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Intersectional Experiences of Violence: Studying the Serial Murder of 16 Men and Boys in Milwaukee, 1987-1991

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INTERSECTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE: STUDYING THE SERIAL MURDER OF 16 MEN AND
BOYS IN MILWAUKEE, 1987-1991

by

Sally Svetic

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

INTERSECTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE: STUDYING THE SERIAL MURDER OF 16 MEN AND BOYS IN MILWAUKEE, 1987-1991

by

Sally Svetic

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2020
Under the Supervision of Professor Kristin Sziarto, PhD

Between the years of 1987 and 1991, 16 multiply-marginalized men and boys went missing in the City of Milwaukee; few other than their family and friends noticed. In 1991, it was discovered that they were murdered by Jeffrey Dahmer, a white man living on Milwaukee's near west side. This paper argues that state power, racial capitalism, and white supremacy devalued the lives of Black, queer, young and poor people and created conditions that allowed Dahmer to commit 16 murders without detection by the Milwaukee Police Department. In this thesis, responses from Black, Lao, queer and Othered people are centered. In particular, I emphasize the voices of writers aligned with the Black radical tradition, whose work appears in various archives and offers key perspectives on how racial capitalism and white supremacy operated. This thesis also draws from LGBT and community organization archives to craft an intersectional analysis that demonstrates the dynamics of policing that sanctioned these murders. Policy requests from community members and leaders are then contrasted with municipal responses, which used this tragedy to justify policy changes and increased funding to the Milwaukee Police Department. The implementation of community-oriented policing, while fitting within the requests of some organizers discussed here, did not address the conditions that devalued the lives of the young men who were murdered.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BRC	Blue Ribbon Commission
COP	Community Oriented Policing
CYD	Career Youth Development
FPC	Fire and Police Commission
LAMM	Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee
LRN	Lambda Rights Network
MPD	Milwaukee Police Department
NOVA	National Organization for Victim Assistance

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

At the end of the summer of 1991, Milwaukee was the center of news media reports the world over. The mutilated bodies of countless men had been found in an apartment on Milwaukee's near west side. The names and ages of the seventeen known victims are as follows¹: Steven Hicks, age 18, killed in Bath, Ohio in 1978 (his murder is not a part of this case study because it took place in a difference in location and 11 years); Steven Tuomi, age 25, killed in 1987; James Doxtator, age 14, and Richard Guerrero, age 22, killed in 1988; Anthony Sears, age 24, killed in 1989; Raymond Smith, age 32, Edward Smith, age 27, Ernest Miller, age 22, and David Thomas, age 22, all killed in 1990; and Curtis Straughter, age 17, Errol Lindsey, age 19, Tony Hughes, age 31, Konerak Sinthasomphone, age 14, Matt Turner, age 20, Jeremiah Weinberger, age 23, Oliver Lacy, age 24, and Joseph Bradehoft, age 25, all killed between February and July of 1991 ("Jeffrey Dahmer," 2020)². They were all killed by one man, Jeffrey Dahmer. The lives and identities of these men and boys varied, with some being out as gay, some practicing same sex encounters, and some engaged in sex work, including posing for nude photos. Fifteen of the seventeen were men of color. They were not just gay men, and they were not just men of color – they were gay men of color, an identity that is experienced as more than just the sum of two parts.

¹ I intentionally choose to share their names before that of their killer.

² While it is unconventional to cite Wikipedia, this is the most complete and detailed list available. The Wikipedia page cites a variety of sources, including Brian Masters (1993) *The Shrine of Jeffery Dahmer*, Joel Norris (1992) *Jeffrey Dahmer*, Robert J. Dvorchak & Lisa Holewa, (1992) *Milwaukee Massacre: Jeffrey Dahmer and the Milwaukee Murders*. As I made the intentional choice to not read the many books written about Dahmer, I also chose to not cite them directly.

I came to this project during my first semester of the Master's Program in Urban Studies at UWM. One of the core classes of this program is a seminar on the History of American Urban Problems, during which students are encouraged to explore the archives that are housed at UWM. During an exercise where we were all asked to search for information on police community relations, I came across the Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee Records, which contained a folder titled Dahmer Trial, Response, 1991-1992. As I have spent all 26 of my years in Milwaukee, I was aware of the Dahmer murders and their geographical and social significance to the city of Milwaukee, but I had never considered the lesbian and gay organizational response. I was encouraged to follow this 'rabbit hole' research topic and have related every assignment in my four semesters to this project. The literatures that frame this project, specifically feminist and anti-racist theories of intersectionality, necropolitics, and racial capitalism came from class readings and discussions with my classmates. My methods were strengthened during the Qualitative Research Methods in Geography course, while Sociology of Sex and Gender Inequalities provided me with an introduction to intersectionality.

An extensive amount of material has been written about Jeffrey Dahmer, including at least 17 books (all of which are true crime style popular media accounts) and five movies about him and the murders he committed. I intentionally chose not to use any of these as sources, as they all focus on Dahmer exclusively and as the only subject worthy of study. As for scholarly work on the case, there are only 3 works by two authors: an article and a book chapter by one, and a dissertation by another. These works also focus on Dahmer. Thus, this thesis adds to a scarcity of scholarly literature and takes a very different perspective by focusing on those killed. My aspiration with this work is to raise up the lives of the people who were killed and to

counter the overwhelming dominance of biographical work done on the murderer that erases the people and voices of the communities he most impacted. This is why I chose to frame this thesis with intersectionality, as it allows me to focus in every section, on the varying and multiply-marginalized identities of the 17 men and boys who were killed by this man. I also chose a critical race framework based on the importance of turning to CRT to learn from the work of Black³ scholars who developed the theory from both their lived experience and their critical scholarly expertise. This is especially important for me to center as a white researcher.

In this thesis, to understand the conditions that allowed these premature deaths to happen, I also bring understandings of racial capitalism and settler colonialism to bear on the case study. These systems function to perpetuate white supremacy, including the taking of indigenous lands, and the exploitation of devalued labor (Bonds, 2019; Bonds & Inwood, 2016). Racialized distinctions of inferiority and superiority and being and nonbeing, intended to facilitate capital accumulation for white settlers, legitimize and make routine violence against Black, Indigenous, queer and otherwise multiply-marginalized people (Bonds & Inwood, 2016; Collins, 1998; Cowen, 2019; Hugill, 2017). Milwaukee, and the United States as a whole, are settler colonial geographies because colonial forces have settled on Indigenous land and have no intention of decolonizing. Therefore, I include an acknowledgement of Indigenous land in

³ APA guidelines state that all references to racial and ethnic groups should be capitalized, including Black, White, Indigenous, Latinx(a/o), Lao etc. Throughout this thesis, I will follow APA guidelines where it does not conflict with my major archival sources and theoretical framework. In the case of capitalizing white, I believe this does not consider the complexity of identity, or the distribution of power. White is a racial identity only in the sense that it is constructed through white supremacy, colonialism and racial capitalism. Deciding to not capitalize white follows the archival sources I lift up in this thesis (see Stelly) and recognizes the violent origins of white as a racial category.

Milwaukee because it aligns with the critical frameworks of this thesis and recognizes the violence of occupying land that is not ours.

In recognition of the enduring relationship of the indigenous people to the land that I study and the land where these murders occurred, we acknowledge in Milwaukee that we are on traditional Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Peoria, Miami, Sioux, Ho-Chunk and Menominee homeland along the southwest shores of Michigami, North America's largest system of freshwater lakes, where the Milwaukee, Menominee and Kinnickinnic rivers meet and the people of Wisconsin's sovereign Anishinaabe, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Oneida and Mohican nations remain present (Electa Quinney Institute; Native-Land.ca).

This thesis will proceed in roughly chronological order. Chapter 2 is a review of literature, covering previous work on the Dahmer case, and work that will provide the theoretical framework for this thesis, intersectionality and critical race theory. Theories and definitions of violence, capitalism, colonialism and policing are also included. Chapter 3 will discuss the conditions in the city of Milwaukee between 1987 and 1991 that facilitated the murders of 16 multiply marginalized young men by one white man. Chapter 4 analyzes the responses of community organizations to these murders and the forms of resistance that were born from their understandings of this case. Chapter 5 outlines the changes in municipal policy that were crafted in reaction to these murders and the community responses, including the implementation of community oriented policing policies within the Milwaukee Police Department. The collections of archives that were used to formulate these arguments will be noted and described along the way.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

Problem statement and research questions

In the four-year span of 1987-1991, one man, Jeffrey Dahmer, killed 16 men and boys, without detection by the Milwaukee Police Department. These murders gained an extreme amount of media attention and have been written about in hundreds of popular media accounts ranging from books, films, documentaries, and comic books. They are the theme of a tour in Milwaukee, which was featured on an episode of the television show *Dark Tourist*. There have been songs written about these murders, and t-shirts and tattoos have been made with Dahmer's face, cementing him as a legendary subject. With all of this attention, one would think that there would be wealth of scholarly work on this case as well.

There have been a handful of works (Barnard, 2000; Barnard, 2004; Coleman, 1997; Schmidt, 1993), but most focus on Dahmer as the only subject worthy of study. Scholars write about his psychology, early life and family, and the overall legal case. There has been very little analysis of and attention to the people he killed, the locality where these murders took place, or the conditions through which he was able to get away with these murders. In addition, there has been no official documenting of the responses from the communities that were affected by the loss of their loved ones, or the policies that emerged in Milwaukee in response to this case. This thesis will reconstruct, as best as possible, the events, responses, emotions and structures that were in place in Milwaukee in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This paper aims to answer the following questions: what circumstances in the city of Milwaukee allowed 16 murders to be committed by one man in four years? How did community organizations respond to these

murders? What forms of resistance were born from their understandings of this case? How were changes in policing policy in the early 1990s impacted by these murders?

Previous work on the Dahmer case

The academic works that most resemble the undertaking outlined here include Ian Barnard's article (2000) and book chapter (2004) on race and queer identity through a case study of Dahmer's life and crimes and a 1993 doctoral dissertation by Martha Schmidt connecting "Emotion, identity and social movements" to this case. Barnard's 2004 book, *Queer Race*, contains a chapter titled "Jeff Dahmer," which focuses on the media coverage, trial, and existing popular works that hold Dahmer as the only subject. Barnard's (2004) main argument in this piece is that Dahmer's killing of gay men has meant the erasure of his gayness and his whiteness. Barnard (2004) acknowledges some themes that will be used in this thesis, such as the normalization of gay whiteness that renders queer identities of color unthinkable (p. 83). They⁴ cite Diana Fuss in explaining the demonization and morbidification of homosexuality, as a social understanding that could have been used to contextualize reactions to these murders (2004, p. 87). This is important to highlight because of the media's focus on the "torture, dismemberment, necrophilia, and cannibalism" that occurred in this case (Miner, 2013, p. 104). In their 2000 article "The Racialization of Sexuality: The Queer Case of Jeffrey Dahmer," Barnard identifies the desire/hatred dichotomy of interracial gay relationships evident in this case. They argue that the conclusion most writers, reporters, and scholars have come to is that Dahmer chose men of color as his victims because of his hatred for them (Barnard, 2000, p. 68). Barnard

⁴ Ian Barnard uses they/them pronouns.

finds evidence of confusion regarding the victim selection in this case because Dahmer both had sex with the victims before the murders yet was known by friends to be racist. While the overall narrative and findings of Barnard's work will be problematized in this thesis, I will occasionally cite their works when the analysis or evidence is relevant.

When Barnard chooses to focus on Dahmer's erasure of identity, they center Dahmer as the subject, and the 17 men he killed become background in the study. While discussing both queerness and race in this chapter, Barnard fails to address what I find vital: the intersecting nature of racialization and queerness in the lives of the people who were murdered (Barnard, 2004). Barnard (2004) makes the subject of this piece clear with the familiarization of "Jeff" Dahmer's name in the chapter title. Barnard's (2000) discussion of victim selection in their article once again stresses the individual decisions of Dahmer and does not include an analysis of why the lives of these young men would have been devalued, leaving them exposed to conditions of violence. Barnard (2004) identifies that "institutional racism produces a disproportionately high ratio of poverty, neglect, and vulnerability among people of color in the United States," but connects this only to class and fails to illuminate white supremacy as a system that replicates violence in the lives of queer people of color (p. 84). And in both pieces, Barnard leaves out any references to the City of Milwaukee as a unique locality that could be implicated in this tragedy.

Schmidt's work aims to "analyze the impact that the events surrounding the murders had on Milwaukee's lesbian and gay community" (1993, p. 2). Schmidt describes the media's insistence that these were "gay crimes" that resulted from either Dahmer's homosexuality or the "gay 'lifestyle' led by many of his victims" (1993, p. 2). The emphasis on gayness in this

case, Schmidt argues, led to lesbian and gay organizing in Milwaukee, through a need for response to these harmful media portrayals of gay life. This is a compelling focus of study and was the topic that I originally thought I would be writing about, and similar narratives will be presented at certain points in this thesis. Schmidt also shares insights into the significance of Bath, Ohio as Dahmer's hometown, as she went to High School with Dahmer there.

What Schmidt misses is the vital element of intersectionality in the identities of the 17 men that were killed. By choosing to only study the lesbian and gay community, Schmidt never acknowledges the fact that the victims were also racialized people and that they experienced systemic, intersectional violence. Schmidt cites Collins (1991) and hooks (1984) but only in discussion of the rational choice model. Schmidt references race only once, when she writes that "Dahmer and his victims symbolized the most extremely marginalized elements of culture – based on sexuality, race, and class" (1993, p. 181). This sentence is extremely harmful as Schmidt assigns Dahmer possession of those he killed and lumps their experiences in with Dahmer's as all equally marginalized - an argument that will be the antithesis to this paper's argument. While Schmidt studies some of the same lesbian and gay organizations as I do, I did not find any of her analysis or theorizing relevant to the research questions in this thesis.

Jonathan Coleman also discussed the case in his 1997 book *A Long Way to Go*, which gives readers a look into relations between Black and white people in Milwaukee and across the nation. Coleman came to Milwaukee in 1990 or 1991 (unclear from the first few chapters of his book) to study the city which had

the nation's highest rates of black-to-white unemployment, one of the highest rates of black teenage pregnancy, one of the highest turndown rates for minority

loan applications, one of the lowest percentages of black owner-occupied housing, and one of the highest percentages of black people living below the poverty line (1997, p. 6).

Coleman wasn't in Milwaukee because of the Dahmer case, given that he arrived before the murders were discovered, but details of the case fit well into his documentation of Black life in Milwaukee. He collected thousands of pages of archival materials in preparation to write this book, 14 boxes with 200 audio cassettes which are all housed in the UWM archives, many of which I used in this paper (Mss 152). His narrative on the Dahmer case begins with him meeting with Milwaukee Chief of Police Philip Arreola on July 22nd, 1991, less than 12 hours before Dahmer would be apprehended. Coleman (1997) weaves the Dahmer case into his depiction of race relations in Milwaukee with stories of events he attended and people he spoke with who referenced their personal reactions.

Yet, Coleman (1997) never once acknowledged the queer implications of the case, nor did he mention any of the names of the people killed by Dahmer, except in the case of Konerak Sinthasomphone. Overall, this book seems to be written with so much of Coleman's reactions and experiences that it could not be considered a documentation or preservation of history but as a guide for other white folks to understand the conditions he encountered in Milwaukee. Working against the weak and often harmful arguments of the existing scholarly accounts that this case perpetuates; the following is a discussion of the theoretical framework that will guide this research.

Framing – intersectionality and critical race theory

This work is situated within the existing bodies of literature of intersectionality, critical race theory, queer theory, biopolitics, necropolitics and critical geography. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge write that “intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences” (2016, p. 2). The authors highlight the ‘critical’ aspect of intersectionality and value destabilizing “existing bodies of knowledge, theories, methodologies, and classroom practices” (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 31). They reference Kimberlé Crenshaw, stating that homogeneous understandings do not lead to solutions to violence (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 49). This speaks to the research question here because of the homogenization of the men and boys who lost their lives at the hands of a serial murder. The lived experiences and identities of these individuals are now reduced to one analogous term: victim.

Intersectionality has its origins in legal theory, with Kimberlé Crenshaw’s 1989 piece “Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex.” Crenshaw wrote of the experiences of Black women as being constantly pulled into either feminist communities, where their womanhood was recognized but their Blackness was not acknowledged, or civil rights movements, where their Blackness was expected to be the only focus and issues of gender were set aside. Crenshaw builds on this theory of single-axis understandings of oppression with the idea that women of color’s experiences cannot be understood as the sum of two oppressed identity categories (1989, p. 140). In this system, racism becomes understood through the male experience and sexism becomes understood through the white experience. Through this, social movements have changed their praxis, with single-axis movements working towards “rights and

legal equality” and intersectional movements working to “dismantle legal and administrative systems” (Spade, 2013, p. 1031). There has also been a reproduction of these single-axis concepts within the academic study of marginalization, through the separate development of race and gender scholarships (Collins, 1998). Intersectionality, then, brings academic and personal comprehension to individual experiences of violence and subjection.

Intersectionality also lends an understanding to definitions of violence in the United States as historical, social, dynamic and contextual (Collins, 1998). In addition, violence against Black women and other multiply-marginalized people, becomes obscured, routinized and legitimated (Collins, 1998). Collins develops four factors that affect how groups are implicated in the systems of violence at play in the US. Based on power differentials, some groups develop “authority over the mechanisms of systemic violence” (Collins, 1998, p. 931). Some groups covertly and/or overtly benefit from the violence that is targeted at other groups (Collins, 1998, p. 932). Collins also discusses how all groups are negatively affected by this systemic violence but experience victimization in varying ways. Her examples include white women experiencing private-sphere violence as stay-at-home-moms, white boys encountering violence during the process of male socialization and gay men being the target of hate crimes (Collins, 1998, p. 933). Finally, she discusses the resistance traditions developed by members of groups that historically experience routine violence (Collins, 1998, p. 933). These understandings of how violence permeates American society in ways that support institutional racism, sexism, classism, ageism, nationalism and heterosexism, lead to a call for transversal politics through which social location of other groups can be understood in relation to one’s own (Collins, 1998). Crenshaw believes it vital to reframe what has been perceived as isolated and individual as

social and systemic, a process that has shaped the intersectional work of groups of color and queer groups (Crenshaw, 1991).

Intersectionality can be a strong foundation on which, and through which, to build an entire body of research. The existing literature does just this, specifically through the discussion of violence against queer people and people of color and encounters with police. Academics trace the correlation between violence in urban settings and queer identity and race through case studies, ethnographies, theoretical pieces and statistical analysis (Brown & Knopp, 2010; Brunson & Miller, 2006; Conron & Wilson, 2019; Donahue, 2015; Leovy, 2015; Loyd & Bonds, 2018; Rios, 2011; Stanley, 2011). Intersectionality is vital to the understanding of violence in relation to the fact that, overwhelmingly, trans and queer people of color experience severe and fatal violence (Stanley, 2011). In addition, heterosexism, sexism, racism, cissexism and classism have been instilled institutionally in the United States, specifically as it relates to the valuing of health, sustainment of life and regulation of space and bodies (Brown & Knopp, 2010). African American youth experience differences in police interactions based on gender, with boys being routinely treated as suspects and girls being sanctioned for smaller infractions like breaking curfew and experiencing police sexual misconduct (Brunson & Miller, 2006, p. 531). And forms of violence such as structural racism and homo/transphobia and stigma lead to LGBTQ youth of color becoming disproportionately involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (Conron & Wilson, 2019, p. 4). Through an intersectional lens, experiences of violence can be understood as informed by individual's multiple identity markers. In the case of the Dahmer murders, this thesis will demonstrate how intersectionality can help us understand

the importance of the multiply-marginalized identities of the young men Dahmer killed, as their lives were undervalued by systems of racial capitalism and necropolitics.

