

Two homosexual pedophile sadistic serial killers: Jürgen Bartsch (Germany, *1946 - †1976) and Luis Alfredo Garavito Cubillos (Colombia, *1957)

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From a criminalistic and legal perspective, we report 2 cases of homosexual pedophile serial killers who share certain characteristics. Sources are first hand accounts only: a) Meetings with Luis Alfredo Garavito Cubillos, and with the investigators in Colombia (in July 2002), and b) the yet unreleased original files of the trials against Jürgen Bartsch, as well as letters written by him. These resources were never used in scientific investigation and publications until now. Between 1992 and 1999, Luis Alfredo Garavito killed more than 300 children in the core age span between 8 and 13 years (as an exception, 6 to 16 years). His *modus operandi* remained stable. The children were tied up, tortured, raped, and killed by at least one cut in the lateral part of the neck, or by decapitation. During the killings, Garavito was drunk. During his still ongoing confessions, he directs the investigators correctly to all scenes of crime spread over large parts of Columbia. It is formally well possible that Garavito will be released out of prison within the next 10 to 20 years, *i.e.* even before the maximum sentence of 40 years will be over. In 1966, then 19-year old Jürgen Bartsch (1946-1976) was arrested after an unsuccessful attempt to torture, kill and dismember a young boy. Before, *i.e.*, between 1962 and 1966, Bartsch had killed 4 young boys aged 8 to 12. He estimated to have undertaken more than 100 further homicidal attempts. The method of actual murder was beating and strangulation. He dismembered most of the bodies, pricked out the eyes, decapitated

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the bodies, and removed the genitals. He also tried but failed to perform anal intercourse with the victims. His actual goal was to slowly torture the final victim to death. His wish for dominance, control, and sexual gratification but also his strategies of avoiding prosecution were topics that Bartsch openly discussed. Under the influence of psychiatric consultations, Bartsch's views on his parents, as much as memories of sexual abuse performed by a teacher, changed. In a psychiatric hospital, Bartsch managed to marry a woman who had written letters to him. During a voluntary castration operation, he died due to an error in the anaesthetic procedure.

Key words: Serial killings - Sadism - Pedophile killers - Paraphilia - Columbia - Germany.

Bartsch

Case history

In 1966, then 19-year old homosexual serial killer Juergen Bartsch (1946-1976) (Figure 1) was arrested after an unsuccessful

*retired.

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Figure 1.—Jürgen Bartsch during the marriage ceremony (A) and on police mugshot after his arrest (B).

attempt to torture, kill and dismember a young boy.¹⁻⁷ The victim, left in an unused air raid shelter, had been able to free himself by burning his ties with a candle flame while the offender had gone home to eat, and watch TV with his parents in the parent's bed; he had to do this every evening at 7. p.m.

Before, *i.e.*, between 1962 and 1966 Bartsch, between the age of 15 1/2 and 19 years, had killed 4 boys aged 8 (Klaus Jung), 13 (Peter Fuchs), 12 (Ulrich Kahlweiss) and 12 (Manfred Grassmann) (Figure 2). He estimated to have undertaken more than 100 unsuccessful homicidal attempts. Every murder showed minor differences in the *modus operandi* but basically followed the same scheme: after luring a boy into following him to a mine that had also been used as an air-raid shelter in the war, he attained his obedience by beating him. He then tied up the boys, manipulated their genitals, sometimes masturbated without ejaculation, and finally killed the children by beating or strangulation. Afterwards, he cut the body into pieces (including decapitation), emptied the body cavities (breast and abdomen), and generally dismembered most of the bodies. His actual goal was to very slowly torture the victims to death.

Finally, he partially buried the remains inside the tunnel. This was most likely to hide the tissue and bones from children who (with a very low probability) might have come in-

side playing. The tunnel was located near a street, and a cloister, but still a few miles out of town.

Some *post mortem* acts against the corpses were variable and included dismembering the whole body,⁸ pricking out the eyes, severing limbs, decapitation, castration, resection of pieces of flesh out of the thighs and buttocks, and at least one failed attempt of anal penetration.

In his detailed description during the preliminary investigation (Figure 3) of the case and during the trial, Bartsch emphasized that he never reached the sexual climax while masturbating but whilst cutting the flesh after his victims' death. As he told the police, this resulted in a continuous orgasm. During his last murder he came very close to what he had envisaged as his greatest desire: to tilt his victim to a post and slaughter the 12-year-old boy alive.

In all other cases, the method of actual murder was beating and strangulation.

His wish for dominance, control, and sexual gratification but also his strategies of avoiding prosecution were topics that were openly discussed with Bartsch from the start of the investigations on. As a final goal (central phantasy), Bartsch stated that he wanted to skin a live child with soft skin, few hair, and a non-aggressive mood. This goal was not reached because in his earlier attempts, the children died too fast. However, he dismembered the children and ejaculated onto the flesh. The only part of his behaviour that he would not openly comment on was if he did eat the flesh or not; he would only say that he touched it with his lips.

Bartsch extensively traveled through the neighborhood, frequently using taxis. No middle class boy at that time could afford a taxi, so he stole the money from the cash register of his parent's butcher shop where he worked. To a lesser extent, he also used the small delivery van of the shop.

To get in touch with the boys, he told them that he worked as a detective, or for an insurance company, and that he needed a witness to recover a suitcase full of diamonds from the tunnel. Most children did not believe the story. Therefore, Bartsch invited them for

