



**Case study of Myra Hindley**

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## Abstract

The current piece of case study concerns the famous murderer of England during 90's named as Myra Hindley. The women is said to have taken part in five murderers and sexual assaults as well. All of the above crimes had taken place in England and Hindley was accompanied by her lover Ian Brady, a convicted criminal himself. The study deals with the background of the case, the early life of Myra Hindley and the situations that led her to follow the path of crime. It also includes the psychological theories that would help the researcher to understand the mindset of Myra and the reasons that compelled her to turn into a psychotic criminal.



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### **Background of the case of Myra Hindley**

Myra Hindley was a rapist and murderer of England. Hindley was considered to be one of the most dangerous serial killer in England of her times and was often termed to be the most evil woman of England. The murders were that were committed were famously known to be ‘The Moors murders’ that were carried out in the month of July in 1963 involved two dangerous murderers being Myra Hindley and her companion Ian Brady. The victims of this mass murder were reportedly the five children that were aged in between 10 to 17 years. The names of the children as mentioned in the police report are namely Pauline Reade, Keith Bennett, Lesley Ann Downey, and John Kilbride along with Edward Evans.

As observed by Pettigrew (2016), the bodies of the two of the victims were found out by digging out the graves located in Saddleworth Moor and hence the following case was named after the same. At the initial stage of the murder, the police of England had information about only three murders for which both the murderers were taken into police custody for trial. Later, in the year 1987, the third grave of the victim was discovered on the graveyard of moor. The police further suspected that the fourth victim was buried there, but no such evidence has been discovered till date even after repeated searches. The bodies of the victims were found to be in distorted conditions that indicated the chances of sexual assault.

The murder committed by Brady and Hindley came into public eye after they confessed for the same in the year 1985. The statements of the two murders cleared the air and a conclusion was drawn that both of them were involved in four murders. The first victim of Hindley and Brady was Pauline Reade, a 16 year old teenager. As per the police reports Reade was on her way to a dance when she disappeared. She was last seen on 12<sup>th</sup> of July in 1963 in Crumpsall.

In the opinion of King, Foley & Cummins (2016), Hindley, under the influence of Ian Brady decided to commit a perfect murder and made a plan for the same. The two murders decided that Hindley would be driving her van in the local area of their residence and that Brady would be riding his bike and following Hindley. Brady was supposed to find a victim and signal Hindley by flashing the headlight and then Hindley would offer lift to that person.

After Brady spotted a young girl, Hindley offered a lift and later recognized the girl to her younger sister’s friend named Pauline Reade. Hindley made an excuse of missing an expensive

globe on Saddleworth Moore and Reade accompanies Hindley to Moore. On reaching the place, Brady also accompanies the two and Hindley introduced him to Reade as her boyfriend. Hindley was waiting in the car and the rest two went on in search of the gloves. Half an hour later Brady returned to the car and took Hindley to the place where the murder was committed. On seeing the condition of Reade's clothes, Hindley guessed that Brady had sexually assaulted Reade. Later, the two murders buried the body. This is the way in which Myra Hindley and Ian Brady committed their first murder.

Later the two murders were engaged in the murder of John Kilbride, a 12 year old kid in the month of November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1963. After that the two murdered Keith Bennett, who was going to visit his grandmother. The next two murders were committed on similar basis. According to Bradley (2013), the attack by Hindley and Brady on one of their victims named Edward Evans was witnessed by Hindley's brother in law named David Smith. On the complain of Smith, the superintendent came in disguised to arrest the murderers. The police searched the premises for evidences of murder, and later discovered the body of Evans. Hindley and Brady were arrested on the grounds of murder and were taken to the police station. The two of them kept on insisting that it was an accident and that they were not guilty for the murder of Evans.

