

Emerging Tropes: Race, Gender, and Monstrosity Master Frames in Podcasts' Depiction of
Serial Killers

by

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

Race and gender are socially constructed identities that have severe ramifications on individuals lived experience, hence their conceptualization as master statuses. For a long time, researchers have noted that these constructs drive media frames, particularly in media reports on delinquency and crime. These frames have been explicated to be advantageous and detrimental, the implication being dependent on the race or gender of concerned individuals. However, this age-long report of race and gender as determinants of media frames have been contested in recent studies. Nonetheless, these literatures lack an intersectional approach to the contemporary understanding of the deterministic role of race and gender in the framing of crime by the media. Therefore, I investigated this lacuna by focusing on the framing of an extreme form of violence- serial killing. Given the increased prominence of the podcast media in society today, the impact of the race and gender of serial killers was simultaneously examined on three known aspects of media frames- race master frames, gender master frames, and monstrosity master frames, drawing samples from true crime podcasts. Race and gender master frames were approached using the stereotypes associated with whiteness, blackness, femininity, and masculinity while monstrosity master frames were approached in terms of celebrity monster and evil monster depictions. Data were analyzed using thematic discourse analysis and results revealed a non-traditional use of race and gender master frames in the depiction of serial killers, what I called the colonization of hegemonic race-based narratives, and monstrosity master frames proved to be dependent on both race and gender. This finding contradicts orthodox sociological account of the absolute deterministic impact of race and gender, as master statuses, on ideology and media frames.

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Dedication

To you, my Ori.

Acknowledgement

As a settler who lives and works on Indigenous lands, I acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən people, on whose traditional territories the University of Victoria stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationship with the land continue to this day. Colonization is ongoing and my personal and professional commitment is dedicated to resistances to it.

Motivation comes in various ways, some of which can be unperceptive but, nonetheless, impactful. Other kinds, however, are very salient. I will eternally be grateful to my mom and sister, Lara and Lola, for their endless support. You both are images of unconditional love, unwavering kindness, and phenomenal intellect; living by the examples you set helps me persevere through life's challenges and undertake herculean tasks with calm and hope. The solace you provided me in my moments of fear and self-doubt is instrumental to my success thus far.

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Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates the intersecting role of race and gender in the contemporary framing of serial killers. This role is observed in three areas of framing: race master frames, gender master frames, and monstrosity master frames. To begin, a detailed account of master statuses and master frames is crucial due to their central role in this thesis. Social status is the value that is attributed to an individual by virtue of their position or identity in society. While an individual may possess multiple social statuses based on multiple identities, some interpellations have priority over others on the social hierarchy, hence the emergence of master statuses. The term *master status* was coined by American Sociologist Everett Hughes in 1945 to describe an identity that takes precedence over other identities that an individual might have on their lived experiences (357)- including how they are perceived, judged, and treated by others as well as the opportunities they get. A master status can be ascribed, such as race and, arguably, gender, or achieved, such as occupation.

The concept of master frames was coined by Snow and Benford (1992) in their exploration of social movements. They perceived a frame as the schemata or approach used by social movement groups to point out social ills, identify culprits, proffer solutions and strategies for implementing suggested solutions, and, lastly, articulate social problems. This, they termed, the punctuational, attributional, and articulation function of frames. While multiple social movement may employ diverse frames in approaching social problems, Snow and Benford (1992) used the term *master frame* to describe a generic frame that may ‘color and constrain’ the frames of other social movements (138). While this account of frames and master frames differs from my use of the concepts in this study, I am providing it as a recognition of the origin of the term.

My use of the term master frame is novel and based on the account of framing provided by Entman (1993), a professor of media and international relations, who described frames as aspects of reality that are purposely selected and made salient through communicative texts (52). This decision was made due to the alignment of the scope of my thesis to media studies, based on my study population- true crime podcasts, and the relevance of Entman's account of frames to the concepts of stereotypes, discourse and ideologies that are central to this thesis. I will soon expatiate on this association.

Again, frames are aspects of reality that are selected and made salient via communicative texts i.e. discourse. By extension, I infer that a master frame is an aspect of reality whose selection and salience in communicative texts has experienced dominance and institutionalization i.e. a staple frame in media discourse. To expatiate, I will provide a hypothetical illustration below:

A black man robbed a grocery store and the incident was reported by the local newspaper. In the report, the newspaper focused on highlighting the race of the perpetrator, specifically linking the act (robbery) as inherent among the perpetrators race group. No attempt is made to recognize structural problems such as unemployment and systemic racism that might have induced the act.

From this illustration, we can denote that the framing of the robbery incident by the local newspaper is race-based, the observed frame being the criminality of black people. At this point, the frame is just what it is, a frame, and is less capable of influencing the perception of a large proportion of individuals towards the identified race group.

However, if the black criminality frame becomes adopted by multiple media agencies, featuring in majority of their discourse of black individuals, over time, what is happening is the institutionalization of the frame and its transition from a frame to a master frame- an overarching,

widely accepted frame with ramifications for associated individuals. And in this capacity, the black criminality master frame becomes capable of influencing the perception of a larger number of individuals in a way that demerits the race group.

One consequence or effect of a master frame is the formation of stereotypes about individuals, groups, or events that are framed in particular ways- stereotypes being overgeneralized ideas about individuals that may or may not be true. In other words, positive master frames are bound to elicit positive stereotypes and negative master frames are likely to produce negative stereotypes.

Entman (1993) opined that frames are spatial temporal i.e. they are peculiar to specific times or eras in history. Stanbridge (2002) termed this cultural potency. By extension, this is true of master frames and from this spatial temporality, we can assert that master frames evolve and are replaced by new ones, over time. Stereotypes, however, reinforce themselves (Wigboldus, Dijksterhuis, and van Knippenberg 2003), hence are pervasive and resistant to change. This is because rather than being rooted in institutional discourse and linked to time and place as frames are, stereotypes are grounded in individual discourse and, thus, transmitted across generations. Zhang et al. (2022) noted that the persistence of stereotypes is due to the human tendency to categorize social subjects and objects in order to make sense of the complex world that we live in.

I noted earlier that frames emerge from media representation of issues via their choice of elements to select and make salient while master frames arise from the institutionalization of these frames. This makes rational, the curiosity about factors influencing selection and salience of particular aspects of reality and not others, the crossroad where ideology comes into play.

Although originally associated with Karl Marx, the term *ideology* has experienced modifications in sociology overtime. Marx conceived ideology as a form of consciousness peculiar to individuals

or groups, dictating their response to domination or subordination. Specifically, he noted that the ideology of the lower class is precisely responsible for their inability to recognize their exploitation by capital. While Purvis and Hunt (1993) saw this as the critical conception of ideology, they identified a sociological dimension to this concept which are the values that form the lived experiences of individuals, or proletariats, values which form the basis of their false consciousness. Thus, ideologies comprise forms of consciousness (and their effects) and the values that cause the formation of forms of consciousness.

From this value approach to ideology, we can conceive of ideology as a system of ideas that shape the lived experience of individuals, including their actions, inactions, and perceptions of others. These ideas, Purvis and Hunt (1993:496) asserted, are the effect of discourse i.e. ideologies are developed via discourse. In other words, discourse is the process through which ideology is produced. Discourse encompasses the process of communication between social subjects, featuring texts (written, spoken, or otherwise illustrated), factors impacting the production and interpretation of such texts and the impact of such productions and interpretations. Simply put, discourse is everyday interaction, at personal or institutional level. When we post a funny meme on social media, we are doing discourse; when we give instructions to our work team, we are participating in discourse. More on discourse will be seen in Chapter 3.

So far, the following points have been established:

- Frames are aspects of reality that are selected and made salient
- Selection and salience are presented through discourse
- Ideologies are system of ideas that shape the perception of individuals

If ideologies shape our perceptions, they undoubtedly shape our views about the society and those around us, making us decide what is worthy of discussing and what is not. Thus, to respond to the selection-salience determination dilemma raised above, ideologies drive the selection and salience of certain aspects of reality and not others, hence ideology is a driver of frames and, by extension, master frames. For instance, a group that perceives women as homemakers would employ a deviant frame in their discourse of women who work outside the home, thus perpetuating the female subordination ideology. In another instance, a group that perceives gender equality as necessary will employ a conformist frame in their discourse of women who break traditional gender norms by working outside the home, thus perpetuating a gender equality ideology. Two ideologies are visible here- female subordination and gender equality, with the discourse of one group, and its associated frame, reinforcing their ideological stance and contesting the ideologies of the other. The following are key take aways of the relationship between ideology, framing, and discourse:

1. A frame is an effect of ideology
2. A frame is presented and/or transmitted through discourse
3. Discourse (discursive frames) reinforces and/or contests specific ideologies

Therefore, building on Entman's conception of frames, I redefine frames as aspects of reality whose selection and salience are driven by ideologies, produced through discourse, and serve to reinforce or contest specific ideologies. Frames, and master frames, are, as such, effects and producers of ideologies, one of such ideologies being stereotypes.

The spatial temporal nature of master frames implies that as the ideologies of the era change, so will the master frame. This means that new ideologies will start to influence the production of new frames. However, stereotypes established through past frames i.e. ideological effects, are more

resistant to change and these stereotypical ideologies impact the identities they are associated with, identities such as femininity, whiteness, blackness, and masculinity. In other words, the ability of a master status to significantly impact people's experience in society lies in the stereotypes (positive or negative) associated with the identities they possess or have been ascribed. Above all, as much as ideologies are crucial to master frames, they are equally pivotal to master statuses.

1.1 Background to the Study

Race and gender are master statuses that influence media reports of crime, including murder, in ways that reflect certain master frames. While previous studies have established that the framing of murderers reflects race and gender master frames that work to favor some and disadvantage others, recent studies have observed a decreased prominence of these frames, thereby contesting the role of race and gender as master statuses in the contemporary media discourse of crime.

However, these conclusions were reached following the exploration of non-sequential murder reports in print media and without an intersectional lens. Since sequential murder is a more extreme form of violence and media are not exclusive to the print genre, using an intersectional lens, I explored the impact of race and gender on the framing of serial killers in American podcasts. The impact of race and gender, as master statuses, was observed on framing in 3 areas – race master frames, gender master frames, and monstrosity master frames – to determine if these representations fit into or digress from current knowledge about media framing of murder.

Race and gender were explored in terms of the stereotypes associated with specific race and gender groups and monstrosity master frames were explored in terms of celebrity monster and evil monster depictions. Results revealed a non-traditional use of race and gender master frames in the depiction of serial killers, what I called the colonization of hegemonic race-based narratives, and monstrosity master frames proved to be dependent on both race and gender. My use of colonization in this context is based on Fairclough's account of orders of discourse colonization, where the features traditionally associated with a discourse genre are adopted by another genre.

* * *

Media fascination with serial killings can be traced to the 19th century, stemming from the atrocities of Jack the Ripper in London in 1888. Initially labeled as the Whitechapel murderer, the media framed the Ripper's acts as extraordinary- mostly based on his 'skillful' evasion of authorities. Vronsky (2004: 62) believed this media fascination to have set the pace for the subsequent framing of serial killers as possessing 'heroic capacities' in crime literature. However, this celebritization was not the case in antiquity.

Noteworthy is that the term 'serial killer' is a master status that attracts the monstrosity master frame whose origin dates to pre-modern times. Although serial killing is conceptually a modern terminology, historians and criminologists have grouped many pre-modern killings as serial, following the logic of sequentialism and motive. In pre-modern times, when the perpetrator of a 'serial murder' is unknown, the crime is attributed to folkloric animals such as the werewolf (Schlesinger 2000). However, when the perpetrator is known, as in the case of Gilles de Rais and other early European serial killers, these individuals are labelled as 'monsters in human flesh', vampires, or what Hickey ([1991] 2010:40) called 'creatures of the night'. This is due to the perceived dissonance between humanity and the gruesome act of premeditated murder, often involving the dismemberment of a fellow human, hence the depiction of perpetrators with the evil monster frame. While this notion of evil monstrosity still applies to the modern-day framing of serial killers, past monstrosity frames are tied to demonology of the supernatural while modern-

day perceptions of a monster serial killer is a depraved human being (42)- a human who acts viciously, like a monster, as opposed to a human possessed by a monster¹.

Nevertheless, although modern media still frame serial killers as evil monsters, a new frame has emerged- celebrity monsters. Wiest (2016) found that in the United States, the news media representation of serial killers entails aesthetic framings, featuring reference to their intelligence, tactfulness, and appealing physical features among others, with minimal evil monster master frames- the stark opposite of the UK print media representation.

Hier (2019a) asserted that irrespective of the gruesomeness of their acts, not all serial killers benefit from the celebrity frame and argument about why this so persists. While Wiest's findings reveal that culture determines the monstrosity frame (celebrity or evil monster) projected by the media, the influence of master statuses in this regard was not considered. Exploring this could contribute to our knowledge of why some serial killers presumed for primetime remain inconspicuous.

Master statuses are powerful interpellations i.e. deterministic identity constructs that hold ramifications for individuals. As argued by critical theorists, master statuses like race serve to reinforce hegemony and by extension, social stratification. Hegemony, according to Gramsci (1995), is the subordination of one group by another, achieved via ideological mechanisms. Every master status is associated with peculiar stereotypes (ideologies) which comes into play in the

¹ Although some serial killers, like David Berkowitz (Son of Sam), claim that they murder people based on transcendental instructions/demonic possession, the association of serial killing to demonic possession no longer dominates serial killer framing like it did in the past.

framing of individuals, although they may overlap in some ways. Hegemony is, thus, reinforced via these stereotypes.

As noted earlier, frames are aspects of reality whose selection and salience in the media is driven by ideologies, relayed through discourse, and reinforces or contests existing ideologies. When these frames become rampant in discursive practices, institutionalization occurs, turning them into master frames. To elaborate, the master frames associated with race, as a master status, can be sub-divided into white master frames and black master frames. Deducing from previous studies, the master frames associated with the latter relay ideologies of dangerousness, inferiority, and inherent criminality among others while that of the former relay virtuousness, innocence, and conformism among others (Adams 2017; Lane 2017; Galadari 2018; Lane et al. 2020). Similarly, master frames associated with gender, as a master status, can be sub-divided into femininity master frames and masculinity master frames, each bearing implications for identifiers- such as the perception of females as warm and affectionate and men as violent/aggressive². Noteworthy is that these master frames are crucial to the hegemonic function of master statuses. For instance, relaying one ethnic group or religion positively and another negatively causes marginalization and, by extension, superiority-inferiority complexes.

Criminologists and sociologists have found master frames to impact media narratives of crime. For instance, when murder is committed by a black individual, the media takes on the

² Notice how the violent/aggressive stereotype of masculinity overlaps with the dangerous stereotype of blackness.

criminalblackman³ master frame, demonizing the entire black race (Lane 2017; Lane et al. 2020), although recent studies have contested the persistence of these hegemonic race-crime narratives in present-day (Carlson 2016). With reference to gender, women who commit murder are framed as mentally imbalanced, aberrations of womanhood, or victims of evolutionary abruptions and not ‘real’ women (Pozzan 2014; Khan 2020). These mad/bad frames are employed to foster reconciliation with familiar notions of femininity as warm and compassionate, not violent or aggressive, hence maintaining hegemonic gender roles and gender division that have been argued to sustain gender inequality.

Going back to Wiest (2016) and their link of culture to monstrosity framing, given distinctions in the stereotypes appropriated to the master statuses of race and gender and their strength in impacting narratives about individuals (Harrison and Esqueda 2001: 88; Brown Givens and Monahan 2005; Parham-Payne 2014), it is rational to assume that their influence will extend to the monstrosity framing of serial killers. For instance, we can propose that male serial killers are more likely to be framed as evil monsters and females less so. However, another thing to consider is the extent of this relationship – if it holds – when gender meets race. For instance, will white male serial killers experience minimal evil monster depictions compared to black male serial killers, given differing stereotypes associated with their respective race and its ability to shape representation?

Thus, my research explored on one hand, the intersecting impact of race and gender on the monstrosity framing of American serial killers. Results from data analysis affirmed, among other

³ The criminalblackman is a concept coined by Russell-Brown (1998) to describe the stereotype that portrays men of color as predisposed to criminality.

things, my proposition of the intersecting impact of race and gender on monstrosity framing. The contribution of this discovery to race and gender hegemony will be explored in chapter 5.

In terms of focus, media discourse about serial killers is dominated by white and/or male perpetrators (Walsh 2005; Hale and Bolin 2012; Holmes, Hickey, and Holmes 2012; Pozzan 2014), indicating the under-acknowledgement of people from other races and genders. However, besides representation differences in terms of infamy, for the serial killers who appear in the media, the impact of their master status – or identities – on their depiction is sparsely explored.

Thus, on the other hand, my study employed an offender-specific⁴ stance to explore the extent of race and gender stereotypes in the media's depiction of serial murderers, specifically on how the master frames associated with their master statuses manifest in their depiction in the media.

To summarize, race and gender impact media frames and available literature focus either on: i) exploring race or gender as individual determinants of media frames in non-sequential murder reports in traditional news media or ii) exploring gender as an individual determinant of media frames in sequential murder reports in the print media. We are unaware of the intersecting impact that race and gender might have on the representation of serial killers along the lines of race, gender, and monstrosity master frames, particularly in newer media. By exploring this angle in American podcasts, using a thematic discourse analysis approach, this void was filled, providing

⁴I use the term offender-specific to imply an analysis of how the media frames serial killers based on their master status (race and gender) in contrast to a victim-specific analysis where focus would be on how the media frame serial killers based on the – race or gender – identity of who they murder.

insight into the extent of hegemonic master frames in this age and time and how race and gender intersect to impact the manifestation of these frames.

1.2 Research questions

1. How do race master frames manifest in the depiction of male and female serial killers of different races?
2. How do gender master frames manifest in the depiction of white and black serial killers on different genders?
3. How are monstrosity master frames impacted by race and gender?

1.3 Scope and Research Objectives

As touched on earlier, the purpose of this study is to explore America's media representation of serial killers from two seemingly neglected perspectives: framing in newer media like podcasts and differences in representation at the intersection of race and gender. Podcasts were selected as a media genre to explore representations because of their relatively fresh status in the true crime genre, the legitimacy they have gained among other media genres (Sherrill 2022: 1486), and the observed decline in their portrayal of marginalized groups as criminals and never victims, a trait which dominated the true crime genre before the growth of true crime podcasts (1474). As statistics reveal that more Americans are turning to podcasts as a convenient information source (Götting 2024), it is pertinent to explore the nature of its discourse in terms of hegemony sustenance or contestation.

Furthermore, podcasts have been reported to be capable of connecting with audiences at a deeper level (Boling and Hull 2018: 106; Pâquet 2018) than traditional news media like newspapers, indicating a greater impact on audiences' behavior. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the dynamics of the frames present in their narratives.

Analysis of race centered on Whites and Blacks, flowing from the history of media bias in the representation of marginalized races in comparison to hegemonic ones. Native Americans were excluded as it would expand the scope of this study beyond what time constraint will allow due exploration of. In examining gender, females and males were the center of analysis. Other gender identities were excluded because given the media's identification of most serial killers using binary gender categories, I envisaged that sufficient data to reasonably explore non-binary groups in relation to the identified races will not be obtained. The impact of race and gender was observed in terms of the stereotypes associated with both identities. As noted earlier, master frames are

producers (and effects) of ideologies, with stereotypes being one of the ideological products of master frames. As such, race master frames were explored in terms of stereotypes of blackness and whiteness while gender master frames were explored in terms of stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. The master frames of monstrosity that guided this analysis are the celebrity/fantastic monster and the traditional/evil monster frames, flowing from existing literature on the monstrosity framing of serial killers (Vronsky 2004; Wiest 2016). The guiding objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To uncover the role played by gender stereotypes in the depiction of female serial killers and discover if its impact on representation differs based on the perpetrators' race.
2. To uncover the role played by gender stereotypes in the depiction of male serial killers and discover if its impact on representation varies across racial groupings.
3. To investigate the presence or absence of race-crime master frames in podcasts' depictions of serial killers and if such logic is gender-specific.
 - a. Uncover the potential role of racial stereotypes in the depiction of white female and black female serial killers.
 - b. Uncover the potential role of racial stereotypes in the depiction of white male and black male serial killers.
4. To discover the role of race and gender in the monstrosity framing of serial killers.

Fairclough (1992) provided a framework for uncovering how ideologies are transmitted, perpetuated, and transcended through discourse via text analysis, interpretation of discursive

practices, and explanation of social practices, which he referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As my study is based on uncovering emerging themes relating to master frames in the representation of serial killers, thematic analysis was employed to identify themes. However, as established in the introduction, since master frames are effects of ideologies, conveyed through discourse, and consequently reinforce or contest existing ideologies, a CDA perspective was employed to support my thematic analysis. Particularly, some elements of Fairclough's CDA were crucial in identifying my themes. For instance, overwording, an element under the vocabulary dimension of Fairclough's text analysis component of CDA was pivotal in deciphering evil monster frames in the podcasts explored. Other CDA elements that proved helpful in my thematic analysis include modality, sentence structure, presuppositions, and metadiscourse among others. The application of these elements is mentioned during specific applications in my presentation of findings (Chapter 4). Furthermore, my explanation of identified themes is based on their implication on social identity and system of beliefs or ideologies. As this is in line with Fairclough's guidelines to engaging in a social analysis of discourse and given that the themes were observed from a discourse genre (podcasts), I labeled my data analysis approach a thematic discourse analysis. More details are provided in chapter 3.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Despite the unending attention given to serial killing in popular criminology, the phenomenon is sparsely discussed in academic criminology. The explicit and sometimes tacit ideology behind the limited available discussion on media representation of serial killers entails issues of sensationalism, celebritization, and selective acknowledgment/representation. These perspectives have allowed for a better understanding of the dynamics of serial killing. For instance, Wiest's (2016) work exposed disparities in the monster image frames used for serial killers in the US and the UK media, with the latter embracing a more traditional conceptualization of monsters in its framing and the former utilizing celebrity monster frames. Furthermore, studies exposing the media's under-acknowledgement of black serial killers (Jenkins 1993, 1998; Walsh 2005; Branson 2013) created awareness that serial killing is not race-specific, a misconception that severally threw the FBI off the radar of perpetrators, due to their construction of void race-based profiles during investigations. However, we remain modestly informed on the extent of race and gender as mutually impacting the media's representation of these murderers, particularly in contemporary times where issues of sexism and racism are contested to be dwindling.

