. Having been personally victimized and suffering from PTSD also seem to be strong predictors of delinquent behavior.

Of the 12 men interviewed, the majority report living in an unstable environment in childhood. Their stories express a lack of safety and security and describe living with fear and anxiety. For some, food, shelter, and clothing were not taken for granted.

Eleven of the twelve men in this study witnessed and/or experienced violence through childhood physical and/or sexual abuse and though living in homes where incidents of domestic violence occurred. Pedro's story, *The Final Frontier*, illustrates what little safety or privacy was to be found in his young life. Joseph describes a father who "would hit back-hand, fist, belt, anyway you wanna call it." Domingo would be forced to kneel on rice. Cooper states that his father "would use switches, belts, extension cords...I never felt safe." A number of the participants refer to "beatings" and "whippin's."

Child abuse affects the way information is mentally processed and used to organize behavior at a very basic developmental level (Trickett & Schellenbach, 1998.) Theories of personality development exist within many psychological disciplines in regard to early developmental stages. As noted in Chapter Two, Freud and Erikson both emphasized hierarchical stages of development. Freud's focus was psychosexual, Erikson's model was psychosocial. Maslow's hierarchy of needs began with basic physiological needs. According to the theories that consider dependency needs, the healthy self-actualization process is nurtured by the way in which the drives and needs of the individual are responded to by the parents or caregivers, as well as by the social milieu. Trust vs. mistrust comprises the beginning stage of Erikson's model, more specifically he states that the individual learns about trust from the dependability of environment, and the consistency of the attention and affection he or she receives. Pain, stress, inconsistent relationships, and living with the threat of the same disrupts the ability to trust and thus the following theoretical stages of development - autonomy, industry, etc. A stable environment is important for healthy development.

When someone commits a crime and breaks a law we consider them morally defective. Kolberg's theory of moral development was based on Piaget's theory of cognitive development. According to Piaget, children's moral sense arises from an interaction between their developing thought structures and their social experience. Hoffman (1980) notes that moral development involves an expectation of reciprocity and equality among individuals. These theories concur that when individuals are abused or neglected and basic needs are not met, individuals may learn to view the world with the expectation of a negative outcome. If further developmental stages are not attained, the individual may not develop more effective coping skills and continue to react by acting aggressively. In many cases, violent behavior is a learned response. When abuse is modeled in the absence of other coping strategies, aggressive action can become a default mechanism.

In *Childhood and Society* (1950), Erikson states that everyone experiences crises and conflict during the developmental process and the successful resolution of these conflicts gives rise to continued growth. Given their experiences of childhood it should be no surprise to us that these individuals grew up with the perception of a hostile or dangerous environment.

#### Lack of Stable Relationships - Interpersonal Chaos

Many studies attempt to address the prediction of violent behavior but neglect the importance of primary, stable relationships. "We are drawn to life by love" (May, 1969, p.81). The need to feel loved, to experience a sense of belonging, and the opportunity to associate and participate with others in a positive manner is a basic building block of human development. It is the foundation on which we build our self-identity and self-

esteem. Early ego psychologists such as Fairbairn, Klein, and Winnicott purported that in order to promote ego growth, successful bonding in early positive relationships is needed. Aggression was seen as a reaction to the frustration that resulted from a lack of relationship and in this sense was seen as a defense rather than a negative drive. The ability to adapt was the product of a good relationship between individual and object.

Humans have a strong genetic propensity to develop powerful emotional attachments. The quality of this attachment can vary greatly. Some children are securely attached, others are anxious and conflictual, and others are avoidant. The behavior of the caretaker plays a significant role in the quality of attachment. Emotional connection with caregivers can be unavailable. Greater responsiveness to the child's needs, more eye contact, touching and holding are associated with secure attachment. Although the infant/child's own temperament can influence the potential for attachment, the response of the caregiver appears to be the principal determinant. Individuals with secure attachments to their caregivers develop more successful relationships. (Strofe, 1979, Bertherton & Waters, 1985).

The majority of participants report unstable or negative primary relationships and subsequent instability in later relationships. In many cases the quality of family life was stressful. Overall, they report that the relationships with parents were unstable during formative years. Eleven of the twelve participants report either an absent father or strained relationships with their fathers. Domestic violence, parental substance abuse, economic instability, and racism all impacted the family and the relationships within the family. Ten of the twelve the participants expressed the feeling of lack of a connection and attention and/or of not being favored with in the family that resulted in a sense of

feeling lost within the family unit. Lou states, "...there was a poverty of attention. We had to take care of ourselves as best we could."

Some participants reported excessive responsibility within family. Their roles ranged from taking on adult responsibilities by taking care of their siblings to deflecting the abuse onto themselves. Joseph describes how he had to work after his father left. He had to go with his mother on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> to make sure she spent her welfare check on food rather than drugs. At 12 he "felt like an adult "

Waymon Berry of Corcoran Prison in California writes,

### Starving

Within State Prisons there are so many broken beings that are overwhelmed with hopelessness! Most of us were made to feel hopeless and broken even as children - long before we began to commit our transgressions out of panic or stupidity.