Definitions of violence

To begin this theory building, we will need to agree on a definition of violence. Given its well-fitting application to this study, I will use Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2002) definition of "violence—the cause of premature deaths" (p. 16). This definition includes both the physical, material violence most are familiar with, as well as the epistemic, systemic, knowledge-based violence that is less familiar. Inherent in this definition is also an understanding that racism and violence are interlocked. Gilmore (2007) further theorizes that racism is "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (p. 28). Violence in the United States has been expansive and integral to every moment in the country's formation and development.

This paper will focus on racialized systems of violence that are in place in the United States as a capitalist, surveilling, colonial country. With racialized slavery as the base for systems of capital in this country, it is easy to see how these systems formed. Policing developed "as an antiblack force" (Seigel, 2018, p. 21). Racial capitalism, a system that will be defined in a few pages, in the United States relies on the production of race, and US policing has been integral to this production as well as its deployment in cultivating state power. Violence then becomes power as the "application of violence...produces political power in a vicious cycle" (Gilmore, 2002, p. 16). Explanations of police power and violence will be presented in a few pages as well.

Further considering violence in relation to this case, it is important to note trans and queer people of color are murdered at a rate exorbitantly higher than white and cisgender queer people. Of the murders of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people reported to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs in 2010, 79% were people of color and 50% were transwomen (Stanley, 2011, p. 16). While statistics, especially nationally reported crime statistics, offer fragmented and disjointed accounts of violence, there is clearly an overwhelming problem of violence against queer people of color. The types of violence varies and occurs both from outside and within queer communities. An example of this can be seen in the way that cis-ness and whiteness are sustained in trans/nonbinary dating communities, which threatens the safety of Black folks looking for partnership (Zamantakis, 2019, p. 14 of chapter). Whiteness is reproduced when relationships are built without acknowledging its presence or the power and violence that come with it (Zamantakis, 2019, p. 14 of chapter). When discussing how race effects relationship building with white respondents, Zamantakis found that “race became reductively boiled down to culture, and culture became the source of racial problems” (2019, p. 14 of chapter). White respondents had reactions that blamed machismo for enforced gender binary in Hispanic culture, and silence around trans experience in Black communities was blamed for high murder rates of trans women (Zamantakis, 2019, p. 14 of chapter). In these ways, the unchecked prevailing of whiteness is complicit in, if not the cause of, violence in the lives of queer people of color.

Violence is also disproportionately experienced by queer youth. A study into “Physical Dating Violence Victimization Among Sexual Minority Youth” found that there were higher rates of dating violence among sexual minority youths (Luo, Stone, & Andra, 2014).

“Heterosexual youths experienced the lowest prevalence of PDVV (10.7%), followed by unsure youths (19.1%), bisexual youths (21.5%), and lesbian or gay youths (24.6%)” (Luo, Stone & Andra, 2014, p. e69). Stressors related to the development of sexual identities “and institutional stigma, prejudice, and discrimination” is one factor that was given for this (Luo, Stone & Andra, 2014, p. e66). In addition, a “hostile social environment may lead to feelings of shame and isolation, denying one’s sexuality, internalized homophobia, depression, negative health behaviors, less favorable perceptions of the quality of one’s relationships, and relationship violence” (Luo, Stone & Andra, 2014, p. e66).

Necropolitics, biopolitics and state power

Necropolitics underpins the assertion that the City of Milwaukee holds culpability in the deaths of Steven, James, Richard, Anthony, Raymond, Edward, Ernest, David, Curtis, Errol, Tony, Konerak, Matt, Jeremiah, Oliver and Joseph⁵. Here, sovereign power, or state power, is defined as “the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 11). This theory emphasizes the two sides of sovereign power: bio – that which gives life, and necro – that which brings death. Foucault conceptualized biopolitics as governmental powers working “to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order” (1988, p. 138).

Necropolitics complicates biopolitics by tracing the power of sovereign states to decide who is allowed to live and who must die, which makes the construction of race by colonialism visible (Mbembe, 2003). Mbembe writes that “the politics of race is ultimately linked to the politics of

⁵ I will continue to use the full list of their names when it is possible, as I believe it is vital that they are identified as individual lives that were lost, and not just a statistic.

death...In the economy of biopower, the function of racism is to regulate the distribution of death and to make possible the murderous functions of the state” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 17).

Queer necropolitics is situated within queer theory and critical race theory. While there are varying positions within queer theory, a shared resistance to the end goal of liberal inclusion remains key. Queer theory rejects normativity and defies social and civic systems that police and exclude queer experiences (Ruti, 2017). José Esteban Muñoz writes poetically about the drive to obtain a utopian queer future, one which we “may never touch” but is felt as the “warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality” (Muñoz, 2009, p. 1). This ideality of future queer worlds is a theoretical base for critical queer theory and praxis and connects to other anti-racist freedom movements, such as abolition.

Works on queer necropolitics then aim to demonstrate the ways in which sexual difference is marked in hegemonic political understandings “in a way that accelerates premature death” (Haritaworn, Kuntsman & Posocco, 2014, p. 1). The death of the 16 men in this case study involved overkill, a concept that is used to describe cases of excessive violence, including decapitation and the removal of body parts post-mortem (Stanley, 2011). Stanley’s use of queer necropolitical theory is useful here because it helps conceptualize the overkill, dismemberment and cannibalism, that was sensationalized by the media during this case. In addition, necropolitics and overkill illuminate the assumption that queer life has no value, often defended through the trans and gay panic defense (Stanley, 2011). When a trans or queer person is murdered, the accused perpetrator has the option to use this defense to excuse their behavior or lessen their sentence.

Queer necropolitics is also used to frame literature around transgender kids living in “white settler society” such as the US or Canada (Travers, 2018, p. 37). Through the queering of necropolitics, the unequal distribution by the state of life-sustaining resources among the deserving who may live and the undeserving who must die is termed precarity (Travers, 2018). Unlike necropolitics, which focuses on large scale state power, queer necropolitics “focuses on systemic racism, classism and institutionalized state violence” which takes the form of the prison industrial complex, lack of access to healthcare and policing (Travers, 2018, p. 39). These theories challenge the milestones accomplished by LGBT movements, like federally legalizing same sex marriage in the United States, because there has not been attention paid to issues outside of gender and sexuality. Considering intersectional queer identities complicates necropolitics as liberal gay politics have granted some “queer subjects” the ability “to be folded back into life” while others are “marked for death” by racialized queerness (Haritaworn, Kuntsman & Posocco, 2014, p. 2). Mainstream LGBT politics invest in punishment systems, as demonstrated by hate crime laws becoming a new frontier of LGBT liberation, making prisons a site of queer vitality. However, given that sexually and gender non-conforming people of all races and classes have been historically criminalized, and only recently have privileged gay and lesbian people been able to live lives outside of the carceral system, it becomes clear that this solution will not work for all in the community (Haritaworn, Kuntsman & Posocco, 2014, p. 16). Queer necropolitics challenges queer happiness at being accepted by society and instead emphasizes the need to “foster the survival of those who were meant to perish but are not disposable” (Haritaworn, Kuntsman & Posocco, 2014, p. 20). Queer necropolitics, then, further

emphasizes the need to focus on the ways that the men and boys who were murdered and multiply-marginalized.

Racial capitalism

Cedric Robinson (2000) theorizes that race and capitalism cannot be defined without each other. He argues that race, racism and nationalism, were produced through the need for relations between European peoples in systems of feudalism in medieval Europe and slavery during the Roman Empire (Robinson, 2000). In acquiring the wealth of European modernity, “conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, force, play the greatest part,” not “effort” or “right” (Marx, 1977, p. 874). Through this system, humanity has been divided into categories of “‘worthy’ and ‘unworthy’” (Melamed, 2015, p. 80). Capitalist society then developed structures steeped in racialized force, “as a historical agency” (Robinson, p. 2). Through this idea, one must always consider capitalism as racialized and race as produced as a system of violent subjugation through capitalism (Melamed, 2015; Robinson, 2000). Through “loss, disposability, and the unequal differentiation of human value...racism enshrines the inequalities that capitalism requires” (Melamed, 2015, p. 77).

In order to apply the idea of necropolitics to the case study at hand, we must consider Robinson’s framing of racial capitalism with territorialization. Mbembe discusses the idea of colonial occupation as a spatial relation of territorialization, with the creation of “zones and enclaves...[and] the classification of people according to different categories” creating imaginaries which give “meaning to the enactment of differential rights to differing categories of people...the exercise of sovereignty” (2003, p. 26). With this definition of colonial occupation, we can see the extreme racial segregation of Milwaukee, as well as the

disproportionate/unequal policing practices at work here, as an example of this type of territorialization that denotes who is disposable (Fanon, 1991; Mbembe, 2003).

Territorialization is also connected to the construction of the racialized Other, “as a mortal threat or absolute danger whose biophysical elimination would strengthen...potential to life and security” in zones of value within colonized landscapes (Mbembe, 2003, p. 18).

Geographically, territorial stigmatization, in place from racialized capitalism, can work to shape social divides between residents of the same city (Loyd & Bonds, 2018). Loyd and Bonds write about the 53206 zip code in Milwaukee as constructing a politicized rhetoric encompassing racialized poverty, high crime rates, and “already dead and dying” (Loyd & Bonds 2018, p. 898). This rhetoric acts as “spatial shorthand for talking about race, violence, and poverty” (Loyd & Bonds 2018, p. 899) while obscuring the structural role that “decades of deindustrialization and labor assaults, metropolitan racial and wealth segregation, and public school and welfare restructuring” have played in the inequality that exists here and in Milwaukee more broadly (Loyd & Bonds, 2018, p. 898). Key to this case study is the fact that this rhetoric further imbeds police power as a liberal “posture of saving Black lives” deployed by elected officials (Loyd & Bonds, 2018, p. 898).

Another piece vital to the understanding of necropolitics and racial capitalism in this case is the idea of surplus populations. Experiencing unemployment or precarious employment, these populations are defined by their value as expendable within systems of capital accumulation (Pulido, 2016). Characterized as poor, segregated, people of color, the isolation of surplus populations is vital to systems that create policies which are violently catastrophic to life and the environment (Gilmore, 2007; Pulido, 2016). The necropolis is defined by McIntyre

and Nash as a concentration of surplus population where lack of industry marks racialized subjects as “inherently wasteful and stagnant (surplus), in need of colonial (or neo-colonial) coercion to make them productive” (2011, p. 1471). The deindustrialization of Milwaukee meant the loss of jobs to suburbs, while bus lines were simultaneously cut to access these jobs from the neighborhoods where many workers who previously held these jobs lived. These conditions caused the high levels of unemployment among Black people in Milwaukee in 1991. Loyd and Bonds (2018) argue that territorial stigmatization of Milwaukee’s 53206 zip code, shaped by racialized capitalism, has led directly to Milwaukee’s urban and social divides. Pulido offers the example of Flint, MI, which “is considered disposable by virtue of being predominantly poor and Black” and the poor white people who also live there are “forced to live under circumstances similar to that of Black residents” (2016, p. 8). Whiteness becomes of “limited utility in escaping the devaluation associated with poor Black people and places,” Pulido explains (2016, p. 8). This is important to this case study because some (2 discussed in this case study, 3 known) of the people Dahmer killed were white.

Racial capitalism, recent US history

The cross-country migration of an estimated 6 million African Americans between 1910-1970 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012) was met with racial violence from whites who refused to live with nonwhite neighbors. In Milwaukee, the Black population increased by 14.4% overall during this time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). State and Federal policies during the New Deal intensified racial segregation. The Federal Housing Administration was created during the Great Depression to provide federally subsidized mortgages through the Federal Housing Act of 1934 in order to facilitate home ownership (Browne-Marshall, 2013, p. 243). Black neighborhoods

were labeled as undesirable and a risk for mortgage lending, which led to over 98% of housing financed through the FHA to go to white home buyers (Browne-Marshall, 2013, p. 243). This federal legislation had many effects on Black families, finding housing at this time was often unsafe, or, in the case of homeownership, involved a loss in value and limited the accumulation of property wealth in Black communities (Browne-Marshall, 2013, p. 244). The FHA reported, with no evidence, that “integration undermined property values” (Rothstein, 2017, p. 93). Amplified by the real estate scare tactic termed blockbusting, white families began moving out from neighborhoods that were racially marked as unsafe and declining in value (Rothstein, 2017). Moreover, the history of fear and crime can be linked directly to racial segregation. As mentioned in Rothstein’s account of white flight, media, politicians and criminal justice agencies have worked to instill a correlation between crime, violence and Black life nationwide. This fear drives capital investment away from the risked-labeled Black neighborhoods and into white neighborhoods and suburbs (Herbert & Brown, 2006, p. 767). A practice that has been gaining momentum since white flight began in the first half of the twentieth century. Adding to the economic segregation of African Americans, federal highway construction was planned in ways that destroyed established Black commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods, while connecting white communities to new job opportunities outside the city (Herbert & Brown, 2006, p. 767). This history makes clear that racial segregation is a system long in the making, propped up along the way by municipal, state and federal policy.

In Milwaukee, racial segregation in the 1950s and 1960s was led by the outmigration of European-Americans from the near-north side neighborhood, replaced by the city’s growing African-American population (Sziarto, McGinty & Seymour-Jorn, 2014). During this time, Black

residents referred to Milwaukee as the Selma of the North, as “the expansion of the city’s Black population was highly restricted” with racially restrictive covenants preventing non-whites from finding housing elsewhere (Loyd & Bonds, 2018, p. 906). Simultaneously, public policies and private investment “fueled deindustrialization, concentrated public and private economic investments in the suburbs ringing Milwaukee, and worked to dismantle public education and social welfare” (Loyd & Bonds, 2018, p. 906). These factors lead to a 26% Black unemployment rate in 1986 (Sziarto, McGinty & Seymour-Jorn, 2014, p. 7) and a poverty rate of 29% (Loyd & Bonds, 2018, p. 906). Milwaukee is now cited as the city with the highest rate of Black-white segregation in the country (Frey, 2018).

It is important to acknowledge that these processes have constructed racialized understandings of space, crime and life in the urban core. They are meant to be understood as social constructions that have created conditions of violence, “premature death,” in the lives of Black and racialized people (Gilmore, 2002). These constructions have been resilient, even while formal racial laws disappear, because of the foundations of white supremacy in the United States: coloniality.

Coloniality and white supremacy

Systems of coloniality and white supremacy permeate the history of the United States and are still functioning to provide advantage and privilege in the lives of some, and early death in racialized others. As established, colonialism is the structure of power that defined European and U.S. expansion, including the taking of lands from Indigenous people through extermination and the enslavement of Africans in the transatlantic slave trade. While some argue that colonialism or formal colonial rule has ended in the U.S., there has been “no formal

process of decolonization,” making the United States, along with Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others, a settler colonial country (Hugill, 2017, p. 2). Racial capitalism and settler colonialism function together to devalue the lives of people of color. Indigeneity is complex and cannot be simplified to phenotypic characteristics as race often is. Blackness and Indigeneity can be considered together as intersectional aspects of a person’s identity (Hugill, 2017; Melamed, 2015; Pulido, 2016). To discuss systems of racial capitalism, like segregation, and not address settler colonialism is epistemic violence. Milwaukee has been a place of home for Indigenous groups including the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Odawa (Ottawa), Fox, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sauk, and Oneida (Rindfleisch, 2017). In 1832, the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi ceded the land that is now Milwaukee to the U.S., after intense pressure and hostility from negotiators (Rindfleisch, 2017). In 1838, “the U.S. forcefully removed the Potawatomi to Missouri, Iowa, and Kansas...which the Potawatomi to this day call the Trail of Death” and “by 1865, the residents of Milwaukee had largely purged the city of its Indigenous origins” (Rindfleisch, 2017). This history demonstrates the violent settler colonial formation of Milwaukee through white supremacist tactics of displacement and genocide of Indigenous people.

Implicit in systems of coloniality and domination is white supremacy, which reproduces and sustains whiteness as a marker of earned advantages, entitlements and a right to life (Brown & Barganier, 2018). The institutional and systemic implications of white supremacy are noted in Gilmore’s (2002) definition of racism as the premature death of people of color. White supremacy is identified as “the foundation for the continuous unfolding of practices of race and racism within settler states” (Bonds & Inwood, 2016, p. 715). Bonds and Inwood (2016)

emphasize whiteness as a normative racial identity that grants “naturalization and invisibility...and white skin privilege” (p. 720). Expressed both explicitly and covertly, white supremacy permits the persistence of coloniality without formal racial exclusions (Brown & Barganier, 2018). State power is one way that white supremacy is operationalized. Indeed, “the history of the pathologizing of urban spaces,” through federal, state and local policies, “was critical to advancing the next stage of racial management: police and prisons” (Brown & Barganier, 2018, p. 197).

Race-based policing, founded in white supremacy, “allows an entire segment of society to move through life – even while committing crimes – relatively free from surveillance” (Brown & Barganier, 2018, p. 257). This explains state culpability in Dahmer committing 17 murders without detection. Racialized differences in policing can be seen beginning in states like Virginia, where enslaved people were so thoroughly considered property that they could be killed by slaveholders, without any retribution, as if no wrong was done (Brown & Barganier, 2018, p. 44). Through this history, a different understanding of the state’s role in Dahmer’s killings is revealed, as police are expected to keep social order, supported in this task by municipal government. As the police failed to protect those we lost in this case, as well as Black and gay people in Milwaukee more broadly, they are implicated in the deaths outlined here and the violence that was occurring against people of color and queer people at this time.

In response to these murders, Matthew Stelly⁶ wrote that “mass murders are acceptable in American society under certain conditions...when it’s to the benefit of this country” (“The Dahlman Murders,” 7/27/92). Stelly continued, explaining that the United States infected 39 Black men with syphilis during the Tuskegee Experiment; the medical community was complicit in the deaths of at least 4 women in continuing to market the Dalkon Shield as a form of safe birth control, and the planned extermination of Indigenous people has been implemented by colonialist forces since this land was first identified as worth stealing (Stelly, “The Dahlman Murders,” 7/27/92). Further, “mass murder by the State or by certain classes or races of people has historically been a matter of ‘rule of law.’” His arguments here reflect the theories of necropolitics, Gilmore’s definition of violence as the early death of racialized people, and the idea that surplus populations are racialized and disposable in the system of racial capitalism.

Policing, definitions

The system of policing in place in the United States today can be seen as developing both from slave patrol practices and Sir Robert Peel’s changes in policing principles put into place in 1829 London. Police power was first noted as a legal concept in Greek society, as a “political-philosophical threat” focused not on crime but on order and the public good (Seigel, 2018, 8). Peel provided a model of military-style patrol that aimed to address high crime rates through a foot patrol that would deal with “dangerous classes” (Schaffer, 1980). The United States would put a special twist on policing with the twinned development of military

⁶ Matthew Stelly was a Black activist and journalist working in Milwaukee at time of murders. His perspective found in newspaper archives is crucial to understanding Black leaders analysis of the conditions in Milwaukee for Black people at this time. I will introduce him and his work in greater detail in Chapter 3.

style policing and the patrol model of the US slave south (Brown & Barganier, 2018; Seigel, 2018). Through an analysis of this history, “the absence of relationship between policing and crime reduction” is revealed (Seigel, 2018, p. 5). The police were used as enforcers of racial management, authorizing anti-Black violence while institutionalizing surveillance in the lives of Black people and racialized others.

