

Leaping Liz! Taylor sets the date for hubby No. 7

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HORROR IN MILWAUKEE

He was a quiet man who worked in a chocolate factory. But at home in apartment 213 a real-life ***SILENCE OF THE LAMBS*** was unfolding. Now that Jeffrey Dahmer has confessed to 17 grotesque murders, his troubling history of alcoholism, sex offenses and bizarre behavior raises a haunting question: Why wasn't he stopped?



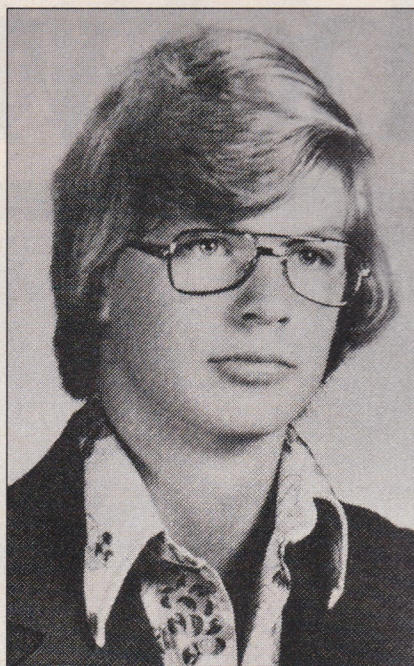
People weekly

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► The face of evil? Serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer was no silent lamb: "He bleated like a sheep in class."

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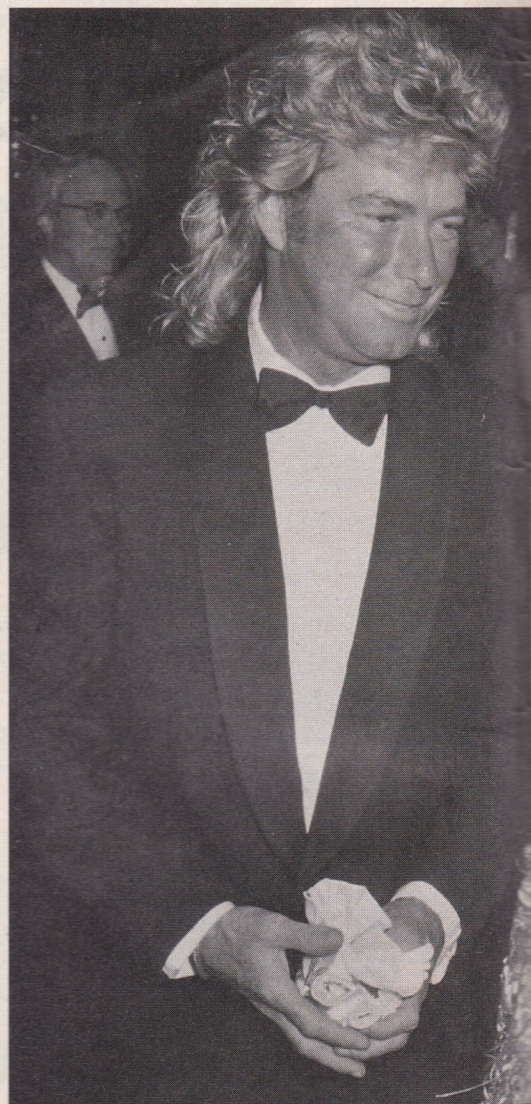


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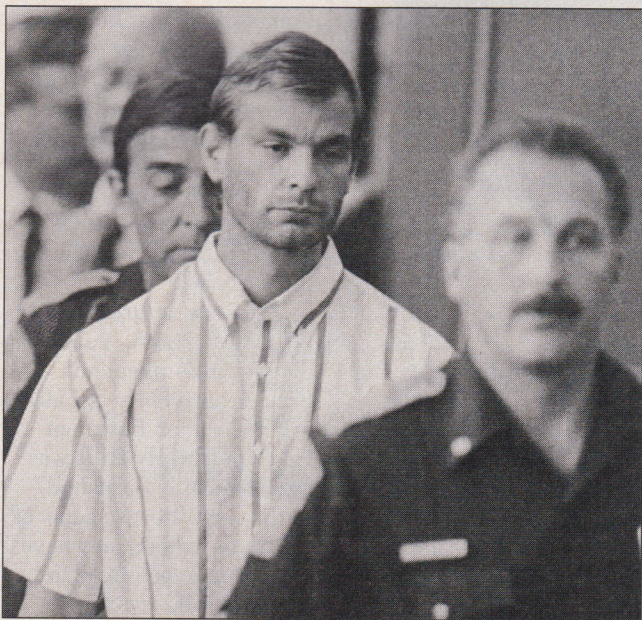
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THE DOOR OF EVIL

