

## **The Role of Narcissistic Personality Disorder in Rage-Type Murder (Part 2)**

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### **Abstract**

This research was directed at establishing whether narcissistic individuals will go to extreme levels of violence, specifically murder, if their self-image is threatened. The aim with the current research is to explore a possible association between rage-type murder and narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). In Part one of the study rage-type murders as a phenomenon was delineated and NPD was defined. The literature pertaining to the association between rage-type murder and NPD was highlighted. A current case that signaled the probable processes during a catathymic crisis and the gratuitous violence that follows was interpreted against the background of the existing literature. However Part one of the study left one with a sense of discontent as to whether NPD do play a role in cases involving rage-type murder and gratuitous violence. In Part two of the current study (this contribution) the researchers will use cases identified from Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital (a hospital in Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa) to uncover the role of NPD in rage murder. Our aim is to determine whether these perpetrators displayed narcissistic personality traits during the commission of a rage-type murder of a loved one. All the cases we selected were referred to the Psychiatric Hospital by order of the court for observation and involve males who displayed traits associated with NPD and committed rage-type murders. Our intention is to determine the extent of pre-existing NPD in these individuals and how this contributed to the murderous action they committed. Emphasis is placed on the psychological motivation of the perpetrator, as well as the relationship that existed between the perpetrator and the victim prior to the event. As the subject of the research was a relatively unknown phenomenon, a qualitative approach was used. We endeavored to identify the underlying personality dynamics to determine whether an association between rage-type murder and NPD exists. Although more research is necessary, our findings in Part two of the study has established an association between the selected cases of rage-type murder and NPD and there is historic documented evidence (Part 1) suggesting that individuals with NPD will most likely react in a similar manner in similar circumstances, as a result of their underlying personality disorder.

### **Keywords**

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Text Revision) (DSM-IV-TR); Grandiosity; Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2); Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD); Object; Observation; Paranoia (Pa); Psychopathic Deviance (Pd); Rage-Type Murder; Self; Self-esteem; Self-image.

## **Introduction**

In Part one of the study rage-type murders as a phenomenon was delineated and NPD was defined. The literature pertaining to the association between rage-type murder and NPD was highlighted. A current case that signaled the probable processes during a catathymic crisis and the gratuitous violence that follows was interpreted against the background of the existing literature. However Part one of the study left one with a sense of discontent as to whether NPD do play a role in cases involving rage-type murder and gratuitous violence.

## **Aim of this Contribution**

In this contribution the researchers focused on establishing whether narcissistic individuals will go to extreme levels of violence, specifically murder, if their self-image is threatened in intimate relationships. The aspiration was to determine the extent of pre-existing NPD in these individuals and how this contributed to the murder they committed. Emphasis is placed on the psychological motivation of the murderer, as well as the relationship that existed between the murderer and the victim prior to the event. Individuals who commit rage-type murders do not have psychopathy, and they cannot be diagnosed with Axis I disorders, as stipulated in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Text Revision) (DSM-IV-TR), and are thus seen as 'normal' (i.e. individuals who do not have a history of violence or psychopathology).

## **Hypothesis**

The association between NPD and rage-type murder would assist in determining the risk associated with a narcissistic individual and the likelihood they would re-offend in similar circumstances. Individuals who commit rage-type murders should not be held criminally liable for their actions, since an underlying personality disorder as well as a specific build-up to the event, is required. They should be allowed to contextualize a defense of non-pathological criminal incapacity, and be committed to a psychiatric facility. The effects of the unconscious, a dysfunctional ego, or a weakness in the superego resulting in a personality disorder should not be valid justification for legal punishment (Bromberg, 1951; Levesque, 2006). The punishment for the crime must be based on the personality of the perpetrator, as well as the motivation underlying the act in order for a suitable treatment to aid in the perpetrator's adjustment in the future (Bromberg, 1951).

The above hypothesis is based on the body of literature (Part 1) which highlighted that an external event generally provokes the act; the perpetrator and victim are usually involved in an intimate relationship; there is an escalation of the situation, which over time becomes overwhelming, as both the perpetrator and the

victim are unable to escape. A catathymic crisis is usually fatal as gratuitous violence follow whenever the narcissistic individual cannot control his extreme anger and rage toward a partner who taunt, ridicule or scorn them. An overkill episode signifies the need to remove the internalized object relationship; and the perpetrator is normally the one who notifies the authorities, suggesting they are aware of the wrongfulness of the act, but this is not a sign of remorse for their actions. To test these assumptions we endeavored to seek an association between narcissism and rage type murder by means of a qualitative investigation.

### **Research Methodology**

As the subject of the research was a relatively unknown phenomenon, a qualitative research approach was used. The research focused on analyzing specific cases of murder, more particularly cases where rage-type murders were committed. It endeavored to identify the underlying personality dynamics to determine whether an association between rage-type murder and NPD exists.

Case studies illustrating rage-type murderers who had been admitted to the Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital for a 30-day observation period were identified and analyzed. These cases were selected through reviewing the case history of each individual to determine whether the murder fitted the outlined definition of a rage-type murder. The cases that met the outlined requirements were deemed suitable for the purpose of the research, where after the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2) results of the selected cases were examined to determine the personality organization of the individuals and whether they displayed narcissistic personality traits. This information was then used to determine the possible association between NPD and rage-type murder.

The MMPI-2 was selected as the assessment tool as it is the most widely used personality assessment available (Butcher & Williams, 2000; Siegel, 2008). In short, the MMPI-2 is a standardized questionnaire used as a quantitative measure of an individual's emotional adjustment. Based on 567 True/False questions, the individual's responses are recorded on a profile form, consisting of ten clinical scales and six validity scales. This profile is then compared to the scores derived from normative samples, to obtain clinical information (Groth-Marnat, 2009; Siegel, 2008). The content of the majority of the MMPI-2 questions deal with psychiatric, psychological, neuropsychological and physical symptoms that can be associated with psychopathology (Groth-Marnat, 2009).

For the purposes of this research a two-point code type was used to indicate the presence of narcissistic personality traits. A two-point code type implies an elevation of two scales, for the purposes of this research specifically the psychopathic deviance (Pd) scale and the paranoia (Pa) scale, also referred to as the

4-6/6-4 code type. The Pd scale is a measure of anti-social tendencies and psychopathic behavior, and the Pa scale “assesses suspiciousness, mistrust, delusional beliefs, excessive interpersonal sensitivity, rigid thinking, [and] externalization of blame” (Butcher & Williams, 2000, p.80).

