

Chapter 4

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Fort Sam Houston at San Antonio, Texas, where he took medical specialist training.

On July 13, 1979, he was assigned as a medical aid man to the 2nd Battalion, 68th Armored Regiment, 8th Infantry Division, and sent to Baumholder.

"He was an average or slightly above average soldier in the first year," Goss recounted. "I was a clinical specialist. He was a combat medic. At the aid station, I'd go back to diagnose a patient, and he was right there with me. Eager to learn."

Goss, who today is an operating room equipment technician in Holland, Mich., offered the following glimpses of Dahmer's time in the Army:

■ He was a loner with no close friends, and frequently would leave the base in a cab on Friday, not to be seen again until Saturday or Sunday.

■ There were no problems with alcohol in his first year in Germany, but toward the end of his second year, he had had enough of the military and wanted out, regardless of what he had to do.

■ Unlike others who surrounded themselves with remembrances of family and home, "Jeff didn't have that. His room was set up strictly militarily. He didn't have any pictures of his home. . . I never saw a picture of his parents. I don't ever remember him getting any mail."

■ He seldom spoke about his family. "I didn't even know he had a brother. He just mentioned his father, mother and grandmother. The only thing he said about his mother and father, he said they recently divorced. . . He said he didn't feel welcome around their houses."

■ He didn't talk about girlfriends. He didn't talk about sex at all. But when the subject of homosexuality came up, he spoke against the gay lifestyle.

■ He read books and magazines occasionally, was smart and could carry on "a lengthy and intelligent conversation on any subject."

■ His heavy drinking started near the end of the year in 1980, when he would go on three-to-five-day binges. "It started to affect his job and appearance. He started missing work. He would come to work at battalion aid station under the influence. You could smell it on his breath. He'd be staggering. Or he wouldn't show up for work."

■ In his last year, other soldiers made fun of him because he was drunk most of the time. They'd say something cruel, but he didn't lash out at or hit anybody. During his last six months in Germany, he "stayed in his bed, drinking, cracking jokes. He was too drunk. He'd screw up on the punch line and then he'd laugh."

Above all else, there were two things about Dahmer that stuck out in Goss' mind:

One was their parting conversation at the airport, and the other was what Goss termed Dahmer's "secret."

"Let me explain something about Jeffrey Dahmer," Goss said. "I've dealt with many people in the Army. He was the one person - he could talk to me about anything, family problems with his mother and father, that he didn't get along with either one, that's why he'd stay with his grandmother - but there was something that was bugging him in Germany."

"He'd say there was something he could not talk about. He's the only one (in the platoon) who had something he couldn't talk about. I'd say, 'There's something bugging you, isn't there?' He'd say, 'Yes, but I can't discuss it with you.'"

Their last conversation is one that haunts Goss today.

"Some day you'll hear about me again," Dahmer told him.

"When he said that, I thought: Well good, he's going to go home, make something out of his life and be successful," Goss said. "I took it as meaning that he was going to pick the pieces up and make something of himself."

But today, Goss is not so sure about what he meant and what was lurking behind Dahmer's secret.

"I knew he had a troubled past and I knew he had something that was gnawing at him. . . I feel like I need to get in my car and go to Milwaukee and sit down with Jeff and say, 'Is this (the slaying of Steven Hicks) what was gnawing at you inside?'"

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That proves nothing, of course, but police there, like police elsewhere, have an astounding array of grotesque, unsolved "motiveless killings," and they are dumping a mountain of requests on Milwaukee police these days for details on the whereabouts of Jeffrey Dahmer.

Some of those requests are more significant than others.

For instance, unlike Wisconsin and Ohio, Florida had the death penalty at the time of the Walsh slaying.

During the six months Dahmer spent in Florida, his father reported little contact with him. In an interview with the Milwaukee Sentinel, Lionel Dahmer credited his wife, Shari, with getting Jeffrey to return to Ohio.

But the time back in Ohio apparently didn't last long, either.

On Oct. 7, 1981, Jeffrey Dahmer went into Maxwell's Lounge at the Ramada Inn in Bath Township with an open bottle of vodka and refused to leave.

He was escorted to the parking lot and, when police came, he threatened to kick one of the officers in the groin.

Dahmer, who was reportedly unable to get out of the back of the cruiser without assistance, was arrested for having an open container of liquor, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

He was fined \$60 and costs and got a 10-day jail sentence, which was suspended.

It was nothing all that new for the Dahmer family.

From the time he was 18 or so, his father said in the interview, Jeffrey would borrow the father's car, start drinking and leave the car anywhere.