The unimaginable horror in apartment 213 leaves a shaken city wondering about the serial killer in its midst



MORRY GASHAP

▲ His lawyer said he was in a “state of anguish,” but Jeffrey Dahmer was impassive in court as he was charged with first-degree murder.

IT WAS NEAR MIDNIGHT IN MILWAUKEE, but the sticky, scorching heat of day lingered still—the kind that drives people outdoors, sends tempers flaring and unnerves even the police. Officers Robert Rauth and Rolf Mueller were on a routine patrol of the city’s rundown west side. Cruising near N. 25th Street, they saw a man, apparently dazed, running toward them. A pair of handcuffs dangled from his wrist. Tracy Edwards, 32, flagged the patrol car, pointed to the Oxford Apartments up the street and said that the man in apartment 213 had a big knife under the bed and was trying to kill him.

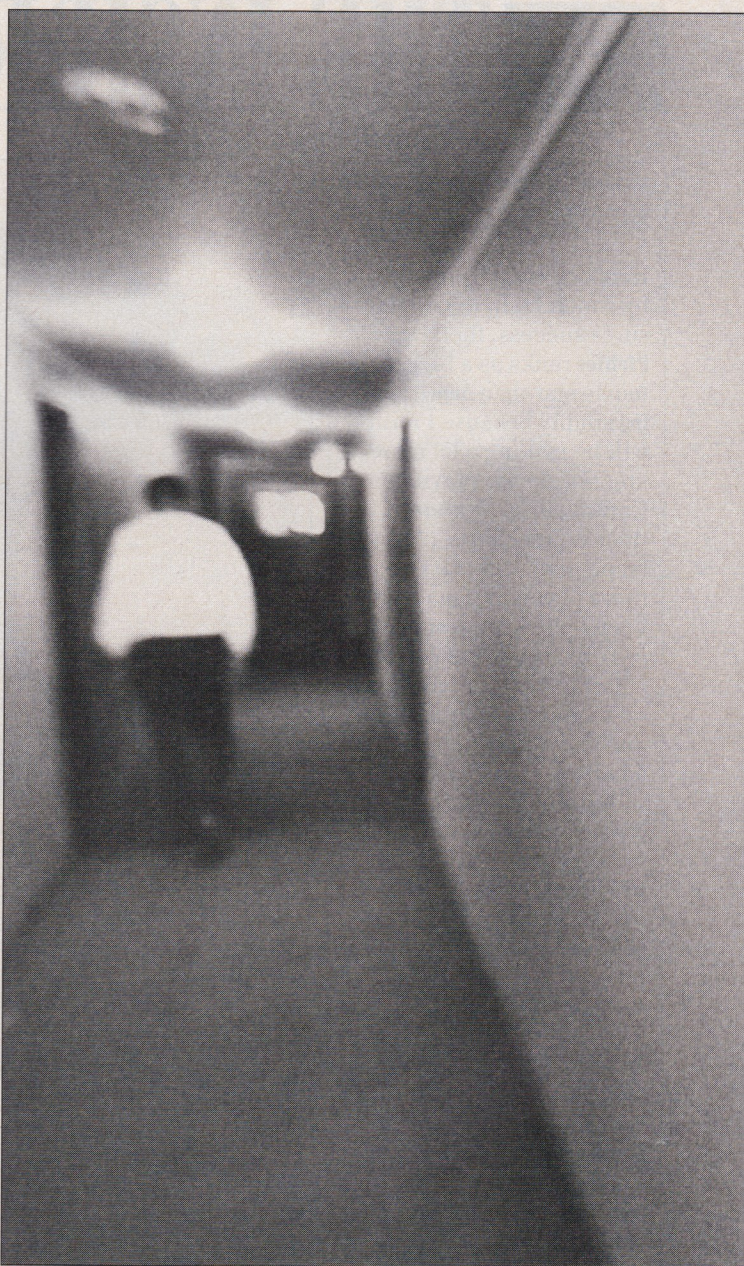
Rauth and Mueller are veteran

cops who thought they’d seen it all. Nothing, however, could have prepared them for the chamber of horrors awaiting them behind the door of apartment 213. An acrid, putrid stench assaulted their noses as 31-year-old Jeffrey Dahmer—pale, soft-spoken, his breath reeking of beer—politely let them in. Mueller headed for the bedroom, where a Polaroid camera lay on the bed. He indeed discovered a butcher knife underneath. But what caught Mueller’s eye were the photographs spilling out of the highboy. They showed homosexual sex acts, men in various stages of undress—and corpse after corpse, bodies mutilated and dismembered,

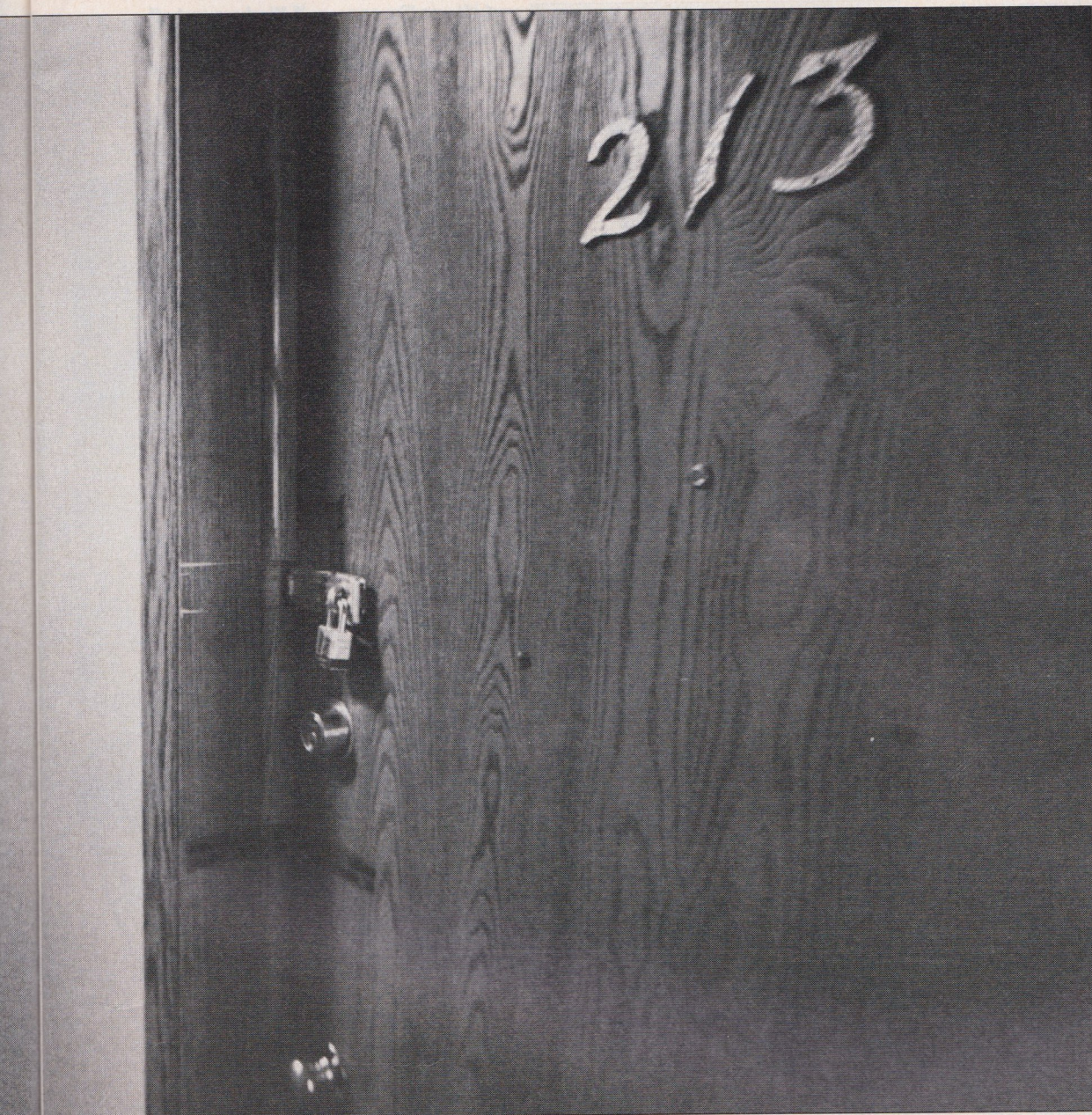
including one eaten away from the nipples down, apparently by acid.

