



Exploring generational perspectives on  
the social costs of inappropriate  
behaviour.

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# Introduction

My personal investigation explores generational perspectives on the social costs of inappropriate behaviour and explicitly examines conformity and non-conformity regarding the setting of agendas in the media and legal system—key concepts that focus on time, power, and Society. Inappropriate behaviour refers to actions that violate legal or social norms and can potentially lead to legal consequences.

Throughout my investigation, my primary research methods include a questionnaire, a focus group, and one interview, which analyse both qualitative and quantitative data. This will enable me to gain a deeper understanding of public opinion and insight from an educated perspective on both micro and macro levels regarding my topic, incorporating my cross-cultural and generational perspectives.

Through my secondary research, I have come to understand certain historical cases, such as those of Ted Bundy and the Menendez brothers, which will help me better comprehend how Society has treated individuals who have committed crimes with apparent justification and those who have been romanticised in the media. I'll be using scholarly articles, media articles, legal documents, documentaries, and a Netflix TV show that sparked my interest in this topic through its portrayal of the Menendez brothers in a negative light.

Throughout my personal investigation, I will discover how the media shapes views on how people interact with deviants and individuals who commit inappropriate behaviours. I will determine whether Gen Z is more considerate of mental health and its impact on inappropriate behaviours than Gen X. I will explore these theories through my primary and secondary research. I need to understand how the cross-cultural aspect of generations affects present-day media and have a better understanding of my three chapter topics and my overall question. Using my primary research, I was able to identify the differences between generations, their impact on individuals who have committed crimes, and how they are portrayed in the law and the media. I will incorporate labelling theory into my investigation to determine how criminals are represented in the media, as well as Moral Panic Theory to explore societal reactions to crime across generations.

My research will enable me to better understand the generational shifts and the aspect of Change. Viewing how values and societal norms have shifted and changed concerning inappropriate behaviour. This project aims to evaluate and assess the Changes that have occurred and conduct a deep dive into how these have affected Western Society.

# Log

When I was younger I hated horror movies particularly the ones about a murder or a violent crime, however during my adolescent years, I began to be curious about True Crime and started to research and immerse myself in knowledge regarding the subject. Importantly I couldn't understand the world's reaction to their crimes why is it that I'm scrolling on social media and I suddenly see a fan and it someone who has killed and done horrible things to another person suddenly I became interested in why even at a young age I was being shown things in the media that's persuaded my opinion towards someone who has committed inappropriate behavior. Seeing crime being glorified in the media, I wanted to understand what the consequences of it were, how it ultimately impacts the outcomes of trials and the public's perception. When I first decided to investigate crime, I knew I wanted to look at specific cases that were relevant in the media, both current and past.

I was unsure of how I would integrate this into my PIP topic without doing a case study. When my teacher introduced the term of inappropriate behaviour I was apprehensive because I was unsure if this would correlate with, my intentions for the topic however I decided that exploring the generational perspectives for social costs of inappropriate behavior as I hope that this term would bring insights into how language is being used and to ensure that I do not close off my investigation into people who have just committed murderers.

When considering how to structure my PIP, I was immediately interested in the idea of who sets the agenda and who has the most significant impact on the outcome of a case for an individual. I wanted to investigate how the media changed perspective, taking into consideration the crossovers between generations and how that has ultimately affected the outcome of a court case or the imprisonment of an individual. This connects directly to another one of my chapters, which discusses how heroes and villains are portrayed in the media, which I thought was particularly relevant to the Menendez brothers' case. This chapter led me to choose who I wanted to investigate, understanding how the media has the power to portray an individual as a hero or a villain in the media, particularly within the Menendez brothers' case and Ted Bundy's case.

I ended up integrating throughout my entire PIP as I decided it was relevant. I also investigated in one of my chapters how normalised inappropriate behaviours are communicated through Western society in respect to language; however, through the duration of my PIP, I decided to integrate how specific language depicts individuals as attractive even if they have committed these inappropriate behaviours and the ultimate impact that has on Western society.

