

**FERGIE'S FOLLIES** shake her troubled marriage

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# People

weekly



**EXCLUSIVE**

## SALLY JESSY RAPHAEL'S ORDEAL

It began with a 1:30 a.m. knock on the door, and the news that her teenage son was near death after a car crash. In the agonizing days that followed, TV's fastest-rising talk show host kept a vigil at his bedside and went to work in a daze. "All I wanted was for him to open his eyes." Finally, he did.







WILL MCINTYRE



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DAVID BINDER

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# PROBING THE MIND OF A KILLER

A Milwaukee jury must decide whether Jeffrey Dahmer is mad—or just evil

**I**NMATES AT THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY Jail have a nickname for Jeffrey Dahmer—the Chop-Chop Man. Their imagination was not taxed by the coinage. Since his sensational arrest in July 1991, Dahmer, 31, has admitted to killing 17 young men, many of them homosexuals, cutting them into pieces and saving some of the body parts “to eat later.” But as Dahmer’s trial opens this week in Milwaukee, new facts have emerged that are making his horrific deeds seem more frightening still.

In his confessions, Dahmer detailed the gruesome dismemberments that took place at his neat little slaughterhouse of a one-bedroom apartment in Milwaukee or at his grandmother’s home in a nearby sub-

urb. While some of his victims were unconscious, Dahmer attempted makeshift lobotomies, drilling holes in their heads in order to pour an unknown chemical into their brains. His reason? He has explained that he wanted to create zombies under his complete control. When these experiments failed, Dahmer killed his victims, hacked up their bodies, skinned and filleted them, threw out their flesh with the trash and either smashed the bones with a sledgehammer or steeped them in acid until they were unrecognizable mush.

He kept some of the remains as souvenirs, however. Investigators found a photo of a tabletop sculpture that Dahmer made from an unidentified decaying head resting on a pair of

severed hands. Among other trophies were a number of skulls camouflaged in gray paint to look like plastic, a man’s scalp and a penis preserved in formaldehyde.

Must such atrocities be the work of a madman? That is what a jury of 12 will be asked to decide over the next few weeks. Any possibility that Dahmer might be innocent was settled on Jan. 13 when he formally pleaded guilty to murdering 15 of his victims, signing separate statements detailing each killing. Dahmer, however, has entered a plea of insanity, which experts believe will be difficult for his lawyer, Gerald Boyle, to substantiate. Under Wisconsin law, Boyle will have to prove that his client suffered from a mental defect that diminished his ability to know right from wrong or to behave according to the law. “One can commit bizarre, grisly acts and not necessarily be legally insane,” says John Liccione, chief psychologist for the Milwaukee County Mental Health Complex. “It is not the acts themselves, but a person’s bizarre expla-



MILWAUKEE SENTINEL/SABA

▲ Shortly after his arrest, Dahmer (with attorney Gerald Boyle) told police, “I have nothing to hide.”





▲ Jean-Paul Ranieri (in his chapel) once heard Dahmer say, "All gays deserve to die."

nations for the acts, that are a sign of mental illness."

So far eight psychiatrists and psychologists have probed and analyzed Dahmer, searching for the biochemical imbalances, neurological impairments and genetic disorders found in some mass murderers. Besides looking for physiological abnormalities, the analysts examined a host of psychological possibilities. "[These killers] are often victims of neglectful or cruel parenting and have been abused sexually, physically or emotionally," says Joel Norris, a San Francisco psychologist and author of four books on serial killers. "As a result, they suffer from feelings of powerlessness and inadequacy."

A parole officer's report quotes

Dahmer's father, Lionel, as saying his son was sexually abused by a neighbor at age 8, something Dahmer himself denies. The prosecution, however, is expected to argue that sexual disorders are not the key issue. "It all boils down to the question of control," said University of Wisconsin psychologist Frederick Fosdal. "Whether he could control his acts versus being out of control will be the question."

