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**Families Coping With Elder-Homicide  
In Rural Jamaica: Voices for the  
Development of Victim  
Services and Crime Prevention**

**By  
Annette M. Mahoney**

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Social Welfare, The City University of New York.**

**1999**

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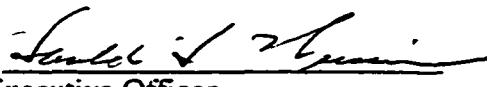
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Social Welfare.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**ABSTRACT**  
by  
Annette M. Mahoney

**Families Coping with Elder-Homicide in Rural Jamaica:  
Voices for the Development of Victim Services and Crime Prevention**

**Adviser:** Dr. I. Epstein

Despite the well documented extent of crime and violence in Jamaica, to date, there has been little or no empirical attention on the impact of violent assaults, such as murder, on surviving kin. Little is known about the coping strategies of survivors and the factors that might mitigate the impact of such assaults. Yet, the reality of homicide has been variously described as creating enormous emotional, social, and economic costs for victims' families.

This exploratory study uses qualitative methods to investigate the sequelae to elder-homicide in rural Jamaica. It explores how families of victims cope; societal support for trauma resolution; resources that survivors would have utilized if they were available, and further explores survivors' views as to how to prevent future cases of elder-homicide in their communities.

The field work for this study was conducted in three rural parishes in Jamaica. Using a quasi-variation sampling strategy, a non-probability sample of 24

was selected - 8 from each parish site representing a total of 16 elderly victims of homicide. Qualitative analysis of data generated through the interview process yielded rich descriptive data which were used to draw conclusions, make inferences and strengthen the interpretation process.

A major theme that emerged from the study findings is the need for a wide array of medical, mental health, legal, monetary and other social service interventions. The dominant core survival symbols of religion, family and friends are viewed as being unable to help survivors fully recover from the murder of their loved ones. Two to three years after the incident occurred, many survivors displayed significant symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and psycho-social impairment, yet mental health and other forms of support were, in general, unavailable to them.

Another emerging theme is the role of justice as a mediating factor in survivors' recovery. Most survivors view the criminal justice system as "unresponsive to their needs for justice and security".

These and other themes formed the basis for the development of a framework from which to address the establishment of victim services and make recommendations for preventing future cases of elder-homicide in rural Jamaica.

*To the memory of my mother*

***Hilda Maud D'Oyley***  
*(murdered on 9-26-95)*

*and to*

*the sixteen elderly victims of homicide  
represented in this study*

## **Acknowledgments**

The idea for this study is predicated on an enormous personal tragedy - the robbery/homicide of my wonderful mother, friend and mentor. She is especially remembered for her life-long love of learning, support of my ambitions and her generosity of spirit. The values that were instilled by her, as well as my father, also deceased, have become the hallmark of my sustenance during this difficult period of my life. I feel extremely fortunate to have had them as my parents.

I am also grateful for the unwavering support, compassion, and love that I received from my beloved brother, Norman. Unfortunately, he succumbed to a heart attack before the completion of this study. Not only did he understand the emotional complexities of my pursuing this study, but he encouraged me in this heartfelt interest. I will always cherish memories of him.

Appreciation is extended to the 24 men and women who participated in the study. Their willingness to be interviewed and share memories of their innermost pain associated with the murder of their loved-ones has been gratifying.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

**This qualitative study investigates ways of preventing the criminal victimization of the elderly in rural communities in Jamaica; explores the impact of elder-homicide on victims' families and communities; and seeks to identify services that might benefit families traumatized by this crime in the future.**

**The criminal victimization of the elderly constitutes a social problem with high visibility and far-reaching consequences. Despite empirical findings that show that the elderly are victimized at lesser rates than other age groups, the sense of outrage that permeates the murder of elderly persons has the potential for a serious disquiet among the entire citizenry - one that is engendered by deep-rooted fear, reduction in overall well-being and the shattering of the social conscience of entire communities.**

**In keeping with the accepted doctrine in criminology, elderly Jamaicans experience lower rates of homicide than other groups in the nation. Official crime data compiled by the Jamaica Crime Investigation Bureau (CIB) show that for the period 1994-1995, there were 1,470 reported murders in Jamaica. Of this number, 67 or approximately 5.1 per cent were elderly. What these figures do not reflect, however, is the devastating effect of elder-homicide on the family, friends and**

loved ones left behind. Neither does it capture the extent to which a single case of elder-homicide impact on the physical, emotional and social functioning of elderly persons within a community.

One aspect of victimology literature that differs considerably from the Jamaican experience is the significantly higher incidence of elder-homicide in rural Jamaica, compared to the urban area of Kingston and St. Andrew. Data obtained from the CIB show that for 1994-1995, 78 percent (52) of murders against elderly persons occurred in rural Jamaica. This is in sharp contrast to the under 60 years age group, where only 37 percent (507) of murders were committed in these parishes. The higher incidence of elder-homicide in rural Jamaica is clearly worthy of investigation, firstly, because Jamaica's crime problem has traditionally been viewed as an urban problem, and secondly, because criminal attacks on the rural elderly could be symptomatic of the greater problem of neglect of their basic needs.

Elder-homicide, when viewed from the broader context of Jamaica's escalating crime problem, presents a dismal and alarming picture. Since the early 1960's when Jamaica gained her independence from England, homicides have grown from 5 in 100,000 of population, to 11 in the late sixties, and up to 20 by the late 1970's and early 1980's (Stone, 1994). With a murder count of 780 in 1995, and over 900 cases

in 1996, Jamaica, an island of just 2.5 million people, is experiencing significantly higher murder rates than many developed complex nations including the United States. According to the US Department of Justice data, the US murder rate for 1995 totaled 21,597, with a murder rate of 8 per 100,000 inhabitants. Unlike the United States where murder declined by 13 percent for the period 1991-1995, Jamaica's murder rate increased by 39.03 percent for the same period, with projections even higher for the remainder of the 20th century.

The trend toward increases in crime levels in Jamaica has been attributed to a convergence of factors. These factors include various conditions that universally beset developing countries, such as inner city poverty, social alienation, family disintegration; to more recent and complex factors of increased availability of guns and drugs, political tribalism, and the growing problem of convicted felons deported to the country from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

In response to the growing problem, the Jamaican Government has outlined a new 20 point crime prevention plan (The Sunday Gleaner, November 3, 1996). The provisions of which include a policy of "zero tolerance" of all minor offenses, tighter controls of licensed firearm dealers and the expansion of the police force. While this plan is a necessary step for reducing crime levels, it is criticized for its failure to

address one of the basic underlying causes - social deprivation. It is also criticized for what is termed its failure to grasp the unique complexities and changes that are occurring in rural communities.

Historically, rural Jamaica was considered to be relatively safe from the social violence and resulting state of anomie that permeates much of the urban capital. In fact, it is estimated that 70 percent of all homicides that were committed in Jamaica during the 1960's and 1970's occurred within the urban center of Kingston and St. Andrew. The lower prevalence in rural parishes is often attributed to the cohesiveness, as well as the strong institutions that have shaped and cemented the social order of these communities. At the core of the rural culture is a long kept tradition of respect and reverence for elders, and strong attachment to family and community. Elder-homicide in rural communities, therefore, represents a violation of the most fundamental of community precepts. It further increases the vulnerability of large numbers of elderly citizens, many of whom are returning residents from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, or have migrated from the urban center of Kingston with the hope of enjoying the peace and tranquility of the country-side.

Is the once peaceful country-side of Jamaica now suffering from the worst

maladies of urban life? How can these heinous crimes be prevented? How do victims' families and the broader community "heal" from the murder of an elderly citizen? What services would best help persons victimized by this crime cope with their loss?

This study explores the above questions and is informed by Cohen and Felson's (1979) conceptualization on predatory crimes; by the basic tenets of crisis theory and post-traumatic stress disorder. It is also influenced by the literature on victims' services.

## **1.1 Goals and Objectives of Study**

This study seeks to develop a framework for advocacy and program development to address the unique needs of families in rural Jamaica who experience the traumatic loss of an elderly family member due to homicide. In keeping with the tenets of phenomenological inquiry, the study explores the sequelae to the loss experience as described by informants; their service needs; the extent to which these needs were met; their perception regarding how crimes of this nature could be prevented in the future; and attempts to isolate and interpret other factors which increase the vulnerability of elderly rural persons to victimization.

The study represents a serious effort to present an interdisciplinary convergence to the study of “victims’ services”, “grief, trauma and recovery”, and crime prevention — drawing on the areas of criminology, social sciences, and social work advocacy and treatment. These areas tend to be neglected by researchers, social workers, and policy-makers in Jamaica. This study may serve as a model for other programs - contributing to the development of awareness pertaining to the service needs, and rights of both primary and secondary victims of crimes. Additionally, this study may be used to inform crime prevention planning for use among rural elderly communities in Jamaica.

The objectives formulated for this study are:

- To ascertain and describe the emotional and behavioral reactions of families who have lost elderly family members due to homicide.
- To learn informants’ experiences regarding the availability and accessibility of various legal, social, medical and psychological services in the aftermath of the crime.
- To explore informants’ views about services that could be helpful to families and communities victimized by elder-homicide in the future.
- To ascertain and describe factors which delay the grief recovery process.
- To describe the unmet needs for mental health intervention emerging after the homicide.
- To ascertain and describe informants’ views regarding how incidents of elder-homicide could be prevented in the future.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

This review presents an overview of the factors which increase the vulnerability of elderly persons to criminal victimization. It provides a context for exploring the societal factors in Jamaica that have given rise to the phenomenon of elder-homicide. Against this background, the psychological and emotional disruption that results, is explored with the view to identify how social service agencies might best serve families and communities victimized by this crime. The final portion of this review is concerned with how communities and law enforcement officers may work in partnership to prevent criminal victimization of elderly persons.

Throughout this review, the terms “secondary victims”, “families of victims” and “surviving kin” are used interchangeably, depending on the terminology found in sections of the literature.

#### **2.1**

#### **The Elderly as Victim of Crime and Violence: Victimization Patterns**

Amid wide-ranging discrepancies in reports of victimization levels among the

elderly, there is general consensus that the elderly in most societies, including the U.S., are considerably less prone to criminal victimization than younger persons. Empirical evidence supports claims of a curvilinear relationship between age and criminal victimization (including murder). That is, rates are low in childhood and adolescence, peak between ages twenty and fifty and gradually decline thereafter (Kunkle and Humphrey, 1982). This lower victimization rate has been attributed to the relative low visibility of this group due to social isolation and lack of mobility among them (Dussich and Eichman, 1976). This self-imposed confinement may, however, change with the large “baby boom” generation who will enter old age in the next two decades. The opportunities brought on by the information age, coupled with improved health of older persons will, undoubtedly, influence important changes in how older persons will live their lives. Not only are they expected to lead longer and more productive lives, but they are expected to be more visible in the process. How these changes will affect elder-victimization rates is yet to be explored.

Researchers have consistently found that there are contrasting realities of old age which are directly or indirectly related to differentials in the probability of victimization. On the one hand, there is the positive experience - the “golden years” as characterized by financial security, increased leisure, freedom from daily routine

and decreased stress. On the other, there is the reality for an overwhelming number of seniors within the U.S., and especially in the “developing world”. They are constricted by diminished resources, reduction in social participation, cultural stigmatization and the inevitable decline in their physical strength and agility. These physical, social and economic challenges place elderly persons at disproportionately high risk for victimization.

On a physical level, advanced age brings with it changes that may mean that older persons are less likely to resist attack, flee from adversity or engage in self-protection activities (Kosberg, 1985). It is for this reason that Ennis (1967), found that the elderly are highly vulnerable to crimes against property such as, purse snatching, counterfeiting, forgery and malicious mischief. The perception of potential offenders of the reduced physical efficacy of the elderly may mean that they come to be defined as more attractive targets (Grayson, Stein, 1981). Other potential effects of the general diminishment of physical capacity may, according to Skogan and Maxfield (1981), involve the development of a subjective sense of vulnerability which increases fear and insecurity, and impair recovery and adjustment processes in the post-victimization phase. However, some victims do not recover. Fox and Levin (1991) found that elderly robbery victims are at greater risk that their younger counterparts of suffering the ultimate vulnerability -

**homicide. Often this is due to their diminished capacity to withstand the physical and emotional trauma brought on by their confrontation with violence.**

**Economic background and race are also strong indicators of vulnerability to crime. In the context of the American society, these two factors are inextricably intertwined. Several studies, including that of Kunkle and Humphrey (1982) found that older black persons - male and female - were at disproportionately higher risk of criminal victimization than their white counterparts. It should be noted also, that the prevalence of poverty in the American society is ordered in the same fashion - poverty among non-whites is significantly higher than among whites. Partly due to their precarious economic situation, and partly due to their race, non-whites often have fewer residential options. Large numbers of them live in urban crime-ridden communities. Wolfgang (1958) found that living in these low-income areas with large numbers of school dropouts, unemployed youths, and high crime rates, increase the exposure of the elderly to persons who are most likely to commit crimes. Forty years later these findings are still applicable.**

**The menacing conditions that exist, especially in public housing to which many elderly persons are relegated, often escalate due to pervasive fear – fear of possible offenders and fear of involving the police because of the fear of retaliation**

on the part of offenders. Large numbers of these elderly persons are also limited in their ability to secure their dwellings - to afford security devices such as alarm mechanisms, security locks and security guards. This is despite findings by Bazargan (1994) that protective measures provided by some senior housing complexes contributed to lower levels of fear among the elderly residents. The finding by Repretto (1974) that young burglars are more concerned with ease of dwelling entry than the goods that are in the house, also serves to highlight the importance of building security to the victimization risk.

In modern societies which are mainly oriented toward production and performance, there is often little esteem for those who can no longer participate in the production process. The elderly are often stigmatized by stereotypes that question their intellectual capacities and their proficiency. These stereotypes result in loss of social contact, leaving the elderly person lonely and isolated. The highly stigmatizing character of aged roles does not only restrict the mobility of the elderly, but often, it increases fear of victimization. It is quite unfortunate that the rather isolating practice of living behind closed security doors, also decreases vulnerability to victimization.

A demographic trend that has the potential to increase the vulnerability of

elderly persons to victimization is the growing number of elderly persons with the propensity to live alone. At present, about 8.9 million or one-third of all older Americans live alone (Aging America: Trends and Projections, 1991). This number includes more than one million, or 47.1 percent of persons age 85 and older, up from 38.8 percent just ten years ago (Bureau of the Census, 1991). Lapota (1978) suggests that the elderly who live alone often do so in the quest to demand and maintain social and geographical autonomy from the interference of kin and friends. He suggests further that the decision to live alone often precludes considerations about possible changes in neighborhood characteristics, and occurs at a time when their family might be involved in their own careers and with their immediate families. The lack of suitable protectors, whether family members, friends or community support, increases the vulnerability of the elderly to crime. Various studies have found that older persons who live alone are more likely to experience fear of crime, and are more likely also to become victims of homicide than those who live in multi-person households (Lawton and Yaffe, 1980).

All comparative research on the vulnerability pattern of elderly persons, suggest that victimization of the elderly, like with other segments of the population, usually occurs in a climate of poverty and social deprivation. In keeping with these findings, the largest proportion of homicide generally occurs within urban areas.

The perpetrators of homicide tend to be young, male, poor and frequently unemployed. While homicide may happen to persons of varied socio-economic backgrounds, it is most apt to take place in working class and poverty areas of cities. However, the extent to which elder-homicide occurs in rural close-knit communities is yet to be investigated fully.

The following section of this chapter addresses the socio-political factors in Jamaica that have set the stage for increases in social violence in that country.

## **2.2 The Social Context of Crime and Violence in Jamaica**

The high level of crime and violence within the Jamaican society has long been the nation's primary social problem. Its causes are deep-rooted and complex, and cannot be explained entirely by the universal Third World conditions of poverty and social deprivation. Jamaica's higher crime rate, compared to other countries in the English-speaking Caribbean has led many social scientists in the region to question how one area of the Caribbean could have such marked differences in crime rate, given other historical, social, political and racial similarities. At a recent conference of international criminologists, the call was made for a new paradigm in criminology

to explain the complexities of crime in the Caribbean region (Caribbean Life, February 7, 1997). Another perplexing puzzle in the study of violence in Jamaica, is that the trend toward increases in crime and violence began around the time that Jamaica gained her independence from England. Why did the homicide rate, which remained stable at around 5 per 100,000 of the population during the colonial era, increase so dramatically to a rate of 21 per 100,000 by the 1990's?

Stone (1994) attributes the change in social violence after 1962 to a convergence of interrelated psychological, social, economic and political forces. It is these forces that he suggests, signaled a profound change in values that redirected behavior toward violence and violent crimes. He suggests, further, that a minority reaction was to abandon the traditional values which taught acceptance and resignation towards poverty. Instead, violence became a weapon in the Jamaican class struggle - a weapon that was fueled by a new social doctrine that blamed society, the system, the rich and the middle class for the fate of the poor.

Palmer (1989) posits that the social tension of the 1960's resulted from the struggle of the mostly black lower class in the Jamaican society to create a "black racial identity". Influenced by the "Black Power" and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, they sought to confront what they deemed to be the social and

economic inequities within their own society -inequities that they believed were enmeshed in a class stratification system that favored persons with “lighter skin” over those who were phenotypically Black. He suggests that while segments of the black lower class espoused fierce racial pride, there was a significant degree of social aloofness on the part of black middle class Jamaicans, which further polarized the classes. It is this polarization, though not necessarily based on “shades of blackness”, that many believe has resulted in distrust and mutual hostility between some sectors of the middle-class and those who feel disenfranchised. It is also this distrust that Stone (1994) attributes to the growth of class-exclusive communities, especially in Kingston and St. Andrew. The growth of these homogenous communities has led to the decline of middle-class role models and increased “ghettorization” of many poor communities. The proliferation of marginalized communities, and the polarization of social classes, undoubtedly, fostered the climate for the formation of various delinquent sub-cultures especially within the capital city of Kingston.

The tradition of crime originated in certain segments of society, beginning with a common frustrating situation in the social structure (Cohen, 1955). For many lower-class Jamaicans, the accumulated frustration during the 1960's was rooted in a system that had proved incapable of delivering on the promise of “better conditions

of life” for all its citizens - an expectation that was heightened at the time of self rule. Much of the fury was directed at those who had acceded to political power. Viewing them as a petty bourgeois class, and as oppressive as their former colonial masters, these feelings were heightened by the stark reality of the times – a tale of two countries –one, according to Payne (1994) was experiencing phenomenal opportunities and unprecedented prosperity – while the other experienced much despair. The emergence of new sub-cultures - and the growth of many, including the Rastafarian movement, could have been a way for some in the lower class to achieve some type of status ---status that they could not otherwise achieve in the New Jamaica.

Like the 1960's, the 1970's was a period when the Jamaican masses yearned to bring their particular interests to bear on the shape of the country's social and political economy. The People's National Party (PNP) under the leadership of Michael Manley, captured their optimism with the political slogans “Better Must Come” and “Power to the People”. As a former trade union leader, Manley was aware that there were pockets of alienation within the urban environment which on more than one occasion during the 1960's had exploded with violence. It was by addressing himself to the discontent and by adopting a dynamic approach to such issues as unemployment, poverty and political participation that he was able to lead

the PNP to victory in the 1972 elections. This revolution of rising expectations born in the wake of prosperity, changes in law, war on poverty and a host of other features of contemporary life was soon followed by obvious failure to meet these expectations (Payne, 1994).

One of the first challenges faced by this new government was that of maintaining law and order. According to Allen (1980), gun murders, which were virtually unheard of before in Jamaica, accounted for 50 percent of murders. In 1974, shootings with intent had increased by 1900 percent and murders by almost 400 percent. Approximately 70 percent of these murders occurred in the urban area of Kingston where 30 percent of the population lives.

This state of affairs reached crisis proportion and created such fear and strong public reaction that strong legislative action was demanded from the government to cope with this problem of increasing crime and violence. Among the measures enacted was the extraordinary Gun Court Law passed in 1974 after the shooting of a number of prominent Jamaicans. It established a new court, where all persons using firearms for criminal purposes were tried within seven days, without option of bail, and if found guilty, sentenced to indefinite detention without right of appeal (Payne, 1974). This law was later determined to be unconstitutional.

By 1976, however, the country's narrow economic base began to show signs of crumbling under the force of a global recession, and was further aggravated by a shift in political direction by the Manley government. Domestic and international opposition to the government's program of change came together and worked in tandem (Payne, 1974). The rhetoric of democratic socialism did not only contribute to the collapse of the Jamaican economy, but it resulted in dividing the Jamaican classes along lines of political ideology. With the belief that a socialist form of government would redistribute the nation's wealth in an equitable fashion, lower-class Jamaicans were more inclined to ascribe to this ideology, while many middle and upper-class Jamaicans migrated to North America in large numbers in fear of losing their possessions or even their lives.

The general election of 1980 signaled the rejection of the socialist experimentation and the reaffirmation of the nation to the free enterprise system. It was also a time when the Jamaican population sought to heal from the tremendous turmoil of political violence that emerged during the elections of 1980.

