Parricide: An Analysis of Offender Characteristics and Crime Scene Behaviorsof Adult and Juvenile Offenders

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Abstract

Researchers of parricide have often concentrated on the characteristics of the offenders. However, research which has empirically documented the link between offender’s characteristics and crime scene evidence is scant. Therefore, the aim of this study is to attempt not only to explore the crime scene behaviors evident in parricide offenses, but also to determine whether there are any differences between juvenile and adult offenders in both personal and crime scene characteristics. Twenty-four cases of parricide offenses, obtained from the FBI Behavioral Science Unit case files, were analyzed using frequency and chi-square. The results revealed, contrary to literature, that mental illness and abuse were not significantly different for both groups. Regarding crime scene variables, differences between the two groups were found on a number of victims and movement of the victim’s body after death. Other interesting findings include initial approach to victim and overkill. These findings provide investigative and research implications, and provides a new direction in parricide research.

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Introduction

The fascination with criminal investigation and crime analysis is at an all time high. All the television shows – CSI, Law and Order, and Murder – have given the public instant access to what investigators go through when they are trying to solve a crime. Whether or not the events portrayed in these shows are accurate; viewers are turned on by the mystery of the investigative process, where one has to devise a story of the event and a profile of the offender based solely on physical and behavioral evidence.

Much of the past researches on criminal behavior have concentrated on understanding what motivates a person to commit the offense (Ewing, 1997; Ewing, 2001; Moffatt, 2002). Studies have also been conducted to determine biological, psychological, and social factors related to criminal behavior (Eysenck, 1977, as cited in Salfati & Kucharski, 2005; Baxter, Duggan, Larkin, Cordess, & Page, 2001). These are all important in the field of forensic psychology, particularly in the area of treatment and rehabilitation, judicial procedures, and public understanding. Recently however, researchers have realized the need to study criminal behavior in a way that would aid law enforcers and detectives in the initial stages of criminal investigation. Hence, it becomes necessary that researchers utilize information that can be readily used by investigators and that they can immediately act on (Canter, 2000). The goal of this paper is to document the link between offenders’s characteristics and crime scene evidence in parricide cases.

This paper will begin with a brief overview of parricide and the studies that have been done in this area. A review of criminal offender profiling will also be given as well as an examination of the research on crime scene behaviors and parricide. Then a description of the current research will be given, including its purpose and the procedures involved. Lastly, a discussion of the results and its research and investigative implications will be given.

Parricide can be generally defined as the killing of parents or stepparents by their son or daughter, where the offender can be an adult, a juvenile, or a child (younger than 10). Accounts of parricide are not something new. In fact, stories about killing of one’s parent are present in several literary works, one of which is the Greek
mythology, “House of Atreus”. The story is about Orestes, the son of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. Upon his return home from the war, he learned that his father was murdered by his own mother and her lover. Orestes then, at the urging of his sister Electra, killed their mother to avenge their father's death (Rubenstein, 1969, as cited in Newhill, 1991). Another parricidal theme from Greek mythology, and perhaps one of the most cited, is the story of Oedipus, who unknowingly killed his real father during an argument (Santrock, 2002). Other literary works include William Shakespeare's “Macbeth” and Dostoevsky's “Crime and punishment” (Newhill, 1991). Numerous media accounts are also available on parricide both nationally and internationally (Boots & Heide, 2006).

Most statistics on parricide are taken from homicidal incidence rates. In 2006 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reports published that about 21.6 per cent of murder victims were killed by family members. Moreover, among the 14,990 homicide victims where the relationship between offender and victim were known, 115 were mothers and 114 were fathers. This indicates that approximately 1.5 per cent of homicide involved parents as victims. This is not very surprising since several researchers have already noted the rarity of parricide cases (Shon & Targonski, 2003; Heide, 1993a; Flowers, 2002). Despite its infrequency parricide has garnered significant interest from the media, public, and scientific community.

Review of Related Literature

Efforts have been made to research parricide, largely in a clinical sense, identifying characteristics of offenders and their families. For example, psychological, educational, environmental, economic and sociocultural histories are identified, as well as other demographics such as sex and race. In this section, a discussion of the past research on parricide will be presented. This will be divided into two parts: Characteristics and crime scene behaviors. The studies will then be synthesized to show how far previous researches have reached with regard to the topic of parricide and what is yet to be explored in this area.

1. Offender and Victim Characteristics
Heide (1993a) provided a statistical description of the characteristics of parricide offenders by analyzing incidents of single victim-single offender parricide situations from 1977 to 1986. The results show that a significant proportion of offenders and victims were White and non-Hispanic. She also found that majority of the offenders were male, and while most of the offenders were adult, a large amount of stepparent parricide were committed by youths ages 18 years and below. She also found a strong relationship between the age of the offender and parental victimization; where offenders under the age of 30 were most likely to kill their fathers, stepfathers, or stepmothers while those between 20 to 50 years of age were most likely to kill their mothers. Analysis of victim age also revealed certain differences. She found that biological parents were usually older than stepparent counterparts, and that females also tended to be older than their male counterparts.

In a follow up study, Heide and Petee (2007) analyzed parricide offender, victim, and offense correlates. The data included parricide incidents from 1976 to 1999, which yielded a total of 5,781 victims and 5,558 offenders. Unlike the first study (Heide, 1993a) the researchers included both single and multiple victim-offender. The researchers replicated Heide’s findings from the 1993 study, and also found a relationship between victim age and gender. It was revealed that fathers who were killed were usually in their early 50s, while the mothers were in their late 50s, further supporting that female victims are usually older.

