Gary Ridgway (Green River Killer)

Haley Burns
Forensic Psychology
2nd period
Reason why I chose this topic:

Well as weird as it sounds I’ve always found serial killers interesting. Gary Ridgway was local and with how many woman he killed ranging from such a young age fascinated me, I personally wanted to learn more about his life and what may have made him want to kill woman.

Main research questions:

● How Was he finally caught?
● How did he escape the death penalty?
● What did the ages of the women range from?
● How did he usually kill his victims?
Gary Ridgway’s Life Growing Up

Gary Ridgway was born February 18th, 1949 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Grew up in a deprived neighborhood near Seatac Airport.

Had two brothers; one younger, one older.

He wet the bed until his early teens; he was belittled by his mother because of this.

He had conflicting feelings of sexual attraction and anger towards his mother.

Tested with an IQ of 82, signifying low intelligence and had to repeat a year twice.
First attempted Murder

At 16 years old, Ridgway led a 6 year old boy into the woods and stabbed him through the ribs 6 times. According to both the victim and Ridgway, Ridgway walked away laughing and said "I always wondered what it would be like to kill someone."
After High School

After he graduated, he married his high school sweetheart. He then enlisted in the Navy and was sent on a tour to Vietnam where he saw combat.

He started having sexual encounters with prostitutes and contracted gonorrhea which began his lifelong hate for prostitutes.

Once he returned home he discovered his wife was having an affair causing their divorce.

He got a job at a local Kenworth plant painting designs on trucks which he held for 30 years.
The start of the murders

He began murdering women in 1982.

All victims were prostitutes.

Victims between 15-40 years of age.

He never attacked a particular ethnicity.

Didn’t focus on physical features.

Typically chose those who looked vulnerable.
Ridgway would usually pick up his victims along the South Pacific High in Seattle, Washington.

After sex, Ridgway would strangle his victim to death. At the beginning he strangled them manually but after being inflicted with many wounds from the victims trying to defend themselves so he began using ropes, belts and other ligatures as not to draw suspicion.

Most of the bodies were dumped in the woods of the Green River in what Ridgway described as “clusters” He would sometimes return to the bodies & have intercourse with the bodies.
Conviction/Admitting to the Crime

Ridgeway was convicted on accounts of 48 murders and has been issued 48 life sentences to go along with his 480 years of incarceration.

He has confessed to nearly twice that number and is assumed to have killed 90+. His 48 confirmed murders make him the most prolific serial killer in the history of the United States.
Serving his time

Since 2004 he has been serving his time in the Washington state penitentiary, after his arrest in 2001 based on DNA evidence.

He agreed to show the police where he hid two of the bodies, to escape the death penalty.

He was moved to a maximum-security federal penitentiary in Florence, Colorado.

Moved back to Washington because victim’s families, law enforcement and local leaders spoke out against his move to Colorado.
Vocabulary:
Serial killer: a person who murders three or more people, with the murders taking place over more than a month and including a significant break (a "cooling off period") between them.

Sociopath: a person with a personality disorder manifesting itself in extreme antisocial attitudes and behavior and a lack of conscience.

Prostitute: a person, typically a woman, who engages in sexual activity for payment.

Questions:
What was his life like growing up?
How did he usually kill his victims?
Bibliography