It is estimated that 20,000 persons abandoned their homes that were burnt down and some 500 Jamaicans were killed in political warfare between JLP and

**PNP gangs mainly in the capital Kingston, St. Andrew and Spanish Town. In 1980, the police were almost helpless in being able to contain the high level of violence in which the political gangs were armed with high power assault rifles, semi-automatic pistols and sub-machine guns. The army had to be brought in to assist the police (Stone, 1994).**

**Despite the fact that the levels of political violence have not been repeated since 1980, there is still fear that it may escalate at anytime. This fear is compounded by the fact that the high powered guns that were used in the 1980's have not been retrieved by law enforcement. In fact, according to data obtained from the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB), violence by shooting has increased steadily since the 1980's. In 1988 there were 995 reported cases; by 1995 there were 1,308 such cases.**

**The political, economic and social challenges faced by the Seaga government of 1980-1989, were similar to those faced by the incumbent government of Prime Minister P.J. Paterson. They were both faced with the ominous task of revitalizing the country's economy while stabilizing the social order. Various stabilizing policies were implemented.**

Stabilizing policies, targeted at the demand side of the national budget involve fiscal and monetary control and devaluation which reduce real incomes and the domestic demand for imports. Stabilization policies are generally designed to achieve a balance of payment equilibrium over a short time (one or two years), and emphasize the balance of payments target at the expense of income growth (Onimode, 1989). International Monetary Fund (IMF) stabilization programs which typically lead to deflation, devaluation and decontrol, often result in public expenditure cuts in social programs.

The IMF prescriptions for stabilizing the Jamaican economy created much instability in the Jamaican social order. It is the harshness of the terms of this contract that Payne (1988) attributes the blame for the high levels of unemployment, instability of the Jamaican dollar, and the deteriorating social and economic infrastructure which further increase criminality within the society. These conditions have been evidenced by large numbers of petty crimes involving stealing, burglary and praedial larceny. These offenses have averaged approximately 25,000 annually reported cases since 1988 (CIB Statistics and Research, 1991-1996).

In the case of violent crime, increased drug use, drug trafficking, street gang and the deportation crisis are viewed as the most significant contributors to this

problem. Stone (1994) describes this relatively new phenomenon as one that is driven by the accumulation of alternative power. The disruptive effects of these problems are associated with not only increases in social violence, but with a type of “barbarism” that is new to the Jamaican law enforcement system.

In a report by the United States News and World Report (January, 1988) James Brown, special agent in charge of the Miami Field Office for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) states that Jamaican gangs, also called “posses” have been smuggling crack and cocaine to the United States, while smuggling handguns, assault rifles and machine guns back to Kingston where it is believed that these weapons are sold on the streets.

In addition, many Jamaican natives who have gained notoriety for their involvement in criminal activity in the United States have been deported to Jamaica. Provisions of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, enacted by the Congress of the United States, has made it possible for a massive and labor-intensive crackdown on criminal aliens. While federal officials have always had the power to deport undesirable aliens, the new rules have made it more likely to happen. It has lowered the threshold for penalties and, in a far-

reaching move, made the possibility of deportation retroactive. One offshoot of this stepped-up effort is an outcry from foreign nations receiving the deportees, who say they have brought a new crime wave in their countries. In the Caribbean, which got about a quarter of the 36,909 criminal aliens deported last year, those returning are creating law enforcement headaches. (Newsday, May 11, 1997) Jamaica is disproportionately affected by this deportation trend. Apart from the 3,655 Jamaican natives who were deported from the U.S. for the period, 1993-1996, it has had to accommodate a smaller, but growing number of its citizens who were deported from Canada and the United Kingdom as well.

The growing sentiment throughout the Caribbean region, and Jamaica in particular, is that many of these “sophisticated criminals” having lost the luxuries of first world economies, are driven by such rage, that they are willing to enact “unspeakable ills” in an effort to survive. Besides, many of them have little or no loyalty or ties with the country of their birth, having migrated at an early age. Their levels of sophistication and criminality is believed to outweigh, by far, the ability of law enforcement’s interdiction capability.

As the Jamaican government seeks to contain the levels of violence within the society, some uneasy findings may thwart their effort. Bonnick (1994) reports that

studies conducted in Jamaica conclude that the Jamaican community has accommodated itself to high levels of crime -- having lived with this malady for so long that they do not think that it can change. Another daunting problem that he found concerns the declining percentage of crime related murders that have been solved; according to him, the percentage fell from 24 percent to 12 percent between 1987 and 1989. This finding is consistent with more recent trends between 1990-1995. According to the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) statistics, of the 3,313 murders that were committed between 1991-1995, only 1,492 have been solved. These low rates at which violent crimes have been solved in Jamaica is attributed to the intimidation of witnesses and the low level of confidence in the police force (Stone, 1994).

In recognizing the impact of the increasing crime problem on the lives of the Jamaican populace, more and more Jamaicans are demanding that drastic measures be implemented. These sentiments are expressed by Neita, who in an article in the Daily Gleaner of September 30, 1996, bemoans the fact that victims are being robbed of their rights while "psychiatrists, and do-gooders, preach the *gospel* that crime is a bastard conceived in a bed of poverty". Morris Cargill, another columnist with the Jamaican Gleaner shares much of the sentiment expressed by Neita. He appears to be critical of persons who he describes as "bleeding hearts" - persons who

seek to commute or delay scheduled hangings in Jamaica through the appeal process. Cargill reminds his reading public that with an annual murder count of approximately 1,000, there would be no place to house convicted murderers if their sentences were commuted. In his usual cryptic style, he states the following: "perhaps the bleeding hearts would be happy if we farm them (convicted murderers) all out to one of our better all-inclusive hotels. We could rename it the *Hanging Garden of Babylon*". (The Weekly Gleaner, N.A., October 1-7, 1998.)

### 2.3 The Elderly in a Changing Rural Culture

In the past, rural Jamaican communities coalesced around those with solid middle-class values - ministers, teachers, doctors, and other community leaders. The comparatively low crime rate during those years reflected the fact that most rural residents lived in cohesive communities with identifiable standards. Several important changes have since taken place – changes that have severely impacted the relationship between the elderly and his community. These changes include a demographic shift from urban to rural areas, and the increasing shift from a rural agricultural-based economy to various small scale enterprises, including illicit ones.

Massive demographic shifts have changed the social order of rural communities. The 'push and pull' of socio-economic conditions have influenced both internal and external migration. Internal migration flows in Jamaica show a tendency for females to predominate in rural - urban migration. (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995). This trend is consistent with external migration patterns to the U.S., Canada and the United Kingdom. During 1995 some 18,058 immigrant visas were issued to Jamaicans destined for those countries (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995). Those who migrate, often leave their elderly kin in vulnerable situations. In the absence of "real protectors" they become targets of exploitation and theft. Targeting of these elderly persons results from a long kept belief that those persons are in possession of cash and valuables received from their family members abroad. The prejudices and stereotypes concerning the elderly also play a part in the motivation of offenders to target them. They often perceive the elderly as lacking in intellectual capacity and as being "senile". The misconception often leads to daring attacks on elderly persons.

According to the Planning Institute of Jamaica (1995) most rural parishes are experiencing significant growth in their population. The shift from urban to rural areas account for this growth. The pull toward rural communities is often determined by the lower cost of living in rural Jamaica and the over-crowding of the

urban center. Increasingly, rural Jamaica is becoming attractive to those from the inner-city sub-culture of violence, who seek to take advantage of limited policing of rural neighborhoods in order to mount their campaigns of terror.

Accompanying the latter group, is a host of detrimental influences of the decaying urban structure that they left behind. Manifestations of this decay are described by Leo-Rhynie (1993) as a crisis in human relationship seen in children's lack of respect of adults; aggressive behavior; abandoning children to the streets; increasing drug use; the targeting of the most helpless in society for sexual abuse and violence; the viciousness of crimes and the formation of gangs. These factors have collectively undermined the traditions of safety and shattered the stability of rural communities.

The influx of people from the urban area into rural Jamaica also create uncertainty, ambiguity and conflict in the minds of people who have lived in a community in which changes occurred at a pace which made life stable and predictable. The close-knit rural community of the past was one where the elderly person had an intimate knowledge of his neighbor - the youths, their parents and grandparents. The relationship between them was often defined as "family". The new neighbor from Kingston and St. Andrew depending on his age, family

background, and perceived status, may be perceived as a threat to the community. This is borne out of the belief that youths who are socialized within inner cities are more likely to victimize the elderly than those residents who grew up within the tradition of the close-knit rural culture.

The economic shift from agriculture to often illicit enterprises, seldom includes considerations about the legality of the enterprise. Instead, participation is driven by the lucrative and quick reward that such enterprises offer. This consideration also seem to offset the risks associated with crime. Many youths have abandoned the pursuit of conventional goals and have become enmeshed in dysfunctional lifestyles such as drug use, the selling of drugs and other terrorist activities such as gang involvement and robberies. Stone (1994) warns that Jamaica is on the verge of developing a vicious level of “narco-terrorism” that could easily mature into the kind of Columbian situation where drug gangs operate as a state within a state and can dictate terms to governments, communities and whole societies. He notes further that agriculture provided a base for earlier generations of youths, despite generally high unemployment levels. They grew crops and reared animals and were able to take care of their families. This generation, however, has abandoned family farms and sought to make “quick money”, often through illicit means. More frightening is the fact that many of those youths who grew up within the tradition of

close-knit rural culture, are now imitating the bad behavior, aggression, foul language and proneness to violence that is rooted in the sub-culture of the inner city.

As a result of rampant criminality within their neighborhoods, many elderly rural Jamaicans have become virtual prisoners in their homes. Unlike their urban counterpart who have learnt to accommodate to increasing levels of social violence within their community, the rural elderly are often unprepared. They must first come to terms with the fact that the “preferred status” accorded to their earlier cohorts is no longer honored by segments of the present generation. Attacks against them happen despite the fact that the elderly in Jamaica, particularly those in rural communities, continue to make useful contributions to their society. There is evidence, however, that large numbers of rural elderly persons are refusing to assume certain roles.

One role that the elderly appear to be shrinking from is that of surrogate parenting. Leo-Rhynie (1993) states that grandmothers in Jamaica are no longer willing or able to become substitute parents as they were in the past. She attributes this change to diminished resources on the part of many elderly and on the need by some elderly to assert their autonomy. This new trend leaves the elderly living alone, without the benefits of the earlier multi-generational family household.

Concurrent with this trend, is the high cost of consumer goods and the decline of real earnings which often leave them without the resources necessary to ensure the safety of their homes. The emphasis on “doing for oneself” often precludes considerations of living in homogenous adult facilities. These state-run housing facilities are often viewed as serving the indigent elderly. To avoid the social stigma attached to these facilities, the elderly are likely to vigorously assert their right to live at home, even under dire circumstances.

How then can the rural elderly be protected in their rapidly changing communities? The following section outlines a framework for preventing them from victimization within the context of these neighborhoods.

#### **2.4 Preventing Crime and Combating Fear of Crime among Elderly Rural Residents in Jamaica**

Crime and the fear of crime are big problems which influence how elderly Jamaicans live their lives. High crime rate, coupled with the general perception that social control has deteriorated in the society is a major source of such fear. They are increasingly being exposed to news about crime through newspaper reports, radio and television. They are victimized vicariously as they hear about incidents of

crime from neighbors and friends. The rural elderly is somewhat accustomed to hearing stories of crime and violence that take place within the inner-city of Kingston, however, when they learn that a neighbor was mugged or his home was burglarized or was killed in the process, the seriousness of the crime problem takes on a compellingly personal meaning.

Several studies, including those of Orzek and Loganbill (1985), Ginsberg, (1985) and Bazargan (1994) describe the impact of fear on behavioral elements of lifestyle and psychological well-being of older persons. According to Orzek and Loganbill (1985) fear of crime may influence how elderly people's needs for both independence and security are satisfied. In addition, the fear of being victimized affects their self-concept. Social isolation may result from such fear of crime, and heighten the possibility of depression. As these elderly persons become more isolated, the lines of communication usually breaks down contact with others, including law enforcement officials. Greenberg (1989) found the availability of social support or resources to deal with neighborhood problems can alleviate crime and the fear that it engenders even in highly threatening environments.

In general, crime prevention programs are aimed at making crime harder to happen. They seek to empower individuals and their communities in order to

improve their safety, security and well-being. The Guidelines for Cooperative and Technical Assistance in the Field of Urban Crime Prevention adopted by the United Nations Economic Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1995 outlined the need for a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to urban crime prevention practices. This approach is also necessary in addressing rural crime problems. Like urban crime, rural crime is multi-faceted. As a result, prevention strategies require the combined efforts of a number of partners including law enforcement, local community leaders, social service providers and residents of the community. The development of a partnership to prevent crime may be viewed as a creative way to address the combination of social, systemic, personal and situational factors which place the elderly at risk for victimization. It also provides the basis from which communities, and the elderly in particular, may lobby government agencies for needed resources, legislative changes and reforms that are necessary for reducing crime and fear in their communities.

The Triad Approach developed by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in association with the chiefs of police is one that includes older people and the people who work with them to form an advisory council for local law-enforcement on crime and security issues concerning the elderly. It discusses and recommends programs, increases communication, and recruits older volunteers

to help with its objectives (US Dept. of Justice). This organizational model is one that could effectively break down some of the significant obstacles that impact how communities in Jamaica work with the criminal justice system, as there is little cooperation at present.

Lack of trust and confidence in the Jamaican law enforcement has negatively impacted intelligence gathering investigations and the ultimate disposition of crimes in Jamaica. (The Daily Gleaner, September 30, 1996). A positive relationship between the elderly and the police, on the other hand, could create an atmosphere where elderly Jamaicans feel safe to report threats to their community, feel that they are being protected by their local police, and have established contacts with police personnel.

Local crime prevention programs must be based on the particular needs of the community, and its residents, and usually consist of two components - security and education. The security component frequently involves police patrol in the target area and has as its objectives crime deterrence and reduction of the elderly's fear of victimization (Gross, 1979). The educational component is designed to educate the elderly in methods of increasing their security and decreasing their vulnerability. Citizens involved in the educational component receive instructions on topics that

range from making their homes more physically secure, to the proper way of carrying a purse. By making the environment less inviting to criminals and, hence, more secure, this program component seeks to lessen fear of crime in addition to “hardening the target” (Norton and Courlander, 1982).

Implicit in the goal of crime prevention programs, is the belief that victims’ behavior (passive or active) contributes to the denouement of the crime drama. As outlined in Felson and Cohen’s (1980) formulation, a predatory crime requires an offender willing and able to commit the crime, a target suitable, accessible and vulnerable, and the absence of any target protector. They suggest further that all these elements must converge in time and space in order for the victimization to take place. Since, according to this formulation neither the victim nor the perpetrator represents an unbiased cross-section of the population, crime may be prevented either through efforts on the part of the victim or through intervention with possible perpetrators.

The implementation of a crime prevention plan for use among rural communities in Jamaica will benefit both the police and the public. This partnership may serve to empower the often marginalized elderly person to become more involved in developing solutions to social problems within his community.

**Government agencies must also play an important role to support this partnership, through explicit guidelines, and the provision of resources, they must ensure that prevention measures are reflected not only in public elderly housing facilities, but must embark on programs that ensure the safety of housing facilities especially for the indigent elderly.**

**A community crime prevention approach represents a new operational strategy, as well as a new policing philosophy in Jamaica. The implementation of this approach would, therefore, require that police personnel receive adequate and appropriate training in order to work in partnership with communities. On the other hand, communities and the elderly in particular, must gain sufficient trust in their police department in order to work together. Through the mass media, churches and local community service agencies, these barriers could be broken down. Churches in Jamaica play an integral role in the lives of elderly persons, and could play a useful role in providing the physical space for such meetings, as well as the emotional support which is necessary for them to become actively involved in their protection.**

## **2.5 Establishing a Context for Recovery**

Despite the high levels of crime and violence within the Jamaican society there are virtually no specialized services to help victims cope with the devastating aftermath of victimization. Further, neither the criminal justice system nor the various service agencies seem to acknowledge the unique challenges faced by surviving victims. In the absence of a formal system, victims and their families are forced to rely almost exclusively on the informal network of friends, family, clergy and community. Yet there is some evidence that non-professional helpers are often not equipped to help survivors mitigate the enormous conflicts that they are faced with. In some cases, they can even aggravate the crisis state, despite their good intentions. Rosenbaum (1987) found that non-professional helpers often responded inappropriately, such as pressuring the victim to minimize the seriousness of the incident, or to readjust too quickly. He found that they also tend to "overpathologize" the victim. He notes that the professional helper is not immune to these problems and, therefore, requires specialized training for work with victims.

Criminal victimization, especially when it involves violence may result in considerable disruption of psychological, emotional, cognitive and behavioral functioning. The damage that results is clearly associated with the nature of the

incident, the ability of survivors to cope, as well as a host of pre and post victimization factors. In a study of 34 elderly victims of burglary, Pretorius (1994) found that besides the trauma of physical injury, almost 71 percent suffered post-traumatic stress syndrome. The symptoms of this disorder include recurrent intrusive thoughts, images and sounds of the incident, nightmares, feelings of emotional detachment coupled with anxious attachment, a wish to avoid all feeling and reminders of the incident, a chronic fear of recurrences, and poor concentration and performance (Pynoos and Eth, 1995).

These symptoms are not unlike the psychological and emotional trauma that accompany the occurrence of homicide. In fact, there is some evidence that suggest that the level of psychic trauma from such a heinous event is by far, more intense than for less serious crimes. Although Johnson (1997) found that victims of serious crimes had higher scores on depression, anxiety, and somatization than victims of less serious crimes, high hostility symptoms were found among victims of crime. In describing the enormity of the impact of certain crimes on the victim, Malmquist (1986) noted:

*"The disorder is more severe and longer-lasting when the stressor is of human design, rather than seen as a misfortune in nature".*

The impact is especially severe when the victim of homicide is elderly. In this

case, a repertoire of disturbances are indicated for the surviving kin, friends, and the community as a whole. According to Miller, et al, (1983), these people become the victims of homicide along with the person murdered. In some cases entire communities are plagued by guilt and tension for what they may perceive, as their failure to protect one of their most vulnerable citizens. However, the surviving family suffers disproportionately in the after-math of the crime. For them, the psychological and emotional effect from the sudden loss of an elderly spouse, parent, sibling, aunt or cousin can be simultaneously numbing and debilitating -- creating emotional scars of far reaching proportions. They are often faced with feelings of shock, depression, anger, rage, guilt and helplessness -- feelings that are pervasive and all encompassing.

The perception of vulnerability is compounded by feelings of isolation which have three roots. First, these families of homicide victims have experienced something which is incomprehensible to all who have gone through it, as well as to those who haven't. For those who have, however, there is no good way to share the experience, and even the most sympathetic of listeners cannot truly understand what the family member is feeling. Second, the isolation comes from what could be described as a fear of contagion. Because a sense of order and safety is necessary in order to function in the world, people assume murders only happen to "others". To

acknowledge that they can occur to family or friends is to acknowledge the reality that they can happen to anyone. Victims' families may suddenly find themselves avoided by acquaintances, friends and co-workers. Lastly, family members frequently feel isolated from one another caused by a desire to protect each other. The effect of this is a decrease in family communication and an increase in isolation (Lyon, et al, 1992).

The surviving family having been thrown into a state of disequilibrium, must seek to reorganize its roles, and reestablish belief in the social order so that it can go on living, yet the resultant state of chaos is often incapacitating (Parkes, 1963). Similar to Getzel and Masters' (1984) finding that the death of a child or spouse by homicide hampers the family's reorganization efforts, the murder of an elderly family member creates the same problem. First, the suddenness gives the family no opportunity to prepare for the loss. Second, homicide often creates physical disfigurement and upsetting imagery which interferes with the family's ability to integrate the reality of the kin's death. Third, the uncertainties of homicide -- Who is the perpetrator? How might the homicide have been avoided? What could the family have done to prevent the event? -- become recurrent questions which interfere with the progress of bereavement. Finally, the cumulative long-term repressed and expressed feelings of each member of the kinship, resonate more painfully in the

**absence of communication; creates expressive and instrumental disruption.**

**Concurrent with the psychological distress surrounding the murder of a family member, survivors are often faced with tremendous monetary and non-monetary costs. Johnson (1997) reports on a study conducted by Miller and colleagues who estimated the costs and consequences of personal crime in the United States at \$450 billion annually. In their formulation - \$105 billion annually is spent on medical costs, public program costs related to victim assistance, and loss of earnings, while the remaining \$345 billion represents the non-tangible costs such as pain, suffering, and lost quality of life.**

**Unlike the United States, Jamaica has no established victim service program. Faced with the unexpected expenses of burial, medical care, and other resultant expenses brought on by homicide, the financially marginalized family can ill-afford these expenses -- expenses in Jamaica that could be estimated at an average of J\$100,000 per victim. Even when expressed in the terms of the U.S. equivalent of US\$1.00 to JA\$36.33, which amounts to US\$2,752.50, it exceeds by far the average income of many Jamaicans. Yet as part of the cultural tradition, the surviving Jamaican family members must ensure that the deceased family member is afforded a burial with appropriate rites to honor their legacy. The lack of resources to**

provide such a burial renders this family as not being "respectful" of the dead. A family who must borrow from his neighbor in order to pay burial costs is deemed "worthless". To save honor of the family, they must, therefore, manage the costs of this expense among themselves, often expecting those of more means to withstand most of the expenses. The family tensions that result from such arrangements often, further undermine the ability of the family to face the crisis situation as a close-knit unit."

Increasingly, countries such as the United States are recognizing the impact of crime on survivors. States throughout America are developing various programs to help traumatized victims restore control of their lives. One such program is the Victim Service Agency (VSA) a multi-service agency in New York City, and geared toward the needs of families of homicide. In their analysis of the presenting problems of those surviving kin who used the program, Getzel, G., Masters, R. (1984) determined that 60 percent of service requests entailed assistance for financial entitlement, advocacy, and benefits in kind, such as crime victim compensation, public assistance, public housing, food stamps, utility problems, and medical care. They found further that 30 percent of the presenting problems were for requests for help with acute grief reactions to homicides and the dysfunctional behavioral problems of children and other relatives. They concluded that "the depth

of emotional reactions was overwhelming and cannot be overstated". Reportedly, the clients presented with "deep shock and apathy and evinced helplessness, terror, consuming rage, guilt, and intense yearnings for the dead".