In a study exploring the differences between adult and juvenile parricides, (Marleau, Auclair, & Millaud, 2006) compared the two 55 parricide offenders from Institut Philippe Pinel de Montreal on factors such as demographic, social, criminological, and psychological variables. Of these offenders, 45 % were adults, 18 years old and up, and 12 % were juveniles, 17 years old or younger. In analyzing the data using chi-square, they found that juveniles were more likely to kill both parents, explaining that this was perhaps due to the juveniles living at home and most likely, having both parents alive. Firearms were also noted to be the weapon most used by the juvenile group. They also found that 23 per cent of juveniles had an accomplice while this was not found in any of the adult cases. Their results also show, concurrent with other literature, that majority of adult parricide offenders suffer from mental
illness, specifically paranoid schizophrenia (56%). They also noted that all of the adult offenders were found insane at the time of the offense. In examining the juvenile group, they found that, contrary to literature, none of them were sexually abused or were living in significantly hostile family environment. Interestingly, they found that juveniles had evidence of suicidal ideation and recurring thoughts of killing their parents. A common finding for both groups was that 52 per cent had overkill, and of these offenders, majority were reported to have been consuming substances or alcohol months prior to the offense. This suggests that alcohol or substance consumption might also be one of the factors for committing the act.

A. Mental illness

Mental illness has been cited as one of the factors relating to parricide (Ewing, 1997; Ewing, 2001; Heide, 1992, as cited in Boots & Heide, 2006). In a study by Baxter et al. (2001) comparing mentally disordered parricides and stranger killers, it was found that schizophrenia was the most common diagnosis for parricides on admission, where personality disorder was the most common for mentally disordered stranger killers. The sample comprised 98 individuals who committed parricide and 159 who committed stranger homicides. Majority of the offenders were male and the mean age of both groups was 30-31 years. Results showed that the parricides were less likely to have a disrupted childhood but more likely to be living in the same household as the victim, and significantly less likely to use alcohol or display a long antecedent criminal history. They found that an overt sexual element did not exist as it did in the stranger group. It is interesting to note that many of the parricides appeared to have been a result of prolonged tension within the family and that some of the offenders had previously attacked the victims.

Another study was by Millaud, Auclair, and Meunier (1996). They examined the relationship of mental illness and parricide by looking at six offenders who attempted parricide and six offenders who completed the parricide. About 40 per cent of offenders were diagnosed as having paranoid schizophrenia or alcohol and drug abuse, and five out of the 12 offenders had personality disorders. Additionally, they discovered that personal and familial history of psychiatric illness was present in 75 per cent of the offenders. About half of the offenders also cited familial and personal history of
violence as a factor contributing to the parricidal act. The researchers also pointed out several risk factors in parricide. First, they mentioned that in about one third of the cases, consumption of alcohol or drugs seemed to have aggravated the psychotic symptoms of these patients. Second, almost half of the offenders sought psychiatric help weeks prior to the offense. Lastly, in 25 per cent of the cases, discontinuation of psychotropic medication was a factor in the parricides.

Other researchers have also talked about parricide offenses in relation to catahymia. Catathmic violence is the result of an ongoing emotional tension due to traumatic experiences and projection of blame and responsibility onto others (Meloy, 1992, as cited in Dutton & Yamini, 1995). The person believes that the only way to resolve the internal tension is through the act of violence. Revitch and Schlesinger (1981, as cited in Schlesinger, 2004) described the stages of the catathmic process as incubation, violent act then relief. They discussed that during the incubation phase, the individual becomes obsessed and preoccupied about wanting to kill another person (future victim). The commission of the act appears sudden and unplanned. After which, the individual feels a sense of relief, and for a time, experiences normalcy and internal homeostasis.

Schlesinger (2004) explains common catathmic and parricidal characteristics. One such characteristic is overkill, an excessive amount of force used to kill a person, or more force than is needed is used to accomplish ending someone’s life. Overkill often serves to rid the offender of any remaining tension and prevent murder-suicide. Undoing is also common in catathmic murders as well as parricides, where the face or whole body is covered or turned away, as is displacing the body from the scene of the crime.

Dutton and Yamini (1995) also examined the relationship of catathymia and parricide. They compared catathmic murderers and parricides to suicidal people in his study to describe the concept of projective-introjective cycling. He found that both groups obsessively saw themselves as failures. A shame-based affect emerges where shame and guilt is attributed to the self. The aversive self-awareness emerging from this shame becomes unbearable, and is either projected inward (in the suicide group) or outward (in the parricide and catathmic group). In the parricide and catathmic group, anger grows and an externalizing attributional style is adopted, so the anger is projected
outward. Depression and feelings of failure often originated in the parricide’s upbringing, where there was a parental standard that was impossible to achieve. Dutton (1995) found that these parents engaged in random punishment, physical abuse, and publicly belittling the child.

B. Abuse

Perhaps one of the most common factors associated with parricide is abuse. It is believed that offenders, who became a parricide perpetrator, also have been the victims of brutal, verbal, sexual, and emotional violence at the hands of their victims. Heide (1992, as cited in Ewing, 1997) pointed that youths kill their parents because they could no longer tolerate the dysfunctional home. Most families of parricidal children were also found to have a domineering mother and rejecting father (Dutton & Yamini, 1995).

Tanay (1973, as cited in Ewing, 2001) discussed the concept of “reactive parricide”; where the child, due to a long-standing abuse, responds by killing his parents. Abuse does not have to be directly experienced to have an effect. Some children get affected even by just witnessing his father beating up his mother or sexually assaulting his sister (Kelleher, 1998). Others, on the other hand, perceive or believe that they have been mistreated, when in fact there was no evidence of abuse. These individuals are those who view their parents’ restrictions and rules as a form of abuse, and retaliate by killing the source of these punishments or abuse.

2. Parricide and Crime Scene Behaviors

Considering the benefits offender profiling can offer investigators, researchers have been trying to improve on the validity and reliability of this tool. Majority of the research in profiling deals with serial murderers (Dowden, Bennell, & Bloomfield, 2007). There have also been other researchers who extended the study of profiling in the area of homicide (Salfati, 2000; Salfati, 2003). The study of crime scene behaviors in parricide, however, has been limited; most focusing on weapons used.

In a study comparing weapon use in filicides (ie. killing of children) and parricides, Marleau (2003) analyzed 43 adult parricide offenders from the Institut Philippe Pinel de Montreal. All of the offenders were found to be insane at the time of their offense. His data revealed that majority of parricide offenders used a knife (56%)
and only 9 per cent of these offenders used a firearm in committing the offense. Furthermore, he noted that 81 per cent of parricide offenders used a weapon to commit their crime while only about 40 per cent of filicide offenders did. He also compared weapon use with the presence of schizophrenia, but found that there was no relationship between the two. He explained that weapon use of parricide offenders were perhaps due to the simple reason that the target of these offenders' crime were more difficult to kill as compared to those offenders who committed filicide. He noted the possibility of the perception of imbalance of power, and that the use of weapon may have been the only way of committing the offense, guaranteeing the death of the parent.