My PIP journey has been anything but easy. It was a wrestle with academic pressures and struggle with linking my pip to the syllabus as I wanted more freedom to investigate which is why I found myself steering off course however I feel confident with the research I have gathered and I'm sure that I bring awareness and highlight the critical issues that we face in media both past and present.

# Chapter 1

## The social impact/costs of hero or villain stereotypes in media analysis.

Are heroes and villains good and evil, or is this just how they've been portrayed to us through the media, or just told to believe? Heroes and villains have always been a common phenomenon in the media. This is cross-cultural, as is seen from Gen X, and is still relevant in current media. Particularly looking within the justice system and understanding how the media portrays nonconforming individuals in a specific way to influence the audience, depending on the Generation and time period. And eventually, this can change how individuals interpret heroes to villains and villains to heroes within growing media.

Society labels people in the media in a negative or positive light, depending on the reason for their portrayal. It is essential to understand why the change in Generation moves people from believing Heroes into villains, from villains into Heroes. Unpacking the social costs that the hero and villain stereotypes have on society means looking deeply into conformity and nonconformity. Individuals like Ted Bundy have been portrayed as conforming individuals when, in reality, the nonconforming part of their identity led them to commit the Crimes That incarcerated them. Also, it shows how an individual can be betrayed as non-conforming in one Generation but in the next be portrayed as a conforming citizen of society, as seen in the Menendez brothers' case. Nonconformity and conformity play a part in the hero-in-villain stereotype, as conforming individuals are commonly seen as Heroes to society as they follow societal standards and don't strive to commit acts of violence. Nonconforming citizens can be looked at as villains, although nonconformity doesn't necessarily mean you are a violent evil being; however, you are non-conforming to the lore. Social values can be portrayed by the media as negative and, therefore, villainous.

The overall topic incorporates generational perspectives. This is particularly relevant to how individuals are portrayed in media. It is essential to understand that with each Generation comes different values and beliefs. With new generations, particular topics become more relevant, like mental health, which is becoming more relevant in legal and media portrayals and consequences for individuals. This is all part of the change that new and generational perspectives have on individuals, particularly in the legal and media aspects.

Throughout the investigation of personal interest, primary research methods of a questionnaire and a focus group were conducted.<sup>1</sup> From these primary research methods, in the investigation, some relevant information about what society views as heroes and villains, especially within the media, was obtained. When asked in my questionnaire, "Do you think media representation of criminals has changed over the years?" 87.5% of people agreed that their representation of criminals has changed.<sup>2</sup> This is then applied further to the idea of Ted Bundy. In a popular tweet that was made in the focus group, participants said they

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<sup>1</sup> Primary research questionnaire and focus group

<sup>2</sup> Primary research method questionnaire

distorted the narrative and how he did terrible things to them, but they flipped it. This is an interesting perspective on how society agrees with modern-day views and perspectives compared to the normalised behaviour of him being looked at as a hero in former generations.<sup>3</sup>

In the questionnaire, the question was asked How do you think they were/are portrayed in the media—as innocent or guilty? Please explain your reasoning. In relation to the Menendez brothers, one response caught my eye as someone said, "In the 80s, they were portrayed as guilty," and "This case was also brought to light on social media recently, the result of Gen Z being more educated on mental health, trauma, etc."<sup>4</sup> Through this, people have been advocating for their freedom, as the popular opinion on social media is that they're not guilty." Through this response, I can understand that Society agrees with the idea of the changing perspective of the Menendez brothers, particularly how they will look at a former generation compared to now. This quote also sheds light on mental health and how the new Generation is more educated on the matter, therefore changing their perspective on this case. Within my focus group, I presented a video of a TV presenter making light fun of the Menendez case to their lawyer, Leslie Abramson. One participant said, "They were making a joke of it" This can tell me a lot about the changed perspectives in society and how the Menendez brothers' trial was looked at as a joke on television. Still, to this new Generation, it is seen as a serious thing that has many implications for mental health.<sup>5</sup>

In the process of researching the Ted Bundy case, specific articles sparked interest. This was a New York Times article titled "All American boy on trial" in the seemingly simple case of Ted Bundy, a man accused of being a serial murderer whom the public should have despised. However, they depicted him as being a pillar to the community, a good "All-American" boy.<sup>6</sup> A complete contradiction to the heinous crimes he was accused of committing, this tells a lot about the time period in which the article was released. It is clear that in the 1980s, the betrayal of a Hero was more based on the charismatic nature of one personality than the facts leading them to the Crimes they have committed.