Intervention aimed at preventing the onset of serious psychological disturbance or to moderate the risks to survivors of homicide often employs crisis approach during the initial stage. Pynoos and Eth (1986) suggest that crisis intervention can minimize post-traumatic stress reaction, while bereavement counseling may reduce the immediate and long-term effects of homicide. Crisis theory, as developed by Lindemann (1994) and Golan (1978) categorize bereavement as a crisis. Crisis intervention approaches focus on an event or situation which overwhelms the capacity of the organism to reach homeostasis. The precipitating event is both a threat and challenge to the person. Crisis responses are phasic and self-limiting in nature. The conclusion of a crisis may point to a new adoptive strength or more poorly integrated reactions.

Short-term approaches, such as crisis intervention, tend to have only a limited impact on the process of recovery. These approaches seek to impose order upon a process that is inherently turbulent and complex. Time-limited interventions assume the recovery process as being straight forward or linear. However, as posited by

Herman (1992), the trauma affects every aspect of human functioning from the biological, to the social, hence, treatment must be comprehensive. Also treatment must reflect the "meandering" and dialectal nature of recovery as described by Herman (1992). In a recent study conducted by Johnson (1997), victims' levels of distress began to decline only after 6-12 months. This study is also in keeping with that of Rosenbaum (1987), who found that victims were largely unaffected by crisis intervention provided by trained police personnel. The enduring consequences of the homicide on individual kin, and the kinship system are, therefore, best addressed within the context of long-term intervention.

Group approaches hold particular promise for intervention with homicide survivors in addressing the survivors' fear (Lyon, et al, 1992). The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others. Recovery, therefore, is based upon empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can only occur within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation. In their renewed connections with other people, the survivors may recreate the psychological faculties that were damaged or deformed by the traumatic experience. These faculties include the basic capacities for trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and the intimacy. Just as these capabilities are originally formed in relationships with other people, they must be

reformed in such relationships (Herman, 1992).

Group services may be delivered in long or short-term structured or unstructured sessions, providing support information and normalization experiences for survivors. Time-limited sessions are often followed by "self-help" or support groups which contribute to an expansion of the continuum of care and opportunities for ongoing support and advocacy. Getzel and Masters (1984) found that surviving kin were particularly interested in meeting other survivors who would "know what they are experiencing". They also found that support groups provided a safe environment for individuals to share powerful bereavement reactions, ritualize unspeakable losses, and express frustration with the criminal justice system. The group process also contributes to personal feelings of competence and provides a new social network for survivors that could replace relationships lost as a result of the homicide.

Another important function of the group process is that of satisfying the survivor's longing for "vengeance" and "retribution". The group may become a substitute extended family system which, collectively seek to ensure that perpetrators of such acts, receive the type of punishment that they deserve. They may offer support to individual members during crisis situations and may seek

further to advocate for social action and reform of the criminal justice system.

Survivors of homicide in Jamaica would benefit especially from organizing for social action and change. Central to their concern are their right, as victims' families, to be informed of court actions and to participate in the criminal justice system; their right as citizens to influence policies pertaining to sentencing; and making recommendations for the prevention of homicide in their society.

### **2.5.1 A Conceptual Framework**

The socio-cultural, economic, political and other demographic factors which place the rural Jamaican elderly at risk for criminal victimization, including homicide, have been discussed in the foregoing sections. Additionally, various studies were drawn on in determining how families victimized by elder-homicide cope in the aftermath of the crime. This section provides a conceptual framework from which this project will be organized and studied. The study is formulated in relationship to the underlying principles of control theory.....The Routine Activity Approach; Crisis Theory and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The routine activity approach provides a frame of reference from which to study issues pertaining to crime prevention. Crisis theory and the tenets of post-traumatic stress

disorder were drawn on when assessing the accompanying feelings, and possible behaviors shaped and constructed by the traumatic event of elder-homicide. The assessment also guides the development of the research guide and the formulation of an intervention framework to address the needs of surviving families of victims of homicide in Jamaica.

### **Routine Activity Approach**

Routine Activity Approach emphasizes the situations that provide an opportunity for crime rather than personal characteristics of individuals that might lead them to commit crimes (Felson, 1979), Felson and Cohen (1980) document the important influence of "lifestyle" or "routine daily activities" on determining the opportunity structure of predatory criminal behavior. They suggest that age, sex, marital status, family income, and race are all bound up with lifestyle, and help predict victimization. Other lifestyle factors include: amount of time spent in public places, the extent to which victims and offenders share demographic characteristics, proportion of time spent among non-family members, person's ability to isolate themselves from those with offender characteristics, and convenience, desirability, and vincibility of the person as a personal victimization target.

Implicit in this approach is the belief that predatory crimes are preventable, and

that victims' lifestyle or behavior (active or passive) play an important role in the motivational or causal process leading to the commission of the crime. These assumptions are borne out in Cohen and Felson's (1979) formulation, which states that predatory crime requires the convergence in time and space of offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of effective guardianship.

The routine activities approach has clear implications for the structuring of inquiry into crime prevention initiatives for use among elderly groups. In particular, it offers a framework that investigates:

- the characteristics which increase the attractiveness of the rural elderly as suitable targets of victimization.
- factors which influence the supply and control of motivated offenders.
- the opportunity Structure of Predatory Criminal behavior within rural communities (i.e. level of formal and informal control).

### **Crisis Theory**

The reality of homicide has been variously described as having a deleterious effect on the biological, psychological and social functioning of surviving individuals and families (Freeman, et al, 1996; Getzel and Masters, 1983; Lyon, et al, 1992). Crisis theory provides a conceptual frame of reference for structuring and guiding interventions for individuals and groups faced with a wide range of stressful

situations, including loss due to homicide. This theory rests on the postulate that certain stress factors or hazardous events render the normal repertoire of problem ..solving capacity incapable of responding, thereby posing a threat to the survivor's functioning.

Concepts of crisis and concepts of brief treatment, the two areas of convergence in crisis theory, underlie the basic tenets of the approach which view a state of crisis as being time-limited, necessitating services that are concrete and specific in nature. According to Rapoport (1967), the individual or family does manage in due time to achieve some solution to the crisis, although the outcome may be variable. The new state of equilibrium may be the same as, or worse, or better than that achieved before the crisis, depending on a variety of factors which include demographic and psycho-social characteristics of the individual prior to the victimization and the nature of the incident itself.

In the case of homicide, the sudden and violent nature of the occurrence complicates the bereavement process and creates unique emotional responses which make the use of short-term crisis intervention therapy a necessity. Families and individuals are often overwhelmed by the unforeseen economic, social and psychological consequences, and they often evidence behaviors associated with the

threat and challenges of this crisis event. Early and ongoing environmental supports have been found to mitigate some of the profound effects of the trauma.

The goal of crisis counseling, especially in the short-term is limited to reducing the effect of malevolent external forces while assuring that psycho-social supports are provided to the individual., The immediate manipulation of the individuals' environment and the provision of social support will reduce the likelihood of further regression and will allow for more rapid recovery (Parad, 1965). While crisis counseling can soften some of the deleterious effects resulting from the act of homicide, follow up care is often necessary because the course of recovery from such trauma does not follow a straight-forward linear path.

### **Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

PTSD refers to a set of symptoms and problems that can develop following a psychologically stressing event that is outside the range of the usual human experience. Unlike common-place misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or body integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror and evoke responses of catastrophe (Herman, 1992). Each person experiences his or her own unique collection of symptoms, which may or may not be shared by others

who have had similar types of trauma. According to Pynoos and Nader (1990) bereavement due to homicide is often complicated by post-traumatic stress reactions and traumatic rage. The symptoms of which fall into three main categories – “hyperarousal”, “intrusion”, and “constriction”.

Hyperarousal reflects the persistent expectation of danger, and is manifested by startle reactions, hyper-alertness, vigilance for the return of danger, nightmares and psychosomatic complaints. Intrusion reflects the indelible imprint of the traumatic moment, and is characterized by recurrent intrusive thoughts, images and sounds of the incident. The final stage of this disorder, constriction, reflects an altered state of consciousness, characterized by emotional detachment, coupled with the numbing response of surrender (Herman, 1992).

The traumatic symptoms experienced by surviving families of elder-homicide is likely to be more severe than for other trauma-related events. This is in keeping with Malmquist's (1986) finding that "the disorder" is more severe and longer-lasting when the stressor is of human design rather than seen as a mere misfortune. In the case of a homicide, the level of psychic trauma is complicated by the coexistence of grief responses and anger, rage and powerlessness. The powerful, emotional response to such a "meaningless event" can, therefore, evoke

**persistent emotional effects which can last for many years.**

**Unless dealt with, PTSD can become chronic, manifesting in symptoms of anxiety, depression, sleep disorder and impaired relationships. Herman (1992) argues that success in mitigating the effects of PTSD can only take place within the context of empowerment and relationships. Interventions for PTSD after a homicide might, therefore address the survivor's fear and the social impairment associated with it, restore a sense of security and help survivors understand their feelings of helplessness, rage and grief.**

**The following section outlines the methodology of the study.**

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1**

##### **Study Design**

This study utilized both open-ended and structured interviews as well as observation. A qualitative design was favored for this study because of the proven value of this approach in providing rich insight into human behavior. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989) human behavior, unlike that of physical objects, cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities.

Using an interview guide approach, a focused list of questions was generated from the review of related literature and from the researcher's own interest and experiences. Statistical analysis of demographic information obtained through the structured interview process generated quantitative data, while qualitative data emerged from the content and case analysis of in-depth interviews.

Observations were combined with interviews to provide a check on what is reported in interviews. Observations permit the observer to go beyond external behavior to explore the internal states of persons who have been observed (Patton,

1990). According to Erikson, (1976), protection against data distortion is especially necessary when working with survivors of catastrophic events, because they are generally believed to overstate or magnify the danger of a situation, thereby, making it difficult to obtain a reliable history of their experience.

Apart from providing insight into the validity of the responses of informants, observations were used to ensure that those participants whose emotional state appeared to be “very fragile” were excluded from the interview process. This determination was based on manifestations of such behaviors as “extreme anger”, “uncontrollable sobbing”, “extreme sadness”, and display of “great discomfort”. Observations were also directed at the physical setting in which the fieldwork was done, as well as the interaction between informants and their family members.

Patton (1990) describes the framework, such as the one above, as “sensitizing concepts” which are used to organize observations and make decisions about what data should be recorded. In this study, the agenda for observation was based on the need to provide contextual information about the phenomenon of elder-homicide in rural Jamaica, make determination about issues pertaining to recruitment and inclusion of participants and to check the validity of responses.

**This agenda was internalized by the researcher and was used to frame the decision-making process as described above. The written notes that were taken during the data collection process provided sufficiently detailed background information which permits the reader of this study to visualize the fieldwork setting.**

### **3.2 Research Sample**

**A non-probability sample of 24 was selected from three (3) rural parish sites in Jamaica - St. Catherine, St. Ann and St. Thomas. Eight (8) informants were selected from each parish site. The ratio of informants to victims was as follows: St. Catherine - 8 informants to 6 victims; St. Ann - 8 informants to 5 victims, and St. Thomas - 8 informants to 5 victims. Selection of geographic sites was based on a combination of the principles of maximum variation sampling strategies, and on convenience sampling. This strategy was applied in the following order:**

- Considerations were made pertaining to variations in parish sites in terms of level of infra-structural development, population distribution, economic enterprise, and incidence of elder-homicide.**
- Parish sites are selected based on the extent to which they vary in terms of the above characteristics, and on the convenience of these sites to the principal investigator. A primary consideration concerned the availability of economic resources.**

**This approach was not entirely purposeful, as consideration of convenience**

often superseded that of maximizing variation. A major tradeoff from combining these methods, however, is that it offered some level of heterogeneity in terms of geographic sites, while providing convenience in terms of the cost of conducting the inquiry. Common patterns that emerge from the limited variation, while not generalizable to all rural parishes, may be viewed as being of particular interest and value to the findings.

The first step in the process of identifying and selecting informants for this study began with the obtaining of homicide reports from the Jamaican Crime Investigation Bureau (CIB) Homicide Division. Homicide victims aged 65 years and older, killed by non-family members were identified. Other selection criteria limited participation to cases of elder-homicide within the 3 parish sites of this inquiry, and for the period 1994-1995. Important identifying descriptions of victims included: name, age, gender, and parish in which the murder occurred. These factors were critical to the second stage of the identification and selection process.

The second step necessitated collaboration with the homicide division of the police department in each of the selected parish capitals. Information that was ascertained included: (a) Names of police districts and police personnel responsible for investigating each case of elder-homicide; (b) general information pertaining to

the circumstances surrounding each case. In keeping with the study's quasi-variation sampling strategy, attempts were made to select cases that reflect diversity in terms of (a) personal characteristics of victims, (b) neighborhood characteristics, and (c) offender characteristics.

The third step in identifying potential informants was through contact with the local police precincts which conducted investigation of the homicide. These precincts represented a rich source of information about each case of elder-homicide, and provided useful data pertaining to victims' families, and circumstances surrounding the homicide. Eight informants were selected from each parish site. Those informants selected in the category of "family members of victim" were 18 years and older and were related to the victim by marriage or by descent.

Once identified, prospective informants were contacted through personal visits and telephone contacts when possible. The researchers' introduction to informants was made in the following order: (a) the name of the referent, (b) information about self, (c) name of work, (d) objectives of study, (e) method of work, and (f) issue of confidentiality and (g) informed consent. Date and time of interviews were discussed and agreed upon. All prospective participants who were

contacted expressed a willingness to participate in the study.

### **3.3 Procedures for Data Collection**

Data were collected through personal interviews. A general interview guide approach was used. (see Appendix 4 for copy of Interview Guide.) The interview guide served as a basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics are covered, Patton (1990). The guide was formulated in relationship to the literature on "victim vulnerability", "trauma and recovery", "offender and neighborhood characteristics", "victim services", "crime prevention", and "crime and violence in Jamaica". Its construction was also guided by the researcher's personal experience with elder-homicide as well as her background as a Jamaican national.

According to Judd and Kidder (1986) personal interviews allow the interviewer to notice and correct misunderstandings, probe inadequate or vague responses, and to answer and allay fears of respondents. These factors are of particular importance to this study, given variations in accents and speech pattern, low literacy levels, and the emotional nature of the data being collected. A face-to-face interviewer can establish rapport, motivate the respondent to answer fully and

accurately, thereby, improving data quality. It allows for further explanation and clarification of items in the instrument.

Interviews lasted approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. Though appropriate for this population, this method was costly and time-consuming due to the expansiveness of the geographic sites. Against the background of investigating the respondents' experiences with elder-homicide, open-ended questions fostered dialogue and critical reflections, consistent with the empowerment process. For purposes of qualitative analysis, the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed.

The researcher's background as a Jamaican national, and as a person who has an intimate knowledge of the phenomenon being investigated undoubtedly, benefited the gaining of entrée into the world of other victims' families. However, this was not without difficulties and dilemmas. Moreover, being an insider and an outsider simultaneously had to be monitored constantly. As an insider, the shared experience between informants and researchers represented a "bond" that motivated their decision to participate in the study. Like informants, the researcher often experienced emotional difficulties and found herself vulnerable to feelings of depression and grief during the interview process.

As an outsider, the researcher presented in a professional capacity, that as researcher — one who would write about their stories, thereby adding validity to their experiences. Through the use of trained professional interviewers, the researcher attempted to minimize the potential dilemma of the insider/outsider status.

### **3.3.1 Training of Interviewers**

In addition to the principal investigator, a professional social worker and an assistant were trained as interviewers. The choice of interviewers was based on availability for the entire data collection period; level of interpersonal skills; and the likelihood that they would follow directions and keep up with the requirements and rigor of data collection. Interviewers were involved in two days of training to enable them to collect data in a consistent and reliable manner. The training sessions focused on the background and purpose of the evaluation, face-to-face interviewing procedures and techniques, the use of data collection instruments, data quality checks and editing procedures. An item-by-item walk through of the instruments and role play practice were integrated into the training process to help interviewers become comfortable with the process.

### **3.3.2 Informed Consent**

Individuals have the right to know what the purpose of a study is and to understand the role they, as participants, will play in it. They should be informed of their right to withdraw at anytime during the study (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

Informed consent for this study was obtained from participants in a written form during an orientation session. The purpose of the study, the right to withdraw at anytime during the study, the name of referents, and confidentiality assurance in regard to the data collected, were explained to participants at the beginning of the interview. Informants were also warned that they may experience emotional difficulties, feelings of extreme pain, and depression and grief, as they share their experiences.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Qualitative analysis involves description and interpretation of data (Patton, 1990). This process began with the transcription of all tape-recorded interviews. The content of the interviews was read several times and was then analyzed manually with the goals of identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns

in the data (Patton, 1990).

This was an inductive analysis, meaning that the pattern and categories emerged from the data (Patton, 1990) and natural variations were observed. Categories emerged from the respondents' studied (indigenous categories) or the researcher's articulation of that which respondent could not name (analyst-generated categories) and contained recurring regularities in the data (Ibid).

Open-ended questions were analyzed to provide rich narrative descriptive data on victim characteristics, circumstances surrounding homicide, impact of homicide on survivors, coping strategies utilized by survivors, factors delaying recovery, and to gather information on crime prevention, based on participants' perspective. Structured interviews yielded demographic data that was used to elaborate or develop analysis, thereby, providing richer detail.

Used as an analytic framework for the descriptive analysis, the interview guide provided an extensive and detailed description of the phenomenon being investigated and synthesized different points of view concerning the issue. "Thick descriptions" were developed using direct quotes, allowing the reader also to draw his/her own interpretation (Denzin, 1989). The rich metaphors, phrases and the

**"every-day" words of respondents strongly communicated their innermost thoughts, feelings and experiences.**

**Interviews were cross-analyzed, and the responses from different respondents were grouped together to enrich descriptions, draw conclusions, make inferences and strengthen the interpretation process. Descriptions and interpretations yielded some answers to the original questions that were posed.**

**The following is a description of the "Community of field work".**

### **3.5 The Community of Fieldwork**

**The fieldwork for this study was conducted in three of the twelve rural parishes in Jamaica. (See map of parish boundaries.) The parishes of St. Catherine, St. Ann and St. Thomas were selected based on considerations pertaining to level of infrastructural development, population distribution, economic enterprise and incidence of crime and violence. These variations in the characteristics of the fieldwork sites were intended to elucidate significant common experience that are central to this investigation.**

Jamaica's rural population represents 50.4 percent of the total population, with 50.7 percent being males (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995). Elderly Jamaicans who make up 9.62 percent of the population, disproportionately reside within the rural areas. Fear of crime, higher cost of living expenses in the urban area, and attachment to rural community life are generally believed to be the reasons for the preponderance of elderly rural residents.

With a population of 384,200, St. Catherine, the largest of the fourteen parishes, is also the most populous. Sixty-three percent of its population reside in the parish townships of Spanish Town, Linstead, Portmore and Old Harbor. (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995). The close proximity of these townships to the urban center of Kingston and St. Andrew and to the parishes key economic bauxite/alumina and manufacturing sectors contribute to this population pull. Unlike the townships in St. Catherine, which boast a fairly well-developed infrastructure, the deep rural sections of the parish often lag behind in terms of transportation and communications network. The mountainous terrain of these areas has seriously affected the development of roadways, making access to vital services difficult and costly. An ongoing rural electrification program and an upgraded telephone system have benefitted some rural communities, while those in the most remote areas still lack these modern conveniences.

St. Catherine has earned the dubious distinction of the “most violent rural parish” in Jamaica. Of the 286 murders that were committed in rural Jamaica during 1994, 92 were in St. Catherine. By 1995, the homicide rate increased in rural Jamaica to 315, with a total of 116 in St. Catherine. (CIB statistics and research data). With a total of 12 police stations to 384,200 residents, it is widely agreed that there is need for more police stations in this parish.

Unlike St. Catherine which has an economy that is developed chiefly from alumina production, agriculture and small manufacturing enterprises, St. Ann’s economic base derives chiefly from tourism, with mining and cattle production as subsectors. Located on the northern coast of Jamaica, the chief townships are Ocho Rios, and St. Ann’s Bay. According to the 1991 census data (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995), St. Ann has a population of 150,700. Of this number, only 19,600 reside within the two major townships. Like in other rural parishes, the infra-structural development of the deep rural section of the parish lags behind that of townships. However, as the tourism sector expands throughout the parish, the quality of roadways, transportation and communications systems are undergoing tremendous development and expansion. St. Ann experiences moderate levels of crime and violence. Data from the Jamaica Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) show that for 1994 there were 22 cases of homicide, while in 1995 there were 15. A

higher level of policing in the tourism centers of the parish is attributed to these moderate homicide rates.

St. Thomas, the third community of fieldwork for this study, is located on the south-east coast of Jamaica. It borders Kingston and St. Andrew to the west and Portland to the north. According to the 1991 census data ((Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1995), St. Thomas has a population of 84,900, making the parish one of the least populous. Approximately 9,800 persons reside in the parish capital of Morant Bay. The economy of the parish is supported chiefly by banana and coconut industries, fishing and subsistence farming. While the major roadways leading from Kingston to Portland are well developed, the rural interior of the parish is less developed.

Essential services such as police and hospitals are located in major parish townships, further limiting access to residents in the interior of the parish. The incidence of violent crime in St. Thomas is moderate, with the majority of homicides occurring in communities that are closer in proximity to Kingston and St. Andrew. The CIB data (1996) show that of the 286 murders in rural Jamaica in 1994, 15 were committed in St. Thomas. For 1995, there was a total of 315 murders in rural Jamaica, with the number of reported cases in St. Thomas being 13.