An interpretation based only on a two-scale elevation was considered to be overly simplistic. Thus, all scales were interpreted independently, and a clinical interpretation provided in the context of each individual's background. The 4-6/6-4 code type individual was used to indicate whether the individuals did have narcissistic personality traits, and thus was classified as having NPD.

Based on the definition provided (Part 1), we identified the following characteristics that were required in order to classify the encounter between the victim and the perpetrator as a rage-type murder:

- There was a pre-existing relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.
- The perpetrator had an over-controlled personality (i.e. they generally do not respond to provocation and are against the use of violence).
- There was a catalyzing interaction with the victim directly prior to the murder.
- Post-event analysis indicated a situational build-up to the murder.
- In many cases dissociation is present.
- The specific criteria for the selection of cases were as follows:
- The murder was classified as a rage-type murder.
- The individuals in the selected case studies were over 20 years of age.
- The individuals entered a defense of non-pathological criminal incapacity in cases involving rage-type murders, and were referred to Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital for observation by a court of law.
- Only cases from 2001 onward were included in the research.

Nine cases were identified of individuals thought to be rage-type murderers, who were admitted for a 30-day period of psychiatric observation from 2001 onward. Only five were accepted as rage-type murders according to the criteria above. All the cases selected were referred to the Psychiatric Hospital by order of the court and involved males over the age of 20 years. The individuals involved were admitted to the Forensic Unit and were subjected to standard psychiatric hospital observations, which included psychiatric interviews, psychological interviews, psychological testing, as well as general behavioral observations in the ward. All the information obtained during the standard psychiatric hospital observations is held in the clinical case files in the archives at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital. All the standard psychiatric hospital observation evaluations were completed prior to the initiation of the research, and the case records had been closed.

## Results and Discussion

In rage-type murders, the act itself is often oversimplified and the dynamics involved overlooked. To understand this specific type of murder, it is not only necessary to establish the motive, but also important to identify and describe the unconscious facets of the personality that were revealed by the interaction between the perpetrator and the victim (Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 2005). What sets rage-type murders apart from other types of murder is not why it happened, but rather how the act is justified within the individual (Wertham, 1966). When examining rage-type murders, the context of the individual's personality and background needs to be considered, as it provides the foundation for understanding the dynamics of their actions. The discussion of each case is based on the account of the events and the literature presented, which highlights the defining features indicating why each of these case studies is specifically considered a rage-type murder. The account of the events is that of the perpetrator, and was taken from the interviews conducted with the perpetrators during their 30-day observation period. This information was collected by means of an analysis of the information in the case files, as well as discussions and suggestions from the supervising psychologist, Professor Jonathan Scholtz, Head of Clinical Psychology at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital, who played a role in the interpretation of each case. The information in the case files includes information collected by means of assessment interviews conducted by the supervising psychologist, data collected by means of psychological tests, among others the MMPI-2, information obtained in the form of reports and interviews from third parties, including family members and other health professionals who were involved with the case, session records in the form of process notes taken during the interviews conducted by the supervising psychologist, and in some instances written work by the client.

After each discussion, the MMPI-2 profile for each individual will be presented and interpreted. The interpretation of the MMPI-2 is based on the elevated scores in the different scale types. The elevated scores define the code type of the individual. To interpret an individual's profile accurately, one needs to explain the overall configuration of the results within the context of the demographic characteristics of the different individual cases (Groth-Marnat, 2009).

Professor Scholtz, interpreted the MMPI-2 profiles of the selected cases in this study. We used the MMPI-2 results, together with a case history, collateral information and psychometric assessment information to develop a character image/profile of each individual. The information from all the sources was synthesized to arrive at a clinical interpretation of each individual. The validity of the profile is listed, followed by the clinical scales in order of descending elevations, with the highest elevations and the appropriate code-type. The results obtained from the profiles will be discussed within the context for each case.

## **Case Study One: Mr. A**

### **Rationale for Selecting Mr. A's Case**

Mr. A was referred for a 30-day observation period in 2006 following the murder of his wife (Miss A) earlier the same year. Mr. A shot Miss A in the chest with a hunting rifle and he was subsequently charged with her murder. An account of the events surrounding the murder will briefly be discussed followed by a clinical interpretation of Mr. A's MMPI-2 results.

### **Background Information and Discussion of Mr. A's Case**

Mr. A does not fit the personality profile of a psychopath or anti-social personality disorder (ASPD). He can be described as mentally stable with no prior history of violence and he is not impulsive in his general behavior. Mr. A did not have any criminal history prior to the murder, and there is no indication of premeditation. He acted impulsively; the violent reaction was an isolated event that is uncharacteristic of his general behavior.

There are indications that Mr. A had low-grade depression prior to the murder. It is likely that the depression is the result of his businesses becoming insolvent and his belief that everyone viewed him as a failure. He did not appear depressed, but this may be due to his apparent lack of emotional responses as a defense mechanism, which he probably not usually expressed on a conscious level, but used to avoid dealing with his emotions. Furthermore, there are indications that Mr. A was preoccupied with a sense of isolation and feelings of inadequacy due to the failure of his businesses and the strain on his relationships with his family members.

The murder event can be explained according to the central elements outlined by Wertham (1950) [Part 1]. The first element central to the murder event is that the act is a defensive display of explosive affect. An injury to the pride of Mr. A, which could be attributed to his failed businesses, as well as Miss A's constant reminders to him of his failure precipitated the murder. The second element central to the murder event is the dissociation Mr. A experienced. He committed the act in an altered state of consciousness, where there was impaired contact with reality, evident in his apparent inability to recall the events during the murder. The third element central to the murder event is the lack of motive for the excessive violence carried out. The explosive expression of aggression is triggered by a seemingly insignificant event, in this case it was the argument with Miss A concerning his activities during the day. The motivating factor in rage-type murder appears to be displacement of emotion onto the victim. It is likely that Mr. A was of the opinion that the only way to escape the situation of his perceived failure was to remove what he believed to be the source of the threat, in other words to murder Miss A, who constantly reminded him of his failures by criticizing him.