With a shock, Mueller realized the pictures had been taken in that very room. After scrutinizing another grisly photo, he ran to the kitchen area, prompting Dahmer to leap up from the living room sofa, screaming like a terrified animal. When Mueller opened the refrigerator, he made an unspeakable discovery: a human head, sitting on the bottom shelf next to a box of baking soda. As the officers led the handcuffed Dahmer outside, neighbors—who say he attracted stray cats—heard him meowing.

Over the next several hours, in grim procession, officers wearing ox-



TARO YAMASAKI



xygen masks and protective suits turned up the remains of 11 men from the slaughterhouse that was Dahmer's home. Three more heads were found in a lift-top freezer. Five skulls, apparently scraped clean, were stowed in a box and a filing cabinet; two more were stashed on a closet shelf. Police found five full skeletons and the remains of six other bodies—three of which were in a chemical-filled, 57-gallon plastic drum in the bedroom. Body parts were stored about the apartment—including bones in cardboard boxes and decomposed hands and a genital organ in a lobster pot—as were bottles of acid, chloroform and formal-

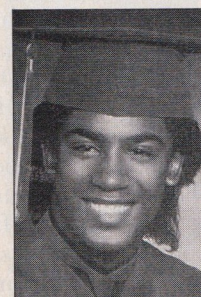
dehyde and various tools, including three electric saws. The sickening carnage eerily recalled the serial murders dramatized in this year's movie thriller *The Silence of the Lambs* (see box, page 36).

Dahmer confessed to the murders of the 11 victims whose remains were found in the apartment and later to six others that may date back as far as 1978. His lawyer, Gerald Boyle, said Dahmer had told him, "This is my fault. There is a time to be honest." In his admissions, Dahmer detailed a ritual method to the madness. He lured his victims—most of them black and homosexual—from shopping malls, bus stops

▲ Police padlocked the door to Dahmer's third-floor apartment after his arrest. The flat was actually a macabre charnel house where he kept the remains of 11 men whom he drugged, strangled and dismembered, all carefully protected by his own electronic security system.



▲ Steven Hicks



▲ Anthony Sears



▲ Ricky Beeks



▲ Edward Smith



▲ Ernest Miller

AKRON BEACON JOURNAL/AP

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL/SIPA PRESS

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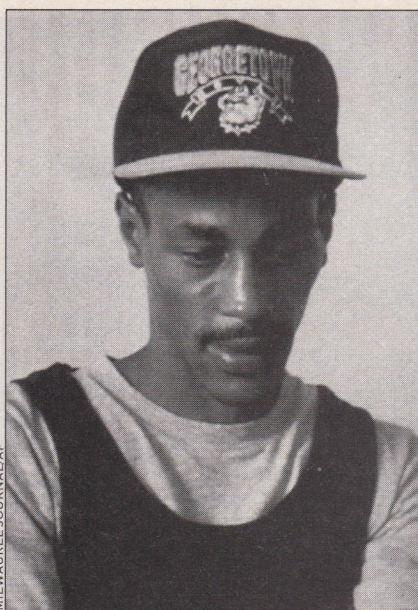
AP

and bars by offering them money to pose for pictures at his apartment, where he then drugged them with sedatives, strangled and dismembered them.

And, like Dr. Hannibal “the Cannibal” Lecter of *The Silence of the Lambs*, Dahmer hinted he too had a taste for human flesh. There was no food in apartment 213, only condiments. Inside the freezer were packed lungs, intestines, a kidney, a liver, a heart—the latter, he said, had been saved “to eat later.”