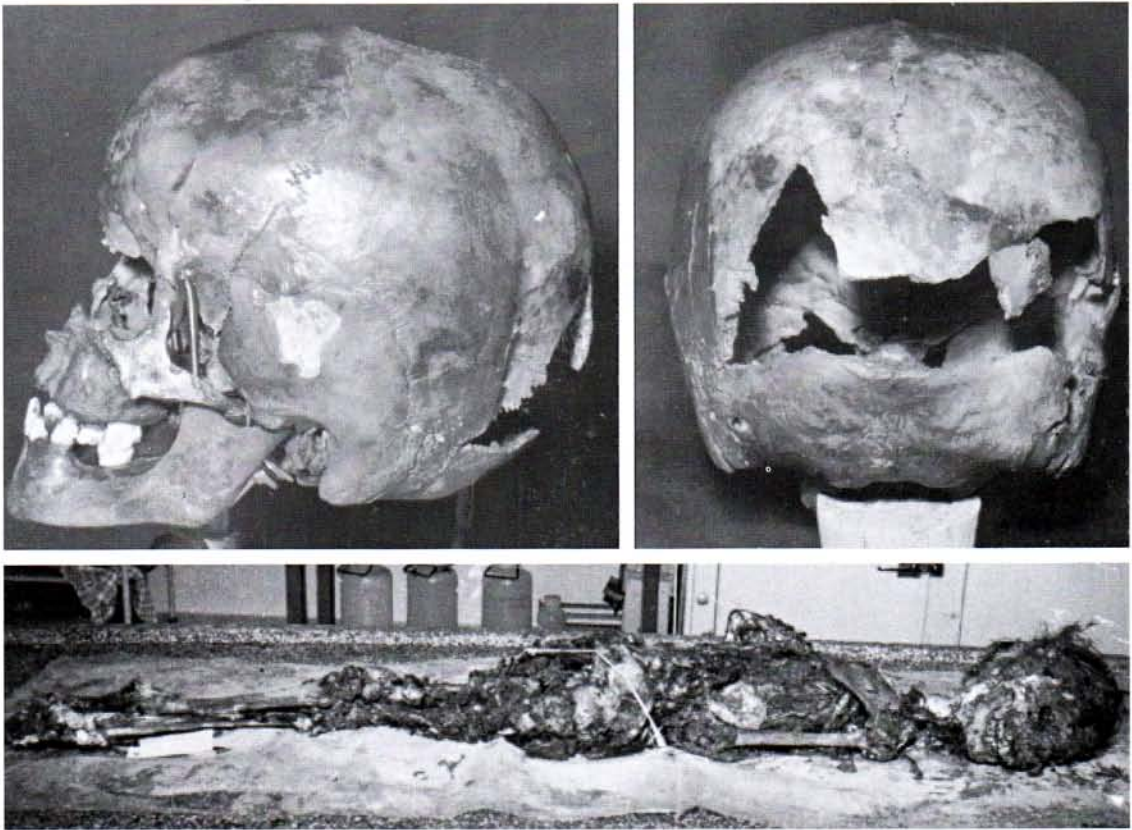


Figure 2.—Severe violence applied against the head of Jung (top); decomposed body of Grassmann (bottom; in Inst. for Legal Medicine).

apple juice in a pub that was already on the way out of town. There, he offered them money (50 Deutschmarks)^a and presented this or another story to the child. Bartsch himself did drink alcohol as a habit but took care to keep control during his crimes.

Often, Bartsch would also hang out at parish fairs where he invited children for free rides. Parish fairs in Germany were, and are known to attract poor and homeless people and those from a less respected social background which made it difficult for well-dressed Bartsch to talk to children without causing suspicion. However, the anonymity, and the sheer amount of children raised this chances. For a short while, Bartsch also carried a very large suitcase (Figure 4) in which he thought he could transport the children. After he was asked why he was carrying a

a) Current value roughly around 50 USD/EUR.

“children’s coffin” (common German expression for a large suitcase: “Kinder-Sarg”), he immediately got rid of the item. After it became known that Bartsch visited parish fairs, he was called “parish fair killer”. Later this switched to “beast” (Bestie), an expression that Bartsch sometimes used as a joke to sign some of his letters out of prison or out of the psychiatric institution to friends.

The continuous efflux of money out of the parent’s cash register brought Bartsch’s parent’s practically to bankruptcy. Nobody suspected Bartsch as the thief since he was a very polite and mild boy. It has to be pointed out that Bartsch did not like to work as a butcher at all. He had had no idea what career or occupation he should choose for himself after school, so he accepted the offer of his father to become a butcher. Bartsch explicitly stated that the experience of slaugh-



Figure 3.—Bartsch (in white pullover) fully co-operated with the police (here: homicide detectives in suit). Reconstruction of violent acts against Grassmann; inside of tunnel.



Figure 4.—Jürgen Bartsch carrying the “children’s coffin” that he tried to use to transport children until passengers asked about the purpose of the suitcase.

tering animals was very unpleasant to him, therefore he mostly worked as a sales person at the meat counter in the shop.

Bartsch’s social mother was described both “loving and caring, yet strict” (personal comment by Det. Mätzler to the author, 2002), or “completely overprotective and emotionally withdrawn” (personal comment by friend of Bartsch Paul Moor, 2003). The parents had adopted Bartsch as a baby. His genetic mother came from a socially weak background, and the baby was raised in a hospital environment that gave him protection but no personal love. When his social parents saw him for the first time in the hospital looking for a suitable child, they found Bartsch so charming that they immediately decided to adopt this particular baby.

Bartsch’s father is generally described as a person who did not at all understand what had happened, and who was very focused on his business (comments by Mätzler and

Moor). When he was asked by the court to act as a witness, he replied that this would cause problems because he would then have to close the shop for a day. In prison and in the psychiatric hospital, Jürgen Bartsch’s mother and an aunt were his prime contacts to his family. The two women were allowed to send him crime novels, comic books and magic tricks.

Under the influence of psychiatric consultations, Bartsch’s friendly views on his mother partially changed. He remembered that she once threw a knife after him in the butcher shop, and that neither of the parents “ever” played with him because they were so busy with the shop. At the same time, his mother was a clean and extremely accurate person. Clothing had to be folded, and put in the shelf in military style. Mother Bartsch also personally bathed her son until he was arrested. The only friendship that Bartsch had inside of his parent’s house was with a boy

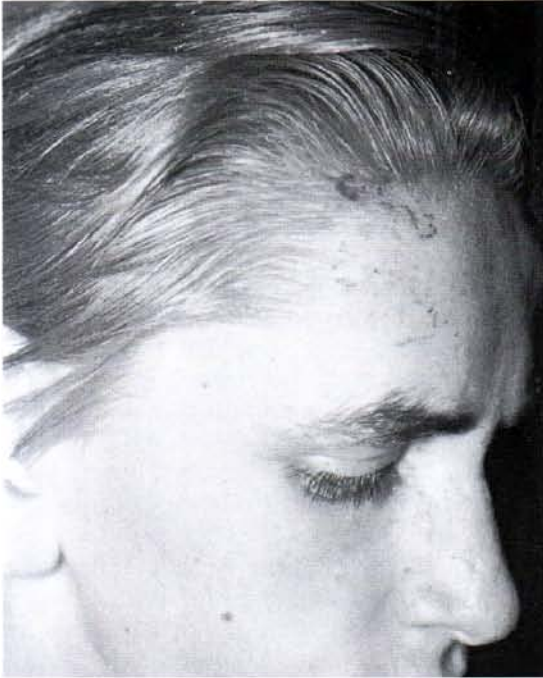


Figure 5.—Comparably low degree of violence against the head of surviving victim Frese. Bartsch intended to skin Frese alive and torture him to death after his return from watching TV with his parents.

whom he did like a lot but finally severely hit hard for no apparent reason after friendly scuffling. Homosexual play including ejaculation was always involved in Bartschs few friendships.

After the first trial, Bartsch described memories of sexual abuse by a catholic priest (one of his teachers in a boarding school) who was actually known for beating the children frequently and violently. Until today, the sexual abuse matter is the only one that was not validated in the Bartsch case; it is not clear whether his claim was a recollection based on fact or a fabrication or exaggeration of an intelligent juvenile person who received nearly unlimited attention after his confessions by psychiatrists, the media and the police.