There is no apparent motive for the murder, and it seems likely that the argument prior to the event provoked the murder. The escalation of the situation over time is displayed by Miss A's constant criticisms leveled at Mr. A, as well as their strained relationship, which left both Mr. A and Miss A feeling insecure and unable to escape the situation. Mr. A did experience a degree of dissociation as he claimed not to remember any events from the time that he pointed the hunting rifle at Miss A, until the time that he phoned his father-in-law to inform him of what had happened. After Mr. A shot Miss A, there was a superficial return to normality, but with no insight into the murder. He was aware that his wife had been shot, but he did not report specifics of the murder. Furthermore, he calmly phoned his father-in-law to inform him about what had happened, and asked him to notify the police, where after he went outside to wait for them to arrive. Mr. A was the one who requested the police to be notified; indicating he was aware of the wrongfulness of the act, but this is not an indication of remorse for his actions.

### **Clinical Interpretation for Mr. A's Case**

When Mr. A was assessed, he was 34 years of age. He is a white male with a Grade 12 education. Mr. A was referred to Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital for a period of 30 days for observation in 2006 following the murder of his wife. The MMPI-2 was administered to Mr. A during his observation period in 2006, and his profile coded according to the MMPI-2 norms. It yielded the following results:

- Validity scales: VRIN, TRIN, L, K, S (reflect a valid profile).
- Clinical scales: Pd, Pa, Hs, Ma, Pt, Si, Mf, Sc, Hy, D.
- Elevations: Pd, Pa, Hs, Ma.
- Highest elevations: Pd, Pa.
- Code type: 4-6/6-4.

Mr. A has a poor self-concept and is highly insecure. The insecurity and low self-esteem are illustrated by the theme in the relationship between Mr. A and Miss A that “she would leave him at any time”, as Miss A was a pretty woman from a wealthy family. Mr. A indicated that he was surprised initially that someone of her standing would be interested in him. Poverty while growing up added to Mr. A's insecurities. For Mr. A, it was important to “make it in life”, have all the material things that would convey a certain status and illustrate his material success to others. Having a wife and a family were part of his idea of this success. It was important to Mr. A that his wife and children believe in and adore him. Mr. A was very “needy” emotionally, but not able to engage emotionally on a deep level himself. This basic stance towards intimacy came from Mr. A's background history. Mr. A had a father,



who was violent and strict and a mother, who was overwhelmed by her troubled marriage, the expectations of her husband, trying to make a living in order to provide for the family, which made her emotionally unavailable to Mr. A.

Appearance and personal grooming were very important to Mr. A. He regarded himself as attractive and explained that he received a great deal of attention from the opposite sex, which later made Miss A jealous. His image as one of the most successful businessmen in the town was very important to him. Mr. A dressed well, splashed out on material things, such as an expensive house, cars and horses and sent his children to a private school. Mr. A had a “narcissistic need” to feel special, adored and admired, as well as the need to receive attention and loyalty from others. Those close to Mr. A had to provide this, his “narcissistic supply”, especially Miss A, who was his primary “narcissistic supplier”. Miss A's mistrust and loss of confidence in Mr. A as a businessman, as well as her later consistent confrontation, meant that she withdrew her “narcissistic supply” from him. Mr. A lost the adoration, attention and loyalty he needed from Miss A to keep his defensive psychological structures in a state of equilibrium and his idealized self intact.

It is important to remember that during the build-up phase, the perpetrator's defences are placed under severe strain and is slowly eroded over time. For Mr. A, the many arguments before the murder, the many instances where Miss A accused him of having sex with other women, his failed businesses and the change in his financial position all contributed to the strain. When the final trigger, the intense argument where Miss A accused Mr. A of “sleeping with black whores” while he was attending a shooting competition, takes place (also referred to as the “narcissistic injury”), Mr. A became overwhelmed. His defensive capability is seriously compromised, he experiences deep hurt and humiliation and he acts out with primitive rage, destroying the source of his humiliation and pain in order for his internal equilibrium to be restored. After the murder there was a return to calmness. Mr. A experienced no genuine remorse, given the psychopathic elements of his personality, even commenting to others that Miss A deserved what happened to her. The temporary episodes of remorse can be attributed to his narcissistic entitlement, psychologically saying “how dare you leave me, nobody leaves me, I am too special”.

It is also important to note that Mr. A's other elevated scores on his MMPI-2 profile were the Hs and Ma scales, indicating the focus he has on his physical aptitude and his appearance. The Hs scale corroborates Mr. A's strong tendency to be overly concerned or involved with his appearance, which was identified in his history. The Ma scale further confirms his narcissistic tendencies, such as his grandiose aspirations, his exaggerated sense of self-worth and self-importance and his superficial relationships.



## **Case Study Two: Mr. B**

### **Rationale for Selecting Mr. B's Case**

Following the murder of his wife (Miss B) in 2000, Mr. B was referred for a 30-day observation period in 2003. Mr. B slashed Miss B's throat with a carving knife, and he was subsequently charged with her murder. An account of the events surrounding the murder will briefly be discussed followed by a clinical interpretation of Mr. B's MMPI-2 results.

### **Background Information and Discussion of Mr. B's Case**

Mr. B does not fit the personality profile of a psychopath or ASPD. Mr. B can be described as mentally stable; he has no prior history of violence, nor is he impulsive in his general behavior. He did not have any criminal history prior to the murder and there is no indication of premeditation. Mr. B acted impulsively; the violent reaction was an isolated event uncharacteristic of his general behavior. According to Mr. B there had been no physical altercations between himself and Miss B until the one they had on the day of the murder. The only physical violence that Mr. B had been exposed to prior to that day, was when his father was violent towards his mother. After experiencing how violent his father was, Mr. B had vowed never to hit his wife. Furthermore, Mr B stated that his family treated him like “a king” and he became accustomed to praise.

The build-up of tension and frustration was evident from approximately a year and a half before the murder, when Mr. B and Miss B started experiencing marital problems. Miss B attributed their problems to Mr. B's child being the source of tension throughout the time preceding the murder. When Miss B informed Mr. B that she had been having a relationship with another man for a year prior to the murder, it was an additional source of tension. This tension between them over these issues escalated to the point where a month prior to the murder they discussed divorce. Miss B was unreasonable in her demands, and since Mr. B did not agree, she refused to divorce him. On the night of the murder, Miss B informed Mr. B that she was planning to marry another man later that year. It is evident that when Mr. B heard of Miss B's plans, violence became a solution for the mounting tension in the relationship, as he claimed a physical fight broke out after he became aware of her plan. The violence was not controlled and the murder was committed.

