

Serial Killers & Childhood Trauma

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Intro

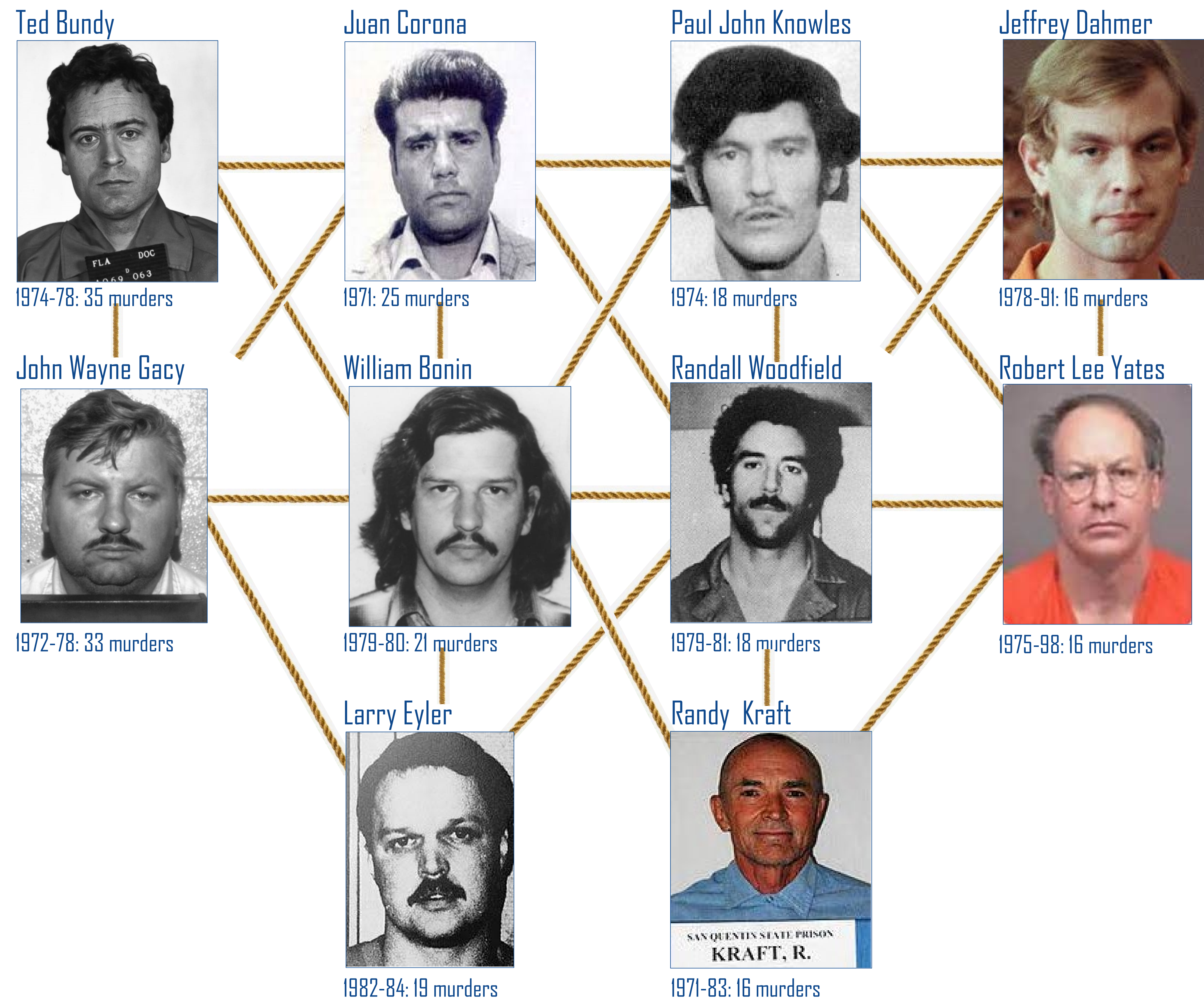
- Goal: To explore how a serial killer's victimology is affected by any childhood trauma they previously experienced or any diagnosed mental disorders.
- Who: The 10 most notorious male serial killers (MSK) in the United States with the highest victim count.
- How: Explore the connections between childhood trauma inflicted upon the MSKs, their mental disorder diagnoses, and the violence they have inflicted upon their victims.
- Why: To observe whether one's childhood trauma shapes the victims later chosen by serial killers.