**The following chapters describe and analyze the data collected in this study.**

**In Chapter 4 the Investigator attempts to recreate images of shock and pain as expressed by respondents, as well as provide contextual information about the victims.**

**Presentation**  
**And**  
**Analysis of Data**

## Chapter 4

### Introduction

#### **Lost Innocence: A Family - A Community**

Shock, horror, anger, rage and disbelief are only few of the emotions that accompany the news that one's family member has been murdered. These emotions possess the insidious capacity to shatter survivors' perception of self, community and world. The disfigurement to the family structure leaves individuals feeling guilty and vulnerable. Feelings of guilt, though often unfounded, is often based on an agonizing and destructive sense of failure - failure to protect one's loved-one from the horror that befell them.

Images of the community, once an identity-defining symbol, also undergoes changes. No longer is it the safe and pleasant place that framed the cherished portraits of family members that have long since died, but it has become a menacing and unfriendly place where horrific crimes happen. As to the world, it has become chaotic and will remain that way for a long time to come.

Accordingly, two survivors describe how their communities and world have changed:

*"You hear it on the news, you hear it happens in places like Kingston -*

*in the ghetto areas, but not in a hundred years you could believe that it would happen in your little district and to your own flesh and blood - family."*

*"This is a community where most people don't have burglar bars on their windows. In fact, when I was a boy, we never even use to lock the doors or the windows at night. We would feel safe, but all of a sudden everything change. A whole lot of strange faces are around the neighborhood and we don't know who is who anymore. To tell you the truth, I don't walk alone at nights anymore. I am very afraid and I am not ashamed to tell you that."*

Accompanying the fear, is a wide array of debilitating symptoms that will render surviving family members traumatized, stigmatized and deeply scarred. Further complicating their dilemma is the fact that they are often forced to cope with such violent trauma without warning and with inadequate means to do so. One woman describes her dilemma this way:

*"I didn't know what to do. I still don't know what to do to get over the feelings that I have. Sometimes I would feel so down in my spirit that I wouldn't mind if I just sleep away and join him. I use to live a simple life and all of a sudden*

*everybody know me as the woman whose husband was murdered. They talk about it all the time and it make me feel that since they don't find the killer, people speculate and say that maybe he must have done something bad to somebody and they must have retaliated, but I know that he was a good man who didn't harm a fly."*

A man describes the shock and disbelief surrounding the news that his 73 year old father - a prominent and upstanding citizen, was shot and killed in a place that he called home for over thirty-five years. He expresses his feelings this way:

*"We are talking about murder. It is not a everyday thing in anybody's life. You just don't expect it to happen. It happens in Kingston and places like that, but when it starts to happen within your own family and to older people like your father - a person that you have leaned on all of your life - a person who is your anchor, so to speak, you definitely become dumb-founded. It leaves questions in your mind like who is next? What kind of protection must I take so something like this don't happen again?"*

Murder of any type conjures up images of shock and horror. What is incomprehensible to the average person, however, is imagining the feelings and emotions that a son undergoes when he walks into the home of his parents to find

both his 87 year old father and his 73 year old mother dead - victims of homicide.

To describe the method of the killing, the term "over-kill" is a mere understatement.

Not only were their heads completely severed, but his father was shot in his leg and abdomen as well. He describes his painful encounter in this way:

*"It was like a horror movie but I just couldn't turn off the TV and make it disappear. You think your mind is playing trick with you - it is not real - it couldn't be real, but only Jah knows my mind was not playing no tricks; it was real."*

Unfortunately, homicide is the cruel reality faced by these and many other families. The following section provides a "glimpse" into the lives of their deceased kin.

#### **4.1**

#### **Innocent Victims of Homicide: Who Are They?**

In describing their deceased family members, survivors appear anxious to embrace the opportunity to immortalize memories of their loved-ones - return voices that were suddenly silenced, and virtues that came into questioning after the homicide. In doing so, descriptions of the positive attribute of loved-ones frequently appear to be emphasized or exaggerated. Nonetheless, these descriptions also seem to represent a genuine effort to integrate the reality of their kin's' death.

Feelings of powerlessness, grief and pain that have been the hallmark of the survivors' existence since the homicide seem to disappear, if only for a short while, as they describe their deceased kin. They use their newly found power to reorder events and in fantasy appear to reunite themselves with their loved-ones as they reveal some of the personal and social characteristics of their kin.

#### **4.1.1 Personal Characteristics**

Despite the tears that were welled up in her eyes, a widow managed to have a bright spark in her eyes as she described her husband of 28 years - a man that she appeared to have loved deeply. She described him this way:

*"My husband was a wonderful, wonderful man. Me and him was married for 28 years when they kill him. We lived a good and decent married life. He never look at another woman and I never look at another man. We respect each other. He was very loving and very kind. Him work hard as a carpenter and he would buy everything to make me and the children happy."*

Another widow portrays her deceased husband as a very generous and attractive man. She states:

*"Him was generous to a fault. He would give away the clothes on his back. All the children on our street loved him because he was always looking out for*

*them - buy them things Christmas time and other holiday. He was a man who take pride in his appearance. Him would always dress nicely. People always admire him. You could never tell that he was 65 years old."*

In speaking about his deceased father, a son said the following:

*"My father and I were very close. He was a strict disciplinarian but he was a very good father. He provided for our family very well, educated me and the other children that they adopted. I am now a businessman, and he taught me 80 percent of whatever I know in business. I love him and I respect and miss him a whole lot."*

A grandson describes his grandfather as a hard-working and humorous man despite the fact that he later became afflicted with a mental illness:

*"My grandfather was a farmer. He used to cultivate different crops like yams, potatoes, bananas, and things like that. With all the fact that he worked so hard, he would still find time for us - his grandchildren. I know he loved me a whole lot. He would take ripe bananas, mangoes and all the best of his crops for me and my mother. He was like a father to me. My father was out of the picture and he took on the responsibility of helping my mother with money and food and things like that. I remember him as a God-sent man, a funny person*

*who made us laugh and a man who worked very hard."*

The elderly victims represented in this study share one major characteristic - the love, admiration and respect of their surviving kin. They differ, however, in such characteristics such as: age/gender, living arrangements, and job-related characteristics. Table 4.1.1 describes victims' age and gender characteristics.

**Table 4.1.1**  
**Victims According to Age Group and Gender**

Age Group (Years)	Male		Female	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
65-70	10	77.0	1	33.3
71-80	2	15.4	2	66.7
Above 80	1	7.6	--	---
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As is evident in the above table, elderly victims of homicide were predominantly males between the ages of 65-70 years old. Vulnerability to homicide victimization appears to decline significantly for males (77 percent victimization rate for 65-70 age group, 15.4 percent for age 71-80, and 7.6 percent for those 80 years and above). Of the 3 elderly female victims 33.3 percent (1) was between 65-70 years old, while 66.7 percent (2) victims fell between the age group

of 71-80 years old.

Increased vulnerability of the elderly to homicide may be due in part to the fact that elderly persons are living longer and are leading more active lifestyles than their earlier cohorts. With increased visibility, they are more likely to come in contact with possible perpetrators. A participant in the study pointed out that at 77 years old, her deceased aunt was not only attractive, healthy and full of life, but she was very involved in community activities. She states:

*"She was 77 years old, but you couldn't tell by looking at her. She was a very attractive, healthy and busy woman. She would wear her high heel shoes and dress so well that a person would think that she was in her 40's. People admire her because he was so young at heart and very hard-working. Sometimes I would tell her to relax a little bit, but no - not her. She was an officer in her church so she would go to church meetings, go to school board meeting, and go to bank meetings. She would always be doing something to make this community better. When she is at home people always would go to her for advice. Some of them would ask her help in things like if they or their family getting married; they would ask her help in putting the wedding together or things that have to do with their children education. She was really a dedicated and hard-working person."*

Another family member had this to say about her deceased husband:

*"People just couldn't believe that he was 67 years old. The man always look so young and fresh. When he died people who heard his age at the funeral and on the radio kept saying to me, 'I can't believe that he was 67 years old and he looked so good'."*

A son remembered his father in the following way:

*"My mother died a couple of years ago and for a man in his 70's, my father picked up himself and moved on with his life. He didn't wait to die, a matter of fact, he even has a son who is now 8 years old. The man is so active that you wouldn't look at him and guess that he is more than 55 years old. He ran the family business, ran the household and just took care of everything."*

#### **4.1.2 Financial Status of Victims**

In keeping with the belief that most elderly victims are targeted based on their financial status, Table 4.1.2 shows that the majority of victims could be classified as middle-income Jamaicans. Indicators of one's income level within the context of rural Jamaica is generally evidenced by (a) accumulated wealth in terms of size of property, housing size and ownership of commercial enterprise, (b) occupational type and (c) level of education. In recent years a new category has been added -

returning residents from the US, Canada and England. What places the returning residents in this category is the significantly higher exchange rate between those foreign currencies and that of Jamaica. At the time of writing, the exchange rate between the Jamaican Dollar and these currencies were: J\$1.00 = £59.2 British pound; US\$36.33, and Canadian \$24.00 (The Weekly Gleaner, N.A., April 24, 1998).

Perception regarding access to foreign currency generally extends beyond the category of those who are "returning residents" to include persons, especially the elderly who have children living abroad. Table 4.1.2 shows the Source of Victims' Income as reported by family members.

**4.1.2  
Source of Victims' Income**

<b>Source of Income</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Returning Residents/ Children living abroad	2	12.5
Owens business enterprise/ large property	8	50.0
Professional/highly skilled	2	12.5
Small farmer	2	12.5
Carpenter	1	6.3
Agricultural worker	1	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Participants described the financial status of victims in the following ways:

*" I wouldn't call him rich, although people around this area seem to think that he was rich. What I would call him is a successful businessman. He was just blessed that way. He earned everything that he had the hard way. He and my mother planned and worked together. My mother was an accountant at one of the banks in my area. She was the one who managed the finances. When she died suddenly a few years ago, he had to take over and manage everything - the poultry farms, the commercial businesses that we had, the life-stock business, the real estate - everything. Yes, he had a comfortable lifestyle."*

*" She was a retired person. Her husband died a few years ago; he was a farmer. He farmed on a large scale and they educated their children well. The children are all professionals. Some of them live abroad. The house is quite big and well furnished. I think it has about 5 bedrooms. You know she kept the place so nice and people around here just feel that she was well-off."*

*"Him was a big contractor. He worked for the government - like build bridges and things like that, so he use to handle a lot of money."*

Unlike the above-mentioned victims, some victims were of a lesser means as described below:

*"The thing that still bother me is that we were not wealthy. As you see, this house is a modest little house. The houses that you passed to come here - some of them are bigger and better. I don't work and my husband was only a simple carpenter - but he was hard-working and he didn't waste his money. He spent it on me and the children."*

*"My grandfather was a farmer. He had a piece of land in the community and he would plant things like yams, potatoes, and pumpkin. He would sell those things and use the money to take care of his family."*

#### **4.1.3 Victims' Living Arrangements**

Victimology literature identify 'living arrangement' as a significant ecological factor influencing the vulnerability of elderly persons to criminal victimization. Table 4.1.3 shows that 50 percent (8) victims lived with more than one family member, 31.3 percent (5) victims lived with a spouse, and 18.7 percent (3) victims lived alone.

**Table 4.1.3**  
**Victims' Living Arrangement**

<b>Living facilities</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Lived at home with more than one family member	8	50.0
Lived at home with spouse only	5	31.3
Lived alone	3	18.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

What Table 4.1.3 does not reflect, is the fact that rural communities are often organized in family clusters. It is, therefore, not unusual for elderly persons to live in close proximity to extended family members who are often expected to assume the role of "primary protector" in the absence of immediate offspring.

In describing the level of attachment that her deceased aunt had to the community, this participant elaborates on the role of the extended family network. She states:

*"From your reach the crossroads to come here, only about 3 houses are not owned by my family. You see, what happen is that all of this property was owned by my grandparents. They left it to their children and told them that it should pass down from generation to generation. Where I live was part of the 3 acres that my mother got. My aunt, the one who was murdered, her land*

*adjoins my uncle's property. My uncle is sickly so we join with my cousins to take care of him. With my aunt who was murdered, her children are abroad, so even though she lived alone she never was alone because all of her nieces and grandnieces and other relatives were always over at her house. I believe that she felt safe because she knew that she was surrounded by people who love her."*

Living 'independently' while depending on the broader community for some level of protection, is not limited to those elders with a large family network. Some elderly persons depend on the generosity of their neighbors in providing protection for them. A participant describes it this way:

*"We grew up and moved away. I went to Kingston and worked and lived there. My parents sold the family house and moved to a smaller house in another parish. We went to see them often but part of me was kind of scared that something could happen to them - two elderly people living alone. I would put that thought away and would remind myself that they had good neighbors who would protect them. Unfortunately, there were some bad elements who capitalize on the fact that they were old people living alone."*

### ***Discussion and Summary of Findings***

Though somewhat inconsistent, the findings in this section when analyzed against the tenets of routine activities-lifestyle theory, may provide some useful explanations. Using the formulation that being outside of the home increases target-likelihood for elderly persons as it exposes their vulnerability, (Kennedy and Silverman, 1990) may account for the higher victimization rate of males between the ages of 65-70 years old, compared to those in older age categories. When compared to women, Jamaican men are likely to be more “visible”, thereby, more likely to interact with potential perpetrators. The fact that many of the victims were described as “looking much younger than their actual ages” should not be underscored. This may have implication for new generation of elderly persons - this may mean also that the decline in vulnerability to victimization that usually occurs with growing older may be gradually extending upwards.

The fact that 75 percent of victims fell under the categories that suggest a middle class lifestyle also supports tenets of lifestyle theory. Living in communities, many of which have strong indicators of poverty, the lifestyle of these victims increase their visibility as well as their vulnerability to victimization.

Finally, the finding that only 18.7 percent (3) victims lived alone is somewhat

**analogous to the tenets of routine activities theory. Interpretations of this theory emphasize that the “lack of suitable protectors” increase the attractiveness of the victim. The fact that over 81 percent of the victims lived with other family members at the time of the murder may be an indication that family members are unable to protect their elderly loved-ones in the event of such vicious assault.**

**The following chapter outlines the circumstances surrounding the homicide - premonitions of the loss, the murder, location of the offense, and means of offense commission - motive for the attack and knowledge of the perpetrator, as reported by survivors.**

## Chapter 5

### **The Tragedy: Circumstances and Events Recalled**

With voices and faces reflecting an array of personal distress, rage and imagery and passion of the homicide, surviving kin reveal painful details of their loss. They do so despite acknowledging the extreme pain that this sharing could cause. No doubt, recognizing the importance of sharing, they recreate elements of their nightmare.

#### **5.1 Premonitions of Loss**

For some participants the nightmare preceded the homicide - the frightening dreams - depression and those feelings that they just could not describe in any other way than “weird”. One woman describes it this way:

*“For about one month before the murder, I knew something bad was going to happen. I didn’t know what it was. My body became so heavy. I felt weird. One evening I sat down and just started to cry. I cried and cried. That evening my aunt who was murdered came over to visit and I found myself just staring at her. She noticed me and asked me why I was staring at her so. I just told her something like ‘I love you’. It was like somebody told me that something bad was going to happen to her.”*

For another woman, her premonitions of loss were manifested chiefly in dreams and nightmares. She states:

*“About a week before, I went to my bed and I dream that a huge black bird - something like a crow - was attacking me. I tried to fight it off but it kept picking at me and picking at me. In the dream, I was shouting for help and nobody came. I guess, I was shouting because my husband wake up and ask me what wrong. I had cold sweat all over me. When I told him the dream, he said that it was not a good dream. When this happen, it ran through my mind that it was the murder I was dreaming about.”*

And still there is one participant who stated that he had a “weird” feeling that something bad was going to happen to his brother. It was these feelings, he believes, that led him to alert the police soon after his brother’s disappearance.

When asked if their dreams and other premonitions of loss, lessened the initial impact of their loss, one participant stated that it did, to some extent. She responded this way:

*“In a way, I was prepared for something bad to happen. Maybe prepared is not the right word. I expected something really bad to happen, but not in my wildest dreams could I ever imagine that my husband would be killed, and*

*killed in that way.”*

## **5.2 The Murder**

*“My uncle and his wife were at home at about 6:30 or 7 o'clock one evening and some guys broke into the house to rob them. One of the guys grabbed the wife's purse and she screamed. My uncle ran to see what was happening and they shot him dead on the spot. They shot the wife too, but she recovered somewhat.”*

*“They cut the grill to the back porch, cut the telephone wire and went into the house. They stabbed her and killed her, then they stole things that they could take with them and left her there dead.”*

*“He had a contract from government to build a bridge. Apparently, the killers knew that it was payday and that he would have a lot of money for paying bill so they went on the worksite, killed him - shot him dead in his left breast and then they steal the money and left.”*

*“It happened in his house in the back patio. My 8 year old brother was there and he saw it all. About 6:30 p.m. my Dad opened the grilled door to go feed*

*the dogs. That is when three gunmen pounced on him. One tried to rape the housekeeper, but the alarm went off and they ran. As they were running away one of them shot my father and killed him on the spot. They stole one of my father's gun. I am not sure what else they took."*

*"They smash the glass window and went inside the house. When we found them in the morning, my father was lying in a pool of blood in the east bedroom, his head was cut off and he was shot also. My mother was in the west bedroom. Her head was cut off too."*

### **5.3 Location of the Offense**

In keeping with the findings of Kennedy and Silverman (1990) and the tenets of life-style theory, the majority of the victims identified in this study were murdered at their homes. Eighty-One percent (13) were murdered at home, compared to 12.5 percent (2) who were murdered in a private area other than within their homes (Table 5.3). Of those who were murdered outside the home, 2 were either at their place of employment or en route to their jobs. In one case, the victim was murdered on his farm.

**Table 5.3**  
**Location of Offense**

<b>Place of Offense</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Victim's home	13	81.3
Private place	1	6.2
Public place	2	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The location in which the homicide occurred appeared to evoke strong emotions from surviving family members. One woman was especially outraged at the fact that someone dared to have entered the sanctity of her aunt's bedroom and murdered her there. She states:

*"What makes me really, really mad is how they dare go into her bedroom and murder her there. Imagine the woman is in her own house and her own bed and some low-life would come into it and take her life. It makes me so mad."*

A man who lost his brother appeared to be somewhat philosophical about finding his brother's body on the floor in his bedroom. He states:

*"The only thing that I was thankful for was that his body was there. It could have been worse. Those damn bastards could have killed him and dumped his body and we wouldn't have a body to bury. So although it is so hard to take, I am glad that his body was there. Some people are not so lucky, they don't*

*even get to bury the body of their loved-one.”*

Family members of victims murdered away from home also expressed outrage at the location of the offense. A woman whose husband was murdered at the site of his employment made the following remarks:

*“Imagine, there are so many idle people who are out there who don't want to work. My husband at his age was working so hard and they would only hang out and study what is happening, when is pay day and things like that, and kill him right there on the road for his money.”*

#### **5.4 Means of Offense Commission**

In addition to location, the means by which the homicide was committed also seem to be of significance to survivors. The pain surrounding their loss appear to be far more intense when the death is due to stabbing or beating. There is no doubt that both these means are perceived to be more heinous. One woman explains it this way:

*“If them did shoot her and kill her maybe I would have feel better. I just can't get over the fact that they use a knife and stab her until she was dead. I just can't get pass the agony that she must have gone through before she died. I can't sleep at night thinking about how terrified she must be when she saw the*

*knife. I just can't tell you how I feel when I wonder how long she took to die."*

In the case of an elderly man who was beaten to death, his grandson had this to say about the way that he was killed:

*"Look at my grandfather's age - an old man. How could somebody in their right mind beat an old man like him, break his ribs and collapse his lungs and kill him? My grandfather was sick, he was frail. Those people who did it are animals; they are not human beings. How could they do that?"*

The means of offense commission is shown in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4**  
**Means of Offense Commission**

<b>Means</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Shooting	9	56.2
Beating	1	6.3
Stabbing	4	25.0
Shooting and Stabbing	2	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The analysis of data showed that 56.2 percent (9) victims died as a result of shooting, 6.3 percent (1) from beating, 25 percent (4) from stabbing, and 12.5

percent (2) from a combination of stabbing and shooting. The significantly higher proportion of shooting among these victims is contrary to the findings of Kennedy and Silverman (1990) who found the ordered likelihood of means among the elderly is first beating, followed by shooting and then stabbing. The combined category of shooting/stabbing describes a level of "viciousness" and "intent" that is seldom associated with elderly homicide.

## **5.5 Motive for the Homicide**

The issue of motive is one that creates recurrent and debilitating anxiety for survivors. They ask the rhetorical question, Why? In addition, without the establishment of a motive, there is a pervasive fear of the perpetrator - that he is free to injure other family members is a thought that creates a nightmare for them.

Family members had this to say about motives for attack:

*"The police them say that it was robbery. Yes, them did take some of his [victim's] things but you still don't know. It's not like him and anybody did have any problem. Everybody did like him because he was a very kind man. Somehow, it is easier to bear it if it is robbery than if somebody just arrange to take him out like that. I guess we will never know because them still don't catch the murderers."*

Other motives suggested by survivors included the following:

*"I think that it was done by bad-minded people. They couldn't do what they like on his property. They want to tie their goats and cows to eat down his crops and he wouldn't allow it, so they got him out of the way."*

*"They beat him and kill him for no reason than because they are wicked. The man was losing his mind. He must have accused somebody of something. The worse part is that everybody in the neighborhood knew that he was coming off his head, but they kill him anyway."*

The established motive for the murder is shown in Table 5.5.