After the second trial, Bartsch lived in a psychiatric hospital. Inside this institution nobody received psychological treatment due to a lack of personnel. In the psychiatric hospital, he obtained permission to marry a woman who had written letters to him. He was also voted the patient's speaker, and he

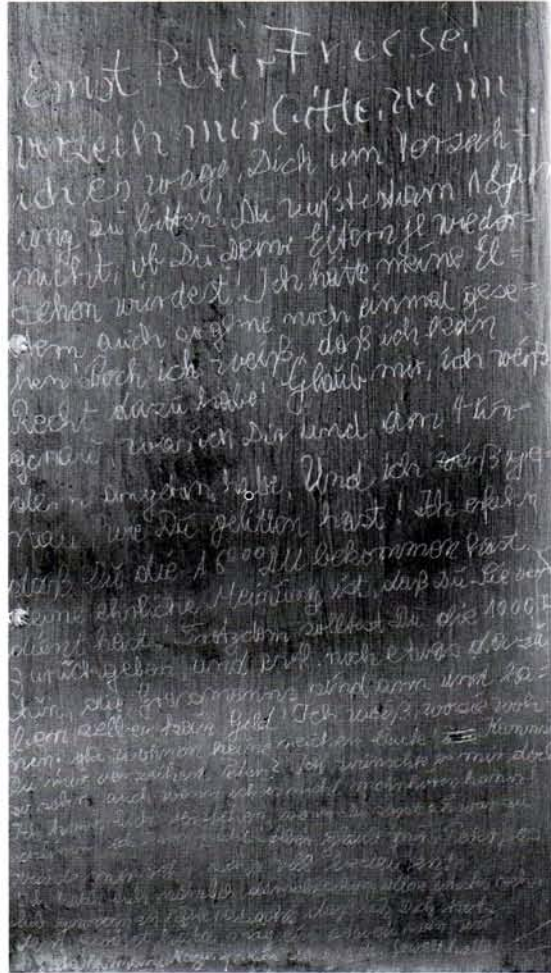


Figure 6.—Parasuicidal inscription into prison cell wall from Bartsch to Frese: "Ernst Peter Frese! Please excuse if I dare to ask you for pardon! (...) That is to say, I honestly started to develop a very strong affection for you. The fact that I would have killed you shall be the proof that my impulses had control over me." (Letters actually become smaller from top to bottom.) (Fig. 7: previous page).

entertained fellow inmates by semi-professional magic tricks. Before the trials, Bartsch was a member of the German Organization of Magicians/Illusionists (Magischer Zirkel). Since the organization disliked the bad reputation the Bartsch case might bring, they did not allow him to stay a member.

Bartsch was not only interested in controlling his impulses but also wanted to know why he committed the crimes. The genetic, psychological, neurological and psychiatric sciences were not ready to meet this legitimate request

one that was brought forward by all serial killers that the authors know of.

Inscriptions and letters

Bartsch stated that he had a feeling of love for his victims. This was generally accepted as true since he never lied during the confessions and since he could not expect to benefit from this revelation.

During a pseudo-suicidal phase in prison, he scratched several inscriptions in the wall, one of them being of particular interest in this context. It shows the dominant, controlling, egocentric and twisted personality of Bartsch. Ernst Peter Freese, the final and surviving victim (Figure 5), had escaped on June 18, 1966, because Bartsch had left two burning candles in the tunnel before he abandoned Freese to go home for dinner. As Freese had told Bartsch that he was afraid alone and tied up in the dark tunnel, Bartsch fulfilled his request because he wanted him to feel comfortable. Bartsch always carried one or two candles with him, in case he found a suitable victim. After Bartsch left, Freese accidentally put out the first candle while trying to burn his ties but succeeded to burn the ties at his ankles with the second candle. This way, he escaped.

Inscription to Freese (Figure 6):

"Ernst Peter Freese! Please excuse if I dare to ask you for pardon! On June 18, you did not know if you would ever meet your parents again. I very much would have wanted to see my parents again, too! But I know I do not have the right to do so!^b (...)

And I know how you suffered! I learned that you received the 16 000 DM.^c My honest opinion is, that you deserved the money! However, you should give 1 000 DM, and maybe a little extra, to the Grassmanns,^d they are poor and do not have money themselves! Can you pardon me, Peter? I wish for this so much, even if I cannot hear it any more. I can understand if you say: It was too bad, I

cannot! But please, Peter, believe me, it would mean a lot to me. That is to say, I honestly started to develop a very strong affection for you.^e The fact that I would have killed you shall be the proof that my impulses had control over me."

Bartsch also identified with the police, especially with the actual investigators who talked to him. An inscription to them reads:

"Herr Hinrichs. Herr Fritsch. Herr Mätzler. You^f were all very kind to me! Would I not have been like "that", one day, I would have been one of you! And believe me: I surely would not have been a bad civil servant!"

After the second trial, Bartsch started a very long and personal exchange of letters with Detective Mätzler. He also became a friend of journalist Paul Moor who at this point worked both for the U.S. *Time Magazine*, and the German *Die Zeit*. Moor and Bartsch later agreed that Moor would not publish any more about the case to allow their friendship to grow without public pressure. Reason for this was that Bartsch felt more and more uncomfortable about the effects of being a media darling. In a letter to the court, he referred to this perception of a "star", and especially how this interfered with every legal motion he made, including his application for marriage. The structure of that notion seems slightly illogical but Bartsch just threw in as many arguments as he could find to fight for his cause:

"High court, tell me how this^g could be prevented? Not at all? You are right. *Today*, I am already blamed for it. Immediately, there is the accusation of being a "star". This is as convenient as it is wrong. The story with Father Pütz^h also has another side: he is not guilty for what I have done but HE, nobody else, determined my orientation towards pedophilia and sadism, and HE told me (when I was 13) the exact plan which I used later. HE seduced me on the gallery of the church nearly every week (I was 12). He put me in

e) In German: "Ich hatte Dich nämlich damals allen Ernstes sehr lieb gewonnen".

f) In German: "Ihr", being the style used for letters to personal friends.

g) Bartsch is referring to media attention.

h) The priest/teacher in boarding school whom Bartsch accused of sexual abuse.

b) Bartsch could, and did meet his parents in prison seldomly but on a regular basis. This statement can only be understood from its nature of a suicide note.

c) A very high reward for that time; currently, roughly 15 000 USD.

d) Parents of one of the children that Bartsch had killed.