Dahmer’s ordinary, even banal background at first seemed to mock efforts to fathom what lay behind such evil. He was known as a mild-mannered man who worked, of all places, in a chocolate factory. But as reporters pressed further with family and acquaintances, a portrait emerged of a disturbed young man—an alcoholic, a homosexual who despised gays and a convicted child molester. No one could have known that his aberrant behavior was steadily building toward a criminal pathology, but there were clear signals of distress that were treated too lightly by mental health officials, the criminal justice system and perhaps his own family. Neighbors in the Oxford Apartments concede they discounted clues that now seem to flash ominously: foul smells wafting from the apartment, bulging bags of trash Dahmer was constantly dumping and the late evening whine of a power saw.

Born in Milwaukee and raised in the well-to-do community of Bath, Ohio, just outside Akron, Dahmer was traumatized at an early age. At 8, he was sexually abused by a male in the neighborhood. At Revere High School in nearby Richfield, where Dahmer played tennis and clarinet, he was considered bright but was unwilling to apply himself, preferring instead the role of prankster. “He had a bizarre sense of humor,” says classmate John Backderf. “He bleated like a sheep in class, had fake epileptic seizures in the hallways. I don’t remember having a normal conversation with him.” He developed a ritual walk to the school bus: four steps forward, two back, four forward, one back, day after day, never deviating.



MILWAUKEE JOURNAL/AP

There was a darker side to such odd behavior. Dahmer began drinking heavily, often consuming several beers before going to school. Because of his preoccupation with death and torture, friends began wondering if he was dabbling in the occult. Around that time, in 1975, neighbor Jim Klippel, then 16, was walking in the woods behind the Dahmers’ ranch-style house when he came upon a mutilated dog carcass. The head was mounted on a stick next to a wooden cross. The body, skinned and gutted, was nailed to a nearby tree. (Dahmer’s stepmother, Shari Dahmer, said that young Jeffrey—who developed a keen interest in chemistry after receiving an introductory set from his chemist father—“liked to use acid to scrape the meat off dead animals.”)

By his senior year, Dahmer’s mother, Joyce, and his father, Lionel, were in the throes of a bitter divorce in which they fought over custody of their younger son, David, then 12. After the separation, Joyce returned to Wisconsin with David. “Jeffrey was left all alone in the house with no money, no food and a broken refrigerator,” said Shari, who married Lionel after his 1978 divorce. “The desertion really affected him.”

Dahmer has now confessed he committed his first murder that June. He picked up a 19-year-old hitchhiker, Steven Hicks. Dahmer invited the youth to the house in Bath to drink beer, then bludgeoned and

◀ “It was like confronting Satan himself,” said Tracy Edwards, who escaped from Dahmer’s apartment.

▼ Workers cart off a freezer, which contained a ghastly collection of preserved human body parts.



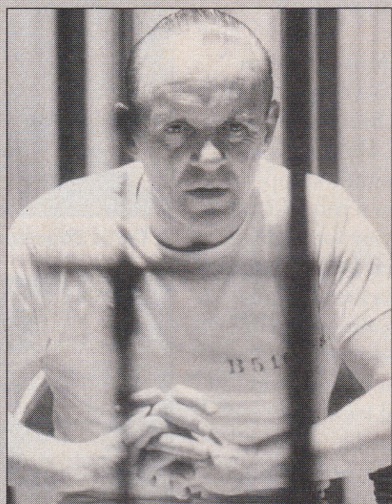
JACK ORTON/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL/SIPA PRESS

strangled him with a barbell before dismembering the body, cutting up the pieces and scattering them in the woods. Dahmer drew a map of the area for investigators who have already dug up about 50 bones, many tentatively identified as human rib or vertebra fragments.