In defining what policing means to this case study, we look again to state power. “Police and state are differentiated by degree: police are the human-scale expression of the state” (Seigel, 2018, p. 9). As police function in this way, as the actors of state power, they take on the work given to them by the state (Seigel, 2018). The violence of police work “is sometimes hard to see, and many people understand it as exceptional” (Seigel, 2018, p. 9). Viewed as only used in extreme cases or by bad cops, the potential of violence enforced and enacted by police is often missed. Violence is the essence of police power (Seigel, 2018, p. 9). Add the idea of surplus populations that was defined earlier, and it becomes clear which groups will experience the most frequent instances of police violence. James Baldwin writes that

the police are simply the hired enemies of this population. They are present to keep the Negro in his place and to protect white business interests, and they have no other function. They are...quite stunningly ignorant; and, since they know that they are hated, they are always afraid. One cannot possibly arrive at a more surefire formula for cruelty (Baldwin, 1966, para. 22).

This statement makes clear the experience of Black people when interacting with police. The cruelty of policing will continue to be a theme in this thesis, along with the hope for community policing policy to mend the relationship between police and people of color.

Community policing

The concepts inherent to community policing - cooperation with the public, and a need for public approval of police actions - were suggested in Peel's understandings of the principles of policing as he developed the London Metropolitan Police (Schaffer, 1980). The name was first given to a project in Strathclyde, Scotland, where David Gray and David McNee developed community involvement branches of the police force which were responsible for social welfare matters in addition to crime prevention (Schaffer, 1980). While social services, previously funded by the state, were being cut both in Great Britain and the United States, community policing functioned to fill this gap in service, where they would ask only for more money, and control.

Given the systems of racial capitalism, coloniality and white supremacy ingrained in policing in the United States, community policing was offered as a solution that would not only lower crime rates but "sensitize police to the problems of the black community" (Seigel, 2018, p. 2). Police had come to view those living in "black areas...as a potential criminal or enemy" (Seigel, 2018, p. 2). Therefore, many recommended that solutions should involve "increasing the number of black police...community policing, police-community approximation, police sensitivity trainings, modern technology to remove the opportunity for bias, officer accountability, citizen review boards, and greater police education" (Seigel, 2018, 2).

The hope for the success of community policing did not manifest, as "policing is at least as lethal; as it has ever been, markedly in tandem with the prison system it justifies and feeds" (Seigel, 2018, p. 3). Community policing did act to "expand and relegitimate the police," while justifying "another exponential increase of the number of people under state surveillance and

control” (Seigel, 2018, p. 3). “A growing number of people think that policing cannot be reformed but only diminished – that the best way to decrease police abuse is to give police the smallest possible role in social life. Calls to defund, disarm, shrink, and even abolish the police are increasingly common” (Seigel, 2018, p. 3). This is the call that this thesis makes: that the current systems of policing and incarceration in the U.S. have been, and continue to be, a source of violence and death in the lives of marginalized people.

Policing, a history

There are two sides to policing practices that have violent effects on the lives of multiply-marginalized people: under-policing and over-policing. Both are present in this case study and need to be represented here in the literature review. It becomes clear that while these practices demonstrate two different styles of policing, they come from the same systems – state sanctioned racialized violence, racial capitalism, coloniality and white supremacy – and all cause racialized differences in the way policing is experienced. Current literature focuses mainly on mass incarceration, a system of over-policing. Scholars write of the assumptions of violence in the lives of Black, queer, young and poor people, that mark them as those “who must die” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 11). The remainder of this section presents scholarly perspectives on such violent policing in the lives of multiply-marginalized people.

This research is centered around the experiences of youth of color in dealing with the police. Studies have demonstrated that young people of color often experience adultification, which leads to lack of protection from law enforcement and targeting by police regardless of affiliation with criminal activity, and therefore increased levels of violence (Conron & Wilson, 2019). Queer youth of color experience a compounded effect of police neglect and violence as

they are often faced with family rejection, conflict, poverty and homelessness (Brunson & Miller, 2006; Conron & Wilson, 2019). Studies like these provide insight into the police interactions experienced by youth of color in a way that was formerly missing from academia (Brunson & Miller, 2006; Conron & Wilson, 2019; Leovy, 2015; Rios, 2011). Varying experiences that encompass both over-policing and under-policing demonstrate that an intersectional framework is needed to comprehend the power police hold in the lives and safety of young people. While there are some studies that look at how youth of color or queer youth experience police interaction, there are fewer works that discuss or explore these marginalizations together.

Rod K Brunson and Jody Miller (2006) capture young Black people's encounters with police. Their research is centered on how gender influences youths' experiences with the police in their neighborhoods, especially from the perspectives of minority youths themselves. This intersectional research question led to findings that involved varying experiences of policing among the respondents. The authors stated that "young men described being treated routinely as suspects regardless of their involvement in delinquency and also reported police violence. Young women typically described being stopped for curfew violations but also expressed concerns about police sexual misconduct" (Brunson & Miller, 2006, p. 531). This study is compelling because it demonstrates the failing of police to protect a vulnerable population, as seen in this case study of the Milwaukee Police Department's inadequate protection of young primarily Black and gay men and boys.

Sociological works in the first half of this decade have attempted to use ethnography and statistical analysis to understand the effects of policing and violence on young people of

color. Leovy writes about the almost daily occurrence of homicide on the Southside of Los Angeles, arguing “where the criminal justice system fails to respond vigorously to violent injury and death, homicide becomes endemic” (2015, p. 8). Framed around the necropolitical theory of the “state monopoly on violence,” Leovy argues that the government has the exclusive right to protect its citizens from, as well as execute, violence (2015, p. 8). Beginning during the Reconstruction period, after the end of chattel slavery in the United States, “black-on-black killing drew little notice” (Leovy, 2015, p. 6). There was often no investigation, a theme that follows through to the 1968 Kerner Commission’s assertion that laws are enforced at a minimum, if at all, in cases of Black men killing Black men. With this understanding, Leovy explains that police forces across the country have turned to strategies of broken-windows policing, exerting control over mundane nuisance abatement, instead of protecting the lives of people who experience daily violence. She explains that under and over-policing “are in reality two sides of a coin,” with harshness compensating for fundamental weaknesses (Leovy, 2015, p. 9).

In a similarly focused piece, Rios writes about the criminalization of Black and Latino boys in Oakland, California (2011). The research focuses on how “surveillance, punishment and criminal justice practices affect the lives of marginalized boys” and “how young people come to understand their social world as a place that sees them and treats them as criminal risks” (Rios, 2011, pp. 7, 9). All the boys involved in the study reported negative police interactions, in addition to criminal justice focused punishment from school officials, community workers and family members. Rios discusses the “paradox of control” in which police officers sympathize with the poverty and trauma faced by the youth, and take extreme punitive actions with youth

perceived as criminal or deviant (2011, p. 5). Rios finds that a “youth control complex” is being applied to both Latino and Black youth, but experiences are different (2011, p. 40). Latino youth were sometimes able to gain respect from teachers and police when they changed their appearance, Black youth were not. In response to this punitive social control, the boys in this study formed responses of “despair and politicized identities” (Rios, 2011, p. 159). The necropolitical conclusion is that racism and racist systems in the United States lead to death. Either social death, “the systematic process by which individuals are denied their humanity” or physical death (Rios, 2011, p. 159).

The history of police harassment as a central force in the lives of LGBT people in cities has been well documented (Stewart-Winter, 2016; Hanhardt, 2013). Changing laws and attitudes meant that gay people would, in mid-1960s Chicago, experience a shift from military, psychiatric, and employment harassment, and instead find themselves the targets of police violence (Stewart-Winter, 2016). Changes in antivagrancy laws in San Francisco at this time meant that police gained the power to discern who to arrest in relation to disorderly conduct, loitering, sexual solicitation and prostitution (Hanhardt, 2013). These authors do not attempt to discern any variation in experiences of police violence and often collapse the narrative of gay life at this time through a white lens. There is some discussion of work done between the African American and LGBT communities, but they are considered as two separate groups coming together. However, the influence that black-freedom movements had on the politics of gays and lesbians in the 1960s and 1970s was exemplified by the gay-pride parades and marches that emerged in the 1970s after the success of the black-freedom marches (Stewart-Winter, 2016, p. 6). It is understood that queer and Black people have experienced similar

migration patterns to cities, where they find both anonymity and structural violence (Stewart-Winter, 2016; Hanhardt, 2013). Scholarship that focuses on the history of police violence in the lives of queer people of color has been largely neglected, although exists in pieces among other histories.

The prison industrial complex, which exists most broadly in the United States but is also on the rise in countries like Britain, Canada, and Australia, is a cause of violence in the lives of queer people. In fact, gay, lesbian and gender non-conforming people have been subject to oppressive policing since the turn of the twentieth century in the United States (Terry, 1999; Lamble, 2015). Through the expansion of the prison system, communities of color, poor and working class people, youth, immigrants, people with mental health issues and queer, trans and gender-non-conforming people are targeted disproportionately, and often fed into “cycles of poverty, criminalization, incarceration, and violence” (Lamble, 2015, p. 271).

Presently, police and state officials participate in violence against queer, trans and gender-non-conforming people by “ignoring everyday violence against queer and trans people; selectively enforcing laws and policies in transphobic and homophobic ways; using discretion to over-police and enact harsher penalties against queer and trans people; and engaging in acts of violence, harassment, sexual assault, and discrimination against queer and trans people” (Lamble, 2015, p. 273). Miss Major, a transgender elder and the executive director of The Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Justice Project, speaks about the prison industrial complex (PIC) in an interview with Jayden Donahue:

for a girl getting involved in the PIC...we already, from the moment we decide to be a transgendered person, are living outside the law. The moment this dick-swinging motherfucker wants to put a dress on and head on down the street to go to the store or something like that, they have broken the law. Because it's not a legal thing that we're doing. We can be beaten, attacked, and killed, and it's OK...you are already a convict for just how you present yourself and you might start to live a lifestyle of a person that is living outside of the law. Because you can't get a legitimate job, you can't get a chance in school, you can't get a chance to function and survive as a part of mainstream society (Donahue, 2015, p. 311).

Miss Major's description of her daily experiences of violence as a transgender woman demonstrates the intersectional ways that the prison industrial complex and the systems of racism, cissexism and transmisogyny sanction this violence.

Black radical tradition

Robinson (2000) titles his work defining racial capitalism, not with the name of the structure that has caused the violence explicated here, racial capitalism, but with the idea that *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* has characterized global Black experience. This tradition is seen through the ongoing forms of Black resistance to the system of racial capitalism. Through the reassembling of social bonds, "a shared philosophy developed in the African past and transmitted as culture" reemerges as a revolutionary Black consciousness "informed by the historical struggles for liberation and motivated by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality" (Robinson, 2000, p.

171). This tradition can be seen in the “(re)constituting” (Melamed, 2015, p. 80) of communities and collectives, over generations, beginning as “organized revolts in the slave castles in Africa, and on board slave ships,” (Robinson, 2000, p. xxx) and today emerging as movements like Black Lives Matter.

Maroon collectives, communities of formerly enslaved Africans, demonstrate the Black radical tradition. To marronage was to escape enslavement and, often, establish new life and community outside of slavery. Robinson explains that the goal was to preserve the “social and historical consciousness” and “disengage” from European systems of slavery and racism (2000, p. 310). As the transatlantic slave trade continued to establish itself in the US south, so did the Black radical tradition, and through the enriching of legends of maroon communities “a Black people evolved” (Robinson, 2000, p. 310). Furthering the development of the Black radical tradition was “the genius of Black Christianity, the construction of Creole dialects, the founding of Black and Seminole-like maroon communities, the flight to the Black quarters of southern cities, the plotting and actualizing of rebellions, and the construction of familial and communal relations in the slave quarters” (Robinson, 2000, p. 311) - all of which enabled the persistence and survival of African people.

Resistance to systems of racial capitalism can be seen in the writing and organizing of Black people, like the Combahee River Collective. The Combahee River Collective, a Black Feminist collective, wrote of their resistance to systems of oppression as they found their “origins in the historical reality of Afro-American women's continuous life-and-death struggle for survival and liberation” (1977). They worked as a collective of Black women “struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression” as these systems are interlocking

(Combahee, 1977). Centering their work on the “liberation of all oppressed peoples” meant their goal was “the destruction of the political-economic systems of capitalism and imperialism as well as patriarchy” (Combahee, 1977). It has also been discussed in this chapter that “the pathology of race was [a] dominant part of Western consciousness” (Robinson, 2000, 310). But that “was of less concern than how Black peoples might survive the encounter” (Robinson, 2000, p. 310). I choose to center this paper in critical race theory, and with those Black scholars that hold the tension between the history of people of African origins working to reassemble social bonds “developed in the African past” and the history of colonialism and capitalism that has led to racialized systems of violence globally (Robinson, 2000, p. 308). Raising up stories of Black resistance, then, is vital to understanding the Black experience in any case study.

This thesis contains three substantive chapters that work to answer three different research questions through the frameworks defined in this chapter:

- What conditions in the city of Milwaukee allowed 16 murders to be committed by one man in four years?
- How did community organizations respond to these murders? What forms of resistance were born from their understandings of this case?
- How were changes in policing policy in the early 1990s impacted by these murders? How did agents of change in Milwaukee use these murders as justification for changes in policing policy?

In the answers to these questions, whenever possible, the individual identities of the 16 people who were murdered will be considered, often through an understanding of the racialized conditions of the settler colonial United States.

Methodology

This research was conducted as a case study through primarily archival research. Case studies are a classification of research that organize data into a bounded system, illuminating a specific organization, community, time period, context or setting. Case studies aim to establish an in-depth understanding of the specific case they are investigating, using a variety of qualitative data sources, in this case archival documents, videos and audio recordings (Creswell, 2013). Much like other types of research, case studies can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. When research is done before the formation of the research question, through an inductive approach, this is generally an exploratory case study (Greener, 2011). The research question for this project was formed in this way, once the initial data was collected and the setting and overall themes were generalized.

Robert Yin is known as one of the main case study theorists and has contributed to much of the understandings of the theory and praxis of case study methods. Yin (2014) stresses that case studies answer “how” and “why” research questions, which applies well to the research questions for this project. The strengths of using archival records as a source of case study evidence, lies in the ability to reproduce and review the data repeatedly, and their stable, unobtrusive, specific, precise and broad nature (Yin, 2014). The weaknesses lie in access and retrievability, which was not a risk to this study as all of the archives used for this paper were held at UWM or at the Milwaukee Public Library. Both institutions are easily accessible for me.

Yin (2014) also warns against the assumption of documents containing the absolute truth, something that I was cautious of as I compared documents from a variety of collections and critically analyzed them. Archives can also be silencing of individual voices, as they often represent organizational and institutional records. I worked to counteract this whenever possible, and will discuss this in detail in a few paragraphs.

This project is bounded by the time period beginning in 1987 when Steven Walter Tuomi was murdered and continues through the time when 16 other men and boys went missing in Milwaukee and were later discovered to have been killed by one man. It continues through the city of Milwaukee's reactions to the news of these murders, including municipal government, community organization and individual reactions, which led to policy changes in the Milwaukee Police Department. In order to formulate the scope of this thesis, I consulted any archival collection that is held at UWM and that referenced 'Dahmer' or was from a relevant organization existing in 1991. Black, lesbian and gay community organizations or individuals, news reports from the time, and groups and individuals that were involved with the Blue Ribbon Commission, or the implementation of community policing within the MPD, were the primary collections that I draw from. The data collection process included photographing all potentially relevant documents, over 1,200 photos, which I determined based on a quick scan of each document in each folder. While I haven't taken the time to count exactly how many of these documents have actually been used in this thesis, I would guess that it is less than half. I erred on the side of caution and ended up with many organizational documents, some that were not directly relevant and discussed only bookkeeping matters. I took notes on anything that could relate to the case study. The documents that made it into the findings included

correspondence, speeches, government documents, including press releases and legislation, meeting notes, written personal testimony, reports on national rates of anti-gay/lesbian violence, full episodes of a Milwaukee-based gay/lesbian cable access show from this period, and newspaper clippings.

In developing codes and themes from these notes, I used an inductive process. This was an intentional choice, knowing that I am focusing on data that pertains to identity, systemic violence, and community response. I chose to do coding by hand, printing all 68 pages of typed archive notes. I wrote codes in the margins, themes that were emerging from the archives, from which themes emerged. I then studied these codes to develop preliminary chapter outlines. Once I had outlines for each chapter, I went back through the printed copy of archive notes that I had coded and added specific archival sources into the chapter outlines. From there, assembling my first draft was a relatively simple process. Of course, as the drafts went on, things were reorganized, and I was able to see which sections were in conversation with each other. I was then able to see the arguments that existed, formed directly out of the archives and in relation to the theoretical frameworks I use.

Deciding which media archives to gather and analyze was a challenge, however, when I consulted the frameworks of intersectionality and critical race theory, the answer became clear. Towards the end of the notetaking process, I was left with a vast number of sensationalized, fetishizing, and exploitative clippings of articles related to the case. They were almost all from the mainstream, white-owned, Milwaukee newspapers of the time: *The Milwaukee Journal* and *The Milwaukee Sentinel*. I had reached a point where the graphic details of the case were causing me harm, and I decided that reviewing the media coverage from

mainstream, white-dominated sources would not serve this work or my health. It also became clear that the Black perspective was severely lacking in the archives I was able to collect from UWM. I was able to find a collection of Black owned Milwaukee newspapers at the Milwaukee Public Library and chose two newspapers that were in operation during this time. *The Milwaukee Courier* and *Milwaukee Star* were both printed weekly, and I consulted all issues between March of 1991 and September of 1991. This range was chosen after looking over all issues from 1991 and determining that March through September was the time when the articles published were most pertinent to this case study. Matthew Stelly was a major contributor to both papers at this time and influenced the literature which I cite, as many of his arguments and perspectives are congruent with the Black radical tradition. Matthew Stelly was an organizer, advocate, agitator and historian from Omaha, Nebraska who worked in Milwaukee from 1987 to 1983 (Sasse, 2019). He had a bachelor's degree in Black Studies and took doctoral classes in sociology, urban planning and urban education (Sasse, 2019). In 1987, Stelly moved to Milwaukee and taught at a community college for a year before he became an editor and columnist at the *Milwaukee Courier* from 1988 to 1993 (Sasse, 2019).