Many of the people I know in prison just want to feel as though they matter enough that somebody - anybody - will listen to them. They are so very much like misbehaving children - they do not transgress because they are evil, but rather because it is the only thing most of them know how to do to communicate to others that they need attention. So very many of us - both in and out of prisons - are literally starving for attention, yet we have been made to feel as though we are expendable - easily forgotten.

### Lack of Belonging-Isolation

The lack of safety and lack of relationship described above can result in a profound feeling of aloneness and sense of not fitting in or feeling important. As humans, we are born with a basic need for connection. Because many of these individuals did not trust, they did not form healthy relationships and in many cases may have withdrawn from others. It is much easier to control one's surroundings without the added variables that others bring to the environment. On the other hand, when they did seek association it was often with others like themselves. For some, gang membership

brought them a sense of connection, belonging, protection, and self-definition. For others, running with a bad crowd escalated their violent behavior and created a false sense of power. Some remained alone.

Human beings have an tendency to divide the world into “us” and “them.” As stated above, psychologists have long believed that the earliest relationships with primary caregivers becomes a prototype for later relationships. If one experiences oneself as a part of an outgroup the sense of isolation is perpetuated. The ability to trust is further compromised by possible PTSD. Many find it difficult to overcome the lack of support they received from their environment and have no expectation of positive change.

#### Lack of Education - Limited Choices

According to a recent survey, about 70% of prison inmates are illiterate. (Schlosser, 1998.) Clearly, this deficit limits resources, choices, and impacts one's ability to function in today's world.

Eleven of the twelve participants quit high school. Many report liking school as a young child but quickly encountering a variety of problems. Education may not have been valued in the home. Some environments were too unstable to sustain consistent attendance. Others may have had undiagnosed learning disabilities.

The majority of the participants report acting out in school. If a child is aggressive, this behavior can interfere with school learning and with positive peer relationships while at school. Aggressive children tend to be rejected by their social peers and form relationships with other nonconformists. At this level of development, their acts of aggression may be early attempts to seek esteem and to overcome shame.

Education is essential in learning how to think, question, reflect, and problem solve. Through the process of education, we learn how to learn, to critically analyze and examine, to experiment, to track consequences, and to differentiate. By learning about what others think, believe, and value, our own options are expanded. Education is directly related to the ability to make informed choices based on appropriate and available alternatives. The participants lack of education and resultant deficiencies limited their choices and contributed to their being marginalized. Their lack of skills rendered them ill-equipped and reinforced their feelings of inadequacy. Consequently, most of the participants found it difficult or impossible to find a functional or fulfilling place in the working world.

#### Lack of Respect - Acute Reaction to Disrespect

“On the street”, respect is everything. As discussed in chapter two, being “dis’ed” is experienced as the ultimate insult. What respect means and how one obtains it is quite variable. Respect or disrespect can be read into the smallest interaction. When participants spoke of not feeling appreciated or respected they expressed the anger and hurt that accompanied their experience of disrespect. Disrespect often began in the home and in their day-to-day family lives. Difficulty in school, oppression within the community and finally, prison environment intensifies the experience.

Early childhood disrespect can have life long effects. After repeated experiences of disrespect, an inner conflict arises between believing that they actually are as low as others treat them and the need for self-respect and self-esteem. The shame that can result from this conflict is often felt to be unbearable. I have heard men relate that when they intimidated someone, or held them at gunpoint they misinterpreted their victim’s fear for

respect. Gilligan (1996) states, "For men who have lived for a lifetime on a diet of contempt and disdain, the temptation to gain instant respect in this way can be far more than the cost of going to prison, or even dying" (p. 109).

As humans, do we have an innate tendency to seek revenge or retaliation? If we feel we have been harmed do we want to strike out? According to Kurtines and Gewirtz (1984),

One result of an instigating condition for violence can be an internal state of anger and feelings of hostility that make the suffering of other people a satisfying and desired outcome. Findings in a variety of research studies show that when individuals feel insulted, slighted, disrespected, frustrated or in some way attacked in laboratory studies, they favor and gain satisfaction from the suffering of those who inflict distress or harm on them. (p. 251)

When probed, the accounts of most violent offenses indicate that acts of violence most often spring from feelings of shame, ridicule, humiliation, fear, or the perception of disrespect.

#### Lack of Self-esteem, Self-worth, and Self-efficacy - Shame

As the spiral of loss continues, the individual experiences a lack of self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficacy. After failing to receive love and respect from others, one's own love of self has difficulty developing. There are no reserves and the individual may experience the self as empty, invisible, or nonexistent. When self-love and the resultant esteem and worth are present an individual feels pride and when it is absent, shame.

Shame erodes the sense of self. Strategies for reducing the feelings of shame in order to rebuild self often become distorted and result in violent action. Additionally, if an individual experiences enough shame and lack of self-love, they become numb to their own feelings and to the feelings of others.

Many of my participants stated that it was very difficult for them to face their shame and powerlessness. Survival, in the family, school, community, and now in prison requires a projection of power. Acting with bravado, “machismo”, indifference, or putting on what they refer to as their “prison mask” helps hide their feelings of vulnerability. If that mask is dislodged, they have “lost face.” Sometimes this outer image is all the selfhood they have.