Later he roamed around bars, stayed until after closing time, demanding more to drink, and several times got into a fight and was hurt.

So Jeffrey Dahmer left Ohio and moved into the home of his paternal grandmother, Catherine Dahmer, in West Allis, Wis., a suburb of Milwaukee.

If the records of his life can be believed, she was the one member of his family he loved.

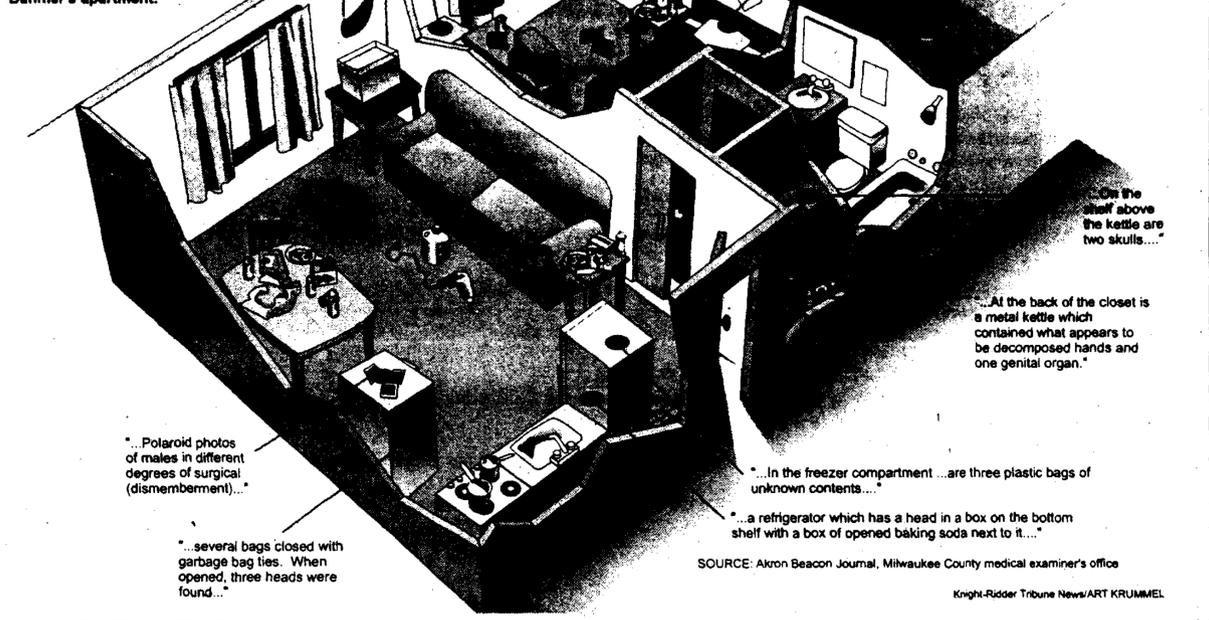
He planted roses for her and kept her lawn mowed.

But she didn't know until much later that he killed people in her basement.

From late in 1981 until he was laid off sometime the next year, Dahmer worked as a phlebotomist

Inside Dahmer's apartment

What the Milwaukee medical examiner reported seeing 15 minutes after police found a handcuffed man fleeing Jeffrey Dahmer's apartment.



SOURCE: Akron Beacon Journal, Milwaukee County medical examiner's office

Knight-Ridder Tribune News/ART KRUMMEL

- one who draws blood - at Milwaukee Blood Plasma Inc.

On Aug. 8, 1982, he was arrested for disorderly conduct by the Wisconsin State Fair Park Police after he reportedly exposed himself.

Wisconsin authorities would not disclose the details of what he did. But he was convicted and fined.

In 1983 and 1984, despite the efforts of his grandmother and her church, Dahmer apparently had no luck finding a job.

During that period, there are few clues to what he did with his time.

Then, on Jan. 15, 1985, he landed a job as a mixer at the Ambrosia Chocolate Co. in downtown Milwaukee for \$8.25 an hour.

Later, when he was in trouble again, he filled out a questionnaire that asked, among other things, about his job skills.

He responded: "I know how to mix chocolate - that's about it."

This time, his scrape with the law was a little more significant.

On Sept. 8, 1986, two 12-year-old boys told police that Dahmer was standing on the banks of the Kinnickinnic River with his pants around his thighs masturbating, and when one of the boys asked him if he was having a good time, he responded: "Yeah, I'm having a great time."

The arresting officer said Dahmer confessed to him that he had done the same thing "about five other times, all over the last month. . . (and that) he doesn't know what changed to make him suddenly start doing this, and that he knows he has a problem and wants to get help."

