The Motives Of Jeffrey Dahmer Essay, Research Paper

The Motives of Jeffrey Dahmer

It?s a beautiful day. The sun is out and the birds are chirping. Breakfast is ready and the kids are actually cooperating with their morning rituals preparing for school. You sit down at the kitchen table with a steaming cup of coffee, breathing in serenity, as you begin to indulge yourself into the morning paper. And that?s when it happens. ?HOUSE OF HORRORS UNCOVERED WITH THE ARREST OF LOCAL CANNIBAL KILLER,? is what the headline read. To the cynics, this would not create much concern. But, for most of us in the summer of 1991, the horrors that were uncovered in apartment 213 on Milwaukee?s North 25th St. sent shockwaves through the country. Jeffrey Dahmer commanded the attention of all America, creating a buzz about the term ?cannibal? and resparking debates about the phenomenon of the serial killer. When the carnage was over the body count had risen to 17. All of Dahmer?s victims were minority men. Typically Dahmer would go to a gay bar, seduce a chosen man, and bring him back to his apartment. He often lured them to his place by offering them money to take nude photos of them. Once they were in his apartment they would drink and have sex. At some point Dahmer would mix up a drink with powdered Halcion and give it to the victim. The Halcion immediately made the victim pass out. Once the victim was unconscious he would continue to have sex with them. His next step was to kill them by strangulation. When the victim was deceased Dahmer would then have sex with them again before the process of dismemberment began. Dahmer chopped up his victims. Some of the body parts were eaten by Dahmer and saved in the freezer. The other parts of the body ended up in a barrel of acid Dahmer had concocted to disintegrate the cadavers. What kind of a human being does this? If we could find what motivates one to commit such atrocities, wouldn?t we be able then to recognize these scenarios in the future in order to stop them. In the following pages I will research what motivated Jeffrey Dahmer to kill.

Jeffrey Lionel Dahmer was born to Lionel and Joyce Dahmer on May 21, 1960. During Jeffrey?s childhood, Lionel had gotten through his bachelors and masters degrees. He was in the process of a grueling Ph.D when Jeffrey started getting into trouble. Because of the lack of time on Lionel?s hands, he asked a local probation officer to probe young Jeffrey to find the source of his troubles. Jeffrey confessed to the probation officer that a neighborhood boy had sexually molested him. Don Davis? book, The Milwaukee Murders, quotes the probation officer as saying that perhaps that incident ?may be the reason why Jeffrey has problems with sexuality issues.? The Milwaukee Murders also reports that Jeffrey?s classmates had a hard time connecting with him. Jeffrey was very polite, neat, and willing to please, flashing a gentle smile when he was complimented. Jeffrey was obsessed with dismemberment. From the age of 12 he would kill stray animals and perfect his technique. He concocted a brew of acids that would strip the flesh right off the bone. Dahmer would later use this technique on his human victims. By contrast, Dahmer displayed a classic passive/aggressive personality. ANSWER ME!; issue 2; 1992, reports that Jeffrey?s parents screamed at each other all the time and eventually got a divorce by the time he finished high school. After the divorce, Jeffrey?s mother took his younger brother and moved to Wisconsin, leaving Jeffrey behind. Dahmer always did feel closer to his Mother and felt greatly abandoned by her leaving. He was very smart, academically. He felt as though his father didn?t value him much. ?There was not much of a bond,? Dahmer later said. ANSWER ME! also reports that, in an attempt to win over friends in school, Jeffrey tried to be the class clown. His efforts were in vein, as his attempt at humor was not well received.

So, what does it all mean? Does it sound all that unusual? My conclusion is that I have found that there is something even scarier than the horrid things that Jeffrey Dahmer did. What is scariest of all is that a cannibalistic killer could emerge from anywhere. Compared to the average American upbringing, Dahmer?s childhood was not all that extreme. These may have been some of the key factors into what motivated the man to kill. And, these characteristics are common among serial killers. But, these are characteristics shared by millions of Americans. Harold Schechter says in his book, Deviant, that ?a serial killer of his caliber is like Halley?s Comet. They come around once every 75 years.? So what is he suggesting? That, perhaps, it is all just a numbers game? That although many of us share the same experiences some of us just simply go bad? People Weekly; Dec 12, 1994 reported that, while in jail, Jeffrey accepted Christ, attended church regularly, and even got baptized. Dahmer clearly showed remorse when saying, ?I do not deserve to live for what I have done. I am sorry that I have not been sentenced to die.? Dahmer was clearly capable of rational thought. A fellow inmate killed Dahmer on November 28, 1994 just five days after wishing for his own death. $407,000 was raised, from auctioning off Dahmer?s possessions, to help the victim?s families, ABA Journal; August 1996. Despite the horrific and fiendish things the man did, The Wall Street Journal; Feb. 11, 1992, says it best when they quote Dahmer?s defense attorney, Gerald Boyle, as saying, ?This was not an evil man, he was a sick man.?

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The Milwaukee Murders; St. MArtins; 1995

ANSWER ME!; issue 2; Goad To Hell; 1992

People Weekly; Dec. 12, 1994

The Wall Street Journal; Feb. 11, 1992