Julian Rotter’s (1975) theory of internal versus external locus of control is extremely applicable. This theory refers to the extent to which people attribute the occurrence of reinforcement to their own efforts, personal internal characteristics, or to luck, chance, or other powerful external forces. Many participants did not feel that they had choices or could affect the situation to create a positive outcome. The findings of the Powerless Survey corroborate this phenomena. On questions which queried the participants belief in a just world, predetermined self-defeating circumstances or their own power to effect change, get ahead, etc. the majority did not feel that an internally focused power was available to them at the time of their violent offenses. If an individual can not achieve status through socially acceptable means, then violent action may be executed as a final resort towards achieving this aim. They will risk anything in an attempt to rescue self-respect and self-esteem.

#### Lack of Power and Resources - Powerlessness

Violence is most prevalent among the poor. To be poor is to be segregated, to live in areas in which the threat of crime and violence result in fear, isolation, injury, and death. As Carlton noted, “I haven’t met a lot of middle-class white guys in my prison career.” Social forces such as social inequality and racism compound early negative

influences. Poverty is not just a lack of money. It is a lack resources, opportunities, choices, and in some ways, lack of membership.

Oppression in any form is an expression of violence that increases the experience of powerlessness and the belief that individual effort is futile. Powerlessness reinforces the feeling of lack of safety, fear, anger at injustice, frustration of wanting and needing but not getting, and the blaming of others, systems, and self.

Economic hardship, lack of resources, lowered self-esteem, disrespect, shame, and powerlessness all go hand in hand. It is true that most oppressed people are not criminals. This fact supports the argument that environmental influences are not a critical factor rather it is how an individual *chooses* to deal with their environment. However, this idea of choice is relative.

According to research done by Robin Casarjian (1998) Lionheart Foundation, of the 68,000 inmates imprisoned in New York State, 75% came from seven inner-city neighborhoods. She states, "These neighborhoods are characterized by abject poverty, disintegrated families, a 50% high school drop-out rate among males, and an unemployment rate of 60% among black males age 18-35."

The structural violence in our culture is a main root of violence. Yet, it appears far easier to focus on the individual than on the systems that influence the individual. Poverty is not just a lack of money, it is a lack of resources and it defines the context in which people live.

In the *Roots of Evil*, Ervin Staub (1989) states that within certain contexts humans "have the capacity to experience killing other people as nothing extraordinary.

He contends,

Difficult life conditions give rise to powerful needs and goals demanding satisfaction...Hard times make people feel threatened and frustrated. Threats to the physical self are important, but so are the threats to the psychological self. All human beings strive for a coherent and positive self-concept, a self-definition that provides continuity and guides one's life. Difficult conditions threaten the self concept as people can not care for themselves and their families or control the circumstances of their lives. Powerful self-protective motives then arise...there is a need both to protect self-esteem and to protect values and traditions. There is also a need to elevate a diminished self. (p. 15)

Participants reported varying degrees of economic hardship. Some experienced severe poverty while others came from working-class families.

#### Lack of Coping Skills - Limited and Rigid Response Abilities

The acquisition of specific cognitive, emotional, and social skills are important in learning how to cope with frustration, hurt, anger, and the inevitable challenges of every day life. Ordinarily, we learn these coping skills at various developmental points in our lives. Children often learn by example. The behavior, values, and attitudes of parents and siblings have a strong influence on children. Values of respect, honesty, and pride can be an important source of strength. For many of the participants, effective coping skills were not modeled or reinforced. Effective communication, decision making, problem solving, anger management, stress reduction techniques, and assertiveness methods, etc. were not developed. The majority of the participants report turning to drugs and alcohol to self-medicate and as an inefficient coping mechanism. In this study two participants report experimenting with alcohol and/or drugs as early as ages seven, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, and seventeen.

Alcohol lowers inhibitions against aggressive behavior. Nine of the twelve participants were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their crime.

Drugs are addictive, expensive, and big business. The drug culture is a violent one. Inmates report stealing to obtain drugs and fighting to protect their resources. Many cities have been hard hit by the crack epidemic of the 1980's and the violent crime that accompanied it. According to Schlosser (1998), 60 to 80% of the American inmate population has a history of substance abuse. Meanwhile, the number of drug-treatment slots in American prisons has declined by more than half since 1993. Currently, drug treatment is available to just one in ten of the inmates who need it.

### Lack of Meaning-Anomie

If one lives a life without safety, relationship, self-esteem, respect, or power it follows that it would be difficult to experience meaning. Victor Frankl (1959) discussed existential meaning in terms of categories of fulfillment. He noted a number of categories through which one might derive meaning from life.

- ◆ performing a deed, playing a meaningful role, through achievement and accomplishment
- ◆ experiencing a value such as love, forgiveness, truth, beauty, wanting to do what is right
- ◆ suffering/with perspective, when suffering is unavoidable, change is directed at self rather than the environment.