Throughout the secretary's research of the Menendez brothers' case and trial, a particular narrative was discussed, the change in narratives between generations, particularly. For example, on a popular social media website called TikTok, videos showing their support circulated. One particular user, called menendezsupporter Released video footage of people protesting for the support of the Menendez brothers and Saying, "Now it's up to the justice system" Furthermore, in their caption under the video, they said, "I've been supporting Lyle & Erik for a while now, and today feels like an important moment. Grateful to be part of a community that believes in justice and truth." This part of my secondary research shows how the newer Generation upholds support for the Menendez brothers in their betrayal of the media and sets a hero narrative for them.<sup>7</sup> Another TikTok video made by

<sup>3</sup> Primary research method focus group

<sup>4</sup> Primary research method questionnaire

<sup>5</sup> Primary research method focus group

<sup>6</sup> J.Nordheimer, 'ALL-AMERICAN BOY on TRIAL' *The New York Times* (10 December 1978)

<<https://www.nytimes.com/1978/12/10/archives/allamerican-boy-on-trial-ted-bundy.html>>

<sup>7</sup> 'TikTok - Make Your Day' (Tiktok.com2025)

<<https://www.tiktok.com/@menendezsupporter/video/7494300904720469270?q=su>

Cobieaep shows a different type of support for Eric Menendez. This video depicts him in an edit commonly used to sexualize someone in media formats. This is a controversial video, as some do not agree with sexualizing the Menendez Brothers, as they are victims; however, this video gained a lot of traction with 65.1k likes, proving how this up-and-coming Generation sexualizes and creates a hero out of the Menendez brothers.

<sup>8</sup>

When looking at the Ted Bundy and Menendez brothers cases, it is clear to see that with the introduction of new generations comes new values and morals, which leads to the hero and villain stereotype changing for individuals in the media. The Menendez Brothers clearly show a change from being described as villains in the press to understanding that trauma with the new Generation and taking on a new narrative of hero. Ted Bundy has clearly gone from being sexualized and portrayed positively through the media to the majority of people realising the true nature of his crimes is not to be romanticised, therefore creating a new narrative of a villain in the media. These examples contribute to the idea of how an individual is portrayed in the media differently than the generational values evolving and changing over time, and why people are looked at as villains and Heroes due to the nature of the being involved in the media.

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[port%20for%20the%20Menendez%20brothers%20&t=1745815684312](https://www.tiktok.com/@cobieaep/video/7424703901040987434?q=menendez%20brothers%20hotedit&t=1745816934496)> accessed 29 April 2025

<sup>8</sup> 'TikTok - Make Your Day' (Tiktok.com2021)

<<https://www.tiktok.com/@cobieaep/video/7424703901040987434?q=menendez%20brothers%20hotedit&t=1745816934496>> accessed 29 April 2025



## Chapter 2

### How do normalised inappropriate behaviours impact Western societies?

“Sure, he killed people, but isn't he so dreamy?” Have you ever heard one of your friends or family say this about a known criminal? What is this language, and why are they using it? Why are they labelling someone with a criminal history as attractive, and why are these labels being used to describe these people? These are questions that were thought about throughout the investigation of this topic. Generational development has a massive impact on the language and portrayal of people committing inappropriate behaviours, from the way that they are being publicised to the way that they are being raised. It affects all aspects, from media to legal. When a serial killer or a criminal is described as being attractive, it can confuse some; however, there is a name for it: it is called Hybristophillicia. John Money, A popular sexologist in 1986, was the first to research the topic, and from then, many Criminologists and psychologists investigated the topic further, creating more labels like aggressive and passive Hybristophillicia. This is an interesting label as it has been used since 1986, making it a cross-generational label. The ideology of normalising, sexualising criminals and labelling people who commit inappropriate behaviours with uncomfortable language in labels has an overall impact on how normalised behaviour impacts Western Society.<sup>9</sup>