True crime podcasts, a new and rapidly growing addition to the true crime media genre, have been noted to be less prejudiced in their delivery of crime narratives, unlike previous true crime narratives (Sherrill 2022: 1474). However, this assumption is yet to be tested on the genres' narratives on serial killers- who have been tagged by Harmening (2014) as humanity's worst offenders. My research employed an intersectional framework to uncover the role of race and gender in podcasts' representation of serial killers to discover dynamics in the frames utilized. Media frames are important because the information we consume from the media significantly shapes our perception of issues and people (Entman 1993). These perceptions often lead us to form

new or hold existing stereotypes about them, which we then spread in our interactions with others, consciously or unconsciously.

Stereotypes are a major cause of moral panics and have roots in master frames. While recent research reveals a shift in the narrative style employed by the print media in their framing of homicide cases, from the dominant use of race-crime master frames that promote prejudice to more nuanced frames that incorporate the role of larger structural issues in inducing criminality (Carlson 2016), the extremity of serial killing on the violence spectrum makes it crucial to explore if this emerging trope applies or not. This is not to advocate for the media's employment of humane ways in the representation of serial killers but as a contribution to the racism and sexism debate in contemporary media frames and as an insight into how crime severity impacts race-crime master frames.

Results from my analysis revealed the use of race master frames in podcast's representation of serial killers. However, these frames were not used in ways that sustain hegemonic race ideologies, rather a reversal of hegemonic race stereotypes was observed. When gender intersects with race, although male serial killers were depicted with more black master frames than female serial killers, white male serial killers experienced greater black stereotype depictions while the discourse of black male serial killers was dominated with stereotypes associated with whiteness. I called this the colonization of hegemonic race master frames in media narratives. This contests current knowledge of the impact of race, as a master status, on media depiction of crime. Furthermore, as this pattern of race frame colonization was observed in the representation of an extremely violent crime, two insights can be drawn. The first is that the severity of crime takes precedence over hegemonic race ideologies. Inferring from this insight, we can assert, secondly, that society is capable of choosing morals over hegemony, thus transcending or reconstituting current hegemonic

narratives. This relates to Fairclough's account of the (re)constitution of the social through practice- discursive practice, validating the power of discourse in transforming society.

The colonization of gender master frames was also observed in the depiction of female serial killers, featuring a greater use of masculinity stereotypes in their depiction. And when race intersects with gender, both male and female white serial killers had greater masculinity stereotype depiction than black serial killers of both genders. The implication of this on the race colonization argument is discussed in chapter 5.

Results also revealed that while the celebrity depiction of serial killers is race dependent, monstrosity depiction is tied to gender. These new insights into the extent of race, gender and monstrosity master frames in media depiction of serial killers would have been unobtainable without employing an intersectional lens.

1.5 Operational Definition of Terms

1.5.1 Celebritization

The celebritization of serial killers imply their depiction with appealing qualities such as intelligence and beauty, sensationalizing them and the acts they have committed. It entails the questionable amount of attention they receive from the public, particularly the media, and can manifest via the production of copious literary materials- fictional or non-fictional, that place them and their gruesome acts in the limelight, with their victims dwelling in the shadows.

1.5.2 Media

In the communication paradigm, media refer to outlets or channels used in disseminating information to members of the public. While there are many kinds of media, the word is used in this study to refer to the news media, specifically podcasts, unless otherwise stated. The news media include print media – such as newspapers, journals, and magazines –, broadcast media – such as radio and television news – and the internet- including websites and podcasts.

1.5.3 Podcast

A podcast is a media genre that allows information to be disseminated over the internet through digital files. Although podcasts were originally developed as audio media, substantial video podcasts have been seen in recent times. Nonetheless, references to podcasts in this study imply their audio forms. Pertinent is to state that podcasts comprise various niches such as health, global issues, and comedy. However, this research concentrates on the true crime niche within the podcast media genre.

1.5.4 Serial killer

A serial killer, or serial murderer, is defined in this research as an individual who murders two or more individuals in separate events, with a cooling-off period between each murder. The relationship between the murderer and victim as well as the motives involved are not necessary in this conceptualization, what matters is victim count, sequentialism, and a cooling-off period.

1.5.5 Intersection/intersectionality

Crenshaw (1989) coined the term *intersectionality* to explain that our lived experience is peculiar to the multiple identities that we possess and in investigating or to understand these experiences, one must consider these multiple identities. I used the term *intersectionality* in my study to refer to how race and gender, as master statuses, overlap to impact the framing of serial killers in American podcasts. This framing is explored in terms of three master frames- of race, gender, and monstrosity.

1.5.6 Under-acknowledgement

In this research, under-acknowledgement, as it relates to serial killers' representation, implies the media's suppression of information suggesting that serial killing is not identity-specific, majorly via selective publicity. Simply put, this entails putting more resources into covering cases involving one gender or race group. Under-acknowledgement in media narratives creates a frame that can potentially cause mass misconception on who serial killers are or are likely to be- an occurrence that, among other things, increases the public's vulnerability to being victims of serial killing.

1.6 Thesis Organization

In the following chapter, I discussed the prevailing ambiguity in the definition of serial killing, highlight the definition that I have selected to guide this research and justify the basis for my selection. Afterwards, I provided an overview of the history of serial killing, from antiquity to contemporary times. Readers might be intrigued to find that serial killing dates to the evolution of modern humans (Homo Sapiens) and was directly responsible for the extinction of the specie before us- The Neanderthals. This history was broken into 2 sections- serial killing from the stone age to the 18th century and from the 19th century onwards, with attention paid to continental and class distinctions in the perpetration of this crime. From this broad historical evaluation stemmed a narrower focus on serial murder in the United States, particularly the phases involved- based on fluctuating incidences. Details was provided on how the nation came to be popular for ‘housing’ the highest number of serial killers and a brief background was given on the factors leading its media to drop the dominant universal master frame of depraved monstrosity in favor of the celebrity monster master frame in depicting serial murderers.

A new section reviewed literature on the representation of serial killers in terms of the under-acknowledgement/over-acknowledgement debate and monstrosity imagery differences between two nations that share social and economic similarities- the United States and the United Kingdom. The dynamics of representation within these two categories was discussed in relation to race and gender stereotypes.

Following this, podcast was discussed as a rapidly growing contemporary media genre, specifically the role of its true crime niche in accelerating the medium’s popularity. The impact that this niche has had on audiences’ perceptions, judicial decisions, and master frames utilization in the media industry was discussed, including how these impacts place them in a pertinent light

among other media genres in contemporary times and why it is necessary to explore the framing techniques inherent in their discourse of crime, especially extreme ones like serial killing. Lastly, the frame analysis and intersectional approach were reviewed as frameworks guiding this research, where I shed light on how frames are developed in the media, their observed impact on humans' schemata and how constructed identities could impact the media's development of frames and master frames.

Chapter 3 explicated the qualitative methodology employed by this study and the justification for it. 8 samples were selected using a combination of stratified and simple random sampling techniques and extracted data were analyzed using thematic discourse analysis.

Chapter 4 featured the presentation of findings, beginning with the demographic information of samples and followed by the 6 identified themes from my data analysis. These themes were discussed hierarchically in terms of frequency i.e. from the most observed to the least observed theme. Themes were discussed independently to provide detailed and clearer insight into the categories under each theme.

In chapter 5, I engaged in an interpretation of the implication of emergent themes on current accounts of media framing of crime in terms of race and gender. The extent of race and gender, as master statuses, was also explained in relation to the monstrosity framing of serial killers and inferences were drawn to its ramifications on social identities and our ideologies about race, gender, and the framing of crime.

Chapter 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptualizing Serial Killing

Criminologists have struggled to define serial killing and four major factors at play in this definition dilemma include motive, number of victims, method of killing- including cooling-off period, and offender-victim relationship (Dietz 1996; Hickey [1991] 2010). As most of these definitions are inspired by insight into known serial murderers and/or events, they are bound to be restrictive in scope, given that many serial killings are either undiscovered or discovered but the killers unapprehended (Ferguson et al. 2003).

Although the serial killer terminology was found to emerge in literature before Ressler's claim of coinage⁵, in his book with Shachtman: "Whoever fights monsters" (1992: 32), FBI agent Robert Ressler attributed the development of the term serial killer to himself in the 1970s, asserting that he did so to solve the prevailing unhelpful terms used to refer to a range of sequential killings- such as stranger killings, lust murder, chain murder and recreation/thrill killing (Ressler and Shachtman 1992; Vronsky 2004: 327; Newton 2006: 237). Inspired by the multiplicity of the killings and the state of mind of the killer- unsatisfied and anticipating his next kill, which he found similar to the tension effect of the serial adventure shows that dominated the TV media in his time, he defined serial killing as premeditated and intended murder that is perpetrated repetitively by

⁵ See Michael Newton's Encyclopedia of Serial Killers (2006: 237) and Peter Connelly's "The Representation of Serial Killers" (2010: 3).

someone who fantasizes about the experience. However, his definition delves towards serial killings motivated by sexual domination/fantasies, which is restrictive.

Egger (1984) defines serial killing as the murder of two or more strangers – who share commonalities – by a person or some persons, with all murders bearing no connection and intended to satisfy fantasies like sexual needs as opposed to material needs such as life insurance benefits.

Ressler and Egger's definitions exclude many identified female serial killers in two ways: offender-victim relationship and motive- as female serial killers usually murder close relatives like partners or their children, sometimes for economic gains.

Initially, the FBI defined serial killing as four murder events occurring at different locations, with temporal separation: a cooling-off period between each murder (Jenkins 2023). In 1998, the victim count was lowered to a minimum of three (FBI 2008: 8). However, this definition received criticisms for its restrictive victim count – which excludes those who kill twice and have the intention to kill more but get apprehended before they are chanced –, the need for multiple crime scenes – which excludes nurses, for instances, who murder at a single location, typically hospital, with temporal separation between each murder –, and lack of specificity on what types of murder counts as serial: for instance, an individual can kill another in self-defense, the state can order the execution of deserving folks- these are all murders, nevertheless they are not unlawful, as the ultimate goal is not personal gratification, rather they are necessary measures to either protect one's life or the public's safety. Following a symposium held by the FBI to deliberate on the issue, all present groups agreed that serial murder is the unlawful killing of two or more persons by the same offender(s), at different time periods and in separate events (FBI 2008: 9). Sequentialism and spatial temporalism thus, are dominant elements in determining if a murder counts as serial, irrespective of motive.

This study relies on the latest version of the FBI's conceptualization of serial murder in selecting samples for this research, given its less restrictive nature. This allowed for a wider sample coverage, especially of known female serial killers, due to their average low victim count and often non-sexual motive which excludes them from most research explorations on serial killing.

2.2 History of Serial Killing

2.2.1 The Stone Age to Pre-19th Century

While the terminology is a product of contemporary deliberations, the act of serial killing predates the term by centuries, dating far back to the period before continental demarcations- the stone age (Vronsky 2018). Vronsky advanced that modern humans (Homo Sapiens) committed the very first act of serial murder in an attempt to wipe out the specie before us – the Neanderthals –and assume dominance over Earth (40). After the emergence of our specie in what is now Africa centuries ago, we – Homo Sapiens – invaded Europe and Asia, home to the Neanderthals, between sixty thousand to one hundred thousand years ago and waged war on them. Our sequential killings of the Neanderthals lasted until forty thousand years ago, with the successful extinction of the specie before us and our emergence as the dominant specie- a specie of serial killers (42). Vronsky argued that all humans, given our history of homicidal rage, are capable of serial killing as we possess the homicidal rage of our predecessors. However, this trait is manifest only among those who choose to act upon it due to inadequate socialization (50). In other words, serial killers are born, not made. It is those of us who are non-serial killers that are made, as we are socialized out of this natural impulse to kill.

Following these intergenerational serial murders and the widespread of civilization, featuring socialization and the suppression of our barbaric trait, the first documented case of serial killing took place in the Roman Empire in 31 BC (Newton 2006: 116), featuring the conviction of 170 women of the murder of numerous males via poisoning. Still in Rome, its emperor between 37-41 AD – Gaius Caesar, popularly called Caligula – despotically initiated the murder of several citizens, usually via organizing death circuses: arenas (colosseums) where men were made to fight one another to the death for the entertainment of onlookers (Vronsky 2004: 43; Miller 2014: 2).

However, classifying Caligula's act – and similar ones by other tyrannical heads of state – as serial murder has been contested. For example, Connelly (2010) argued that these rulers do not actively engage in the murders, they only create circumstances that warrant multiple killings to occur.

In the 11th century, Iran – then Persia – was plagued with serial assassins belonging to a cult group named “Hashashin” and shortly after the group's decline, a cult with similar motives was born in India (Newton 2006: 117). Nobles like Gilles de Rais of France and Elizabeth Bathory of Hungary were recorded to have killed several between the early 15th and mid-17th centuries respectively (117).

Gilles de Rais was a wealthy aristocrat who would sexually violate and eventually murder young boys who were entrusted to his care by their parents. His tactic was to seek out the boys, luring them with promises of serving as court boys in his castle, and given high levels of poverty, many took delight in his offer; but once in, the boys will never be seen again (Vronsky 2004: 46). Elizabeth Bathory on the other hand was the female version of Rais, torturing young women in her household to death at the slightest infractions, sometimes sexually. She also lured them with Rais' tactic.

2.2.2 19th Century Onward

Although serial killing today is perceived as an American phenomenon (Wiest 2016), the bulk of documented historical cases of what we now call serial murder occurred in Europe, from the ancient Roman Empire to France, Hungary, Germany, and eventually London- the latter occurrence sparking global recognition and media attention to the phenomenon. According to Vronsky (2004: 57), serial killings increased in frequency and diversity – in terms of the social class of perpetrators – in the 19th century, stemming from the increased availability of leisure time for the masses. Leisure, according to him, incites serial killing as a potential deviant will require

ample time to premeditate and fantasize about killing others (43)- time that is unavailable to middle/low-income individuals as they are in a constant struggle to survive. But with socioeconomic improvement and a considerable shrink in the gap between the upper and lower classes in 19th century England, more peasants, not just nobles, started indulging in serial killing, most of which were sexually motivated (57).

Vronsky (2004) provides an in-depth trail of serial killing in 19th century Europe, from the murder of 6 prostitutes by Joseph Philippe in France in the 1860s to the butchering of prostitutes by the devolving White Chapel Murderer, infamously called ‘Jack the Ripper’ in the 1880s. However, Newton (2006) went as far back as 1815 to identify serial killings in Europe, with the conviction of Gessina Gottfried for poisoning 20 victims (117). Furthermore, Burke and Hare were apprehended in 1828 after committing 11 murders in England, Swiatek also murdered up to 6 people and fed them to his children in Austria, 1850. And 1 year after, Helene Jegado was convicted of poisoning up to 60 individuals.

Serial Murder in the United States: Where Does the Media Come in?

Moving to the United States, the first recorded case of serial murder was that perpetrated by the Harpe brothers in the 1790s (Newton 2006: 117). Also in 1820, John Dahmer was apprehended for 2 murders, although he confessed to having committed more in both England and the United States. The Espinoza brothers’ murder of 26 in the 1860’s and the Bender family’s killing of at least 12 people in 1872 were also recorded. Two years later, in Boston, a teenager – Jesse Pomroy – tortured and murdered 2 young children (Vronsky 2004: 60). This was followed by the rape and subsequent murder of two women and a five-year-old female by Tomas Piper, within the same year and city (60). Stephen Richards and Herman Mudgett also killed sequentially in Nebraska/Iowa and Chicago in the late 1870s and early 1890s respectively (Newton 2006: 117;

Jenkins 2017: 67). Jane Toppan, one of the few documented female serial killers, poisoned almost 100 patients in New England, U.S., starting in 1880 (Newton 2006: 117).

While Europe housed majority of known serial killers from the time of the empires to modern times, as the 20th century emerged, serial killing became more prominent in the United States, traversing its cities (Vronsky 2004: 71). While most pre-20th century American serial killers were profit motivated and stationary, those emerging in the 20th century were mostly sexually-driven and migratory (71), the latter trait making it difficult for their detection and apprehension, predominantly due to linkage blindness (Egger 1984; Vronsky 2004: 24; Hickey [1991] 2010: 191; Jenkins 2017: 109).

Jenkins (2017: 68) grouped serial murder in America's 20th century into 3 phases. 1900-1940 featured a slight decline in serial homicide in comparison to the previous 2 decades, with a minimum of 100 serial murder cases occurring- among which at least 24 were extreme cases⁶. The mid-century (1940-1965) witnessed the lowest incidence- 50 cases of serial murder, 7 being extreme. From the 1960's onwards, however, serial murder began to skyrocket, with at least 1 case springing up every 24 days and one extreme case occurring every 3 months (76).

It is pertinent to highlight that just about a century ago, Europe produced majority of the world's known serial killers. This raises the question of how America came to occupy that position in the 20th century and arguably in the current era- as serial murder is contemporarily framed to be an American problem.

⁶ Jenkins defined extreme serial murder as cases where victim count per perpetrator is greater or equal to ten.

Jenkins (2017) hypothesized possible reasons to be technological advancement that fostered collaboration between law enforcement agencies (60, 110), thus mitigating linkage blindness⁷ and the American press' less-restricted access to police findings and court proceedings – compared to Britain and Britain-influenced nations like Canada – which allows them to suggest the possibility of a connection between murders that share similarities in their publications (84).

While media fascination with serial killing globally began in the 1880s, based on England's rippers' atrocities, media focus – on a national level – intensified in the United States in the 1970s, due to an increase in the frequency and gruesomeness of serial homicides within that period (Jenkins 2017: 97). The location of the bulk of these crimes – major cities – contributed to high media coverage, as city affairs often take precedence over those of non-central areas in national news reports. Instances include the Son of Sam killings in New York, the Hillside Strangler in Los Angeles, and the John Wayne Gacy murders in Chicago. This coverage inspired the production of fictional and non-fictional literary materials that replicated the killings (Jenkins 2017: 104), with heavy focus placed on perpetrators- a foundation for their celebritization.

However, news media still depicted these killings as the work of depraved human monsters, rooted in the 1880s ideology of Jack the Ripper and other serial homicidal maniacs (Vronsky 2004: 6). But the arrest and prosecution of Ted Bundy formally marked a switch from the 'depraved monster' imagery to a more humane form that utilizes humanly qualities such as handsomeness and charming in portraying serial murderers. The substitution ideology can arguably explain this switch in representation style. Vronsky (2004: 6) posited that many of us share similarities with

⁷ Technological advancement alone cannot eliminate linkage blindness as Newton (2006) posited that some law enforcement bodies withhold cooperation due to age-long feud or ego (159).

Bundy – ambition-driven, desire for success and to elevate our social class – unlike with early serial killers who, according to biological crime theories, often have physical criminal features like prehensile foot and highly developed orbital arches, or are undriven to succeed- sexual perverts who have no aspiration than to mutate and dismember. Thus, our association with Ted Bundy, as a human being who looks, acts, and thinks like us – save for his serial killing ideas – marked a new era in America’s perception of serial killers from depraved monsters to charming monsters, a ‘post-modern serial killer’. This perception influenced his subsequent portrayal across literature and signaled the celebrity serial killer imagery that arguably came to dominate America’s media.

2.3 Serial Killers and their Representations

Current literature on the representation of serial killers broadly falls into two categories. First is the issue of over/under-acknowledgement, which highlights that the media and academic criminologists (Holmes and Holmes 1998: 31) persistently portray serial killing as an act that is reserved for the white male population. This discovery brings to the limelight, the stereotype that people of other races and gender are not involved in serial killings- as perpetrators. The second issue relates to imagery, where murder events are sensationalized, and perpetrators become idolized as having achieved 'the impossible'. In many cases, the material possessions of the killers become valuables and even get auctioned (Vronsky 2004: 19; Wiest 2011: 96). This overwhelming attention gave rise to the celebrity status phenomenon- although Wiest (2016) contested this claim and found it to be relational, particularly country-wise. Acknowledgement dynamics pertaining to race and gender is explored in this section while monstrosity framing dynamics was discussed under framing theory in heading 2.5.1 alongside an elaboration of race and gender depictions of crime in the media. This was done for smooth transition and better readability.

2.3.1 Gender and Acknowledgement

Hale and Bolin (2012: 2) advanced that the under-acknowledgement of female serial killers in popular and academic criminology can be attributed to violent crime statistics where men are shown to be the major perpetrators of violent crime. This position is corroborated by the FBI's report on violent crime in the United States in 2021. 758,749 violent crime incidences were estimated to have occurred, among which 77% of the offenders were male and 18% were females [the gender of the rest was unknown]. Hale and Bolin further reported that the majority of [known] female serial killers murder their first victim between their 20s and 30s and continue for approximately 5 years before getting apprehended (6).

Taking a somewhat different angle, Holmes et al. (2012) argued that femininity stereotypes that portray women as nurturing and vulnerable account for the public's reluctance to readily acknowledge the existence of female serial killers, owing to the belief that they are incapable of violence. Such reluctance could explain their meager representation in popular and academic criminology and within law enforcement's criminal traits inventory. For instance, the development of the initially-dominant four categories of serial killers – Vision, Mission, Hedonistic, and Power/Control – which guided law enforcement's hunt for them – was based on the analysis of the motives of male serial killers (Holmes and DeBurger 1985). It logically follows that this myopic focus stagnated FBI operatives' apprehension of female serial killers as they are less likely to be suspected.

While male serial murderers often kill for sexual or hegemonic reasons (Holmes and DeBurger 1985), research shows that their female counterparts murder for material gain, with the popular weapon being poison, usually arsenic (Hale and Bolin 2012). While Hickey ([1991] 2010:256) found that female serial killers made up 15% of all serial murder cases in the United States between 1826 and 2004, Jenkins (1993: 48) advanced that this figure underrepresents females who 'silently' kill sequentially, using poison for instance. He argued that academic literatures that discuss female serial killers almost entirely focus on those who engage in physical murders- such as shootings. Hickey (255) also acknowledged this point, believing it to be the cause of the FBI's recognition of Aileen Wuornos as the first female serial killer because of her use of a gun to murder victims. Since multiple poisoners claim the most victims in known serial killer cases (Jenkins 2017: 75) and given female serial murderers' preference for this method, it is rational to proclaim that there were and perhaps are more female serial killers than current records indicate.

Hale and Bolin noted that the victims of most female serial killers are hardly strangers, contrasting with the victim population of male serial killers who, in many cases, are not affiliated with them⁸. As the earliest identified serial killers were males, this could account for the initial use of ‘stranger killings’ to refer to acts known today as serial killing.