The archives contained very few explicitly intersectional accounts, but I have raised them up whenever they do appear and have worked to construct an intersectional approach from the existing, not-very-intersectional accounts when possible. I value intersectionality in this work based on the varying identities of Steven, James, Richard, Anthony, Raymond, Edward, Ernest, David, Curtis, Errol, Tony, Konerak, Matt, Jeremiah, Oliver and Joseph. I also kept my own intersectionality in mind, as a white, naturalized, settler, working-class, able-bodied, cisgendered, queer woman. Using an archival methodology has limitations, specifically

in the types of accounts that are collected in institutional archives. Most documents consulted from the UWM archives came from lesbian and gay organizations, and municipal institutions. There were virtually no accounts that spoke directly to intersectional experiences. The one exception to these limitations was the Jonathan Coleman papers (Mss 152) which contained 10 boxes of records Coleman kept in order to write his book on race relations in Milwaukee. Coleman collected documents from a wide variety of individuals and smaller organizing groups, which provided me with a handful of accounts that were helpful in forming intersectional analysis. But even the few I was able to glean from Coleman's collection were not enough. Voices from the Lao community and Black community were scarce, even though Lao and Black youths were killed. In the entirety of the records I was able to collect for this thesis, there was only one document that spoke directly to the Lao response to this tragedy, and it was from an organization. There were no other Lao voices (neither organizational, individual, journalistic, nor artistic) in the archives I found. I identified this limitation over the summer while collecting the archival documents at UWM and was able to work towards filling that gap during by collecting Black newspaper archives from the Milwaukee Public Library. If I had had more time, I would have been able to continue my search for archives detailing the experiences of Lao people in Milwaukee during this time, as well as Latinx and Indigenous experiences.

The archives that informed the narrative and arguments that follow came from Black and LGBT newspapers at the time, including *The Milwaukee Courier*, *Milwaukee Star* and *Wisconsin IN Step*, and documents included in the Lambda Rights Network (LRN) Records, Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee (LAMM) Records, Human Rights League for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgendered Records, the Jonathan Coleman Papers, the Dave Berkman

Papers, the Ralph Navarro Papers, Queer Nation Milwaukee Records, Milwaukee Gay/Lesbian Cable Network Records, and the Milwaukee Journal Stations Records. These documents came from organizations outside the records where they were stored, including the Lao Association of Wisconsin, the Mayor's office and his Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission on Police-Community Relations, the Fire and Police Commission (FPC), *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, *The Milwaukee Journal*, *Wisconsin Light*, *Wisconsin IN Step*, Black and White Men Together, the League of Martin, and the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD). The types of documents also varied and included meeting minutes and agendas, organizational reports, policy recommendations, hearing transcripts, procedures, personal and official letters, typed speeches, press releases, mission statements, newspaper articles, hand written notes, newsletters, flyers and posters, personal testimony on incidences of violence and on police community relations, reports on anti-gay/lesbian violence nationally, an audio recording from the Blue Ribbon Commission press conference, an audio recording of a radio show discussing coverage of the Dahmer case, full episodes of Tri-Cable Tonight, a cable access show recorded in Milwaukee by members of the gay and lesbian community, and episodes of a special on gay life in Milwaukee called "Some Call Them Gay" that aired on WTMJ. I valued the many perspectives these archives were able to provide, as I read them alongside one another, keeping the experiences of the multiply-marginalized young men who lived at these intersections in mind.

CHAPTER 3: POLICING AND THE VALUE OF YOUNG GAY LIVES OF COLOR IN LATE-20TH CENTURY

MILWAUKEE

In this chapter, I argue that specific circumstances in the city of Milwaukee created the conditions for Dahmer to kill 16 men and boys between 1987 and 1991.⁷ Informing this argument are archives from the Lambda Rights Network Records, which are found at the UWM library, and articles included in copies of *The Milwaukee Courier* and *Milwaukee Star*, two black owned newspapers that were published in Milwaukee during this time, which are available in digital form at the Milwaukee Public Library. The journalist Matthew Stelly is featured heavily, as he wrote many pieces on the murders, including pieces that went well beyond journalistic reporting into analysis of the very conditions my research aims to understand. I find Stelly's analysis is in alignment with the Black radical tradition and critical race theory, and throughout this chapter put his work in conversation with these frameworks. I argue that the conditions in Milwaukee during the time these murders were committed enabled Dahmer to be able to commit a murder every two weeks before being caught. The conditions were put in place by systems of racial capitalism, including segregation, violent policing, and unemployment (Robinson, 2000).

By the 1990s, Milwaukee had become a site of entrenched, racialized poverty and violence. Deindustrialization, racial housing and wealth segregation, public school segregation,

⁷ It is important to note that in 1988 and early 1989, Dahmer lived with his grandmother in West Allis, therefore the murders of James Doxtator, Richard Guerrero and Anthony Lee Sears occurred outside of the city of Milwaukee, but within Milwaukee County and directly adjacent to the city of Milwaukee. This does not spoil the narrative I will present on the conditions, because they lived in Milwaukee were picked up by Dahmer in Milwaukee as well. West Allis is also a short distance from the Avenues West neighborhood where Dahmer would kill the majority of his victims, between May of 1990 and the end of July, 1991.

and welfare restructuring had all played a role in deep-rooted racial and class inequality in Milwaukee (Loyd & Bonds, 2018). Alderman Michael McGee, a Black alderman representing one of Milwaukee's primarily Black districts, wrote of Black life in Milwaukee, "we are destined for incarceration, death, and complete and absolute sadness, instead of the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness promised by the Declaration of Independence" (Coleman, 1997, p. 7).

Harold Breier was the chief of the Milwaukee Police Department from 1964 to 1984. Under his reign, people of color, specifically Black Milwaukeeans, faced racist policing practices, and from 1971 to 1981, 23 people were killed by police brutality (Miner, 2013, p. 102).

In a television special titled "Some call them gay" that aired on September 24th, 1973, the lives of gay and lesbian people in Milwaukee were highlighted. The special publicized that "more than a dozen gay bars in Milwaukee are thriving because 15,000 gay men and women spend time there" (Mss 203). While these facts demonstrated a strong gay community in Milwaukee, the special also discussed the fact that employers had the right to fire someone for being gay at this time. The host, Jim Cummings, stated that "gay people can laugh but their lives are serious and complicated...often shrouded by secrecy." Clearly, experiences varied day to day and person to person.

These conditions are presented here through single-axis identity categories. While this is problematic and works counter the theoretical framework, that is how they were presented in the archives. I will continue to work to illuminate how they can be understood in tandem, and ask readers to layer the stories of oppression and violence that follow, in order to better understand the intersectional experiences of the men and boys who were murdered.

Racial capitalism in Milwaukee: Black writers' analyses

From Stelly's journalism and from reports like that issued by "Black Milwaukee,"⁸ racial capitalism can be seen as contributing to the devaluation of Black and otherwise marginalized lives in Milwaukee in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Unemployment and segregation were two conditions present in Milwaukee that point to Gilmore's definition of racism as the premature death of racialized and socially separated people (2002, p. 261). Shortly after the murders were discovered, "Black Milwaukee" released a document about what they wanted the nation to know. They asked "what conditions would allow such a killer to go on so long" a question that had dominated since the news broke, but was often framed as how could this happen here? (Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). Seemingly unsurprised that something like this could happen in Milwaukee, they listed employment, housing and policing as the main factors that contributed. Black unemployment, already at a rate five times higher than white unemployment, was exacerbated given that African American workers were subjected to extensive background checks before being considered for employment (Stelly, "The Dahlman Murders," 7/27/91). They wrote that housing inequality was evident in that the stench coming from Dahmer's apartment was not considered a problem given the location and racial makeup of the neighborhood. And finally, they asserted that Dahmer was able to commit these crimes because of the racism, harassment, abuse, and slow or no response being the norm when it

⁸ This title refers to a document found in the Jonathan Coleman Papers in a folder titled "Dahmer, Jeffrey, 1991" and was undated and unsigned. The title at the top of the typed page read "What Black Milwaukee Wants the Nation to Know" and then went on to describe what is included in this paragraph. It is unclear where this could have come from but fits with narratives shared by other Black Milwaukeeans in the archives. See Appendix B for a copy.

came to stigmatized neighborhoods calling on the Milwaukee Police Department. “These conditions” could “no longer be tolerated” (Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16).

Matthew C. Stelly asked in his May 4th, 1991 article in *The Milwaukee Courier*, “Is the City Guilty of Hate Crimes?????” Discussing police misconduct in Milwaukee, Stelly argued that through racialized systems of oppression, like segregation, policing, banking, insurance and taxation, brutality was a daily presence for Black Milwaukeeans. Stelly notes that, in cases where Black people have been killed by the police, most result in a “justifiable homicide” ruling. So why, then, he asks, is it called police ‘misconduct’ if it is justifiable to kill those whom white supremacy and racial capitalism have deemed a surplus population? Instead, Stelly argues that these occurrences of police violence should be viewed as “behavior fashioned for urban areas,” given that “segregation of the races is systematically maintained by the city’s directors and planners.” He also argued that “unemployment in Milwaukee is by design, crime in Milwaukee will continue to rise as segregation increases its stranglehold on the lives of Black and Latino residents” (Stelly, 1991). Thus, the operations of racial capitalism, and Black critiques of them, can be seen reflected in the writings of Black Milwaukeeans in the late 1990s.

Interpersonal, homophobic violence

When studying the time before the discovery of the murders committed by Dahmer, one gets an eerie sense of the pervasive level of violence against people of color and gay and lesbian people in Milwaukee. Many asked how it was possible for something like this to happen in Milwaukee, but looking at the archives of organizations serving these populations, one can trace the conditions and events that led to it. The archives included disproportionate instances

of violence through single-axis lenses, but the men and boys in this case study would have experienced violence through both racism and homophobia, as well as in ways beyond these.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a wave of violent and visible crimes committed against gay and lesbian people in Milwaukee. And with the passing of Wisconsin's new hate crimes penalty enhancement law, there was finally hope in finding justice. In addition, the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 "directs the Attorney General to acquire data...about crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity" (Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990, 1990). This Act was the first federal statute to specifically name protection for people based on their sexual orientation. Once this was enacted, gay and lesbian organizations began to take on the work of documenting crimes committed against queer people. This meant that records of hate crimes after 1990 are more readily available.

A pair of articles from the Milwaukee Sentinel and the Milwaukee Journal, published in May of 1989, exemplify this foreshadowing of violent tragedy in the gay and lesbian community. "Gays wonder if violence is growing" (Barbara Miner, 5/21/89, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 9) and "Gays are urged to report attacks" (No Author, 5/18/89, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 9) tell of a time in Milwaukee where verbal and physical harassment and violence against queer people was commonplace. On December 4th, 1988, the body of 31-year-old Dennis Owens was found near a warehouse at 329 E. Florida Street. He had been shot five times, including two fatal shots in the head behind his ear, and run over and dragged by a car. Two young men were charged with his murder, testifying that they were looking to rob "a queer" in order to get money to go drinking and accidentally shot Owens when he made sexual advances (Miner,

1989). Miner writes that nationally, there were more than 5,000 incidents reported in 1987, a 40% rise over the year before, according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Most reports involved verbal harassment and threats of violence, while 12% addressed physical assaults. Locally, the problem was concentrated around the gay and lesbian bars on the near south side, with abuse coming primarily from young men in their late teens or early 20s who had been drinking (Miner, 1989). The 1984 study of anti-gay harassment conducted by the Governor's Council on Lesbian and Gay Issues, under Gov. Tony Earl's administration, found that 2/3 of homosexuals surveyed in Wisconsin "feared for their safety, and 21% said they had been punched, kicked or beaten by heterosexuals because of their sexual preference" (Miner, 1991).

During this time, the state was not only counting hate crimes, but deployed the type of violence they were counting. In July of 1990, near Appleton, Brian Rochon was harassed at a nightclub by off-duty police officers. Rochon joined some friends on the dance floor and soon found an off-duty police officer coming at him calling him a 'faggot' and knocking his hat off his head. The officers then followed Rochon out of the bar and proceeded to physically and verbally assault him. This incident led to a series of court proceedings that caused Rochon to move out of the state. After the trials, Rochon was able to give a class at the academy about homosexuality, stating "they have incorporated homosexuality into their program to help other people understand what homosexuality is and what their lifestyle is like" (New Tri-Cable Tonight No. 14, Aug. 1, 1991).

Later that year, in October, Terry Fournier and friends were leaving Club 219, at 219 South 2nd Street, and were trying to stop a drunk friend from driving home. Police stopped as

they were driving by and asked everyone for identification. An officer followed Fournier and a friend to their car to get their IDs, when they reached for their IDs in the car, the officer put his hand on his gun and stated, “your ID better be all that is in there or I will blow you away!” Fournier was shocked at the officer's threat as he had been cooperative during the whole encounter. As he gave the officer his ID, a car drove by, hit a parked car and drove off. The police took their IDs and followed the hit and run and didn't get back for about an hour (Fournier, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder, 24). This case demonstrated another example of the ill-treatment of queer people in Milwaukee by MPD officers.

On July 11, 1991, Richard Rosin and two friends went to LaCage, a gay dance club located at the intersection of National Avenue and South 2nd Street in what is known today as Milwaukee's Walker's Point neighborhood. At bar close, Richard and friends left to go home when two white males (believed to be leaving Steny's) verbally assaulted them in front of LaCage. Rosin's friend Dan Doro stepped up to the assaulting men to try and get them to leave them alone, when they punched Doro at least twice in the chest. Parked kitty-corner to LaCage was a police squad car who flashed their lights onto the incident but remained in the car and did nothing to stop the incident. Rosin tried to call the officers over, but they did not respond (Rosin, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 24). In a similar case, on August 4th, 1991, Ron Manville was at LaCage when he was punched in the face by a man who had been hit on by Manville's friend. When Manville reported this incident to the police, an officer named Gary Baldus told him “this is what happens when you flirt with other men” (Manville, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 24). These cases are examples of homophobic crimes committed by Milwaukee residents and police officers. They simultaneously highlight the dismissal by Milwaukee police officers of violent

experiences in the lives of queer people and the homophobia and racism evident in the selective deployment of police force.

Silencing of Black gay lives

It is especially difficult to find archives that describe the violent conditions faced by gay men of color in Milwaukee at this time. The notable exception was the exact case studied in this thesis, and even then, accounts that are not sensationalized or exploitative are rare. One way to understand this is through the Milwaukee media's erasure of Black gay lives in 1991.

Accessible in unprecedented ways, including a national airing on PBS in 1991, Marlon Riggs 1989 film *Tongues Untied* gave voice to the lives of Black, gay men, through poetry, rap, personal testimony and performance. The film includes footage of Black gay men living in the United States, and through the poetry of Essex Hemphill, themes of Black gay brotherhood and deadly silencing are revealed. Looking at the reactions of Milwaukee's public television station to this film elucidates the erasure discussed here.

The film relays that this dual identity, Black and gay, means experiencing homophobia and racism together, in an entirely unique and silencing way. As poet Essex Hemphill iterates in the film, "silence is a way not to acknowledge how much my life is discounted each day." Discounted, devalued, Riggs overlays these words with footage of police violence against Black gay men. Hemphill explains that he is more likely to share his triumphs, his new piece of art or performance, or "so and so's party at Club She She" than the anger and hurt he experienced that morning when a jeweler refused him service because he was a Black man, perceived as a thief. Chants of "Brother to Brother" (times 50), of "Black Black Black Black! Gay gay gay gay!

We will have no other way!” cement the insistence and determination, of these men to live.

And yet, on his own experience living in San Francisco, Riggs says,

I was an invisible man. I had no shadow, no substance, no place, no history, no reflection. I was an alien, unseen and seen, unwanted....Each joke levels us a little more, and we sit silently - sometimes join in the laughter, as If deep down, we, too, believe we are the lowest among the low (Riggs, *Tongues Untied*).

Riggs, acting as a homophobic preacher, asks: “what is he first, black or gay?” Racism from gay brothers, homophobia from Black brothers, and the deathly combination of the two from larger society, are all detailed here.

Tongues Untied was released in 1989 when many people were dying of AIDS. There was a feeling of certain and impending death and loss, as Black gay men were disproportionately dying from this disease. Riggs lived with a diagnosis himself, as did Hemphill, and both died from it. In a poem at the end of the film, Riggs states:

Lately, I’ve lived with another rhythm. At first, I thought just time passing. But I discovered a time bomb ticking in my blood. Faces, friends disappear. I watch, I wait, I watch, I wait. I listen for my own quiet implosion. But while I wait, older, stronger rhythms resonate within me, sustain my spirit. Silence the clock (Riggs, *Tongues Untied*).

Here, Riggs is referring first to HIV/AIDS as a time bomb. Then, with “older, stronger rhythms” he is alluding to the Black radical tradition, a revolutionary consciousness that has resisted the extinguishing of African social bonds since the transatlantic slave trade. Riggs then queers the

Black radical tradition, demanding the inclusion of Black gay men, with the statement “Black men loving Black men IS the revolutionary act.”

Echoing the sentiment of the silencing of Black gay men was the decision that Milwaukee’s public television station would not broadcast *Tongues Untied* along showings in other cities on July 16th, 1991 (Poda, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 9). The station had a history of producing and broadcasting programs on gay rights, but felt this program was “indecent and obscene,” containing sexually explicit language and profanity (Poda, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 9). I cannot say for certain if MPTV was really only concerned with the occasional “fuck” uttered in this film, or if there was a distinct discomfort in the idea of broadcasting the existence, resistance and struggles of Black gay men. But when analyzing the themes in the film, silencing of Black gay experiences is demonstrated through lived realities.

Policing – the political environment

Accounts of policing in the 1980s and 1990s in Milwaukee demonstrate a lack of value for the lives of multiply-marginalized people, specifically gay men of color. The Milwaukee Police Department had long been a major actor in the perpetuation of violence against Black and queer communities. Often using harassing over-policing tactics when it served them, officers were also known to be completely unresponsive to calls in specific, racialized neighborhoods and demonstrated homophobia and blaming when policing gay districts or interacting with gay and lesbian people who had been victimized by crime. Many of the conditions discussed in this chapter - including over-policing and under-policing - were implemented through policy decisions made by political actors in Milwaukee.

The line of mayors and police chiefs that led city government and the police department each left a legacy unique to their own beliefs. Frank Zeidler, Socialist, was mayor from 1948-1960, Henry Maier, Democrat, was mayor from 1960-1988, with John O. Norquist, Democrat, following from 1988-2004. Harold Breier, Milwaukee's police chief from 1964-1984, was known as a "no-nonsense, law-and-order cop with a disdain for black people" (Miner, 2013, p. 102). Following Breier was Robert Ziarnik, chief from 1984-1989 and Phillip Arreola, from 1989-1996; and Arthur L. Jones, the first Black chief of police, from 1996-2003.

Breier's legacy in the Milwaukee Police Department cannot be overstated. His style of policing, characterized by overt racism and violence, was carried on in the MPD well after his term as chief ended. A 1975 court decision ordered the department to hire more Black officers, but in the early 1980s, there were "only 129 black police officers on a force of 2,000. None were above the rank of sergeant" (Miner, 2013, p. 102). As Breier had been running the department for two decades, it was clear to see his anti-Black influence on police practices in Milwaukee. Also implicated was "Mayor Henry Maier, known for doing little to address concerns in the black community beyond establishing commissions and issuing reports, refused to publicly challenge the seventy-year-old Breier" (Miner, 2013, p. 103). In October of 1991, "three-fourths of the Department, including all those in the ranks of Captain and above, joined the Department while Harold Breier was Chief" (Mayor's Citizen Commission, "A Report to Mayor John O. Norquist," pp. 9, Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 3).

The League of Martin, an organization of African American police officers in Milwaukee, was vocal at the time about white dominance in the Milwaukee Police Department. Lenard Wells, president of the League of Martin, stated that the "MPD remains the domain of white

males that adhere to and administer old traditionalist views of policing” (Mss, 152, Box 11, Folder 2). He explained that “responsiveness, sensitivity and Community Oriented Policing” would not be achieved if these conditions remained. In addition, Wells described discriminatory practices and double standards of conduct that occurred within the department, which were not problematized given that there was only one minority member of the Internal Affairs Division.