Ted Bundy's case is a perfect example of how language and labels were used to sexualize a Criminal. In an interview I conducted with a university student studying social work, she presented the idea of how Ted Bundy is being described as charismatic and handsome she said, “I often see Ted Bundy being defined as someone who is attractive and charismatic when talking about Ted Bundy they always kind of supposed sexualized and fetish his sadistic nature”<sup>10</sup> The idea that Ted Bundy has been sexualized and fetishized integrates with the term Hybristophillicia Which is quite relevant in this case an exam will of him being fetishized is when individuals were writing letters of love to Ted Bundy in prison as seen in this article “People finding serial killer Ted Bundy attractive is nothing new. He had fans even on death row. This article is an example of a narrative that was carried out towards convicted Killers such as Ted Bundy. Dr Ramsland stated in the article, “In their minds, they thought he might kill other women, but he'd be good to me.” This is a common belief among people who are attracted to serial killers or criminals. This falls under the term Hybristophillicia. This article, “His handsome looks made him somewhat of a celebrity, and he attracted many female fans,” exhibits how Ted Bundy had a female fan following at the time of his arrest and

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Why Are People Attracted to Serial Killers?’ (Birmingham City University2025) <<https://www.bcu.ac.uk/news-events/social-sciences/why-are-people-attracted-to-ser-ial-killers>> accessed 25 May 2025

<sup>10</sup> Primary research Interview

carried it through generations.<sup>11</sup> Part of this case being so interesting is the fascination with a known criminal not only in Generation X carried out through Generations Z, which is exhibited through modern social media platforms such as TikTok, where a Ted Bundy fan account called tiarnievan Exhibits this rare sexual phenomenon in this present generation On the social media account she demonstrates herself in her bio as an 18-year-old female who loves Ted Bundy with some of her more popular videos of him gaining 200,000 views. Over three thousand likes demonstrate how this phenomenon is cross-generational and how widespread it is in present-day media. Not all of her videos gain positive traction, as some comments are concerned with victims and the overall impact of this narrative towards a convicted serial rapist/killer.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the When looking at the case of Ted Bundy language and labels are particularly important into how the media referred to him and labeled him on Twitter a user by the name of Master Regalion Refers to him as charming intelligent enhanced and handsome and insinuates this is the reason women were attracted to him<sup>13</sup> although there are many mixed opinions and views online and on media it is important to understand the true gravity of his crimes and in saying this many people believe that the over popularization of Ted Bundy is disrespectful to the victims and the victims families this is even seen from a statement Netflix made in regards to the Sexualization of Ted Bundy from the Netflix original of Ted Bundy as Zac Efron, Netflix tweeted "I've seen a lot of talk about Ted Bundy's alleged hotness and would like to gently remind everyone that there are literally THOUSANDS of hot men on the service — almost all of whom are not convicted serial murderers" Netflix having to release this statement shows the advert sexualization of Ted Bundy on modern-day media platforms since the release of this Netflix original<sup>14</sup> however Ted Bundy has always been sexualized even since his trial with a young girl outside of the court house disclaiming "He just doesn't look like the type to kill somebody,"If anything be new social media platforms and ability to share widespread information has only increased popularity and fans for Ted Bundy.<sup>15</sup>

Language and labels can also be used in a negative way to influence a criminal or criminals in the media. This can be seen with the Menendez brothers' case, as during the time, there

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<sup>11</sup> A.McMahon, 'People Finding Serial Killer Ted Bundy Attractive Is Nothing New. He Had Fans Even on Death Row' (Abc.net.au31 January 2019) <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-01/ted-bundy-why-the-serial-killer-attracted-female-fans/10763676>> accessed 25 May 2025

<sup>12</sup> 'TikTok - Make Your Day' (Tiktok.com2025) <<https://www.tiktok.com/@tiarnievan>> accessed 25 May 2025

<sup>13</sup> X (formerly Twitter)2025 <<https://x.com/tenetsofpower/highlights>> accessed 25 May 2025