The murder event can be explained according to the central elements outlined by Wertham (1950). The first element central to the murder event is that the act is a defensive display of explosive affect. In this instance, the murder occurred after an argument ensued between Mr. B and Miss B. There had been an escalation of tension immediately prior to the event. An injury to the pride of Mr. B precipitated the

murder. In the weeks preceding the murder, Miss B was inflexible in her demands for a divorce settlement, but on the night of the murder she informed Mr. B that she was planning to marry another man. Miss B's unreasonable behavior and her refusal to reveal her plans prior to that point, triggered the eruption of violence. The murder was a defensive display of explosive affect, aimed at eliminating the threat. The second element central to the murder event is the dissociation Mr. B experienced. He reported that he had gone into a "trance-like" state. He committed the act in an apparent altered state of consciousness, where he experienced impaired contact with reality. Mr. B claimed to have neither recollection of the events nor specifics of events immediately prior to the murder. He claimed to remember only the physical fight between him and Miss B, but could not recall any of the action. Mr. B stated all he could remember was "seeing red". When Mr. B was asked who slashed Miss B's throat, he replied, "Don't know". Upon being asked whether he had cut Miss B's throat, he calmly stated, "Could be". Mr. B claimed to be confused and puzzled that he was unable to remember anything about the event. The third element central to the murder event is the lack of motive for the excessive violence carried out. An explosive expression of aggression is triggered by a seemingly insignificant event, in this case Miss B's apparent lack of concern for Mr. B. The motivating factor appears to be a displacement of emotion onto the victim. It is likely that Mr. B was overcome with anger when he heard Miss B was planning to marry another man. At first Mr. B only slapped Miss B, who then retaliated and slapped him back. The situation escalated to the point where Mr. B felt the compulsion to murder Miss B.

There is no apparent motive for the murder, but it seems probable that the argument prior to the event provoked the murder. The escalation of the untenable situation over time was displayed by Miss B's refusal to accept Mr. B's child, followed by her relationship with another man, and finally her refusal to divorce Mr. B whilst at the same time planning to marry another man. Mr. B experienced complete dissociation as he apparently could not remember anything from the time that Miss B bit him during their physical fight, until he woke up the next morning, inside his vehicle at a garage. After Mr. B woke up, he returned home where he discovered the body of his wife. After efforts to clean up the crime scene and failed attempts to contact his lawyer, Mr. B proceeded to get ready for work as he did every other morning.

Mr. B was advised to notify the police and he turned himself in to the police later that day. He did not expect the police to arrest him after reporting the murder. During the course of his interview with the police, Mr. B stated that he did not know why he was arrested. He thought the police would first investigate the murder and only then make an arrest, if it was necessary. Mr. B indicated that he was willing to assist in clarifying the circumstances surrounding Miss B's death, and said that he

answered the questions posed to him, although he was under no obligation to do so. At the time, he was aware of his surroundings and that Miss B had been murdered. Furthermore, Mr. B realized that he was probably the one who had murdered Miss B, but did not think his arrest was necessary. He did not show any remorse for his actions during his interrogation.

### **Clinical Interpretation for Mr. B's Case**

Mr. B was assessed at the age of 37 years. He is a black male, who obtained a degree in Electronic Engineering. Mr. B was referred for a period of 30 days for observation in 2003 following the murder of his wife in 2000. The MMPI-2 was administered to Mr. B during his observation period in 2003, and his profile coded according to the MMPI-2 norms. It yielded the following results:

- Validity scales: VRIN, TRIN, L, K, S (reflect a valid profile).
- Clinical scales: Pd, Pa, Hs, D, Sc, Pt, Tf, Si, Hy, Ma.
- Elevations: Pd, Pa, Hs.
- Highest elevations: Pd, Pa.
- Code type: 4-6/6-4.

As in the case of Mr. A, Mr. B also suffered from low self-esteem. Mr. B grew up in rural area, in a large extended family among many other relatives. Mr. B always felt less important than his siblings and thought that by having a good lifestyle he would be able to prove his worth to others. Mr. B resided with relatives for long periods during his childhood, thus having limited contact with his core family. Mr. B's father was a violent man and physically abused Mr. B's mother. From a young age, Mr. B received most of his attention from woman in the village where he stayed, which made him feel good about himself.

Mr. B wanted to get out of the village and become successful in life, as status was important to him. After leaving school, Mr. B attended a so-called traditionally black university to study for his degree. As he felt this was not compatible with his image, he repeated the degree at a so-called traditionally "white" university. Mr. B married a medical professional whose family had strong political connections. Mr. B was promoted to a senior position in his work, which afforded him respect and admiration from his subordinates. Respect and admiration were always important to him. Mr. B was steadfast on his appearance and spent a great deal of time in the gym to ensure his physique would receive attention. Mr. B enjoyed receiving attention from other women and although he was very jealous and possessive towards Miss B, he was having an affair with another woman.

As in the case of Mr. A, it is important to remember that during the build-up phase the perpetrator's defenses are placed under severe strain and are slowly eroded. For Mr. B, his strained marriage, mainly due to several arguments about his child, led to marital problems. Miss B's parents were more involved than usually in their marriage and the illness of Mr. B's mother all contributed substantially to the pressure he experienced. From the moment that the narcissistic injury occurred, the process that followed is similar to that of Mr. A. When the final trigger (the "narcissistic injury"), the heated argument where Miss B told Mr. B she was planning to marry another man, takes place, Mr. B is overwhelmed, his defensive capability seriously compromised, experiences deep hurt and humiliation and retaliates with primitive rage, destroying the source of his humiliation and pain in order to restore his internal equilibrium. After the murder there was a superficial return to normality. Mr. B experienced no genuine remorse given the psychopathic elements of his personality. The temporary episodes of remorse can be attributed to his sense of narcissistic entitlement.

In Mr. B's case, the other elevated score on his MMPI-2 profile was the Hs scale, with the next highest score being the D scale. The elevated score on the Hs scale reinforces how important Mr. B's appearance was for his self-esteem. The D scale seems to verify the underlying low self-worth and feelings of inadequacy that Mr. B had worked so hard to overcome. The combination of elevated scores suggests that Mr. B's personality type falls into the category where the individual cannot bear rejection, criticism, or not being good enough in the eyes of others, especially those who acted as the main suppliers of his "narcissistic needs".

### **Case Study Three: Mr. C**

#### **Rationale for Selecting Mr. C's Case**

Mr. C was referred for a 30-day observation period in 2005 following the murder of his ex-girlfriend (Miss C) earlier the same year. Mr. C kidnapped and shot Miss C several times, and he was subsequently charged with her murder. An account of the events surrounding the murder will briefly be discussed followed by a clinical interpretation of Mr. C's MMPI-2 results.