Frankl states,

Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a "secondary rationalization" of instinctual drives. The meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own *will* to meaning. ( p. 121)

Many of the participants stated that they did not know who they were or what their life was about. For most, the meaning of life was about survival and enduring a deadness within life. Anomie, alienation, uncertainty, lack of purpose, hopelessness, and

despair are the consequences of meaninglessness. As Nietzsche stated, "He who has a *why* to live for can bear almost any *how*." Conversely, Joseph stated, "I used to think the purpose of my life so far was to die." Death could be considered a type of resolution to a meaningless life. Therefore, living with risk, danger, and destruction might provide a distorted kind of meaning.

### Powerless Survey

Eight of the twelve participants scored low in self-worth, two scored in the neutral range, and two indicated that they believed that they had a high degree of self-esteem. The scores for self-efficacy were quite low with eight scoring below a neutral score of three, two at three, and one in the high range. Trust in others was generally low with only three scores being in the neutral range. Ten of twelve did not believe that opportunities were available at the time of their offense. Ten of twelve perceived their lot in life as being less than the norm. Ten of twelve rated their frustration level as high. Eleven of twelve indicated that money was associated with power and ten of twelve associated force with power. Johnny and Ivan were generally the two that did not indicate an experience of powerlessness. However, even with their two opposing scores, the group average remained significant.

Table 6. Thematic risk factors

The following information was gathered through the interview and Powerlessness Survey.

Subject	Lack of Safety	Lack of Relationship	Lack of Belonging	Lack of Education	Lack of Respect	Lack of Self-Esteem	Lack of Power	Lack of Meaning
Pedro	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Domingo	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Joseph	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Taylor	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
John	o	o	+	+	+	o	o	o
Carlton	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Tiger	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Pete	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+
Hector	+	o	o	+	+	o	o	+
Martin	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ron	+	+	+	o	o	o	o	+
Lou	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

## Programmatic and Clinical Implications

The theoretical implications and suggestions for programmatic and clinical intervention rest within and beneath the themes and sub-themes found within the profiles.

Nearly all of the participants recommended early intervention as the most effective means of preventing violence. Programs that target children before they begin the downward spiral that leads to taking violent action. Currently, the majority of typical programs are aimed at perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. While some programs are intended to be preventive, most seek to ameliorate damage already done or to prevent damage from reoccurring. What is urgently needed is intervention and change within the systems and settings that influence behavior such as the family, peers, schools, and the community. In order to influence the developmental process, early intervention is essential.

Preventive intervention launched by city governments, police departments, schools, social agencies, civic organization, church groups that target children would be most efficacious. Foremost is reducing childhood experiences that place a child at risk for involvement with violence such as abuse, neglect, bullying, sexual assault, witnessing violence in the home, community, and influence of the media while at the same time, providing positive experience that support socially constructive behaviors. Communities must begin to take responsibility for themselves. By strengthening internal resources and taking a community-centered approach, assets within the community can be built upon.

Education is pivotal, both for the individual and for the community. Children at risk for dropping out need to be assessed and their learning needs accommodated. Along with academics the school curriculum can also address social issues, class and race inequality, harassment, and discrimination because of membership in a social group. Family support services that focus on parenting skills that teach the importance of consistent love and attention, positive ways to handle children, appropriate modeling, consistency in rules and discipline, firm limit setting, and communication must be made available. In order to support and allow the development of strong loving relationships that will enable a sense of safety, security and trust, parents must be cared for as well. Many parents know what is required of them but lack the resources to put what they know into action.

Most importantly, a national campaign to change institutional violence, attitudes toward violence, and tolerance of violent behavior must be developed. This effort would enlist the media and reshape its influence from negative to positive.

Overall, effective programs must be instituted as early as possible and continue throughout successive developmental periods. They must address the entire pattern of risk factors and behaviors that lead to aggression and be presented within multidisciplinary contexts.

These findings have significant implications within the field of psychology, mental health counseling, substance abuse counseling, and social work. Treatment for those at risk for perpetrating violence must exist along side of preventive programs. It is clear from reading the profiles that transformation is possible. It may have taken years for these participants to come to an understanding of responsibility and to develop the

need to do good but they have begun to rehabilitate themselves in spite of the prison system, not because of it. Despite the suffering they have endured, they have begun to develop insight, responsibility, self-esteem and self-efficacy, and even wisdom.

Some of the participants are further along in their commitment to nonviolence but each has demonstrated growth. They have come to value meaning, forgiveness, and redemption. This process could be facilitated through counseling and therapy. Nearly all of the participants reported that although it was sometimes painful, they sincerely appreciated the opportunity to be able to tell their story and to be heard without judgement. Each commented on the transformative potential in being allowed to speak one's truth and feel that someone was listening.

Within the prison culture, therapeutic programs which could begin to reshape faulty thinking and values would help with recidivism and generational transmission.

### Future Research

Psychology has contributed a significant amount to the existing research on violence. However, in order to continue its inquiry into etiology and prevention more research is needed in the following areas:

- ◆ Further empirical studies that measure the effects of lack of safety, self-esteem, self-efficacy, relationship, belonging, power, coping skills, and meaning on violent behavior.
- ◆ What can strengthen resilience? Longitudinal designs which examine factors that support the resilience of children and buffer them against adverse effects of violence.