2.3.2 Race and Acknowledgement

Research on serial killers and their representations reveal that black male serial killers are underacknowledged in the US media- as well as academic criminology. This discovery comes off as a shock, considering the overrepresentation and frequent portrayal of Black males in other brutal crimes like gun violence, drug/gang violence, and non-sequential homicides (Jenkins 1993; Walsh 2005). For a long time, a misconception that there are no black [male] serial killers thrived in the media, academia, and law enforcement. This misconception and under-acknowledgement could be a by-product of racist ideologies which assume that people of color do not possess the perceived ‘intellectual skill’ (Branson 2013: 2) required to successfully commit sequential murders and evade law enforcement for years. In other words, they are presumed to be savages but not smart savages- a quality that is tagged extraordinary when the perpetrator is white. The ‘sacredness’ attached to the act perhaps accounts for America's obsession with and glorification of serial killers (Wiest 2016)- as will be discussed in the next section. Their infamy has further been linked to the media’s presentation of them as invalids/mentally retarded (Branson 2013: 2)- for the few ones that make the news. Furthermore, Jenkins (1998) advanced, albeit contested, that the media labels serial killers with derogatory terms like ‘monster’ and ‘animal’”, hence the fear of being perceived

⁸ Considering that most male serial killers murder young women, kids [often after kidnapping], and prostitutes. (Vronsky 2004)

as racist when using such words to describe Black male serial killers leads them to shy away from publicizing sequential killings by this population. However, Walsh (2005) disagreed with this justification, arguing that representation can be provided without the use of derogatory terms. Nonetheless, the under-acknowledgement of the reality of Black male serial killers significantly impacts law enforcement's efficiency in apprehending them, leaving a lacuna for more victims to be killed⁹.

Studies on – the representation of – black female serial killers remain the most unexplored part of academic criminology. Although acknowledgment of their existence was seen in the footnote of Branson's (2013: 15) paper, how they operate and the dynamics of their representation via media frames were not examined. Although some studies, as reviewed above, have investigated the characteristics and representation of female serial killers, all explored categories were white females, except for one Hispanic female in the work of Pozzan (2014). Despite this, details on her representation were missing from the research and the impact of race was not considered. This observation reinforces Crenshaw's (1991) assertion that black females experience marginalization in multiple parlances.

⁹ As evident in the DC snipers' case- FBI agents profiled the perpetrators to be White males whereas they were Black males. Given the heavy reliance on profiled information during investigations, the FBI kept looking in the wrong direction, which extended killing episodes (Branson 2013: 14).

2.4 True Crime Podcasts

Existing research on the race, gender, and monstrosity framing of serial killers employs the print media as sources of data. Thus, these studies observe media frames in previous decades, frames that may not reflect current media narrative styles. As podcasts are a newer media, I will be exploring representation in the true crime genre of podcasts to give insight, a fresh angle, into the dynamics of media framing of serial murderers in contemporary times.

Hammersley (2004) coined the term podcast to describe a new wave of technology centered around free audio production and dissemination through the internet- downloadable radio programming. He referred to this as the audible revolution. I sense that his use of the word ‘revolution’ to describe the emergence of podcasts is associated with the decentralized nature of the platform, in comparison to other news media genre that are institutionalized and whose contents are highly structured to reflect particular frames. Entman (1993:55) advanced that the frames utilized by traditional news media are so structured that deviation from one frame, by a media agency, could lead other media agencies and the public to question the credibility of the deviating agency. With podcasts having no rigid institutional restraint, information dissemination is decentralized and frames are more reflective of popular as opposed to institutional ideologies.

The software behind the technology was created by Dave Winer in 2000, involving Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds through which digital audio could be transmitted, freely. Podcasts are digital audio files that anyone can download – for free – on their digital devices over the internet. Apple is credited to have played a key role in the popularity of podcasts, from its release of the iPod in 2001 which increased public fascination with audio technology (Bottomley 2015) to its 2014 software upgrade that incorporated the podcast app into all its devices (Sherrill 2022).

In the same year, the launch of ‘Serial’ transported the true crime genre into the podcast world, being the first true crime podcast channel. The emergence of *Serial* popularized the true crime genre within the podcast media niche (Boling and Hull 2018: 92; Boling 2019: 164) and paved the way for the sporadic rise of hundreds of channels within the niche (Yardley, Kelly, and Robinson-Edwards 2019: 504). This has been labeled ‘the Serial effect’ (Pew Research Center 2016:68; Sherrill 2022). *Serial* is the first true crime podcast series that was released to the public in 2014 for a duration of three months- October to December, exploring the murder of Hae Min Lee, a high school student whose death was believed by law enforcement believed to have been caused by Adnan Syed, her ex-boyfriend. But investigations conducted during the production of *Serial* proved this conviction wrong, leading Adnan to freedom. According to Yardley et al. (2019:504), this occurrence sparked public interest and brought the podcast media into limelight.

2.4.1 Characteristics of True Crime Podcast

Punnett (2018: 96) offered eight features, most of which must manifest in a podcast before it can be considered a true crime genre. They include teleology, justice, subversion, crusader, geographic, forensic, vocative, and folkloric. Teleology implies that the content discussed must be non-fictional. The content should also be oriented towards seeking justice for victims. Although this point raises the question of objectivity – keeping in mind that offenders may be victims of deficient structures – and contrasts the identified fluidity of victimhood Yardley et al. (2019) found in true crime podcasts, the subversive element addresses such concern. The crusader feature implies a call to action, for social change. Also, the geographical locations of the incidence must be touched on in the narratives. Scientific criminological elements such as crime labs, fingerprint technologies, etc. are further required to be discussed. In terms of vocation, the narrators/hosts are required to position themselves within the discourse and utilize emotions. This feature appears to

be present in all podcasts, not just true crime, as researchers have credited podcasts for their capacity to connect with audiences at a deeper level than traditional media genres (Boling and Hull 2018: 106; Pâquet 2018). Lastly, folkloric implies that true crime podcasts should be pedagogical, embedded with lessons and a bit of fear to encourage listeners to be conscious of their surroundings to prevent falling victim to crime.

2.4.2 True Crime Podcasts Versus Other True Crime Media

The characteristics of true crime podcasts elevate them from other media that report true crimes, particularly in their ability to establish a deep connection with audiences and reach into their emotions (Pâquet, 2018), thus potentially impacting their perception of issues and ensuing behavior more than other mass media. Buozis (2017) argued that podcast hosts achieve this by positioning themselves as co-narrators¹⁰ in relation to the audience, appealing to them to make sense of the information they hear and share their opinions. This could facilitate listeners to undertake private investigations of their own on the issue, in a bid to uncover the truth. Such formation of independent thought facilitated by deep engagement signals that their opinion counts – an opportunity that other media niches do not provide – and such accreditation renders podcast listeners hooked. This view is supported by Spinelli and Dann (2019), who argued that podcasts are unique in how information is disseminated- which impacts how audiences engage with it and the relationship between them and producers.

Furthermore, rather than providing mere reports of crime issues, podcasts go further to impact real change in society by not only exposing people to unfamiliar crime cases but also questioning the decisions of the criminal justice system and the correctness of their convictions- advocacy for

¹⁰ Spinelli and Dann (2019) used the word co-conspirators.

victims and insight into the guilt of inmates (Boling 2019: 162; Yardley et al. 2019: 517). Podcasts have displayed their relevance at the structural level, particularly within the judiciary arm – featuring judges’ reference to podcast episodes in their decisions and judgments – and non-profit organizations [innocence projects] whose goal is to represent the [unfairly] accused – as more people are motivated to tell their innocence story through podcasts (Boling 2019).

Coupled with this, many true crime podcasts discuss true crime events in seasons, with a season having multiple episodes that provide in-depth details on the crime- the perpetrator, victims, crime scene investigations, etc. (Boling 2019: 173). Such strict dedication is lacking in the print media, perhaps due to the limited space reserved for the coverage of crime news, and this could prevent full disclosure of information to the public. This situational hoarding could make irrelevant parts of the story salient, leaving out parts perceived to be irrelevant but are indeed crucial. Podcasts address this shortcoming of traditional media by providing audiences with all available information and letting them decide what is important and what is not.

From the foregoing, true crime podcasts have been shown to be more thorough in their report of crime news, less sensationalistic by blurring the criminal-victim line via acknowledging that a person can be both victim and offender, and truth-seeking. All these features represent a media that is less likely to frame issues with stereotypes of – for instance – race and gender. However, this challenge to hegemonic narratives by podcasts has not been tested against a race-gender backdrop in narratives of extreme forms of violence like serial killing.

2.5 Supporting Frameworks

2.5.1 Framing Theory

Although frame, as a concept, has featured in academic discourse prior to the 70's, it was introduced into Sociology by Erving Goffman in 1974, when he coined the term frame analysis to describe a method that would aid ethnographic researchers uncover how those they are studying make sense of their behavior. Communication researchers have adopted the terminology to explain how the media, in particular, frame information and impact the public's perception of issues. The most notable among these academics is Entman (1993), whose writing helped reconcile the prevailing ambiguity and inconsistency in the use of the framing terminology.

Entman defines framing in terms of 2 elements- selection and salience (52). Framing occurs when a particular phenomenon – or aspects of it – is handpicked and attention is drawn to it using communicative texts to achieve a specific goal, such as promoting a way of thinking. Rather than being limited to textual descriptions, frames are present in both audio and visual communications. Frames function to define a problem, diagnose its cause(s), associate a blame to it (moral judgement), and proffer solution(s), although they may not necessarily fulfill all functions (52).

The saliency feature of frames is what makes them more noticeable and memorable to receivers. Entman believes that salience can be achieved through the placement of words/phrases, their repetition in delivery, or their association with symbols that receivers find culturally familiar. However, he posited that what counts as salient may not depend on arrangement, repetition, or association, but is also impacted by the preconceived thoughts in the receiver's head- their schemata (53). In other words, as much as people might notice an issue that is made salient in a narrative, they may also see what is not necessarily there. In the same manner, personal schemata

may cause people to completely ignore salient parts of a communicative text/audio i.e., intended saliency may go unnoticed.

The concept of selection implies that while some aspects of reality are chosen and emphasized in the media, others are omitted. Frames are defined by attributes they highlight and those they omit, and the attributes included are as crucial as those that are excluded in impacting audiences' understanding of an issue. For instance, Yardley et al. (2019) argued that issues of male rape have long been absent from true crime media, as narratives of rape make females the salient group that is most likely to experience victimization. This causes the public to wrongly assume that men do not experience rape, which is oppressive as it denies voice and agency to male victims.

When a particular frame gains legitimacy over time, especially among media bodies, it becomes a master frame and when certain media bodies refuse to utilize it or if usage stops among those who are currently utilizing it, Entman asserts that it could question the credibility of the media in question (55). However, it has been observed that while the print media, although contested, often frame homicides using stereotypes of race, podcasts grew to challenge this hegemony (Boling 2019; Yardley et al. 2019)- yet their credibility as a media is not in question and they have, in fact, gained legitimacy among other media genres (Sherrill 2022). This challenge to hegemony has however not been explored for podcast narratives of extreme violence like serial murder, more so as it relates to race and gender.

Pertinent is to state that while media frames may not always impact audiences' behavior or thoughts (Macdonald 1995:17), Entman (1993:56) advanced that in matters of social interest – like serial killing –, people highly rely on frames provided by the media in deciding what to think. This is in line with Fiske and Taylor's (1991) assertion that we, humans, are 'cognitive misers',

undesiring to always engage in critical thinking and relying on frames to narrow – or ease – our thought formation. Therefore, with a frame analysis, the power of information dissemination, by the media, in impacting our consciousness – about serial killers for instance – is made explicit.

Race-Crime Master Frames in the Media

In the United States, media narratives have been linked to the instigation of moral panics about the black population, facilitating the correlation between blackness and deviance, and whiteness and victimhood (Carlson 2016: 2; Colburn and Melander 2018: 385; Lane et al. 2020). Owing to the censorship of Blacks in the media industry [as workers], Wilson et al. (2013: 37) believed this race-crime master frame to reflect the attitudes of the media gatekeepers towards Blacks.

Recent statistics show that white offenders are more than 5 times less likely to be depicted with mugshot images, more likely to be humanized by the media via publishing photos of them with their families and friends, and 50% more likely to be referred to by their names in comparison to black offenders (EJI 2021), signaling presumption of innocence for the former. According to Parham-Payne (2014:756), for black offenders, name omission, often accompanied by pictorial omission – in cases where mugshots are not used – creates a ‘homogenized illustration’ of deviance being rooted in the black race.

In the same vein, studies show that people of color are perceived as deviant, suspicious, and violent and these stereotypes are referenced when crime is committed by a black individual. And when a black person is the crime victim, the media is reported to draw on stereotypes of blackness to justify such victimization such as asserting that the perpetrator was spooked by suspicious looks or behavior. Lane et al. (2020:801) saw this demonization enhanced with the introduction of frames that link whiteness to virtuousness and defense of the law (800). Such frames allow existing

race stereotypes to intensify in the public's mind. Entman (1993) opined that the ability of a frame to be impactful on an audience can be dependent on their preconceived notions, with the frame serving as an instrument to validate, justify, and intensify those thoughts. Thus, when crime news framing involves negative stereotypes about people of color, these stereotypes are likely to perpetuate in the minds of those who already hold similar ideologies about people of color, allowing hegemonic labels to thrive indefinitely. This extends race-based moral panics which has severe ramifications on social tolerance, peace, and integration. Hier (2019c) defined moral panics as “socially regressive overreactions to objectively minor problems”. In other words, spinning social occurrences and their ramifications out of proportion.

In contrast to the derogatory framing of black deviants and their othering as criminals, studies show that whites who break the law are often framed as victims of circumstances, either in terms of self-defense or psychological conditions like mental disorders (Collins 2014) that push them to commit crime or provocation by folk devils- the ‘others’ (Galadari 2018:33). Adams (2017) also found a similar pattern in his studies and labelled it as an attempt at rationalizing white crime. Dunbar (2022) observed that individuals who perceived violent crime as perpetrated by blacks showed low affinity with the enactment of criminal reform policies. It can be inferred that this is based on the stereotype that people of color are beyond redemption – and incarceration or, when necessary, capital punishment should be applied – whereas white offenders are more likely to reform, given the chance.

While these studies found race stereotypes to dominate news reports of crime, usually homicide and other non-extreme violence, researchers are starting to observe new patterns. Yardley et al. (2019) compared podcast representation of offenders to that of the traditional print media, against the backdrop of master frames, and noted the presence of identity fluidity in the former's

representations- where offenders are sometimes framed as victims of deficient social structures- not just folk devils. Carlson (2016) observed a similar trope in contemporary print media's narration of homicide cases, noting a dwindle in traditional race-crime frames. In her systematic comparison of two similar homicides in two eras, one occurring in a time considered to be 'racial' and the other in a contested 'post-racial' era, media frames in the latter employed a moral breach¹¹ strategy, where the criminalblackman narrative that dominated the former era gave way to a more nuanced frame that contested stereotypes of blackness.

In summary, while some studies show that the framing of deviance – mostly homicide – is influenced by race stereotypes, others have found this frame to be less absolute in contemporary times, perhaps due to the effort of anti-racism movements and sensitization over the years. Two inferences can be made from these differing conclusions:

1. From the perspective of the persistence of dominant race-based frames in media narratives of crime, we can assume that as the nature of violence perpetuated becomes more extreme – such as in serial killing –, race stereotype frames will also skyrocket, with blacks facing more condemnation and whites experiencing rationalization.
2. From the perspective contesting absolute race-crime master frames, it can be hypothesized that regardless of the extremity of violence, the framing of deviance in contemporary times will be moral-breach oriented, with less race-based narratives that incite moral panics.

¹¹ Moral breach is a term coined by Carlson (2016) to explain an emerging trope in media crime framing whereby media discourse challenges or ruptures hegemonic orders rather than sustain them like moral panics do. She referred to moral breaches as “counterhegemonic moves” (5).

These two possibilities warrant the exploration of whether a relationship exists between the extremity of violence and race-based framing in contemporary media. Serial killing fits into the classification of extreme violence, based on the usually sadistic nature of the killings and the high victim count per perpetrator. Although statistics reveal that serial killing accounts for just about 1% of all deaths in the United States (Jenkins 2017), the gruesomeness of recorded killings and their execution by human beings, not natural disasters or social/health conditions, make the phenomenon of great concern to both law enforcement and the public.

Gender-Crime Master Frames in the Media

Despite the under-acknowledgement of female serial killers in the media, owing to the difficulty in reconciling stereotyped expectations of femininity [warm, gentle, etc.] with their gruesome acts, the few who are portrayed are depicted using the “mad/bad” frame¹² (Khan 2020). This could be an effort to rationalize their behavior to prevent the crumbling of normative gender expectations of femininity (Pozzan 2014: 62). Some of these normative expectations are based on Bem’s (1974) sex role inventory, consisting of 20 feminine, 20 masculine and 20 neutral adjectives that she believed to be associated with the male and female gender. Here, born females are expected to be shy, affectionate, sympathetic, compassionate, warm, gentle, and love kids among other features. Since female serial killers act outside of these ‘normative’ categories, they face a double penalty-of social and biological deviance. On the other hand, Bem used categories like aggressive, forceful, and dominant, among others to describe men’s intrinsic traits; therefore, the acts of male serial murderers, although socially deviant, are believed to be within the boundaries of their gender expectations (Picart 2006).

¹² Consider watching the 1982 English translated Dutch movie, “*A question of Silence*”.

This sex-defect framing of crime can be linked to Lombroso and Ferrero's biological theory on female offenders, featuring their association of female violence with biological defects. Despite the criticism and age-long displacement of their general biological crime theories, their ideas on females who kill appear to have stood the test of time (Khan, 2020). For women, such representation style pulls focus from the murder they have committed and puts into the limelight, not just their failure as social beings but their failure as females.

Research suggests that female deviants are often framed as receiving lenient treatment¹³ from the criminal justice system because of their gender, taking the form of reduced sentences and preferential treatment while serving their time. However, Pozzan (2014: 42) found that this claim does not apply to female serial killers: they were depicted as receiving harsh punishments despite their gender- and sexual/physical abuse history. Despite this, previous incarceration, marital status, and education level significantly impact the extent of harsh punishment depictions (43). In other words, unmarried, less educated people with criminal backgrounds (prior to their serial killing career) were depicted as receiving harsher punishments compared to married, more educated folks with no previous criminal record.

Pozzan also (2014) found that female serial killers are represented outside traditional femininity stereotypes- with the representation delving more towards the masculinity stereotype of aggressiveness. However, the media concurrently frames them as lacking agency and engaging in the act out of necessity [as a response to domestic violence, induced by mental problems, substance abuse, etc.] and not based on their free will. Emphasizing this reaffirms the femininity stereotype

¹³ Noteworthy is that depiction of treatment might be different from actual treatment by the justice system.

of weakness as the public is made to believe that women's deviance is not a product of their freewill but caused by external factors such as insanity- placing this at the center of attention takes agency away from them and reinforces female subordination and traditional norms of femininity (67). However, analysis of female depictions in this research was done without accounting for race differences. Since race, as a master status, has been observed to impact the lived experience of gendered individuals in distinct ways, I explored the impact of race on the framing of female serial killers, to uncover whether peculiar gender stereotypes are present in specific representations and to what extent. The same goes for the framing of male serial killers.

Monstrosity Master Frames in the Media

Academic works have mostly referenced the media's sensationalizing of serial killings in ways that almost glorify perpetrators (Vronsky 2004), turning them into antiheroes (Jenkins 2017) or, as Wiest (2016) posited, fantastic monsters. Studies on the monstrosity imagery of serial killers reveal that perpetrators are framed in two ways (Egger 1998; Vronsky 2004, 2007): either as evil monsters or as fantastic/celebrity monsters.

On one hand, the evil monster imagery involves the framing of serial killers as deprived, psychologically challenged, vampires, possessed, and sadistic among others (Epstein 1995). On the other hand, when serial killers are framed aesthetically, with emphasis on their appealing qualities such as handsomeness or a charming nature or intelligence, the imagery is that of a fantastic monster who becomes popular and celebrated in society (Egger 1998; Vronsky 2004, 2007). Their celebritization could take the form of the production of fictitious or even biographical literature on them, literature that places them – not victims – in the limelight, highlighting their organized and swift commission of crimes (Schmid 2005; Jenkins 2017) and the folly of law

enforcement officers, as they hunt for them- such as how Gary Ridgeway, a serial killer, infused himself into the investigation launched for his apprehension, without suspicion from detectives. Excluding high acknowledgement and glorification in the media, the celebritization of serial killers also manifest in the fan page created for them, the marriage proposals they receive while awaiting execution, the collection and auctioning of their valuables and even body parts like hair and fingernail clippings as well as pictures at exorbitant prices (Schmid 2005; Levin 2008; Connelly 2010; Wiest 2011).

The portrayal of serial killers with the evil/depraved monster frame was taken on globally in 1888 with the killings by Jack the Ripper in London (Vronsky 2004, 2007). However, in the US, the discovery of Ted Bundy's atrocities in the 1970's caused a switch in the country's media frame of serial murderers- from depraved monsters to intelligent and charming monsters- representations that celebrate their qualities more so than castigate their actions. Wiest (2016) saw that such representations pull focus from the murderous acts they have committed, from the victims, and projects light onto the killer- raising the perpetrator to celebrity status.

Pertinent is to note that the celebritization of serial killers is not entirely synonymous with the celebritization of Hollywood Actors for instance. While Actors are often perceived as role models, serial killers are not (except to copycat killers). However, like celebrities, they also have fans, receive a great deal of attention- during and after their lifetime, have their personal items monetized, and even receive marriage proposals (Harmening 2014: 21; Fezzani 2015: 166).

Wiest (2016) discovered that the celebrity imagery only dominated the United States media frames, with the UK media using more of traditional evil monster frames to depict serial killers. However, race and gender were not accounted for in exploring monstrosity frames within these

contexts. Given the impact of these two master statuses – race and gender – in impacting media frames, it is crucial to investigate how they might affect monstrosity framing in the media. I will be exploring whether the use of celebrity imagery in the US media framing of serial killers is constant, given the intersection of race and gender. This will shed light on the dynamics of Wiest's identified cultural undertone in American media's celebritization of serial killers- particularly on the possible role of race and gender in obscuring the impact of cultural ideologies in US media depiction of serial killers.

2.5.2 Intersectionality

Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to advance a new approach to investigating phenomena – originally inequality and oppression – by focusing on how various identity markers combine to define specific experiences for certain people, experiences that would have remained obscured in the absence of consideration of such interaction. Originally, the framework was developed as a response to the observed subjugated experiences of women of color within both antiracist and antisexist discourses, leading her to assert that being situated within multiple subjugated identities render one's experiences invisible and such experiences can only be brought to light and challenged through an intersectional lens.

To Crenshaw, identities are mutually inclusive as opposed to mutually exclusive, with one identity impacting how the other affects a person's social standing and lived experience. Race is a social construct that independently works to the advantage of some individuals, depending on which subcategory they fall under. The same goes for gender, with people of color and females being the disadvantaged groups in respective instances. Going by the independent analysis of the oppression experienced by females in comparison with males, it is logical to assert that all females experience

the same levels of subjugation and inequality- meaning the inequality experienced by a White female is a clone of that experienced by a Black female. However, this conclusion is inaccurate.