Dahmer was found guilty of disorderly conduct and was put on probation for a year.

By September 1988, Dahmer had apparently worn out his welcome at his grandmother's house. The final

straw came when she discovered him in the basement with a man.

It is not clear from the various accounts exactly what the grandmother saw or why it became the impetus for the father to get Dahmer to move.

Lionel Dahmer said he also investigated the grandmother's complaint of a bad smell coming from the garage, even though the garbage men already had taken away whatever it was that smelled and all that remained was "a little, slimy black viscous residue in the garage."

And he told the Milwaukee paper that Jeffrey finally made an embarrassing confession that "I just had too much time on my hands and I just wanted to see what chemicals would decompose the chicken I bought."

"He said he had free time and having free time was bad for him. He's a bus rider and he said he saw

a raccoon that had died, so he got off the bus and took it home to experiment with, too.

"I said 'God, Jeff, this is strange. This is weird.'"

Yet the father insisted that aside from his son bleaching some chicken bones when he was 10 or 11, Jeffrey showed no curiosity involving chemicals or dead animals.

In the Milwaukee Journal, however, the stepmother, Shari Dahmer, offered a little different recollection:

"Because his father's a chemist, Jeff used to take animals and melt them down to the bone," she said.

Jeffrey Dahmer, of course, later confessed that he was doing more than melting down chickens and raccoons at his grandmother's house.

He apparently was melting down human beings.

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Jeff's prior generic caseload parole officers, I have tremendous reservations regarding Jeff's chances when he hits the streets.

"Every incident, including the most recent conviction for sex offense, has been associated with and initiated by alcohol in Jeff's case."

"I sincerely hope that you might intervene in some way to help my son, who I love very much and for whom I want a better life."

He concluded prophetically: "This may be our last chance to institute something lasting."

On the following day, March 2, 1990, the judge let Jeffrey Dahmer out of jail.

Whether he had received and read his father's plea is not clear.

But by then, it was too late for some.

Dahmer already had butchered and discarded the remains of at least five human beings.

Indeed, six months after he was arrested for fondling the Laotian boy and two months before he was sent to jail for doing it, he went back to his grandmother's house with 24-year-old restaurant manager Anthony Sears. He drugged Sears, strangled him, decapitated him, cut his body into pieces, and boiled his head until he could extract the skull.

It appeared to be a trophy, of sorts, which he painted gray and kept.

Two months after his release from jail, he killed again.

This time it was 33-year-old Raymond Lamont Smith, also known as Ricky Beeks.

He was the father of a 10-year-old girl, but frequently went for long periods without connecting with his

family.

He was last seen on May 29, 1990, the same day Dahmer reported to his parole officer and complained that he didn't like the new apartment he had rented on North 25th Street in Milwaukee.

He had been ripped off there over the weekend, he said, and had lost his watch, \$300 and all of his clothes.

The officer noted in the log that Dahmer "usually has a neat appearance, but was unkempt and unshaven today."

His parole log goes on for page after page to chronicle Dahmer's last months of freedom.

It appears to be the desperate time of a tormented man who was sexually confused because he was attracted to men rather than women, yet professed to detest homosexuals.

He reportedly developed a hatred for blacks, yet moved into one of the highly segregated black neighborhoods of Milwaukee.

The only bright spot in the log came on March 25, 1991, when the officer wrote: "Dahmer was happy. His mother called him after having no contact with her for five years. Dahmer said conversation went well. She knows he is gay and has no problem accepting it. Dahmer said they will maintain their contact. Mother lives in California."

Shortly thereafter, the killings became more frequent.

On April 7, he killed 19-year-old Errol Lindsey.

On May 17, Dahmer told his parole officer he had been questioned by Milwaukee police about another man who had been found strangled in the apartment complex, but he knew nothing about it, and they went away.

On May 24, he killed 31-year-old Anthony Hughes.

Then on May 26, 14-year-old

Konerak Sinthasomphone disappeared on his way to soccer practice.

Ironically, he was the younger brother of the Laotian boy whom Dahmer molested three years before.

On the following day, Dahmer reported to his parole officer; it's recorded in the log.

"Continues to complain about everything," the log says. "Stated grandmother ill and he has gone there every day to help her out."

That evening, the day after after Konerak Sinthasomphone disappeared, Milwaukee police were summoned to North 25th Street by Dahmer's neighbors.

Konerak Sinthasomphone had escaped and was outside Dahmer's apartment, naked, bleeding from the buttocks and apparently drugged.

Dahmer, however, did not appear to be panicked by the confrontation.

He chatted with police, convincing them that the child was an adult and that they were homosexual lovers having a spat.