#### **Background Information and Discussion of Mr. C's Case**

Mr. C does not fit the personality profile of a psychopath or ASPD. Mr. C can be described as mentally stable, with no prior history of violence and he is not impulsive in his general behavior. He did not have any criminal history prior to the murder and there is insufficient evidence to suggest premeditation. Mr. C acted on impulse and the violent reaction was an isolated event, which is uncharacteristic of his general behavior.

Mr. C can be described as an emotionally immature individual, who was seemingly preoccupied with Miss C. He was usually not aggressive, had a high degree of impulse control and low levels of hostility, which is evident from his patience with Miss C and continued efforts to preserve the relationship despite the constant rejection from her. There were, however, indications of depression, by Mr. C's own admission, as well as inwardly directed hostility, which was evident from his suicidal ideation.

The build-up of tension and frustration in this situation was evident for the five months preceding the murder. Miss C terminated the relationship several times, but immediately after the termination pursued Mr. C again. After successfully rekindling the relationship, she immediately terminated it again. Violence became more of a solution as the tension and frustration in this situation kept increasing. Mr. C had purchased an illegal firearm and kept it with him, which he claimed was to end his own life.

The murder event can be explained according to the central elements outlined by Wertham (1950). The first element central to the murder event is that the act is a defensive display of explosive affect. In this instance Mr. C had suicidal ideations that manifested as a homicidal act. Mr. C was "obsessively preoccupied" with Miss C to the extent that he was described as being depressed and suicidal when she ended their relationship. The murder was precipitated by an injury to the pride of Mr. C, as Miss C's childish display of behavior and refusal to communicate triggered the eruption to violence. After Mr. C had shot Miss C several times, he experienced relief from the tension of the situation. The suicidal thoughts evaporated as soon as the murder was committed. The second element central to the murder event is the dissociation Mr. C experienced. He committed the act in an apparent altered state of consciousness, where he experienced impaired contact with reality. He described the event as an accident, although he could not provide details thereof. The third element central to the murder event is the lack of motive for the excessive violence carried out. An explosive expression of aggression is triggered by a seemingly insignificant event, in this case it was the refusal of Miss C to communicate with Mr. C. The motivating factor in rage-type murder appears to be displacement of emotion onto the victim. It is likely that Mr. C believed that the only way to escape the situation was either to commit suicide or to murder Miss C. Initially he contemplated suicide, but later displaced the emotion onto Miss C and thus murdered her to escape the tension in the situation.

There is no apparent motive for the murder and it seems likely that her continued rejection prior to the event precipitated the murder. Miss C's constant pursuance and rejection of Mr. C aggravated the situation over time, which led to

Mr. C feeling insecure, confused, devastated and unable to escape the situation. Mr. C experienced a degree of dissociation as he claimed not to remember any of the events during the time he shot Miss C. After Mr. C shot Miss C, he claimed it was an accident and that the firearm had accidentally discharged when he tripped. After the event Mr. C was immediately aware of what had happened and that there would be consequences and he therefore did not immediately surrender to the police. In his case, however, the police were called to the scene prior to the murder by individuals who were aware that he had a firearm and was in a room with two women. After a standoff, Mr. C did surrender to the police, but did not show any remorse for his actions.

### **Clinical Interpretation for Mr. C's Case**

Mr. C was assessed at the age of 26 years. He is a black male, who obtained a degree in Public Management and a diploma in Project Management. Mr. C was referred to Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital for a period of 30 days for observation in 2005 following the murder of his ex-girlfriend. The MMPI-2 was administered to Mr. C during his observation period in 2005, and his profile coded according to the MMPI-2 norms. It yielded the following results:

- Validity scales: VRIN, TRIN, L, K, S (reflect a valid profile).
- Clinical scales: Pa, Pd, Pt, Ma, Si, Mf, D, Hy, Ma, Hs.
- Elevations: Pd, Pa.
- Highest elevations: Pa, Pd.
- Code type: 4-6/6-4.

Although not as apparent as the previous cases, Mr. C also suffered from low self-esteem. As a child, he was uncertain and reserved, especially when it came to girls and lacked confidence. Miss C was Mr. C's first serious relationship and it is clear that he was out of his depth in a close intimate relationship. During his interviews, Mr. C often repeated that he was totally smitten with Miss C.

Mr. C, as with Mr. A and Mr. B, was focused on his physical appearance, to the extent that he founded a body-building club at the tertiary institution where he studied and spent many hours every week training to enhance his physique. Mr. C performed well at his work but was willing to end his promising career in the Cape to follow Miss C to Pretoria to be with her. As with Mr. A and Mr. B, it is important to remember that during the build-up phase the perpetrator's defenses are placed under severe strain and is slowly eroded over time. For Mr. C, his on-and-off relationship with Miss C put him in a state of uncertainty, where he experienced anxiety and, after several terminations of the relationship, he became depressed. Compounding

this, Mr. C was aware that Miss C was unfaithful to him on at least two occasions in their relationship. Mr. C was unable to process the circumstances of his relationship with Miss C and deal with the erratic nature of the relationship. The infidelity and the loss of admiration and love from Miss C were incompatible with the self-image Mr. C had constructed of himself, which caused him humiliation and shame (the “narcissistic injury”). In Mr. C's case the precipitant event was drawn out over a period of time, but in the final moments Miss C's refusal to answer him and covering her ears when he asked her about their relationship, destroyed his defensive capability, which made him say, “Die, you dog”, and shoot her several times. These words and the cold-blooded manner in which he killed her, illustrates the intense, primitive rage he experienced. After the stand-off with the police, Mr. C had a superficial return to normality, when his internal equilibrium was restored. Mr. C experienced no genuine remorse, given the psychopathic elements of his personality. The temporary episodes of remorse can be attributed to his narcissistic feelings of entitlement.

It is important to note that Mr. C's next two highest scores on his MMPI-2 profile were the Pt and Ma scales. The elevated score on the Pt scale indicates underlying feelings of insecurity, inferiority and a tendency to ruminate and be overly worried and tense at times. These tendencies were strongly evident during the build-up phase. The Ma scale, as with Mr. A, confirms his narcissistic tendencies, such as his grandiose aspirations, his exaggerated sense of self-worth and self-importance, as well as his superficial relationships. This case clearly illustrates the role of the unfortunate fit in terms of the relationship, in other words, that the personality type of the victim sadly exacerbates the underlying pathology of the perpetrator.