Ernest Lacy’s death on July 9th, 1981 at the hands of the MPD epitomizes the violent, anti-Black state power that existed in Milwaukee during Harold Breier’s term as police chief (Miner, 2013, p. 101). Lacy was stopped at the Open Pantry on 24th & Wisconsin by three members of Milwaukee’s all-white tactical squad who were looking for a rape suspect. Four witnesses -three white Marquette students and one black church elder “saw Lacy face-down on the ground, his feet near the curb and his head almost in the lane for oncoming traffic. He was handcuffed with his wrists behind his back, his arms jerked high into the air...an officer was kneeling on him” (Miner, 2013, p. 101). He was thrown into a police wagon, and when they arrested another man, was found lying on the floor of the van not breathing (Miner, 2013, p. 101). He was pronounced dead upon arrival to the hospital, and another man was arrested for the rape. Lacy was “thin and slightly built. He had a history of emotional problems. His family said he was easily intimidated, with a particular fear of police and being in enclosed places...Lacy had died due to an interruption of oxygen to his brain because of the pressure applied to his chest and back” (Miner, 2013, p. 102). Lacy was the 23rd person in 10 years to lose their life at the hands of the Milwaukee Police Department.

This time was also notable for the resistance and organizing to the systemic violence perpetuated by the MPD. After Lacy's death, "race relations in Milwaukee were dominated by the long-standing issue of police brutality. Education, jobs, and housing were still important concerns, but they took a backseat to what was so starkly a matter of life and death" (Miner, 2013, p. 102). Led by Howard Fuller and Michael McGee, more than 125 organizations came together to form the Coalition for Justice for Ernest Lacy, bringing together people with many different identities who were fed up with the actions of the MPD. The coalition organized around disciplinary action for the officers involved, getting one officer fired and four suspended. The Lacy family also received a \$500,000 settlement (Miner, 2013, p. 104). State law was impacted by this case, including the "Lacy Bill" which made it illegal to abuse or neglect a suspect in police custody and the "Breier Bill" of 1984 ended the life term for Milwaukee police chiefs and transferred authority to the FPC, the mayor, and the Common Council (Miner, 2013, p. 104).

After Breier resigned as police chief in 1984, some people expressed a sense of hope and change with Ziarnik's appointment to the position. Sue Burke, member of the Governor's Council on Lesbian and Gay Issues, stated that "the Milwaukee police, entirely due to former Police Chief Ziarnik, are much more responsive than they ever were" (Miner, 1991). The article also explained that some thought there were still problems with individual officers harassing specific businesses (Miner, 1991). The need for cooperation with police along the lines of hate crime reporting was emphasized. Ralph Navarro, chairman of the Lambda Rights Network, warned that "violence against homosexuals will continue to rise unless more incidents are reported" (No Author, 1991). Working with MPD, FPC, and the district attorney's Sensitive

Crimes Unit, Lambda Rights Network and Gay Information Services started a project aimed at encouraging more victims to report physical and verbal attacks.

This cooperation between gay organizations and the MPD under Ziarnik demonstrates the differences between how he and Breier viewed violence against gays and lesbians, but does not give any answers on how the change in police chief might have effected relations with people of color. It's important to note that in an article for *The Milwaukee Courier*, Black State Representative Marcia Coggs explained that white children are brought up to believe police are their friends and will help them in times of trouble, while children of color, specifically Black children, grow up seeing police as "enforcers of the status quo" who will be unconcerned about their problems and will lack commitment and sensitivity to their experiences (Coggs, "Capitol Report," 8/10/91). Rep. Coggs' position, informed by both her personal experience and political experience, and illuminates the kinds of experiences that prevent improved relations between police and Black communities.

The case of Konerak Sinthasomphone

One of the murders in this case most explicitly illustrates the lack of police attention given to the protection of queer and multiply-marginalized young men and boys. The murder of Konerak Sinthasomphone was extensively covered by the media, cementing these details into public imaginations and for future studies such as this one. Sinthasomphone emigrated with his family from Laos when he was two years old. His older brother was sexually assaulted by Dahmer in 1988, a crime that Dahmer was convicted of in 1989, and was then given an eight-year sentence. Dahmer served only one year and was let out on probation in 1990. On May 27th, 1991, Konerak Sinthasomphone went over to Dahmer's house to pose for photos for \$200.

At 2 a.m. on May 28th, Milwaukee resident Nicole Childress called 911 to report that “there's this young man, he is buck-naked and he has been beaten up. He is very bruised up. He can't stand. He has no clothes on. He is really hurt” (Worthington, 1991). Three officers were dispatched to the scene and entered Dahmer’s apartment to question him and the unnamed naked young man (Associated Press, 1991). Dahmer told the police that Sinthasomphone was his 19-year-old lover and they had just gotten in a lovers’ quarrel. The officers failed to run a background check on Dahmer, which would have shown that Dahmer was on probation for the sexual assault of Sinthasomphone’s brother. Sinthasomphone remained silent during the duration of the officer’s visit, as he had been drugged, and the officers assumed he was intoxicated. In a recording of the officers reporting back after the incident, an officer states “the intoxicated Asian naked male (laughter in background) was returned to his sober boyfriend (more laughter)...my partner is going to get deloused at the station” (Worthington, 1991).

In a statement to the police after his arrest, Dahmer claimed to have strangled Sinthasomphone shortly after the officers left and admitted that there was the body of another victim in his bedroom when the officers were in his apartment. After this encounter with police, Dahmer went on to kill four more men. For the first few days after the discovery of the murders, reporters were referring to the man arrested as “Dahlman” as the police kept all details of the case under close lockdown (Stelly, “The Dahlman Murders,” 7/27/91). It’s worth pointing out that the police seemed more concerned with protecting the identity of this man than they were with protecting the life of 14-year-old Sinthasomphone, or any of the other people Dahmer killed.

On the Sinthasomphone case, Barnard writes that the officers could have been dismissive of the 911 calls because of Sinthasomphone's race or because they assumed him to be gay, but they also could have been acting, in their minds, out of respect for this relationship. The officers may have suspected nothing was amiss because they assumed that gay male relationships are typically violent. Barnard argues that they might have felt pressure to honor interracial, gay relationships, and to not assume that a "sexual liaison between two males was criminal or immoral, or even not to presume to interfere in an order of sexual conduct that was alien or perhaps offensive to them" (Barnard, 2000, p. 74). However, I find no evidence of this in the officers' initial statements, nor in realistic gay-centric reports of queer life in Milwaukee during this time.

A similar sentiment was present in a statement from an anonymous caller during a 90-minute special on Tri-Cable News, where members of the gay and lesbian community were invited to share their reactions to the murders. The caller stated that before this incident, "gay organizations" claimed that the police were being too hard on them and policing them too closely. The caller identified themselves as outside of the gay community, and host Michael Lisowski responded that these gay organizations were not asking for special treatment but rather equal application of rights. In this case, that would be the appropriate application of Wisconsin's domestic violence law that requires the abuser to be taken in (New Tri-Cable Tonight No. 14, Mss 206, 8/1/91). This interaction problematizes Barnard's assertion that the police were acting out of respect for gay relationships.

Policing – violence and lack of protection

Police violence is the result of the exceptional amount of power given to police to control populations and demonstrates the criminalization of certain identities. It results in material police violence and mass incarceration. Critical race theory, Marxist theory and critical carceral studies (Bonds & Inwood, 2016; Camp, 2016; Camp & Heatherton, 2016; Neocleous, 2000) tell us that there is no such thing as ‘just right’ policing, because of the exceptional power granted police. Nevertheless, the archives I draw on demonstrate that some people sought police protection and did not receive it. This is the result of populations being deemed unworthy of protection, normalizing violence and victimization in the lives of some, while allowing criminal behavior to go unchecked and unnoticed in others.

Gay bars were sites of police violence. “Milwaukee Police keep gay people under close surveillance because gay people are different” (Some Call Them Gay, Mss 203, 9/24/73). The Community Relations Specialist for the Fire and Police Commission stated “we’re just not ready to see two men kissing. Gay people who hassle with this, have to realize they’re living too soon” (Some Call Them Gay, Mss 203, 9/24/73). These sentiments were stated outright in 1973, on WTMJ channel 4, an NBC affiliate, however, they stayed in effect much longer than that. A former police officer and lesbian living in Milwaukee stated that “officers often look harder for infractions in bars and other establishments with lesbian and gay or minority clientele” (Anonymous Testimony, Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2).

During the time that Dahmer was meeting and killing men in Milwaukee, mostly meeting them at gay bars around the South 2nd Street & National Avenue area, there was a pattern of policing that is troubling to this case study. On March 27th, 1991, Club 219 hosted a

“Hot Buns” contest, where six contestants “mooned the audience,” with two also exposing their genitalia (Moore, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 14). This exposure of genitalia was a violation of city law. According to first-hand accounts, 20-35 officers raided the bar, in 13 squad cars, and made seven arrests, issued fines to the business and bartenders, and generally shook up the bar patrons. There was much concern surrounding this use of police resources given that “patrons of the gay and non-gay bars in that neighborhood are often mugged; one was recently murdered” (Moore, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 14). These violent crimes were only part of the larger story of this area’s violent crime problem, as Dahmer had been picking up men from Club 219, and other bars, in order to kill them.

Just before the news of the murders broke, a group of concerned bar patrons and community organizers came together to start a community block watch program. Reports from this group state that 100% of bar patrons feel safe inside the bar while 90% feel unsafe outside (Handwritten Notes, Mss 108, Box 1, Folder 12). The organizers wanted to add lighting to streets and alleys, form citizen patrols, and work with police to reduce homophobic practices and reduce crime. The police responded with a warning to be self-aware, know where to park, don’t walk alone or have sex in dark places, and to “let someone know who you have picked up for the night” (Handwritten Notes, Mss 108, Box 1, Folder 12). This advice blamed the people experiencing violent crime and demonstrated that the police took no responsibility for the fact that perpetrators targeted this area knowing it was an environment where they could get away with this type of behavior. Another example of this attitude within the MPD came from Alderman Paul Henningsen, who represented the downtown and near westside district 4. In a letter to the Fire and Police Commission, he stated that the police often blamed residents of his

district for living in a high crime area when they called for police. Henningsen stated that he has heard officers say, “it’s your fault for living in the area; what do you expect from living here?” (Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2). This blasé and blaming police attitude justifies the lack of police protection and casts the residents of such neighborhoods as ‘surplus population.’

Stories of police indifference to the deaths of queer people of color were prevalent in the archives. The strongest demonstration of this is that there were sixteen murders committed within four years, and the MPD had not concerned themselves with these people missing, let alone finding their killer. Tony Hughes’ family had been actively searching for their son and brother and had given this information to the police, but they did nothing (Taylor, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). The system failed those men and boys who were murdered, and their friends and families who were looking for them, labeling them as disposable people. A Milwaukee police officer was quoted as saying “down there life is cheap” in reference to the neighborhood surrounding the 25th Street apartments where Dahmer lived (Vigil Speech, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). This statement epitomizes that there is no concern surrounding occurrences of violence “down there” because the lives of the people living there are devalued.

There were also stories of community knowledge relating to Dahmer not being shared out of fear of police retaliation and indifference. A report by Rick Smith, a friend of Matt Stelloh’s, explained that sense of haunting fear. Stelloh was introduced to Dahmer around June/July of 1990 but refused to go to his house or have sex, until August of 1990 when he went to Dahmer’s apartment. Dahmer offered drinks, but Stelloh refused. Dahmer made coffee instead, but when Dahmer left the room, Stelloh dumped it down the drain. He then smelled something bad in the fridge, so he opened it, finding two heads and some body parts. Dahmer

came back and realized that Stelloh had seen what was in the fridge. They then fought, but Stelloh got away with the help of an unnamed friend. Because Dahmer threatened Stelloh's life and because he didn't think anyone would believe him, Stelloh never reported this incident to the police. The friend that helped him escape had since died of AIDS, and once the story broke, Stelloh didn't think he had witnesses, so he never went to the police. Smith reported on this incident given that Stelloh had been picked up by police and was charged with accessory after the fact (Stelloh, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 24).

The fear of police in the lesbian and gay community in Milwaukee was also demonstrated through a survey administered by the Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee. Four times as many women as men reported having been the victim of a hate crime. In the survey 80% of members described the police as indifferent and uncaring and 60% of members reported police as abusive when reporting a hate crime. "Abusive behavior by officers was reported by 4% of lesbian members when officers were not dealing with a hate crime. In other words, police were 15 times more likely to be abusive to victims of a specifically lesbian incident" (LAMM, Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2).

These experiences of police violence, both material and epistemological, provide an understanding of the ways that police policy and attitudes devalued the lives of gays, lesbians and people of color in Milwaukee. Systems of racial capitalism that call for the early death of surplus populations and the general homophobic and racist climate in Milwaukee in the 1980s and 1990s, both add layers of violence in the lives of gay men of color. Through the explicit citing of these experiences, it becomes clear that Dahmer, while living in a racialized

neighborhood, frequenting gay establishments and regularly having same sex encounters, was exempt from this type of police scrutiny and systemic violence.

The Dahmer exception – white supremacy at work

The conditions outlined above explain the vulnerability and devaluation of the men and boys that Dahmer killed. In contrast, Dahmer received exceptional and privileged treatment from the city and systems of racial capitalism and white supremacy that facilitated his existence as a serial murderer, undetected, for as many years as he did. He was fully employed at the Ambrosia Chocolate factory, where there was a waitlist for employment. He was often reprimanded for falling asleep on the job and was a convicted felon and sex offender, but his employer considered him a more deserving employee than those waiting for employment (Stelly, “The Dahlman Murders,” 7/27/91). He was not evicted for the stench coming from his apartment, which is troubling given eviction’s history as a “method that inner city landlords use when it comes to Black noncompliance” (Stelly, “The Dahlman Murders”).

In addition, he had been convicted of the sexual assault of a minor in 1989. After his arrest, many questioned why he had been let out on parole and why his probation officer had not checked on him at his residence, as is policy. The families of his victims came together to ask Dr. Walter Farrell and Dr. Harold Rose, professors at UWM, to review the sentencing practices of Judge Gardner, who decided to place Dahmer on parole. The families also asked for “an investigation of the Milwaukee office of the probation and parole department to determine if there are double standards in the treatment of minority and white parolees” (“Press Statement from Families of Dahmer Victims,” Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2). These occurrences of differential treatment were echoed as Dahmer appeared in court well dressed, groomed and

without handcuffs or shackles, a luxury not afforded to “men of color, who are routinely hauled into local courtrooms in shackles, under heavy scrutiny and in a disheveled state of appearance for lesser offenses” (Farrell, “The Dahmer Holocaust,” 8/3/91).

These exceptions to the conditions faced by multiply-marginalized and racialized people in Milwaukee are indicative of white supremacy at work. Matthew Stelly wrote “Dahmer...is a white supremacist because he carried out what others obviously want: the destruction of Black people. He set into motion the same kinds of actions that starvation, polluted air, population density, unemployment, lack of educational opportunity and poor health all do. Only he did it in less time” (“One Man’s Opinion,” 8/3/91). Dahmer’s actions were seen by Stelly as performing the true intentions of the practices of racial segregation, eliminating the surplus populations that were no longer needed in the racialized system of capitalist accumulation.

While Stelly’s analysis here is indicative of the Black radical analysis of the situation, it is not at all intersectional as Stelly ignores the queerness of the men and boys that were killed. Some of the men were out regulars at the gay bars where Dahmer picked up men, while some were active in gay community organizations and support groups. Others were not known to be gay by their family or friends, but either engaged in same sex practices or participated in sex work with same sex clients. Patterns of homophobic violence at the time, including but not limited to the murders in this case, are important in understanding why Dahmer was left to commit 16 murders in a four-year span.

CHAPTER 4: SEARCHING FOR AN INTERSECTIONAL RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

The murders come to light

On July 22, 1991, Tracy Edwards escaped Jeffrey Dahmer's apartment in handcuffs and went to the police, who subsequently found evidence of other murders in his apartment. Almost immediately, media outlets began a frenzy of coverage. As the police began their investigation, they realized the number of victims far outweighed anything they had dealt with before, and that it would take time to identify victims from the remains that had been left. The following is a list of all known murder victims killed by Jeffrey Dahmer and the date they were believed to have been murdered: Steven Hicks, age 18, was last seen in 1978; Steven Tuomi, age 25, was killed in 1987; James Doxtator, age 14, and Richard Guerrero, age 22, were killed in 1988; Anthony Sears, age 24, was killed in 1989; Raymond Smith, age 32, Edward Smith, age 27, Ernest Miller, age 22, and David Thomas, age 22, were all killed in 1990; Curtis Straughter, age 17, Errol Lindsey, age 19, Tony Hughes, age 31, Konerak Sinthasomphone, age 14, Matt Turner, age 20, Jeremiah Weinberger, age 23, Oliver Lacy, age 24, and Joseph Bradehoft, age 25, were all killed between February and July of 1991 (Jeffrey Dahmer, Wikipedia). These 17 men and boys were overwhelmingly nonwhite with "12 Blacks, 2 Hispanics, 2 Whites and 1 Laotian." What isn't mentioned in this list is that James Doxator, presumably included in the Black category of this citation, was also Indigenous ("What Black Milwaukee Wants the Nation to Know," Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). They were not just gay men, and they were not just men of color – they were gay men of color.

In this chapter I will talk about how community responses unfolded after the murders were discovered, with an intentional focus first on intersectional accounts, then on pairing

single-axis organizational accounts to understand the experiences of multiply-marginalized people. I draw heavily from the Lambda Rights Network Records and the Jonathan Coleman Papers, which are found at the UWM library, and articles included in copies of *The Milwaukee Courier* and *Milwaukee Star*. Featured heavily again, Stelly wrote many analytical pieces in the Black press that are in direct conversation with the framework of this thesis. The responses mainly came from community organizations that are marketed as single-axis, Black or gay and lesbian, but often can be read in ways that bring out intersectional experiences.

Calls for unity

Many called for unity in Milwaukee of those affected by these murders, while others did not believe unifying with oppressors would lead to better conditions. One person stated at a July 29th press conference “if we don’t come together they’re gonna pick us off one by one” (Tri-Cable News, 8/1/91, Mss 206). Mayor Norquist called for unity among groups pointing fingers (“Statement,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8) while Walter C. Farrell Jr., professor of Educational Policy and Community Studies at UWM, called for unity among the African American community (“The Dahmer Holocaust,” 8/3/91). Reverend Jesse Jackson, on his “community healing” visit to Milwaukee, warned of the “false feeding of fear that divides people, black and white” (Agnew, “Jesse Jackson,” 8/10/91). It is notable that in the documented “demands and concerns of the African American Community” and “What Black Milwaukee Wants the Nation to Know” unity was not mentioned as a solution on its own. Both documents, of relatively unknown origins found in the Coleman Papers, asked for specific changes to improve the quality of life for Black Milwaukeeans. There were some responses from Black individuals that countered this idea. For example, Larry Taylor, a Black gay man, in a

speech at a July 29th press conference on media coverage, stated “all of us, no matter what color skin, gay or straight, need to work together; because we all bleed the same color blood” (Taylor, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17).