<sup>14</sup> X (formerly Twitter)2025 <[https://x.com/netflix/status/1089950741064601600?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1089950741064601600%7Ctwgr%5E89eec91634e330b471802eb3401911c7e15f5c55%7Ctwcon%5Es1\\_%2Fwww.vanityfair.com%2Fhollywood%2F2019%2F01%2Fnetflix-ted-bundy-twitter](https://x.com/netflix/status/1089950741064601600?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1089950741064601600%7Ctwgr%5E89eec91634e330b471802eb3401911c7e15f5c55%7Ctwcon%5Es1_%2Fwww.vanityfair.com%2Fhollywood%2F2019%2F01%2Fnetflix-ted-bundy-twitter)> accessed 25 May 2025

<sup>15</sup> A.McMahon, 'People Finding Serial Killer Ted Bundy Attractive Is Nothing New. He Had Fans Even on Death Row' (Abc.net.au31 January 2019) <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-01/ted-bundy-why-the-serial-killer-attracted-female-fans/10763676>> accessed 25 May 2025

was not a lot of awareness for sexual assault victims, particularly males, in a Popular talk show in the 1990s called Politically Incorrect. Specific language and labels were thrown about towards the Mendez Brothers. The host said, "You defended the Menendez kids. What do you care about? The facts: This was aimed at Leslie Abramson, who defended the Menendez brothers in the trial. Other comments were made by other guests on the show, like "This woman is crazy. She is really crazy" This was also aimed at Leslie Abramson. When she tried to defend the Menendez brothers,<sup>16</sup> in the interview that was conducted, the interviewee said, "They've made them look crazy" In a picture of the thumbnail, she also stated, "They literally are depicting them as monsters" This further shows how even in present-day Society with mental health aspects being taken into consideration there is still a negative representation of the Menendez brothers.<sup>17</sup> However, there is another side to the Menendez brothers' case being publicised in the media, as they receive lots of fan interaction. However, the Menendez brothers are not a blatantly clear case in which to identify Hybristophilia because of the controversy surrounding the Menendez brothers' guilt or innocence. Another example of language and labels used to publicise the Menendez brothers negatively is how they were portrayed in a Netflix TV show about them. A popular thumbnail they used to depict them holding shotguns and the title of the show is called Monsters And when the interviewee saw this she said " They've made them look crazy" This shows how even in modern-day Society Public Image of the menendez brothers can still be negative however, due to their apparent sexualization in the media, seen from TikTok trends such as the TikTok video made by Cobieaep, which shows The apparent sexualisation towards Eric Menendez.<sup>18</sup>

When discussing the topic of language and labels being used to sexualize known criminals and serial killers, the term Hybristophilia, a sexual phenomenon, is commonly seen. When researching this topic, it is clear that individuals fall under the term Hybristophilia, primarily through social media. However, this media is usually positive towards the Criminal in a sexualized way. There are also instances where language and labels are used to negatively impact individuals in the criminal justice system. This language and these labels are used to discuss normalised inappropriate behaviours in Western culture and do not take into consideration the impact on the victims and the individuals themselves, especially in social media.

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<sup>16</sup> (Youtube.com2025) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c1ch21ewXE>> accessed 25 May 2025

<sup>17</sup> Primary research Interview

<sup>18</sup> 'TikTok - Make Your Day' (Tiktok.com2025) <<https://www.tiktok.com/@menendezsuppporter/video/7494300904720469270?q=support%20for%20the%20Menendez%20brothers%20&t=1745815684312>> accessed 29 April 2025

## Chapter 3

### Who sets the agenda? How has the media influenced these cases? How did this influenced the outcome?

Everyone on this planet has an opinion on what is right and wrong, so who gets to decide Good and evil? Who gets to set the agenda? The media has been a presence throughout history, and it has come in all shapes and sizes, from magazines to the internet. Now we have social media. Media can be a positive thing with introductions into the expression of identity and the opportunity for individuals to express their voice and opinion.