The introduction of other identity markers such as race will reveal that the oppression of females results not only from their gender identity but also from racial attributes- indicating that belonging to a race that has been constructed to be superior will shape a females experience of sexism grossly differently from that of others within inferiorly-constructed racial groups. However, without an intersectional lens, we will remain uninformed of these differing experiences of sexism, leading to the development of gender equality strategies that will be ineffective on some females.

Ultimately, the argument and goal of intersectionality is that the experiences of individuals cannot be effectively understood within the traditional boundaries of individual identities but at an intersection of all identities, given that the boundaries blur much-needed information.

By applying this logic, I found that existing studies on the representation of serial killers by the media look at the issue either in terms of race, gender, or monstrosity framing but never all three. As Crenshaw advanced, identity intersection uniquely shapes the experiences of everyone – including serial killers – and such experiences extend to their representation in the media. This study explores how race and gender simultaneously impact the depiction of serial killers in podcasts, to shed light on possibly blurred information within non-intersectional studies. I envisaged that through this lens, the extent of race and gender stereotypes in media depictions within the context of extreme violence will be uncovered.

Chapter 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will discuss my methodology, study population and samples, including the techniques used in selecting these samples and my justification for them. Data collection techniques and data analysis procedures will also be elucidated.

3.1 Research Design

This study is based on the interpretivist – also called constructivist – paradigm. A research paradigm is a set of philosophical assumptions on the nature of reality, knowledge and how such knowledge is to be gained. These assumptions in turn guide the conduct of research. As a paradigm, constructivism is based on the belief that reality/social phenomenon is socially created, i.e. subjective, thus possessing manifold meanings/dimensions (Wahyuni 2012). In other words, perception is dynamic, and as perception changes, reality is constructed differently.

The subjectivity of social realities does not imply that those realities are not real or objective in themselves, rather there is a dialectical interplay between subjective constructs/meanings and objective realities. This link is exemplified by Berger and Luckmann ([1967]1991) in their account of the sociology of knowledge. They opined that we construct meanings, such as frames, about realities, such as social problems like serial killing, through our interaction with others. Following this construction, as the meanings we form gain widespread acceptance, they become institutionalized/reified and then act back to solidify our perception. Thus, while meanings about realities are subjectively constructed, their institutionalization in turn influences our subsequent thoughts and constrains our actions (Hier 2019b:37). For instance, male and female are subjectively constructed gender norms that became institutionalized and, until recently, were a

rigid objective identification yardstick for those who created them. In other words, objective phenomena are backed by subjective constructs and individuals become constrained by the object of their creation.

This dialectical constructionist view of subjectively created constructs and objective phenomena will be useful in exploring how the subjective frames associated with the master statuses of race and gender jointly impact the contemporary construction of serial murder in podcasts.

To understand the construction of serial killers, the qualitative methodology was employed in this study. Wahyuni (2012) and Schwandt (2001) define a methodology as a blueprint that guides the conduct of research within specific paradigms. A qualitative methodology is a model that directs the conduct of research using non-numerical measures. Although other paradigms may employ this model, the constructivist paradigm particularly favors qualitative methodologies because they enable in-depth exploration of a phenomenon beyond what quantification affords (Strauss & Corbin 1990), which is helpful for gaining new insight into unfamiliar – or complex – issues, like those examined in this study.

3.2 Study population

This study is on the representation of serial killers in American podcasts, which will necessitate my study population to be American serial killer podcasts. However, my survey of the data field revealed that there is a dearth of American podcasts that exclusively focus on serial murders. Therefore, the entire American true crime genre was used as a structure to identify my study population, as podcasts within this genre discuss myriad true crime incidences, including serial killing, in episodic form. My target is the serial killer episodes within these podcasts. My population was determined via 3 stages. The first stage allowed me to identify American true crime podcasts by using the keyword ‘American True Crime Podcasts’. However, given the scarcity of narratives about serial killers of marginalized identities in these podcasts, the second stage allowed me to access them via the use of more specific keywords such as ‘Black True Crime’, ‘Black Female Serial Killers Podcasts’, and ‘Female Serial Killers Podcast’. In the final stage, I screened the population identified in stage 1 and 2 to ensure that they met six requirements which will be elaborately discussed below.

Stage 1

I punched the keywords ‘American true crime podcast’ into the Google search engine and 49 podcasts popped up (See Table A.2). However, one podcast¹⁴ was listed twice on the google search

¹⁴ Morbid appeared twice on the google search result. The first appearance was titled ‘Morbid’ while the second was titled ‘Morbid: A True Crime Podcast’. When both titles were searched on google, I was led to the same page podcast page- Morbid. Thus, I collapsed the second appearance into the first and employed the simple title of ‘Morbid’ to identify the podcast.

result and 8 were not classified as ‘true crime’ on their Apple podcast profiles¹⁵. I screened out these 9, which left me with a total of 40 podcasts.

My population in this stage are those 40 true crime podcasts (see Table A.3). I based my selection on the search engine result because, all things being equal, Google ranks podcasts based on internet users’ interaction with them. Thus, these podcasts are presumed to have more listeners, indicating that their frames are more likely to reach a wider audience and potentially impact their perceptions than podcasts that are absent from the list.

Stage 2

The key phrase ‘Black true crime’ was punched into Google and the first result that appeared was the Black True Crime podcast, which is dedicated to the coverage of criminal cases involving Black offenders. However, most of the serial killers discussed therein are males. Owing to my intersectionality framework, I zeroed in on Blackness and femininity by searching for ‘Female serial killers podcast’, the first on the list being the Female Criminals podcast and ‘Black female serial killers’, leading me to identify the Sistas Who Kill podcast, the sole podcast that provides

¹⁵ Given my research objectives, to ensure the credibility of my findings, it is pertinent that the podcasts in my population are classified as true crime as this expresses the host’s full dedication to the coverage to actual crime cases, not fictitious or mythical ones. Thus, podcasts like Serial, S-Town, Crimetown, Wine and Crime, Sinisterhood, The Shrink Next Door, Scamfluencers and Believed were screened out because of their classification as news, society and culture, news comedy, comedy, documentary, society and culture, and society and culture respectively.

coverage on murderers possessing 2 marginalized identities: blackness and femininity. The addition of these three podcasts increased my population to 43 (see Table A.4).

Stage 3

In selecting the final population from these 43, six requirements were used:

- The podcasts must have an episode on at least 1 serial killer.
- They must meet at least 3 of the characteristics of true crime podcasts provided by Punnett (2018).
- The acts of the identified serial murderers must align with the FBI's definition of serial killing.
- The serial killers discussed must be American.
- The episode(s) must have been aired between 2019 and 2023 to capture more recent forms of representation.
- Finally, the time length of the episodes must be reasonable: Podcasts episodes that are under 30 minutes or podcasts whose entire episodes focus on a single serial killing case were screened out. Episodes under 30 minutes were eliminated because it was envisaged that less detailed data will be extracted from such short discourse. Episodes longer than 2 hours, such as in podcasts where all episodes are based on the discourse of a single serial killer, were also eliminated to avoid dwelling on a single case and allow for uniformity in focus.

By employing the above requirements, 29 podcasts were eliminated from my population. Reasons for this include absence of episodes focused on a serial killer, length problems, discussion centered on the comparison of serial killers, and the discourse of unsolved serial killing cases among others.

Specific reasons for the elimination of each of these 29 podcasts are provided in Appendix Table

4.

Below are the 14 podcasts that passed this scrutiny, hence forming this study's population:

Table 1: Study Population

S/N	Podcast Name
1.	My Favorite Murder
2.	Crime Junkie
3.	Morbid
4.	The Last Podcast on the Left
5.	Park Predators
6.	Anatomy of Murder
7.	Dateline NBC
8.	True Crime Garage
9.	Criminology
10.	Mile Higher
11.	Sword and Scale
12.	Black True Crime
13.	Sistas Who Kill
14.	Female Criminals

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Using the multistage sampling technique, 8 podcast episodes were selected as samples from my study population, to represent the race and gender groups that are the focus of this study; details of this process will be provided shortly. However, it is pertinent to state that while 8 samples may not provide an absolute representation of the podcast population, given the novelty of my research questions, this sample size is a good start at understanding newer media representation of extreme violence and how race and gender simultaneously impact utilized frames, to explore whether established orthodoxies in media-crime literature persist in contemporary times.

Multistage sampling is a sampling technique that requires the combination of two or more techniques of sampling to determine final samples from one study population. For this research, the two techniques involved in my multistage sampling are the stratified and the simple random sampling techniques. Stratified sampling falls under the probability sampling technique and it involves the division of a population into homogenous groups (strata), usually based on demographic features (Rahman et al. 2022), followed often by the random selection of samples from each stratum (simple random sampling) to ensure that each demographic group is adequately represented. This method seems appropriate, given the identity dynamics of my research and the observed under-acknowledgement of serial killers with certain identities in media publications.

To kickstart the sampling process, I divided qualifying episodes¹⁶ in my podcast population into 4 strata, based on the race-gender identity of the serial killers discussed. The strata include: white female, black female, black male, and white male. Detailed information about the serial killers that

¹⁶ Qualification requirements have been provided under stage 3 of the population screening process.

fall under each stratum is provided in Appendix Table 5. Keeping in mind that multiple podcasts may discuss the same serial killer at some point, I stratified these podcasts in a descending order based on their google search appearance, and if a serial killer discussed in an earlier podcast appears in subsequent ones, later appearances are excluded from stratification to avoid double counting. Lastly, numbers were assigned to episodes in each stratum. 46 episodes fell under the white male stratum, 11 under the black male stratum, 3 under the white female stratum, and 2 under the black female stratum.

2 samples were selected from each stratum using a random number generator, leaving a final sample of 8 podcast episodes. Below is a table depicting the selected samples alongside the podcast they fall under:

Table 2: List of Selected Samples

S/N	Podcast	Sample (Episode)	Race-gender Strata
1.	Morbid	Joe Metheny	White male
2.	Criminology	Jeffrey Dahmer	White male
3.	Crime Junkie	Khalil Wheeler-Weaver	Black male
4.	Black True Crime	Lorenzo Fayne: STL Child Killer	Black male
5.	My Favorite Murder	Lavina Fisher	White female
6.	Female Criminals	The Smotherer Part 1 & 2- Wanita Hoyt	White female

7.	Sistas Who Kill (1)	Caroline Peoples and Angel Ford-Wright	Black female
8.	Sistas Who Kill (2)	Marie Dean Arrington	Black female

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic discourse analysis. This approach was chosen given the intention of this study to identify emerging tropes relating to hegemonic master frames in the depiction of serial killers within a discursive context- podcast. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined a thematic analysis as a method intended to identify, analyze, and report observable patterns in a data set. These observable patterns are the themes, from which answers to research questions are drawn. On its own, thematic analysis is an unstructured method of qualitatively analyzing data. Unstructured is not an indication that the approach lacks structure or process but that its processes are fluid, untied to any theoretical paradigm, making it more accessible to qualitative researchers and adaptable to other analytical methods such as discourse analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006:80-81).

According to Taylor and Ussher (2001:310), identifying themes require an active process of seeking them out. Since the themes discovered in this study are based on the exploration of discourse, I drew on Fairclough's (1992) guidelines to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to support the identification of master frames in the podcast samples and, importantly, explain their contribution to established ideologies about hegemonic master frames as drivers of media discourse. Braun and Clarke (2006:81) espoused that a thematic discourse analysis can be used to demonstrate that the patterns found in data are socially produced without extensively engaging in a discursive analysis. This way, discourse analysis served as a sensitizing framework to support identified themes in my data.

In the same vein, while CDA is, on its own, a method of data analysis, Fairclough espoused that the guidelines he provided can be utilized in other forms of analysis to gain a more robust

understanding of the constitution of hegemony through discourse (Fairclough:1992:225). I took advantage of the flexibility of thematic analysis and of Fairclough's recommendations on analyzing discourse to search for dynamics in the employment of hegemonic master frames in the discourse of serial killers.

Thematic analysis is conducted by the researcher familiarizing themselves with the data during transcription, assigning codes to parts of the data that relate to research objectives, identifying themes among these codes, reviewing themes, and reporting findings (Braun and Clarke 2006).

Given the complexity of CDA, the rest of this section will be devoted to its simplification, with attention to the guidelines laid by Fairclough and insights drawn from these guidelines to my analysis.

Discourse, in broad terms, refers to the whole process of social interaction that goes beyond language. Language is a linguistic concept that encompasses vocabulary and grammar use/structures; but discourse belongs to the social parlance as it involves the analysis of ideology within language i.e. how our ways of thinking impact our use of language. Although text is a part of and arguably the foundation for discourse, discourse encompasses the factors behind the production and interpretation of particular texts (discursive practices) as well as the dialectical relationship between a text and social subjects and objects i.e. a social analysis. Therefore, to engage in a discourse analysis (DA) will mean to analyze texts at these levels.

Discourse analysis is a qualitative method that examines the meaning of communicative texts within specific social, historical, cultural or political contexts. There have been many forms of DA through time, ranging from Sinclair and Coulthard's classroom discourse analysis to ethnomethodologist's conversational analysis, both of which Fairclough (1992:12) described as

non-critical, to more critical typologies like the critical linguistics approach of Fowler et al. ([1979] 2019) and Pecheux's approach to DA. Fairclough's (1992) designation of DA typologies as non-critical has to do with the focus of such approaches on analyzing texts and discursive practices outside the consideration of the social (12). For a DA to be critical, it must, in addition to describing these practices, also explicate the role of power and ideologies in shaping discourse and bring to light the impact of hegemony on social identities and social relations (12) and how these relations, as manifested in discourse, sustain hegemony. These connections – between power, ideologies and discourse – are typically blurred or clandestine for most people and to bring these hidden connections imbedded in communicative texts to light, with the aim of inciting positive social change, is the ultimate goal of a critical discourse analysis.

Although Michael Foucault is a renowned personality in the parlance of CDA, I employed Fairclough's CDA approach due to its more integrating nature, encompassing elements that were neglected by Foucault which, in turn, produced an approach that is more suited for social science research. Some of the neglected elements in Foucault's work include his conviction that discourse analysis is the analysis of statements/of the discursive formations (socio-historical variables) that make certain statements and not others domineering in particular epochs. Foucault separated discourse analysis from, among others, textual analysis and believed that discourse cannot be equated with language (Fairclough 1992:40). Also, Fairclough critiqued Foucault's notion of the constitutive properties of discourse. To Foucault, objects and social subjects are shaped by discursive practices. This schematic view failed to consider the dialectical possibility in this relationship. Since discursive practices occur within a constructed world, with preconstituted social subjects and objects, this practice-subject/object relationship is dialectical (Fairclough 1992:60) and as much as the latter shapes the former, the former also shapes the latter.

Fairclough believed that strengthening these weaknesses in Foucault's work will create a more effective approach to CDA for social analysis. He explicated the role of language in discourse, hence the need for textual analysis within discourse analysis. This is not to imply that DA should be reduced to linguistic forms of textual analysis, as this would fall short to what Fairclough described as non-critical forms of discourse analysis, but that textual analysis should be a part of DA through three dimensions (1992:56):

1. Analysis of texts
2. Analysis of discursive practices: This involves the production, distribution, consumption and interpretation of texts, including answering questions about interdiscursivity i.e. the discourse types drawn upon in text production.
3. Social analysis of discursive events – i.e. any instance of discourse – in terms of its multi-level impact, such as on structures, institutions, and the dialectical relationship between situational (structural/ideational) and dispositional (interpersonal) impacts.

The media are organizations formally saddled with the task of information dissemination, through written texts, spoken words, or audio-visual means. The content of information they disseminate, in terms of ideology or frames, are often representations of current socio-political or cultural climate, which, as advanced by Berger and Luckmann ([1967]1991), are embodiments of institutionalized knowledge that are bound to vary; and as this climate shapes media frames, the latter could as well restructure the socio-political/cultural climate. This position echoes Fairclough's (1992:64,72) view of the dialectical relationship between discourse and social practice i.e. as much as discourse is shaped by social elements such as member resources and ideologies, these elements are in turn capable of being transcended and restructured by discourse. This, he regarded as the constitutive function of discourse (64). To buttress his position, Fairclough

(1992:110,113) exemplified the news media representation of events involving upper-class members of society using either public [official] language or private [common everyday language], with each discourse type/representation form posing consequences for social identities and maintenance of hegemony. The use of popular language, for instance, presents the experiences of upper-class members in ways that are similar to the experiences of the masses, thus enabling the latter to view elite's experiences as not too different from theirs (112). Fairclough termed this as the colonization of orders of discourse i.e. the adoption of the style of a discourse genre by another discourse genre. This colonization is capable of poking holes into hegemonic structures and rearticulating social relations towards equality. By drawing on this insight in my analysis, I observed a similar reconstruction of discourse towards dehegemonization in the form of colonizing race master frames. More on this will be explicated in subsequent chapters.

3.4.1 Fairclough's CDA Framework

Analysis of texts, discursive practices, and social practices are the three-levels that constitute a CDA framework in Fairclough's tradition. I have referred to each of these three levels as components, the features under each component as dimensions and the characteristics of each dimension as elements.

3.4.1.1 Text Analysis

Text analysis is the first component of a CDA, involving text description through an evaluation of its form and associated function i.e. how it is used and its meaning. Fairclough introduced four dimensions of text analysis: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary relates to individual words and can be explored through the following elements: *word meaning*, *wording*, and *metaphor*. Fairclough (1992:185) crystalized that the relationship between words and meanings is dialectical in that words may have different meanings, but meanings may also be worded differently. Because of the relativity of *word meanings* and ensuing ambivalence, Fairclough enjoined analysts to use context [situational and sequential¹⁷], as opposed to dictionary meaning, to decipher the meaning of words used in discursive events (188) and their hegemonic tendencies. He recommended that interpreters focus on three elements when interpreting word meanings: keywords of specific or general significance, the meaning potential of a word, and words with changing meanings.

Wording is a means of signifying – i.e. giving meaning to– words and is different for every text producer as it depends on the members resources¹⁸/conventions drawn upon (191). Therefore, the way a discourse is worded gives insight into the ideologies preoccupying the process. The three elements of wording that interpreters should focus on are: the presence of new words and their theoretical, cultural, or ideological significance, overwording (which signals intense preoccupation with an ideology), rewording (the contestation of existing words), and ideological relations drawn upon for wordings.

Metaphor refers to the link drawn between discourse subjects and other social phenomena (social issues, people, events) as a means of constructing reality in a particular way. Metaphoric

¹⁷ Elaboration on this is provided below under ‘Force of Utterance’.

¹⁸ Internalized social structures, norms and conventions [of gender, power relations, etc.] (Fairclough 1992:80).

expressions often have ideological basis and analysts are to focus on deciphering the ideological motive behind such associations and corresponding ramifications (197-98).

Grammar

Grammar relates to the formation of clauses and sentences using words (vocabulary) and its elements are grouped under three functions: ideational, interpersonal (identity and relational) and textual.

The ideational function entails the signification of the world through texts (64) and the element under here is *transitivity*. *Transitivity* deals with how meanings are (re)presented through texts by means of process, voice and nominalization. Transitive processes can be relational- where the verb marks a relationship, actional- where the verb performs a task (action process can be directed or non-directed action), mental- relating to cognition, affection, or perception, or event-based- relating to an occurrence and its outcome (180). Voice implies the construction of clauses/sentences to give primacy to or delete an agent, achieved through the use of active or passive clauses respectively. Nominalization is the transformation of a clause into a noun/nominals, with the intention of deleting the agent(s) and/or participant(s) (182). For example, saying “punches were thrown at the party” rather than “Faith punched Anna severally at the party”. One thing to pay attention to in the analysis of transitivity is the representation, or the lack thereof, of agency, causality, and responsibility, as this gives insight into the ideology driving the text production.

The interpersonal function entails the identity and relational aspects of language (76), detailing how social identities and relationships are marked and negotiated in discourse (28,64). The elements here are *modality* and *politeness*. *Modality* is the level of affinity that a text producer has

to propositions¹⁹ made in text (158) i.e. the affinity they show to a representation of reality. This can be observed through the use of categorical modality, modal auxiliary verbs, adverbs, hedging, intonation, hesitation and so forth. Modality can be subjective, in which case an assertion (affinity) is clearly represented as that of the text producer, or objective, in which case ownership of the affinity is unclear, making it ambiguous to pinpoint whose idea is being represented (159).

Politeness is the third element of grammar in text analysis and it involves a set of strategies used to prevent the production of speech acts that are threatening to one face or that of whoever we are interacting with. Fairclough borrowed from Brown and Levinson's (1978) account of positive and negative faces to explicate politeness. According to them, humans have a positive and negative face, the former being the desire to be liked and admired [leading us to be helpful and sympathetic to the needs of others] and the latter being the desire to not be disturbed, dominated or imposed upon [our need for privacy and autonomy]. Thus, during discourse, politeness can manifest as positive or negative (on record), with positive politeness featuring speech acts that appeal to the positive face of the interlocutor and negative politeness appealing to their negative face. Politeness can also manifest off record through hinting, for instance, and there can be a complete lack of politeness indicators in a discourse. Although Fairclough grouped politeness under force of utterances, he opined that the element is also associated with text features (75); however, he did not group it under any text dimension. I included it under the interpersonal function because it

¹⁹ Propositions can be made by the text producer earlier during text production, which is then reacted to- a form of modality. Alternatively, modality can be towards a referenced text from another author (more of this will be discussed under intertextuality).

deals with the interaction among discourse participants and its analysis helps to uncover how relationship between discourse participants take shape and are negotiated during discourse.

Textual function relates to how sentences are constructed in ways that reflect foregrounded information and Fairclough identified *theme* as the textual element of grammar (178), referring to the way clause elements or parts of a sentence are positioned according to their perceived pivotalness- informational prominence. The theme of a clause/sentence is the information provided at its point of departure which could give insight into the structure of the discourse (thematic structure), in terms of how points are presented, as well as foregrounded information on the text. Themes can be marked or unmarked (183-84). An unmarked theme is the first part of a sentence that has no foregrounded word; in other words, it is the subject of the sentence. Marked themes are words or phrases that precede the subject to provide foreground information on the rest of the sentence i.e. the ideological justification for the sentence. For instance, adding 'of course' to the start of a sentence carries a foregrounded ideology or preconceived notions about the subject being discussed which could have racial or gender undertones.