Several vigils were held to honor those lost and provide an understanding of times when communities did come together to support each other. On August 2nd, the first day of the African World Festival, there was a “prayer vigil with the families and friends of the young men who were victims of the mass murders” (Stelly, “Black Leaders Speak Out, 8/3/91). On August 5th, a vigil was held in remembrance of the victims lost to these heinous crimes. In a speech given at this vigil, the author wrote about resistance and unity:

here today, gathered united in the cause for justice...for the victims of Jeffrey Dahmer and justice for the entire city of Milwaukee....We are here today to let all of the city of Milwaukee know, the police, the citizens, everyone, that a civilized society needs a Police Department to keep law and order, but a Police Department that does not neglect or discriminate against anyone!....Let us now work together to forge ahead and bring about a positive change for everyone in this city (Unsigned Vigil Speech, Aug. 5, 1991, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17).

This speech notes the importance of unity among certain groups, while also expressing frustration and a need for resistance to the broken system of policing in Milwaukee that sanctioned the deaths of the men and boys in this case.

In another speech written for the vigil, the author acknowledged the intersectional nature of this loss:

you and I have been brought here tonight to express our sorrow at the loss of our friends, family members and members of our community. These victims, most of who were gay black males were loving, caring people; who touched some of us in our daily lives and who have become representatives of others who have been victimized by a system that has failed us...We will not stand idly and allow the police, the media or society to blame the victims for the acts of this criminal. You and I are victims!...Do not forget the anger! Do not forget the rage! ("Vigil Speech Aug. 5 1991" Typed speech, Aug. 5, 1991, box 1, folder 17, LRN records).

While none of the speeches from this vigil were signed, Stelly identified the speakers as Queen Hyler from Stop the Violence, Jeanetta Robinson from Career Youth Development, Scott Gunkel from LRN and Tim Grair from Queer Nation. The convergence of speakers representing both Black and gay/lesbian organizations demonstrated cooperation not often seen in the city. This vigil was one site of intersectional community work, where speakers expressed a variety of responses including grief, frustration and a call to resistance and action. The archives relating to this vigil prove invaluable in illuminating occurrences of diverse groups working together in Milwaukee during this time.

What these calls for unity fail to address, is the history of white decision making that created the conditions that allowed these murders to happen. Matthew Stelly writes about those in power opting to focus on "healing, cooling down, justice, coming together, and other code words which are basically aimed at sweeping Dahmer's predatory acts under the rug" ("Dahmer II," 8/10/91). He argues in this piece that he did not believe that joining with white

groups, whether lesbian and gay organizations, Mayor Norquist or the MPD, would fix the conditions that permitted Dahmer to murder 12 young Black men. In support of this, James Cameron writes of the experiences of Black Milwaukee County and City employees, in the time before Dahmer's identity was released. Cameron writes that "the whites in their departments thought it was just so terrible – but – when you consider the kind of people living in that neighborhood, what more could you expect? The black people there, all over our city, were killing themselves with dope as well as with bullets and knives at random. The blacks were giving Milwaukee a bad name – high up among the murder cities" (Cameron, Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). With attitudes such as these present in government employees, it is no wonder some Black people in Milwaukee were not persuaded that unity was the solution.

Intersectional responses

People of varying identities came together to discuss this tragedy during the August 1st, 1991 episode of Tri-Cable Tonight, a monthly cable talk show that aimed to heighten visibility of the lesbian and gay community in Milwaukee. A Black woman who did not identify herself stated, the gay community "may know four victims, but the Black community knew all of them...I look at those young men and I see them as my son, any one of them could have been my son or my neighbor or my nephew" (Tri-Cable News, 8/1/91, Mss 206). Combating a response of racialized hate and victim blaming from a white man, this woman stated that "it's an imposition on the Black community to be told by anyone how they should be reacting at a time like this" (Tri-Cable News, 8/1/91, Mss 206). Larry Taylor, a Black gay man living in Milwaukee, rearticulated this response stating the tragic loss of Tony Hughes, "a dear friend...who was a caring, loving, warm individual" as felt by his many friends, gay and straight

(Taylor, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). These two individuals have varying identities that intersect within their racial identity, and through their emotional reactions we can see how they conceptualized the identities and community bonds of the victims.

Scott Gunkel, President of Lambda Rights Network, wrote for his speech given at a July 29th press conference, about the unified experience between marginalized people as victims of violence. He wrote that “every day in Milwaukee, gays are harassed, attacked and even murdered because of our sexual orientation. We are victims - victims of ignorance, intolerance and hatred. We are not alone - people of color, women and those in poor neighborhoods are also victimized daily. This is the thread that connects us” (Gunkel, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). The archives of the Lambda Rights Network demonstrate community organizing among gay and lesbian groups in partnership with queer people of color and other Black community organizations.

The Lavendar⁹ network was a group of 24 lesbian and gay organizations that came together after this crisis “to gather ideas on community-wide projects and exchange information on activities” (“Annual Report,” Mss 289, Box 1, Folder 10). This network is evidence of intersectional community work that occurred in Milwaukee during this time. Out of the 24 organizations that made up the Lavendar Network, including the main organizers, Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee (LAMM) and Lambda Rights Network (LRN), there were three organizations that particularly brought queer people of color to the network: LOC Women of Color, Black and White Men Together and Black Gay Men of Pride. These organizations were

⁹ This is not a typo, Lavendar was the spelling used on every document that referenced the network. It is unclear why they used this spelling.

able to come together and write a proposal to the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission, focusing on the lack of confidence in Milwaukee's political leadership and institutionalized homophobia within the Milwaukee Police Department. LAMM continued to expand their network by joining the Community Action Coalition, which was hosted at the Harambee Ombudsman Project, therefore establishing links with the African American community ("Emergency Response," Mss 208, Box 1, folder 21).

Documentation of the response from groups outside of Black and gay and lesbian organizations was difficult to find in the archives. There was one document, however, from the Lao Association of Wisconsin that gives a thought-provoking glimpse into the response of Lao community organization leaders to these murders. Sisouk Bounpraseuth, vice president, wrote that their objective was "to ask for more protection...as the Laotian living in Milwaukee" (Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2). Bounpraseuth outlined their concerns as mainly rooted in communication, suggesting hiring Lao police officers in Milwaukee would help with understanding residents when they call for assistance. They also stated that they had not received any information on the Sinthasomphone case, and if they did not, they would believe that their "rights are being robbed." They asked "for other organizations not to take advantage of the death case of the 14 year old Laotian boy for profit" as it "brings bad reputations" to the Lao community. Overall, the association wanted to make it known that they were not interested in protesting the police or the government, but in fact respected police officers as their older brothers and sisters and the government as their parents (Bounpraseuth, Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2). Given the constraints of this paper, this was the only document collected that directly considers the response of the Lao community in Milwaukee. It would have been ideal,

given more time and resources, to find archives that contained a larger selection of their thoughts and feelings after losing a young member of their community to this tragedy.

Political and community organizing for policy change

Despite the many calls for unity by and among marginalized communities, there were concerns about unity involving the white leaders whose decision-making had contributed to the conditions. Local Black leaders hoped to confront white supremacy through resistance to the inequality put in place by capitalist systems of government and violent state power. Black elected officials wrote Attorney General Richard Thornburgh to express their concern surrounding the MPD's lack of responsiveness (Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). "Black Milwaukee" wanted the nation to know that they would, "by any means necessary, continue to protest until [they] receive total freedom, equality, liberty and justice" (Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). Another document, "Demands and Concerns of the African American Community" listed twelve demands to be met "in order to get through this horrendous crisis, [and] enhance the quality of life for African Americans and other racial minorities regardless of sexual identification" (Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). Among these demands were changes to police procedure, contracting with Black psychiatrists to provide counseling, equitable employment opportunities for African Americans throughout the City, the removal of the three officers involved in the Sinthasomphone case from the department, including pressing criminal charges against them, and finally the resignation of Mayor Norquist. Through this document, the complete lack of confidence in Norquist to improve the lives of Black people in Milwaukee is made clear. "Family members of the victims of Jeffrey Dahmer" came together to express their recommendations on police community relations, probation and parole systems, and legislation, as a way to both

grieve those they lost and work towards bettering the city (“Press Statement from Families,” Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2).

A group of Black elected officials, including Elizabeth Coggs-Jones, Milwaukee County Supervisor; Michael McGee, City of Milwaukee Alderman; Marcia P. Coggs, Wisconsin State Representative; Terrance L. Pitts, Milwaukee County Supervisor; G. Spencer Coggs, Wisconsin State Representative; Annette Polly Williams, Wisconsin State Representative, wrote a letter to Attorney General Richard Thornburgh asking for his assistance dealing with these events (“Letter to Richard Thornburgh,” Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). In this letter, the officials stated their concern for the involvement of the MPD in the murders committed by Dahmer. They called for “an independent and objective investigation” into the conduct of the MPD which they deemed “racist and homophobic” (“Letter to Richard Thornburgh,” Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). Some also had individual responses that echoed the sentiment of resistance and justice. Marcia Coggs took issue with how the three officers responded to the 911 call concerning 14-year-old Konerak Sinthasomphone running naked and bleeding down the alley. She wrote, in her “Capitol Report” for the *Milwaukee Courier*, “had the police followed customary procedures, or at least what has been the typical practice when dealing with minority suspects, they would have learned from their computer database that Jeffrey Dahmer had a previous conviction record stemming from the 1988 sexual molestation of Sinthasomphone’s brother” (8/10/91). While the political actions varied, they were all based in improving conditions for Black Milwaukeeans fixing biased and discriminatory policing.

Rev. Jesse Jackson stated that peace is one goal, but justice is necessary first, as the city must make sure they do not “heal a sore with the glass still in it” (Agnew, “Jesse Jackson Calls,”

8/10/91). His remarks established peace among Milwaukeeans as the end goal and defined justice as finding solutions to police negligence and racial and sexual orientation discrimination. Similarly, professor of Educational Policy & Community Studies at UWM, Walter C. Farrell Jr., documented his personal views on “The Dahmer Holocaust” in a guest editorial in *The Milwaukee Courier*. “The Dahmer Holocaust has visited fear, pain, and disrespect upon Milwaukee’s communities of color (African American, Asian and Hispanic), and it has further revealed the stark social and economic differences along racial lines in our City.”

Farrell commented on the lack of statements given by white officials besides Norquist, in condemning the acts of “cannibalistic violence” compared to the response Alderman McGee received after issuing a warning that Usinger’s products were tainted with rat poison. In this case, Norquist called McGee “demented” while Common Council President Thomas Donegan “racially slurred McGee by calling him a singer and a dancer” (Farrell, “The Dahmer Holocaust,” 8/3/91). Farrell’s response illuminates a few themes, including grief, fear and resistance to politicians’ (in)action. White officials had responded to the Dahmer case with silence, while many Black officials were outspoken about their reactions. Marcia Coggins compared the behavior of city officials in response to this case as an “ostrich approach,” functioning with their heads buried in the sand, hoping “the racial problems that confront Milwaukee...will pass” (Coggins, “Capitol Report,” 8/10/91). These Black leaders expressed both personal and emotional responses to the murders and concrete action they believed needed to be taken in order to establish justice for marginalized people, especially Black people, in Milwaukee.

State and local officials made decisions on how to treat the grief present in Milwaukee without consulting those most affected. The Black community, broadly here, was outraged at

the city's decision to involve the Community Crisis Response Team from the private, non-profit National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), "to ease stress and trauma caused by the slayings" ("For Release," Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16). Given that the Wisconsin Association of Black Social Workers was in existence since 1971, the use of NOVA to deal with trauma and pain within the African American community was an insult. The association was specifically "disturbed, offended, and outraged" at the continued perception that "African American professionals lack the skill, knowledge, and ability to address and deal with our own people and community" (Stelly, "Black Leaders Speak Out," 8/3/91). To make matters worse, when Black professionals' offer to help was finally heard, they were expected to work for free (Stelly, "Dahmer III," 8/17/91). "Family members of the Dahmer victims" came together in the CYD's Survivors of Homicide Support Group to share their grief and work toward making change to foster "some good [to] come out of this terrible tragedy" ("Press Statement from Families," Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2). They were also resistant to the bringing in of NOVA and felt that the community already had structures in place to help each other heal from homicide.

Pro-Black solutions were suggested by some, including Alderman Michael McGee's Black Panther Militia. Ald. McGee voiced his frustrations about the municipal response to the Dahmer case, at a press conference he called on July 27th, given that both mayor Norquist and Common Council president Donegan made "passionate condemnation[s]" of him when he accused Usinger's Sausage of using tainted meat (Gray, "Ald. McGee Holds," 8/3/91). Ald. McGee called for Mayor Norquist's resignation. On unity, McGee stated "they feel that this can be a point where the city can become more unified. If they wanted to become unified they should have done it when 16 black children were killed in a house fire in 1985. We have got to deal with this

ourselves” (Gray, “Ald. McGee Holds,” 8/3/91). McGee demanded the city take action to improve the conditions in Milwaukee that “breed criminal activity,” which he outlined as the tenets of racial capitalism. His proposals included the “New Kemet Hotline” and the “Community Centurion Project,” which together envisioned a system for reporting crime that is self-reliant on the Black community (Stelly, “Police ‘Misconduct,’” 5/11/91). This vision would include “Police officers living in the inner city in exchange for a salary, free car and a free house.” It would reduce “the response time of outside police officers” meaning that “those reporting the crime would be Black, those receiving the information would be Black, and those responding most expeditiously would be Black” (Stelly, “Police ‘Misconduct,’” 5/11/91). Barbara White, co-chair of the Free South Africa Coalition, stated the FPC and Norquist would not find justice in investigating the actions of the MPD. White stated

the mayor is not in charge of this city, so we ought to run it...our community needs to run the city because we can't get loans, we don't have decent housing, the police don't respond to us, nobody cares what happens to us so we need to start caring and running our own lives. (Stelly, “Black Leaders Speak Out,” 8/3/91).

The call to action to create change within Black Milwaukee, and by Black Milwaukee, was a theme that was present in the archives.

Similarly, gay and lesbian community organizers, called for specific changes in policy. Unlike Black community leaders, the gay and lesbian community leaders had to contend with the particular way the media used Dahmer's sexuality to sensationalize their coverage of the

case. In the weeks following the uncovering of the crimes, gay and lesbian organizers came together to hold a press conference, which demonstrates the varied personal responses and organizational demands in the wake of the media coverage and processing of the loss of Milwaukee community members. Scott Gunkel, President of Lambda Rights Network, wrote for his speech given at the July 29th press conference about the organizational goal of the conference. This included “a full scale, comprehensive investigation by outside authorities of the Milwaukee Police Departments failure to protect the citizens who are people of color, gay and lesbian or poor.” Next, he recommended the appointment of “an official liaison for the Milwaukee Police Department to work with the leaders of the gay and lesbian community.” He also requested that the MPD “involve us in creating and implementing ongoing information and education on gay and lesbian issue for all police department staff.” And finally, he wrote that as gay and lesbian organizations, “we call on the Mayor’s office and Fire/Police commission to take a leadership role in meeting our demands” (Gunkel, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). In various ways, these demands were met in the months after the press conference.

The lesbian and gay community in Milwaukee found themselves in a time of mourning while being made a media spectacle for the entertainment of the country, and the world, and organized around this. There was a considerable amount of “anti-gay/lesbian hysteria” that drove media outlets to turn the murders committed by one man into a problem of criminality in the entire lesbian and gay community (LAMM Board of Managers, Box 1, Folder 14). Kitty Barber, the Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee and the Lambda Rights Network took it upon themselves to correct this harmful image by setting up a press conference. With speeches by Barber, Scott Gunkel, Larry Taylor and others, they were able to change the narrative of media

coverage on this case. This was the only example of organizations being able to effectively change the media narrative surrounding this case, especially nationally. Stelly stated that news reporters invaded the inner city “looking for an edge,” meaning that the people living in the neighborhood where these murders occurred were unable to escape the assault of media sensationalism, violence and exploitation of their pain (“Nightmare,” 7/27/91).

Kitty Barber wrote about the use of the phrase “homosexual overkill” in her speech for the press conference. There was no definition or explanation given of this phrase, which encouraged the public to see gay/lesbian people as perpetrators rather than victims of crimes. The term “homosexual overkill” was first popularized in the coverage of the 1990 murder of James Madden by Joachim Dressler. It was used at the beginning of media coverage to sensationalize the Dahmer case, but after gay and lesbian activists and organizations spoke out about this homophobic coverage, almost all references to Dahmer’s sexuality were dropped from reports (Barnard, 2000, p. 70). Barber also wrote that the use of the term ‘homosexual’ in conjunction with the killer encouraged the public to believe violence against gays and lesbians was acceptable, equating the lives of queer people with violence and murder. This, in turn, she argued, “resulted in increased harassment and threats against our already embattled community.” The murders being described as “deviant homosexual behavior,” when the killer never identified himself as gay, becomes irrelevant according to Barber because his behavior was deviant by any standard, and his victim’s sexuality did not add or detract from the horror of his crimes. Barber also wrote that the “media’s racist portrayal of the neighborhood in which these crimes occurred as a place where only drunks, addicts, prostitutes and drug dealers reside... dehumanizes the victims” (Barber, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). Barber was also

interviewed in a radio segment on the news coverage of the murders, and stated that both the Journal and the Sentinel were trying to prove that Dahmer was gay, while simultaneously ignoring the fact that the men he killed were mostly out members of the gay community (“Wisconsin News Magazine Coverage of Dahmer Case,” Mss 347, Box 5, Audio 1).

In addition to the sensationalism present in media coverage, there was outrage from the lesbian and gay community in Milwaukee and elsewhere about the lack of coverage of the many missing persons who turned out to have been murdered. Scott Gunkel, in his speech for the July 29th press conference stated that, “not only were these men the victims of a mass murderer, but also of a police department that did not even NOTICE, much less act on the disappearances of so many young men, most of whom were gay and African American and were last seen in the same neighborhoods” (Gunkel, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). This statement echoes Larry Taylor’s speech, in which he discussed Tony Hughes’ family receiving no help from the police in looking for him (cited in the under-policing section of chapter 3). Taylor identified himself as “speaking on behalf of the Black community and Gay Blacks in particular” (Taylor, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). These statements illuminate the erasure of Black gay life that existed in Milwaukee at this time.

Grief, shock and fear

The responses to the loss of friends, brothers, sons, grandsons, and neighbors cannot be summed up into a few pages. What is presented here is a mere glimpse of the many varied responses that were present, as came through the archives I was able to collect. Pain, fear, resistance, and outrage were themes seen across Black responses to the loss of these men. Many noted their lack of surprise that something like this could happen in Milwaukee. During

the special episode of Tri-Cable Tonight on local reactions to the serial killings of gay men, host Michael Ross wanted the audience to know that they “have to express anger, shock, fear, grief, frustrations and blame” that they were “free to scream, cry, speak whatever you like.” The special’s other host Michael Lisowski added that “if you feel nothing, you feel numb, angry, depressed, bitter, that’s alright” (Mss 206). Ross and Lisowski themselves demonstrate the varying identities that make up the gay community in Milwaukee, with Ross being a younger Black gay man and Lisowski an older white gay man. They both knew some of those who were killed personally.

