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| Robert Berdella  *The Butcher of Kansas City, Missouri* | | |  |
| Information researched and summarized by  *Ryan Fisher, Ashley Aust, Danielle Bisset, Timothy Jamba, John Jones, Audrey King, Jennifer Kowalski, Elizabeth Krell, and Jaclyn Layton*  Department of Psychology  Radford University  Radford, VA 24142-6946 | | | |
| **Date** | **Age** | **Life Event** | |
| 01-31-1949 | 0 | Robert Berdella was born in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. | |
| May 1956 | 7 | Brother, Daniel, was born | |
| 1961 | 12 | Berdella was baptized as a Catholic | |
| Dec 1965 | 16 | Father dies of a sudden heart attack at age 39. Mother remarries soon after. Berdella resented it. | |
| 1965 | Raped by a man he worked with in an Ohio restaurant. | |
| Stopped attending church services | |
| Watched the movie “The Collector” which was about a man who kidnapped a woman and kept her captive. He would later admit that this movie left a lasting impression on him. | |
| Aug 1967 | 18 | Enrolled in the Kansas City Art Institute. | |
| 1967 | Began to abuse and sell drugs and alcohol. | |
| Jan 1968 | 19 | Arrested, and plead guilty, for selling amphetamines to an undercover agent. He received a five year suspended sentence. | |
| Feb 1968 | Arrested for possession of LSD and marijuana. After spending 5 days in jail the charges were dropped for lack of evidence. | |
| 1968 | Began to work as a short-order cook. | |
| Sep 1969 | 20 | Bought a house where he would live until his arrest | |
| Dec 1969 | Dropped out of art school | |
| 1970’s | 20-30 | Became more accomplished as a chef and worked for many well-known restaurants and country clubs. Joined local chefs association where he helped set up training classes for aspiring chefs.  Helped organize local crime prevention and neighborhood watch association | |
| Began renting space at the local flee-market where he sold oddities, antiques, and | |

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|  |  | artifacts. |
| Became open about his homosexuality |
| 1981 | 32 | Quit work as a cook and begin to work full time at his shop, which he named “Bob’s Bazaar Bizarre”. |
| 1982 | 33 | Became seriously emotionally involved with an unstable Vietnam veteran, however, the relationship did not last long.  Began picking up young male prostitutes. He would become a friend with many of them, often allowing them to live with him in exchange for helping with  housework. He tried to get many of them to quit prostituting and get their lives in order. |
| 1984 | 35 | Began hanging out with 19-year-old Jerry Howell, one of the young prostitutes. |
| 07-04-1985 | Drugged Howell with animal tranquilizers. Bound and gagged him to a bed and sodomized him repeatedly. During this time, and subsequent crimes he took numerous pictures and kept a detailed log. |
| 07-06-1984 | Howell died from asphyxiation. Berdella hung Howell upside down in his basement and cut slits in the body in order to drain the blood. He then  dismembered the body, put the pieces in trash bags, and left them on his curb. Garbage men then unwittingly took the trash to the dump never to be found again. |
| 04-10-1985 | 36 | Allowed an acquaintance, Robert Sheldon to stay at his house for a couple of days. Injected him with drugs with the intention of “keeping him” like he did to Howell. |
| 04-11-1985 | Decided not to “keep” Sheldon and took him to the doctor because Sheldon was complaining of soreness from the drugs. |
| 04-12-1985 | Sheldon got drunk and Berdella again decided to “keep” him. He then drugged him with sedatives and tranquilizers and then bound and gagged him as he had done with Howell. He then sodomized and tortured him repeatedly for days. |
| 04-15-1985 | A workman arrived to do some roofing work for Berdella. Berdella then suffocated Sheldon with a plastic bag so that the workman would not hear him. He then placed the body in his bathtub and made incisions to allow the blood to drain. He then dismembered and disposed of the body as he had done with Howell, except this time he kept the head and buried it in his backyard. |
| 1985 | Met Mark Wallace after he had help with some yard work for him. |
| 06-22-1985 | Berdella found Wallace in his tool shed seeking shelter from a violent storm. He invited Wallace inside and drugged him. |
| 06-23-1985 | Berdella tortured and sodomized Wallace for several hours until he died from asphyxiation. Berdella then disposed of the body as he had done before. |
| 09-26-1985 | Picked up an acquaintance, James Ferris, at a gay bar and took him back to his house. |
| 09-27-1985 | He then drugged, bound, and tortured Ferris as he had with the others until he died from asphyxiation. He disposed of the body as he had before. |
| 06-17-1986 | 37 | Met a male prostitute he had known for a couple years named Todd Stoops and invited him back to his house. He then drugged and tortured him for weeks. |
| 07-01-1986 | Stoops died from blood loss as a result of the torture. Berdella disposed of the body as had the others. |
| 06-05-1987 | 38 | Bailed a friend, Larry Pearson, out of jail and invited him to live with him. |
| 06-23-1987 | Drugged and tortured Pearson in his basement for 6 weeks. |
| 08-05-1987 | Berdella went to the hospital after Pearson had bit his penis. Berdella was told that he would have to stay in the hospital for a couple days. Before his stay, he went home and suffocated Pearson with a plastic bag. |
| 07-07-1987 | Returned home from the hospital and disposed of Pearson’s body. He kept his head and buried it in the backyard. He also removed Sheldon’s previously buried skull and put it on display in his house. |
| 03-29-1988 | 39 | Picked up a 22 year-old male prostitute, Chris Bryson, and took him back to his house. He drugged and tortured him as he had done with the others for 5 days. |
| 04-02-1988 | While Berdella was at work, Bryson freed himself by burning through the ropes that bound him, and jumping out of the second story window. Bryson then ran to a |