Previous Research:

- Most serial killers have an adverse childhood experience (ACE) that correlated to their later crimes (Caroprese et al., 2017).
- 67% of MSKs have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis, or displayed ASD symptomology (Alley et al., 2014).
- Most MSKs premeditate murder and have paraphilias, displaying Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (Burgess et al. 1989).

10 Male Serial Killers:

Data Obtained from: Biography, Murderpedia, & Radford



Results

Table 1 – Serial Killer Mental Health Dx & Prior Criminal Record

Serial Killer	Mental Health Diagnosis	Criminal Record Prior to Killings
Ted Bundy	Anti-Personality Disorder, Necrophilia	theft, car burglary
John Wayne Gacy	Anti-Personality Disorder	sexual assault towards minor
Juan Corona	Schizophrenic Reaction, Paranoid Type	none
William Bonin	Manic Depressive	sexual assault of youth, kidnapping sodomy, child molestation
Larry Eyler	Asperger's Disorder	possession of burglary tools
Paul John Knowles	Unknown	petty theft, kidnapping
Randall Woodfield	Exhibitionist Disorder	vandalizing, public indecency, robbery at knife point
Randy Steven Kraft	Unknown	None
Jeffrey Dahmer	Asperger's Disorder	None
Robert Lee Yates	Paraphilic	None

Table 1

Table 1 shows the MSKs' mental health history along with any prior criminal history
*Age and Ethnicity - The MSKs' average age at the time of first murder was 27.8 years old. Nine of them were White, with one being Hispanic.