- ◆ What aids in the discovery of personal responsibility? How does this realization arise? What are the mediating factors? In this study the absence of control group is a methodological problem. What enabled others to not offend? Why did these participants resort to violent action and their siblings did not? What enabled them to eventually gain perspective?
- ◆ What is the exact nature and design of specific erroneous thinking processes regarding choice, will, and attributions of power? What can rehabilitate the victim mentality? What facilitated the eventual contention that circumstances certainly influence but ultimate power and control is found in response, not reaction to circumstances?
- ◆ What is the influence of socioeconomic status and minority status on the experience of powerlessness? Awareness must precede change. The economic and social factors that contribute to the violence actions of an individual are unaffected by our current criminal system.
- ◆ What is the value of personal narrative?
- ◆ More research is needed in the investigation of restorative practices of offender to victim.

Vivian Stern in *A Sin against the Future* (1998) surveyed world prisons, rehabilitation, and the systems which have been most successful in curbing crime and violence. She notes that the most effective systems exist in cultures where the perpetrator is not viewed with contempt and hatred. She states that face-to-face restorative practices are more likely to awaken conscience than our current practices.

## Conclusion

It is especially striking that these deficits occurred so early in the lives of the participants. Many did act out as children. Some were offered help but it appears that the help came too late or the systems which held the child were unable to alter the complex factors that were influencing the child. Resources and positive intentions exist for a limited time. According to psychiatrist and internationally recognized expert on violence Dorothy Lewis (1998),

When children are small no matter how aggressive they are, we doctors and other grown-ups are willing to talk with them, play with them, try to discover what's eating them...But something happens to these children, or to their doctors when the children reach about five foot, two inches in height. The very same children that the doctors saw as hyperactive, or brain damaged, or borderline psychotic when they were, say four foot, nine inches, now look different...As time goes on the diagnostic metamorphosis continues. Adolescence progresses and children get even bigger. Now age dictates diagnosis. Eighteen is the magic number that transforms conduct disorder to antisocial personality disorder. Nothing much about the patients has changed-just their ages. (p. 63)

Although temperaments do vary, escalating aggression and violent behavior in children is not the norm. When it does occur, there is often a reason. Children who behave badly are often punished, and because their underlying needs are not met, they continue to act out and thus continue to be punished. Finally, as adolescents and adults, the consequences change. For some it may be too late.

If these participants had received the proper help could their predilection to violence have been averted? Generally speaking, are we giving up on our children? In many states the Get Tough on Crime Legislation has extended to children. In CT (where all of these men are currently incarcerated), children as young as 13 can be tried and sentenced as adults. In some states they can be sentenced to death at 13. Because of the

state of mind that most perpetrators find themselves in, it is common knowledge that this law has no deterrent effect. Yet, we continue to punish children.

While we differ in many of our outer characteristics, values, and attitudes there are many ways in which we are alike. At one time we were all children in need of safety, stability, and loving relationships. We share, even with violent offenders and murderers the need to feel loved, the need for a nurturing environment, the need to feel respected, and the need for purpose and meaning.

For the most part, public perception of criminals and violent offenders is shaped by the media and by fear. Most people do not question who commits a crime or violent act or who makes up the 1.7 million individuals currently incarcerated in the United States. This study has attempted to provide the reader with a small glimpse of the individuals and life circumstances associated with violence.

Clearly, violent action is the result of a confluence of factors. Perhaps the one thing that can be agreed upon is the need for early intervention. Nearly every participant in this study made this recommendation. Their direction is echoed in the Appeal of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates: For the Children of the World. (Appendix E). Early intervention is our responsibility. Allowing children to remain at risk is to continue to turn our back on abuse. Each perpetrator was a child with positive potential. If we do not intervene, then we contribute to their eventual violence and to the violence in our culture. When these children become adults we wash our hands of them and half believe that punishment will turn them around. Many have been punished their whole lives and it is because of this that they have acted out.

Even the craziest expression of violence is a communication by the perpetrator. As Lou notes, "It is a distorted form of communication." This paper has suggested that until we can hear and understand what is beneath these violent actions, we cannot achieve its prevention.

The roots of values lie deep in the archetypal and unconscious symbols and myths of the society. Changing the value system first of all requires probing in the questions: What does violence *do* for the individual? What purposes does he achieve or try to achieve through aggression and violence? (May, 1972, p. 39)

If we only respond with apathy, fatalism, anger, fear, judgement, our own need for vengeance, and punishment we miss the opportunity for positive action and change. We know enough. Elliot Curie (1985), a noted criminal violence researcher states,

It is not lack of knowledge or technical prowess that keeps us from launching an honest and serious fight against crime; the obstacles are ... ideological and political. We have the level of criminal violence that we do because we have arranged our social and economic life in certain ways rather than others. If we continue to tolerate the conditions that have made us the most violent of industrial societies, it is not because the problem is overwhelmingly mysterious or because we do not know what to do, but because we have decided that the benefits of changing those conditions aren't worth the costs. (p. 19)

Punishment is out of hand in America. It is no longer about reducing crime and violence or even about justice. In addition to making us feel good, punishment has also become big business.