On further investigation, both of them insisted that Smith had committed the crime and was framing them into it. Later, Smith informed police that the evidence was hidden in two suitcases in Manchester. As observed by Cummins & King (2014), the police discovered the suitcase and found few pornographic photographs of a young girl and tape recording of a girl's voice screaming for help. Later on the bodies were also discovered. However, despite the evidences the two murderers pleaded of not being guilty. In the year 1085, the crime was accepted by Brady to a leading reporter named Fred Harrison and later the two were arrested by conducting further investigation regarding the missing number of people.

### **Early life of Myra Hindley**

Myra Hindley, the daughter of Nellie and Bob Hindley was born and brought up in Manchester. A young Hindley had been the victim of his alcoholic fathers' physical torture. The living conditions of the family deteriorated further after the birth of Hindley's sister in the year 1946. At the age of five, Hindley came to reside with her grandmother living nearby.

Hindley's father was a fighter in the Second World War and so taught Hindley was taught by her father on how to fight and stand for oneself. The relationship of Hindley and her father was on a brutal basis. Hindley's father had influence her young mind to hurt people in turn for bad treatment and this was possibly the reason for such situations in Hindley's life.

Hindley later worked as a clerk in one of the local engineering company named Bratby and Hinchiliffe but was dismissed after six months due to irregularity. At the age of 17 Hindley was engaged to Ronnie Sinclair however the wedding was called off after several months. After this she engaged herself in her judo lessons at one of the local schools.

At the age of 18, Myra Hindley met Ian Brady for the first time in the year 1961 on 27<sup>th</sup> of July. Later, Hindley joined a company named Millwards and started working there as a typist. As per the notes entered by Hindley in her diary, she went on several dates with Ian Brady and seemed to very fascinated by the man despite of being aware of his criminal records. In this regard, Bradley (2014), said that Brady has had a bad influence on the mind of Hindley and was able to persuade her to watch the X rated films with him and wear unacceptable clothes. As a result of this, Hindley went on to less sociable with her colleagues. The obsession of Hindley for Brady grew stronger day by day and Brady used his power of persuasion on Hindley to make a criminal out of her.

Hindley's appearance also changed after she started dating Brady. The girl had changed her hair color and started wearing clothes that were considered explicit during those times. The clothes included high length boots, leather jackets along with short skirts. This shows the impact that Brady had on the life of Hindley. In addition to this, the two also planned bank robberies though such was not undertaken by the two. Hindley's changed her appearance again and tried to be more risqué in her clothing sense.

Further, on being convicted of the crimes conducted by the two, Hindley made claims that it was Brady who planned to commit the "perfect murder". According to Strub&McKimmie(2015), Brady was fascinated by a novel written by Meyer Levin about the murder of 12 years old kid and later escaped the penalty of death. In the year 1963, in the month of July Brady and Hindley stated a living relationship at Hindley's grandmother's house.

In the later years, Hindley's sister married one of the local boys named David Smith and none of the family were impressed on this marriage and was attended by no one. The reason for this was that David was a convicted criminal and Hindley's younger sister was already seven months pregnant. Brady met David for the first time on an outing. The two men appeared quite impressed with one another as written by Hindley in her diary.

In the year 1964, on account of slum clearances undertaken in Manchester post war, Hindley was rehoused along with her grandmother. Later, Hindley refused to allow her grandmother to stay at her home and left the old lady at a relative's house. The day when the couple murdered Patricia was the day Hindley brought her grandmother back to home.

In the 1990's claims were made by Hindley stating that she was drugged by Brady and was compelled to take part in the murders. Hindley also stated that she was being blackmailed by Brady on the basis of the pornographic photos Brady had taken of her and along with that Brady had also threatened Hindley of murdering her younger sister, Maureen.

On being taken for trial by the police, Hindley appealed not guilty but the appeal went on to be unsuccessful. Hindley later pleaded for a change of status from category A to category B. Hindley befriended another prisoner named Maxine Croft and made a plan to escape from the prison. Due to their unsuccessful attempt Croft was convicted and was jailed for further six years and Hindley was then sentenced to 25 years in jail.