Contrary to what Marleau (2003) found, most studies have indicated that firearms were the most common weapons used in parricide. Testing two psychodynamic assumptions on parricide, Shon and Targonski (2003) examined the stability of parricide over time as well as the weapons used in committing this offense. Specifically, they wanted to see whether parricide had not been affected by social factors from 1976 to 1998 and if knives were the primary weapon used by the offenders due to its sexual significance. In examining the 6,629 cases, they found that majority of the offenders used firearms in killing their parents. They also found that there has been a consistent decline in the rate of parricides since 1991. They attributed the decline to changes in family structures proving that parricide, like other homicides, are affected by the changes in society. Shon and Targonski concluded that the two Freudian assumptions on parricide are flawed in that parricide is not caused by intrapsychic factors since it can be influenced by societal factors and there seems to be little or no sexual significance in these offenses because an overwhelming majority of these offenders used firearms, not knives, in committing the offense.

In 1993, Heide (1993b) examined weapon use in parricide offenses, comparing the victims of both juvenile (i.e. 17 years and younger) and adult parricide offenders. She used the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) data base to gather records on weapons used by parricide offenders from 1977 to 1986. She had a total of 2,255 biological parents and 616 stepparents of single victim-single offender parricides. Using chi-square analysis, she found that majority of parricide offenders’ use of these
four weapons: firearms (ie. handgun, rifle, and shotgun), knives or cutting instruments, blunt instruments, and personal weapons (eg. hands, body, etc.). She also found that fathers, both biological and adoptive, were more likely to be killed by firearms, regardless of the type of gun used. Mothers on the other hand, were more likely to be killed with handguns or cutting instruments. In comparing adult and juvenile offenders, the data showed that juveniles were more likely to kill parents and stepfathers with a firearm, more specifically rifles and shotguns, than adults. Heide explained these results using the physical strength hypothesis stating that it is logical for juveniles to use firearms because adults, particularly males, may be stronger than them. She concluded by saying that perhaps occurrence of juvenile parricides could be attributed to the availability of guns to these children, and that the number of parricides committed by juveniles might decrease if access to firearms were restricted.

Only one study was found that looked into actual crime scene correlates of parricide. In the study of Fritzon and Garbutt (2001), they examined 191 cases of the different types of intrafamilial homicide (eg. Parricide, filicide, familicide, etc.). They compared crime scenes according to the relationship of the victim to the offender. They hypothesized that the crime scenes would differ depending on whether the offender saw the victim as a person (ie. Someone significant) or victim as an object (ie. The victim does not have a significant role in the offense). They also looked into the nature of the aggression or whether the offense was expressive (ie. The act was driven by rage or anger) or instrumental (ie. The act was purposeful or intentional). Using a multidimensional analysis called Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), Fritzon and Garbutt were able to divide the crime scene variables into four different categories: Instrumental object, instrumental person, expressive person, and expressive object.

In looking at Fritzon and Garbutt (2001) results on parricide, it appears that patricide cases can be categorized as being mostly expressive object. This meant that the motivation for killing was the built up rage and frustration from the offender and that the father just happened to be the chosen target to vent out these frustrations. Consequently, majority of the parricide cases appear to be either Expressive person or Instrumental person. This indicates that victim’s role is significant in that they are the target of the offense, and that the act of violence can either be a planned attack or due
to an emotional outburst.

Parricide offenders are most often adult, white, male, and live in the same dwelling as the victim. Most juveniles are in their teens and target their father or both parents, where most adults are in their early 30s and target only the mother. Research has shown that adults are more likely to suffer from schizophrenia at the time of the crime; where juveniles are reacting more to inescapable child abuse. Some parricides are also believed to be catathymic in nature, involving an incubation period, murder as the only-way-out, overkill, acts of undoing, and post-murder relief with flat affect.

Crime scene evidence, on the other hand, is limited in parricide research, mostly focusing on the element of overkill and weapon type. Our research intends to supplement parricide literature by introducing parricide crime scene characteristics. Such knowledge has investigative implications for the discovery of a victim who also happens to be a parent.

The Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of parricide by confirming what has been found in the literature concerning parricide offender characteristics and expanding the research in this area by examining crime scene behaviors of these offenders. More specifically, the researchers wanted to:

1. Verify the findings from previous literature on the characteristics of parricide offenders. Specifically, the researchers wanted to know whether juvenile parricide offenders were more likely to have parental abuse in their backgrounds. It also wanted to know whether adult parricide offender were more likely to have some form of mental illness.

2. Find out the crime scene characteristics of parricides; particularly the most prominent, or those of highest frequency.

3. Find out distinctions between crime scenes of adult and juvenile parricide offenders.

In doing this study, the researchers hope to add to the growing literature on offender profiling and investigative psychology so as to gain a better understanding of criminal behavior in general. More importantly, by adding to the literature on offender profiling, the researchers hope to contribute to the development of more valid and
reliable investigative methods to be used by police officers and detectives.

**Methodology**

The data from this study were taken from the case files provided to John Jay College of Criminal Justice by the FBI Behavioral Science Unit, as part of a joint research project. One of the strengths of the case files was a wealth of information on the crime including police reports, witness statements, offender interviews, and autopsy reports. Most of the files also had extensive reports regarding the background of the offenders and victims such as level of education, employment, psychological history, and criminal history. Another strength was the presence of crime scene photos. The photos provided a clearer information on the location of the body, its position, and the type of weapon used to commit the crime. However, having only these case files as the data source, limited the sample size.