If we believe that violence says something about the moral character of the perpetrator, and we insist on treating violence with violence, then we must also look at our moral character as a nation. It is undeniable that each of us has both the capacity for good and evil within us. Jacob Boronowski writes in *The Faces of Violence*,

Which of us has not cried, "Revenge!"  
Which of us has not felt  
A liberation in the act of anger?  
Which of us has never said  
"I'll show 'em yet!"

Who has not hoped  
To outrange an enemy's dignity?  
Who has not been swept  
By the wish to hurt?  
And who has not thought that the impersonal world  
Deserves no better than to be destroyed...? (p. 165)

When we begin to acknowledge our own violence as a culture and reduce our  
hunger for hurting back, we will enter the first stage of healing.

John Edgar Wideman (1998) writes,

The sad, defeatist work of building prisons, the notion that prison walls will  
protect us from crime and chaos are symptomatic of our shortsightedness, our  
fear of engaging at the root, at the levels that demand personal risk and  
transformation, our fear of confronting the real problems caging us all. (p. 15)

The pervasive manifestation of violence in our country today is indicative of an  
culture in serious social decay. The real danger is not locked up in prison, it is all around  
us in the systems that contribute to desperation. A call to awareness and conscience is in  
order. During the collapse of Rome, St. Augustine felt that there must be some function  
to evil. He concluded that evil exists in order to reveal good. The pathway is clear. We  
must inject good/love into those who are at risk for violence, especially children. We  
must begin to make a focused effort to water the seeds of safety, identity, relationship,  
trust, connection, integrity, hope, compassion, and nonviolence. To do so, we need a  
deeper understanding of the needs of an under-served population and what will prevent  
them from being at risk. We must work towards eliminating the breeding grounds  
wherein lies the threat of being defined and defining oneself as a failure. That we punish

our underclass most severely should be an issue of concern. As one of the participants noted, if you are growing vegetables and you do not provide good soil, adequate light, proper nutrition, and regular watering, why would you be surprised to find that your garden did not develop.

Without proper cultivation the erosive effects of violence will continue to damage our social and spiritual evolution as a culture. We must take action to supply and support better environments in which to grow. The burden for preventing violent action rests on each of us. Overcoming violence and creating a healthy culture is an enormous challenge and a potential calling for each of us. We must take action — but not alone. Our instructors in this study and all the other authorities who confirm their views have described numerous factors that contribute to the etiology of violence. There are so many kinds of actions that need to be taken that each can choose the ones that call upon and suit his or her particular resources and talents. Answering this call to serve, taking an active role in this critical endeavor, and applying our individual gifts and skills to the different facets of this common purpose may introduce renewed meaning into each of our lives.

## APPENDIX A

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR PARTICIPANT

I have been going into men's prisons for about six years as a facilitator in the Alternatives to Violence Program. I have spent a fair amount of time on the inside and over the years have met hundreds of convicts. I have seen and heard things that most people don't get a chance to and therefore aren't aware of. I have met you, spent time with you, and heard your stories and insights. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to hear the real experts speak on the topic of violence.

It seems that to effectively and humanely reduce the risk of violence, our culture must look deeply at its roots and develop appropriate methods of intervention (rather than to just lock people up). This study wants to gather information about the background, experience, and insight of the offender in order to get the real message out there and hopefully develop programs that will effect change. This researcher believes that the insight and voice of the convict is essential to this process.

APPENDIX B  
STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

Researcher: JoAnna Schoen Ph.D. Candidate  
University of Massachusetts

Title: The Etiology of Violence and the Wisdom of the Perpetrator

This research project is designed to explore the insights and experiences of violent offenders. No personal information which might identify an individual through their background, history of offenses, behavior, or psychological condition will be quoted or included in this study. The respondent will be granted full anonymity.

I understand that in giving my consent, I agree to answer a questionnaire and/or participate in an interview that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. I will be asked questions about my background and experience of violence and I will have an opportunity to share my opinions. The interview will be audiotaped and occur during non-working hours. Non-identifying material from the interview may be quoted or paraphrased in the write up of the study. This material will be submitted to the participation order to confirm accuracy. The information obtained will be written up in the dissertation and in other possible professional publications.

I understand that I will not be paid for my participation in this study or realize a gain in any way. My participation will not affect current or future privileges. I understand that the primary purpose of my participation is to contribute to an effort to better understand and increase knowledge of the motivating factors involved in violent behavior.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study but I understand that I have the option to refuse to participate in this study or to withdraw from it without prejudice at any time.

I have read this form and fully understand the terms of my participation in this research project. I understand that if I have further questions regarding the procedures of this project that they will be answered in detail to my satisfaction.