However, in situations regarding those who have committed crimes and the handling by the legal system, the power of the media cannot be underestimated in its ability to impact the public's perceptions and as an avenue for people to express their opinions on specific cases and whether they believe the accused are guilty or not. As seen in cases like the Menendez brothers or even Ted Bundy, the media has had a detrimental effect on the outcome of the proceedings of these cases, whether it should have or not. The generational impact of the media has changed and matured over time; however, it has still become relevant in these cases. The media and the legal system question the Extent of Justice that has been served in regard to these non-conforming individuals and who ultimately had the most significant effect on the outcome of their cases.

The Menendez brothers' case is an interesting example of how the media can affect the outcome of a case. This was further seen in the questionnaire, with 50% of individuals agreeing that social media has a bigger influence on shaping public perception of guilt or innocence.<sup>19</sup> This case has an interesting relationship with the media, particularly because it is cross-generational.

This case started in the late 1980s, and it's still relevant today with the Menendez brothers looking at being resentenced with a possibility of parole. When looking at the Menendez Brothers' case, it is clear to see that the media had a massive impact on the outcome of their case and the ultimate understanding of whether justice was achieved. In a legal blog published by Queen Mary University of London, it is quoted, "More than three decades later, their story is back in the spotlight. Netflix's new show about the case is sparking fresh debates about whether these brothers were ruthless killers or victims of unimaginable abuse." this raises interesting debate to whether if this Netflix show was released the Menendez Brothers would have the opportunity of a re-sentencing ultimately showing how the media plays a massive part into the justice system and justice being achieved.<sup>20</sup> Further

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<sup>19</sup> Primary research method questionnaire

<sup>20</sup> 'When Crime Becomes Entertainment: The Menendez Brothers and Media Frenzy' (Qmul.ac.uk 13 May 2025)

<<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/lac/our-legal-blog/blogs/when-crime-becomes-entertainmen>

proving this point is an article released by NCS News in relation to the Menendez brothers' case, where it states, "In an interview with NBC News, Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón said his office already had plans to revisit the case after receiving two petitions. But the Netflix documentary triggered an onslaught of new interest, and his office started getting a lot of questions. The district attorney's acknowledgment that the Netflix documentary triggered new interest, therefore pushing this case to the office, shows how this media example had a detrimental effect on the ultimate outcome of this case.

Manny Medrano, a Los Angeles-based criminal defence attorney, said, "There's no question that the brothers benefited from the Hollywood influence and the documentaries and everything else that happened after that." This brings them to the overall Hollywood influence in the media that affected the case not only the Netflix show but the documentary as well pushed people to understand the context of the Menendez Brothers even though the Menendez brothers were quoted saying that the Netflix show was "ruinous" and filled with "blatant lies," no one can doubt the ultimate effect led to the brothers re-sentencing and the possibility of parole.

Although there was backlash from the Menendez brothers from the initial release of the Netflix show, this case is a perfect example of how the media can be used as a tool to shed awareness and light on details that the justice system does not take into account through the push of the Menendez Brothers' Resurfacing in the media. This ultimately led to their possible release.<sup>21</sup>

The Ted Bundy case, in general, was a controversial case in many aspects as it appeared in the media. When asked in the interview about which has a bigger influence on criminals, the media or the legal system, the interviewer responded with "the media because people can form normalised opinions".<sup>22</sup> Not only with their doubts about Ted Bundy's guilt, but also as to the fact that he was not the typical murderer.

There were also concerns regarding his fan attraction. And in this regard, the media played a detrimental role in prolonging the case. The newspapers were known for regarding him in a positive manner, using words like handsome and presenting him as a person to be admired. Not only did this affect how long the case was in court for it affected how the media portrayed him to the public not always as a serial killer but more as a "handsome bad boy" in a New York Post article it writes "Law enforcement officials from several states claim Bundy – who dresses in ivy league clothes, flashes a warm smile and never forgets his mother on Mother's Day – is responsible for a trail of savage sex murders across the country."