They accompanied Dahmer back to his apartment, where there were photos of victims - some dead - scattered on the floor, and a strong odor, according to the Milwaukee Journal. Dahmer later said the body of Hughes was in the bedroom while police were there.

Incredibly, police officers bought the story of the homosexual spat and returned the boy to Dahmer.

Dahmer killed him immediately after police left and cut him into pieces, according to the Journal report.

The tiny, one-bedroom apartment had become a human slaughterhouse.

Dahmer froze some body parts, boiled some, melted others down with chemicals, and apparently discarded other portions in trash bags.

Neighbors began to complain about the putrid odor coming from his apartment, and wondered about wrestling noises and the occasional whine of an electric saw.

Some noted that he cursed loudly when he appeared to be alone. It seemed he was cursing himself.

He always used the back entrance of the building.

But the truth was that he was not always alone.

He had company on June 30, July 6, July 15 and July 19.

And on each night, to make sure his visitors didn't leave him home alone, he killed them.

Finally, at 11:25 p.m. July 22, a hysterical 32-year-old man with handcuffs dangling from his left wrist ran into the streets of Milwaukee and drew the attention of the world.

In an interview with the Akron Beacon Journal, Tracy Edwards detailed the terror of what he said was a five-hour ordeal in which he begged Dahmer for his life.

He said Dahmer tried to get him to disrobe for photographs and repeatedly threatened him.

Edwards, who said he is the father of six, insisted he is not gay but was lured to the apartment for drinks through an intricate setup arranged by Dahmer. Edwards thought others would join them there

for a party.

Had he not managed finally to overpower Dahmer and escape to summon police, Edwards said, he had no doubt he would be dead.

Thus far, Dahmer's secret has been poured out in repulsive confessions that revealed the killing and dismemberment of 17 men, starting in Bath Township, Ohio, with 18-year-old Steven Hicks two weeks after Dahmer's graduation as one of Revere High School's supposedly most forgettable students.

Not only did he commit the gruesome killings, he said, but he also had sex with some of the corpses and saved some favorite parts in the freezer so he could later eat them.

If true, the experts say, such actions are consistent with perversion in which sexual gratification is gained from corpses, including eating them.

But there's more to the story than what we know yet - or so says Ronald M. Holmes of the University of Louisville, a criminologist and an expert in serial killers.

There's no way, he said, that Dahmer killed in 1978, then not again until the mid-1980s.

"Somewhere along the way, he's killed between there," Holmes said. "It just takes too long. . . I'm not saying 17 or 20 of them, but I'm saying probably at least four or five or six in there someplace."

This Week on Cable Seven

August 19-23

MONDAY

4:00 PM Celebrate
4:30 PM 30 Minute Cooking
5:00 PM Sideline Sports
5:30 PM Cable Previews
6:00 PM Insight
6:30 PM Shape It Up
7:00 PM Candler Health Forum
7:30 PM CEL Regional Library
8:00 PM On Line
8:30 PM Underground Savannah

TUESDAY

4:00 PM Celebrate
4:30 PM Live It To the Max
5:00 PM Teens on Target
5:30 PM Lightwaves
6:00 PM Bandwagon Music Report
6:30 PM Shape It Up
7:00 PM Continuing Education
7:30 PM In Focus
8:00 PM HAS: In Prospective
8:30 PM Tell It Like It Is

WEDNESDAY

4:00 PM Celebrate
4:30 PM Candler Health Forum
5:00 PM CEL Regional Library
5:30 PM On Line
6:00 PM Underground Savannah
6:30 PM Shape It Up
7:00 PM City Span
7:30 PM Public Issues
8:00 PM The Real World
8:30 PM It's Your Money

THURSDAY

4:00 PM Celebrate
4:30 PM Continuing Education
5:00 PM In Focus
5:30 PM HAS: In Prospective
6:00 PM Tell It Like It Is
6:30 PM Shape It Up
7:00 PM 30 Minute Cooking
7:30 PM Sideline Sports
8:00 PM Cable Previews
8:30 PM Insight
9:00 PM Savannah City Council
(Same day coverage)

FRIDAY

5:00 PM Savannah City Council
(Repeat of Thursday)
4:00 PM Celebrate
4:30 PM City Span
5:00 PM Public Issues
5:30 PM The Real World
6:00 PM It's Your Money
6:30 PM Shape It Up
7:00 PM Live It To the Max
7:30 PM Teens on Target
8:00 PM Lightwaves
8:30 PM Bandwagon Music Report
9:00 PM Chatham Co. Commission
(Same day coverage)

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