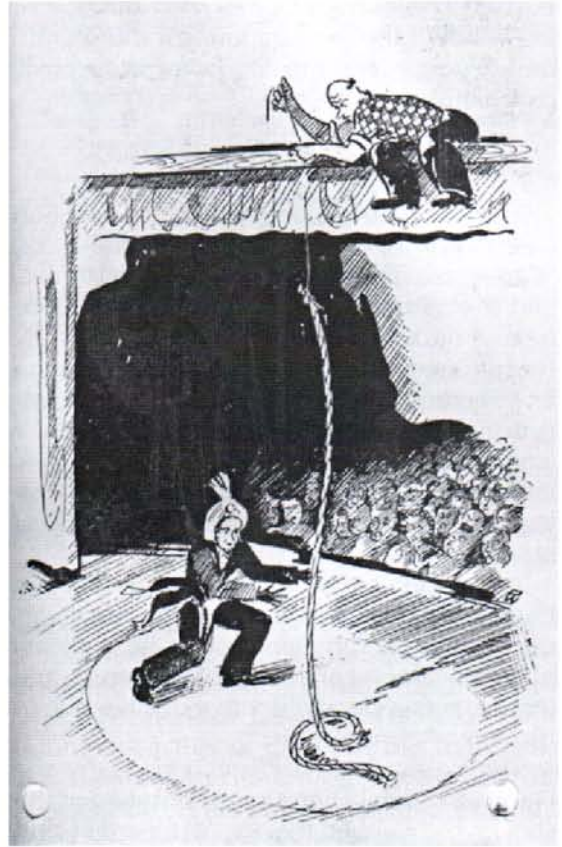


Figure 7.—Bartsch sent hundreds of letters and post cards out of prison and the psychiatric institution. Christmas card to Giese (A) and Head of the Court Fischer referring to Bartschs hobby, magic tricks (B).

his bed when I had POLIO, and a fever of *ca.* 40°C, and told me about a knight (before that I had to masturbate him) who lived in France and who killed hundreds of boys.”

Bartsch also sent out postcards to the psychiatrists that he liked, especially to Giese, the only expert for sexually deviant behavior at the time, who also testified as expert witness in the first trial. In contrast to others who replied to Bartsch with long letters, Giese tried to be brief, yet very friendly, open and objective. Giese was the only person involved in the case who fully understood the complexity of Bartsch’s paraphilia. After the first trial, Giese, however, rejected to visit Bartsch on a regular basis. One of the notes to Giese, written in August 1968 on a printed Christmas card (Figure 7), reads:

“It sure is very nice of you that you wish to help me, and I am oh so grateful for this. It

only is a pity, as you already said, that even a conversation in letters would be quite difficult at the moment, because every now and then there would be something that the judges would have to hold back because of the regulations. But I will wait for you. In thankfulness yours, Jürgen”

When Giese learnt that Bartsch behaved suicidal, he wrote in January 1969:

“Dear Jürgen Bartsch, first of all I thank you for your friendly Christmas, and New Year greetings that I cordially send back to you in reply. I must however combine this letter with the urgent wish that you do not try again to bring your life to an end. You simply must not do this, one reason being to allow several things to happen in your case. With kind regards I am your Hans Giese”

This letter does not only prove the open and friendly manner in which Giese and

Bartsch communicated but also that Giese knew about the preparations for the second trial, leading to a turning point in forensic psychiatry.

Legal aspects

The first trial was held in 1967 at the High Court (Landgericht) in the small city Wuppertal. The hearings lasted only days, and it was decided that Bartsch should be treated under adult law. He was found fully (legally) responsible, lost all civil rights, and was sentenced to technically 5x life-long imprisonment (~ 125 years) for 4 homicides, 1 attempted homicide, abduction of children, and sexual contact to children. Homosexuality was still illegal in Germany at this point but not an issue at the trial.

The motion for the appeal was prepared in the usual way; it was said that the client was not examined sufficiently, that he was still in the developmental stage of a juvenile, and that he was generally not responsible due to his mental constitution.

The case was therefore revised by the German Federal High Court (Bundesgerichtshof) which agreed that the Wuppertal Court should have consulted an expert who was specialised in psychopathology of human sexuality, and not just in psychiatry. "Specialist statements about mental states in relation to sex drive anomalies" were requested. This decision marked a turning point in forensic psychiatry since the Federal High Court deviated from its own former decisions by criticising that the court of first instance did not hear a "better" expert witness for this particular field. Furthermore, now a movement within the criminal law pushed through that voted for *rehabilitation* instead of punishment of offenders. Criminal courts were now forced to decide whether offenders should be punished or treated psychologically, *i.e.*, if social re-in-

tegration was possible. Already in summer 1969, the parliament passed the first two acts for a reform of the German Criminal Law, implementing the idea of rehabilitation.^k

This way, and due to his charming personality, and innocent looks, Bartsch became *the* high profile killer of the late 1960's/early 1970's in Germany.

At the second trial in 1971, now again at a District Court, there was a very high number of experts present to avoid further legal proceedings:^l 2 human geneticists/anthropologists/forensic biologists (at that time, this was the same profession in Germany), 3 psychologists, 5 psychiatrists and the director of the only German university based Institute for Sexology. Two of the 3 psychiatric experts from the first trial were rejected as experts (as requested by the defense; one by self-rejection).

The expert testimony of five experts was considered to be relevant by the court, and led to the following conclusions:

- at the time of the crimes, Bartsch was not yet matured enough ("juvenile" offender);
- his responsibility was reduced because he could not fully control his sadistic impulses.

This was a sharp contrast to the judgement of the District Court of Wuppertal, from Dec 15, 1967:

"considering the structure of the defendant's personality based on the opinion given by 3 expert witnesses it has to be stated, that the defendant had already completed the process of developing his personality."

"The defendant could have controlled his impulses anytime."

Extract from the Judgement of the District Court of Wuppertal, April 6, 1971:

"The defendant clearly was still in the state of development concerning his social skills and his moral maturity due to his personal disposition, his childhood experiences and upbringing."

"The defendant could not escape his sadistic fantasies which eventually overcame all

i) The decision of the Criminal Division of the German District Court (Große Strafkammer des Landgerichts) can only be reviewed by the Federal High Court. This court examines the case in terms of wrong application of the law. It does not examine the facts the decision is based upon.

j) Referring to former decisions of the courts that concerned the efforts a court has to make when consulting an appropriate expert witness.

k) First Law concerning the reform of the Penal Code (1. StrRG), June 25, 1969; Second Law concerning reform of Penal Code (2. StrRG), July 4, 1969.

l) Rasch, Lempp, Bosch, Brocher, Müller-Luckmann, Mantell, Lauber, Panse.

TABLE I.—*Criminal liability and sanction in today's German law.*

Criminal liability	Sanction
Reduced responsibility for the crime because of the state of mind during the action of the crime or because of mental condition (mental illness pp.) (§ 21 StGB)	Punishment (§ 38 ff. StGB) and/or Measure (61 ff. StGB) depending on the reason for the lack of responsibility (influence of drugs, mental state during the action of the crime) and depending on the dangerousness of the offender for society
No responsibility for the crime because of the state of mind during the action of the crime or because of mental condition (mental illness pp.) (§ 20 StGB)	Measure (61 ff. StGB) depending on the reason for the lack of responsibility (influence of drugs, mental state during the action of the crime) and depending on the dangerousness of the offender for society
Full responsibility	Punishment (§§ 38 ff. StGB; imprisonment, fine etc.)

moral boundaries and culminated in the fulfillment of his desires. The defendant's responsibility in juridical terms was therefore reduced to a considerable extent."

The maximum sentence for juveniles was applied: 10 years of incarceration, served in a mental institution, followed by preventive detention.