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[t-the-menendez-brothers-and-media-frenzy.html#:~:text=This%20influence%20on%20justice%20lies,proceedings%20even%20across%20international%20borders>](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/hollywood-help-menendez-brothers-case-rcna177372)

accessed 4 July 2025

<sup>21</sup> A.V. Lozano, 'Did Hollywood Help the Menendez Brothers' Case?' (NBC News 26 October 2024)

<<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/hollywood-help-menendez-brothers-case-rcna177372>> accessed 4 July 2025

<sup>22</sup> Primary research method Interview

The media uses this language, and I almost disbelieving tone, pushing an agenda of innocence into the audience is mine. This proves how the media is confused in a negative light to push lies towards unknowing people who are not aware of the evidence gathered against Ted Bundy and then pushes for his innocence, ultimately leaving the victims and the victims' families feeling that justice was not achieved.<sup>23</sup> The New York Post also refers to him in an article. "The handsome law school dropout"<sup>24</sup> using this language treats Ted Bundy like some sort of celebrity and not someone who committed vicious crimes, which is what he was convicted of.

Not only does this have a negative effect on the case, as it influences the jury and the judge. It also has a massive negative impact on the people who were affected by his crimes. The article goes on to state, "Or was he an All-American, public-spirited student – a victim of police who used him to 'solve' sex crimes when no other suspect was handy?"<sup>25</sup> The New York Post almost accuses the police of using him as a way to easily solve the murders; however, it does not take into account the facts of the trial and the evidence that was presented. It simply conveys Ted Bundy's non-atypical profile for a murderer, which would not be enough evidence to suggest he did not commit these crimes, but pushing this on people who do not have the facts of the case ultimately allows for people to be swayed in their opinion and believe that Ted Bundy was innocent.

The media can be a positive thing in that it sheds light on facts that may not be known to the public and allows individuals to have information to form their own opinion and ultimately bring justice and equality. However, in saying this the freedom of the media also allows for negative betrayals to be believed and distributed affecting people in a negative way particularly victims of cases and families that have been affected such as in the Ted Bundy case the media can be a powerful tool when used rightly and could ultimately have a massive influence on how a case is sentenced. The media has been an essential tool across generations that allows people the opportunity to gather information. It is a question of the freedom of the media and how it is used to convey opinion, not just facts. This ultimately has a detrimental effect on non-conforming individuals in society and the way they are handled within the justice system.

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<sup>23</sup> An Unlikely Killer? (*The New York Post*, Wednesday, July 25, 1979) [https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsId=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL\\_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU](https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsId=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU) accessed 4 July 2025

<sup>24</sup> A. Soltis 'LOVE-BITE BY ANDY SOLTIS SLAYER EXPECTS THE CHAIR' (*The New York Post*, Wednesday, July 25, 1979) [https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsId=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL\\_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU](https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsId=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU) accessed 4 July 2025

<sup>25</sup> A. Soltis 'Love Bite Serial Killer' (*The New York Post*, Wednesday, July 25, 1979) [https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsId=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL\\_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU](https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsId=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU) accessed 4 July 2025



# Conclusion

Throughout my investigation into generational perspectives of the social cost of inappropriate behaviour, I discovered how the legal system and the media interact with each other and shape a narrative around conformity and nonconformity. In my PIP, I have integrated high-profile cases such as Ted Bundy's and the Menendez Brothers, as these cases have become more relevant in present-day media due to generational perspectives. Throughout my personal investigation, I discovered how, due to the changing values of Generation X to Generation Z, more awareness of mental health and trauma for victims and individuals becomes integral to the perception of criminals in the media.

My primary research consisted of a questionnaire, focus group and an interview. These questions were aimed to discuss the topics of the Ted Bundy case and the Menendez Brothers case in relation to media generational values and my three chapters ultimately allowed me to conclude that the media plays a decisive role in shaping public opinion and perception of cases that can often lead individuals to blur the line between justice, injustice heroes and villains. Throughout my secondary research, it is evident that social media and other forms of media, such as Netflix documentaries, also incorporate media from Generation X, such as talk shows and news articles, which ultimately determined that media has a massive overall impact on the outcome of a case.

This investigation reveals the critical relationship between the media and contemporary society as the media serves as a place where people can bring awareness, education and opinion to topics; however, conversely, it can also be a place where misinformation is being spread, which can ultimately impact legal contexts. Highlighted in the PIP is the influence of how generational changes can influence the media's role in shaping public perception of justice and identity. The ultimate balance between the media and the legal system remains a critical issue in Western Society to this day.