**Table 5.5**  
**Motive for the Attack**

<b>Motive</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Theft/Robbery	13	81.3
Other motives	3	18.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5.5 shows that 81.3 percent (13) of the homicides were precipitated by theft or robbery. In 18.7 percent (3) of the homicides, a motive other than theft/robbery was established. Although the significantly higher proportion of

theft/robbery based on homicides is consistent with empirical Victimology findings, it should be noted that the surviving family is often not totally convinced of the motive. This is due in part to the low level of trust that participants have for police officers. One man stated it this way:

*"I am still not sure why somebody would want to kill her. The police tell us that the motive was robbery but I don't believe that at all. The police have a way of calling every crime robbery. The poor man could hardly see - almost blind - so if they came to rob, why didn't they rob and go away?"*

## **5.6 Knowledge of the Perpetrator**

Lack of knowledge pertaining to the perpetrator is a major "set-back" for survivors. Very few of them get answers to a question that is upper-most in their thoughts - who could have done this horrible act? Unfortunately, most of them will have to rely on the "rumor mill" - the speculations of an outraged community. This is so because the low disposition rate on crimes of this nature in Jamaica. Table 5.7 shows Outcome of Murder Investigation. Study participants posited various responses for the low disposition rate of homicides. Some blame it on what they perceive to be untrustworthy policemen. Others believe that the perpetrators are often so sophisticated in executing their craft that they are generally able to avoid interdiction. They state it this way:

*"When things like this happen in Jamaica, everybody keep their mouth shut because they are afraid that they will get killed."*

*"Even some people who might know something wont go tell the police anything because they know that you can't trust these police. They will go back and tell the criminal and then they will come for you."*

*"People are afraid of these criminals; they are cunning. They know what to do to prevent getting caught. They have their people in the community - accomplices who have their ears low (listen carefully) so that if anybody talk, they can come back and kill them or their family. These people are not regular people; they don't have hearts."*

Failure to apprehend the perpetrator often leads to feelings of bitterness, distrust and isolation among surviving families. A family member describes her painful experience:

*"After they kill my father I just didn't know who did it. It was pure rumor. Today you would hear that it is this person did it and tomorrow you would hear that it is somebody else. It got to the point where I just didn't know who to believe, so I just stop talking to everybody in the community. At one point*

*the only people that I talk to was my own family. Every single soul was a suspect in my book - young, old - it didn't matter."*

In cases where it is established that the perpetrator is a resident of the same community as the victim, the resulting level of tension can severely undermine the social fabric of that community. In some cases, community residents resort to vigilantism. In other cases, they become so terrified that many of them relocate to other communities. Participants explain it this way:

*"One of the culprits was a youth from this very community - boy who grew up right here. After that we know that nobody was safe - so we had a big demonstration in the street and summoned the Superintendent of Police and request better protection. You know, even though the boy was a no good, SOB, him still have family in the district who think that people are telling lies on him, so the district split right down the middle - those who believe the boy is the criminal that he is, and those who are his family who think people don't like him. The community put so much pressure on the boy's family that they had to run away by night - move far away from here. We don't want people who support that kind of behavior living here."*

*"After the murder, the news start spreading that this boy from nearby was the*

*one who was involved. Man, a couple of men and even some women - strangers and relatives alike - went down to the boy's yard and they were there to beat the hell out of him - maybe even kill him themselves before the police catch him, but the boy was not home. Him was really lucky because the police had picked him up before they got there."*

Then there are some family members whose only knowledge of the perpetrator comes from media reports stating that a suspect has been killed. With some degree of skepticism, this participant stated:

*"Me and my brother are very suspicious about when the police say they kill somebody. I think that they just look at the unsolved murder and they link somebody that they kill to the crime. The next thing they do is stop investigating the case and there is no justice all around. Consider the mother who may hear that her son was shot dead by the police and the police claim that he was a suspect in some murder that he didn't commit."*

Very few family members are afforded the opportunity of facing the perpetrator of the homicide. One such person is the niece of a 77 year old female victim. She realizes that the opportunity of facing the perpetrator of the crime is rare for surviving kin. She acknowledges that fact by stating:

*"I went through hell because I wanted to know who - which animal - would do such a terrible act? God is good because at one time I didn't feel like anybody would be arrested for the crime until it happen."*

Not only was the perpetrator positively identified by his fingerprints, but as she describes it, this made her feel like celebrating for the first time since the murder.

She states:

*" I went to court and watched as the sick animal was taken before the judge. I felt like leaning over and using my bare hands to tear him apart, but I remembered that my aunt would not have liked it."*

She did, however, come up with the profile of a killer - a profile that no doubt fits perpetrators yet to be caught - drug-addicted, no strong family ties, multiple offender, male, and young adult. She describes him this way:

*"The police say that he is 23 years old and he is a known crack addict. I know that my aunt did not know him so he could have robbed the house and left, but the animal had to kill her too. It is not the first time that he has killed. They charged him for murdering another elderly man. The boy don't seem to have any family because nobody was even in the court with him. You look into his eyes and all you could see is the living devil from hell."*

While this niece celebrates the arrest and subsequent trial of the perpetrator, she no doubt is keeping her "fingers crossed" for what may be deemed - an appropriate outcome of the investigation.

### **5.7 Outcome of the Investigation**

As Table 5.7 shows, the outcome of homicide investigations seldom results in arrests. Convictions are even more rare. This is a major source of frustration for families who have lost elderly kin to homicide. The failure of the criminal justice system to arrive at what they deem a satisfactory disposition of the case, may serve to undermine their sense of justice, leaving them to feel that they were twice victimized as stated by this man:

*"Nobody was arrested. The police keep saying they are investigating but still nothing happening. I can't tell you how it make me feel to know that him dead and his death going to go like "Sammy mouth" (nothing will come of it)."*

**Table 5.7**  
**Outcome of Investigation**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Arrests made	5	31.3
No arrests made	8	50.0
Convictions	0	—
Other/Victims killed by police	3	18.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Some surviving kin hold on to an illusive dream - one in which the perpetrator is apprehended, tried in a court of law, found guilty and made to pay the ultimate price - death by hanging on the Jamaican gallows. Others are more realistic, realizing that their lives have been irrevocably changed - a fact that a conviction will never undue.

### ***Discussion and Summary of Findings***

There are some subtle inconsistencies between the findings of this study and that of lifestyle theory. These findings show that 81.3 percent (13) victims were killed at home while approximately 18.7 percent (3) victims were killed elsewhere. Lifestyle theory suggests that the elderly are more likely to be killed at home because they spend more time at home than their other age cohorts. This does not, however, support the fact that 11 of the 16 victims fell between the ages of 60-70

while only 5 victims fell within the older group of 71 years and above. The finding may best be explained by the work of Repetto (1970) which states that the elderly person is not the target of the crime, but the dwelling and its contents.

In other findings, there were no conviction in any of the murder cases. Arrests were made only in 5 cases and the remainder of cases were unsolved.

Theft/Robbery was considered as the primary motive for the attacks on elderly victims. Elderly victims were most often murdered as a result of shooting (56.2%), which was followed by stabbing, a combination of stabbing and shooting, then by beating.

Chapter 6 describes the impact of homicide on survivors, and illuminates other difficulties that result from the tragedy.

## Chapter 6

### **Facing the Tragedy: Impact and Difficulties Experienced by Survivors**

The murder of a loved-one has a pervasive effect on the well-being of survivors. Participants in this study revealed that they experienced a substantial increase in psychological distress, reduced sense of personal mastery, failing health and a host of other factors which have delayed their recovery from the loss.

#### **6.1 Psychological Difficulties**

Among the symptoms of unresolved grief and pain that they described are: feelings of sadness, anger, guilt, rage, loneliness, depression, nightmares, loss of appetite, forgetfulness, avoiding reminders of the deceased family member, feeling as if they are losing their minds and constant thoughts of the murder scene. These symptoms are consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) - a debilitating malady characterized by exaggerated startle response and recurring and intrusive recollections or dreams of a traumatic event. Symptoms of PTSD fall into three main categories: "hyperarousal", "intrusion" and "constriction" (Herman, 1992). These categories encapsulate survivors' struggles with grief and pain.

### **Hyperarousal**

This symptom is considered as the cardinal symptom of PTSD. The traumatized person startles easily, reacts irritably and experiences difficulty with sleeping. Participants described the symptoms that they experienced in these ways:

*"It is nearly three years since the murder and I still can't feel better. I can't stop crying and I can't sleep through the night. I lie in bed and just think about what happen. Sometimes I feel like I am losing my mind."*

*"The least little thing happen, I get frighten. Even at nights I would jump out of my sleep - just like that. We have a breadfruit tree that hang over the house and when the breadfruit shoot drop on the zinc, I get so frighten thinking that somebody is trying to get me even though deep in my heart I know that it is the breadfruit shoot."*

Fear is another anxiety symptom described by participants. Driven by specific fears, one woman describes behaviors that border on being obsessive and compulsive. She describes it this way:

*"Ever since my father was killed, I notice how I over-do things - especially when it comes to locking up the house. I would put on the night latch on the door, walk to my room and go back to the door to check if the door is secure."*

*Some nights I would go to the door 5 or 6 times - just to make sure that it is on. Sometimes my husband would see me get out of bed in the middle of the night and he would ask me what happen, and I would tell him that he should go check the doors if they are safe and he would remind me that I check them 5 or 6 times already. Sometimes in order to make me feel good he would go and check it because he knows that if he don't check it then I can't sleep."*

### **Intrusion**

This group of symptoms is manifested in traumatized people as the constant reliving of the traumatic event. According to (Herman, 1992), the traumatized person cannot resume the normal course of their lives because the trauma repeatedly interrupts it. The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep. The dramatic and painful quality of intrusion is captured in one man's description of his terrifying nightmares after the death of his aunt. He states:

*"I get terrible nightmares sometimes. I have this dream that keep coming back and it is driving me crazy. In the dream, it is like I go to the beach or some place like that with my aunt and she is in some kind of difficulty, but I can never get to her in time to save her. The other night it was like we were at the*

*beach and she is calling out for help and I am swimming as hard as I can to go get her. It is like she is drowning and I am just swimming fast as I can but all of a sudden a big shark come in and swallow her up and it try to come after me too but I escape. The other morning after I wake up I couldn't even go to work - I was depressed for the entire day. I have been having this dream or a version of it since my aunt died and it always shake me up. My mother was saying that the good thing about the dream is that I always try to go help her. I just want this dream to go away."*

Still haunted by terrifying flashbacks of the murder of her father, this survivor reveals some of her experiences. She states:

*"Since the murder, I can't function normal. I am always thinking about what happen. After he died I was studying at a school near here. I was learning computers, but I just couldn't concentrate on anything. It is like I am always day-dreaming. I didn't learn a thing. I would be looking at the teacher but would be thinking about my father and how they kill him. Even some of my friends tell me that I am not much fun to be with anymore. If I go to a party, this minute I would feel in the party mood, and the next minute I get sad and want to go home. People say that this is happening to me because I was so close to my father, but I don't know. I just want to be able to think straight*

*again. I mean - I don't ever want to forget him but if all I do is think about him and pine after him, I won't be able to do anything with my life."*

### **Constriction**

Constriction or numbing is the third symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder. Traumatic events such as murder evoke not only terror and rage, but often a state of detached calm in which terror, rage and pain dissolve. Events continue to register in awareness, but it is as though these events have been disconnected from their ordinary meanings, (Herman, 1992).

The "zombie-like" state is one that most survivors revealed that they had experienced. For some of them, the symptoms of constriction have drastically limited their interest in making future plans. For others, life no longer has any true meaning - they merely go through the motions of living.

Traumatized by the homicide of her husband of many years, one woman describes her symptoms this way:

*"I used to be so afraid to stay in the house by myself that I would go and stay with my family in St. Ann's Bay. I would spend two weeks there and move on and spend another few weeks somewhere else. Now , I just give up. If they*

*want to kill me too, let them do it. I am tired of all the problems so I just lock my door and stay there by myself. I just don't care anymore."*

Another woman describes her feelings this way:

*"The days come and go by. I can't believe that it is 2 years already since she is gone. Nothing is the same - nothing have any meaning to me. We eat and drink a little something everyday because if we don't eat we will die, but even the food that we eat, we don't get any enjoyment from it. I use to be a big Christmas person - all now, I would have my fruits soaking and my ham curing in the fridge, but since she died, I don't plan anything at all. There is nothing in life that can make me feel really happy again."*

Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are also experienced by children and young adults related to the victim. An aunt describes the symptoms that her 13 year old niece experienced after her elderly parent was murdered - symptoms that reportedly were never adequately treated by professionals.

*"She can't sleep when night comes. She is so afraid that we have to keep a light on in her room. She won't sleep by herself either. One night I slept in her room with her and in the middle of the night she just started to scream and wail. She is a different child completely since they kill her father. She was*

*very bright and a very happy child - now she don't talk unless you talk to her, and you have to be careful what you say because as you call the father's name or anything that remind her of him, she would start to cry all over again. She always look frighten and out of it - always sad and even the teachers at her school pick it up. We took her to the doctor and all the doctor said was that we should try to show her as much love as we can, but still..., I am concerned about her."*

This aunt recognizes the fact that her niece needs suitable professional care. Additionally, she appears to have created an atmosphere that might be conducive to her nieces's recovery. However, for many families that are traumatized by the homicide of a relative, communication and relationship difficulties work in tangent to further undermine recovery.

## **6.2 Communication and Relationship Difficulties**

Homicide creates a major assault on individual family members - their family system is thrown into disorder, they feel helpless and vulnerable, and the social system on which they must depend becomes menacing and chaotic. The resultant anxiety becomes incapacitating for survivors who must re-establish belief in the social order so that they can go on living.

A woman explains how the trauma surrounding the murder of her uncle threatened to destroy the relationship between herself and her live-in boyfriend of 8 years.

*"After my uncle died, my boyfriend was very helpful to me. Him was quite understanding. Him know how much my uncle did mean to me and so he was patient and loving to me. Can you imagine the shock that I get one day when I came home from work and he told me that maybe we should separate. When I ask him why, he said that I had changed and I didn't show him any affection or things like that. He felt that I should have got over my uncle's death already. In one sense I understand what he was saying because I never feel like being lovey dovey with anyone after it happen - but on the other hand, I try to deal with it but I just couldn't get over it like that. It take time."*

Other survivors argue that some of their friends and family members failed to fully acknowledge their pain. Some of the unempathetic responses are described below:

*"Just because I was a niece of Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, everybody seem to think that what I was going through was less than if I was her own daughter. They just wouldn't understand. One woman - she came up to me and was telling me that I shouldn't keep looking so sad because at least it wasn't my mother who was*

*killed - it was my aunt. I am not a violent person, but I felt like I would slap her damn face in. Everybody think that they are expert and they want to give you advise and none of them has ever gone through what I am going through. They need to keep their mouth shut."*

*"There are some people who want to help but they don't know how. They come and ask questions upon questions like they are re detectives. They don't realize that when they keep harping on the murder - it brings up everything in my mind all over again. They want to know what the police say - what I think - everything. It just get on my nerves."*

Contributing also to the communication and relationship difficulties faced by survivors is disagreement surrounding the allocation of the victims' estate. This is especially likely if the victim died intestate or in situations where the survivors cannot reach an amicable agreement on how the estate should be divided. As described by a daughter of a victim, the relationship between her stepmother and herself "soured" significantly soon after her father's death. She describes what happened:

*"The relationship with my family is not as smooth as it used to be. It is like a situation where the family is divided over the property. Since my father die,*

*my stepmother is showing a completely different face. She is only concerned with her children. Those of us who are not her children get nothing. I keep to myself because I don't like injustice. I mean the things that my father said was ours before he died, the wife - she hold on to them for herself and for her children - and it is not fair."*

In expressing outrage over the fact that her family has been torn apart over the settlement of her brother-in-law's estate, a woman states:

*"It is a shame. My sister and her husband raise two girls along with the son that they had together. Now the girls don't go to the house. The son don't make them feel welcome when they go there. They complain to me that it is like they are imposing on him. He don't tell his sisters what is going on. There is a whole lot of infighting going on over who is to get this and who is to get that."*

She vows to learn from this experience, as she explains:

*" I make a will before I die because I don't want my family to fall apart because of what I leave behind - my dear - that is what is going on. This one want this house, that one want that piece of furniture and the other one want the car and so much money. What I do is keep out of it because they are all*

*intelligent people who all go to college. The Bible tell you that money is the source of all evil."*

Still, there are some family members who migrate from their community in the quest to avoid reminders of the crime and to re-establish a sense of safety. This is especially true of returning residents from abroad. Many of them have returned to England and the United States, having been forced to abandon plans to spend their twilight years in the country of their birth. Whenever this happens, the remaining kin may experience the trauma associated with multiple-losses - that of the deceased and of the kin who migrated. Family members describe it this way:

*"After they kill my uncle, my aunt decided that she was not going to stay here. Her children came out from England and took her back to England with them. It is so hard for me to pass by and see the beautiful house that they built to live in and now none of them is in there. It is hard to communicate with her because I don't want to bring back the sad memories for her, so I hardly ever write her anymore. All I can do is go down on my knees and pray for her."*

*"They killed my uncle who was living here but the uncle who came out for holiday manage to get away and run to the police station. He did come out to find a piece of land to build his house here in St. Thomas, but now he went*

*back to England and say he is never putting foot back in Jamaica. It is hard, for now I feel like I am all alone. They were the only true family that I had but now one is dead and sometimes I feel like my uncle in England is dead too because he don't write or call - he is not himself anymore."*

### 6.3

#### **Financial Difficulties**

There are tremendous monetary costs associated with homicide. The costs include loss of earnings, medical costs, and funeral and burial expenses. In some cases, these expenses have drastically reduced the standard of living of the surviving family. The most severe of all cases, however, appear to be when the sole breadwinner is the murder-victim. A widow of 65 or 70 years bemoans the fact that she has been forced into a life of dependency. She states:

*"I am not working. My husband use to take care of me and the family. Now that he is gone, I have to depend on my children for every little thing. They share whatever they have with me. This bother me a whole lot because they have their own responsibility and shouldn't have to take care of me."*

In the case of another elderly widow, her financial situation is even more disturbing. She blames the poor state of her finances on the heightened cost of the medication that she takes daily for arthritis, high blood pressure and bad nerves, and

on the fact that her husband is no longer around to provide for his family. Despite her advanced age and her medical condition, she is forced to “make a living” for herself. She explains her situation in this way:

*“At first I use to sit and cry and worry. I almost got a nervous breakdown over it, but with the help of God I came to and realize that I can make a living for myself. I didn't have any choice - my husband isn't around anymore and he didn't leave a lot of money to take care of me, so what I did was to start a little business - a small business with one of my church sisters. I don't make a lot of money but it is helping me a whole lot. I don't have to beg or borrow from anyone.”*

For one man, the death of his father has created a unique type of financial crisis. His father, a well-established businessman left behind a staff of workers to be paid, an 8 year old son to be taken care of and a host of other business commitments to be settled. The problem, however, was that no family member was able to access the bank accounts of the victim who died intestate. Instead, he opted to sell some of his own assets in order to secure those of his father's - a decision he claims was necessary for the following reasons:

*“My Dad worked very hard for everything that he had. As the oldest child, my job is to make sure that his labor is not in vain. I prefer to lose anything that I*

*personally owned than to lose anything of my father."*

#### **6.4**

### **Unmet Need for Service Intervention**

Securing a safe environment and establishing a sense of safety are considered prerequisites to recovery for persons who are traumatized. In the case of families of homicide victims, the incident often leaves them with some major fears coupled with feelings of helplessness. The anxiety that accompanies this state is often incapacitating, yet for participants in this study, there were very few resources available to them.

Like other survivors, fear is a major theme for one man who lost both his parents to homicide. The feelings of fear that he expresses are not only real, but appear to be haunting. He fears that he or other family members may be harmed by the perpetrators of the crime - perpetrators who have not yet been apprehended. Despite his fears, however, he claims that the police have failed to provide him with the necessary protection that he needs. He describes his feelings this way:

*"There are times when fear play on my nerves. I am afraid to walk the property because you never know who is in the bushes - and I am afraid that they may just be lay-waiting me to kill me too - or kill a family member.*

*Sometimes I give in to the fear and stay under locked doors, but other times I brave up myself and do what I have to do. I can't make fear cripple me."*

This man describes further, a prior attack on his life and the response from law enforcement. He states:

*"I'll tell you something further, now that I control my papa's property, it is like they are out to murder me too. They still want to do as they please on the property. If I go there and talk about it, they will murder me. One man tried to kill me and I went to the police and they didn't pay me any mind. I had to remind them that it was my parents that were killed a few years ago. They don't respond to nothing - that is my biggest problem. I have no protection from the police and I live in fear that they will kill me too."*

One woman sums up her feelings regarding her safety in this way:

*"I don't feel safe. I don't have a life. I go to work and I rush home as quickly as I can. I am a prisoner in the house - peeping through the window. If I see a strange person, I go crazy. I can't sleep either. I worry about the safety of the house and still I don't know any other way to make it safer. I have steel bars on the windows and on my back door, but that still don't guarantee me safety. My aunt's house was even safer than this and they went in there and killed her."*

*The only thing that I can do is pray to God for safety."*

#### **6.4.1 The Criminal Justice System - Unresponsive and Depersonalized**

Victims describe a criminal justice system that places them in a very passive position. Many of them stating that they neither receive basic assistance nor information. Some survivors describe how they have become angry and frustrated by the highly depersonalized system - one that fails to provide protection for them.