The parricide cases were found among the domestic homicide and homicide by children files. There were a total of 24 parricide cases and 36 offenders, as some cases involved multiple offenders. These cases included both adult (i.e., those 18 years or older) and juvenile (i.e., those 17 years or younger) offenders. A standardized data sheet was completed to begin the analysis of the cases. The data sheet included information such as offender and victim demographics; offender actions before, during, and after the crime; evidence left at the crime scene; mode of death, and others. Each researcher then was assigned a certain amount of cases (i.e., Researcher 1 – cases 1 to 8, Researcher 2 – cases 9 to 16, Researcher 3 – cases 17 to 24), and in their own chosen time, went to the file room to gather the necessary data.

The data were then content analyzed by each researcher. In order to avoid different perspectives, a list of variables was made to search and define the coded variables related to offender characteristics and crime scene behaviors. A majority of these were coded dichotomously, using “yes” or “no” values for each of the variables. In order to improve inter-rater reliability, coding was checked by exchanging cases and searching the files for discrepancies in coding or missed information. In doing this, the researchers were able to assess the internal consistency reliability of each case and variable, and estimate the inter-rater reliability (Hoyle, Harris, & Judd, 2002).

The first step in summarizing the data is to organize the data in some logical
fashion. Frequency is useful in condensing a large amount of information into an actual number or quantifiable data. The second step is to test for significance using Chi-square. This enables researchers to see if the differences between the frequencies or percentages between variables are statistically significant (Braces, Richard, & Snelgar, 2006). However, approximation of the chi-square distribution breaks down if expected frequencies are too low. Therefore, in this study, since the total sample size is small, it is necessary to use an appropriate exact test as Fisher’s exact test instead of the Pearson’s chi-square value.

1.. Offender and Victim Characteristics

Seven of the primary offenders (i.e., those mainly responsible for the offense, either in planning or in actual killing) were juveniles ($\bar{x} = 16$, $SD = 0.76$) and 17 were adults ($\bar{x} = 30$, $SD = 10.65$), as seen in Table 1. The data indicated that, for both groups, parricide is primarily a male crime (Table 1). Also, the majority (85.7%) of the offenders were White. In looking at level of education, about 86 per cent of juvenile offenders were educated, having at least a high school degree; compared to 53 per cent of adult offenders. Regarding work, more than 50 per cent of adult offenders were found to be employed at the time of the offense. In comparing the two groups in these variables, there were slight differences found, although the results failed to reach the significant level ($p < 0.05$). In examining the accomplices (age ranging from 14 to 50 years old), no differences were found between them and the primary offender group in terms of ethnicity and gender.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Juveniles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range</td>
<td>18 – 57</td>
<td>15 – 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age in years (SD)</td>
<td>30 (10.65)</td>
<td>16 (0.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Males)</td>
<td>15 (88.2%)</td>
<td>6 (85.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Females)</td>
<td>2 (11.8%)</td>
<td>1 (14.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 42 victims were killed by the 24 primary offenders. These victims include parents, other relatives (e.g., sibling and grandparents), and other people (e.g., mother’s boyfriend). The victims’ age ranged from six to 83 years old ($\bar{x} = 52$, $SD = $
19.16), with the juvenile group having a mean victim age of 44 years old (ranging from 10 to 78, \(SD = 19.16\)) and adult group having around 57 years old (ranging from 6 to 83; \(SD = 17.76\)). Majority of the victims, as with the primary offender, were found to be White (92.9%). However, unlike the primary offenders, about 55 per cent of the victims were female. In examining the relationship of these victims with the primary offender (Table 2), it can be said that adult offenders were more likely to kill their mother than juvenile offenders, although no significant differences were found between the two groups \((X^2 = 0.913, df = 1, p = 0.339)\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Juveniles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>10 (38.5%)</td>
<td>6 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>12 (46.2%)</td>
<td>5 (31.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>2 (7.7%)</td>
<td>3 (18.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relatives</td>
<td>1 (3.8%)</td>
<td>2 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1 (3.8%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Crime Scene Variables**

Both groups were compared on a number of crime scene variables as can be seen from Table 3. These variables were taken from past literature that analyzed crime scene variables of homicides (eg. Salfati, 2000; Last & Fritzon, 2005; Salfati, 2003) since the researchers were not able to find any parricide literature that looked into the crime scene behaviors of the offenders. Studies on homicides, particularly the one done by Last and Fritzon (2005), indicate that intrafamilial homicides might have certain aspects in their crime scenes that would differentiate them from other types of homicides, as those committed by strangers or acquaintances.

In their study examining expressiveness in these three types of homicide (ie. Stranger, acquaintance, and intrafamilial), Last and Fritzon (2005) discovered that intrafamilial homicides could be, to some degree, be differentiated from these other types. They found that in intrafamilial homicide, the offenders were more likely to use a weapon from the scene and to inflict multiple wounds in one body part than the other two types. They also said, in examining victim-offender relationships, that
intrafamilial homicides had more expressive crime scenes (ie. Aggression and harm to the victim is the primary motivation).

Hence, the researchers found it fitting to adapt certain crime scene variables from these studies; not only for the purpose of using variables that are grounded in literature, but also to test whether the high frequencies found from this study would concur with those found in the literature regarding intrafamilial homicides. In total, the researchers had 31 variables that were compared and analyzed for each of the 24 cases.

**Table 3  Crime scene behaviors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per offense (24 cases)</th>
<th>Per victim (42 cases)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Double homicide</strong></td>
<td>Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single offender</strong></td>
<td>Blunt object used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victim other than parents</strong></td>
<td>Sharp object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forensic awareness</strong></td>
<td>Shot (firearm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Property of value taken</strong></td>
<td>Multiple weapon used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arson</strong></td>
<td>Single wound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapon from scene</strong></td>
<td>Multiple wound one area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapon brought</strong></td>
<td>Multiple wound distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staging</strong></td>
<td>Body positioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body moved (within the house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body transported (use of vehicle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overkill (ie. excessive wounding over and beyond that required to cause death)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The data were taken from the case files provided to John Jay Colledge of Criminal Justice by the FBI Behavioral Science Unit. A total of 42 victims were killed by the 24 primary offenders.
Results

This section will be divided into two parts – one for offender characteristics and the other for crime scene variables. It should be kept in mind that while every single case has provided a great amount of valuable information, due to the small size of the sample, caution should be exercised when interpreting the results.