With this understanding, I agree to become a participant in the project described above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*date*

I have witnessed the reading of this consent form, explained the procedures of this study, and have answered all questions to the best of my ability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*date*

APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Facility Level: 4 3 2 1

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: ☐ Male  
☐ Female

Race: ☐ White

☐ African American

☐ Latino

☐ Native American

☐ Asian

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education: ☐ less than HS diploma ☐ HS diploma/GED

☐ Vocational Training

☐ Associate's Degree

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Graduate Degree

Education completed while incarcerated:

Socio economic class as a child:

☐ lower ☐ middle class ☐ upper class

At time of incarceration:

☐ lower ☐ middle class ☐ upper class

☐ rural ☐ suburban ☐ city ☐ inner city

Occupations prior to incarceration:

Marital status: ☐ single ☐ married ☐ common law ☐ divorced ☐ separated  
☐ widowed

Children: # Female \_\_\_\_\_ Ages \_\_\_\_\_

# Male \_\_\_\_\_ Ages \_\_\_\_\_

Religious affiliation as child: ☐ Protestant ☐ Catholic ☐ Jewish ☐ Muslim

☐ none ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Current religious affiliation:

What acts of violence have you committed?

What were you convicted for?

Age at conviction

What is your current sentence?

Have you done previous time? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, age at first conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, for how long and for what offense?

At what age did you begin to take violent action?

What were these behaviors?

Do you have any health problems? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please explain.

Any accidents or injuries? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please explain.

Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental health problem? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please explain:

Do you remember ever having a head injury? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please explain:

History of drug abuse: ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, what drugs have you done?

If yes, at what age did you begin to use?

History of alcohol abuse: ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, for how long?

If yes, at what age did you begin to drink?

Did the influence of drugs or alcohol affect violent behavior? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please comment:

Have you ever had treatment for drug or alcohol abuse? ☐ yes ☐ no

Family information:

	Living	Age	Occupation	Incarcerated	Violence	Drugs	Alcohol
mother	Y N						
father	Y N						
siblings							
step/ foster parents							
grand parents							
others							

Marital status of parents: ☐ single ☐ married ☐ common law ☐ divorced  
☐ separated ☐ widowed ☐ unknown ☐ comments

Who did you live with growing up?

Did you get along with your family? ☐ yes ☐ no

Comments:

Who were your role models?

Have you ever owned a weapon? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please comment:

Were you ever in a gang? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please comment:

Did you like school? ☐ yes ☐ no

How did you do in school?

As a young child did you get in trouble home or at school? ☐ yes ☐ no  
If yes, did you? ☐ talk back ☐ lose temper ☐ easily annoyed ☐ often felt angry  
☐ get into fights ☐ destroyed property ☐ stole items ☐ skip school  
☐ run away from home

As a teenager did you get in trouble home or at school? ☐ yes ☐ no  
If yes, did you? ☐ talk back ☐ lose temper ☐ easily annoyed  
☐ often felt angry ☐ get into fights ☐ destroyed property ☐ stole items  
☐ skip school ☐ run away from home

Have you ever experienced discrimination because of class or race? ☐ yes ☐ no  
If yes, please comment:

Were you exposed to violence in your home? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please comment:

Were you punished? ☐ yes ☐ no

Were you exposed to violence in the community? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please comment:

Were you exposed to violence through TV, movies, video games? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please comment:

Why do you believe that you took violent action?

Did anyone try to help you? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please comment:

What did you need that you did not have ?

Do you believe you will commit an act of violence in the future?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ maybe

Why or why not?

What did you think your violence would accomplish?

How did perpetrating acts of violence make you feel?

What has life been like for you?.

What are your earliest memories of violence?

What did you need that you did not have?

What did you have that you did not use?

What is your experience of :  
Respect/Disrespect.

Power/powerlessness.

Anger.

Fear.

Why do you believe that people do violent things?

Do you think it is possible to be non-violent?

What does it take?

What do you think can be done to help prevent violence?

I have asked you the things that I think are important. If you were conducting this study, are there things you would ask that I haven't thought of?

# APPENDIX D

## POWERLESSNESS SURVEY

Participant ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Read each statement and decide to what extent it describes what you thought or felt then circle the number that describes your attitude or feeling PRIOR TO INCARCERATION. This questionnaire is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be very truthful and describe yourself as you really were, not as you would like to be, or know you can be, or are now.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree Moderately	Agree Strongly
1. I feel I am a person of worth, equal to others.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I believe that if I work hard enough, I can achieve anything.	1	2	3	4	5
3. There are more good people than bad people in the world.	1	2	3	4	5
4. People listen to me when I speak.	1	2	3	4	5
5. In life, I feel I was dealt as good a hand as anyone else.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I believe in a higher power.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I believe that with the right kind of help, most people can turn their lives around.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel that help is available.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel that people can change.	1	2	3	4	5
10. It feel that it is impossible to get ahead.	1	2	3	4	5
11. People are no good.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Most problems have a solution.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I trust myself.	1	2	3	4	5
14. No matter what I do, I'll never get what I need.	1	2	3	4	5
15. There are plenty of opportunities available to me if I try hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I do not feel capable of dealing with most problems that come up in life.	1	2	3	4	5

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree Moderately	Agree Strongly
17. Most people cannot be trusted.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Failure makes me try harder.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I am easily frustrated.	1	2	3	4	5
21. If you ask for what you need, you will probably get it.	1	2	3	4	5
22. People care about my pain.	1	2	3	4	5
23. It matters whether I live or die.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I can make a difference in this world.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I often feel that no one knows that I exist.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Every human life counts.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Life is cheap.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I'm glad I was born.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I definitely make an impact on people.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Good will ultimately win out over bad/evil.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I have something special to contribute to others.	1	2	3	4	5
32. People will remember me after I'm gone.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Intelligence gives people power.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Money gives people power.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Integrity gives people power.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Physical strength gives people power.	1	2	3	4	5
37. The deck is stacked.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Might makes right.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E  
 APPEAL OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATES FOR  
 THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

# Appeal of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates:

## For the Children of the World

To: **Heads of States of all member countries of the General Assembly of the United Nations**  
 From: **Nobel Peace Prize Laureates**

Today, in every single country throughout the world, there are many children silently suffering the effects and consequences of violence.