In 1976, Jürgen Bartsch asked for a castration hoping that afterwards he might be released from the mental institution for the reason of not being dangerous for society anymore. Months before the operation, Bartsch had however fought vigorously against any possible motion towards castration because he feared for his health. Castrations were only allowed if a person asked for it and had good practical reasons. Later, he seemed to have believed that castration might be the only way towards a possible healing of his impulses. After his first application for castration was rejected, he fought even harder for the operation.

On April 28, 1976 Bartsch died during the castration operation on the operation table due to an error in the anesthetic procedure (the medical doctor who accidentally killed other patients this way too, was sentenced to 9 month on probation).

Criminal liability

The question whether an offender is considered insane or not by the court has great

m) StGB=Strafgesetzbuch=Penal Code.

impact on the outcome of the criminal trial. Today, it is generally accepted and implemented in the German Criminal Law that mentally disturbed offenders have to be treated differently from sane offenders (§§ 63 ff. German Penal Code). The question whether a person can be held responsible for his actions and which sanction has to be imposed depends on either his current state of mind during the action of his crime or on his general mental constitution (§§ 20, 21 German Penal Code). This means that like in many countries, the expert witness on forensic psychiatry has great influence on whether a criminal can be regarded as responsible for his actions. If the expert comes to the conclusion that the offender could not control his actions due to a mental illness or due to his present mental condition he can generally not be punished. In this case he can only be sent to a mental institution (Table D).

Garavito

Case history

Luis Alfredo Garavito Cubillos (born Jan 25, 1957) is the serial killer with one of the highest proven numbers of victims.^{2, 9, 10} Between 1992 and 1999, Garavito killed more than 200 children at core ages between 8 and 13 years, with the exception of one boy aged 16 (walking handicap, March 1994).

His *modus operandi* remained relatively stable. During daytime, he lured children of a lower social status out of crowded parts of the city into hidden areas that were over-



Figure 8.—High grass, shrubbery and hills close to the road leading out of Villavicencio. Typical area into which Garavito led the children; actual crime scene.

grown with high plants. Garavito promised either payment for easy work, or drugs, or made other offers. The children were tied up, tortured, raped and killed by at least one cut in the lateral part of the neck, or by decapitation. During the killings, Garavito was drunk.

Even after his arrest (for attempted rape) under a wrong identity it was not immediately possible to track his crimes since Garavito had frequently changed his places of stay and his jobs. He also grew different hairdos and used wrong names. During his still ongoing confessions, he now directs the investigators correctly to all crime scenes all over Colombia.

In spite of an initial sentence of 2 600 years, it is in fact possible that Garavito will be released from prison within the next 10 to 20 years, after serving a sentence of minimum 25 to maximum 40 years in jail.

Our account is based on a ten-day visit in Bogota and Villavicencio in July 2002 that included several meetings with the investigators, Garavito himself and his social worker. Technically, the case is still ongoing since Garavito still confesses to yet unknown crimes. We also met Garavito in a different prison in 2005 for further talks and tests (Armenia).

ARREST

On April 22, 1999, in bushes close to a street leading out of the town Villavicencio

(ca. 400 000 inhabitants) in Colombia, a homeless man observed an adult male who tried to abuse a boy (Figure 8). On the same day, taxi drivers observed a man who matched the description given by the boy. The man had no personal I.D. but gave the name and I.D. number of a man who was a politician in a small town. Since at that time no computer or file network and no obligatory registration of the place of residence existed, his data could not be checked. However, being asked where he intended to go, the man told the police that he walked to a town that was 90° away from the direction he had given. It seemed that the man had lost his orientation, and because of the matching personal description given by the body, he was put in prison.

DISCOVERY OF A SERIAL KILLER'S SPREE

In February 1998, 2 naked corpses of children were discovered lying next to each other outside of the town of Genua, Colombia. The location was set on the slope of a hill as most of the other crime scenes. On the next day, only metres away, a third corpse was found, this time in a state of advanced decomposition. All bodies had been tied at the hands. Numerous blood stains could be detected in the area, as well as a knife. The necks of the bodies and the external genitals were deeply cut or severed. A closer investigation of the bodies revealed bite marks and signs of anal penetration; a bottle of lubricant was found, too. *Post mortem* interval could not be determined; DNA typing of the collected stains could not be performed because of costs.

Since at that point there were several known serial killers on the loose in Colombia, it was not clear if these were victims of e.g. Pedro Alonso Lopez (around 70 victims; locally known as the "monster/strangler of the Andes"). The crime scenes, and the state of the corpses did however not at all match the crimes of the other serial killers, e.g. Lopez only killed girls. Profiling was not possible due to organizational and funding problems.

It was found that the dead boys had been living in a town nearby, were aged 11 and 13,

and had been close friends. They came from a socio-economically weak background, and had to work in the streets selling fruit, chewing gum, etc., to add to their family's poor incomes.

The investigators noted that: a) one victim's mother commented that her son briefly returned home on the day he disappeared and told her that he would help a man with a cattle transport, and that b) it was odd that all children disappeared around 10 a.m. on different days. The explanation found much later was that Garavito usually either offered the boys juice or cake in a local shop, checked out their character, structure of skin (soft, not too dark),ⁿ etc., and then asked them either to walk with him, or to help him with carrying something. Garavito adjusted not only his outfits (street vendor, bum, priest, etc.; Figure 9) but also the task that he asked for according to the local situation (carrying a crate of oranges, help him with cattle, harvesting sugarcane, etc.).^o He also promised drugs to addicted children, and payed stakes for children interested in games. Initially Garavito had simply offered money but since most children found this suspicious, he switched to a mixture of promises and an appropriate, yet slightly raised amount of money (usually an amount worth a little more than one day of children's work - *i.e.*, the children would not tell their parents straight away but use the money as fake income in exchange for a day off). In all cases, he tried to lure the children away immediately so they would not return home beforehand.

Close to his home town, at 6 a.m. on the morning after Halloween (considered to be the "Evening of the Children" in Columbia), Garavito also found a victim by offering a child to help him collect sweets that it had lost the night before.

INTENSIFIED INVESTIGATIONS

A four-person unit from the D.A.'s Office of Investigations from the province Armenia

n) Only exception: Boy with dark skin tone, age 13, July 1997.

o) Garavito still adapts perfectly to his environment. When we first met him, we wrongly concluded from his habits, and clothing, that he was the director of the prison.