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|  |  | neighbor’s house wearing nothing but a dog collar around his neck. Police began to care for Bryson and listen to his story of repeated torture when Berdella arrived home. | |
| Apr 2-4 | Police searched Berdella’s house and found his torture logs and pictures. Berdella was arraigned on seven counts of sodomy, one count of felonious restraint and one count of first degree assault. Initially, bail was set at $500,000. | |
| Apr 5-Sep 13 | Bail was revoked when an officer testified that one of the men in the photographs from Berdella’s house appeared to be dead. Berdella remained in jail while police found more evidence of his crimes; this included digging up his backyard where they found Pearson’s partially decade skull. | |
| 07-02-1988 | Grand jury indicts Berdella for the murder of Larry Pearson | |
| 08-03-1988 | In order to avoid the death penalty Berdella pleads guilty to Pearson’s murder. | |
| 09-02-1988 | Grand jury indicts Berdella for the murder of Robert Sheldon | |
| 09-13-1988 | Berdella plea-bargains to life in prison in exchange for a full confession of his crimes. | |
| Dec 13-15 | Berdella confesses to investigators to his crimes in vivid detail. | |
| 12-19-1988 | Berdella pled guilty to 1st degree murder in the death of victim Robert Sheldon and to 4 counts of 2nd degree murder involving additional male victims. Berdella confesses in court and is sent to the state penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri for the rest of his life. He also announces that he has set up a trust fund in the amount of $50,000 for the families of his victims. | |
| Jan. 1989 | 40 | Gives an interview with a local television channel in which he blames police and media for distorting him and his crimes. | |
| Jan. 1992 | 42 | Todd Stoops’ mother wins wrongful death civil suit against Berdella, and is awarded a record $5 billion. Because Berdella can’t pay this amount, Stoops’ mother would have a claim on any future earnings Berdella might make. | |
| 10-08-1992 | 43 | Berdella dies in prison from a heart attack. | |
| **General Information** | | | |
| Sex | | | Male |
| Race | | | White |
| Number of victims | | | Suspected of 6, Confessed to 6, Convicted of 6 |
| Country where killing occurred | | | United States |
| States where killing occurred | | | Kansas City, Missouri |
| **Childhood Information** | | | |
| Date of birth | | | January 31, 1949 |
| Location | | | Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio |
| Birth order | | | 1st of 2 |
| Number of siblings | | | 1 |
| XYY? | | | Unknown |
| Raised by | | | Both parents |
| Birth category | | | Oldest |
| Parent’s marital status | | | Married |
| Family event | | | Death of father (Heart Attack) |
| Age of family event | | | 16 |
| Problems in school? | | | Yes, teachers felt that he was hard to teach, though he earned excellent grades |
| Teased while in school? | | | Yes |
| Physically attractive? | | | No |
| Physical defect? | | | Severe near sidedness, forced to wear thick glasses sense age 5. Also spoke of having surgery to improve his jutting jaw |
| Speech defect? | | | Yes, he had a slight lisp |
| Head injury? | | | None |
| Physically abused? | | | Yes, father would beat him with a leather strap |