This violence takes many different forms: between children on streets, at school, in family life and in the community. There is physical violence, psychological violence, socio-economic violence, environmental violence and political violence. Many children – too many children – live a "culture of violence."

We wish to contribute to reduce their suffering. We believe that each child can discover, by himself, that violence is not inevitable. We can offer hope, not only to the children of the world, but to all of humanity, by beginning to create, and build, a new Culture of Nonviolence.

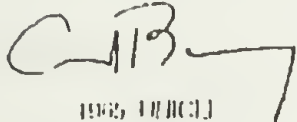
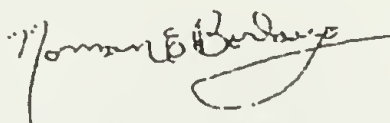
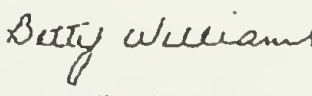
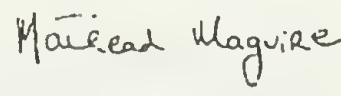

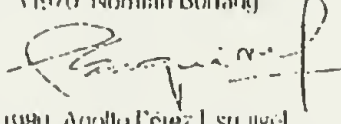
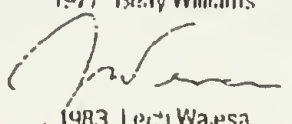
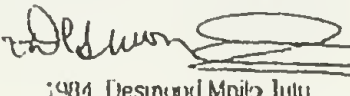
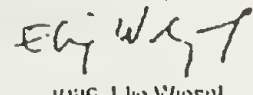
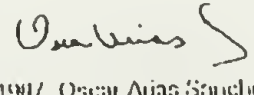
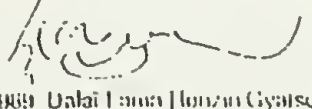
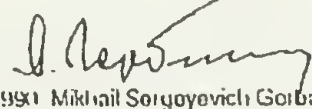
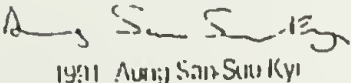
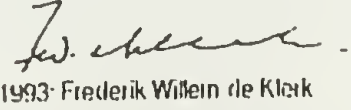
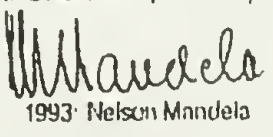
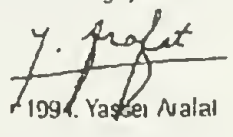
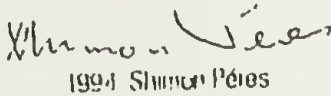
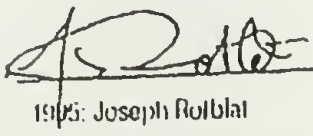
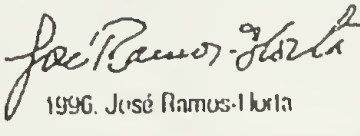
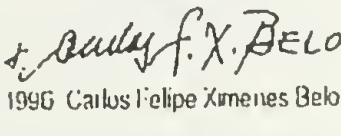
For this reason, we address this solemn appeal to all Heads of State of all member countries of the General Assembly of the United Nations, for the UN General Assembly to declare:

- That the first decade of the new millennium, the years 2000-2010, be declared the "Decade for a Culture of Nonviolence;"
- That at the start of the decade the year 2000 be declared the "Year of Education for Nonviolence;"
- That nonviolence be taught at every level in our societies during this decade, to make the children of the world aware of the real, practical meaning and benefits of nonviolence in their daily lives, in order to reduce the violence, and consequent suffering, perpetrated against them and humanity in general.

Together, we can build a new culture of nonviolence for humankind which will give hope to all humanity, and in particular, to the children of our world.

With deepest respect,

**The Nobel Peace Prize Laureates**

 1965 UNICEF	 1970 Norman Borlaug	 1971 Betty Williams	 1977 Mairead Corrigan Maguire
 1979 Mother Teresa	 1980 Adolfo Pérez Esquivel	 1983 Lech Wałęsa	 1984 Desmond Mpilo Tutu
 1986 Elie Wiesel	 1987 Oscar Arias Sánchez	 1989 Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso)	 1990 Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev
 1991 Aung San Suu Kyi	 1993 Frederik Willem de Klerk	 1993 Nelson Mandela	 1994 Yasser Arafat
 1994 Shimon Peres	 1995 Joseph Ruffini	 1996 José Ramos Horta	 1996 Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo

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