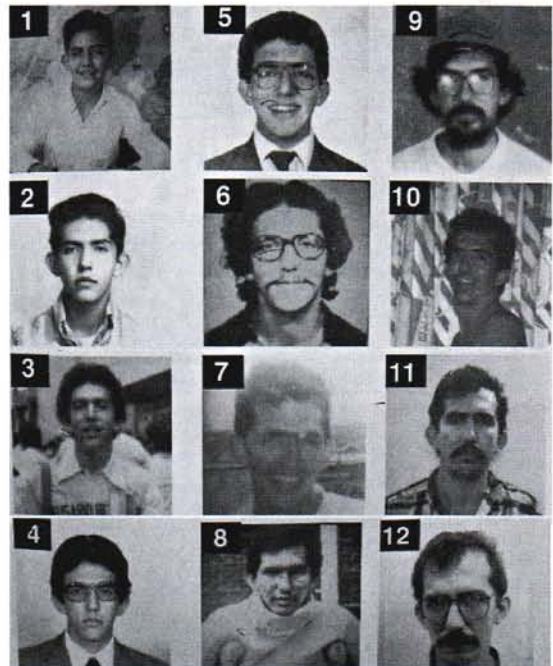


Figure 9.—Garavito's appearance changed over the years. Picture 2: Age 18, picture 10: February 1999, picture 11: April 1999, picture 12: July 1999. By now, he looks very different again. (From Aranguren Molina⁹).

now started to look for similar homicides all over Columbia. Hundreds of cases were reported but most of the children had neither been identified nor was there a description of their injuries. Retroactive identification by use of the teeth was frequently impossible, either because the children never had an X-ray, or the X-rays were buried after the earthquakes of 1998. Therefore, until today, 27 of the children killed by Garavito are not identified. Facial reconstruction was performed in few cases at the Institute for Legal Medicine in Bogota.¹¹

Another series of killings against children aged 8 to 10 in the region Valle in 1995 raised further suspicion. Two of the 4 dead children were cousins, and again, all children came from a weak social background, were described as not very intelligent, and again, they disappeared shortly before noon. Again, the children were found on the slope of a hill with high-growing plants, not far outside of the town. The pattern of children being killed more or less at one spot but on differ-

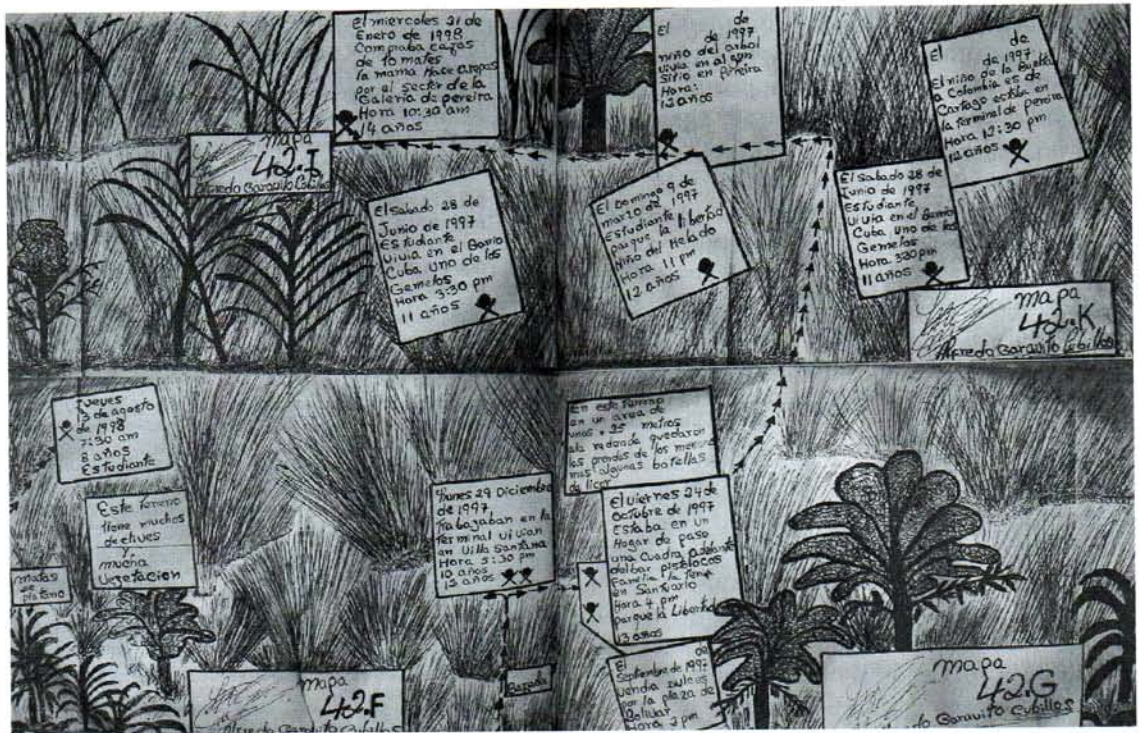


Figure 10.—Only using his memories, Garavito still draws precise maps to aid locating the corpses. He numbers the maps and signs them with his name.

ent days is a signature of Garavito. He did not bury the bodies but leave them on the spot. Once he had found a suitable location for the killings, he would use it all over again. The children may have suspected that something was wrong once they arrived but were immediately tied up.

Garavito could not stop himself even in dangerous situations. On the early afternoon of June 8, 1996, a boy went missing in the town of Boyaca. He followed Garavito on his (the boy's) own bike so no violence had taken place. The corpse was found 5 days later decapitated with the severed penis stuck inside of the mouth. The mother of the boy had immediately started a search, and found that the boy had last been seen in a local shop with some other boys and a stranger who bought them sweets. The stranger was identified as Garavito who stayed in town. He was questioned by the police but stated that he sure bought the children sweets but then left alone. Approximately 4 days later, Garavito killed a 13-year old boy in the close by town Pereira.

SIGNATURES OF THE KILLINGS

Apart from the already mentioned behavior, decapitations, or at least their attempt seemed to be typical for Garavito. In many cases, because of the decomposition, the only way to prove this, were notches in the fourth vertebra of the neck. Many of the soft tissue cuts that could be documented were caused by a knife that produced raw lacerations as if the blade was old or notchy. The internal organs were usually left in place; on the abdomen, Garavito did produce multiple stab wounds but no anatomical cuts. The only exception was a 10-year old boy (killed in January 1997) who was found under similar circumstances, but the wounds were produced by a stabbing weapon without a blade (technically: impaling wounds). Dismembering of the corpses only took place in cases where body parts had to be transported out of houses in which very few killings had taken place. In very few cases, he also put the bodies in bags and sank them together with stones in water.

On many crime scenes, empty bottles of the cheapest brand of local schnapps were found. In fact, Garavito had a habit of abusing alcohol, and left the empty bottles just like the corpses openly at the scene of crime.

By now, it becomes clear that Garavito subdivided suitable killing places into sectors, and killed one child per sector. In many cases, he very slowly tortured the children who were sometimes tied in way so that they could still walk around over quite a distance but not escape. Anal penetration seems to be a common feature of the cases but it remains unclear if this was a *post mortem* or *peri mortem* act. Until today, Garavito draws precise maps out of his memory which show the exact locations of the corpses (Figure 10).

Most of the crimes were performed on or around weekends when most children hung around the market places. Garavito tried to lure them away during day time because this raised less suspicion concerning the odd jobs he offered as well as a possible non-presence at dinner.

Before Garavito's confessions, the public still did not generally accept that one killer was responsible for the crimes. Therefore, although there was no indication for it at all, the usual suspects like satanists or other secret organizations were accused. Their responsibility was unlikely since no two killings took place at the same time. At the same time, the travel pattern of the offender was highly irregular (Figure 11). Another theory pointed towards alleged organ trade. Since mostly stab wounds were found, and since the conditions at the scenes of crime - identified by blood stains protruding from living persons - were highly unsterile, this theory was quickly dismissed.