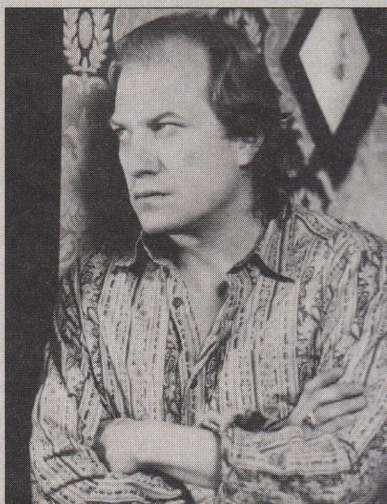
After attending Ohio State for a few months, Dahmer dropped out and enlisted in the Army in December 1978. Posted to Baumholder, West Germany, he was still the quiet loner, except during drinking binges when he would become increasingly moody and defiant. Lying in bed, headphones blasting Black Sabbath and other heavy-metal music, Dahmer would guzzle martinis until he passed out. Finally, in 1981 he was given an early discharge.

Later that year, he moved to the Milwaukee suburb of West Allis to live with his paternal grandmother, Catherine. He worked for a downtown blood bank before taking a job in 1985 at the Ambrosia Chocolate Company, where he was a stock clerk. His inner disturbances contin-

The *Lambs* connection: fiction pales



PHOTOEST 121



Jeffrey Dahmer and *Lambs*' Buffalo Bill (Ted Levine), right, fit the typical serial killer profile more than does Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins). "Once behind bars," says psychologist Joel Norris, "[serial killers] seldom want out to kill again."

Body parts in the freezer, the suggestion of macabre delectation—for many people the revelations from apartment 213 brought one image instantly to mind: Hannibal the Cannibal, the killer connoisseur of *The Silence of the Lambs*. But erudition like that of Dr. Hannibal Lecter belongs strictly to the realm of fiction, says Joel Norris, 49, a San Francisco psychologist and author of four books on multiple murderers.

While often keen, the minds of serial killers run in obsessive ruts. "Part of their frustration is that they have high ability and potential but they can never realize that potential," he says. Instead, they channel their intelligence into killing.

Jeffrey L. Dahmer may have more in common with *Lambs*' other nightmare man, the skin-stitching Buffalo Bill—a furtive, gender-obsessed character who was less mad genius than helpless psychopath. Buffalo Bill, in fact, was based on the traits of three actual serial killers.

Norris's study of 300 serial killers has revealed several common threads: They almost always show evidence of neurological or central-nervous-system impairment, ranging from dyslexia to epilepsy; they walk in their sleep or experience déjà vu; they have memory lapses, and their violence is almost always

presaged by killing fantasies or hallucinations. They are fascinated with fire and at some point usually mutilate animals.

According to Norris, most serial killers also abuse alcohol or drugs. Many suffer from malnutrition and "all have been abused, emotionally, physically and quite often sexually."

The victims, Norris says, "symbolize something in their [murderer's] pasts. John Wayne Gacy killed male prostitutes because he was extremely homophobic, and he was killing the hated homosexual part of himself." Homophobia and racism are central to Dahmer's case, Norris maintains. "Most serial killers . . . believe that they are doing good for society by killing certain types." They also commonly save a piece of the body as a totem to reexperience their fantasy. Almost a third cannibalize their victims.

But the most dramatic parallel between Jeffrey Dahmer and his predecessors is that if warning signs had been heeded, he might have been stopped. "The more people know about Mr. Dahmer, the better chance they have for recognizing others like him," Norris says. "And I guarantee you that right now there are at least two more like him out there, waiting to be discovered."