Cohesion

Cohesion is the third dimension of the text component of discourse analysis and involves the synthesization of sentence parts such that one sentence leads to the other and the next is built off its predecessor to ensure congruence. Elements under here are *cohesive functional relations* and *explicit cohesive markers* (175-76). *Cohesive functional relations* majorly take the form of elaboration, extension, or enhancement (Halliday 2004: 540-547). *Explicit cohesive markers* are the indicators of these functional relations. They are readily visible on the surface of texts, and they take the form of conjunctives, ellipses, reference, and lexical cohesion.

Text structure

Text structure is the last dimension of the text component and it entails structuring conventions associated with discourse production which manifests during interactional control. Features of interactional control are turn-taking, exchange structure, topic control, and agenda setting and formulation (Fairclough 1992:152-58). How these features manifest and are negotiated during discourse reveals power relations between participants. This dimension is useful for exploring interactional forms of discourse like interviews but it not relevant to my research, hence I omitted it from my analysis. My research is on podcast representations of serial murderers as opposed to interviews of serial murderers. Interaction between murderers and podcast hosts is absent in the former, hence the redundancy of analyzing text structure in terms of interactional control.

3.4.1.2 Discursive Practice

Discursive practice relates to the processes associated with text production, distribution and consumption. This component of CDA is crucial to understanding power and ideological relations in texts because in producing texts, producers draw on available members' resources which are rooted in the ideologies/conventions of the society they inhabit, a reference that is capable of naturalizing and sustaining hegemony. Nevertheless, discourse is also capable of transcending hegemony by reconstituting the conventions of the social. Thus, as much as discursive practices are shaped by social structures, the former are as well socially constitutive (Horváth 2009:46). The process of text distribution is dependent on the nature of the discourse and the conventions that it is associated with. A medical text, for instance, has peculiar conventions of production (formal interviews) and is bound to be transformed into several publications and even statistics, compared to classroom discourse. The consumption of texts is dependent on how it is interpreted, which brings us back to the pertinence of member resources and the issue of hegemony. In essence, the

way we produce and interpret texts is based on our members' resources. Fairclough then proposed that analysis of discursive practice should not only entail the exploration of how text is produced and interpreted using members' resources but also on the nature of the resources being drawn upon and in what ways they are utilized- normative or creative (Fairclough 1992:80,85). In analyzing discursive practices, Fairclough proposed three dimensions: force of utterances, coherence and intertextuality.

Force of Utterance

Force of utterance signifies a text producers' intention behind an utterance produced (82)- which could be to make a promise, ask a question, issue a command, or threaten, etc. It is the speech act that a text is used to perform. Fairclough observed the ambivalence of force within texts, as an utterance can have multiple interpretations. For instance, "Can you clean the dishes?" is a question, a request but can also be a complaint, depending on context. Thus, Fairclough identified three elements that, when taken into account, could help reduce the ambivalence of force and facilitate interpretation of forces within texts. The first is *sequential context*, which involves the nature of the text preceding that which is being analyzed and is dependent upon the nature of the discourse type (82). For example, in a restaurant setting, "Can you clean the dishes?" is likely to be intended as an order which the staff is expected to obey but in a household setting, it could be a genuine question that the household member, whom it is directed to, can either give a positive or negative response.

The second form of context is *situational context* which entails a reading of the surrounding situation. For instance, "Can you clean the dishes?" would be a complaint if uttered after a family member leaves dirty dishes in the sink, as they routinely do. However, in a potluck scenario, the intention behind "Can you clean the dishes?" is likely to be a genuine request. Context provides

insight into the nature of interpretative principles that drive the production of utterances and corresponding implications.

Politeness strategies are useful in further interpreting forces (75,82). A request, for example, can either appeal to the positive or negative face of the interlocutor. It can also be made without any form of redressive action. For instance, “May I have a sip of water from your bottle?”, all things being equal, is intended as a request. Politeness strategies will tell us that this request appeals to the positive face of the interlocutor and can be tagged a positive politeness force of utterance, implying respect for the addressee, as opposed to “I want a sip of water from your bottle” which is a request made without redressive action, an impolite or bald request, implying disrespect for the addressee and bad manners on the part of the addressor, although situational context may skew this interpretation²⁰.

Coherence

Fairclough noted that texts only make sense to those who make sense of it (84). Coherence is the ability to understand and interpret the meaning of texts and one way of achieving this is by drawing upon certain *interpretative principles*. Therefore, interpretative principle is the element under coherence. They entail a set of conventions associated with ways of thinking, and these conventions are rooted in the social, political, and cultural ideologies of or even popular information in specific societies. Thus, to coherently read a text, socio-cultural and political ideologies relating to time and place must be drawn upon. For instance, the statement “They can’t work more than 20 hours weekly; they are international students.” can only be made sense of by

²⁰ Such as when discourse participants are close acquaintances or during discourse involving a child who is yet to be familiar with the norms of social interaction.

connecting the statement to the Canadian government's convention on employment for international students.

Intertextuality

Simply put, intertextuality is the inclusion of other texts in the production of new texts. Fairclough asserted that every text builds upon and, thus, contains fragments of other texts. Although texts are invariably interrelated, each new text has its unique identifiers which he called "our-own-ness" (102). Kristeva (1986) opined that through intertextuality, history is inserted into texts and texts are inserted into history. The former implies that new texts draw upon old/historical ones to reinforce, challenge or reference inherent ideologies and the insertion of texts into history implies that as new texts emerge, they contribute to social change and provide basis for upcoming texts to build on. This is similar to the theory-research relationship. Fairclough explicated two elements of intertextuality, borrowing the terms from French discourse analysts Authier-Révus and Maingueneau. They are *manifest* and *constitutive intertextuality*.

Manifest intertextuality is the explicit reference to other texts in new texts and is achieved through five mechanisms: discourse representation, presupposition, negation, metadiscourse, and irony (118). Discourse representation entails the way events are relayed in texts and the two forms here are direct and indirect discourse. Direct discourse features reporting using direct sentences that represent the real voice of the person being represented. This can be achieved using quotation marks. Indirect discourse features the use of indirect sentences for reporting clauses and, when used, may not accurately reflect the voice/ideology of the reported and is also capable of downplaying the intensity of the information in the text.

Presuppositions are foregrounded information about a phenomenon that are referenced to justify a current statement or discourse. This foregrounded information (propositions), on one hand, may be texts drawn from another author's text (alien text) or from one's previous text (assertions made earlier on in the current discourse or assertions from one's previous literature). On the other hand, they may be popular opinions or ideologies about a subject matter. Presuppositions can be used sincerely or for manipulative intent and its analysis gives insight into the text producers ideological stance.

Negation is the placement or use of two clauses together such that the meaning of one contradicts that of the other. When negation is used in a sentence, two elements are present- an assumption and a presupposition (Giora 1995). A clause is used to make assumptions about a phenomenon, then a second clause contesting/refuting that assertion follows up. This refutation is done based on a presupposed idea of the truth about that phenomenon. What makes negation a mechanism of intertextuality is its association with presupposition- drawing upon other texts to contest an assumption (Fairclough 1992:121-22).

Metadiscourse occurs when a text producer separates themselves from some parts of the text. It can be used to express 'objectivity', inadequacy, or uncertainty. Forms of achieving metadiscourse include hedging- with the use of words/phrases like 'sort of', 'somewhat', and 'kind of' to indicate the inadequacy of an expression; the association of expressions to particular conventions or to a metaphor e.g. saying 'scientifically speaking' to express objectivity or 'metaphorically speaking' to express a symbolic idea. Paraphrasing is another means of exercising metadiscursivity. Metadiscursivity is intended to place the text producer in a position of control over the discourse [a display of objectivity] and is popular in academic writings (Fairclough 1992:122).

Irony is the last mechanism of manifest intertextuality and it occurs when the apparent meaning of an utterance is far from what the text producer is implying. This can be made out from a mismatch of apparent meaning and situational context, intonation, scare quotes, etc. What makes irony intertextual is that an ironic statement often echoes another person's previous utterance. For instance, if a friend tells another not to wear stilettos to a concert but they decide to anyway and it turned out that they could not handle it and the friend yells "Great shoes!", not only do they not mean that, making it an irony, but the ironic statement is an echo of the previous interaction they had, hence an intertextual reaction.

Constitutive intertextuality, also called interdiscursivity, is the relationship between different discursive formations²¹ which manifests within a discursive event (Fairclough 1992:47,68). Each discursive event is associated with particular conventions or discursive formations (67). Some of these conventions work to reproduce hegemony through their text characteristics (vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure) for instance. However, discourse is capable of transcending that hegemony by adopting the conventions associated with other genres. Thus, an analysis of interdiscursivity entails an exploration of the conventions/discursive formations found within a discursive event and – if applicable – how they experience colonization by other conventions to determine ideological and power relations at play or being contested within a given discourse. Fairclough preferred to use the term 'orders of discourse' to refer to interdiscursivity and he identified four properties associated with it (125): genre, activity type, style, and discourse.

²¹ Foucault defines a discursive formation as rules of formation of statements, objects, subjects, concepts and strategies associated with discursive or non-discursive elements that make up a discourse (Foucault 1972:31-9).

Genre is a term that encompasses activities that utilize relatively stable conventions such as those of manifest intertextuality (128). For instance, a research survey or a research paper will fall under the academic genre as they are guided by similar rules such as of structuring, citation and referencing.

Activity type is an engagement carried out, which is often in accordance to prescribed rules or conventions. Thus, specific genres are made up of specific activity types and the latter is composed of peculiar actions and participants (126). For instance, academic research is an activity that involves actions such as reviewing literature and collecting data where necessary. Participants involved in these activities will include the researcher, other researchers (through their past research works) and samples from whom/where data is collected. Participants involved in a retail activity are bound to be different and the genre of retail is different from that of academia.

Fairclough observed the ambiguity in defining style as it pertains to interdiscursivity. Simply, style refers to the manner in which an activity is conducted. By inference, we can define style as the manner in which activities within a genre are conducted. Since genres prescribe conventions for activities within them, style is a property that can be ascribed to genres and they have three parameters (Fairclough 1992:127): tenor, mode and rhetorical mode. Tenor indicates the relationship between discourse participants such as intimate, official, or informal. Mode represents the means of delivery of the discourse such as written, spoken, spoken-as-if-written, etc. Rhetorical mode is the intention behind the mode or delivery of the discourse and can be argumentative or descriptive among others.

Discourse, as a property of interdiscursivity, refers to the perspective from which a subject-matter is constructed which will determine the content produced about that phenomenon (128). For instance, a discussion about food recipes from a plant-based perspective is a plant recipe discourse,

as opposed to a meat recipe discourse whose content will revolve around food recipes derived from animal meat.

In analyzing interdiscursivity within texts, Fairclough recommended an observation of the overall genre (convention) of the text, an observation of the presence of alien genres, the activity, style and discourse features, and the conventional or innovative nature of the interdiscursive properties drawn upon (232).

3.4.1.3 Social Practice

The overall aim of discourse is communication through texts. However, as explicated earlier, the form that this communication takes i.e. the production of discourse, is dependent on – other texts whose content are based on – the conventions of social structures or institutions (intertextuality). These norms and conventions are social practices and the fact that discourse draws upon them makes it a social practice. Fairclough (1992:66) advanced that there are different fronts to social practice; political, economic, cultural, ideological, etc. Given the focus of this research on representation at the intersection of race and gender constructs and the hegemony associated with the history of these constructs, the social practices analyzed are the cultural and ideological forms.

Discourse is capable of establishing and reinforcing power relations among groups in the society by drawing on conventions that naturalize ethnocentric ideologies and by extension, *hegemony*. However, discourse is also capable of transcending these ideologies and hegemony by drawing upon conventions in innovative ways during discursive practice to challenge traditional orders of discourse (67). Thus, Fairclough suggested that in analyzing social practice as it relates to text and discursive practices, we should consider the following properties: social matrix of discourse-entailing the hegemonic relations and structures that typically dominate a genre of discursive event and how discourse in the event being analyzed matches or contests these traditional hegemonic

relations, orders of discourse- entailing the nexus between the discursive event and the orders of discourse they draw upon²², and, lastly, the ideological and political effects of discourse on social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and beliefs [prejudice].

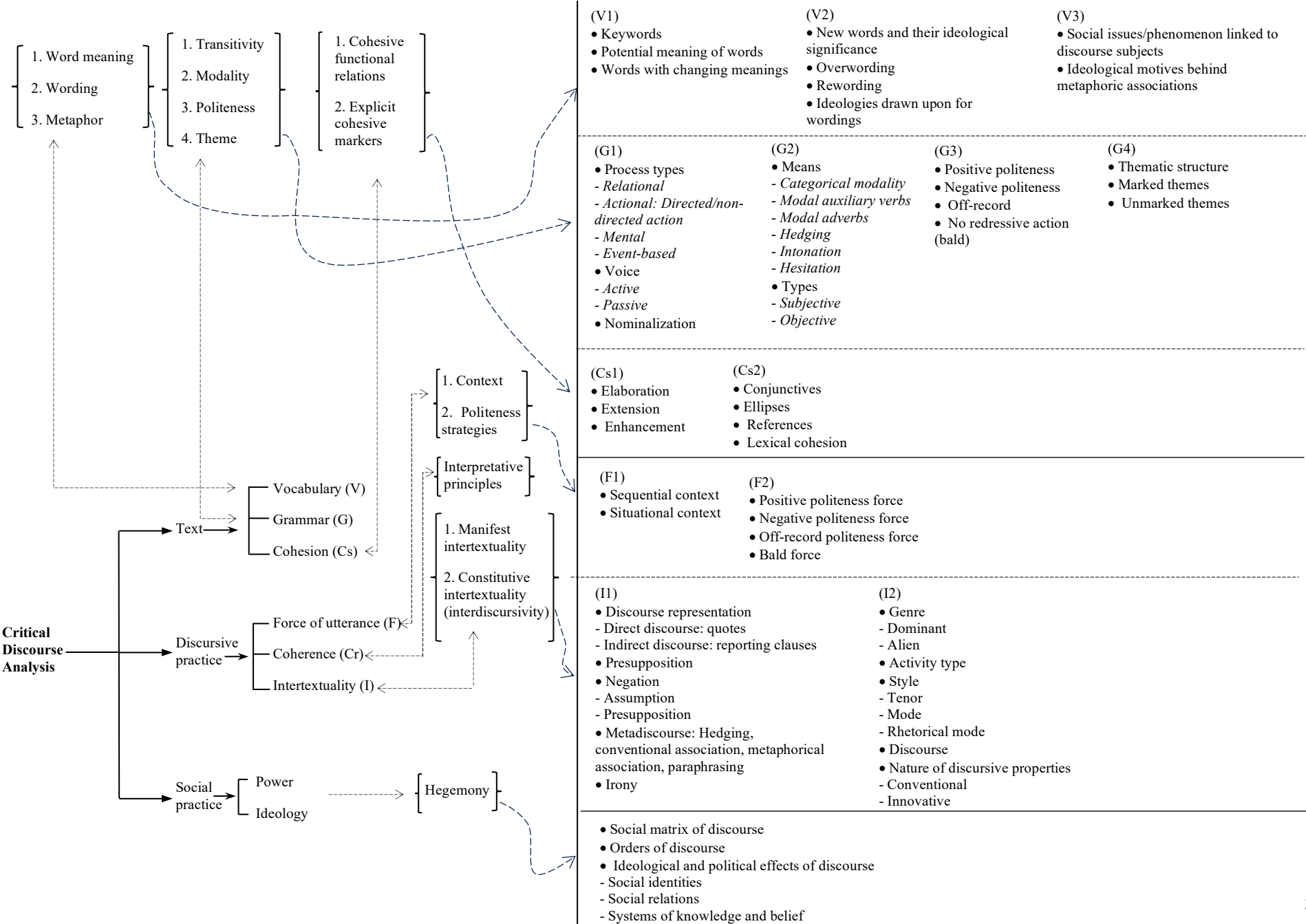
From the above discussion, the role of discourse in sustaining hegemony is apparent. But given the constitutive nature of discourse, it is also capable of transcending hegemony. The manifestation of hegemonic themes in this study goes against orthodox beliefs about how race and gender, as master statuses, impact the depiction of criminals. As will be seen in the following chapters, a colonization of hegemonic master frames was observed in podcast depiction of serial killers, with the master frames traditionally associated with a race and gender group saturating the discourse of other race and gender groups. The social implication of this emergent trope in media discourse will be discussed in line with Fairclough's propositions on social practice i.e. the implication of emergent themes on the social identity of individuals and existing systems of beliefs. This will be tackled in chapter 5.

During coding, some dimensions of text analysis and discursive practices proved useful in interpreting clandestine statements and classifying them under relevant themes. Specific applications of these CDA elements will be seen in chapter 4.

Below is a model of the components, dimensions, and elements of CDA discussed above:

²² In relation to democratization, commodification and technologization (see Fairclough 1992, chapter 7).

Figure 1: Components, Dimensions, and Elements of Critical Discourse Analysis



3.4.2 Data Analysis Process

3.4.2.1 Download and Transcription

While podcast audios are freely available on the internet, the emergence of the dynamic advertisement insertion scheme causes inconsistency in the timeline of discourse in these audios. The dynamic ad insertion involves the use of artificial intelligence to consistently change the kind of advertisement that pops up in podcast audios, with each one varying in length, which contrasts its predecessor- baked-in ads, where podcast hosts include advertisement(s) as part of their script, allowing for timeline consistency. Therefore, to allow for accuracy in timeline reports during analysis, I downloaded these podcast audios as mp3 files using Google's developers tools on google chrome. A link to the podcast episodes on respective websites are provided in Appendix Table 7.

I transcribed the audio files using an AI software and afterwards, verified the transcriptions manually by listening to the audio files, checking for inconsistencies, and correcting errors in the AI transcriptions. This process allowed me to gain familiarity with the data.

3.4.2.2 Coding

The abductive coding process was employed, which is the combination of the inductive and deductive coding techniques. This was aimed at maximizing the identification of relevant codes.

Deductive Coding

Prior to transcribing the podcast audios, I developed a start-list to provide insight into the features associated with the master frames of my intersectional analysis- race, gender and monstrosity framing. The features grouped under this list were derived from existing research on popular stereotypes/frames perpetuated about serial killers (Wiest 2011; Wiest 2016; Vronsky 2018),

blackness and whiteness (Foreman, Arteaga, and Collins 2016; Carlson 2016; Lane 2017), and femininity and masculinity (Wood 2012; Pozzan 2014; Dixon 2017). I have presented them in the ensuing table:

Table 3: Master Frames Start-list

S/N	Category	Specifics
1.	Gender stereotype	<p>Female</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak, fragile • Caring/maternal/nurturer • Emotional, affectionate, sensitive <p>Male</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, powerful, dominant • Aggressive, violent • Competent • Non-affectionate
2.	Racial stereotype	<p>White</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual superiority • Likely to reform • Hardworking • Stable families

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law defenders, conformists <p>Black</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deviant/trouble with the law • Unlikely to reform • Folk-devil • Unstable families • Lazy • [Intellectual] inferiority
3.	Monstrosity master frame	<p>Fantastic/celebrity monster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence- glorification of intelligence • Handsome/beautiful • Capitalizing on skillfulness • Comparison to well-known killers • Perpetrator-centered narrative <p>Traditional/evil monster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood thirsty • Predator • Maniac • Sadist • Satan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim-centered narrative
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Pertinent is to state that this start-list was not consulted until the deductive coding of data was completed and they proved useful in identifying connections between codes that would have been missed in the absence of the list.

Inductive Coding

After transcribing audios, I employed the NVIVO software to analyze the transcripts. I analyzed one transcript at a time and began by assigning codes to texts that stood out as indicators of race and gender stereotypes and monstrosity frames. The assignment of codes in this regard was guided by Fairclough’s CDA components- text analysis, discursive practices, and social practices. For instance, while intellectual inferiority, a stereotype of blackness, was not always explicitly asserted, the speaker’s tone, sequential context leading up to an assertion, use of near-synonyms, and presuppositions, among others, helped in identifying and coding such texts as intellectual inferiority. Through this process, 956 codes emerged inductively.

Following this, I began to identify patterns among the codes and group related codes into categories. During this process, codes that do not seem to be relevant to my research questions or had no identifiable pattern with other codes were categorized as ‘miscellaneous’. Further classification was done to identify patterns within emergent categories, leading to a number of subcategories and lead categories. Some of the previously-tagged miscellaneous codes found their way into the these categories and reference to the start-list codes was instrumental in this process. Finally, I drew on my research questions to identify themes of black stereotypes, white stereotypes, masculinity stereotypes, femininity stereotypes, celebrity monster frames, and evil monster frames, based on emergent categories. These themes emerged out of fifteen lead categories.

Chapter 4:

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, I will be presenting the result of my data analysis in terms of the characteristics of the serial killers discussed in my podcast samples and identified themes, including the categories that make them up, with the aim of answering my research questions. As noted in chapter 3, thematic discourse analysis was employed in the identification of these themes however, the guidelines of CDA, as presented by Fairclough (1992), were referenced in the process of coding, categorization and theme identification. The dimensions/elements of Fairclough's CDA guideline drawn upon in my data analysis include but are not limited to overwording, presuppositions, metadiscursivity, and modality.

4.1 Sample Characteristics

Below is a table showcasing basic demographic information about the serial killers discussed by this study's samples:

Table 4: Podcast Grouping and Demographic Information of Serial Killers

S/N	Name	Podcast	Race	Gender	Victim Count	Victim Type
1.	Caroline Peoples and Angel Ford-Wright	Sistas Who Kill (1)	Black	Female	4	Acquaintances, stranger
2.	Jeffrey Dahmer	Criminology	White	Male	15+	Strangers
3.	Joe Metheny	Morbid	White	Male	2+	Strangers
4.	Waneta Hoyt	Female Criminals	White	Female	5	Children (family)
5.	Khalil Wheeler-Weaver	Crime Junkie	Black	Male	4	Strangers, acquaintance
6.	Lavina Fisher	My Favorite Murder	White	Female	Multiple	Strangers
7.	Lorenzo Fayne	Black True Crime	Black	Male	5	Strangers
8.	Marie Dean Arrington	Sistas Who Kill (2)	Black	Female	2	Husband, stranger

4.2 Themes

Six themes relating to my research questions were identified from the podcasts sampled. These master frames are black racial stereotypes, white racial stereotypes, masculinity stereotypes, femininity stereotypes, celebrity monster frames, and evil monster frames. Noteworthy is that the presentation of these frames as identified themes does not signal their exclusive attribution to corresponding master statuses. Simply put, the manifestation of black stereotypes, as a theme, is

not an indication that only black serial killers were represented under that theme. In fact, patterns observed in the data revealed multiple overlaps in stereotype frames such that identity boundaries – mostly of race but also of gender – collapse. Elaboration on this will be done while answering research questions in the following section. This section will, however, focus on the features of each theme and highlight the categories under them, as found in the data.