In the year 1990, Hindley accepted of being a much more involvement in the murders committed was sentenced to life time imprisonment by the Home secretary. Hindley made claims of being reformed women and appealed for being considered for parole but the same was rejected by the court. In the year 2002, the decision of the Home secretary was challenged by one of the convicted criminal and this gave a ray of hope to Hindley and similar other criminals convicted with life imprisonment.

In this regard the Law lords of England agreed that the punishment for the convicted criminals must be decided by the judges and not by the politicians. As a result of this, the home secretary was stripped of his power to make decisions regarding the term of punishment for the criminals. However, due to excessive smoking, a sixty year old Hindley suffered from a brain aneurysm and was admitted to the hospital. After few days, she died because of a heart disease resulting

from bronchial pneumonia on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2002. The cremation of Hindley's boy was not accepted by the society however one of Hindley's friends from the jail scattered her ashes in a local park named Stalybridge Country.

### **Psychological Research and Theory on the case of Myra Hindley**

Hindley spent most of her childhood with her grandmother. Hindley's parents were financial weak and were not capable to meet the requirements of the family after the birth of their second child. Therefore, Hindley lacked the guidance and love of her parents from the early phase of her life. According to Weare(2013), this may be one of the reasons for her lack of self-control and being so easily persuaded and influenced. Secondly, she suffered from a broken engagement at a tender age of 17. This had a major impact on the demotion of Hindley's social interactions. Hindley was suffering from grief and was tormented and went into depression. In addition to that, lack of affection from her parents added to the sufferings of Hindley.

As a teenager, Hindley was kind and sympathetic towards children and was a very fond baby sitter. On the death of her friend, Michael she went into depression because the boy had asked Hindley to accompany him for a swim and she rejected. The boy drowned and Hindley was suffering from guilt. The psychological changes appeared in Hindley after she met Brady and started dating him. Hindley started becoming secretive towards the family members and was encouraged by Brady to earn a license for gun as well.

In accordance with the theory of expectancy as stated by Eastal et al. (2015), the level of performance of a person when based upon the expectations of that person will lead to a particular outcome on behaving in one particular manner. The truthfulness of Hindley's involvement in the murder is difficult to determine however she was constantly involved in luring the children on to her car for the purpose of satisfying the urge of her counterpart for rape and vandalizing the victims.

The psychotic characteristics that appear to fit Hindley's personality include being socially insensitive, lack of emotions and feeling of empathy, no regard for danger, troublesome behavior, feeling of dislike for other people, not accepting the responsibilities for the actions committed and having an attraction for insularity. Hindley was aware of the fact that the victims

would be slaughtered soon after Brady was done with his sexual amusement. Yet, Hindley did not oppose the decisions nor did she give a second thought to the murders being committed.

In the words of O'Brien (2015), the lack of empathy in the personality and character of an individual is regarded to a trait of an aggressive as well as antisocial person. The control perspective is based on the theory that deviancy roots from the lack of self-control of an individual. In the following case, Hindley was prepared to do anything that Brady asked her to do. This implies the lack of self-control of Hindley over her own decisions.

The theory of differential association and reinforcement implies the process of deviancy of an individual's personality and thoughts. As Hindley spent most of her time with Brady reading books and novels based on crime, she was instinctively drawn towards it. An expression of definition towards violation of law is being more favored than being not favored and this encourages an individual to engage in criminal offense. As per the theory of expectancy, Hindley was devoted to Brady and was delinquent to please him at all costs. Hindley was influenced by Brady to such extent that she would believe every word of Brady. This implies the effect of bad companionship and passes an important message and value.

On the breaking of Hindley's engagement to Ronnie, she was heartbroken and had no intention of living and therefore lacked excitement. After Hindley met Brady, the excitement she felt of Brady after committing the crimes satisfied her and helped her meet her own craving to live.

In this regard, the theory of deindividuation states that people tend to lose their own individuality while acting in a group. This theory appears relevant to the behavior of Hindley as she lacked self-control and neutral moral restraints. In this case, it may be concluded that her change of behavior took place after she met Brady and it is unlikely that she would have engaged in any petty crime had she not met Brady.

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