Statistics show that insanity pleas are rarely successful, which relatives of Dahmer's victims find reassuring. "He sits there [in court] with no remorse, no emotion, and I know in my heart he isn't insane but a cold-blooded killer," says Shirley Hughes, whose son Anthony, 31, was killed by Dahmer last May. Pablo Guerrero,

who lost his 21-year-old son, Richard, to Dahmer in March 1988, agrees. "He isn't insane, he is evil, the devil himself," Guerrero says. Both families are angry that Dahmer's trial will only rule on his sanity. "Now that he has pleaded guilty, we may never know the truth," says Janie Hagen, Richard Guerrero's sister. "I want to know what he did with my brother. I heard on the news that maybe my brother had been flushed down the toilet. I want to know."

Many victims' families are also angry at what they see as the indifference of the Milwaukee Police Department. As evidence, the critics point to the evening of May 27, when three police officers returned a bleeding, half-naked 14-year-old Asian boy to Dahmer. They did so after Dahmer convinced them that he and the youth were gay lovers having a spat. That same night, the boy became Dahmer's 13th victim. (Two of the officers were later dismissed.)

Another controversial incident involved a late-night phone call received by Carolyn Smith last March, nine months after her brother Eddie disappeared. "Don't bother to look for your brother," a male voice told her, "because he's dead. . . . I killed him." When Smith called Milwaukee police to report the phone call, she learned that a missing persons case filed months earlier had never been recorded. That doesn't surprise her sister Theresa, who had originally reported their brother missing. "The minute [a police officer] found out that Eddie was gay, I saw his attitude change," she says. "Suddenly he said, 'Well, he's an adult. There's nothing we can do,' and he walked out the door. I knew then that he would never look for Eddie."

The pattern of disappearing homosexuals began to haunt some of the regular patrons of the leather-and-neon gay bars on Milwaukee's east side last year. And gays had run-ins with Dahmer for years. But, sadly, no one put those two facts together.

Several years ago, for example, Dahmer was evicted from a onetime gay hangout, the now defunct Club Milwaukee Bathhouse, after two men complained he had drugged their drinks and sexually assaulted them. And in February, Bobby Simpson, a bartender at the Phoenix, told friends





Dahmer was friendly with Tony Hughes (above) for three years before killing him. "I don't believe that anyone who could be that cunning, convincing and methodical is insane," says Hughes's mother, Shirley (right, with daughter Barbara).



that Dahmer knocked him out using hot chocolate laced with a sedative. Fortunately for Simpson, he recovered in time to cajole Dahmer into letting him go. One of the few to warn gays against Dahmer was Jean-Paul Ranieri, 46, a self-described street minister. Twice, he says, he interceded when Dahmer tried to pick up young men at a leather bar.

Since his arrest July 22, after one of

his intended victims escaped, Dahmer spends his days reading the Bible in a single cell with no television and few possessions. Under a suicide watch, he is isolated from other prisoners and monitored 24 hours a day. Sometimes he has been incarcerated in a maximum-security prison, where he has been confined to a cell with a glass front, much like the fictional madman Hannibal Lecter in the film *The Si-*

*lence of the Lambs*. Guards there record his movements in a log every five minutes.

There have been only two reported disturbances during Dahmer's incarceration. Once, he threw a tantrum after pens and pencils—considered possible weapons—were removed from his cell. Another time he went on a brief hunger strike to protest no-smoking rules. A chain-smoker, he even tried in vain to get a court order allowing him cigarettes.

If judged sane, Dahmer will be sentenced to 15 terms of life imprisonment with no hope of parole. (Wisconsin does not have capital punishment.) A ruling of insanity means he would be relegated to a maximum-security mental institution. It also means he could petition for a parole hearing every year, although no one seriously thinks he will ever be released. For relatives of Dahmer's victims, the real question isn't his sanity but what he did. "People think that because [his victims] were gay, they got what they deserved," says Dorothy Straughter, whose son Curtis, 17, was killed by Dahmer. "But no matter what lifestyle they chose, they didn't deserve that."

■ JOE TREEN

■ CIVIA TAMARKIN in Milwaukee



▲ The Guerreros spent three years searching for Richard, whose portrait is on the hutch.