Fear, pain, and trauma were also evident in the lives of gay and lesbian people living in Milwaukee, especially after the media coverage of the places they frequented as community spaces. Fear of backlash, as the media portrayed Dahmer as a homosexual predator, was present, made real by reports of increased homophobia and violence surrounding the hub of gay bars on South 2nd Street. PTSD was activated, stated Gary Hollander, as “anxiety of it could have been me, I have this man’s phone number in my wallet, I’ve seen him at the bar” swells in the patrons of these establishments (New Tri-Cable Tonight No. 15, Mss 206).

Fear of backlash turned real, as assaults on queer people in Milwaukee swelled during the time after the murders were discovered. The motives of these assaults, Ian Barnard explains, are unclear, as these attackers were either viewing Dahmer as a homosexual killer (forgetting about the homosexuality of his victims) or a homophobe (forgetting about Dahmer’s own homosexuality) (Barnard, 2000). In addition to an increase in crimes committed in person, there was a trend of phone intimidation and threats directed at gay and lesbian people in Milwaukee. Scott Gunkel reported a voicemail left on his home phone that stated “you all got

what you deserve. There will be more of it. And if you don't shut up, you'll be next" (Gunkel, Mss 208, Box 1 Folder 24). Tom Dake, the dean of students at UWM, reported a harassing phone call to the Milwaukee Police Department on July 23rd, 1991. The caller is reported to have said "I killed a sick fucking faggot last night and I feel real good about it. I hate fucking faggots and I hate you mother fucking dildo ass fucking cocksuckers. And I am going to kill another one too" (Dake, Mss 208, box 1 folder 24). This call remains a disturbing reminder of the pervasive hatred of queer people that existed in Milwaukee at this time.

The geography of this case became inscribed with trauma. Dahmer was said to pick up men from places that Milwaukee residents frequented, such as Grand Avenue, and gay bars like Club 219 and La Cage. There was horror fixed onto the Ambassador Hotel, here Steven Walter Tuomi was murdered in 1987. The apartment building where Dahmer had lived and where many of these horrific violent acts were committed, was home to a number of families who were displaced. The Oxford Apartments were razed in November of 1992, and the families that had lived there were offered public housing accommodations ("Community Action Coalition Community Task Force," Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). Larry Taylor wrote in his prepared speech for the press conference on July 29th, 1991, "I cannot look outside my window without seeing this man standing there or walk through the mall without thinking 'It just can't be!'" (Taylor, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 17). For Milwaukee residents of all identities, the haunting of these murders was seen on the streets of the city in their daily lives. Gwen Moore, State Representative, responded by seeking financial aid for the residents of 924 North 25th Street from Wisconsin Attorney General James Doyle ("Moore Requests Aid," 8/3/91). Moore stated "this is the most horrendous and devastating crime to have happen in our neighborhood since I

can remember. The trauma realized by both those living in direct proximity to the tragedy...will be in need of services which will be offered by the state" ("Moore Requests Aid," 8/3/91).

Fears of Dahmer being able to outmaneuver the criminal justice system were present in Black narratives. Multiple articles in *The Milwaukee Courier* went into great detail surrounding the possibility of Dahmer using the insanity defense, and what that could mean for the Black community. Most notably, Stelly wrote "like rounded-up sheep waiting for the inevitable, the Black folk who were trapped and murdered by Dahmer are to be prayed for. But who has it worse: the 'sheep' that have already gone under the blade, or the ones out in the corals (sic), WAITING...?" ("One Man's Opinion," 8/3/91). Farrell emphasizes this fear, after Dahmer's attorney entered a plea of "not guilty by reason of mental disease or defect," by detailing a possibility that Dahmer would be placed in a mental health institute where he would eventually be eligible for trips off the grounds (Farrell, "The Dahmer Situation," 9/14/91). Farrell then called for the African American community to come together to ensure that Dahmer doesn't "beat the system" by demanding "input into the psychiatrists and psychologists" that examine Dahmer.

Blaming, division and denial

Blaming and homophobic and racist responses to the murders were evident in the archives. In the September 14th, 1991 issue of *The Milwaukee Courier*, Reverend Franklin D. Stribling wrote on the "Root of the Problem." He stated that the expansive nature of this case can be seen as "there is no place on the globe that has not been touched by the satanic homosexual cannibalism people eater Jeffrey Dahmer" (Stribling, "The Root of the Problem," 9/14/91). His choice to include "homosexual" between satanic and cannibalism speaks for

itself. Rev. Stribling continues to state that Mayor Norquist must take the blame as the root of the problem, given his role in reducing the number of officers working for MPD. He continues by writing “if the three police officers who were fired for impropriety in the line of duty, thus accountable for the Laotian ladd (sic) and all of Dahmer’s victims thereafter, John O. Norquist must be held accountable for 195 victims in 1990, and 134 victims this year, 1991” (Stribling, “The Root of the Problem,” 9/14/91). This was one of the only times that the sexuality of the men and boys that were killed was acknowledged in coverage of this case in *The Milwaukee Courier*.

Black organizations and newspaper reports were not focused on the gay identity or practices in the lives of those they lost. Lesbian and gay organizations, the larger more institutionally organized ones, were primarily white and did not concern themselves with representing the Black voices often silenced by their whiteness. These examples demonstrate the harmful rift among those impacted by these murders. At the taping of the August 1st episode of Tri-Cable News there were racial tensions bubbling under the surface of the Milwaukee communities that were greatly affected by this tragedy. One audience member, who did not give his name but identified himself as a white gay man who lives in Milwaukee, felt strongly about sharing his reaction. He stared into the camera and said “to the black people of Milwaukee, the next time a black person calls a gay man punk or faggot, remember you’re pushing them away, isolating them and driving them to Dahmer and others that may be lurking out there. So the next time any of you straight black men or women think about calling someone punk or faggot, you remember those dead men” (Mss 206). Dealing with his emotional pain through blame, this man projected his statement on a group of people

mourning the loss of their loved ones just as much as he might have been. This moment is evidence of the divisions further separating Milwaukee residents during this time. In agreement with this community demarcation, Wisconsin State Representative Gwen Moore stated, “everybody was mad at somebody else. It really elucidated the kinds of divisions that exist within the community, black versus white, homosexual versus heterosexual, the community versus the police, the police chief versus the police union” (Barnard, 2000, 87).

Barnard’s analysis acknowledges these divisions by explaining that some of the family members of the victims used evangelical language coded in homophobia to denounce Dahmer. These statements included one quoting the Bible, thanking God for the verdict, and another calling Dahmer “El Diablo” (Barnard, 2000, p. 80). Barnard explained that if “the families of those Dahmer murdered use an evangelical and homophobic coded language to denounce Dahmer, then their efforts to present their sons, brothers etc. as diametrically different from the demonized Dahmer inevitable involve some degree of homosexual panic” (Barnard, 2000, p. 81). In parallel to racist remarks on black on black crime, right-wing hate groups praised Dahmer for the service he provided to society in killing black homosexuals. One person said “too bad Dahmer got caught when he did. He should have killed more of you faggots. He did a service to the community” (Barnard, 2000, p. 83). This is an example of extreme, violent, hatred for Black gay men in response to these murders.

Some of the City’s leaders were determined to turn the blame away from the City and the MPD. Mayor Norquist’s response was documented in a speech given at a press conference on August 2nd 1991, and focused on the lack of municipal responsibility for these crimes in addition to outlining some solutions he would implement in the months following. In this

speech he emphasized that “a vicious, cold-blooded, calculating killer...preyed upon our citizens...caused incomprehensible grief to the families of his victims...preyed on the minds and hearts of the entire community” (“Statement,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). This shirking of blame continued as Norquist reminded the audience that “one man killed his victims – The time has come to stop pointing fingers and looking for someone to blame” (“Statement,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). These sentiments were in response to the many criticisms of the Milwaukee Police Department and municipal government’s role in these murders. Norquist then invited the audience to buy into his solutions, stating “the time has come to heal our wounds and make sure that we create the kind of community where this can never happen again” (“Statement,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). Norquist’s main solution was the appointment of a citizen commission on police-community relations, and a blue-ribbon panel, to work in tandem with the Fire and Police Commission to conduct “an overview of the police department’s performance, responsiveness and sensitivity to the community” (“Statement,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). Norquist suggested that the commission, made up of “community leaders, law enforcement representatives, and experts in the field,” consider police academy training and citizen complaint procedures, and stressed the possibility of implementing community policing policies (“Statement,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). He closed out this statement by reminding the city that it would take pulling together to recover from this terrible tragedy and that we all must “look out for one another, to take care of each other, and support each other” (“Statement,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). This statement only strengthens Stelly’s suspicion of calls for unity, as Norquist began with denying any accountability for these murders and ended with this call.

Every person living in Milwaukee in 1991 was somehow impacted by the Dahmer case and the loss of the men and boys he killed. Responses to this tragedy must be understood as individual, and therefore have to be examined intersectionally and alongside many others. Through the analysis of the responses I found in the archives, themes of resistance, grief, shock, fear, blaming and confusion were paired with plans of organizing and calls for unity. When the responses are analyzed, an underlying frustration and distrust of the MPD becomes clear, both in relation to the case and in everyday lives of people of color and queer people in Milwaukee. Mayor Norquist was aware of this and gave direct order to his Blue Ribbon Commission on Police Community Relations to come up with solutions to prevent something like this from ever happening again.

CHAPTER 5: POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LASTING IMPACT: COMMUNITY POLICING IN MILWAUKEE

As discussed in the previous chapter, many reactions to these murders included recommendations for changes to policies and attitudes within the Milwaukee Police Department. These came from many different people and organizations who represented various identities and experiences. The municipal action taken (somewhat) answered this call, with Mayor Norquist's appointment of the Blue Ribbon Commission, which was tasked with reviewing MPD's functioning as it relates to serving the diverse communities of Milwaukee. Norquist did not hide his desire to have community policing practices implemented within the MPD, and this was found to be the primary recommendation of the BRC when they were done collecting testimony from residents. While many Black Milwaukeeans supported Arreola and his preference for community policing, there were also criticisms of increasing the budget and scope of work of the MPD. The archives in this chapter are primarily from the Lambda Rights Network Records, including documents that discuss the formation of the BRC, and the Jonathan Coleman Papers, which contained a vast collection of written testimony that was sent to the BRC, as well as their full report.

Municipal policy implications

At his first press conference after the murders were discovered, Norquist announced the appointment of the Blue Ribbon Commission, aka the Citizen Commission on Police-Community Relations, as well as a variety of other municipal actions. Norquist stated

I have directed the Milwaukee commission on neighborhood and community relations to recommend cost-effective ways to improve communication with

residents whose first language is not English. I have directed the department of employee relations to improve the diversity training of all city employees, in every department, to better serve the public. I am asking council president Donegan to direct the common council task force on sexual assault and domestic violence to examine laws and statutes which govern situations of abuse, and to provide the tools and public education required to make certain the Sinthasomphone case is never repeated. Previously, I had assigned public works commissioner John Bolden to coordinate efforts by the health department, city development, employee relations and other city agencies to help the immediate neighborhood...where these crimes were committed (“Statement,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8).

These actions demonstrate an acknowledgement from Norquist that there were places within Milwaukee’s municipal government that needed to be addressed in order to improve the quality of life for marginalized people in Milwaukee, as well as provide direct assistance to those who were most effected by the murders. Norquist did not, however, address the criticisms coming from organizations and individuals as far as direct culpability of municipal government, including the MPD, in Dahmer’s ability to commit murder at the scale and rate that he did.

Formation of the Blue Ribbon Commission

The formation of the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC), also known as the citizen commission on community police relations, was intended to “examine the Milwaukee Police Department’s responsiveness and sensitivity to diversity within the community” (“Mayor

Announces Members of Blue Ribbon Commission,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). However, the formation of the BRC is evidence of Mayor Norquist ignoring the many demands of community organizations, as he appointed majority white people connected to prestigious Milwaukee institutions. Mayor Norquist appointed Fr. DiUlio to chair of this commission, as he was the president of Marquette University at the time and had demonstrated a “personal commitment to Milwaukee and Marquette’s role in uniting community members to improve safety, relations, education and business in the Marquette neighborhood” (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss 218, Box 1, Folder 1). Critiques of DiUlio as chair of the Blue Ribbon Commission were given based on Marquette’s demonstrated homophobia. At the time of his appointment, DiUlio had only served one year as president. But during this time, “the Dean of students at Marquette...had worked hard to insure that the fledgling gay/lesbian student group not be allowed to become part of campus life” (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 1).

Other members included Gary Hollander, professor in psychiatry at the UW School of Medicine, Joseph A. Kalivoda, retired from MPD’s Police Training Bureau as director in 1990, Carol Latham, an executive director of the Wisconsin Department of Justice’s Office on Crime Victim Services and Reverend Leroy Mixon of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church (“Mayor Announces Members,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). Also serving on the commission was Jose Olivieri, partner at the law firm of Michael, Best & Friedrich and board president of United Community Center, Shoua Nao Xiong, executive director of Lao Family Inc., Wesley L. Scott, a consultant of urban planning for the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce and former director of the Milwaukee Urban League, and Stan Stojkovic, professor of criminal justice at UWM (“Mayor

Announces Members,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 8). Studying the appointment of members to this commission is interesting given that some, including Hollander, Latham, Rev. Mixon, Olivieri, Xiong and Scott, are representative of communities who lost loved ones. On the other hand, DiUlio, Kalivoda and Stojkovic, demonstrate Norquist’s investment in policing and traditional systems of academic knowledge.

Interviews¹⁰ shed further light onto their personal motivations for accepting appointment to the Blue Ribbon Commission (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss 218, Box 1, Folder 1). Most wanted to make things better for Black, gay, and otherwise marginalized people in Milwaukee. Gary Hollander, an out gay man who worked within the medical community and the gay and lesbian community, hoped “to insure that the vital concerns of gays and lesbians” would “be presented and understood” (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 1). Carol Latham, an African American woman, was “deeply touched by the losses in the Dahmer tragedy” and worked within the criminal justice system with victims, the police and “the rest of the system” (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 1). Pastor Leroy Mixon serves a predominantly African American congregation in Sherman Park and over the years “had a number of his church members share their sexual identity” with him (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 1). Jose Olivieri, a leader in the “emerging Hispanic community,” felt that he was in a place to respond to the needs of emerging communities with “unique needs” (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss

¹⁰ These interviews were conducted by Ralph F. Navarro for an article titled “Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought” in the 8/9/91 issue of *Wisconsin IN Step*, a local gay and lesbian newspaper. In his notes for this article, which is the archival source for this section, he states that Kalivoda and Xiong who could not be reached for an interview before the deadline.

208, Box 1, Folder 1). Wesley Scott, PhD., an African American leader, had “never been concerned with sexuality or race, rather he has spent his life trying to resolve injustice and problems in people’s lives” (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 1). Finally, Stan Stojkovic, PhD., stated that “he was disgusted with the victimization of victims, blaming the gay community for Jeffrey Dahmer...was totally unacceptable as well as irrelevant,” and had experience as a resource to the MPD command staff as well as his experience teaching criminal justice courses (“Gay/Lesbian Testimony Sought,” Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 1). When reading about the personal motivations to accept their appointments to the BRC, one gets a sense of hope that they would be able to hear the concerns of Milwaukee residents and make recommendations to the Mayor on what changes needed to be implemented within the MPD.

The Blue Ribbon Commission held community hearings and received hundreds of pages of written testimony from citizens of Milwaukee. In their report to the mayor, the commission outlined their methodology as “a combination of hearing public testimony and consulting specialists in policing and community relations” (Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 3, p. 2). They held two hearings in September of 1991, one at North Division High School and one at South Division High School, and held meetings with targeted groups including “elected officials, community-based organizations, members of the clergy, members of the Southeast Asian community, and members of the gay and lesbian community” (p. 2). They met with MPD command staff, representatives from the police officer’s union, “organizations of African American and Hispanic officers,” policing academics, the City Labor Negotiator and the Director of Employee Relations for the City (p. 2). Overall, they concluded that “good relationships and effective policing are best fostered by community-oriented policing with appropriate training, in a Department which

values both its own diversity and the community's" ("A Report to Mayor John O. Norquist," Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 3, p. i). In short, the BRC recommended the MPD adopt community policing which would improve police-community relations and aid in establishing mutual respect between police and residents.

Community policing was defined by the BRC in "A Report to Mayor John O. Norquist and the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners" (Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 13). They wrote that

Community policing is a philosophy which broadens the focus of police accountability and stresses community involvement in combatting crime and disorder. The purpose of community policing is to meet the needs of the community, as determined jointly by police and members of the community. Community policing [will] build trust and cooperation with residents...so that they will provide information and assistance. We believe the role of a police department is to enhance the quality of life by enforcing the law, preserving the peace, reducing fear of crime, and providing a safe environment...[and] that Community-Oriented Policing will be a major factor in the Milwaukee Police Department fulfilling that role (pp. 13, 15).

Thus, community policing proposes "police accountability," "community involvement," and community decision-making with police. When this definition is analyzed alongside testimonies made to the BRC on how individuals and organizations envisioned police reform in Milwaukee, it becomes clear that the legitimation of state power was valued over the needs and requests of citizens. The BRC was convened because the state (the local state, i.e. the city of Milwaukee)

faced a crisis of legitimacy in the popular dissent over the handlings of the Dahmer case, and this can be seen in the BRC's definitions of COP.

Family members of the Dahmer victims, as they called themselves, explicitly asked for justice, respect and sensitivity (Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2). They had a list of 17 recommendations that included having mixed-race squad cars patrol in Black neighborhoods, increased awareness of supervisors as to what happens on the beat, respectful communication from officers, revision of missing person procedures, investigation into violations of probation and parole procedures in the Dahmer case, cultural, gender and sexuality trainings for officers, and review and revision of the crime victim compensation law (Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2). The Lao Association of Wisconsin, as discussed in the previous chapter, asked for "more protection [for] the Laotian living in Milwaukee" which included hiring officers that speak Lao (Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 2). Working from these testimonies and demands, I will demonstrate that COP, as it was defined and proposed by the BRC, fails to address the tangible procedure and policy requests made by the families and communities whose members were killed by Dahmer. COP requires increased contact between police and those most often criminalized, which will lead to early death for queer people of color.

The commission stated that in 1960, the population of Milwaukee was 741,324 and 90% white, in 1980 the population was 636,212 and was 71% white. In 1990, 45.2% of residents under the age of 18 in Milwaukee were African American (p. 4). The report also cited that "Milwaukee is a racially segregated city...the inner-city districts report the lowest incomes in the City, and a high percentage of housing stock in sub-standard condition or vacant and boarded up" (p. 4). In 1989, Milwaukee had 3.2 sworn police personnel for every 1,000

residents, while other cities of at least 250,000 people averaged 2.7 per 1,000 residents. At the time this report was released, “three-fourths of the Department, including all those in the ranks of Captain and above, joined the Department while Harold Breier was Chief” (p. 9). A survey conducted by the FPC in 1981 found that there was “great racial polarization between Whites and African-Americans – with Hispanics in between – on ratings of the relationship between the MPD and the African-American community” (p. 10). Black residents believed MPD used “more force when restraining and arresting minority subjects...treat[ed] minorities worse than whites” (p. 10). There was also a difference in perceptions of officers as “honest, cooperative” and as having “the public’s best interest at heart” (p. 10). The survey also found that Black officers had an overwhelmingly negative relationship with the MPD and were dissatisfied “with promotional opportunities and assignment practices. At that time, there were no African-American officers above the rank of sergeant, and few on special squads” (p. 10). It was determined that “the most important problem currently facing the Commission and the Department [was] the substantial alienation of a major portion of Black Milwaukeeans from their police department” (p. 10). This description of changing demographics in Milwaukee as well as racial segregation statistics demonstrated that the commission was aware of the conditions at work in Milwaukee (discussed in Chapter 3) that allowed 16 men and boys to be killed by one man in four years.