1. Offender Characteristics

Majority of the offenders were living with the victim/s at the time of the offense, especially for the juvenile group (Table 4). Criminal and antisocial backgrounds (ie. School sanctions, juvenile records, and incarceration) were also found to be prevalent in the juvenile group. While 50 per cent of all the offenders had criminal or antisocial histories, the juvenile group outnumbered the adult group by 10 per cent in this variable (57% vs. 47%). On the other hand, about 53 per cent of the adult group was found to have more altercations with the victims in the past.

Table 4  Frequencies for Primary offender data of both groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Adults (%)</th>
<th>Juveniles (%)</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Adults (%)</th>
<th>Juveniles (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current relationship Siblings</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>Criminal history</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted Psychiatric history</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior aggression to Victim</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Alcohol history Residence</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posses (ie. Hearing voices at</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Drug history</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The differences between the two groups in these variables were not statistically significant.
As evidenced in literature, several factors can be related to the act of parricide. Specifically, past studies have asserted that differences can be seen between juvenile and adult parricide offenders in terms of their characteristics. Hillbrand, Alexandre, Young, and Spitz (1999) stated that mental illness is more often the motivator for adult parricide, whereas it is child abuse for juvenile parricide. Hence, the researchers tested for significant differences on the factors listed in table 4 between juveniles and adults.

The frequencies (Table 4) reveal that juveniles were more likely to experience abuse and neglect compared to adults. However, the differences between the two groups in these variables were not statistically significant (p < 0.05), indicating that juveniles were no more abused or neglected than the adults in this sample.

In examining alcohol and substance histories, adults outnumbered juveniles by almost 40 per cent. Adult parricide offenders had more drug related histories than their juvenile counterparts (53% vs. 14%). It is also interesting to note that none of the juvenile group had alcohol related histories, while about 41 per cent of adults did. In analyzing these differences however, the researchers found none of them to be significant at p-level of 0.05.

Another important factor that the researchers looked at was mental illness and psychiatric history (ie. Institutionalization at a psychiatric facility; past/current treatment for mental illness). They found that the adult group had more accounts of mental illness and psychiatric history than juveniles. Particularly, almost 65 per cent of adults were acknowledged to have some form of mental illness (mainly schizophrenia and paranoia). More than 40 per cent of the adult group have also received treatment at some point or were incarcerated in the past, compared to less than 30 per cent of the juvenile group. It is also interesting to note that almost 20 per cent of the adult group reported hearing voices or being possessed at the time of the offense, but none of the juvenile offenders did. Nonetheless, as consistent with the other results, these differences were not statistically significant.

2. Crime Scene Variables

In analyzing the data, the results revealed that about 67 per cent of the offenses happened at night or around midnight. The results also show that majority of the
offenders committed the crime by themselves (75%) and only a few had accomplices. In relation to this, the researchers found that there were a total of 12 accomplices for the whole sample, and it is interesting that of these, seven were family members. Sargent (1962, as cited in Ewing, 1997) had similar findings, stating that some parricide offenders are consciously or unconsciously swayed by other family members (most often a parent) to kill. Ewing (1997) noted that the offender, even without urging, commit the offense in order to protect other members of the family (usually from abuse).

The results also showed that more than 65 per cent of these offenses were single homicides (ie. killing of just one parent). Nevertheless, in analyzing those with double homicide, the researchers noted that these were mostly committed by juveniles (Table 5). In fact, the difference between the two groups were found to be statistically significant ($X^2 = 5.033, df = 1, p = 0.045$). This indicates that in parricides where both parents were killed, the most likely offender would be a juvenile.

Regarding the victim relationship with the offender, the results indicate that there were 10 per cent more female victims than male (includes siblings and other victims). Moreover, the researchers found that adults were more likely to kill their mothers (46.2% vs. 38.5% fathers) while juveniles were more likely to kill their fathers (37.5% vs. 31.3% mothers). However these differences were not found to be significant at p-level of 0.05.

Table 5  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Overall (%)</th>
<th>Adults (%)</th>
<th>Juveniles (%)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Double homicide</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td><strong>0.045</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single offender</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim other than parents</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>0.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forensic awareness</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property value taken</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon from scene</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon brought</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staging</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>0.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple weapon</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>0.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single wound</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>0.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple wound ONE</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>0.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Distributed</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body positioned</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>0.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>0.038 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transported</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmortem</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face covered</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body covered</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense wounds</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide inside</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found inside</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blitz</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>0.063 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con/devceive</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overkill</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: (***) means significant at p < 0.05, while (*) indicates a Hint at significance (p > 0.05 but < 0.08)

The researchers also found that majority of the offenders used a blitz style approach (69%). In comparing the two groups, although it did not reach the p-level of 0.05, it appears that juveniles were more likely than their adult counterparts to use a surprise approach than blitz or conning ($X^2 = 3.965, df = 1, p = 0.063$). Both of these results can explain why the researchers did not find a significant difference for defense wounds.

For weapon choice, it appeared that majority (more than 45%) of the offenders used firearms or sharp/cutting objects (eg. knife). Also, around 70 per cent used weapons that were found on location or from the scene. In analyzing location and number of wounds, the results indicate that about 80 per cent of the victims sustained multiple wounds, majority of which were distributed all over different areas of the body (57%).
In connection to wounding, a vast majority of the victims were identified as having overkill (Table 5). Although there were no significant differences between the two groups, the researchers did find statistically significant results when overkill was compared with other variables. They found that, when compared to wounding, a vast majority of overkill cases also had multiple distributed wounding ($X^2 = 6.857$, df = 1, $p = 0.009$). Also, a significant relationship between blunt instrument and overkill was found to exist ($X^2 = 5.884$, df = 1, $p = 0.018$). This implies that victims who had overkill were more likely to have been killed using a blunt object than other weapons.

A very interesting finding regarding overkill was that it was also found to be significant when related to victim gender and relationship. Chi-square analysis revealed that female victims were more likely to have overkill than males ($X^2 = 4.375$, df = 1, $p = 0.049$). On the other hand, when the relationship of the offender and victim were taken into account, analysis showed that fathers were more likely than mothers to have overkill ($X^2 = 4.388$, df = 1, $p = 0.036$).