236 instances of master frames of race, gender, and monstrosity was observed. The evil monster frame was the most frequent, having 66 appearances, followed by 51 instances of the use of masculinity stereotypes, and 43 observations of black racial stereotypes. White racial stereotypes were observed a total of 40 times and the celebrity monster frame appeared 30 times. The least observed frame was that of femininity stereotypes, featuring 6 appearances. I have presented this information in a descending order in the ensuing table:

Table 5: Themes Identified from Data

S/N	Theme	Frequency
1.	Evil monster	66
2.	Masculinity stereotypes	51
3.	Black racial stereotypes	43
4.	White racial stereotypes	40
5.	Celebrity monster	30
6.	Femininity stereotypes	6

Theme 1: Evil Monster Frame

Of the other master frames, the evil monster frame was the most observed in my data, emanating in the following categories: abnormality, animalistic qualities, cruelty, evil, disgust, and monster frames. The latter include the outright representation of perpetrators as monsters and inferred monster representations through an interpretation of the force of utterance via context.

Abnormality

But Dahmer wasn't like most boys his age. He started wandering off on his own. He was withdrawn. And he started to have disturbing fantasies. He started killing animals and even impaled the head of one animal on a stick. (Criminology 5:55)

This statement presents the perpetrator as an outsider, acting on a premise different from humans, thus evoking images of a non-human evil personality. Another means through which abnormality was expressed was through reference to the perpetrator as a pervert:

So, join us as we discuss the homicidal pervert that is Lorenzo Fayne. (Black True Crime 2:53)

Animalistic Qualities

Perpetrators were presented as predators and savages. In the predator category, overwording of the word 'lure' was observed in Criminology podcast's description of the perpetrators acts. While lure can be used in a friendly way in discourse to suggest, for instance, that a friend tricked you to attend a social gathering, in this context, the word was used multiple times to portray the perpetrator as an animal (as in luring baits in order to prey on them). This conclusion was reached based on the sentence structure of instances of the word use- the use of the 'lure' was followed or

preceded by accounts of the perpetrator's ill intention and/or details of the crime. Consider the following instances:

Dahmer lured 14-year-old Jamie Doxtater to his grandmother's house. He drugged Jamie and then strangled him. Dahmer removed the flesh from the boy's bones with acid and pulverized the remains. (Criminology 16:37)

He lured 26-year-old Anthony Lee Sears to the house and then drugged, strangled, sodomized and photographed Anthony. (Criminology 17:23)

Dahmer lured a 33-year-old sex worker named Raymond Lamont Smith, also known as Ricky Beeks, to his new apartment with the promise of \$50 for sex. Dahmer strangled Raymond and then performed oral sex on the corpse. He dismembered the body and removed the head. (Criminology 21:03)

Dahmer lured a 33-year-old sex worker named Raymond Lamont Smith, also known as Ricky Beeks, to his new apartment with the promise of \$50 for sex. Dahmer strangled Raymond and then performed oral sex on the corpse. He dismembered the body and removed the head. (Criminology 28:20)

Metheny lured 37-year-old Rita Kemper back to his trailer on the night of December 8th. (Morbidity 34:26)

The predator framing is also observed in the portrayal of a perpetrator as cold and calculating. Consider the extract below:

I mean, the texts, the searches, it all seems so cold and calculated. (Crime Junkie 14:39)

I coded this statement as an indicator of predation because the process of preying on others requires lack of emotion and tactic. A cold and calculated move is perceived as such, thus suggesting that the perpetrator is a predator.

Outright use of the word ‘predator’ to describe perpetrators was also observed:

The prosecution for this case went about it by showing the jury that Metheny was a violent, unpredictable predator... (Morbid 57:08)

Another instance of animalistic portrayals is the reference to perpetrators as savages, which evokes a violent animal/beast image. See below:

First of all, it's a whole lot of shooting in the face. These n*ggas is savage. Savage.
(Sistas Who Kill 1 15:42)

Cruel

Depiction of serial killers as cruel took several forms. For instance, the Female Criminals podcast referenced the perpetrator as a cold-blooded killer:

The prosecution for this case went about it by showing the jury that Metheny was a violent, unpredictable predator. (4:44)

Perpetrators were further portrayed as petrifying:

...the story I have for you today is about a man who terrorized a cluster of New Jersey towns in 2016. (Crime Junkie 00:00)

Although Lorenzo was acting big and bad at this time, so he's, you know, terrorizing literally people...(Black True Crime 12:10)

Categorical modality was also used to describe a perpetrator as wicked, demonstrating high affinity to the frame:

But he's terrible. (Morbid 3:32)

He's really horrifying. (Morbid 26:51)

Evil

The representation of serial killers as evil took many forms. Some of these depictions were bald such as those below:

I can't even fathom what the fuck is wrong with this man. I just have to look at him again. So I'm like, this, this right here is evil. (Black True Crime 27:40)

He is undoubtedly one of the most vile, some people would say the most evil killers in American history... (Criminology 4:19)

Other evil depictions were inferred. Consider the following instance:

...but killing children and then doing what he did to their bodies, you know, sexually assaulting them before he killed them. I mean, yeah, there's a special place in hell for you. (Black True Crime 39:34)

Committing any form of atrocity against vulnerable people, such as children, is considered one of the worst crimes against humanity. Based on this reference, in the above statement, the speaker is presupposing that the perpetrator is evil and is, as such, going to hell.

Evil depictions also took the form of demonic frames. Consider the instance below as a bald demonic depiction:

So, this demon ended up confessing to killing Latondra Dean, Fallon Flood, and Glenda Jones. (Black True Crime 26:30)

The demonic frame was also observed in the following extract:

What possessed you to do that? (Morbid 26:26)

I coded the above statement under demonic frame because it reflects the speaker's perception of the perpetrators actions as evil, with strong affiliation to a malignant entity like the devil.

Disgusting

Another evil monster category that was observed is the depiction of perpetrators as disgusting. This was achieved in many ways. See below, three instances of categorical assertion of repugnance:

He's foul. (Morbid 26:26)

This is sick. (Black True Crime 19:22)

Oh, you're disgusting. (Black True Crime 15:03)

Depiction of perpetrators as disgusting also took the following form:

And it bothers me that he's talking about it so lightly. How dare he even speak Glenda's name, you dirty, dirty, low-down shit. (Black True Crime 52:49)

A perpetrator was framed multiple times as gross in the Morbid podcast. Consider the following instances:

But I have a case today that's just really gross. — Oh. — This person is a very gross person. (2:29)

Now this is like... really gross and rough what he does next because he returned to her body several months later and exhumed her... (26:28)

Like he's just really a gross person. (26:58)

Like he would've kept going after her. And he said, and this is like really gross, he said: "Everything was going pretty good until I ran out of my special meat. So I lured another bitch up to my trailer. I got her in there and started to rip her clothes off and knocking the hell out of her..." (48:55)

Monster Frames

The bald use of the word 'monster' to describe perpetrators was observed in many instances. Some of such representations are shown below, with all expressing high affinity modality to monstrosity via categorical assertions:

Now, I, I fully recognize that this man is a monster and the things he did to the victims are appalling, but we can also recognize that this monster was created by the circumstances that he was in... (Black True Crime 10:17)

This, this guy was a monster and it's the reason why he's such an infamous serial killer. (Criminology 56:57)

...he's a fucking monster. A monster of the highest order. (Morbid 16:17)

Theme 2: Male Gender Stereotypes

Studies show that the male gender is stereotyped as independent and strong. Furthermore, men are framed to lack – or hide – emotions, in contrast to women who are portrayed as emotion-dominated. Pursuant to this, researchers have reported that when violent crime is committed by a male, the media frames the act as unsurprising as it is within their genetic predisposition to act as such, stereotyping men as violent. Stereotypes of aggressiveness, independent/taking charge, and lack of affection are the categories of male gender stereotypes found in my data. They unfold as follows:

Aggressiveness

Aggressiveness was observed in two ways- bald and inferred depiction of perpetrators as aggressive and the provision of graphical recounts of their murders. Consider the following instances of bald depiction of aggressiveness, the first featuring the use of categorical modality for emphasis:

With other victims he's in, he's wildly aggressive. Wildly aggressive. He does not like being told no and I could absolutely see this not being even a transactional thing. (Morbid 24:26)

The prosecution for this case went about it by showing the jury that Metheny was a violent, unpredictable predator who lost it when Rita Kemper refused his very aggressive advances, and they claimed he was, had every intent on killing her. And they were 100% right, in my opinion. (Morbid 54:34)

The high affinity modality expressed by the speaker to the aggressiveness of the perpetrator “and they were 100% right...” reifies the aggressive frame. Another perpetrator was inferred to be aggressive based on the reaction she gave to an incident:

And he tries to appeal to her sensitive side, which, of course, pisses the fuck out of her. So she chokes him out and smashes his head through a window. (My Favorite Murder 57:02)

In the above extract, the speaker revealed beforehand that a spy, who got discovered and was being brutalized by Lavinia’s gang, tried to appeal to her for clemency because, as the only woman in their midst, he stereotyped her to be caring. The clause/marked theme “of course”, marks the intention of the statement by denoting that rather than being gentle, as gender stereotypes assume, she is an aggressive personality.

Graphical recount of murders, as a demonstration of aggressiveness, was observed in the instances below. Pertinent is to state that the directed-action transitive process was used in recounting most of these depictions, ensuring that agency and responsibility is accounted for.

Eric, the first, she smothered with a couch pillow. (Female Criminals 2 38:22)

She grabbed a bath towel and chased him down the hallway into the living room.
(Female Criminals 39:04)

Nita pressed a pillow from the crib onto Molly's face... (Female Criminals (39:23)

Dahmer struck him in the head with a barbell and then strangled him... he exhumed the remains, crushed the bones with a sledgehammer and scattered them across a wooded ravine behind the house. (Criminology 14:14)

Then he dismembered the corpse and masturbated on it. (Criminology 15:49)

He lured 26-year-old Anthony Lee Sears to the house and then drugged, strangled, sodomized and photographed Anthony. (Criminology 17:23)

He bludgeoned them both to death with a woodcutters axe. (Morbid 28:14)

And started choking her and dragged her back inside the trailer. —

Holy shit.

— Then he ripped her pants off (Criminology 36:11)

...and he ended up stabbing her over 20 times and killing her. (Black True Crime (26:59)

So she chokes him out and smashes his head through a window. (My Favorite Murder 57:02)

Control

Perpetrators were also depicted as taking control or being independent. Consider the following extracts:

And so I like to think she was like a rich girl with a personality disorder. Like she had it all, but she was like, fuck you mom, I'm not marrying that guy. I'm gonna go out and start robbing people on the road. I've had it with this life of luxury. (My Favorite Murder 45:51)

The quote above presents the perpetrator as taking control of her life and breaking free from traditional gender expectations of femininity such as getting married. This frame is also observed later on, as the speaker recounted her being at the front line of luring victims into the Six Mile Inn:

The entire time, John Fisher is just kind of standing off on the side staring, which is such not a good plan at all. — Yeah. — It's the, the husband should go for the, I mean, if you need to do this now, and you may, for this plan. (My Favorite Murder 57:33)

Although the last sentence in the above quotation presupposes the idea that men and not women should be decision makers, it also presented Lavinia as crossing that line, once again, and taking a lead role in the premeditated murders.

Lack of Affection

The last category under this theme- lack of affection, was observed through in depiction below:

Most mothers they worked with jumped at every opportunity to feed their babies, change them, and hold them. They found comfort in these normal maternal actions in this medical setting. — But not Nita. She had to be encouraged to interact with Molly. And when she did, she often held the baby at arm's length, instead of close to her chest. (Female Criminals 1 34:43)

This statement frames the perpetrator as not indulging in the traditional expectation of motherhood, thus presupposing that the perpetrator lacks affection.

Theme 3: Black Racial Stereotypes

This theme emerged through the identification of several categories that fit traditional depictions of people of color, by the media, in matters of crime as well as popular ideologies about blackness and crime. Studies show that blacks are more likely to be framed as: engaging in criminality based off their volition as opposed to due to psychological conditions or under the influence of drugs, unlikely to reform, extremely dangerous to society, etc.

Such frames were found across the data in this study, manifesting through statements signifying inherent criminality, voluntary engagement in murder, unlikeliness to reform, low intelligence, and untrustworthiness.

Inherent Criminality

The following texts extracted from Morbid illustrates one of the stereotypes of blackness- inherent criminality:

It's like chi, got plenty of people grow up in horrible, horrible households. — Yeah.

— Plenty of people struggle with addiction and don't murder people. (58:19)

The speaker is asserting that the serial killer's experience with being raised in an abusive atmosphere and getting addicted to drugs does not rationalize the crimes that he committed. This justification is reached by referencing other drug addicts and victims of childhood abuse who chose not to murder people, thus suggesting that the perpetrator's action is based on his inner desire for blood and not his detrimental upbringing. This illustrates engagement in murder by choice, with perpetrators being fully aware of the gruesomeness of their acts. The following extract from Black True Crime supports this:

But the main problem is, Lorenzo, is that you had a choice, you know? Like you saw, yeah, you went through a lot of stuff, but instead of becoming different, you chose to be even worse than the people who assaulted you. And that's the part where it's like, dude, somebody has to answer for this. And it's all on you. Not your mama, not your daddy. (39:55)

I don't expect you to really understand what's going on in this court, but you know what you did. So please stop trying to play us like we're stupid. (40:25)

Here, the speaker is refuting the perpetrators claim of not understanding what is going on, categorically asserting that his sanity is intact.

Unlikely to Reform

Another category found that convey black stereotype is the portrayal of serial killers as unlikely to reform- emerging through statements showing excitement for conviction, desire for incarceration, and the exercise of capital punishment, all of which presupposes that the individual should be banished from society as they are beyond redemption. This can be seen in the following extracts:

They also got murder.

— Okay, good. I was hoping that one would stick, too. (My Favorite Murder 1:03:44)

I mean, we're talking about drugging and sexually molesting a 13-year-old boy. And you're going to get what is essentially kind of like house arrest and still be allowed out during the day to go work? I don't get it man. — Yeah, I wouldn't want this guy

walking around in my neighborhood knowing what he did to that boy. (Criminology 18:58)

And... anybody with half a brain would feel like he deserves to die. (Black True Crime 39:34)

In the last two extracts, the speakers desire for incarceration and the exercise of the death penalty are conveyed through high affinity modality. In the criminology extract, this modality is exercised by the second speaker's solidarity with the previous speaker's idea that house arrest, as a punishment for serial murder, is inadequate. Black True Crime used categorical modality "he *deserves* to die" to demonstrate strong conviction that serial murders are unlikely to reform and should be put to death once apprehended.

Low Intelligence

The low intelligence stereotype, that is associated with blackness, was also observed:

That's what I'm saying, you gotta have like a limit. Like, I need to be... I need to be making a significant amount of money to kill. (Sistas Who Kill 1 32:28)

The speaker made the above comment after realizing that the perpetrators murdered a man for \$200, a sum believed to be meager. Inferring from the sequential context, this statement paints the perpetrators as stupid, lacking the intelligence to think through and decide what is worth killing for (and by extension who). This lack of intelligence is reiterated further in the discourse, with a reference to the perpetrators receipt of \$500 for a luxury car that they stole from another victim. This idea of inability to engage in critical thinking can also be seen in the following Black True Crime extract:

I was about to say he's probably not smart enough to sit there and double down and be like, I didn't do it. You know, like with such a low IQ and them constantly asking you questions, you can either go silent or you can crack and be like, look, I did it, you know? (22:40)

The above statement was made as a reaction to the serial killer's honesty in admitting to the murders he committed. However, this honesty, a positive image, was downplayed by attributing it to the perpetrator's unintelligence, believed to make him incapable of lying to law enforcement. This association is based on the established idea that serial killers possess high intelligence (Leary et al. 2019), making them capable of lying to and manipulating those around them, a useful attribute in securing victims. This could explain why many of them are perceived by acquaintances as quality individuals before knowledge of their crimes come to light.

Untrustworthy

The last instance of black stereotype is the depiction of perpetrators as 'not to be trusted'. Consider the instances below, extracted from *Morbid*, where a perpetrator was conveyed repeatedly as a liar, via overwording of the word 'claim/claimed':

Joe did claim Joe Metheny claimed that he had been raised in a very abusive home.
(5:58)

It's awful. So... like much of Joe Metheny's personal history and his confession that would later come, like I said earlier, it's really hard to tell the facts from his lies.
(21:27)

I don't know if they were currently, if they were trying to connect them with actual cases, but that's what he claimed later. (22:13)

Direct discourse representation was also used by the speaker for metadiscursive purpose, to centralize the recounts as the perpetrators version of the story which is likely to be false:

Um, by his own confession, his criminal history began in 1976 where he said he unintentionally killed a man during a bar fight in Baltimore. (21:40)

Theme 4: White Racial Stereotypes

Stereotypes associated with whiteness, even in instances of crime, are reported to be empathic-oriented. White perpetrators are often depicted as law defenders whose criminality is induced by factors beyond their control e.g. mental disorder (Collins 2014), which Adams (2017) called the rationalization approach. This stereotype was noted in statements suggestive of engagement in serial murder due to circumstantial factors like childhood trauma, insanity, and parent blaming. Contestation of guilt and high intelligence quotient were also classified under this theme, the latter done based on ideologies about white intellectual superiority and the former because of its presentation of perpetrators as possibly innocent.

Circumstantial Justifications

Consider the following extracts:

Yeah, I just feel like that's the thing. It's like she was down, right? And you know from the blogs it seems like she had a pretty hard life and like you joining gangs so you can have a place to sleep at night. You know what I'm saying? You selling yourself and you fine with it cuz n*ggas is taking care of you, like housing you and feeding you and you don't have to worry about that. And so it's like she grew up in these circumstances where she had to, you get it, how she lived, you know? (Sistas Who Kill 1 34:48)

This remark suggests that the perpetrator was not entirely responsible for the choices she made and was forced to do so due to lack of a different path. This position is also expressed in the Black True Crime podcast, reducing the accountability of the perpetrators to the crimes that they have committed:

And without exposure to an alternative, better way of life, he just followed the path that was basically laid before him. (10:17)

Also, in this podcast, contemplation was made about whether the perpetrator, who sexually assaulted his victims before and/or after murdering them, was aware that he needed permission to touch other's private parts. The ensuing extract suggested his lack of knowledge in this regard and attributed the blame to his parents which lowers the level of responsibility ascribed to the perpetrator and fosters sympathy towards him:

Well, that's the thing. I don't know if he ever was, because look at who raised him. His mother was an alcoholic abusing him. His stepdad was an alcoholic abusing him. He spent time in and out of group homes because his, his parents couldn't take him. The state didn't know what to do with him. He was all over the place. It doesn't even seem like he was genuinely taught right from wrong. (17:01)

Parental blame and sympathy were also expressed in the ensuing extract:

And the amount of emotional detachment that he had at such a young age — Yeah. — was probably the only reason he was capable of touching those bodies, killing them one, but then touching them after he kills them. He was completely detached. He was broken. (49:33)

Contestation of Guilt

Lane (2017:800) observed that in interracial murder incidents, white perpetrators are depicted as virtuous, engaging in the murder out of love for the community/protecting society from the criminal 'others'. Thus, I identified and categorized guilt contestation under the white stereotype frame as suggesting the possibility of innocence echoes the virtuous frame.

Contestation of guilt manifested in the following extract:

That's like impossible. (My Favorite Murder 52:35)

The context preceding this statement was the presentation of an account of the perpetrators murder style- crushing victims heads with her thighs. The speaker contested the capability of the perpetrator to perform such a task with the identified instrument- her thighs. While such engagement will evoke an image of intentional – and aggressive – criminality, its contestation reduced the perpetrator’s chances of from being perceived as such.

Guilt contestation is also seen in the ensuing extract, where the multiple murders confessed to by a serial killer was categorically dismissed:

And do you think all of his confessions are for real? —

No, I don’t. (Morbid 5:16)

This dismissal alleviates the perpetrator the weight of being judged or perceived harshly by the public, despite the aggravated crimes that he confessed to.

Intelligence

Intelligence is the last category of the white racial stereotype theme observed in my analysis.

Consider the following quotations:

Too smart, they say. Lock her up. A smart black woman. Don't know what to do with her. Lock her up. (Sistas Who Kill 1 37:32)

This statement is a proposition about why prison officials secluded the perpetrator and refused to grant her several requests to be allowed human interaction. The situational context here involves the perpetrator being previously allowed freedom to move and interact with others, while awaiting

her death sentence but she took advantage of the freedom and escaped from the facility. By referencing this context, the speaker painted the perpetrator as highly intelligent that prison officials are frightened of her.

The following quotation also conveys the perpetrator as intelligent, despite his IQ number reflecting otherwise. I sub-categorized this as the contestation of low IQ:

Kristen, [in a different voice] he's very dumb on paper, [back to normal voice] but he is clearly high functioning. (Black True Crime 25:28)

He's forming full sentences. He ain't stuttering. He has full recollection of what he did. He even said that he had a choice to do it. And he did it. He doesn't even sound like he is illiterate or struggles to communicate. (Black True Crime 53:34)

Theme 5: Celebrity Monster Frames

The monstrosity of perpetrators was illustrated in a glorifying manner through four means: achievement, comparison to other serial murderers, complimenting, and promotion.

Achievement

Consider the following illustrations that present perpetrators as achieving a feat:

...it is the story of old timey, legendary lady female... (My Favorite Murder 36:03)

She wasn't just the first, America's first female serial killer. She was also the first Bridezilla. (My Favorite Murder 1:06:30)

The use of the word 'legendary' in the first statement celebrates the perpetrator as having done something remarkable. This representation is also salient in the second quote. The phrases 'she wasn't just the first' and 'she was also' celebrates the perpetrator as pioneering multiple phenomena.

The portrayal of perpetrators actions as remarkable is also observed in the following sentence from Criminology podcast:

His macabre killings made international and national headlines. (53:39)

And a lot of these guys, it's like a badge of honor to take out someone so notorious, like a Jeffrey Dahmer. — Yeah. I mean, what, how can you get more prison cred than that? Right. Taking out the infamous Jeffrey Dahmer. (56:49)

The above presents the perpetrator as having a high stratum worth, so remarkable that taking his life will earn one a mark of respect; the second speaker then showed high affinity to the portrayal, depicting an achievement orientation.

Comparison to Other Serial Killers

Another category found under this theme is the comparison of perpetrators to other serial murderers. Take the following extract as an example:

But that's the thing, it's like, I always think of that, that uh Ted Bundy thing where he's like acting totally like regular in court and then it's just like a switch and then you see the switch and you see the eyes go like animalistic. (Morbidity 17:35)

Comparing the perpetrator's cunningness to another serial killer, who was glorified as intelligent and charming, extends Bundy's celebrated achievements to him.