Figure 1 - Frequency of Primary Childhood Abuse

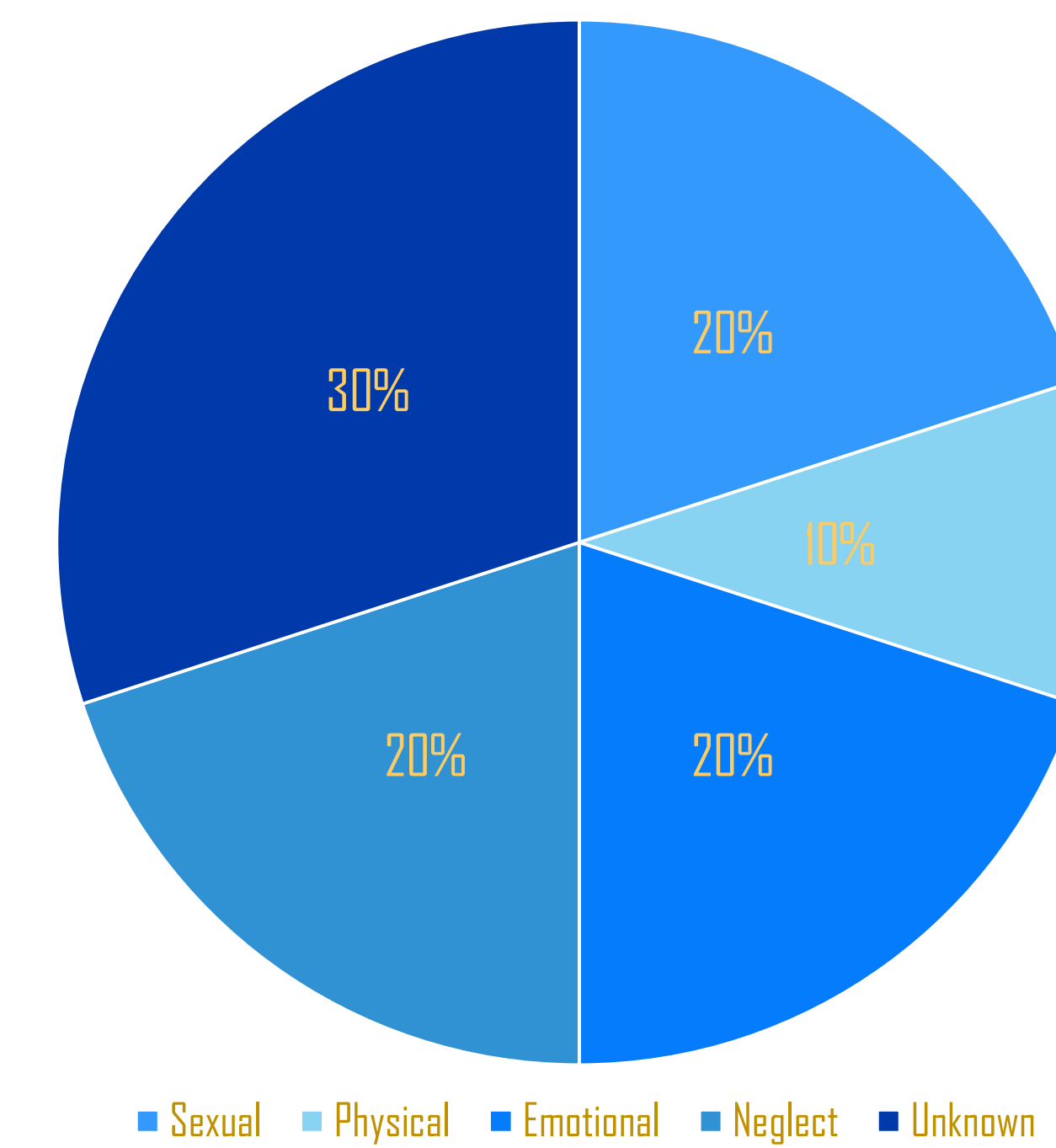


Figure 1

Primary Childhood Trauma
Figure 1 shows the frequency of primary childhood abuse of the serial killers. (*These frequencies are broken down into the relation to primary trauma inflicted upon victims in Table 2)

Table 2

Table 2 shows the types of primary & secondary types of childhood trauma, along with the primary & secondary types of trauma inflicted onto victims

Table 2 – Serial Killer Childhood Trauma and Victim Inflicted Trauma

Serial Killer	Primary Childhood Trauma	Secondary Childhood Trauma	Primary Trauma to Victim	Secondary Trauma to Victim
Ted Bundy	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse
John Wayne Gacy	Emotional Abuse	n/a	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse
Juan Corona	Unknown	n/a	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
William Bonin	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
Larry Eyler	Emotional Abuse	n/a	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
Paul John Knowles	Neglect	n/a	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
Randall Woodfield	Unknown	n/a	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse
Randy Steven Kraft	Unknown	n/a	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse
Jeffrey Dahmer	Neglect	n/a	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse
Robert Lee Yates	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse