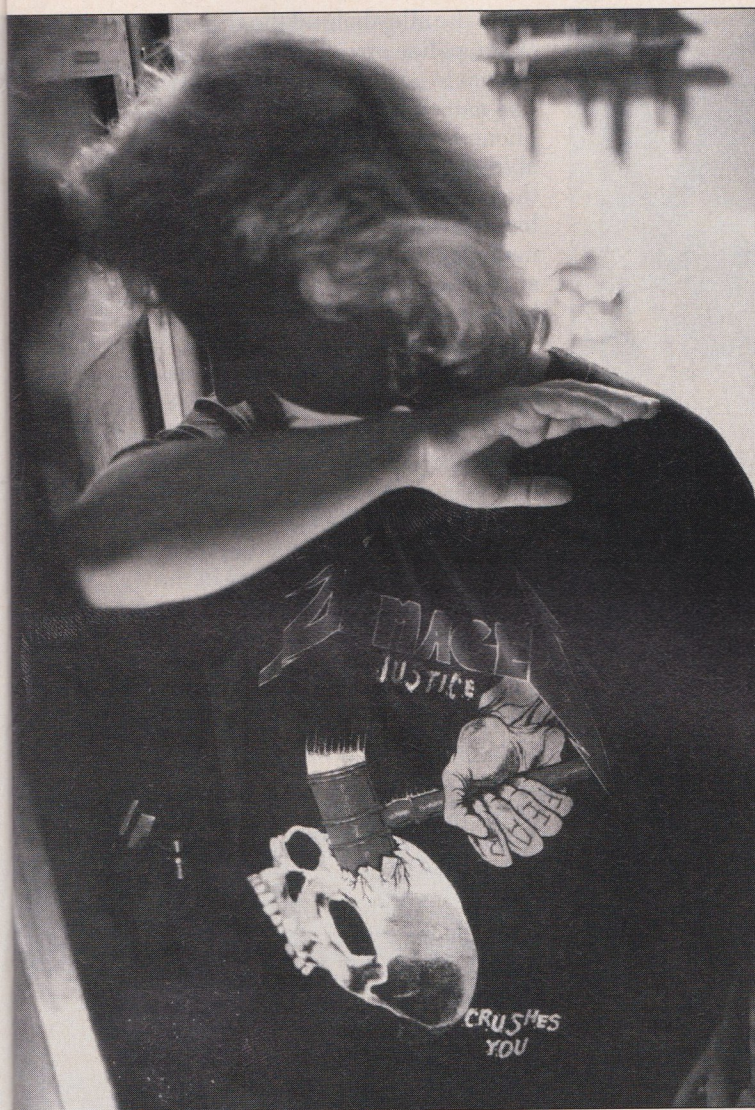
■ JOHN TAYMAN

down the alley behind the Oxford. When police arrived, they told the women to go home. The boy, a Laotian named Konerak Sinthasomphone, was dazed and apparently unable to respond. Dahmer convinced the cops that he and the boy were gay lovers having a spat. Konerak's remains were found amid the carnage at apartment 213. He was also the brother of the Laotian boy Dahmer molested three years earlier.

Dahmer claimed four more victims in the next seven weeks. First was 20-year-old runaway Matt Turner, whom Dahmer picked up at a Chicago bus terminal and lured all the way back to his apartment. Turner's head was placed in the freezer and his body stuffed in the 57-gallon barrel. Then followed Chicago resident Jeremiah Weinberger, 24. Dahmer strangled former high school track star Oliver Lacy, 23, before having anal sex with the corpse. It was Lacy's heart



COURTESY BRIDGETTE GEIGER



victim Anthony Sears, 24, which was kept as a ghoulish souvenir and found in the apartment on 25th Street.

With his arrest in Milwaukee in 1988 for fondling a 13-year-old Lao-tian boy and offering him cash to pose for nude photos, Dahmer again came close to being either stopped or found out. But despite a request by the prosecuting attorney for a longer sentence during which Jeffrey could be placed in programs for alcoholics and sex offenders, the judge ordered a one-year prison term that allowed him to leave for his job and receive psychological treatment as an outpatient. Released after 10 months in March 1990, he met regularly with his overworked probation officer, but only at her office and not at his home, which is usually required. Dahmer's stepmother told reporters that his stint in prison changed him for the worse. "Something happened to him that he would never talk about," said Shari. "Everyone knows what happens to a child molester in prison. I don't know if that's what happened, but when he came out he was hardened, and he hated black people."

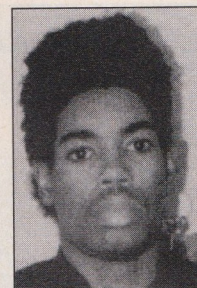
Indeed, by his own admission, Dahmer killed three black men over the next year. During that same period, his neighbors at the Oxford Apartments began to sense something was amiss. Pamela and Vernell Bass, who lived in apartment 214, noticed an oppressive odor in the hallways that never went away. "I went sniffing at all the neighbors' doors," recalls Pamela. "When I got to Jeff's I could smell it coming out of the crack." When she knocked at 213, Dahmer opened the door, revealing a spotless, tidy kitchenette-living room. He offered apologies for the stench, explaining that his freezer had broken and all his meat had spoiled. Dahmer was utterly convincing, explaining to Pamela that he had locks on the bedroom and closet doors to guard against intruders. "I thought he was keeping burglars out," she says, "but it seems he was keeping people in."