In describing what she deems as the lack of cooperation from the police, a woman whose common-in-law husband of 25 years was murdered describes an insensitive and unresponsive reaction from the police. She states:

*"I experience a whole lot of problem with the police. All I needed from them was to get a copy of the death certificate. I needed it for personal business and they wouldn't give it to me. One policeman - him tell me that he wouldn't speak to me because I wasn't legally married to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. Can you believe it? Me and Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ lived together for over 25 years and we have a son together. I had to make three trips back and forth before I get the letter to confirm that the man was dead. I think that they need proper training to deal with the public. They didn't care what I - a woman who lived with this*

*man for 25 years - was going through."*

Others indict the entire criminal justice system for what they perceive as its failure to ensure that justice is served. They express their feelings in the following ways:

*"I can talk for myself and everybody in the family when I say we didn't get no justice. I think that it is a damn shame that because of them - the murderer walk free. My grandfather is in a grave before his time and the criminals are out there like nothing happen. I personally have no faith in no justice system in Jamaica. It is not for poor people; it is for the rich and those who are friend and company with the police."*

*"The criminal get everything. They are protected by the court. They have lawyers and we have to go through so much yet we don't even have a say. We don't get no help from the police - nobody tell us anything. We should have legal people to help us - explain to us what is going on."*

Some family members were more sympathetic toward the criminal justice system. They believe that law enforcement officers are doing the best that they can, given the difficult circumstances under which they serve. One person expresses his

belief this way:

*"Although it is hard not to know who did this horrible crime, we have to say that the police them are trying their best. You know these criminals are very cunning and it is very hard on the police. When I get a chance to go to the station, they would answer my question and talk to me quite nice. They have a hard job and they are only human, so we have to wait and work with them as best we can."*

## **6.5 The Search for Closure**

The search for emotional closure is for many victims' families, one that is quite elusive. For large numbers of them, their quest for justice and retribution has not been realized. They never get the chance to do so because the vast majority of murders are never solved - the perpetrator goes free. For families who are faced with the knowledge that the perpetrator of such heinous crime is not punished - the pain is quite severe. A woman whose husband was murdered expresses these thoughts:

*"I would say that the main problem was that we don't know who did it. You ask yourself why? And no answer come to you. I say to myself, if they want his gun why didn't they take it and leave him alive. I think I would feel a little better if they caught the murderer because I would know that he will get the*

*punishment that he deserve."*

The opportunity to face the perpetrator is not only denied in those cases that are never solved, but there is a small but growing number of victims who experience a kind of bitter-sweet victory. This type of victory does not, however, ensure closure. A man who lost his elderly father explains:

*"After four or five months, there was a report that the police shoot and kill a fellow who they say was a suspect in the killing of my uncle. They didn't catch anybody else, but at least, one was caught."*

He explains further that he was still not satisfied that the "real murderer" was caught. He says:

*"I had difficulty with it. How you going to be sure that the person who you shoot and kill was really the murderer when the person is dead; you can't ask him any questions; you have to just say that it was that person. Sometimes, I wonder if it is not a matter of closing a case by saying the person who was killed is a suspect in this or that case, so I never was sure that any of the real killers was caught. I would have liked to see some amount of justice - some trial."*

Like in the above case, when this woman received news that suspects in the murder of her brother-in-law were shot and murdered by the police, she said the following:

*"I don't get any satisfaction from that kind of news. There was no trial, so you just have to depend on what the police say. I only hope that the real murderers are not walking the street to murder again."*

The above cases address the issue of social control by use of deadly force - a topic that has been investigated by Chevigny, (1990). Contrary to his findings that vigilante killings by police are widely supported by Jamaicans, victims' families, despite the magnitude of their emotional burden, expressed limited support for this unjustified activism. They seek "pure justice" - no doubt believing that their deceased family members deserve no less.

### **6.5.1**

#### **The Need for Mental Health Intervention**

Coping strategies differ significantly among survivors of crime - so does the rate at which they will be able to recreate the behavioral, social and psychological faculties that were damaged by the trauma. The lack of access to mental health and other services is likely to delay their recovery. This belief is in keeping with the findings of Johnson (1997), who found that the level of distress experienced by

victims declined more for those victims who received certain professional services than for those who did not.

In a desperate effort to cope, survivors have utilized combinations of all available resources, yet they acknowledge that these self-help measures may not be enough to alleviate the distress that accompanies victimization. Some see the presence of grief and trauma as a constant - expecting only an occasional respite from the pain. Using a powerful metaphor of a "hole in the wall", one man describes his pain this way:

*"It is like a hole in the wall and you put a piece of paper over it, and you don't see the hole, but every time you knock the wall, it feels hollow."*

For others, the severe and long-lasting trauma that has accompanied the homicide, has lead them to recognize that self-help measures may not be enough to alleviate the distress that they feel. Many of them appeared willing to abandon certain established cultural traditions to embrace "whatever works". With some degree of desperation, they describe their need for mental health intervention:

*"I would use anything - any kind of service that they have for people like me. I mean, I use what was there - like my church, my friends, but that still wasn't enough. I couldn't talk to my parson. I couldn't tell him what was on my mind"*

*because he just wouldn't understand. I just felt like I should get a gun and kill the bastard who did this. Those times, I didn't feel like going on my knees and pray. What would I tell God after he, himself say 'Thou shall not kill'. I really needed help. Thank God, I am feeling a little stronger now, although sometimes, I still feel angry and depress."*

A parent describes his children's need for psychological intervention this way:

*"I was more concerned for my children. They really would do with some professional help. It is over 2 years since their grandfather was killed and they still show signs that they haven't got over it yet. The other day I went to my son's school because the teacher complained that he was hitting other children and biting them. At home, he would be quiet and withdrawn, but when he went to school it was a different matter. Even my 10 year old daughter is having some problem. She was so bubbly, but now she change a whole lot. They don't have no guidance counselors or anybody to help them at school. I will have to find money to try and get the help that they need - even though I am not sure where the money will be coming from."*

### ***Discussion and Summary of Findings***

Participants experience a wide array of psychological, social, economic and

legal difficulties in the aftermath of the murder. Many of these problems began or were exacerbated by the loss of their loved ones. Their symptoms of psychological difficulties are similar to those of post-traumatic stress disorder. The most common symptom being that of family members feeling that they were trapped in a contradictory effort toward recovery. On the one hand, they tried not to think about the murder and avoid all the reminders of it, while on the other hand, they experienced powerful intrusive memories - especially about the physical pain and fear that their family member(s) must have endured. These feelings, along with suicidal ideations, depression and fear, and the "emotional backsliding" that usually occurs in these cases severely undermine efforts toward recovery.

Recovery efforts are also challenged by feelings of isolation, monetary difficulties and by what participants describe as an "unresponsive criminal justice system". Despite these major challenges there is no formal system of support for victims and their families.

It is against the background of these psychological, social, financial difficulties and lack of supports and professional resources that survivors must re-establish their lives. The following chapter outlines their search for recovery.

## **Chapter 7**

### **The Search for Recovery**

*"Easier said than done"*

Speaking about how she has been coping with the murder of her husband, one participant responded by saying, "It is easier said than done". This expression and the accompanying feelings resonate clearly with other survivors. They recognize that adjusting to such a severe loss presents a major challenge to all aspects of their lives. Survivors struggle to accept the fact that their lives have been irrevocably changed. They go through months of re-experiencing and confronting the past, but are often not able to move toward the future. Looking toward a future that does not include their deceased loved-one can be very frightening and painful. Not only do they experience the emotional pain of doing so, but they face the fact that the inter-generational strengths and values of their family have been destroyed.

In describing the disfigurement to their family structure and the pain it caused, survivors stated the following:

*"Things are not the same and will never be the same again. That is hard to take. I can't see my family without her. She was like the head of the family. We all would go to her for advise. She was the one who would encourage me to achieve good things in my life. I just can't see the future without her."*

*"I try to fool myself and tell myself that my husband is not dead because I can't bring myself to really think how life going to be for me without him. I know that I have to put all of that behind me but it is easier said than done."*

Learning how to constructively adapt to the changes that have resulted from the murder of their loved-one is in large part a measure of survivors' strength and fortitude. They must re-invent their lives. Some must learn how to "make ends meet" without the financial support that they received from their deceased family member. While still experiencing emotional pain, others must assume roles that were played by their deceased kin.

Despite the various factors that mitigate against their recovery, survivors demonstrate enormous resiliency in their struggle toward healing. In the absence of a formal system of support for victims of crime, they must rely almost exclusively on family, friends, religious convictions and cultural traditions to help moderate the potential risks associated with the homicide. Reliance on these informal support systems is as much a part of the cultural tradition of rural Jamaica as it is due to necessity.

Jamaican cultural tradition dictates that crisis situations are best addressed

within the context of the family. Sharing one's feelings and emotions with strangers is tantamount to "washing one's dirty laundry in public". Coupled with the fear of becoming the subject of "gossip-mongers" and an even more pervasive fear of being labeled as "crazy", survivors are more likely to seek and receive support from persons that they can trust.

### 7.1 The Role of the Family

Some survivors attribute their "healing" to the love and support that they have received from other family members. The term "support" is generally used to represent material assistance such as monetary aid, child-care assistance, help with household chores and companionship, especially during the early stages of bereavement. On the other hand, the term "love" is used as a depiction of the level of caring, understanding and empathy that they received from other family members.

Speaking of the role that their family members played in their recovery, survivors stated the following:

*"My wife and children have helped me a lot. My wife - she is very supportive and considerate and very understanding. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have her. She always know what to say to make me feel better. She even know when to leave me the hell alone - and not every wife know that. You*

*know, there are times when I don't feel like talking to anybody and my wife understand that, even my children seem to understand me - understand that their Daddy is going through a lot."*

*"I am a dressmaker. When my husband was killed, I couldn't sew a stitch. I just couldn't take people's valuable cloth (fabric) and sew it because I couldn't concentrate on anything. The money that me and my husband had was all tied up. After we bury him there was little money left to pay the bills. If it wasn't for my brothers and sisters I don't know what I would do because I didn't work for over eight months. My brothers and sisters send money from America to help me, and they told me to relax myself and go to the movies or do anything that I want to do to take my mind off the problem. They just give me all that money and it did help me because at least I didn't have to worry about the bills."*

*"I was so afraid to stay by myself in the big house. If a dog bark, my heart would feel that it dropping out of my chest. I was very lonely but one of my brothers send his daughter to come and stay with me at the house. She is fifteen years old but she is good company for me."*

One woman attributes her desire to "move on with her life" to the love of her children and grand-children. As is captured below, she explains that she often wishes that she would join her husband in death, but soon realized that her death would only further undermine the emotional state of her beloved children and grand-children. She states:

*"I found it hard to live without him. I couldn't sleep, think straight or help myself. At one time I stop eating. I would even throw away the food when my children bring it to me. I wanted to die and join my husband. Then one day just like that my little 8 year old grand-daughter came and sat on my lap and she start to talk to me and tell me how much she love me and how if I die she would die too. It was so hard for me to listen to her talk. So I told myself that no matter what future I face, I must try my best to live so as not to put these poor little babies through anymore grief. To tell you the truth - that is when I start to eat again, and now I am feeling much better although sometimes I still worry and cry a lot."*

Still there are some survivors who claim that they received little or no support from other family members. They attribute this lack of support to (a) conflict within the family, (b) family members being overwhelmed by their own pain, and (c) the fact that family members sought to avoid painful memories of the event. In these

cases, the survivors relied on friends and acquaintances or on other forms of support.

## **7.2 The Role of Friends**

Survivors credit their circle of friends with bringing about some degree of normalcy to their lives. Whether it was a trip to the movies or just an afternoon of "gossip", such occasions provided a needed respite - the opportunity for them to "take their minds off their problems, if even for a while." One woman describes the role that her friends played in helping her cope with the murder of her father. She states:

*"After my father died, I was in a daze - I just couldn't believe it. My house was a "real dead house" because everybody look like they shell-shock. If it wasn't for my friends, I don't know what would happen to me - maybe I would be mad by now. My friends would come over in the evening and they would get me to talk; we would talk about anything. They would try to not mention about my father. They would even tell me gossip - what was going on with this one and that one in the community. Another thing is that they would come and draw me out of the house to take me to a party or to go see a movie or something. They always want to keep me busy. Sometimes they would call me on the phone just to talk. That is what I think help me the most. I think that when I talk with them I feel like I am alive again and little by little I start to*

*feel a little better."*

Prolonged grieving, or an active state of grieving that exceeds that of other family members may become the source of conflict among family members. Some survivors "turned" to their circle of friends because of the unempathetic responses that they received from other family members. One such survivor is a woman who posits various reasons for the failure of her family members to acknowledge her pain. She describes it this way:

*"My friends are the ones that help me. It is like my family turned against me because I still wasn't handling the death of Daddy very well. I couldn't sleep at nights, so in the day time I didn't have any energy to do anything. Up to a year and a half after the murder I was still crying and I would stay in my room a lot. Well, one sister in particular, she would get on to my case and she would accuse me of seeking attention. She would say that I am "milking" the murder so that I don't do anything. She and the rest of them - even Momma would say - how come all of us going through the same thing that you are going through, but I am the only one who acting like that. They would say that I am going on like I am the only one who feel Daddy's death. They don't understand me at all and they should know that I am more sensitive than the rest of them. I am more like my Daddy. So what I do is to forget about them.*

*My friends are who help me; they listen to me and talk to me. My family are always jealous. It think what is happening is that they feel guilty that they are not crying and going on like me. They are jealous because they know that I was Daddy's favorite."*

### **7.3 The Role of Work**

While some survivors reported difficulty in their ability to cope with the demands of employment or in maintaining a livelihood, for some the work environment provided a welcome diversion from the pain and grief surrounding their loss. The benefits of work are described by survivors:

*"At first I didn't think that I could focus on my job. I am a nurse and the job calls for concentration and clear thinking. To be truthful, I went back to work 2 weeks after the murder and I was still a mess. I couldn't remember a thing, so what I did was write down everything on paper. That was the bad side - my memory and focus were not sharp but what I got back from going to work helped me a lot. For another thing is that I notice that I would almost feel like everything is normal when I am at work. It is when I got home that everything hit me and I get depressed. Then my colleagues at the hospital, they help me a lot too. They wouldn't make me sit and feel sorry for myself; they are always trying to make me laugh."*

Through his work environment, one man met another survivor of homicide - a man whose son was murdered. He credits his coping to the opportunity to share his feelings with someone who understands his grief. He explains it this way:

*“Who help me is a friend at work. I use to see him but never really talk to him until after my brother was killed. One day he came to me and told me that he heard about my brother and that he was sorry about it. Then he start to tell me about what happen to his 27 year old son - how they kill him - the man's only son. He started to cry at first. I was saying - how come a big man like him just cry like that - then before I knew it - I start to cry too, and the two of us just cry like a baby. Then we started to eat lunch together and talk. When I told him that I couldn't sleep at nights and other things that were happening to me, he told me that the same things happened to him. The man became my tower of strength. He is a Christian too, and he could talk to me about God. I go to his house sometime and he and his wife would come over to be with my family. He help me a lot because he understand my grief because he is going through the same thing.”*

#### 7.4

### **The Role of Religion and Spirituality**

Religion and spirituality, in their various forms have deeply influenced survivors' healing process. Through spiritual guidance, prayer, Bible reading, belief

in an after-life, inspiration from burial service and other religious and cultural traditions, some survivors report that they have experienced a deep spiritual renewal. They describe the role that religion and spirituality played in their recovery in the following ways:

*“There is a sort of emotional support that friends and family can give, but I think that it is my profound belief in God that is taking me through this ordeal. I believe my Creator give me the courage and strength that I need. I try to tap into his source through prayer and meditation.”*

*“Even though all of this happen, I never lose sight of the Creator because I know that he alone is God. They can kill my husband body, but they can't kill his soul. That is what keep me. I know that he is resting in peace and he is alright.”*

*“Some people may look at me and say that they can't understand how I am taking the murder so good, but I think the reason I do it is because my minister and my church people visit me all the time and give me spiritual food. They pray with me and today I am a stronger Christian than I was before all of this happen.”*

Reciting a special verse of scripture has inspired some to “go on with their lives”. One man states that his inspiration comes from the Bible passage that states, ‘To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.’ To him this passage diverts his attention from the horrible murder scene to a place called “heaven” - a place of happiness, peace and love - a place where his aunt now resides.

Not all survivors received this comfort and “healing” from religion. In fact, two survivors reported that the murder had severely challenged their faith. They questioned God - How could he let this horrible thing happen to their family member? Where was He when they needed him most? One woman describes her failure to affirm God’s presence in her life as a form of “spiritual death”. She states:

*“I couldn’t pray or even read my Bible, spiritually; I was dead. I was angry at God. All I could think was, how could God allow this to happen? Where is he when we need him? I am still struggling to understand how he could be there and make this happen. I feel angry at times. Who am I to be angry at God? It is kind of stupid, but that is how I did feel.”*

One man tells how he has become “disenchanted” with religion following the death of his aunt. He states:

*"If you did know the kind of person that she was, she was a real church-woman. Every pan knock at church when she was there. She was a good Christian - not the kind of Christian who are only Christian at church, she live the life. When I see that she of all person was killed in that kind of way, to tell you the truth, I wonder about it. It is hard for me to worship like I use to do."*

Religion and spirituality were not only seen within the context of the Judaic Christian principles. A variety of cultural forms were credited by survivors as having helped them with coping with their loss. Inspiration was said to have been drawn from the struggles of ancestors. One man claims:

*"I draw strength from the ancestors. When I consider the trials that they went through - murders, the rapes and things like that - I just know that I have to make it."*

Jah Rastafari is credited for the drums of Zion, which one man - a Rastafarian, stated helped him cope. He states:

*"I beat my drums whenever I feel down. I beat and beat and listen to the music- sometimes sweat pouring from my body. It is like I am in a different realm. I feel peaceful. Jah give me the peace that I know."*

## **7.5**

### **Rituals and Other Cultural Traditions**

The rich convergence of rituals and other cultural forms are often celebrated whole-heartedly within rural communities in Jamaica. In no area of life are these influences as strong as in the rituals, superstitions and traditions concerning death and dying. One such influence pertains to the final rites accorded deceased loved-ones. These traditions do not only include a burial that demands extravagant spending, but they may include various rites, such as the laying of tombstones and other celebrations of the life of the deceased - celebrations that often become annual events.

Underlying many of these rituals is the superstition that they help the spirit of the deceased in its transition into the spirit world. With a feeling of satisfaction, the spirit can, therefore, rest in peace.

Having been riddled by feelings of guilt and powerlessness, some survivors sought and received comfort from these rituals. As described below, survivors claim that they felt less guilty and achieved some degree of emotional closure from having performed these rites. They describe the role of these rituals in their recovery:

*"She was a meticulous person. She like things that were beautiful - clothes, flowers - things like that. Well, there was only one thing that the family agree*

*on - that she would get a funeral fit for a queen. We bought the most beautiful and expensive casket. We got the funeral home to send their best hearse and we fill it with flowers. We chose songs that she like and we gave her the very best. It cost a whole lot of money, but it didn't matter. We want her spirit to see that we love her in life and in death. In a strange way, I got a lot of satisfaction from that and from the memorial that we did. To me, it is like I know I did my best and she is happy now and resting with our Maker."*

*"We decide by ourself that every year we are going to meet as a family and do something on his birthday. We decide not to do it on the date of his death because we want to celebrate his life. Last year February, we the family and close friends got together and we kill a goat, a pig and chicken and we just talk about him and remember him. That help me a lot, and some of the others tell me that they don't feel so bad anymore, knowing that they are able to do something for him."*

Items of clothing belonging to the deceased also provide some comfort to grieving survivors. As is customary, these items of clothing are often shared among close family members and are often worn by them as a symbol of "continued love". One man describes the "comfort" that he received from wearing items of clothing

that belonged to his deceased father. He states:

*"You may find this funny, but I think that I get a whole lot of comfort just from wearing my Dad's clothes. I wear his pajamas, his shorts and I even got some of his pants altered to fit me. I couldn't tell any and anybody this, but when I put them on - especially the pajamas, I feel close to him. The helper had a hard time to get me to wash them, because I get very sentimental with them, and I want to have them until I die."*

## 7.6 Dreams

Dreams also play a significant role in the recovery of families traumatized by the murder of loved ones. Through dreams, they become reunited with their loved-ones - albeit, awaking from such dreams they face the stark reality of the death. To dream of one's loved-one is a wish that many survivors crave, not only for its implicit message from beyond, but as a symbol of their ultimate fate. For the deceased to be looking healthy, happy and alive is a dream that has special meaning for the survivors - one that reassures them that the victim is "OK" and has found "rest". The role of dreams in his recovery is explained by this survivor. He states:

*"After my brother-in-law got killed, I was in a mess. I couldn't understand. I wish that he would come to me in a dream and tell me what happen. It is strange but the very night I dreamt I saw him. It is like he was alive and going*

*about his business as usual. One thing though - he was looking rosy and good, his face glowing - really beautiful. I know that it is a dream that is telling me that he is alright; he found rest. That help me not to worry too much because he found what all of us looking for - eternal life."*

Dreams also provide the opportunity for traumatized family members to integrate the reality of their kin's death. A grandson describes how his dreams reunited him with his grandmother and the meanings that he attached to such dreams. He describes it this way:

*" I felt so good when I would dream about her (grandmother). One night I dreamt that she was counseling me like she use to do when she was alive. When I got up I smiled to myself. From that I start to see her as my guardian angel. She protect me - she is my guardian angel in heaven. When I think like that, I don't feel too, too bad."*

One woman tells how she "moved beyond pretending that her husband was still alive" to embracing all memories of him - memories that were often manifested in her dreams.