## **Case Study Four: Mr. D**

### **Rationale for Selecting Mr. D's Case**

Mr. D was referred for a 30-day observation period in 2007 following the murder of his girlfriend (Miss D) in 2005. Mr. D shot Miss D multiple times and he was subsequently charged with her murder. An account of the events surrounding the murder will briefly be discussed followed by a clinical interpretation of Mr. D's MMPI-2 results.

### **Background Information and Discussion of Mr. D's Case**

Mr. D does not fit the personality profile of a psychopath or ASPD. Personality assessments were carried out and it was determined there were no psychopathic traits, but cognitive limitations were determined. Mr. D can be described as mentally stable with no prior history of violence and he is not impulsive in his general



behavior. There are no reports of physical abuse in the relationship and although Miss D's father claims that there were many, none could be traced. Both psychologists and psychiatrists agreed and stated that Mr. D had no history of violence and the shooting was out of character. During the observation of Mr. D it was noted that he had no problems, slept well, behaved well and socialized well with others. Mr. D did not have any criminal history prior to the murder and there is no indication of premeditation. Mr. D acted on impulse and the violent reaction was an isolated event that is uncharacteristic of his general behavior.

The murder event can be explained according to the central elements outlined by Wertham (1950). The first element central to the murder event is that the act is a defensive display of explosive affect. Mr. D had repeatedly asked Miss D to stop arguing with him, but she continued to taunt him. He asked her to stop for a final time, but she again just mocked him. In return, he “showed” her how he was going to make her stop – by shooting her. This illustrates the explosive affect Mr. D experienced prior to the murder, which led him to react by removing what he thought was the source of the problem. The second element central to the murder event is the dissociation Mr. D experienced. Mr. D claimed to have dissociated himself from the event, and despite repeated questioning, he had no recollection of the events. Although a neuro-analytical analysis was performed to assist in Mr. D's recollection of the events, he did not have any apparent memory of what had happened. The conclusion was that Mr. D had no conscious intention to murder Miss D. The third element central to the murder event is the lack of motive for the excessive violence carried out. An explosive expression of aggression is triggered by a seemingly insignificant event, in this case the refusal of Miss D to stop the argument with Mr. D over a picture of a naked woman on someone else's cell phone, which he had nothing to do with. Miss D was shot repeatedly and was struck three times. Thirteen shots were fired by Mr. D, which illustrates his expressive level of determination to get rid of the source of frustration. Although there was an excessive use of violence, there was no indication of premeditation.

There is no apparent motive for the murder and it seems likely the argument prior to the event precipitated the murder. In fact, Mr. D seemed to experience a degree of dissociation as he claimed not be able to remember any of the events from when he told Miss D he was going to show her what he would do to her, until the time he heard his daughter crying. Although complete amnesia is unlikely (Bear, Connors, & Paradiso, 2007) Mr. D could not give any specific details of the event. He probably suffered from limited amnesia, which is usually caused by three factors: extreme emotional arousal, alcohol abuse and physical trauma to the head (Rogers, 2008). Mr. D consumed six beers prior to the incident and was extremely emotionally aroused because of the argument and sardonic actions on the part of

Miss D. After Mr. D shot Miss D, there was a superficial return to normality with no insight into the murder. Mr. D was aware that Miss D had been shot, but he did not report specifics of the murder. The state tendered evidence that Mr. D was completely rational after the incident since he drove to his in-laws with his vehicle to report the incident and drop off his daughter. He then returned to the scene of the murder. Furthermore, Miss D was shot repeatedly and accurately, the pistol was found at the scene, and there was no evidence of involuntary actions or remorse on the part of Mr. D.

### **Clinical Interpretation for Mr. D's Case**

Mr. D was assessed at the age of 32 years. He is a white male, who obtained a Grade 12 education. Mr. D was referred to Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital for a period of 30 days for observation in 2007 following the murder of his girlfriend in 2005. The MMPI-2 was administered to Mr. D during his observation period in 2007, and his profile coded according to the MMPI-2 norms. It yielded the following results:

- Validity scales: VRIN, TRIN, L, K, S (reflect a valid profile).
- Clinical scales: Ma, Pa, Pd, Mf, D, Si, Hy, Hs, Pt, Sc.
- Elevations: Ma.
- Highest elevations: Ma.
- Code type: 9.

As in the previous cases, Mr. D suffered from low self-esteem. Mr. D also overcompensated for his feelings of low self-esteem in a similar manner to the other perpetrators (i.e. by focusing on his appearance and personal grooming). Mr. D was a successful business owner and had a beautiful girlfriend - Miss D, who accompanied him everywhere.

As in the previous cases, it is important to remember that during the build-up phase the perpetrator's defenses are placed under severe strain and are slowly eroded over time. In this case, in the build-up to the murder, there is a clear and unfortunate mismatch of the personality types of Mr. D and Miss D. Their relationship was characterized by themes of suspicion, jealousy and anger and the pathological patterns of interaction brought the worst out in both of them. The slow erosion of his defenses over time is illustrated by the many arguments prior to the murder and the separate sleeping arrangements. Mr. D stated on several occasions that they argued often and this resulted in them sleeping in separate rooms. The meddling of his in-laws made Mr. D feel subordinate, or at least not "the man in charge" – a prominent recurring theme in all the above mentioned cases. On the night of the murder, Mr. D and Miss D had a seemingly direct, sarcastic argument about Mr. D as well Miss D's

behavior. Miss D challenged Mr. D and in doing so, hurt and humiliated him. After this final precipitant/trigger, the extreme primitive rage that destroyed his defenses is illustrated by the fact that he discharged the weapon 13 times. After the murder Mr. D had a superficial return to normality. Mr. D experienced no genuine remorse. The temporary episodes of remorse can be attributed to his sense of narcissistic entitlement.

Mr. D did not obtain the same code type as the other cases on his MMPI-2 profile. Mr. D had an elevation only on the Hypomania scale (Scale 9), thus his code type is 9. Code 9 individuals can be described as unrealistic, are likely to be irritable and hostile, and have grandiose aspirations and aggressive outbursts. These individuals have an exaggerated sense of self-worth and self-importance, superficial relationships, are manipulative, deceitful, impulsive and an inability to regulate their moods. The MMPI-2 results corroborated the observed behavior during his observation period. Mr. D was manipulative, immature and stubborn with a tendency to be impulsive. His self-importance and sense of entitlement were also confirmed by his MMPI-2 results. Mr. D's next two highest scores on his MMPI-2 profile were the scales suggesting narcissism, the Pa and Pd scales. These were primary elevations in the other cases and are as such confirming the basic narcissistic constellation of his personality.