Regarding location of the offense and victim body, almost all of the homicides were found to have been committed inside as seen in table 5 (mostly victim’s home). About 40 per cent of the victims have been transported to a different location and almost 20 per cent were moved (either in position or location within the house). The researchers found the moving of the body after death particularly interesting since there was a significant difference between the two groups ($X^2 = 5.707$, df = 1, $p = 0.038$). They found that juvenile parricide offenders were more likely to move the victims’ body than the adult group. It was also noted that male offenders were more likely to move the victims’ body, however due to the small sample size of the study the value did not reach statistical significance.

It is also interesting to mention that positioning of a victim’s body was found for more than 15 per cent of the cases. Specifically, 31 per cent of juvenile offenders positioned the victim’s body while only 8 per cent of adult offenders did. Looking at the crime scene photos of these cases however, the researchers noted that the bodies were not positioned in any degrading way. For most cases, the bodies were positioned in a way that it looked like the victims were peacefully sleeping or watching TV. One case nonetheless stood out. The bodies were positioned in an almost circular way,
with each of the female victims’ feet touching the others, and the two male victims were located away from the females.

A final result to discuss is postmortem activity. About 10 per cent (4 cases) of the cases had postmortem activity. While this is just a small percentage, this is very noteworthy since the common notion about intrafamilial homicides is that rarely involve postmortem activities (Last & Fritzon, 2005). Most of the postmortem behaviors that the offenders engaged in were slicing or cutting off the body parts, mainly for easy disposal. In one case however, the offender felt the need to slice his father’s body open due to a delusion that there were people inside his father. He stated that there were people calling to him for help, asking him to release them. It is also important to note that in only one of these four cases did an offender engage in necrophilia with one of his victims (sister).

Discussion

Majority of what the researchers found point to the two groups not having any difference in terms of either characteristics or crime scene behaviors. Nevertheless, they did find a number of interesting findings; some contradictory to other research while others supporting previous findings.

In examining offender characteristics, the researchers wanted to find out if there were differences between the two groups, particularly in the area of abuse and mental illness. Previous studies have shown that juveniles were more likely to have abuse in their backgrounds and this might have been a factor in their commission of parricide (Hillbrand et al., 1999; Heide, 1992, as cited in Ewing, 1997). The findings in this current study however did not confirm that. The results show that juveniles did not significantly experience more abuse in the hands of their parents compared to the adults. However, looking at the frequencies, it shows that more than 70 per cent of the juveniles reported abuse while only about 41 per cent of adults did. This might mean that there could be differences between the two, but due to the small sample size of this study, the researchers were not able to see the differences.

Mental illness too was not found to be significant. Again, this runs contrary to most of the literature stating that adults are more likely to have mental health issues that contributed to the offense (Millaud et al., 1996; Baxter et al., 2001; Hillbrand et
In looking at the frequencies, they do show a difference between the two groups. However, as with the case of the variable abuse, the sample size might have affected the results. Moreover, most of the case files that were reviewed either had nothing on the mental history or abuse history of these offenders or the information was too ambiguous that the researchers were not able to code them.

Nonetheless, both these findings might also indicate that previous research might have overplayed the effect of these two factors so as to give rationale for these disturbing offenses. Kelleher (1998) explained that, in hearing about crimes, society has a tendency to want to understand the motivations behind these. For some offenders who have extensive criminal backgrounds, society finds it easy to understand why they commit crimes. For others, however, especially those who do not seem to have any violent background, the reason behind the crimes are more difficult to decipher. It is these types of offenders that shake the beliefs of society regarding “good” and “bad” people. As Kelleher puts it, when society hears about “good” people committing crimes, there is an immediate need to find even the most subtle explanation for these acts so that, for the time being, the fear and panic that these crimes instill becomes neutralized. Thus, it can be said that in order to make sense of heinous inexplicable crimes, society looks to alcohol, mental illness, and abuse for answers.

Analyzing the crime scene behaviors of these cases was an important interest in this study as the researchers have not found any literature that dealt with this. While most of the crime scene variables were not found to be significantly different for the two groups, the researchers did find two significant differences. First, they found that juveniles were more likely to commit double parricide than adults. This gives support to what Marleau et al. (2006) found in their study that juveniles usually kill both parents during the offense. This perhaps is due to the age of the offenders in that juveniles have younger parents compared to the adult group, making it more possible for both parents to still be alive. This however could not be confirmed for all the cases in this study due to the lack of background history in the case files.

Another possible explanation for this, which was also presented by Marleau et al. (2006) was that, juveniles were more likely to be residing with their parents at the
time of the offense. In fact, all of the juvenile offenders were living with their parents compared to only about 65 per cent of the adult offenders. Killing of both parents therefore may be due to necessity than anything else. Since both parents are at home, the offender might feel that if he kills one, he has to kill the other so as to leave no witnesses behind. In one case for example, the primary target of the killing was the father. However, as the offender and his accomplice were struggling with the victim, the mother of the offender heard the commotion and went downstairs to see what was happening. The offender then, upon seeing his mother approaching, decides to kill her as well. He rushed to her, held her down, and called for his accomplice to kill his mother.

Second, the researchers found that adults were more likely to move the body after the offense (70.6%). This seemed logical since it can be assumed that adults would be stronger than their juvenile counterparts. In looking at the meaning of this behavior, however, literature indicates that the act of moving a body after the murder reflects planning on the part of the offender (Last & Fritzon, 2005). This is quite contrary to previous literature on parricide since some show that the homicidal acts were sudden and unplanned. While this may be the case for some parricide offenders, the researchers did have cases wherein there was clear evidence of planning for months or weeks prior to the murders.

