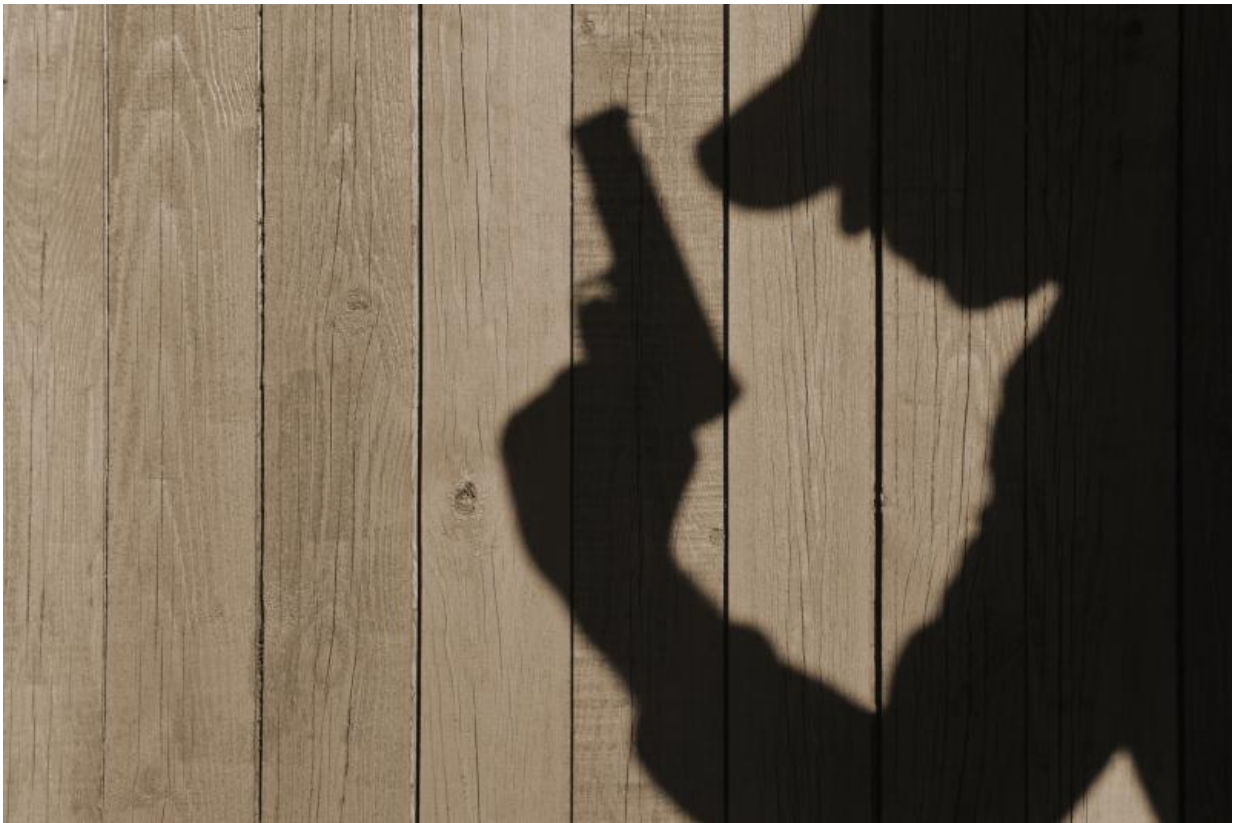


Hitmen bury their feelings for a successful 'hit'

May 20 2015



Hitmen succeed in contract killing where they successfully bury any feelings or emotions, a study into the psychology of novice assassins has found.

Hired killers who consider themselves strategists or businessmen, doing 'just a job' as one hitman described it, can convince themselves they are dealing with a target rather than a person, research by a team of criminologists at Birmingham City University revealed.

North London teenager Santre Sanchez Gayle offered a classic example of detachment, shooting Gulistan Subasi in March 2010, as she opened the door for a paltry sum of £200. The 15-year-old, later sentenced to a minimum of 20 years for the crime, allowed no time for his victim to be personalized before leaving the scene calmly in a taxi.

By contrast Orville Wright's commission to execute Theresa Pitkin in 1996 failed when, after breaking into her flat, he engaged her in conversation and subsequently lost his nerve.

The study points to Jimmy Moody – henchman for the notorious Richardson gang in 1960s London and later a hired assassin for the IRA – as the ultimate example of a hitman who separated his 'work' from the normality of the rest of his life.

The researchers, leading criminologists Professor David Wilson and Mohammed Rahman, said Moody was a classic example of a 'master' hitman, whose motivation to kill was purely financial.

"Moody and the other people in our study show us that when contract killers aren't as successful in switching off their emotions, their jobs tend not to go to plan," said Mohammed Rahman.

"Moody reframed his victims as targets, seeing getting the job done as a normal business activity. These sorts of killers are akin to 'criminal undertakers', who have given themselves 'special liberty' to get things done in the name of business.

"The motivation for most people who become hitmen is economic, so the reframing shows their resourcefulness as individuals who want to minimise risk and effort in the pursuit of maximising profit."

Contract killings

A rare example of a female contract killer, Te Rangimaria Ngarimu, murdered Graham Woodhatch in May 1992. She was paid £1,500 (after being promised £7,000) and shot Mr Woodhatch while he was attending the Royal Free Hospital in London. Ngarimu fled to her native New Zealand but returned to Britain to confess to her role in the murder. It remains unknown why a multi-linguistic devout Christian, who had several degrees, with no previous convictions, agreed to the commit the hit.

At 62, Paul Cryne was the second oldest hitman in the study. Cryne had a lucrative lifestyle in Thailand throughout the 1990s, but ran up debts. He seems to have met up with Sharon Birchwood's ex-husband, Graham Birchwood, through the expatriate community and accepted the £30,000 contract to kill Sharon. Cryne flew back to the UK to carry out the murder and it would later emerge that Mrs Birchwood's death would allow her ex-husband to inherit £475,000. Cryne was apprehended after leaving forensic evidence at the scene of the crime and jailed for life.

Despite agreeing a £7,000 fee for successfully completing the job, when Orville Wright broke into Theresa Pitkin's flat he lost his nerve and failed to complete the 'hit' after engaging his would-be victim in conversation.

Jimmy Moody is believed to have carried out contract killings in several major British cities in the 1960s, including for the notorious Richardson gang in London. After escaping from Brixton prison in the company of a senior member of the Provisional IRA, Moody became a hired assassin

for the republican paramilitary movement. Despite no political convictions he was described as a 'a perfect secret weapon for the IRA', torturing suspected informers before shooting them in the back of the head – known for the 'OBE', or 'one behind the ear'. Moody remained on the run until June 1993, when he himself fell victim to a hit, executed in his favourite pub, The Royal, on the edge of Victoria Park in Hackney.

More information: "Becoming a Hitman." *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*. doi: 10.1111/hojo.12126

Provided by Birmingham City University

Citation: Hitmen bury their feelings for a successful 'hit' (2015, May 20) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-05-hitmen-successful.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.