## **Case Study Five: Mr. E**

### **Rationale for Selecting Mr. E's Case**

Mr. E was referred for a 30-day observation period in 2006 following the murder of his wife (Miss E) in 2005. Mr. E struck Miss E with a blunt object, stabbed her, and slashed her throat with a knife, and subsequently he was charged with her murder, as well as the attempted murder of their son. An account of the events surrounding the murder will briefly be discussed followed by a clinical interpretation of Mr. E's MMPI-2 results.

### **Background Information and Discussion of Mr. E's Case**

Mr. E does not fit the personality profile of a psychopath or ASPD. Mr. E can be described as mentally stable, and although he has limited cognitive ability, he has no prior history of violence, nor is he impulsive in his general behavior. Mr. E did not have a criminal history prior to the murder and there is no indication of premeditation. Mr. E acted on impulse, the violent reaction was an isolated event that is uncharacteristic of his general behavior.

Mr. E can be described as emotionally immature, partly due to his limited cognitive ability. Mr. E experienced a strong sense of isolation as his wife and children communicated with him only minimally, and he felt inadequate due to his

limited cognitive ability. The demonstration of violence illustrated what Mr. E perceived to be the final defense against the disorganization and destruction of the personality. This is evident in the note he wrote for his father where he said that he could no longer handle the fact that Miss E and their children thought he was stupid. The uncontrollable violence acted as a form of self-preservation. He brutally attacked his wife and in an attempt to protect himself from criticism from his children, he attacked his eldest son so his son would not see what had happened.

The build-up of tension and frustration was evident from two years prior to the murder, but it intensified in the months prior to the actual murder incident. Mr. E claimed that his wife had become emotionally cold and distant two years prior to the murder. Furthermore, Mr. E's father-in-law was constantly telling him Miss E was cheating on him. Compounding this, two months prior to the murder Miss E asked Mr. E to obtain a penis enlargement. The murder incident was Mr. E's solution to a build-up of frustration, where after he experienced a superficial return to normality; illustrated by the fact that he asked his son for coffee, completely unaffected by what had just taken place.

The murder event can be explained according to the central elements outlined by Wertham (1950). The first element central to the murder event is that the act, in itself, is a defensive display of explosive affect. The murder carried out by Mr. E was unnecessarily violent, but it brought a sense of relief. Mr. E was able to look at what he did, then calmly ask his son for coffee, then go and sit in the lounge and drink it. The second element central to the murder event is the dissociation Mr. E experienced. Although it was not a complete dissociative reaction, the act was committed in an altered state of consciousness. He had no apparent breakdown with reality; however, he did experience patchy amnesia and subjective accounts of the events. Mr. E could not discuss the events surrounding the murder. His self-reflection and metallization were limited, and the murder was not integrated into his consciousness. Mr. E was aware of what he had done and he knew that it was wrong. However, the gravity of the situation did not immediately penetrate his mind. He continued for several hours in the altered state, attacking his son twice, and then taking him to the hospital to receive treatment. The third element central to the murder event is the lack of motive for the excessive violence used. The explosive expression of aggression is triggered by a seemingly insignificant event. Mr. E explained that he thought that there was someone in the bed with his wife and that was why he attacked her. In this case, there was no report of an argument directly prior to the murder. However, Miss E was in the habit of criticizing Mr. E and on most occasions he did not confront her. After beating his wife, he found it necessary to stab her in the back and cut her throat, and then he proceeded to attack his son in a violent manner on two occasions during the hours following the murder incident.

There is no apparent motive for the murder and it seems likely that Miss E's continued belittling and the children's ignoring of Mr. E precipitated the murder. That the situation had escalated over time was displayed by Miss E's constant criticizing of Mr. E, which left Mr. E feeling insecure, inadequate on all levels, and unable to escape the situation. Mr. E experienced a degree of dissociation as he recalled sketchy memories of the event. In his first statement he claimed to recall nothing, however, in a later statement he provided some details of the event, albeit not everything. In the case of Mr. E, there was awareness after the event of the wrongfulness, but it was not integrated consciousness, as he did not immediately react to the situation. After Mr. E informed his father about the murder of Miss E, he willingly handed himself over to the police, but did not show any remorse for his actions. Mr. E did not inform anyone that the children were at the hospital and needed to be picked up, nor did he accompany his son to receive treatment.

### **Clinical Interpretation for Mr. E's Case**

At the time of Mr. E's assessment, he was 40 years of age. He is a white male, who attended a 'special school' from Grade 5 (Standard 3). He went on to obtain a N1 qualification (equal to a Grade 10/Standard 8). In 2006, Mr. E was referred to Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital for a 30-day observation period, following the murder of his wife in 2005. The MMPI-2 was administered to Mr. E during his observation period in 2005, and his profile coded according to the MMPI-2 norms. It yielded the following results:

- Validity scales: VRIN, TRIN, L, K, S (reflect a valid profile).
- Clinical scales: Pa, Pd, D, Hs, Pt, Si, Hy, Mf, Sc, Ma.
- Elevations: D, Pd, Pa, Hs.
- Highest elevations: Pa, Pd.
- Code type: 4-6/6-4.

Similar to the previous cases, Mr. E had a low self-esteem, which was brought about mainly by his limited cognitive abilities. Mr. E was always very sensitive about references to or comments about his cognitive (in)abilities while he was growing up. Working hard to start his own company was Mr. E's way to compensate for this "inadequacy". His first serious relationship was with Miss E and they got married when they were still both young.