Planning can also happen after the offense, wherein the offender tries to hide or manipulate the evidence by moving the body some place else. In Green (1981, as cited in Last & Fritzon, 2005), he states that about 97 per cent of parricide offenders just leave the crime scene and the victim as is. Last and Fritzon (2005) also found in their study that post-mortem activity as moving the body after death was the only variable that was exclusively not found in any of their intrafamilial homicide sample. Contrary to these two studies, Fritzon and Garbutt (2001) found that a common characteristic (ie. Happening more than 50% of the time) of homicides within families was disturbing the body after death (eg. covered, hidden, moved, etc.). Indeed, this was found to be true for the current study, as some of the offenders did move the body of their victims. In one of the cases, the offender not only moved the bodies of all the victims to the master’s bedroom, but also positioned them in a way that the feet of the
three females were touching each other and the two males were apart from them. To add to that, the father who was the first to be killed and was the primary target of the offense, was placed away from the other victims, hidden from sight.

The researchers also found that adolescents were more likely to use a surprise approach. While this finding did not reach the significance level (p < 0.05), it still warrants attention. Surprise approach usually involves a non-confrontational attack on the victims. These victims might have been sleeping when they were killed. Other offenders waited for the victim to come inside the house or get out of the bathroom. In a few cases for example, the offenders waited for their fathers to come out of the bathroom and then hit them in head. This type of initial approach to the victim may be explained by physical strength hypothesis (Heide, 1993b). She explained that since the parents of juveniles might be physically stronger than them, these offenders prefer to use an approach that requires the minimum amount of confrontation, but at the same time, will ensure the killing. Other journals have actually found that firearms were the most used weapons in this type of homicide (Shon & Targonski, 2003; Marleau et al., 2006; Boots & Heide, 2006), which in fact was also found in this study.

Other interesting results were found for the variable overkill. One, when overkill was compared to the type of weapon used by the offender, the researchers found that it had a significant relationship with the use of blunt weapon. Perhaps this was due to the act of parricide being sudden, where the offender, in the heat of the moment just grabs whatever he or she can and starts hitting the victim. This was actually found to be true by Last and Fritzon (2005). They stated that manual killing or use of blunt force is mostly associated with unplanned homicides. Daly and Wilson (1988, as cited in Last & Fritzon, 2005) also stated that most offenders who utilize these types of weapons had a close relationship with the victim or who knew the victim well.

The researchers also discovered that overkill had a significant relationship to location of wounds. In the study by Last and Fritzon (2005), they found that one of the distinguishing characteristics of intrafamilial homicides was that the victims sustained multiple wounds in one area. However, this was not found to be true in the current study. Instead, the researchers found that victims who had overkill were more likely to have distributed multiple wounding in different areas of their body. This type
of wounding pattern can be interpreted as resulting from the intense emotions surrounding the incident. When a person is emotional, he sometimes loose control over his actions. Thinking does not even seem to play a part during that moment because it is being blocked out by too much emotion (Zillman, 1979, as cited in Salfati & Canter, 1999). This view is supported by Salfati and Canter (1999) and Fritzon and Garbutt (2001) stating that inflicting wounds in numerous body parts are indicative of a loss of control. They found this to be especially true in homicides within families, where offenders become consumed by their anger and frustration that their crime scene reflects a frenzied act of violence.

Last, the results revealed that significantly more female victims had overkill compared to males. However, when the researchers isolated the analysis to the parents, the results showed that fathers had significantly more overkill than mothers. The researchers then believe that the finding for females was due to the inclusion of other victims in the analysis (e.g., siblings, grandparents, etc.).

The researchers posit that overkill of fathers were due to fathers being more hostile and abusive than mothers. The cases examined in this study did show that some of the fathers had a very abusive relationship with their child. They also noted that in some cases of double parricide, the attacks on the fathers were more aggressive compared to the mothers. Some offenders even indicated in their interviews that they killed their mothers quickly because they did not want her to suffer.

Finally, it is interesting to note that in analyzing the frequencies of the crime scene variables, the researchers found that variables that happened in more than 50 per cent of the time were consistent with crime scene variables being described as characteristic of intrafamilial homicides. The researchers found that in the 24 cases they examined, more than half had multiple distributed wounding (57%), a blitz type of attack (69%), there was overkill (69%), the weapon was from the scene (71%), the victim was found inside (74%), and the homicide happened inside (93%). Focusing on the last two variables, Fritzon and Garbutt's study (2001) on intrafamilial homicide did not find these to be the common crime scene characteristics for their parricide offender group. Even so, in looking at their high frequency findings, it did show that, as with the current study, for more than half of their sample the victims’ bodies were
found inside their home. This shows that this type of behavior is perhaps characteristic of homicides committed by family members.

In connection, Salfati (2003), in analyzing crime scene behaviors of homicides, found that in more than 50 per cent of homicide cases the victim’s body was found in the same place where he/she was killed. She also noted that these types of behaviors are indicative of a more impulsive and emotional act, perhaps due feelings of intense aggression at the time of the offense. In the current study, all the victims that were found inside the house were also killed in there. This may indicate that, at least for some of the cases, the killing of the parent was due to overwhelming emotions experienced by the offender prior and during the offense. This consistent with what Fritzon and Garbutt (2001) found that some parricide offenses could be classified as expressive in nature.

Weapon from scene was also found by Last and Fritzon (2005) to be prominent in intrafamilial homicides. In fact, their study revealed that this was one of the most significant variables that differentiated intrafamilial homicides from homicides committed by strangers and acquaintances. This behavior was interpreted by the researchers as indicative of unplanned attack, and was expecting it to fall into the category of expressive homicides. However, in reviewing Salfati’s (2000; 2003) studies on homicides, it was discovered that this behavior fell within the instrumental category. She explained that taking a weapon from the scene represent a more intentional or planned action against the victim. This supports what Fritzon and Garbutt (2001) found, that for some parricide offenses, the act of killing was planned rather than just an expression of anger or rage against the victim. Hence, these high frequency findings show that, while parricide cannot be exclusively classified as either expressive or instrumental, all the attacks are directed at the victim. As what the researchers noticed in the 24 cases, some of the parricide offenses were spontaneous – happening during or immediately after arguing with the victims. Other cases on the other hand were carefully planned – killing to end an abusive relationship or to gain a sense of freedom.
Conclusion

This study presents the result of the relationship between various crime scene behaviors in both juvenile and adult groups. In analyzing the data, the researchers found that, although frequencies did indicate that juveniles have experienced more abuse and adults were more likely to have mental illness, these were not found to be statistically significant. Thus, despite the small sample, the current study was able to show that juvenile and adult offenders might not really have differences in characteristics as postulated by previous literature.