DETERMINATION OF IDENTITY OF KILLER

Garavito had been arrested under the name of a politician. Regular fingerprint identification had not been possible for organizational and technical reasons. In March 1999, after the police checked telephone numbers that had been found in the prisoner's clothing, the investigators discovered that the pris-

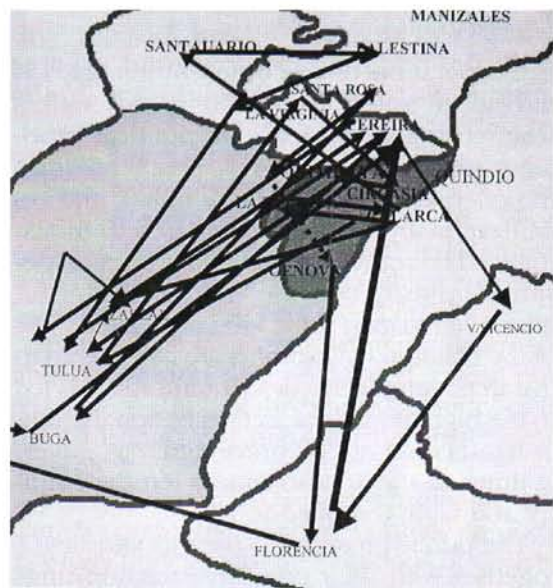


Figure. 11.—The pattern of movement of Garavito seems to be highly erratic. However, Garavito killed several children in the same area (on subsequent days) before he moved along. He also crossed the border to Ecuador.

oner's identity was wrong and that he was actually Garavito. By then, Garavito had long been on the list of suspects. Now, one of the relatives of Garavito handed over a case (box) that Garavito had given to her. Inside were not only cryptic notes but also cut-out passport photographs of many of the deceased children (these were the only trophies that Garavito collected). Also, a calendar with further cryptic notes was found. This was later identified as a list of victims according to the dates. Since Garavito does remember all details of his crimes, including the dates, it is not yet understood why he kept track with such a list.

On October 28, 1999, after several weeks of confirmatory investigations, Garavito was for the first time exposed to the fact that his identity was known and that evidence for his crimes was found. During the first questioning, he confessed to his crimes straight away and asked god and mankind for forgiveness.

It became clear that since 1992, Garavito had killed more than 200 boys (today's count: 300), and committed numerous acts with sexual background against the will of others. His popular name became "The Beast" (la bestia).

Legal aspects

Cooperation of the different agencies is difficult in a very large country that suffers from constant and extreme political problems, massive violence (especially amongst the guerilla and paramilitary units), and organizational problems. Compared to industrialized countries, pedophilia is quite widespread, mostly because children and juveniles need to gain some kind of income (39% of the children in Colombia are considered to live in poverty [Terre des Hommes]). This led to the high number of victims but on the other hand could not be prevented. *e.g.*, several times, Garavito also simply left the country and went to Ecuador.

The public prosecutors (district attorneys), together with their own investigation units (not the same as the police) are allowed to investigate throughout the country. In the Garavito case, this was used to commission the local investigative unit of Armenia with investigating all related crimes. This was based on the fact that the prime suspect (Garavito) came from Armenia but also that numerous corpses had been found in this region. It seems that other local investigation units did, however, not share all their information with the Armenian police.

Legally, the case against Garavito is not closed because he still confesses to killings. Until 2003, he was technically found guilty 70 times, for 160 separate killings. Since Garavito was considered to be sane (in the sense of being responsible for his acts), he could not be sent to a forensic psychiatric institution for an indefinite time. Therefore he was sentenced to custody in prison. As in the Colombian sentencing system the sentences for every single offence are added up, Garavito was actually sentenced to about 2600 years in prison. However, this does not mean that Garavito will serve a life time prison sentence. After the reform of the Colombian Penal Code in 2000, a person can neither be sentenced to death nor stay imprisoned for more than 40 years in total (article 37.1 of the Penal Code). Since Garavito is highly cooperative, mitigation, including an earlier release might have to be applied.^{12, 13}

Garavito did never appear in court. This is due to a regulation that was introduced to the Colombian penal code to simplify cases in which the defendant fully confesses, and in which objective proof for his crimes is present and matches the confession. In such cases, legally binding verdicts can be passed successively and without a formal trial.^p Also, the public was massively outraged already, and a regular trial was not sought after by any party.

Personal impressions

Garavito is held separate from other prisoners because it is feared that else he would be killed immediately. He is afraid of getting poisoned, and only takes drinks given to him by few persons. His guards are on very good terms with him which is reflected by the fact that Garavito himself is relaxed and not at all shy towards them.

The stereotype of the intelligent serial killer is challenged by Garavito in several respects. The high number of victims is on the one hand explained by his indeed clever way to adapt socially and by changes of his clothing (except of his glasses; Figure 9) to local environments. This seems to be natural to him or well trained. To us, he did not make the impression of a person who is playing a rehearsed role. The only thing he never changed, is the frame of his glasses made of red plastic.

On the other hand, the high number of victims was also due to the chaotic and violent structures in Colombia. *E.g.*, it will not raise any suspicion to work as a street vendor by just buying a used cart and selling some type of fruit. This way, it is very easy for a Columbian person to blend in, especially around busy market places (as Garavito did). Furthermore, due to the poverty, odd jobs are attractive for children victims.

Another observation that might speak against regular intelligence is that Garavito cannot restrict his train of thoughts. He will jump from one topic to the other, and even if he starts a conversation on a topic that he feels is interesting (plane crash, etc.), he will switch to a different topic only seconds, or

minutes later. Because of the complete absence of any psychological treatment, he is not used to talk about personal matters, even if it would aid his cause. For example, one of the first things he talked to us about was an article from a popular science magazine that he found very interesting; he had written down notes next to the article. The article was dealing with children abused by their parents. When we asked why this caused his attention, he would absolutely not comment on this issue and switched the topic as if he had not heard the question. This is remarkable because it is the opinion of the police that Garavito was maltreated as a child.

In a picture test that we conducted in 2005 (M.B.), he failed to understand or to solve the quiz items.

From a criminalistic point of view, it is remarkable that Garavito seemed to be too careful to take any trophies from the victims except of the photographs cut out of their I.D. cards. At the same time, he liked to be photographed. Several pictures show him as a street vendor, inside of apartments where he lived, etc.

Travelling for work is quite normal in many economically challenged countries. Therefore, Garavito did not raise suspicion constantly travelling throughout the country. In several cities, he lived together with women who were the same age or older than Garavito and who sometimes had children. In fact, Garavito seemed to be a caring social father since his girl friends never complained about him or stated any form of abuse concerning themselves or their children. They even mentioned that he enjoyed friendly play with his social children. In at least one case, Garavito continuously sent money back to one of his girlfriends during his travels. The investigators believe that Garavito may have lived together with these women on a platonic basis.