Compliments

Providing compliments to perpetrators also evokes the celebrity monster frame. I have presented some instances below:

Lorenzo's giving like smooth chocolate skin. Look at that, all one tone. Yeah, skin is giving. Skin is giving. His skin is giving like blank canvas... — like Hershey's chocolate skin. (Black True Crime 12:48)

Another perpetrator's photograph was also complimented as such:

It could just be like a cool old cigar ad or something. (My Favorite Murder 37:49)

Asides complimenting perpetrator's physical attributes, their actions were also 'approved' of.

Consider the extract below:

And with the noose around her neck, she rants and raves while all the Charleston socialites listen to her scream these words: "If you have a message you wanna send

to hell, give it to me, I'll carry it". — ...That's the most badass fucking thing I've ever... (My Favorite Murder 1:05:40)

Although the speaker did not complete the last sentence, it can be inferred from context that she intended to say that the perpetrator's statement, shortly before being hanged, was bold; and the speaker's tone while uttering this suggests a force of utterance of validation of such boldness.

Perpetrators were also complimented via reference to their popularity. Consider the following extracts from Crimnology podcast:

I think it goes without saying that most listeners know who Jeffrey Dahmer was... (3:35)

There are few people, if any, who have not heard of the name Jeffrey Dahmer. (4:19)

The last category of the celebrity theme is the promotion of serial killers. Take the following statement from Sistas Who Kill 1 as an example:

Her blog is actually really interesting. That's where we got a lot of the earlier parts of the story, so definitely check that out. (28:40)

I coded this statement into the celebrity theme because promoting the perpetrator's blog has the potential to spark her popularity.

Theme 6: Female Gender Stereotypes

Femininity stereotypes observed include motherhood roles, shyness, and innocence.

Innocence

The following extract conveys the innocence stereotype:

...Because ain't nobody gonna stop a girl. (Sistas Who Kill 1 1:07)

This statement was made following an account of the perpetrator's association with criminal gangs and the role she played in keeping their guns safe- by hiding it in her backpack. The presupposition here is that law enforcements will hardly perform a stop-and-search on females, thus evoking an image of innocence.

Shyness

Shyness was also used to describe perpetrators. Consider the following extracts:

Nita was a quiet, inward child who struggled to be noticed in the large brood.

(Female Criminals 3:23)

Mm. Lorenzo, what were you giving? Were you giving Pee-wee? Were you giving someone who was trying to act bitten back but was really scared? (Black True Crime

12:26)

I coded the above statement under shyness because it suggests that the perpetrator, although engaging in terrifying acts, might be doing so to hide his timidity.

Motherhood

Motherhood roles were observed in the data under 2 sub-categories- efficiency in care and good mother:

She was fastidious about the clockwork of childcare, the feeding, the burping, the changing. She constantly changed Eric's clothes if they became messy, even his bibs.
(Female Criminals 1 14:49).

The above portrays the perpetrator as capable of delivering traditional expectations of care to a child. Another expectation that women are saddled with is taking responsibility for their child's welfare and protection, going out of their way to ensure that these needs are met. Such expectations of good motherhood manifests in the ensuing quotation:

...she didn't want her kids uhm following behind her footsteps, but uh sometimes it just be like that. (Sistas Who Kill 2 10:19)

Given her long history with crime, this statement conveys the perpetrator as a responsible mother, desiring to keep her kids away from crime, a kind of heroic representation. The following extract from the same podcast also portrays the perpetrator in this light, referencing her breakdown following news that her son had been sentenced to life in prison for partaking in a robbery with no casualties:

Marie was not happy about this. She was like, y'all might want to put me in here on some bullshit with my kids. You're not about to throw his whole life away at 18.
(12:04)

4.3 Answering Research Questions

RQ1- Manifestation of race master frames: Are race stereotypes employed in the depiction of serial killers? And how does gender impact the representation of serial killers along race stereotypes?

This question is intended to decipher the impact of gender on race-based representation of serial murderers i.e. racial stereotypes²³ in the depiction of male and female serial killers. Thus, 4 angles are explored in answering this question:

- a. Racial stereotypes in the depiction of black female serial killers
- b. Racial stereotypes in the depiction of black male serial killers
- c. Racial stereotypes in the depiction of white female serial killers
- d. Racial stereotypes in the depiction of white male serial killers

In deciphering these depictions, I cross-tabulated each of the stereotype themes observed (as presented in the previous section) with specific cases- podcast samples, based on their race and gender focus, using the queries > crosstab on NVIVO.

Racial Stereotypes in the Depiction of Black Female Serial Killers

As justified in chapter 3, the samples analyzed for black female serial killers representation were both derived from the Sistas Who Kill podcast. Thus, in observing the pattern of racial stereotypes

²³ I would like to state that reference to racial stereotypes in each of these depictions refer to racial stereotypes pertaining to the two races under scrutiny in this study. E.g. racial stereotypes in the depiction of black female serial killers will observe the existence of both black and white racial stereotypes in their representation.

in the representation of this strata, I cross-referenced the black racial and white racial stereotype theme with the transcript of both samples (episodes). Below is a visual of the result:

Table 6: Cross-tabulation Result of Racial Stereotypes and Black Female Serial Killers

Theme	Sistas Who Kill (1)	Sistas Who Kill (2)	Total
Black racial stereotypes	3	0	3
White racial stereotypes	1	3	4
Total	4	3	7

The result indicates the use of white racial stereotypes in the depiction of black female serial killers more than stereotypes associated with blackness. The black racial stereotype observed pertained to low intelligence (1- 09:18, 09:26, 32:28) while representations with stereotypes of whiteness entailed circumstantial justifications for crime (1- 34:50), intelligence (2- 28:42, 37:33), and guilt contestation (2- 33:19).

Racial Stereotypes in the Depiction of Black Male Serial Killers

Samples of the representation of black male serial killers were taken from Crime Junkie and Black True Crime podcast. I cross-tabulated black and white racial stereotype themes with these samples and obtained the following result:

Table 7: Cross-tabulation Result of Racial Stereotypes and Black Male Serial Killers

	Crime Junkie (1)	Black True Crime (2)	Total
Black racial stereotypes	0	16	16
White racial stereotypes	1	19	20
Total	1	35	36

A total of 16 instances of the use of black racial stereotypes was observed in the discourse of black male serial killers. However, instances of white stereotyping occurred more. Black stereotype references found include the following, with reference to selected instances: low intelligence (2- 13:12, 22:44, 23:02), inherent criminality (2- 28:41, 40:27), and unlikely to reform (2- 38:07, 39:34, 42:21). White stereotypes observed include intelligence (1- 14:39, 2- 25:28), circumstantial justifications for crime (2- 9:15, 10:17, 17:01, 19:55, 32:30, 49:33), and contestation of guilt (28:35).

Racial Stereotypes in the Depiction of White Female Serial Killers

Samples were drawn from My Favorite Murder and Female Criminals podcast to observe the representation of white female serial killers. In Female Criminals, the sample selected was discussed by the host in 2 episodes and I transcribed these episodes in separate files to enable accurate reference to time stamps. This made a total of 3 transcripts for white female serial killers and I cross-tabulated them with white and black racial stereotype themes. The following result emerged:

Table 8: Cross-tabulation Result of Racial Stereotypes and White Female Serial Killers

	Female Criminals (1)	Female Criminals (2)	My Favorite Murder (3)	Total
Black racial stereotypes	0	0	1	1
White racial stereotypes	0	0	2	2
Total	0	0	3	3

The above table shows that stereotypes of whiteness were used twice in the discourse of white female serial killers, with one instance of black racial stereotypes. In the latter instance, excitement for perpetrator's conviction was expressed, from which an inference of their unlikeliness to reform was drawn (3- 1:03:57). Instances of white racial stereotypes in depiction include contestation of guilt (3- 52:38) and circumstantial justification for crime via the proposition that the perpetrator suffers from personality disorder (3- 46:06).

Racial Stereotypes in the Depiction of White Male Serial Killers

I cross-tabulated the files of white male samples from Morbid and Criminology podcast with the white and black stereotype theme and the emerging results are as follows:

Table 9: Cross-tabulation Result of Racial Stereotypes and White Male Serial Killers

Themes	Criminology (1)	Morbid (2)	Total
Black racial stereotypes	2	20	22
White racial stereotypes	0	6	6
Total	2	26	28

The above result reveals the use of black racial stereotypes in the depiction of white male serial killers more than representations with stereotypes associated with their race. Instances of black stereotype frames in this regard include unlikeliness to reform, denoted via expression of desire for harsher punishment (1- 19:00), desire for conviction (2- 53:55), and excitement for conviction (2- 58:42) untrustworthiness (2- 5:58, 21:27, 41:13, 41:24), inherent criminality (2- 44:28, 58:19). Stereotypes of whiteness was observed via contestation of guilt (2- 5:16, 44:18, 1:04:08) and proposition of circumstantial justification (2- 33:41).

RQ2- Manifestation of gender master frames: Are gender stereotypes employed in the depiction of serial killers? And how does race impact the representation of serial killers along gender stereotypes?

This question is intended to decipher the impact of race on gender-based representations of serial murderers i.e. gender stereotypes in the depiction of black and white serial killers. Thus, 4 angles are explored in answering this question:

- a. Gender stereotypes in the depiction of white female serial killers
- b. Gender stereotypes in the depiction of white male serial killers
- c. Gender stereotypes in the depiction of black female serial killers
- d. Gender stereotypes in the depiction of black male serial killers

To observe this pattern, I cross-tabulated the gender stereotype themes (male gender stereotype and female gender stereotype) with specific cases- podcast samples, based on their race-gender focus.

Gender Stereotypes in the Depiction of White Female Serial Killers

To explore this lens, I cross-tabulated the cases (transcript) pertaining to white female serial killers with stereotypes of masculinity and femininity:

Table 10: Cross-tabulation Result of Gender Stereotypes and White Female Serial Killers

	Female Criminals (1)	Female Criminals (2)	My Favorite Murder (3)	Total
Female gender stereotypes	1	1	0	2
Male gender stereotypes	2	6	3	11
Total	3	7	3	13

The above table shows that white female serial killers were depicted using more of the stereotypes associated with masculinity compared to traditional feminine expectations. instances of femininity stereotype depiction include the efficient mother image (1- 14:49) and timidity (2- 3:23). Masculinity stereotypes were notable in depictions of lack of affection (1- 34:43;39:13), aggressiveness (2- 38:26;39:04, 3- 57:17) and independence/taking control (46:10, 58:33).

Gender Stereotypes in the Depiction of White Male Serial Killers

This was observed by cross-tabulating gender stereotype themes with podcast episodes that discussed white male serial killers:

Table 11: Cross-tabulation Result of Gender Stereotypes and White Male Serial Killers

	Criminology (1)	Morbid (1)	Total
Female gender stereotypes	0	0	0
Male gender stereotypes	14	16	30
Total	14	16	30

The above output reveals that white male serial killers were not described using any stereotype associated with femininity such as affection, weakness, or subordination. However, masculinity stereotypes of aggression, via the use of the word violent/aggressive (2- 24:38;57:10;46:59) and graphical recount of murder (1- 15:20;40:57, 2- 28:28) were employed in portraying them.

Gender Stereotypes in the Depiction of Black Female Serial Killers

In exploring this angle, I cross-tabulated the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity with the cases (podcast episode samples) that discussed black female serial killers- Sistas Who Kill.

Table 12: Cross-tabulation Result of Gender Stereotypes and Black Female Serial Killers

	Sistas Who Kill (1)	Sistas Who Kill (2)	Total
Female gender stereotypes	1	2	3
Male gender stereotypes	6	0	6
Total	7	2	9

In this output, I observed the use of femininity stereotypes in the discourse of black female serial killers through the feminine innocence (1- 1:48) and motherhood expectations frame. The latter frame was observed in portrayals of good/caring mother (2- 10:31;12:04). However, more masculinity stereotypes were employed, via graphical recounts of murder (1- 8:35;15:33;17:17).

Gender Stereotypes in the Depiction of Black Male Serial Killers

Here, I cross-tabulated the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity with cases of black male serial killers. The output is shown below:

Table 13: Cross-tabulation Result of Gender Stereotypes and Black Male Serial Killers

	Crime Junkie (1)	Black True Crime (2)	Total
Female gender stereotypes	0	1	1
Male gender stereotypes	0	3	3
Total	0	4	4

It can be noted above that stereotypes of femininity and masculinity were employed in the depiction of black male serial killers. The observed femininity stereotype pertains to shyness (2- 12:26) while that of masculinity relates to aggressiveness (2-27:40) and graphical recount of murder (2- 27:16;27:24).

RQ3- Manifestation of monstrosity master frames: In what manner does race and gender simultaneously condition the monstrosity representation of serial killers?

The purpose of this question is to determine whether race and gender play a role in the portrayal of a serial murderer as a celebrity monster or an evil monster. In exploring this, the following areas will be investigated:

- a. Monstrosity framing of black female serial killers
- b. Monstrosity framing of black male serial killers
- c. Monstrosity framing of white male serial killers
- d. Monstrosity framing of white female serial killers

Monstrosity Framing of Black Female Serial Killers

In exploring this question, I cross-tabulated the celebrity monster and evil monster theme with the cases that discussed black female serial killers- Sistas Who Kill 1 & 2. The output is shown below:

Table 14: Cross-tabulation Result of Monstrosity Frames and Black Female Serial Killers

	Sistas Who Kill (1)	Sistas Who Kill (2)	Total
Celebrity monster frame	1	1	2
Evil monster frame	1	0	1
Total	2	1	3

The celebritization of black female serial killers manifested in form of promotion (1- 29:03) and compliment (1- 34:02). The evil monster frame was observed in terms of animalistic portrayal (1- 17:21).

Monstrosity Framing of Black Male Serial Killers

Here, I cross-tabulated the celebrity and evil monster theme with the cases that discussed black female serial killers- Crime Junkie and Black True Crime. Below is the result:

Table 15: Cross-tabulation Result of Monstrosity Frames and Black Male Serial Killers

	Crime Junkie (1)	Black True Crime (2)	Total
Celebrity monster frame	0	2	2
Evil monster frame	2	16	18
Total	2	18	20

It can be observed that while black male serial killers were framed twice as celebrity monsters via compliments (2- 12:38;13:05), the evil monster frame was more prominent in their discourse (1- 0:04, 2- 3:12;10:17;12:11;23:02;26:53;44:07).

Monstrosity Framing of White Male Serial Killers

White male cases were cross-tabulated with the celebrity and evil monster theme and the ensuing table shows the output:

Table 16: Cross-tabulation Result of Monstrosity Frames and White Male Serial Killers

	Criminology (1)	Morbid (1)	Total
Celebrity monster frame	7	8	15
Evil monster frame	14	29	43
Total	21	37	58

The celebritization of white male serial killers took the following forms: reference to popularity (1- 3:35;4:19, 2- 16:44;), achievement/feat (1- 56:49;57:12), and comparison to other serial killers (2- 17:36,36:11). The evil monster frame was, however, more prominent and took the forms of outright monster categorizations (1- 1:00:48, 2- 16:25;30:50), animalistic qualities (1- 17:06; 2- 22:40), cruel (2- 42:15), disgusting (2- 44:40), and evil (2- 26:26).

Monstrosity Framing of White Female Serial Killers

White female podcast episode samples were cross-tabulated with the celebrity and evil monster frame and the ensuing table shows the output:

Table 17: Cross-tabulation Result of Monstrosity Frames and White Female Serial Killers

	Female Criminals (1)	Female Criminals (2)	My Favorite Murder (3)	Total
Celebrity monster frame	0	0	10	10
Evil monster frame	0	1	0	1
Total	0	1	10	11

From the above, we can observe that serial killers in this race-gender strata were framed as celebrity monsters more than evil monsters. The evil monster frame was observed once, via depiction as cruel (2- 4:51). Celebritization was noted in the following instances: achievement/feat (3- 36:25;36:50) and compliments (3- 38:15;45:59;1:07:10).

Chapter 5:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will provide a succinct account of my findings. The significance of my findings on existing studies of race and gender stereotypes in relation to crime will also be examined alongside the implication of emergent tropes on hitherto observations. Limitations to these findings will be noted alongside recommendations for future research.

5.1 Reflection on Race Stereotypes and the Representation of Serial Murderers

Black racial stereotypes were used more frequently in the depiction of black male serial killers in comparison to black females. For white serial killers, the use of white racial stereotypes was observed more in male than female serial killers. This shows that gender plays a role in the race-based representation of serial murderers. Overall, however, male serial killers experienced a significant amount of black racial stereotype frames (38) compared to females (4) and within these two distinct race groups, stereotypes of blackness were more salient in the framing of white males (22) while those of whiteness were more salient in the framing of black males (16).

This observation, of the reversal of race stereotypes in the depiction of serial murderers, is a new trope. Black racial stereotypes entail negative, often false, ideas that are generalized to individuals who identify as black, and are rooted in racism and cultural inferiority assumptions, perpetuating for decades. Such ideas pertain to low intelligence and inherent criminality among others. Going by past studies on race-crime representations, where black offenders are framed via these negative stereotypes and white via positive ideas linked to white superiority, one would expect that black serial killers, especially given the extremity of the crime they have committed, will experience a

more intense association with stereotypes of blackness. However, it was surprising to observe that this frame was more salient in the portrayal of white males.

Critical race theorists hold that race is a social, not a biological construct. Attempts to reconstruct this social hegemony of race has occurred in form of sensitizations and protests among other means. In recent times, researchers have noted that society is moving towards a post-racial era, where the impact of race on individual experience, particularly as a driver of media depictions, is becoming less dominant (Carlson 2016). However, critics denounced such a phenomenon, arguing that society is merely shifting from overt forms of racism to covert, passive forms, a phenomenon termed ‘aversive racism’ (Dovidio et al. 2016; Murrell 2020).

Data from my analysis, however, revealed a different thread. Overt racism entails active, salient race-based associations; aversive racism involves passive, subtle race-based discrimination. What then do we call a salient reversed race-based association like that observed in my study?

Fairclough (1992) presented the idea of colonization of orders of discourse, achieved when the features associated with a discourse genre is adopted by other discourse genres. He gave an example of the commodification of education- achieved via the colonization of education discourse by techniques of the advertising realm (207). The establishment, by critical race theorists, of the social construction of race is proof that stereotypes are themselves, social constructs. Therefore, when these constructs- race stereotypes, pertaining to a racial group becomes salient in the discourse of another racial group, particularly one responsible for the hegemonic construct, it is logical to infer that a colonization is taking place. I call this the colonization of hegemonic race-based narratives, performing a double function: i) the social function of moving towards a ‘post-racial’ society and ii) the reparative function of ‘apology’ for the harms caused by traditional hegemonic race-based narratives.

This observed colonization reinforces the moral breach observed in Carlson's (2016) analysis of newspaper report of Trayvon Martin's murder by George Zimmerman, suggesting that race master frames are not as dominant in media crime reports as they used to. It is important to state that other studies that looked into the framing of race in Trayvon Martin's murder reports, in fact, observed the prominence of pro-white and anti-black frames such as the criminalblackman frame (Lane et al. 2020). Therefore, my observation of the non-traditional use of race master frames is not to suggest that the society is in a post-racial era or that racial stereotypes have faded into obscurity. Rather, my position is that the element of domination or institutionalization that turns frames into master frames is experiencing a decline. Thus, while race-based frames that benefit some and disadvantage others remain in use by the media, these frames are no longer domineering in all media discourse of crime, hence they are no longer master frames.

Furthermore, the indication of a decline in the hegemonic function of master frames reifies that race, race stereotypes, and associated master frames, are socially constructed through discourse and that discourse is equally capable of reconstructing those frames towards dehegemonization. Fairclough advanced that the style employed by a discourse genre is tied to the institutional framework under which it falls. For instance, classroom discourse is bound to be formal and arguably more structured than a family setting discourse, for instance, and this is so because the educational institution has put those rules of formality in place. As explicated severally, until recently, studies of western traditional news media, particularly newspapers, reveal the prominence of race-crime master frames. This might be symbolic of the structure from which these media emerged, the same structure responsible for hegemonic race ideologies via decades-old policies and actions that bred racial division. This hegemony – or its remnants – then seep into institutional discourse, manifesting in news report of crime. Podcasts, however, are a more

decentralized media, providing everyone with the chance, a free chance, to present their thoughts or relay news to the public, making the ideologies found in podcast discourse more representative of public ideologies. Drawing from Fairclough's terminology on discourse democratization, I assert that podcasts, as a media genre, function to democratize hegemonic narratives inherent in traditional news media. The decentralization and democratization of podcasts, as a media genre, is evident in the absence of a rigid institution that dictates which information is to be relayed and how it is to be relayed, as it is in traditional news media like newspaper and television. Podcasts takes power away from these institutions and places it in the hands of individuals, allowing for free expression of views, opinions, and perspectives without fear of institutional reprimand but, rationally, within limits afforded by freedom of speech and expression.

Sherrill (2022:1474) observed a decline in true crime podcast's portrayal of marginalized groups as criminals and never victims in comparison to traditional media. This shows that the genre is rooted in dehegemonizing discourse styles and traditional news media can benefit from adopting them. If this order-of-discourse colonization is achieved, given the strength of the media in reconstructing ideologies, aversive racism is bound to decline and significant progress towards a 'post-racial' society will be made. I believe that the decentralized and democratized nature of podcasts and their observed production of counterhegemonic narratives makes them pivotal in the production of race-neutral discourse.

5.2 Reflection on Gender Stereotypes and the Representation of Serial Murderers

Outputs above indicate the minimal use of femininity stereotypes in the representation of female serial killers, regardless of their race. Instead, more of masculinity stereotypes were employed in their discourse. This result is the same for male serial killers of both races- less of femininity stereotypes and more of masculinity stereotypes. However, one notable observation is that both white female and white male serial killers were portrayed with more masculinity stereotypes (11 and 30 instances, respectively) than black females and black males (6 and 3 instances, respectively). In sum, white female and white male serial killers are more likely to be portrayed with masculinity stereotypes than black female and black male serial killers while femininity stereotypes were more prominent in the discourse of black female and black male serial killers than their white counterparts.

This observation, of the greater use of masculinity stereotypes in the framing of white serial killers than black serial killers, irrespective of gender, supports the conclusion drawn above- from RQ1. Stereotypes of aggression and violence, although attributed to the male gender, are also often associated with black offenders, particularly black males who commit crime. Thus, its greater utilization in the discourse of white serial killers supports the colonization proposition made above.