*"I was living a world of pretense. I use to go around telling myself that my husband is not dead - that he is gone back to work as usual, and he is coming*

*back on Friday. I was very good at it. Then I start to dream about him very often. In the dreams sometimes it is like we are doing the same things that we use to do. Him was never dead in any of the dreams, but when I wake up in the morning I would find myself crying and can't do anything for the whole day. I was telling a friend of mine about it and she said that I have to come to terms with the fact that my husband is dead and not coming back. What I did after that was speak to him, like he was alive - just tell him that he must rest in peace, and things like that. Would you believe that after a while I start to dream about him very regular - sometimes like he would be warning me about something, but each time he would come to me I would know in my sleep that he is dead and that he is only trying to protect me. Now I see him, not so much as my husband, but more as my protector. Yes, he is my angel, taking care of me."*

## 7.7

### **Successes and Failures**

In keeping with the findings of Malmquist (1986), there is much diversity in survivors' responses to violence and loss. Some survivors exhibited remarkable resilience in their adaptation to the loss, while others continued to experience severe difficulty. Table 7.7 is based on respondents anecdotal responses regarding their adaptation to loss.

**Table 7.7**  
**Survivors' Adaptation to Loss**

<b>Level of Adaptation</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Making good to excellent progress toward recovery	8	33.3
Experiencing a lot of difficulties	16	66.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As is evident in Table 7.7, 66.7 percent (16) survivors stated that they were experiencing difficulty with their recovery while 33.3 percent (8) survivors stated that they were making good to excellent progress. Even among those who expressed some level of satisfaction with their recovery, much anxiety was expressed regarding a time frame for total recovery. The need for professional intervention cannot be underscored. Survivors need, among other things, to be reassured about grief and recovery. As described below, some survivors have become frustrated with the slow gains that they have made despite their efforts to "put back the pieces of their shattered lives". They describe their efforts in the following ways:

*"They say that time will heal everything, but I don't know about that. It is almost three years now and I still feel like it was yesterday it happen. I pray and I try hard to get over it but this minute I am up and the next minute I am down."*

*" Since last month or a month and a half ago, I start to feel a little better. I even start to put back on some of the weight that I lose. I lost almost 20 pounds. I tell myself that my husband would like for me not to worry myself so much. I know he is at rest, so I try to live until the Good Father decide to call me home to join him."*

*"I don't feel no better. It bother me all the time. If I am sleeping - it is the last thing that I think of. When I wake it is the first thing on my mind and it stay with me day-in day-out - all the time."*

*"Nothing that I try don't help me. I speak to my minister, I talk to my friends, but it still on my mind. It is not that I don't try. I try hard to block it from my mind, but it won't go away. I just picture his body lying on the grass like when we find him."*

*"I have the children and the grandchildren. They need me although it is so hard to accept. I had to accept it. The Lord giveth and he taketh away. I have to be strong so that I can encourage the children them when they break down. It is not that it don't bother me, but I know that one sweet day I will meet him (my husband) again."*

Participants' responses demonstrate an understanding that there is no "quick-fix" to recovery. However, their responses also suggest a great deal of anxiety - anxiety concerning their ability to "move on with their lives". As stated by another survivor, "I am sick and tired of waking in the mornings with all these weird feelings". These are the "feelings" that lead many participants to acknowledge the need for professional intervention. As expressed below, most participants are aware that professional intervention is not a panacea for their grief and suffering, however, when combined with their established systems of support, such services offer more promise for recovery. They express their views in the following ways:

*"I am relying on God to take me through this. I know that he can do all things, but there is a saying that God help those who help themselves - so if I can get counseling to help me, or anything else, I would still use it."*

*"I never expect it to be easy and believe me it is not easy. The murder has ripped my heart and my life in pieces. People talk about counseling and other things like that. I think if you have counseling, and good family and God on your side, you can feel better."*

*"I think that me and my family would do better if we got help from the professional people, from the police and from our family. It just not enough*

*to depend on yourself. A situation like a murder tear you apart so much that, to tell you the truth, I don't know how I am still alive. Sometimes I think it would kill me too."*

### ***Discussion and Summary of Findings***

In the absence of established victims' services respondents relied very heavily on social support, work and religion to help moderate the "emotional turbulence" that accompanied their loss. Some respondents viewed family support to be helpful. However, some differed in this view, stating that their family members were too overcome by their own grief or that the death of their family member(s) had created distancing between them. Others characterized involvement with family members as being detrimental to their coping process.

Friends who allowed the respondents to mourn and vent their feelings were considered to be particularly helpful. In one case the respondent found tremendous support from a friend and colleague who had experienced a similar loss.

The helpfulness of religion was attributed to supportiveness of ministers and church members, as well as the teachings of the various faiths. The spiritual aspect of religiosity - belief in heaven, prayer, reading the bible as well as other religious

**traditions and symbolisms, were deemed to be helpful.**

**Work was viewed by some to be helpful in that it served to divert attention from their pain. Most respondents, however, stated that despite the comfort that these self-help efforts provided them, professional intervention is needed. Of the 24 respondents, 66.7 percent (16) reported that they were still experiencing difficulty in coping, while only 33.3 percent (8) that they were making good progress.**

**The following chapter outlines participants' views on the causes of homicide and highlights their suggestions for preventing future cases of elder-homicide in their communities.**

## Chapter 8

### Respondents' Views on Causes and Suggestions For the Prevention of Elder-Homicide

Traumatized family members often agonize over how the murder of their family members could have been prevented. They question the role that they could have played in preventing it from happening. They often come to the realization, however, that there are not simple answers to preventing crimes of this nature.

One woman suggests that a multiplicity of factors are working in tangent to undermine the structure of communities such as her own. In particular, she suggests that the isolated and homogeneous community that she grew up in has become diverse in values and lifestyles. It is those changes in values and lifestyle on which she posits the causes of such crimes. She describes it this way:

*"I born and grow up in this community and my father born here too. When I was growing up everybody was like family. As children growing up, you know everybody in the community - young and old. You know them by name - especially the elderly. If you dare pass them on the street and not say Good Morning Mr. So and So or Miss So and So, you will be in trouble when you see your parents. Your learn to show respect to the elderly. Now, it is a different thing. You walk down the street and you see all kinds of strange faces - them*

*stare in your face, cuss the biggest bad word, smoke their cigarette or ganja and blow the smoke in your face if you don't mind. You don't know their parents, so there is nobody to complain to. Many of them come from Kingston - they come from abroad - Deportees - and they come from all over. They are the ones who commit these kinds of crimes. I don't say that those who born and grow here won't do it, but they don't have the heart to do that like those who come into the district. Yes, they are the ones who will stake out your house and kill you like nobody."*

Her argument is supported by that of Stephen's (1994) who argue that the bonding process is important to the health and safety of society. He suggests that an individual who is closely in congruence with social expectations over a long period of time is unlikely to commit a serious crime because he or she has developed a "bond" or stake in society.

Another survivor, a man who lost his uncle, suggests that the bond that previously existed among "community folk" in rural Jamaica might be falling apart. He suggests that had this not happened, his uncle might have been alive. He states:

*"People in the community must work together because even in my uncle's case, when the wife started to cry out, there was a lot of noise, yet nobody put*

*in the effort to go and help. When I was growing up, people in the community use to look out for each other, but now everybody is for themselves."*

There are others who view elder-homicide as a symptom of pervasive anomie which affects the entire country. A man whose father was murdered while feeding his dogs, suggests that the social order of Jamaica has completely broken down. He paints a dismal picture of the future. He states:

*"I have to add a little humor here. The only way to solve the crime situation is to give one citizen to one policeman. Outside of that, this whole thing is much more far-fetched than we think. We look at the economic situation, it perpetrates crime; we look at the domestic situation, it perpetrates crime; You and I probably grew up in an environment where we are accustomed to certain values. We look at some people in society and we wonder about them. They don't believe that they can achieve anything in life if they work hard. They want to have the best of everything by any means possible. They don't value the sanctity of human life - not even the life of a person who is old enough to be their grandparent. The worse part is that it is seen as the accepted behavior these days and they know they can do it and get away with it."*

He is no doubt referring to the large number of serious crimes that have gone

unsolved in Jamaica. This continues to be a serious problem for crime-fighters. In general, it is the belief that respect for law and order is low, and violators will go to great lengths to avoid capture and conviction. It is for this reason that some informants believe that many migrate to rural Jamaica, where the level of policing is lower - they come to hide from justice.

Their avoidance of capture and conviction is also viewed as one of the likely causes of elder-homicide. They fear that the victim might be able to identify them as the attacker, so they “silence” them to prevent this from happening.

The lack of proper parenting was also identified as a major contributant to crimes of violence. The socialization of children in rural Jamaica, was traditionally shared between parents and the community. In recent years, however, there has been a major shift toward individualism. Parents have become primarily responsible for the socialization of their children at a time when they are often ill-prepared to assume such roles. This has resulted in an increasing number of young people who are not equipped to make good decisions. Talking about the state of young people in rural Jamaica, victims’ families outline the following:

*“We need to change the way that we bring up our children. We have to change their attitude about things - they have to learn that you work for*

*things, you just don't get it like that. We are a country where the youth watch videos and movies and they think that you start off poor and get rich after two hours just like the movie. It give them the appetite for things they can't afford. Some of them will knock you down and take your things."*

*"Many of them can't even read and write. You see them sit under the tree all day, and at night they terrorize the community. Instead of go to literacy class, them sit down on their ignorance."*

Other reasons for deviant behavior have been attributed to the lack of religious education and the breakdown of the family. One family member expresses the view that families are no longer taking their children to "Sunday school". She explains:

*"Children must go to church and Sunday school. They need to sit down, get God in their heart. The problem is that many of them have parents who themselves are teenagers who just not ready for nothing. All they want to do is go out dancing and gallivanting."*

She views Sunday school as the place where the child learns Christian values - values that will guide them throughout their lives.

Another respondent describes the breakdown of the family in this way:

*“Most youths who commit crime come from broken homes. Their mother leave the husband or the husband leave the wife. They all looking for a younger, prettier or sexier mate. They leave the children without guidance.”*

### **Views on Prevention**

The question as to how rural Jamaica can be changed back to the safe, sane and desirable communities that they were is one that families of victims ponder. They overwhelmingly agree that handling crimes within their communities will require new approaches and training of the police, empowerment of elderly residents, intervention with possible offenders and a new initiatives by government to assist and support rural communities in their quest to become safe.

## **8.1**

### **Need for New Approaches in Policing**

Many informants for this study believe that the police are inadequately trained to undertake the challenging responsibility of protecting their communities - a belief that a senior law enforcement officer disagrees with. He states:

*“There is no doubt that there is a whole lot of problem when it comes to crime. I think that our men and women of the police force are well trained to handle the problem in our communities. The only problem is we do not have the*

*equipment and the resources to do it. I agree that it is not going to be easy because there are a lot of problems where crime is concerned, but we can do it."*

Both the law enforcement officials and victims' families recognize that in order to prevent crimes against the elderly, the role of the police must be expanded to include crime prevention - a mission that is presently neglected by law enforcement officers. They also acknowledge that certain changes must take place to facilitate a higher level of policing of rural communities.

Central to these changes is the need for the police to familiarize themselves with issues faced by local municipalities - especially the elderly community. To do so, they must work toward developing a healthy rapport with the rural elderly. It is by doing so that they can identify specific problems that impact the community and recommend ways to minimize the risk of victimization. Respondents describe it in these ways:

*"Maybe if the police them would come to the community and talk to the young and the old people and let them know if we hear anything about any kind of crime and if we tell them they will keep it a secret, more people would talk to them and they wouldn't be afraid of the criminals."*

*"I don't know who the police is working for because they don't know us and we don't know them. They need to get off their high horse, so to speak, and walk around the community and know the people who live in this community."*

Other informants suggest that the level of trust between the police and citizens does not support a collaborative relationship. The following reason is given:

*"People don't go and tell the police anything because they don't trust them. You have some police who would go and tell the criminal what you say and the next thing the criminal come and kill you, so it is hard to get the citizens to work with them."*

Also recognizing that the attitude toward the police needs to be improved, a senior personnel within the police department suggested that changes are already in place to address this problem. Additionally, he stated the following:

*"We, in the police department, realize that community policing is the way to go. We know that we have to work more closely with the citizens - especially the elderly. They have to know us and can reach out to us and tell us their problems. We have to be ready to serve them. Changes have to take place because the crime situation cannot continue as it presently is."*

## 8.2 Empowering the Elderly

One way which the police may work at developing a positive relationship with the elderly is by helping to educate them in methods of increasing their security. Norton, et al, (1982) suggest that educational programs for elderly persons should include instruction in topics that range from making their homes more physically secure to teaching them the proper way to carry a purse. By making the environment less inviting to criminals and more secure, the program component should lessen fear of crime, in addition to hardening the target.

A surviving family member views programs like this to be of particular importance to returning residents and the elderly. He states:

*"We need programs for the entire community, especially the elderly people and those people from abroad. Those coming from abroad, especially England - they left this country in the 1950's and they come back and don't realize that the Jamaica they left is not the same now. They don't even realize that this is not England, people will target you to rob you of your belonging. Then some of the people grow up right here but it just can't sink in how bad things are. They need teaching to tell them how to protect themselves."*

Another suggested area of intervention with the elderly is described as

“teaching them how to handle money”. The following reason is given for teaching this skill:

*“We have to teach the elderly people in the community how to handle money because we live so far from the bank up here. We in the country (rural area) tend to keep large amount of money to buy food and pay our bills. It is expensive to go to the bank every time we need some money. With the elderly people, they have a set pattern. They go to the town to collect their little pension or collect money from Western Union - money that come from abroad. They have to learn not to go to the same bank at the same time every month.”*

Apart from changing their patterned behavior, it is also suggested that the elderly be taught self-defense skills. One man suggested that the “elderly be taught karate or something like that”. He explains:

*“I think the elderly should be taught karate and things like that. You see the criminals who kill old people, they are cowards - they are punks. If a man 65 or thereabouts is attacked by these punks and he knows karate, he may be able to spring a surprise punch or two, and he might catch his 'fraid and run.”*

The practice of elderly persons living alone is one that evokes strong reactions from surviving crime victims. One person suggested that persons over 75 years old

should be forcibly removed from their houses and placed in an “old people’s home” to ensure their safety. Others expressed “creative” ways of ensuring that the elderly continues to “hold on to their independence and dignity for as long as they can”.

The following suggestions were made:

*“The police should give special attention to all old people in the community. They should go see them regularly - they should make sure that they are safe with proper security on their windows and door and they should have people to go in and see them too.”*

*“I think they would be safer even if they had dogs. Just like they have police dogs, the elderly should also have dogs - trained dogs to protect them in their houses. Maybe if my aunt did have dogs inside of her house she would be alive today.”*

### **8.3 The Role of Government in Crime Prevention**

Some families of victims believe that the government has a central role to play in crime prevention - especially as it pertains to vulnerable citizens such as the elderly. It is suggested that the elderly is particularly desirable of protection because of the following reasons:

*“Nowadays they go after elderly people. They watch them to see who they*

*have abroad, if they have money and then they plan how to rob and kill them.*

*I think that the government must help all elderly people who say that they don't feel safe. One thing they can do is to make them feel secure."*

Adequate protection goes beyond a well-trained and adequately staffed police force - one with investigative excellence and skills in strategic intelligence gathering, to include one that protects and disseminates crime deterrence methods. A victim's family member suggests that it should further include the following service:

*"The government should have people to go around and inspect the houses of the elderly people to make sure they have proper locks and things like that. They should help those who need burglar bars - buy it and they should help old people protect themselves."*

Government's role in crime prevention also includes making the criminal justice system more responsive to the needs of citizens. Governments at all levels must foster police support for citizen and crime prevention efforts. They must ensure that police personnel receive adequate and appropriate training to work in a partnership capacity with elderly persons to prevent criminal victimization. A reformed criminal justice system is seen by one woman as one that makes important

legislative changes that will deter certain crimes. She states:

*"They should make it a serious crime in Jamaica for anybody to put their hands on a old person - man or woman. They need to say that if anybody do anything wrong to them they get in serious trouble. If the kill a old person - don't come or go - automatically they should hang them if they find them guilty."*

No doubt, this family member is disturbed at the long wait for justice to be served after the death sentence has been returned. He proposes legislative changes that would ensure "swift justice". He states:

*"We could prevent this thing from happening by hanging people who kill as quickly as possible. A person go and kill a harmless person like a 80 year old woman and we use taxpayer's money to feed him in prison for 10-12 years after we find them guilty. We have the American Watch, the Canadian Watch, and all these human rights. Forget about all them watch - cut to the chase and break his damn neck. Send him to the gallows. This will warn others that the government not joking with murderers."*

## 8.4 Intervention with possible Perpetrators

Among the vast array of social programs and other initiatives recommended by families to arrest and divert the desire of young people to become perpetrators of violent crime, are the following:

*"Teach them the values that our fore-parents brought from Africa which is love and honor of old people. Teach it in the schools, at church, and everywhere we get a chance to do it."*

*"Some of them are smoking the ganja and even the crack. The government must provide counseling to help them get over the drugs for it making them mad."*

*"The don't have any hope - they can't read and write - they follow bad company. They just sitting down, hanging out. The government should make all those lazy bastards join the army, work with sanitation or go to literacy school - keep them busy - when they get home at the end of the day, they should be sore tired that they can't even think of robbing and killing innocent people."*

Still others believe that the lack of opportunities for youths is responsible for

such violent behavior. For them, the recommendations are: providing increased opportunities for acquiring job, training and education.

Not all family members believe in these proactive methods. One woman states this:

*"I think it is a waste of time to do anything with people like that. Anybody who would look on a elderly person and kill him, I don't think any kind of prevention would work. They are animals - they have no good in them."*

Recognizing that offenders rarely understand or are confronted with the human dimension of their criminal behavior, one informant suggests that prevention efforts should provide youths with the opportunity to see victims as real people - not only as objects that are abused.

As a person who has lost his elderly father to homicide, he suggests that the following needs to happen:

*"People like me need to get to speak with school children. We should also go on television so that the world can see and know what we are going through on a daily basis. I am sure that when the children hear for themselves what we*

*go through, they might not grow up to kill innocent people. Some of them will remember my family and other people's family and think before they act."*

### ***Discussion and Summary of Findings***

Respondents identify various conditions as having contributed to the criminal victimization of the elderly. These range from broad societal factors such as illiteracy, unemployment, and the lack of proper socialization of youths, to local conditions such as demographic shifts that have brought in elements of the "high crime culture" into their various neighborhoods. Their main thrust for preventing future cases of elder-homicide include a change in the traditional structure, role and methods of the criminal justice system. This, they believe, can only be done if their local police work more effectively to protect and serve their various neighborhoods.

Other suggestions include educating the elderly in methods of increasing their security and empowering their communities to ensure that conditions that give rise to crime and violence are reduced.

**Summary, Recommendations  
for further study and  
Implications for practice**

## **Chapter 9**

### **9.1 Summary of Findings**

Families in rural Jamaica who experienced the loss of elderly kin due to homicide, exhibited many classic signs of trauma 2-3 years after the incident occurred. Many of them admitted to having experienced various symptoms that are consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. These symptoms include flashback of the homicide, traumatic nightmares, emotional numbing, feelings of abandonment, helplessness, distrust and guilt.

The shock of the homicide appear to severely challenge the coping ability of children and those surviving relatives that are frail and elderly. In keeping with the findings of both anecdotal and statistical literature, some children were reported to having presented with high levels of aggression, anxiety and other behavioral and emotional problems. In the case of elderly survivors, there is evidence of rapid deterioration in their mental and physical status following the homicide.

In general the level of distress experienced by some survivors was so high that they appeared willing to ignore the prejudicial attitudes, break cultural tradition and embrace the use of mental health intervention as a way of improving their physical

and mental state. Reports by participants in this study belie any suggestion that Jamaicans, and rural Jamaicans in particular, would fail to use professional mental health services if they were available to them. In fact, families of victims overwhelmingly agreed that they would have used all types of emotional support services including individual and group counseling and support group. In the words of one participant, "when trouble ketch you, pickney shut (shirt) fit you", - (*meaning in desperate situations, one will make do with whatever is available*).

Most participants agreed that mental health intervention was especially necessary during the early stages of bereavement. Further, they view professional intervention as being complementary to the informal support of family, friends and religion.

Other services that were deemed necessary for the recovery of traumatized families include financial support and direct assistance from the criminal justice system. Financial assistance is necessary in dealing with the unforeseen expenses surrounding the homicide. This is particularly necessary to offset funeral and other expenses. In cases when the bread-winner is the victim, the financial state of survivors often become a major concern.

Families also expressed dissatisfaction with the responses of the police, the court system and the criminal justice system as a whole. They view this system as being illogical and unresponsive to their need for justice. They believe further that this system needs to be totally reformed.

By identifying how future cases of elder-homicide would be prevented in their respective communities, participants appeared to have found a purpose, albeit a small one, in the terrible tragedy of the homicide. Among their recommendations are the following:

- the development of educational programs aimed at educating the elderly in methods of increasing their security
- the implementation of security methods to increase police patrol, thereby, deterring and reducing crimes against the rural elderly.
- government intervention - to enact policies aimed at protecting elderly groups, make legislative changes to accommodate for the protection of victims' rights.
- early intervention - to improve the educational, social and economic opportunities for youths.
- return of community involvement in the social development of children.

Underlying the above suggestions, are some basic assumptions about the social process of homicide. For example, the suggestion of 'early intervention' as a way of preventing future cases of homicide, is one that is in keeping with much of the

ecological literature such as that of Baldwin (1979) and Dunn (1980) that tend to conclude that poverty is a consistently strong predictor of crime. Based on this belief, prevention of criminal activity would involve the provision of social and economic opportunities for various disadvantaged groups in society as a way of diverting them from a lifestyle of crime and violence.