By May, the murderous rampage accelerated. Shortly after midnight on the 27th, two women saw Dahmer chasing a 14-year-old Asian boy, naked and with blood on his buttocks,

ued to erupt to the surface. He was arrested by Milwaukee police for lewd and lascivious behavior in 1986 over an incident in which he urinated in front of some children. He professed an interest in having a girlfriend but began picking up lovers at gay bars—all the while denying his homosexuality and telling acquaintances he detested gays. He was fascinated by horror movies such as *Friday the 13th* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Family members recalled finding bones in the trash and in a chemical-filled vat in the basement.

At the time, Dahmer insisted he was stripping flesh from animal carcasses, but he recently made another grisly confession: He admitted that, beginning in 1985, he had killed three men at his grandmother's house. Those bodies were apparently disposed of—save for the skull of

▲ One of the few people who befriended Dahmer was "Esther," a Milwaukee woman (she will not disclose her full name), who met him in 1988. She says they spent hours "talking about how the world would end and people would turn into cannibals . . . He would preach about how God would come to earth and put the bad people in hell with the devil."



▲ Curtis Straughter



▲ Errol Lindsey



▲ Tony Hughes



▲ Sinthasomphone



▲ Matt Turner

that Dahmer saved to eat later.

On July 15, Dahmer was fired from his job at Ambrosia because of chronic absenteeism. Three days later, as neighbor Vernell Bass returned home around 6 P.M., he heard the whine of a power saw; Dahmer, it appears, was at work on his last victim, 25-year-old Joseph Bradehoft. "I wondered what the hell he was building in there," says Bass. "My wife thought he was building bookcases. Then, when the buzzing stopped, I heard him yelling, 'Mother---er, I told you, goddamn it.' It seemed strange because I didn't hear anyone respond or talk."

Dahmer, who is being held on \$1 million cash bond, has been charged with first-degree murder for four of the killings he initially confessed to; other counts are sure to follow, each of which carries a mandatory life sentence. Meantime, Dahmer's lawyer has hired a forensic psychologist to lay the groundwork for an insanity plea. "There's no doubt he's insane," said Lionel, who visited his son in prison. But like all fathers, Lionel is compelled to offer some kind of defense. "[Jeffrey] was not born a monster," he

◀ "It was like he was afraid to touch me or something," recalls Bridget Geiger, who was Dahmer's high

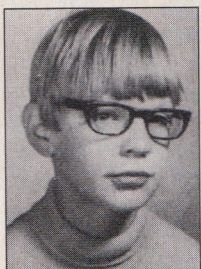
school prom date in 1978. "He had a hard time talking with women, like they had some odd control over him."

said. "He is not a monster."

Dahmer's high school classmate John Backderf sees it differently. He recalls a recent gathering in which he and other classmates talked about their days at Revere High. "You remember Jeffrey Dahmer?" one of them asked. Replied another, offhandedly but with chilling prescience: "Oh, he's probably a mass murderer."

■ PAULA CHIN

■ CIVIA TAMARKIN in Milwaukee, and bureau reports



▲ Classmates recall that the young Dahmer (in junior high school in Ohio in 1973) kept the skulls of chipmunks and other small mammals in his clubhouse.



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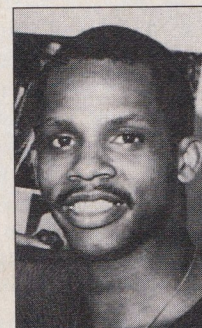


DAVID RODRIGUEZ/SYGMA

▼ "It scared me to death," says neighbor Jim Klippel, who came across this severed dog's head, near circles of scorched earth, in woods behind Dahmer's home in 1975.



▲ Weinberger



▲ Oliver Lacy



▲ Joseph Bradehoft



▲ David Thomas



▲ Richard Guerrero

◀ A soldier took this picture of Dahmer, on his barracks bed in West Germany in 1979. "Beginning Friday afternoon he would drink, pass out, wake up and start again," said the former Army barracks roommate. "He'd be in his own little world."