As in the previous cases, it is important to remember that during the build-up phase the perpetrator's defenses are placed under severe strain and are slowly eroded over time. Unfortunately, the same pattern of pathological interaction is seen between Mr. E and Miss E in the build-up phase. There were several instances where

Miss E humiliated and shamed Mr. E, often in front of others and his children. Apart from teasing Mr. E about his speech, Miss E requested him to have a penis enlargement. Although this was apparently at the insistence of his father-in-law and sister-in-law, it reflected on one of the core elements of his male identity, his sense of male potency and virility. The role of his in-laws is quite clear in the build-up phase, adding to his feelings of humiliation and of “not being the man in control”. In the case of Mr. E a trigger was difficult to ascertain, but it seems that the suspicion his father-in-law had placed in his mind about his wife's infidelity played a role as he explained that he thought someone was in bed with her before he murdered her. The primitive rage, which is illustrated by the way he murdered her and which even extended to his son, is testimony to the intensity of emotions that had built up over time and eroded his defenses. Similarly, once he had annihilated the cause of his narcissistic injury he acted in a calm, rational and devious way. Mr. E experienced no genuine remorse given the psychopathic elements of his personality. The temporary episodes of remorse can be attributed to his sense of narcissistic entitlement.

Although the narcissistic tendencies in Mr. E's personality were less obvious – probably due to his inability to verbalize as eloquently as those in the other case studies, owing to his cognitive impairments – he did obtain the 4-6/6-4 code type on his MMPI-2 profile. Mr. E's other elevated scores on his MMPI-2 profile were the D and Hs scales. The elevated score on the D scale indicates underlying feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem he had battled with all his life. The Hs scale was consistent with his history of various physical complaints and chronic back pain. It seems from his life history that he often “used” illness to gain sympathy and attention. The combination of elevated scores, similar to the case of Mr. B, suggests that Mr. E's personality type falls into the category in which he cannot bear rejection, criticism, or not being good enough in the eyes of others, especially the main suppliers of his “narcissistic needs”.

### **Contextualization of the Findings**

This research was directed at establishing whether narcissistic individuals will go to extreme levels of violence, specifically murder, if their self-image is threatened. The aim was to determine the extent of pre-existing NPD in these individuals and how this contributed to the murderous action they committed. According to Bromberg (1951), the effects of the unconscious, a dysfunctional ego, or a weakness in the superego resulting in a personality disorder should not be valid justification for legal punishment. The punishment for the crime must be based on the personality of the perpetrator, as well as the motivation underlying the act in order for a suitable treatment to aid in the perpetrator's adjustment in the future. Since the personality of these perpetrators is likely to be a key factor in the motivation for the murder, rehabilitation in a correctional facility will prove ineffective (Levesque, 2006).

Based on our findings it is fairly safe to assume that the males in these case studies are likely to react in a similar manner in a similar situation after they have served their prison sentence for the first narcissistic murder. Thus if they return into an intimate relationship, where the corroding of their self-esteem takes place over time, an unpredictable rage incident will most probably occur again to balance out their internal locus of control.

To support this Wertham (1966) refers to a case of a man who murdered two women. He explains it as follows: As a young man, the client was a gifted violist and became a talented musician in later life. As a young boy, he was hardly ever involved in fights and on the occasions that he was, they were minor incidents. He was described as a quiet and soft-spoken individual. He married at a young age. The marriage was characterized by jealousy and many disagreements. One day, after many arguments, he shot and killed his wife, after which he picked up her body and put her on the couch, while saying a prayer over her body. Immediately after the incident, he went to his mother and told her what had happened. His mother advised him to report what had happened to the police, which he did. The man received a prison sentence of 20 years to life for his crime. He had an excellent prison record and was only involved in one fight, which was in self-defense. He continued his musical education while incarcerated and gained recognition for some of his work outside of prison. As a result, he was paroled after 19 years in prison. The judge stated there was "every evidence of rehabilitation and that there is every probability that upon release he shall never again commit any serious breach of the criminal law" (quoted in Wertham, 1966, p.34). After his release he was very successful as a professional musician. He was so successful that he became a celebrity in the music world at the age of 38 years. A few months after his release from prison, the client stabbed and killed the woman with whom he was having a relationship. A friend of the client described the victim and her relationship to him as being "more than only a girl for him, she was a symbol, a symbol of the world" (Wertham, 1966, p.34). In Wertham's (1966) opinion, it is not usually the case where several traits come together to cause a certain result, but more likely, he explains, that one trait becomes more prominent in the perpetrator and this prominent trait, in combination with several other factors and circumstances, causes a violent result. He further states that "the cycle of murder and release may be repeated" (Wertham, 1966, p.33).

In the current research, NPD and more specifically a sense of worth, has been identified as a prominent trait within the perpetrators. In addition, in all the cases the perpetrators were constantly criticized by the victims causing a build-up of tension prior to the murder, which was most likely the instigating factor that gradually corroded their sense of self-worth, which resulted in the sudden surge in violence.



Although more research is necessary, this research has established an association between the rage-type murders and NPD of the selected case studies and there is historic documented evidence suggesting these individuals will most likely react in a similar manner in similar circumstances, as a result of an underlying personality disorder. This suggests that incarceration in a correctional facility is not the correct place to rehabilitate these individuals and why they should be acquitted because of their personality disorder and subsequently be committed to a psychiatric facility as a patient of the state.

### **Future Recommendations**

As the sample size in the current research was relatively small, it is recommended that the research serve as a foundation to conduct further studies in other Psychiatric Institutions that undertake the observation instruction from courts, to establish whether similar results can be obtained. This will ensure more reliability to the research results and enable generalization. Cross cultural comparisons of similar cases will also bear fruitful results to understand the relationship between NPD and rage-type murder better. It will also benefit in the compilation of pre-sentence reports in court rulings and sentencing.

As this research used a secondary analysis, it is recommended that future studies make use of personal interviews with the perpetrators, as it would further the understanding of the phenomenon, which will contribute to the explanation as to why rage-type murders are committed.

From the psychological interviews, case history, collateral and psychometric assessment information obtained by the psychologists involved in the cases, there is an indication that the victims all had underlying borderline personalities. It will thus be useful to do further research into the personality variables of the victims in order to more comprehensively explain the dynamics involved in the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and how this might have contributed to the murder.

At some stage it would be useful to compare the results obtained in a South African sample to international samples to determine whether NPD does in fact contribute to rage-type murder in a variety of contexts.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This research was undertaken to explore a possible association between rage-type murder and NPD. To achieve this, rage-type murder as a phenomenon was described. Cases involving rage-type murder were identified from Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital and the perpetrators' personality variables were analyzed to determine whether they displayed narcissistic personality traits. All the cases selected were referred by order of the court and involved males over the age of 20

years. In all the cases selected, the individuals displayed traits associated with NPD. While the intentions set out prior to the research were achieved, the research should be used as a foundation for future studies to find more comprehensible arguments as to why some individuals with narcissistic personality types commit rage-type murders.

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