It should be noted, however, that very few participants embraced this approach to prevention. This is likely because they view the problem of elder-homicide with a great degree of urgency. Their suggestions are more closely aligned to theoretical formulations such as that of Felson and Cohen (1980) that address issues pertaining to the control of offenders, criminal targets and opportunities. To them, the control of offenders constitute a higher level of policing while the control of criminal targets and opportunities represent ways to lessen the likelihood of victimization.

Finally, it should be noted that efforts toward lessening the likelihood of victimization would not only prevent future cases of elder-homicide, but would lessen victimization rates for residents of all age groups. In fact, this study has found no evidence that victims were targeted based on their age characteristics. Various respondents, described their deceased kin as "looking much younger than their actual ages" or as "active and in good health at the time of the murder". The

fact that the most common characteristic shared by victims was the "middle class status", has led this researcher to conclude that efforts toward "prevention should address the fact that persons who lead middle class lifestyles are likely targets of theft-based homicide.

## **9.2 Recommendations for further Study**

Based on the findings from this study, recommendations for further research are offered from both a very specific and a very general context. Further research should be conducted to provide an empirical basis from which to determine appropriate post-victimization intervention for both victims and survivors of crime. Considerations such as gender differences and differences based on such factors as age, religious affiliations and socio-economic background are important variables for consideration.

Also beneficial would be research aimed at differentiating between what may be considered normal grief reactions following the homicide of a loved-one and those reactions that present prospective risk of psycho-pathology. The data collected during the study show that participants were often concerned about the "strange symptoms" that they experienced - whether these symptoms were transient

or whether they were likely to develop into psychiatric conditions. This study may, therefore, further an understanding of grief and recovery.

Research is also necessary to identify effective ways of delivering mental health and other professional services to victims and their families in Jamaica. Underlying the formulation of this inquiry, should be the findings that traumatized individuals, especially those who experience violent loss, are likely to be overwhelmed by the emotional, social and economic consequences of the assault. This makes it unlikely that they will be able to actively seek necessary services.

The data collected during this study also point to specific crime-related issues for consideration in further research. Some of these are:

- The impact of internal and external migration on elderly victimization in Jamaica;
- Analysis of the recent decline in homicide rates among the elderly in urban Jamaica and the corresponding rise in homicide against the rural elderly;
- Specific characteristics of elderly homicide offenders over time;
- The effect of the “Provisions of the United States Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 on crime rates in Jamaica;
- An inquiry into how to sensitize Jamaican police officers to the psychological needs of victims;

- **The relationship between the severity of victims' stress reactions and the perceived level of cooperation from the criminal justice system;**
- **An inquiry into community self-help measures as a way of preventing future cases of elder-homicide in rural communities;**

### **9.3 Implications for Practice**

**Serving the profound and unmet needs of families who have lost elderly kin due to homicide will require leadership with a particular balance of conceptual, technical and interpersonal skills. Building a public system of support for such services is likely to be met with some level of skepticism in Jamaica. There is little doubt, however, that with strong advocacy, a broad base of support can eventually be obtained. Some of the critical considerations both in the formation and structuring of any new initiative geared toward the problems of traumatized families of victims should include:**

- **An understanding of the various service needs of surviving kin;**
- **The role of professional intervention in the recovery of traumatized persons;**
- **An understanding of the unique position of the criminal justice system in influencing (for better or worse) the recovery of survivors;**
- **How to redirect the criminal justice system away from the conventional**

**procedure orientation to a victim orientation;**

**The cost of establishing victims' services in Jamaica, could be quite high. Hence, there is the need for identifying possible sources of funding (i.e. public and/or private) and for adopting cost-cutting measures such as the following:**

- **How to utilize existing community resources, churches, community centers, etc.**
- **Working collaboratively with existing services, i.e. medical clinics, police departments, schools**
- **How to supplement professional staff with trained volunteers.**

**Supportive professional outreach to the families of victims should take place as soon as possible after the homicide. This is in keeping with the findings of the present study. Participants believe that early intervention by a mental health specialist could have eased some of their feelings of intense grief and despair - feelings that many of them continue to experience. This belief is also in keeping with that of Pynoos and Eth (1986) who recommend crisis intervention as a way of minimizing post-traumatic stress reactions, and bereavement counseling to reduce the immediate and long-term effects of homicide.**

**During the initial period following the homicide, individual intervention with a**

professional is indicated. This is due chiefly to the fact that participants tend to harbor much suspicion and anger about community residents. Invariably, this suspicion results from the fact that the identity of the perpetrator is often unknown. The findings of this study also show that even among the families of the victim, major conflict often arise. These conflicts may further isolate the survivors. Even in cases where no family conflict has been reported, participants believe that their usual network of family and friends were unable to assist them because they themselves were overwhelmed by the tragedy.

Pynoos and Nader (1988) recommend that intervention for PTSD after a murder should address the survivor's fear and the social impairment associated with it, restore a sense of security, and help them to understand their feelings of helplessness, rage and grief. According to them, bereavement counseling should address such areas as the following: accepting the reality of the death, normalizing grief response, providing emotional support for the long-term grief process.

Support groups also have an important role to play in the recovery of traumatized families of victims. Participants in the present study express interest in meeting other surviving families who would know "what we are going through". Miller, et al (1983) found that families of homicide victims were helped in the

following ways by supportive groups: (1) the sessions provided objective information to participants, particularly about the judicial and law enforcement systems which allowed them to regain some sense of control over their lives, (2) they became less isolated, and (3) they were given the opportunity to talk about their feelings.

Support groups promise to become a very attractive treatment option for traumatized Jamaicans. Firstly, to implement support groups may be far more cost-effective than other treatment options. Secondly, beyond its therapeutic value, support groups stand to play an important social action role championing the rights of families of homicide victims.

In the case of the criminal justice system, there is general consensus by survivors that their feelings, perception and assessment regarding the victimization experience were negatively affected by the police or by other aspects of the criminal justice system. Despite this fact, they overwhelmingly acknowledge the role of law enforcement as being critical to their survival.

Making the criminal justice system in Jamaica more “victim-friendly” though quite a challenging task, is one that does not require exorbitant sums of money.

**Simple changes like the following may produce enormous benefits for surviving families:**

- **Providing families with information about the murder, the perpetrator and possible motives;**
- **Providing updates on what is being done to identify and arrest the perpetrator;**
- **Providing adequate security and informing families of any threats to them;**

Since the needs of survivors are so great, it is important that a comprehensive plan be drafted which would come into effect as soon as possible after a homicide occurs. Such a plan should be guided by the tenets of PTSD and crisis theory. In order for the police to assume this new role, they should be trained in such areas as how to make well-informed and appropriate referrals to various adjunctive agencies such as mental health, and how to assist survivors in re-establishing faith in themselves, the justice system and in the social order.

# **Appendix 1**

## **Definitions of Terms**

## Definitions of Terms

**Bereavement** - The state of deprivation following the loss of someone or something held to be significant. Bereavement due to homicide is often complicated by post-traumatic stress reactions and by traumatic rage.

**Community** - A community is not one given entity, but a cultural construction. It encompasses many different groups of cohabitation that are more or less able to provide for its dependent members.

**Deportee** - A Jamaican national who is deported from a foreign country based on a conviction or on implication of involvement in criminal activity in that country.

**Elderly Victim** - Any person aged 60 years and older who was murdered by a non-family member during the period 1994-1995. Additionally, prior to the murder, the victim must have resided within the rural parish of St. Catherine, St. Ann or St. Thomas in Jamaica.

**Law Enforcement Officer** - A member of Jamaica's Constabulary or Defense Force.

**To "Heal" (from Elder-Homicide)** - The process whereby the traumatized survivor regains control of his life --a sense of safety is established; he is able to confront the horrors of the homicide and integrate it into his life story; and is able to reconnect with ordinary life.

**Urban Jamaica** - The Capital cities of Kingston and St. Andrew -- also called the corporate area of Jamaica.

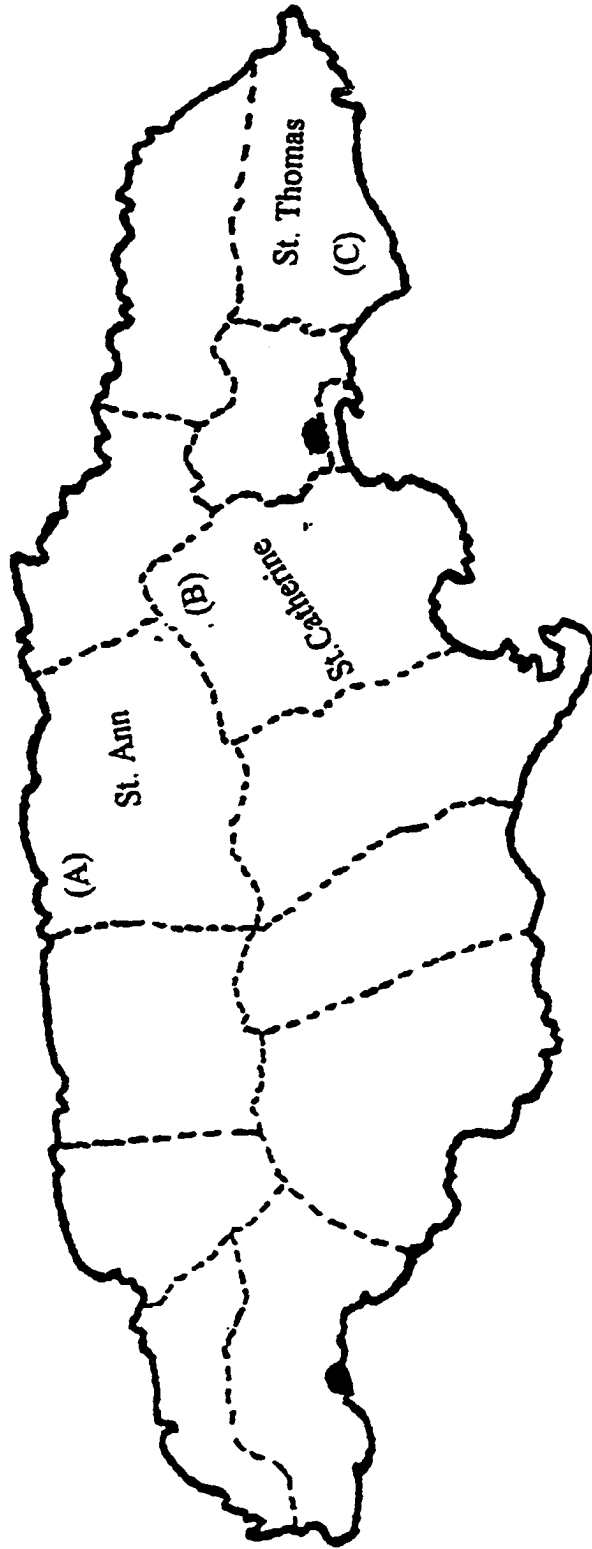
**Victims' Families** - This transcends biological relationships to include those related to the victim by marriage.

**Victims' Services** - Those services that are specifically geared toward helping survivors of crime regain control of their lives in the aftermath of victimization. Services may include: legal, economic, medical, psychological assistance, as well as case advocacy and social action activities.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Map of Jamaica: Study Sites**

**Appendix 2**  
**Map of Jamaica: Study Sites**



**Figure 1.**  
A. St. Ann  
B. St. Catherine  
C. St. Thomas

# **Appendix 3**

## **Recruitment Script**

## **Recruitment Script**

I am a doctoral student pursuing studies in the area of Social Welfare. I am interested in how people react to the sudden and violent death of an elderly family member. This study is aimed at determining what kinds of services persons like yourself need in order to better cope with the tragedy of losing a loved-one. I hope that you will volunteer to be interviewed for this study.

Your name was obtained either from police records/media reports of the incident, or from the police personnel who investigated the death of your family member. Please be assured that in cases where names of prospective informants are identified through the police, the police will not know whether or not you participated in this study. Neither will any identifying details or personal data about anyone be released to police or any government agency. All information collected in this study will be treated confidential. The only exception to the confidentiality rule is if you disclose intention to hurt yourself or someone else. Such information would have to be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Some of the questions that will be asked during the interview may cause sad memories to resurface during or after the interview. You may refuse to answer any question that you believe to be too painful or you may withdraw from the interview

or tell me to stop at any time. Accompanying me is a trained clinical social worker who is here to help you discuss or respond to your feelings and emotions if you decide to participate.

I will be using the information collected from people in circumstances as your own to complete my degree and make general recommendations as to how to improve services and sensitivity to victims' families.

If you have a telephone and would like to contact me, I may be reached at 98-52385. In the event there is no telephone access, I will return at a time agreed upon by you later today or tomorrow. I could leave a copy of this script for you.

Thank you.

# **Appendix 4**

## **Interview Guide**

## Interview Guide

### Research Questions:

1. Please tell me about your deceased family member. (**Prompt:** *age, gender, occupation, affiliation to social group, children [if any], household composition, type of housing*).
2. How would you describe your relationship with your deceased family member? (**Prompt:** *frequency of contact, nature of interaction with him/her*).
3. What were the circumstances surrounding the murder? (**Prompt:** *when/where the incident occurred, type of weapon used, injuries sustained possible motives for attack.*)
4. What is the status of the investigation? (**Prompt:** *number of arrests, perpetrations, case disposition*).
5. Can you describe any difficulty or conflict that you experienced with the criminal justice system? (**Prompt:** *communication and cooperation from police, prosecution team, court system, defense lawyers*).
6. Describe the extent to which the murder of your loved-one has affected your family structure. (**Prompt:** *relationship difficulties, isolation, guilt, fear, belief system*).

7. Describe any changes in your behavior or emotions that you have experienced since the homicide. (***Prompt: sleep pattern, appetite, energy level, ability to concentrate, depression, anger***).
8. How have these changes affected the way you go about your daily business? (***Prompt: at home, at work, within your community***).
9. Could you describe who or what have helped you better cope with your loss? (***Prompt: Faith/Religion/God/Church, family, friends, professionals, psychiatrists/psychologists/SW/counselors***).
10. What were the major hindrances to you as you went through the grief of losing your loved-one? (***Prompt: lack of support services, financial difficulties, communication difficulties***).
11. What types of services would you have used if they were available? (***Prompt: grief counseling, support groups, medical, advocacy groups, financial assistance***).
12. What are your suggestions for preventing future cases of elder-homicide in your community? (***Prompt: educational programs, security devices, intervention with possible perpetrators, level of policing, changes to criminal law***).

# **Appendix 5**

## **Consent Form**

## **Consent Form**

**Principal Investigator:** Annette M. Mahoney  
**Project Title:** Toward the Formulation of Crime Prevention Strategies and the Development of Effective Victim Services: *An Inquiry into Elder-Homicide in Rural Jamaica*

I am asking you to volunteer for an interview that investigates how families and individuals like yourself cope with the sudden and violent death of an elderly family member. I will be using information collected from people in circumstances as your own to complete a doctorate degree in Social Welfare and also as a framework from which to make general recommendations as to how to improve services and sensitivity toward victims' families.

Your name was obtained either from police records, media reports of the incident, or from the police personnel who investigated the death of your family member. Please be assured that in cases where the police identified prospective participants for this study, they will not know whether or not these individuals participated in the study.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. There will be no penalty or loss should you decide to participate. Withdrawal from this interview at any time, even after you begin, will not affect you in any way.

All information collected during this interview will be treated as confidential. You will be assigned a study number to protect your anonymity. There will be no

report or presentation of findings that will include information that permit identification of you or other persons participating in this study. This consent form that you are being asked to sign will be locked and the file taken with me from Jamaica.

There are two exceptions to the confidentiality rule which are as follows.

(1) If you disclose intention to hurt yourself or someone else, such information would have to be reported to the appropriate authorities, and (2), in the event that myself or my records are subpoenaed by legal authorities, I will honor their request and turn over the requested information.

The interview will last approximately one hour fifteen minutes, and will be tape-recorded to ensure accuracy of the data collected. You may find that some questions are uncomfortable and that during or after the interview, some hard feeling or sad memories may resurface. You may refuse to answer any question that you believe to be too painful or you may tell me to stop at any time.

Accompanying me is a professional social worker who will also adhere to the strict rules of confidentiality that guide this research study. She will be available after the interview to discuss or respond to your feelings and emotions if you desire her services. Additionally, to the best of her ability, she will assist you in identifying the nearest mental health services to the extent that they exist.

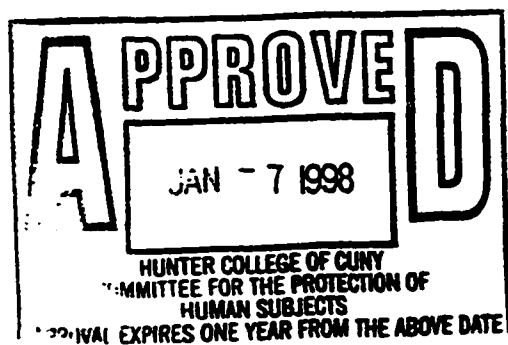
If you agree to participate please read the following statements and sign below:

*I have been given the opportunity to ask questions I wish regarding the purpose and procedure of this study in which I will participate. I have been told that I may refuse to participate at any time, or discontinue participation in the study at any time without in any way prejudicing my rights to any services that might be available in the future.*

*I volunteer to participate in the research study conducted by principal investigator Annette Mahoney. I understand the information provided about what I will be asked to do as a participant, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions with respect to my participation. All of the questions that I asked were answered to my satisfaction.*

Signature (Participant): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (Witness): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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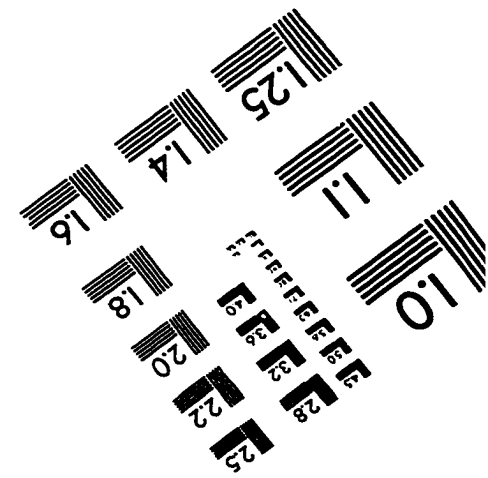
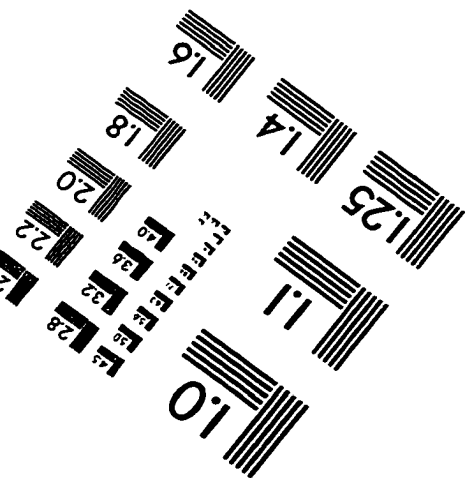
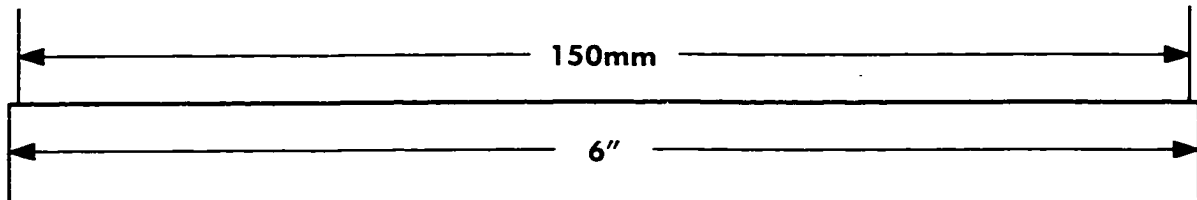
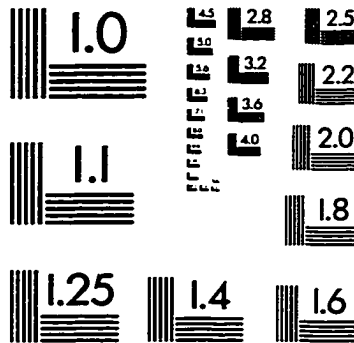
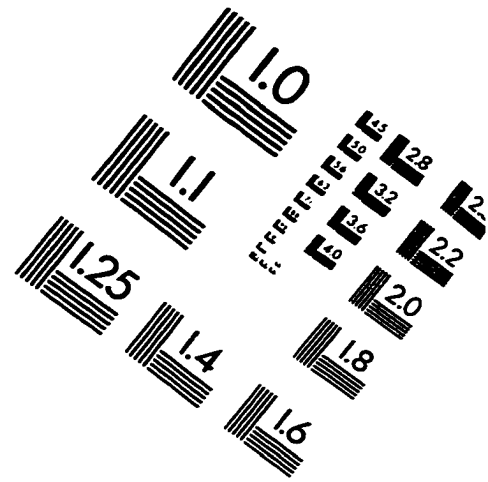
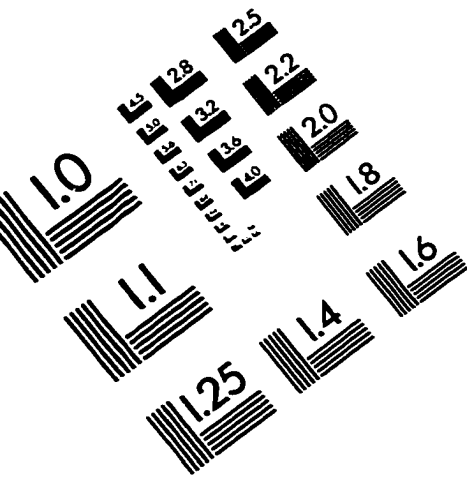
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