Also important is the less use of femininity stereotypes in the depiction of female serial killers and, instead, the adoption of frames associated with masculine traits such as aggressiveness and lack of compassion. This suggests a dissociation of female serial killers from other females and, most importantly, reveals that serial killing is deemed a violent crime and gender plays no role in moderating such perception. Khan (2020) noted that female serial killers are often depicted as insane or abnormal, to preserve biological beliefs about feminine gentility and prevent the collapse of traditional gender expectations. Pozzan (2014) also observed a similar trope, asserting that

female serial killers were framed as psychologically unfit, and despite being portrayed as aggressive, the former frame takes away the agency they've gained from being portrayed outside their gender expectations. However, I disagree with this position on the grounds that such inference is valid only if the insanity depiction is false or is absent in the depiction of male perpetrators who, although equally aggressive, were also mentally deranged. However, my analysis showed that discourse about the mental state of serial killers was not done to pull focus from the violent nature of their crimes, but for mere context- background information on the perpetrator. I found the contemplation of insanity within both male and female serial killer discourse.

5.3 Reflection on Monstrosity Frames and the Representation of Serial Murderers

My findings reveal that, on one hand, white serial killers, regardless of gender, experienced more celebrity monster depictions (25) than black serial killers (4). In this regard, the white males (15) were celebritized than white females (10). Both black female and black male serial killers had equal rates of celebrity depiction. On the other hand, female serial killers, irrespective of race, experienced very minimal evil monster depictions (2 in total). However, it was noted that male serial killers, regardless of race, were depicted as evil monsters (61 times in total), with white males having 43 instances and black males having 18 instances of such depiction. This observation leads to the conclusion that gender plays more role in the depiction of serial killers as evil monsters whereas race plays a greater role in the celebritization of serial killers.

Gabler (2014) asserted that an individual becomes a celebrity by virtue of the desire of others to express curiosity about them to the point of investigating them [their likes and dislikes, physical features, and even private affairs]. This expression of interest is what the media relies on in determining who to publicize and by extension, who to celebritize further. However, we must acknowledge changing times and the role of the media in single-handedly sparking the celebritization of a person or thing via framing strategies. Public fascination with serial killers is believed to be peculiar to the American culture and is rooted in crime sensationalization which gained prominence in the 1980's as an effort of traditional news media to compete with tabloid media in presenting news reports in less formal ways, with public as opposed to official language; news for commoners. This is what Fairclough called genre colonization.

The celebritization of serial killers is a notable phenomenon in media representations that, as Vronsky (2004:6) asserted, was instigated by the discovery of Ted Bundy's atrocities. However, Wiest (2016) found that while elements of celebritization is found in the frames of the US and UK

media, the US media is more likely to represent serial killers as celebrity monsters via fascinating depictions of perpetrators that pull focus from the gravity of their crimes. Although Wiest linked this difference to peculiar socio-cultural characteristics in the explored countries, my findings indicate that the celebritization of serial killers in the United States' media, rather than being solely tied to culture, is also dependent on race. Specifically, white serial killers, regardless of gender, are more likely to be depicted via celebrity frames than black serial killers. Since most literature on serial killers and their celebritization is based on the analysis of white serial killers, usually white males, it is no surprise that the impact of race in this regard has eluded us. While researchers have opined that serial killers celebritization in America reflects the culture of individuality and fascination with fame and popularity, this research suggests that those values impact celebritization only when the perpetrator is white. Hier (2019a) pondered on why some serial killers presumed for primetime do not experience the celebrity monster frame, thus fading into obscurity. While he identified media report style as a factor, findings from this study identified race as another element impacting celebritization. It is pertinent to state that while the race-determination argument may not apply to all serial killers (for instance, Peter Woodcock was a white serial killer who faded into obscurity), findings from this study reveal that race is a predisposing condition for celebritization.

Another emergent trope is that gender was found to impact the framing of serial killers as evil monsters. Both white male and black male serial killers were depicted with evil monster frames while females, regardless of race, had very minimal instances of evil monstrosity portrayal. What is interesting here is that white male serial killers were portrayed as more evil than black males. This goes against traditional understanding of the framing of crime in terms of race, where the reversed is to be expected, given the dehumanizing impact of labelling an individual as a monster.

What this reiterates, once again, is that the framing of crime in terms of race, where blacks are criminalized disproportionately, is becoming a less dominant trope in media reports.

5.4 Summary of Discussion

I would like to emphasize that this study is based on podcasts, an emerging dominant source of information. Despite some recent researcher's observed reduction in hegemonic race-crime associations in the framing of crime in traditional media, I sought out to find if this observation holds true in newer, and decentralized, media like podcasts and in a case of extreme crime like serial killing, as opposed to less extreme ones like robbery and non-sequential crimes like manslaughter. The nature of podcast's depictions was explored in relation to the master statuses of race and gender as intersecting elements impacting podcasts depiction of serial killers.

My findings, as discussed above, are summarized as follows:

- Stereotypes associated with the race of a serial killer are employed in their depiction if the perpetrator is male than if they are females i.e. male serial killers are more susceptible to race stereotype depictions than female serial killers. However, white male serial killers are portrayed using stereotypes associated with blackness more than black male serial killers are.
- Minimal femininity stereotypes were used in the depiction of female serial killers, regardless of race, rather more of masculinity stereotypes were used. Masculinity stereotypes also dominated the discourse of male serial killers of both races. However, white serial killers were framed with masculinity stereotypes more times than black serial killers.
- White serial killers were depicted as celebrity monsters more times than black serial killers. The evil monster frame was minimal in the portrayal of female serial killers, irrespective of gender, and more dominant in the depiction of male serial killers. However, white male serial killers were notably portrayed as evil monsters more than black male serial killers.

5.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

Due to time constraint, conclusions for this study were reached after the exploration of eight podcast episodes, with two episodes focusing on each race-gender strata. Future researchers will benefit from expanding this sample size to buttress the patterns observed here or introduce new tropes that were not captured due to limited samples.

Furthermore, analysis of the impact of race, gender and monstrosity master frames on serial killers' representation at the intersection of race and gender were done without considering the identity of the discourse producer. Fairclough noted that in producing discourse, individuals draw upon unique member resources that impact the content of the discourse produced. Thus, it would be helpful to observe how patterns of the representation of serial killers of a specific race-gender construct change given the race-gender identity of the discourse producer. This insight will be useful for a deeper understanding of the nuances of identity and text production in reports of violence.

As noted in chapter 1, studies show that podcast are more nuanced in their relay of crime incidents, incorporating the role of structural problems in predisposing criminality rather than folkdevilizing a race or gender as repeatedly observed in traditional news media. The master frame colonization observed in this study echoes this unprejudiced element. Thus, emergent themes may be a reflection of the nature of the genre and not representative of other news media. I implore future researchers to explore how this observation might hold in other media genre.

Also, I proposed the colonization of hegemonic race-based narratives in reports of violent crime. Collins (2014) observed that when crime is perpetrated against a white victim, the media reports such incident with significantly fearful language, potentially leading to the demonization of the perpetrator. As this study did not account for the race of the victims of serial killers, future research

can investigate this area to determine if colonization remains constant given varying identities of crime victims- such as race, age, or gender.

In conclusion, findings from this study shake the table of our knowledge of how race and gender, as master statuses, and the stereotypes associated with these identities impact media framing of criminals, specifically serial killers. My findings show that society is capable of transcending detrimental ideologies like stereotypes and, by extension, master frames through discourse. For instance, the fact that both female and male serial killers of the two races analyzed in this study were framed as aggressive and lacking compassion indicates that society perceives serial killing as a violent act that is not justifiable by gender. This indicates the redundancy of gender and race stereotypes in the framing of perpetrators of extreme violence. In other words, the extremity of violence overshadows the deterministic impact of race and gender, as master statuses. This demonstrates that ideologies and other social constructs that reinforce hegemony are capable of being set aside in light of grave issues. Hence, if academics and social activists persist in sensitizing the public and media agencies on the need to consciously frame issues in terms of facts as opposed to preconceived notions, this will foster objectivity in both formal and informal discursive activities and will, in turn, facilitate our transition to a more dehegemonized society. In this vein, I also enjoin traditional news media to embrace the dehegemonized discourse style that I and researchers like Yardley et al. (2019) and Sherrill (2022) have observed in podcasts' framing of crime issues. This might take the form of structural and ideological changes on the part of these agencies, a revolt against hegemonic institutional ideologies on the part of its workers, or both.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1: Google Search Engine List of American True Crime Podcasts

S/N	Podcast Name	Genre
1	Serial	News
2	My favorite murder	True crime
3	Crime Junkie	True crime
4	CounterClock	True crime
5	Somebody	True crime
6	Morbid (Same as Number 8)	True crime
7	Dr. Death	True crime
8	Morbid: A True Crime Podcast	True crime
9	The Last Podcast on the Left	True crime
10	Over my Dead Body	True crime
11	Atlanta Monster	True crime
12	S-Town	Society and culture
13	Someone Knows Something	True crime
14	Morning Cup of Murder	True crime
15	Crimetown	News
16	Park Predators	True crime

17	Bomber	True crime
18	Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo	True crime
19	Chameleon: Hollywood Con Queen	True crime
20	Anatomy of Murder	True crime
21	Wine & Crime	Comedy
22	Root of Evil: The True Story of the Hodel Family and the Black Dahlia	True crime
23	Your Own Backyard	True crime
24	LISK: Long Island Serial Killer	True crime
25	Dateline NBC	True crime
26	Firebug	True crime
27	The Vanished Podcast	True crime
28	Killer Role	True crime
29	True Crime Garage	True crime
30	This Is Actually Happening	True crime
31	Crime in Sports	True crime

32	Criminology	True crime
33	Mile Higher	True crime
34	Strangeland	True crime
35	Sinisterhood	Comedy
36	White Lies	True crime
37	Red Ball	True crime
38	Sword and Scale	True crime
39	Bone Valley	True crime
40	Something Was Wrong	True crime
41	The Shrink Next Door	Documentary
42	Scamfluencers	Society and culture
43	Do No Harm	True crime
44	The Clown and the Candyman	True crime
45	Mommy Doomsday	True crime
46	Believed	Society and culture
47	Suspect	True crime
48	Monster: The Zodiac Killer	True crime
49	Beyond Bardstown: Unsolved	True crime

Retrieved: July 27, 2023

Appendix Table 2: Stage One Population

S/N	Podcast Name
1.	My Favorite Murder
2.	Crime Junkie
3.	CounterClock
4.	Somebody
5.	Morbid
6.	Dr. Death
7.	The Last Podcast on the Left
8.	Over my Dead Body
9.	Atlanta Monster
10.	Someone Knows Something
11.	Morning Cup of Murder
12.	Park Predators
13.	Bomber
14.	Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo
15.	Chameleon: Hollywood Con Queen
16.	Anatomy of Murder
17.	Root of Evil: The True Story of the Hodel Family and the Black Dahlia
18.	Your Own Backyard
19.	LISK: Long Island Serial Killer

20.	Dateline NBC
21.	Firebug
22.	The Vanished Podcast
23.	Killer Role
24.	True Crime Garage
25.	This is Actually Happening
26.	Crime in Sports
27.	Criminology
28.	Mile Higher
29.	Strangeland
30.	White Lies
31.	Red Ball
32.	Sword and Scale
33.	Bone Valley
34.	Something Was Wrong
35.	Do No Harm
36.	The Clown and the Candyman
37.	Mommy Doomsday
38.	Suspect
39.	Monster: The Zodiac Killer
40.	Beyond Bardstown: Unsolved

Appendix Table 3: Stage Two Population

S/N	Podcast
1.	Black True Crime
2.	Sistas Who Kill
3.	Female Criminals

Appendix Table 4: List of Podcasts Eliminated from the Study Population

S/N	Podcast Name	Cause of Elimination
1.	CounterClock	No discussion of serial killing
2.	Somebody	No discussion of serial killing
3.	Dr. Death	No discussion of serial killing
4.	Over my Dead Body	No discussion of serial killing
5.	Atlanta Monster	Not suitable length-wise [episodes are too long]
6.	Someone Knows Something	No discussion of serial killing
7.	Morning Cup of Murder	Not suitable length-wise [episodes are too short]
8.	Bomber	No discussion of serial killing
9.	Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo	No discussion of serial killing
10.	Chameleon: Hollywood Con Queen	No discussion of serial killing
11.	Root of Evil: The True Story of the Hodel Family and the Black Dahlia	No discussion of serial killing

12.	Your Own Backyard	No discussion of serial killing
13.	LISK: Long Island Serial Killer	Coverage on a non-convicted serial killer
14.	Firebug	Not suitable length-wise
15.	The Vanished Podcast	No discussion of serial killing
16.	Killer Role	No discussion of serial killing
17.	This is Actually Happening	Focused on the narratives of crime survivors, not suitable for my research questions
18.	Crime in Sports	No discussion of serial killing
19.	Strangeland	No discussion of serial killing
20.	White Lies	No discussion of serial killing
21.	Red Ball	No discussion of serial killing
22.	Bone Valley	Not suitable length-wise
23.	Something Was Wrong	No discussion of serial killing
24.	Do No Harm	No discussion of serial killing
25.	The Clown and the Candyman	All episodes focused on drawing a connection between two serial killers and other, not suitable length-wise
26.	Mommy Doomsday	Not suitable length-wise [episodes are too long]
27.	Suspect	No discussion of serial killing

28.	Monster: The Zodiac Killer	Focused on an unsolved serial killing case
29.	Beyond Bardstown: Unsolved	Focused on unsolved crimes

Appendix Table 5: Stratification of Episodes within each Podcast Population

S/ N	Podcast	Strata							
		S/N	White male	S/N	Black male	S/N	White female	S/N	Black female
1	My Favorite Murder	1	Robert Garrow	1	Sam Little	1	Lavina Fisher		
		2	Gary Michael Hilton						
		3	Andrew Cunanan						
		4	Robert Spangler						
		5	Marcus Shrader						
		6	David Spanbauer						

		7	Ed Gein						
		8	Oscar Ray Bolin						
		9	Bobby Joe Long						
2	Crime Junkie	10	Mack Ray Edwards	2	Khalil Wheeler- Weaver				
		11	The Butcher Baker Of Alaska- Robert Hansen	3	The Cleveland Strangler- Anthony Sowell				
		12	Ed Kemper						
		13	Charlie Brandt						
		14	Israel Keyes						
3	Morbid	15	Joe Metheny						

		16	The Sunset Strip Killers Part 2 & 1- Doug Clark, Carol Bundy						
		17	John Edward Robinson						
		18	Robert Ben Rhoades						
		19	Dennis Rader Part 3, 2 & 1						
		20	The Boston Strangler(S) Part 2 & 1						
		21	Israel Keyes Part 2 & 1						
4	The Last Podcast on the Left	22	Joel Rifkin Part 2 & 1						

		23	Randy Kraft Part 2 & 1						
		24	Arthur Shawcross Part 2 & 1						
		25	Herbert Mullin Part 2 & 1						
		26	Bob Berdella Part 2 & 1						
		27	Joseph Kallinger Part 2 & 1						
5	Park Predators	28	The Predator- Cary Stayner						
6	Anatomy of Murder	29	John Doe Duffel Bag- Salvatore Perrone						

		30	Dennis Morgan Hicks						
		31	137F Strikes Again & 137- Jeffrey Allen Whipps						
		32	The Desert Of Death- David Leonard Wood						
7	Dateline NBC	33	Bad Intentions- Eric William	4	The Unusual Suspect- Jason Scott				
		34	The Santa Strangler- Adolph Laudenberg						

		35	A Deal With The Devil- Scott Kimball						
8	True Crime Garage	36	Texas Monster Part 2 & 1- Kenneth Mcduff	5	Forces Of Evil- William Henry Hance				
		37	Garage Refill- The Unabomber Part 2 & 1						
		38	The Unabomber Part 2 & 1						
		39	Bodies In The Basement Part 2 & 1- David Maust						

		40	The Casanova Killer Part 2 & 1- John Knowles						
		41	Mind Hunter: John Douglas Part 2 & 1- Joseph Kondro						
9	Criminology	42	The Torso Killer- Richard Cottingham						
		43	Jeffrey Dahmer						
		44	The Green River Killer Part 2 & 1- Gary Ridgway						

10	Mile Higher	45	Ted Bundy: An American Serial Killer						
11	Sword and Scale	46	Episode 126- Shawn M. Grate						
12	Black True Crime			6	Nathaniel Code "The Cedar Grove Killer"				
				7	Carl Eugene Watts				
				8	Lorenzo Fayne: Stl Child Killer				
				9	Lemuel Smith				

				10	Michael Madison				
				11	Harrison Graham				
13	Sistas Who Kill							1	Caroline Peoples And Angel Ford- Wright
								2	Marie Dean Arrington
14	Female Criminals					2	Black Widows Series- Judy Buenoano		
						3	The Smotherer Part 2 & 1- Waneta Hoyt		

Appendix Table 6: Full details of the Study Population

S/N	Podcast name	Date	Episode/discussed serial killer	Race	Gender
1	My Favorite Murder	September 29 2022	Robert Garrow	White	Male
		April 21 2022	Gary Michael Hilton	White	Male
		November 19 2020	Lavina Fisher	White	Female
		September 17 2020	Andrew Cunanan	White	Male
		August 13 2020	Robert Spangler	White	Male
		June 18 2020	Marcus Shrader	White	Male
		July 11 2019	David Spanbauer	White	Male
		July 11 2019	Ed Gein	White	Male
		July 4 2019	Oscar Ray Bolin	White	Male
		July 4 2019	Bobby Joe Long	White	Male
		April 4 2019	Sam Little	Black	Male
2	Crime Junkie	October 24 2022	Mack Ray Edwards	White	Male

		July 18 2022	Khalil Wheeler- Weaver	Black	Male
		August 2 2021	The Cleveland Strangler- Anthony Sowell	Black	Male
		September 21 2020	The Butcher Baker Of Alaska- Robert Hansen	White	Male
		August 17 2020	Ed Kemper	White	Male
		July 22 2019	Charlie Brandt	White	Male
		May 6 2019	Israel Keyes	White	Male
3	Morbid	June 26 2023	Joe Metheny	White	Male
		September 12 & 8 2021	The Sunset Strip Killers Part 2 & 1- Doug Clark, Carol Bundy	White	Male
		June 21 2021	John Edward Robinson	White	Male
		January 12 2020	Robert Ben Rhoades	White	Male
		August 23, 17 & 8 2019	Dennis Rader Part 3, 2 & 1	White	Male

		July 8 & 62019	The Boston Strangler(S) Part 2 & 1	White	Male
		May 6 & April 26 2019	Israel Keyes Part 2 & 1	White	Male
4	The Last Podcast on the Left	July 15 & 9 2022	Joel Rifkin Part 2 & 1	White	Male
		March 25 & 18 2022	Randy Kraft Part 2 & 1	White	Male
		September 18 & 11 2020	Arthur Shawcross Part 2 & 1	White	Male
		July 17 & 10 2020	Herbert Mullin Part 2 & 1	White	Male
		January 3 2020 & December 20 2019	Bob Berdella Part 2 & 1	White	Male
		March 22 and 15 2019	Joseph Kallinger Part 2 And 1	White	Male
5	Park Predators	July 21 2020	The Predator- Cary Stayner	White	Male

6	Anatomy of Murder	July 19 2022	John Doe Duffel Bag- Salvatore Perrone	White	Male
		November 3 2021	Dennis Morgan Hicks	White	Male
		September 1 2021	137F Strikes Again- Jeffrey Allen Whipps	White	Male
		August 25 2021	137- Jeffrey Allen Whipps	White	Male
		November 4 2020	The Desert Of Death- David Leonard Wood	White	Male
7	Dateline NBC	June 13 2023	Bad Intentions- Eric William	White	Male
		February 15 2023	The Santa Strangler- Adolph Laudenberg	White	Male
		December 26 2019	The Unusual Suspect- Jason Scott	Black	Male

		June 19 2019	A Deal With The Devil- Scott Kimball	White	Male
8	True Crime Garage	September 21 & 20 2022	Texas Monster Part 2 & 1- Kenneth Mcduff	White	Male
		July 20 2022	Garage Refill- The Unabomber Part 2 & 1	White	Male
		April 21 & 20 2021	The Unabomber Part 2 & 1	White	Male
		February 24 & 23 2021	Bodies In The Basement Part 2 & 1- David Maust	White	Male
		May 19 & 18 2020	The Casanova Killer Part 2 & 1- John Knowles	White	Male
		November 24 2020	Mind Hunter: John Douglas Part 2 & 1- Joseph Kondro	White	Male
		November 26 2019	Forces Of Evil- William Henry Hance	Black	Male

9	Criminology	May 15 2021	The Torso Killer- Richard Cottingham	White	Male
		December 12 2020	Jeffrey Dahmer	White	Male
		May 3 & April 26 2019	The Green River Killer Part 2 & 1- Gary Ridgway	White	Male
10	Mile Higher	February 11 2019	Ted Bundy: An American Serial Killer	White	Male
11	Sword and Scale	November 11 2018	Episode 126- Shawn M. Grate	White	Male
12	Black True Crime	May 4 2023	Nathaniel Code "The Cedar Grove Killer"	Black	Male
		April 12 2023	Carl Eugene Watts	Black	Male
		January 17 2023	Lorenzo Fayne: Stl Child Killer	Black	Male
		November 18 2021	Lemuel Smith	Black	Male
		September 11 2021	Michael Madison	Black	Male

		July 8 2021	Harrison Graham	Black	Male
13	Sistas Who Kill	February 4 2022	Caroline Peoples And Angel Ford-Wright	Black	Female
		October 23 2021	Marie Dean Arrington	Black	Female
14	Female Criminals	June 5 2020	Black Widows Series- Judy Buenoano	White	Female
		July 10 & 3 2019	The Smotherer Part 2 & 1- Waneta Hoyt	White	Female

Appendix Table 7: Podcast Samples and Links to them

S/N	Podcast	Link
1.	Sistas Who Kill (1)	https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/caroline-peoples-and-angel-ford-wright/id1558041614?i=1000550122678
2.	Criminology	https://podcasts.apple.com/no/podcast/jeffrey-dahmer/id1264424015?i=1000502202712
3.	Morbid	https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/joe-metheny/id1379959217?i=1000617039743

4.	Female Criminals (Part 1 & 2)	<p>1) https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/the-smotherer-waneta-hoyt/id1357366726?i=1000443509114</p> <p>2) https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/the-smotherer-pt-2-waneta-hoyt/id1357366726?i=1000444106385</p>
5.	Crime Junkie	https://podcasts.apple.com/nz/podcast/serial-killer-khalil-wheeler-weaver/id1322200189?i=1000570276282
6.	My Favorite Murder	https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/249-clear-of-debris/id1074507850?i=1000499399280
7.	Black True Crime	https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/lorenzo-fayne-stl-child-killer-episode-93/id1480709706?i=1000595008307
8.	Sistas Who Kill (2)	https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/marie-dean-arrington/id1558041614?i=1000539483569