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| Psychologically abused? | Yes, it also appears that his father liked his younger brother more than him. |
| Sexually abused? | Not by parents, but claims to have been victim of homosexual rape at age 16 by a co-worker. |
| Father’s occupation | Dye setter for the Ford Motor Company |
| Age of first sexual experience | Raped at 16 |
| Age when first had intercourse | No record found, however he was rarely sexually active until after age 30. |
| Mother’s occupation | Homemaker |
| Father abused drugs/alcohol | No |
| Mother abused drugs/alcohol | No |
| **Cognitive Ability** | |
| Highest grade in school | Junior year of Art School in Kansas City |
| Highest degree | High school diploma |
| Grades in school | Excellent |
| IQ | Unknown |
| **Work History** | |
| Served in the military? | No |
| Branch | N/A |
| Type of discharge | N/A |
| Saw combat duty | N/A |
| Killed enemy during service? | N/A |
| Applied for job as a cop? | No |
| Worked in law enforcement? | No, but did help organize, and chair, his neighborhood crime prevention association |
| Fired from jobs? | No record |
| Types of jobs worked | Cook, shopkeeper |
| Employment status during series | Self employed, owned an antiques and artifacts shop called, “Bob’s Bazaar Bizarre” |
| **Relationships** |  |
| Sexual preference | Homosexual |
| Marital status | Single |
| Number of children | 0 |
| Lives with his children | N/A |
| Living with | Mostly by himself, though occasionally he would take on roommates for brief periods of time. |
| **Triad** | |
| Animal torture | Yes, killed a chicken and a duck while in Art School. Also tested various drugs on a stray dog prior to killings |
| Fire setting | No record |
| Bed wetting | No record |
| **Killer Psychological Information** | |
| Abused drugs? | Yes |
| Abused alcohol? | Yes |
| Been to a psychologist? | No |
| Time in forensic hospital? | No |
| Diagnosis | N/A |
| **Killer Criminal History** | |
| Committed previous crimes? | Yes, arrested at age 19 for selling amphetamines to undercover agents. Also arrested one month later for possession of  marijuana and LSD, but charges were dropped |

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| Spend time in jail? | 5 days for the second drug charge |
| Spend time in prison? | No |
| Killed prior to series? Age? | No |
| **Serial Killing** | |
| Number of victims | 6 killed, 1 escaped |
| Victim type | Male prostitutes and drug abusers |
| Killer age at start of series | 35 |
| Gender of victims | Male |
| Race of victims | White |
| Age of victims | 20-30 |
| Method of killing | Asphyxiation and drug overdoses |
| Type of serial killer | Disorganized thrill |
| How close did killer live? | Generally would pick up victim in his car and entice them into his home with drugs. |
| Killing occurred in home of victim? | No |
| Killing occurred in home of killer? | Yes |
| Weapon | Generally, used drugs to knock the victim unconscious |
| Behavior During Crimes | |
| Rape? | Yes, repeatedly and with various methods |
| Tortured victims? | Yes, repeatedly and with various methods |
| Stalked victims? | No |
| Overkill? | No |
| Quick & efficient? | No |
| Used blindfold? | Yes, sometimes |
| Bound the victims? | Yes |
| After Death Behavior | |
| Sex with the body? | No |
| Mutilated body? | Yes |
| Ate part of the body? | No |
| Drank victim’s blood? | No |
| Posed the body? | Yes |
| Took totem – body part | Yes, kept two of the victim’s skulls. |
| Took totem – personal item | Yes, kept wallets and identification |
| Robbed victim or location | Yes |
| Disposal of Body | |
| Left at scene, no attempt to hide | Not usually, however he did put one skull on display in his house after it was buried for years. |
| Left at scene, hidden | No |
| Left at scene, buried | Not usually, however he did bury two skulls in his backyard. |
| Moved, no attempt to hide | No |
| Moved, buried | No |
| Cut-op and disposed of | Yes, left for garbage man to unwittingly take away |
| Moved, too home | N/A |
| Sentencing |  |
| Date killer arrested | April 2, 1988 |
| Date convicted | Plead guilty on December 19, 1988 |
| Sentence | 2 life sentences, no parole. 4 life sentences, with parole. |
| Killer executed? | No |
| Name and state of prison | Jefferson City, Missouri. Maximum Security Facility |
| Killer committed suicide? | No |
| Killer killed in prison? | No, Died of a heart attack in 1992, though there is speculation that he was poisoned. |
| Date of death | 1992 |

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