

Many Murder Victims Said To 'Ask' for Killing

Chicago (Science Service)—In more than a fourth of the cases of murder in Philadelphia the victim brought the killing on himself.

In fact, murder can often be considered a form of suicide, Dr. Marvin E. Wolfgang of the University of Pennsylvania told the meeting of the American Sociological Society here.

Dr. Wolfgang made a study of 588 victims of slayings in Philadelphia during the five-year period 1948-52. In 150 of these, the victim was obviously responsible. This did not include, however, those who merely took the risk of walking late at night; the 150 victims studied actually provoked the murder by an overt physical act. A large proportion (33 out of 150) were husbands (28) or wives (5). The victims also tended to be Negroes, males, and persons with police records for aggressive behavior.

Husband Asked for It

Typical among the suicide-murder victims is the case of a man who came home drunk and started to beat his wife. The wife said, "If you hit me again, I'll kill you." The husband picked up a butcher knife from the kitchen table and put it in her hand. Then he looked her in the eye and slapped her face. She used the knife and killed him.

Such provoked killings are more common in the lower economic classes, Dr. Wolfgang said, although the more conventional form of suicide tends to be more frequent in the upper classes.

People in the lower economic class are more used to physical aggression from others, particularly from the mother. It would seem, Dr. Wolfgang explained, that the husband who deliberately "asks" for a killing from his wife sees in her the image of his mother who used to punish him for wrong-doing.

Warehouses Swept By Towering Flames

Jersey City, N. J. — A towering fire triggered by two tremendous chemical explosions Wednesday swept eight warehouses along a 1,000-foot stretch of waterfront opposite New York City.

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