The second stereotype of a controlling personality seems to be correct for Garavito. He tries to reach his goals by the most appropriate social methods, *i.e.* now by full co-operation with the police. However, until now, he showed no sign of true remorse. Talking to the police, he stated his sympathy

for his victims. In one case, he claimed to have felt sorry when a child told him about its abuse back in the family. Nevertheless, Garavito still proceeded to torture the child to death.

His comments on the personal safety of others are ambiguous. For example, he very early in our conversation warned against walking alone in the streets (which is in fact extremely dangerous in Colombia). We asked ourselves if Garavito was actually concerned about our safety or if he wanted to find out if we were afraid of the whole situation, or if he wanted to put himself in a position of strength.

It seems that due to his personality, he still cannot control the situation because he does not fully understand the intentions of others. His ongoing confessions might seem to him a way to get out of prison earlier but obviously, the police has their own plans to prevent this. When we visited Garavito, he complained that we did not bring expensive gifts but only symbolic ones (T-shirts, etc.). Instead of telling us, he wrote an informant-style report to the police in which he noted what he remembered from our conversation and what we looked like.

Garavito also told us that he wanted to understand the cause of his actions. Since he does not discuss personal matters in depth, we offered him to comment on the crimes of a different serial offender, either Jürgen Bartsch or Father Denke.¹⁴ He was very interested to hear about the cases (he asked specifically about the number of victims) but did not keep track of this conversation.

Generally, Garavito gives the impression of an open, friendly person. In our opinion, he did not constantly lie to us but seemed to be tense at times. Without being asked, he told us that he would not continue his killings outside of prison and that he had got everything sorted out in his mind.

Similarities

Both killers were highly organized in the way they carried out their crimes. Both believe(d) in, and work(ed) on their release

out of prison. In prison, they easily managed to manipulate their complete environment, being treated extremely well in consequence. Bartsch claimed the right for a second chance; Garavito states that he got things straightened out with himself and would not kill again.

The *modus operandi* of both offenders remained stable over the course of their crimes, irrespective of the different number of victims (Bartsch: 4, Garavito: more than 300 confirmed), the offenders' age (Bartsch: ~19, Garavito: ~30) and the different social and cultural background (Europe vs South America). Both were drinkers. The promises made by Bartsch and Garavito to the children were quite similar: They both offered money and a plausible story (Garvito: odd jobs, drugs; Bartsch: suitcase with diamonds, insurance detective).

The killing locations were in both cases places slightly out of town but still in reach. Garavito frequently used the slope of hills so he could most likely see if somebody approached whereas Bartsch used an abandoned tunnel which nobody entered at all.

Both offenders reflected upon the feelings of others in prison and pretended to feel sympathy for their victims. However, this seems to be make-believe because of their general lack of compassion. This could touch might be the reason why both got the same popular name: "La bestia - Die Bestie - The Beast".

Both offenders, to a different extend, were very much determined by their impulses. They only focused on everything that was necessary to carry out the crimes. At the same time, they did not at all focus on general social goals like of a job, social security, etc.. In their statements and/or letters, they relate mostly to current events and thoughts but much less to general concepts and ideas. Still, control and cleverness were the two aspects of the offenders' personalities that allowed them to go through with their crimes for quite some time, killing a high number of victims.

We are under the impression that in prison, both offenders honestly tried to work against their obsessions but - for unknown reasons

- did not manage to overpower their homicidal urges.

Acknowledgements.—Due to the political situation in Columbia, several colleagues do not wish to be named. We do, however, thank the investigators from the region Armenia, especially Harold Mauricio Sanchez Hernandez and Alvaro Vivas Botero as well as the head of the prison in Villavicencio. We also thank social worker Amira Sierra Rodriguez, lawyer Lina Cruz Lopez, and Luis Alfredo Garavito Cubillos for their willingness to communicate with us. MB cordially thanks the following persons: Paul Moor who was a good friend of Jürgen Bartsch, and who added valuable personal information to our research; co-author MRR (Garavito case) and Saskia Reibe (Bartsch case) for their successful and continuous efforts that far exceeded any task that could be considered to be acceptable; the homicide dept. KK 11 of the Cologne Police for their help in obtaining the original files of the Bartsch case, and the State Archive of North Rhine Westphalia for extensive research possibilities.

RIASSUNTO

Due serial killer sadici omosessuali pedofili: Jürgen Bartsch (Germania 1946-1976) e Luis Alfredo Garavito Cubillos (Columbia 1957)

Da un'analisi criminalista legale, sono stati descritti due casi di serial killer sadici omosessuali pedofili che presentano alcune caratteristiche in comune. I dati sono stati ottenuti: mediante a) un incontro con Luis Alfredo Garavito e con gli investigatori in Colombia nel luglio 2002 e b) dai dati ottenuti dai processi contro Jürgen Bartsch così come dalle lettere scritte da lui. Queste risorser non sono mai state usate in investigazioni scientifiche o pubblicazioni. Dal 1992 Luis Alfredo Garavito ha ucciso più di 200 bambini dagli 8 ai 13 anni (con una eccezione di 6 e di 16 anni). Il suo *modus operandi* è rimasto sempre simile. Bambini venivano rapiti, torturati, picchiati e uccisi con un taglio nella parte laterale del collo con la decapitazione. Durante gli omicidi Garavito era ubriaco. Durante le sue confessioni ha diretto gli investigatori con correttezza a tutti i luoghi dei crimini distribuiti sul territorio della Columbia. È formalmente possibile che Garavito venga rimesso in libertà nei prossimi 10-20 anni. Anche prima che siano trascorsi i 40 anni imposti dalla massima condanna. Nel 1996 il diciannovenne Jürgen Bartsch è stato arrestato dopo un tentativo senza successo di torturare, uccidere e smembrare un giovane ragazzo. Prima dal 1962 al 1966 Bartsch ha ucciso 4 ragazzi dagli 8 ai 12 anni. È stato valutato che fosse responsabile di ulteriori 100 tentati omicidi. Il metodo di uccisione era la percussione e lo strangolamento. Egli smembrava la maggior parte dei corpi, prelevava gli occhi, decapi-

tava e rimuoveva i genitali. Ha anche tentato senza riuscirci di avere rapporti anali con le vittime. Il suo obiettivo era di torturare lentamente le vittime fino alla morte. Il suo desiderio per il dominio, controllo e gratificazione sessuale ma anche le sue strategie per evitare i procedimenti penali erano argomenti che Bartsch discuteva apertamente. Sotto l'influenza di consulti psichiatrici, la visione di Bartsch dei suoi genitori così come le valutazioni riguardo le sue memorie degli abusi sessuali da parte di un insegnante su di lui sono cambiate. In un ospedale psichiatrico Bartsch ha sposato una donna che gli aveva scritto delle lettere. Durante un intervento chirurgico volontario è deceduto per un errore nella procedura di anestesia.

Parole chiave: Serial killer - Sadismo - Pedofilia.

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