In studying actual crime scene behaviors of parricide offenders, the researchers, just by looking at percentages, were able to note the most prominent behaviors of parricide offenders in their crime scenes. More importantly, they were able to compare their findings from previous works on crime scene behaviors of intrafamilial homicides. In doing so, it was discovered that high frequency behaviors of parricides were consistent with past literature. Majority of homicides that involved weapons taken from the scene and multiple wounding suggests that the offender might be someone close to the victim. Furthermore, when victims are murdered and found inside a house or a building, it may be a good indication that the victims knew the offender.

The last purpose of this study was to compare crime scene behaviors of juveniles and adults. Here, several interesting findings are worth to be noted. Firstly, the study provides a new direction for the aspect of overkill. The researchers were able to observe that overkill is usually committed with blunt instruments. It was also discovered that overkill and distributed the wounds on the body were significantly related. Second, the results also showed remarkable differences between juveniles and adults in terms of the nature of homicide.

One, it was revealed that adolescents were more likely to kill both parents than adults. One explanation may lie in the fact that their parents are younger than the parents of adult offenders hence both parents were still alive, but it is not entirely convincing without any support from historical background provided in individual cases. Another explanation is that, the juvenile offenders were still dependent on their parents. Thus, living with both parents may account in part for this finding. Another
difference between the groups was that adult offenders were more likely to move the body after committing parricide, suggesting that there may be a sense of planning.

Implications and Future Directions

This study has shown the importance of examining crime scene behaviors of homicide offenses. Despite the lack of statistical significance in majority of the variables, the researchers were able to discover interesting information about how parricide offenders acted during the commission of their crime. The results presented in this paper have substantial implications both in the area of investigation and research.

A. Investigative Implications

By analyzing actual behaviors in a crime, the researchers are able to provide valuable information to investigators. As mentioned, the goal of profiling is to help investigators narrow down the suspect pool to the most likely offender through analyzing the crime scene (Salfati & Kucharski, 2005). Thus it is important that objective and observable variables be used. In this study, the behaviors used are exactly those that investigators might encounter when working on a case, hence its results have investigative significance.

Knowing the differences between the crime scenes of juveniles and adults can help narrow down the search to a specific age group. As found in this study, in cases where both parents are dead, the most likely suspect would be someone aged 17 years old or younger. On the other hand, if there is evidence that the body was moved, either in position or location, it would be more likely that the offender is an adult.

Perhaps the most important of the findings are the high frequency behaviors noted for parricide offenders. These behaviors – multiple distributed wounds, blitz type of attack, overkill, weapon from the scene, victim found inside, and homicide happened inside – gives further support on the research on victim-offender relationship. A combination of these behaviors, when observed at a crime scene, may indicate that the offender is someone who is most likely close to or even related to the victim. This can help detectives and police officers prioritize their search and investigation.

B. Research Implications

It has been emphasized that research on offender profiling is still at its early stages.
The researchers realize that this study is just a small part of a larger study on homicide and profiling. The study was very specific in that it just looked into the area of parricide. Nonetheless, in doing so, the study contributes to the current research on profiling and homicide classifications, thereby increasing the reliability and validity of the past researches in this area.

There is a pressing demand on researchers in this field to improve on profiling techniques and make sure that these tools are valid and reliable. Previous studies on profiling have concentrated on the creation and verification of offender typologies (e.g., Keppel & Walter, 1999; Douglas, Burgess, Burgess, & Ressler, 1992). However, before any typology can be created and validated, a good understanding of the data is needed. As Canter (2000) and Salfati (2003) pointed out, before typologies can be created it is important that frequencies or base rates be first established. This was exactly what the researchers did – they provided a base rate for the crime scene behaviors of parricide offenders. This base rate can be used in further analyzing parricide or comparing parricide to other types of intrafamilial homicides and homicides in general. It is expected by the researchers that in doing small studies as this and taking things one step at a time, research on profiling can be enhanced ultimately adding to the improvement of profiling as an investigative tool.

C. Future Research

It is acknowledged by the researchers that the study has a small sample size. Aside from parricide being a rare crime, the only source of information for this research was the FBI case files. Hence, future studies in this area are encouraged by the researchers to utilize various data bases in gathering their data so as to arrive at an acceptable number of cases. The larger the sample size, the more reliable the results would. Moreover, the variables that would be used in those researches would increase thereby providing investigators more valuable information to work with.

Future research should also consider studying the correlation of parricide offender characteristics and their crime scene behaviors. This would especially be helpful to investigators in narrowing the search for specific types of persons. For example, based on the crime scene behavior it could be inferred that the offender is someone who is aggressive and highly reactive. By knowing this type of information, investigators
could look at those suspects with a criminal history and interview them first before branching out to other possible suspects. This – relating offender characteristics and crime scene behaviors – are exactly what offender profiling is about.

It would also be interesting to compare the crime scene behaviors of parricide with other types of intrafamilial homicides and homicides in general. In order to increase the reliability and validity of profiling research, there should be an ongoing analysis between the different types and subtypes of homicide. By analyzing similarities and differences between the crime scenes of, for example, parricide and infanticide, it can be discovered whether these types of homicide lie in a single continuum and can be analyzed together or not. The same is true for studying homicides in general. In comparing intrafamilial homicides with stranger homicides, it can be discovered whether there are behavior patterns more indicative of a certain type of homicide or not.

Lastly, it is suggested that future research be done on analyzing the nature of parricide crime scene behaviors – are they instrumental or expressive? As this study has shown, parricide cannot be categorized as either of the two. However, due to the small sample size, caution should be employed when interpreting the results. It would also be interesting to examine catathymic behaviors and parricide. It has been suggested in the literature that some parricides are catathymic in nature. Parricide is one of the more hard to understand types of homicide. Thus, if certain crime scene behaviors can be identified as being catathymic, it would be good to look at how these relate to parricide.
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