Figure 3 - Serial Killer's ACES Score

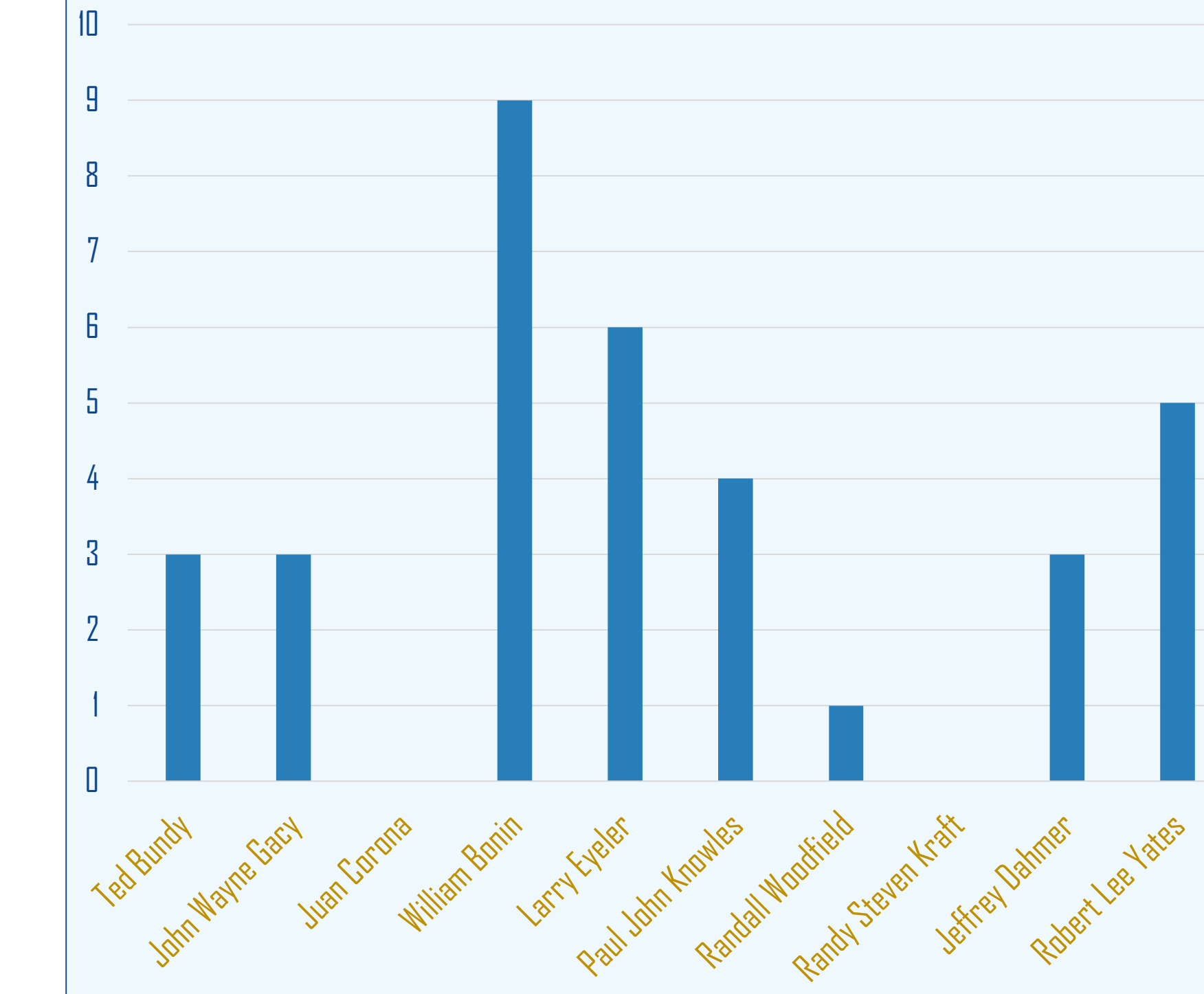


Figure 3

Serial Killers' ACES Scores
Figure 3 shows the ACES Scores for each MSK

Table 3

Childhood Trauma Abuser
Table 3 shows the MSKs childhood trauma inflictor in relation to their later victims' sex and age

Table 3 – Childhood Trauma Inflictor & Victim Demographics

Serial Killer	Childhood Trauma Abuser	Victim Sex	Victim Age
Ted Bundy	Grandfather	Female	Adults
John Wayne Gacy	Father	Male	Minor
Juan Corona	Unknown	Male	Adult
William Bonin	Father	Male	Minor
Larry Eyler	Peers	Male	Minor
Paul John Knowles	Father	Female	Adult
Randall Woodfield	Unknown	Female	Adult
Randy Steven Kraft	Unknown	Male	Adult
Jeffrey Dahmer	Mother & Father	Male	Adult
Robert Lee Yates	Mother & Neighbor	Female	Adult

Discussion

- Predicted: The serial killers' childhood trauma would be reflected in their victimology – **Supported**
- Predicted: A correlation between the serial killers' childhood trauma and their victimology – **Not Supported**
 - An MSK's childhood abuse was only correlated to two MSKs' victim statistics, Ted Bundy & William Bonin.
- Additional Finding: All the studied serial killers inflicted physical and sexual trauma upon their victims, despite each MSK having diverse experiences of childhood abuse, abuser, occupation, victimology, background, etc.

Future Implications:

- Explore why the paraphilias and compulsive thoughts of an MSK lead to their expression through serial murders entailing combined sexual and physical mutilation.

References

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