A direct connection can be traced from the murders committed by Jeffrey Dahmer to the implementation of community-oriented policing in Milwaukee. At the end of the press conference on October 15th, Fr. DiUlio stated that this commission was born out of crisis (Mss 152, Tape 74). From the moment Norquist appointed the BRC, he made it clear that they were looking to implement community-oriented policing, a program that demands increased funding

to police. Chief Philip Arreola, appointed by the Fire and Police Commission, came to the MPD as “an advocate of community-oriented policing” while Breier stated of community-oriented policing:

you can take community policing and stick it in your ear...a police officer doesn't have the training to take care of all the social ills of the city...he should be so busy maintaining law and order that he doesn't have time for that crap...When I was chief we were relating to the good people, and we were relating to the other people too – we were throwing those people in the can (p. 9).

This quote from former police chief Breier demonstrates the radical nature of COP for the MPD at this time. Many officers had spent their career in the department under Breier, who had no problem ranking citizens on the basis of “good” or not, and therefore had never been held accountable to the needs of the many diverse communities in the city of Milwaukee. This helps to understand why so many believed that community policing policies would better circumstances in Milwaukee.

Upon the release of the report presented to Mayor Norquist by the Blue Ribbon Commission, on October 15th, 1991, the mayor held a press conference to update the city on the work that had been done and the work being proposed for the future of the department and police community relations in Milwaukee. Most notably, Norquist announced that the recommendations put forth would mean increasing the budget of the police department, even as the previous two years already saw an increase to the department's budget. He reasoned this stating that “it's important to have the best most efficient anti-crime effort that we can have and that happens when we have close cooperation between the people and their

department. He stated the goal of making the police department “more effective for all of us” including “all the good people of Milwaukee, whatever race, whatever sexual preference, whatever ethnic background, whatever language” (Mss 152, Tape 74).

While this change in policing was asked for by some affected by this tragedy, such as lesbian and gay organizations and some of the Black community, others had criticisms of increasing police funding and control. Citing Franz Fanon, Matthew Stelly wrote “a racist in a culture of racism is therefore, normal. When the police say ‘to protect and serve’ they do not say that this applies to everyone...in reality the police have acted in the only way that they know how: as suburban individuals who see the inner city as a stigma to be wiped off the face of the earth. By calling for more officers, Black civil leaders are actually paving way for their own undermining and destruction” (“Dahmer III,” 8/17/91). Stelly also wrote that “In a city that already has more police per capita than any other city its size, the issue is not bringing in more cops. The issue is making sure that the ones who are on the force take care of business and stop playing games with the life chances of Black residents” (“Dahmer III,” 8/17/91). This supports the literature that argues “the best way to decrease police abuse is to give police the smallest possible role in social life” (Seigel, p. 3, 2018).

Policy implications – community oriented policing in the MPD

The implementation of community-oriented policing was tasked to Police Chief Arreola. In their report, the BRC gave Arreola 90 days (until 1/15/92) to convene a police-community work group that included “residents and business people from various areas of the city, with representation from the African-American, Native American, Hispanic, Southeast Asian, gay and

lesbian, and other racial, ethnic, and cultural communities” (Mss 152, Box 11, Folder 3, p. 15).

The implementation plan needed to include:

a lay explanation of what C-O-P will mean to Milwaukee, an explanation of how community representatives will be involved at each step of the process, and how those representatives will be chosen, implementation steps, with target dates for each step, what each step is expected to accomplish, and criteria for evaluation, how strategies for crime reduction and reduction in drug activity will fit into the plan, structural changes which will be made within the MPD to foster the principles of C-O-P, [and] how training, supervision, and evaluation will reflect the new philosophy (p. 15).

This gave clear expectations to the department as far as what needed to occur in order to see the benefits of community policing policies within the MPD.

Support for Arreola’s leadership style was demonstrated throughout the archives of this time. He took actions that were unprecedented in enacting policy and taking disciplinary action against officers; and his actions were praised by a range of community leaders. Felmers Chaney, president of the Milwaukee chapter of the NAACP, echoed many other Black leaders in Milwaukee who understood that the termination and suspension of the officers involved in the Sinthasomphone case as revolutionary for Milwaukee. Chaney stated “I've been in this city for 50 years and this is the first time that someone was suspended outright...the chief did his job when he suspended those three officers...no other chief of police has ever done that” (Stelly, “Black Leaders Speak Out,” 8/3/91). Interestingly, the Milwaukee Police Association was on

record as opposing chief Arreola's decision to suspend the officers ("Wisconsin News Magazine Coverage," Mss 347, Box 5, Audio 1).

Rev. Jesse Jackson, on his visit to Milwaukee, spoke to thousands at St. Luke's Emanuel Baptist Church. His speech was in support of Arreola's commitment to creating change and healing in the city. Arreola was met with a standing ovation and chants of "don't step down!" (Agnew, "Rev. Jackson Praises Arreola," 8/17/91). Arreola also had the support of the Milwaukee Brotherhood of Firefighters (African American Firefighters Association), as he instituted community policing and demonstrated his support of the African American community through his promotion and appointment decisions (Stelly, "Brown: Elements of Racism Still Exist," 8/17/91). Matthew Stelly, who until this point had written only critically about policing overall and the MPD in particular, wrote a piece titled "Artison and Arreola: Models of Integrity for Racist Milwaukee" in the September 14th, 1991 issue of the *Milwaukee Courier*. He wrote that "Sherriff Richard Artison and Police Chief Arreola are law enforcement officials whose progressive ideas and contributions to Milwaukee oftentimes go unnoticed...let the following remarks serve as a major endorsement of both of these men...Arreola is...a man of color who...is trying to provide a moral standard in a department that has a tradition of immorality" (Stelly, "Artison and Arreola," 9/14/91).

While community policing policies were the main lasting policy changes that came out of this tragedy, many citizens were asking for better processes to file a complaint against the MPD. Milwaukee's Fire and Police Commission (FPC) was created in 1985 to separate issues of public safety from politics. The FPC serves many functions, including overseeing all aspects of Fire Department and Police Department operations, for example, investigating and monitoring

citizen complaints and disciplining employees for misconduct. However, these duties have not always been so well outlined. In 1992 the FPC updated their citizen complaint procedure, which was intended to respond to community concern regarding the length of time complaints took to work through the system, unclear and unposted guidelines, and lack of assistance to complainants (FPC, Mss 208, Box 1, Folder 7). The procedure was updated to include specific steps and guidelines of complaint operations, from filing of complaint to trial and decision. These changes were made in response to concerns that had been voiced from communities of color, gay and lesbian people and other marginalized people, but only in response to the horrific bumbling(s) of the law and protection of citizens that became evident in the case at hand. This policy change can be seen as originating out of the concerns of people who were most affected by the murders of 16 young men and boys, and the systemic violence that exists in racialized and sexually othered people. There were also calls for radical pro-Black policies from Black politicians, journalists and intellectuals that were not implemented.

The formation of the BRC and their subsequent recommending of community policing policies can be understood as reasoned through the Dahmer murders. While Norquist had been urging the addition of COP to MPD practices before the Dahmer murders came to light, it was only made possible through the appointment of FPC members who would then appoint pro-COP Phillip Arreola as chief and Norquist's suggestion to the BRC to take special consideration of community policing policies. It has been demonstrated that everyone involved in the application of community policing in the MPD was hopeful that these policies would make relations better between police and residents. They genuinely believed that by implementing these policies, they would prevent anything like this from happening in Milwaukee again. The

failure of these policies, however, is that they did not address the underlying conditions of racial capitalism, intersectional violence and white supremacist policing that condoned these murders. This failure is evident as of the 2010s, with the blatant police violence that spurred Black activism for police reform in Milwaukee.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This thesis was written in the hopes that, upon reading, people may realize the ways that white supremacy, racial capitalism, and settler colonialism create necropolitical conditions in the lives of queer people of color and otherwise marginalized people. This thesis contributes an academic understanding of the devaluation of the lives of queer people, especially those who are racialized as non-white, by studying the serial murders of 16 men and boys in Milwaukee. Once we acknowledge the complete identities of the 16 men and boys who were killed in Milwaukee by Jeffrey Dahmer, it becomes clear that those with multiply-marginalized identities are exponentially more exposed to state sanctioned violence.

It was a challenge to fully center the 16 men and boys who were killed. There was very little biographical information about them available in the archives I reviewed. The racism and homophobia that allowed them to be killed also functioned to erase and silence them and others like them – queer people of color – and meant that it was difficult to find similarly intersectional voices in the archives. The details I was able to include about Konerak Sinthasomphone’s life and death demonstrate the care that, ideally, would go into the telling of their stories. These details were available in the archives because of the many popular media accounts of this sensational story, and the publicly released records of police failings (i.e. 911-call tapes, legal testimony). This is the biggest gap in the narrative here, the voices of the men whose stories have not been told will continue to be silenced by my research. Without these narratives, the lives of Steven, James, Richard, Anthony, Raymond, Edward, Ernest, David, Curtis, Errol, Tony, Konerak, Matt, Jeremiah, Oliver and Joseph cannot truly be centered over their murderer’s life, but every attempt has been made to do so.

Archives from the time that these murders occurred demonstrate a generally racist and homophobic police department in place, with many residents and municipal actors echoing this sentiment. While some of the people most affected by these murders called for unity, there was a sense that this would not be enough to prevent violence like this from happening again, especially given the white supremacist systems that had supported Dahmer as a serial murder. Demands for radical changes in policing came from many directions, including Black community organizations, Black journalists and politicians, gay and lesbian organizations, the Lao Association of Wisconsin and others. Mayor Norquist used this tragedy as reasoning to implement community oriented policing policies within the MPD, policies which were supposed to prevent violence, but at the same time expanded the MPD's budget and authority.

This research is important because there are still instances of epistemic and material violence occurring in the city of Milwaukee. These cases demonstrate that systems of settler colonialism, racial capitalism and homophobia continue to promote racialized and homophobic violence and are still in place today. On May 11th, 2018, a failed 911 call led to the death of Dennis King, a Black 15 year old. Malik Terrell called 911 to report that he had beaten King and planned to kill him. The 911 operator misheard Terrell and recorded the address as 10th Street instead of 12th Street. When police arrived, the address on 10th Street did not exist. "The dispatcher didn't ask the operator to double-check the address, newly released records show. And the operator didn't verify the address with the caller before she typed it in" (Luthern, 2019). King's remains were found, his body had been put in a garbage cart inside a vacant home and set on fire. Terrell was sentenced to life in prison and the judge called this "the most heinous, vicious, violent, sadistic, and depraved homicide this community has seen in many

years” (Luthern, 2019). Chief of Police Alfonso Morales overruled the internal affairs investigation that found the 911 operator violated department procedures, deciding not to discipline anyone involved, mandate retraining, or issue any formal reminders of department procedures. This case is multi-faceted and does not fit exactly into the narrative of the Dahmer murders, but the similarities in lack of attention paid by the MPD to sustaining young Black lives is startling.

Further demonstrating the continued over-policing of multiply-marginalized men in Milwaukee are the deaths of two Black men at the hands of MPD officers. On April 30th, 2014, Dontre Hamilton was shot 14 times and killed by an officer while he was resting unarmed, in Red Arrow Park. Hamilton was known to struggle with his mental health, as he had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, and was off his medication at the time of his death (Moore, 2015). On August 13th, 2016, Sylville Smith was shot by an MPD officer after a traffic stop, leading to mass uprisings in the Sherman Park neighborhood. Smith also had “a history of mental health issues” according to his school records (Momodu, 2018). Organizing surrounding police violence has continued in Milwaukee, with Hamilton’s mother, Maria Hamilton, founding Mothers for Justice, and his brother Nate Hamilton founding the Coalition for Justice (Rytlewski, 2017). UBLAC (Uplifting Black Liberation and Community) was founded by a member of the Coalition for Justice, Markasa Tucker, as a coalition of women and trans activists (Rytlewski, 2017). The Sherman Phoenix has become a site for Black Milwaukee to come together in community building and resistance, as it rose from the literal ashes that were left at the site after the 2016 Sherman Park uprisings. These cases demonstrate the continued devaluation of

multiply-marginalized lives, as well as the continued resistance to deathly conditions by Milwaukee's Black residents.

As I write this, it is April 5th, 2020, a week and a half into Governor Tony Evers's four-week "Safer at Home" order that is intended to slow the spread of COVID-19. In Milwaukee, Mayor Tom Barrett issued a similar order. As of April 3rd, "African Americans made up almost half of Milwaukee County's 945 cases and 81% of its 27 deaths in a county whose population is 26% black" (Johnson & Buford, 2020). Again and again, systems of racial capitalism, including incarceration, differential access to housing, healthcare, and employment, become the main factors in determining who is allowed to live and who must die. Until the MPD and the city of Milwaukee take active steps to sustain the lives of its residents of color, poor people, queer people and those experiencing mental illness, we will not cease to see the premature deaths of marginalized people.

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APPENDIX A

List of Archives Used:

1. The Lambda Rights Network Records, UWM Manuscript Collection 208, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Box 1, Folder 3, Agendas
 - b. Box 1, Folder 7, Citizen Complaint Procedure, Fire and Police Commission, 1991-1992
 - c. Box 1, Folder 8, Citizen's Commission on Police Community Relations, 1991
 - d. Box 1, Folder 9, Clippings 1987-1992, undated
 - e. Box 1, Folder 12, Community Block Watch Program, 1991
 - f. Box 1, Folder 13, Community Speak Out, 1989
 - g. Box 1, Folder 14, Correspondence, 1987-1992, undated
 - h. Box 1, Folder 17, Dahmer, Community Response, 1991
 - i. Box 1, Folder 21, Grant Applications?
 - j. Box 1, Folder 24, Harassment Complaints, 1987-1993
2. Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee Records, UWM Manuscript Collection 289, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Box 1, folder 10, Committee and Council Report and notes, 1990-2000
 - b. Box 1, Folder 14, Dahmer Trial, Response, 1991-1992
3. The Human Rights League for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgendered Records, UWM Manuscript Collection 210, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Box 1, Folder 1, Anti-Gay/Lesbian Violence in 1994 (report), 1995
 - b. Box 1, Folder 25, Chicago Anti-Violence Project, 1994, undated
 - c. Box 1, Folder 26, Chief of Police Arthur Jones, 1st Year Performance, Undated
 - d. Box 1, Folder 36, COP Advisory Committee
 - e. Box 1, Folder 37, COP Coalition, Education and Outreach Committee, 1991-1992
 - f. Box 2, Folder 1, COP Coalition General, 1991
 - g. Box 2, Folder 2, COP Coalition Minutes, 1992-1994
 - h. Box 2, Folder 3, COP Coalition, Neighborhood Network Center, undated
 - i. Box 2, Folder 4, COP Coalition, Police Foundation Report, 1993
 - j. Box 2, Folder 5, COP Coalition, Program Subcommittee, 1992
 - k. Box 2, Folder 13, Hate Crime Statistics (US Department of Justice Publication), 1992
 - l. Box 2, Folder 30, NGLTF, Anti-Gay/Lesbian Violence
 - m. Box 2, Folder 31, NGLTF Hate Crimes Reports, 1992
 - n. Box 2, Folder 32, Police Sensitivity Training Correspondence, 1992-1994, undated
 - o. Box 2, Folder 33, Police Sensitivity Training Committee, Manual, 1996?
 - p. Box 3, Folder 1, Police Sensitivity Training Committee, Meeting with Police Chief Arthur Jones, 1996
 - q. Box 3, Folder 2, Police Sensitivity Training Committee, Meetings 1994-1997

4. Jonathan Coleman Papers, 1976-1997, UWM Manuscript Collection 152, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Tape 74, Blue Ribbon Commission, Press Conference
 - b. Box 10, Folder 13, COP Implementation Committee Speech, undated
 - c. Box 10, Folder 16, Dahmer, Jeffrey, 1991
 - d. Box 10, Folder 29, "How Milwaukee Boomed but Left its Blacks Behind," 1991
 - e. Box 11, Folder 2, Mayors Blue Ribbon Commission on Police/Community Relations, 1991
 - f. Box 11, Folder 3, Mayors Citizen Commission on Police-Community Relations, Report to Mayor and the Board of FPC, 1991
5. Dave Berkman Papers, 1958-2016, UWM Manuscript Collection 347, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Box 5, Audio 1, "Wisconsin News Magazine on Coverage of Dahmer Case", 8/4/91
6. Ralph Navarro Papers, UWM Manuscript Collection 218, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Box 1, Folder 1, Citizen Commission on Police-Community Relations, 1991
7. Queer Nation Milwaukee Records, UWM Manuscript Collection 303, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Box 1, Folder 3, Flyers, 1992, undated
 - b. Box 1, Folder 4, Demonstration, Fight Racism & Homophobia, 1991
 - c. Box 1, Folder 5, History of Queer Nation, 1991-1992
 - d. Box 1, Folder 6, Mark Belling & Colders, 1991, undated
 - e. Box 1, Folder 7, Police Harassment, 1992, undated
8. Milwaukee Gay/Lesbian Cable Network Records, 1987-1994, UWM Manuscript Collection 206, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Tri-Cable Tonight No. 7, May 1988
 - b. Tri-Cable Tonight No. 8, June 1988
 - c. New Tri-Cable Tonight No. 11, June-July 1991
 - d. New Tri-Cable Tonight No. 14, Aug 1, 1991
 - e. New Tri-Cable Tonight No. 15, Aug-Sept 1991
9. Milwaukee Journal Stations Records, UWM Manuscript Collection 203, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
 - a. Some Call Them Gay - September 24th, 1973 - WTMJ - Jim Cummins
10. Milwaukee African American Newspapers and Magazines, Milwaukee Public Library Periodicals Department at the MPL Central Library.
 - a. *The Milwaukee Courier*, March 1991-September 1991
 - b. *Milwaukee Star*, April 1991-September 1991

APPENDIX B

"What Black Milwaukee Wants the Nation to Know." Mss 152, Box 10, Folder 16.

What Black Milwaukee Wants The Nation To Know

The Jeffery Dahmer case will go down in history as one of the most brutal crimes of our time. Many people are interested in knowing how a human being could commit such a gruesome act. Dahmer, who has confessed to killing over 17 men: 12 Blacks, 2 Hispanics, 2 Whites and 1 Laotian. His cannibalistic murder spree only came to a halt when an intended victim escaped.

What conditions would allow such a killer to go on so long?

Employment- The unemployment rate in Milwaukee is five times greater among African Americans than whites. African Americans are subjected to extensive background checks before being considered for employment. It is evident that Dahmer, a white male, did not get this same treatment before being hired by the personnel department at Ambrosia Chocolate Factory.

Housing- Because of the location and racial makeup of the occupants of the building there was no follow up on complaints about the stench coming from Jeffery Dahmer's apartment.

Law Enforcement- As we have known in our community for many years, racism, harassment, abuse, slow or no response to calls has been the rule not the exception in the Milwaukee Police Department. These conditions made it possible for Dahmer to commit such crimes.

These conditions can no longer be tolerated.

We will by " Any means necessary" continue to protest until we receive total freedom, equality, liberty and justice for African Americans.