# Resource list

## Secondary research

An Unlikely Killer? (*The New York Post*, Wednesday, July 25, 1979)

1979) [https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsltid=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL\\_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU](https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsltid=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU) accessed 28 July 2025

The Unlikely killer secondary research source was an exciting source to integrate throughout my PIP as it showed what media looked like in 1979 regarding the Ted Bundy case, the misinformation that was spread, even through what subbuly a reliable source like the New York Post. This is a significant source as it shows how even a generational media outlet is setting agendas towards individuals who have committed inappropriate behaviours. This article describes Ted in a particular way, which leads the audience to a specific agenda. I was also able to use this article throughout my paper in the third chapter, which gave the audience a better understanding of the time period.

LOVE-BITE BY ANDY SOLTIS SLAYER EXPECTS THE CHAIR (The New York Post, Wednesday, July 25, 1979)

[https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsltid=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL\\_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU](https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsltid=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU) accessed 28 July 2025

The New York Post's release of this secondary research Resource regarding Ted buddy gives insight into the misinformation that was being spread around the time period. In regarding to Ted Bundy They use sensationalized language which Collaborizes a downplays the severity of his crimes it is clear that the New York Post in this instant has a clear personal buyers as they look to sway the audience towards an opinion despite the strong forensic evidence and testimonies during the trial therefore making this source a perfect example to use in my PIP.

Lozano AV, 'Did Hollywood Help the Menendez Brothers' Case?' (NBC News, 26 October 2024)

<<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/hollywood-help-menendez-brothers-case-rcna177372>> accessed 28 July 2025

The second resource was incredibly useful in the research of my PIP, as it allowed me to break down information into how the brothers' case was resurfaced in the media and to pinpoint exactly what aspects of the media affected their case. I was also able to use quotes from this news source, which showed opinions of the as brothers themselves and attorneys of the law. The sauce was credible as it shows a



modded day perspective of the Menendez brothers in the media and shows how media can ultimately affect a case.

Love Bite Serial Killer (The New York Post, Wednesday, July 25, 1979) [https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsId=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL\\_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU](https://www.historic-newspapers.com/en-au/blogs/article/ted-bundy-newspapers?srsId=AfmBOoqkJcnG7ewV4jOJ9AiAbL_BgpQ4cU1uBTc5HL94glhhOBP670Hq&country=AU) accessed 28 July 2025

This source again is written by the New York Post and clearly has extreme bias towards Ted Bundy and pushes a specific narrative towards his case. This was an interesting perspective to integrate throughout my PIP as I thought it did not clearly take it to consideration the perspective of the victims and was disrespectful for the families going through the loss of loved ones. The sources really show how media could influence public perception and a generational shift in media ethics towards Justice in situations regarding inappropriate behaviours.

McMahon A, 'People Finding Serial Killer Ted Bundy Attractive Is Nothing New. He Had Fans Even on Death Row' (*Abc.net.au* 31 January 2019) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-01/ted-bundy-why-the-serial-killer-attracted-female-fans/10763676> accessed 28 July 2025

This article gave fascinating insight into the attraction people felt towards Ted Bundy in Generation X, and what that looked like in the media. Even though this article was published in 2019, it allowed me to understand how specific individuals treated their attraction towards a man in criminal even in a past generation compared to now. The secondary source was beneficial and Authentic as it showed the extreme biases that people held at the time period towards this individual and how this ultimately led me to connect this into my second chapter regarding Individuals finding serial killers attractive.

Nordheimer J, 'ALL-AMERICAN BOY on TRIAL' (*Nytimes.com* 10 December 1978) <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/12/10/archives/allamerican-boy-on-trial-ted-bundy.html> accessed 27 July 2025

This article from the New York Times gave me a lot of insight into the hero and villain stereotype for Ted Bundy. It allowed me to collect more research onto how people perceived him in that generation as it is quite an older source from Generation X. By this article being older it showed me how the switch between being seen as a hero and then being seen as a villain in a later generation can happen in even the most extreme cases. This source is Reliable and recognises the bias from its time period, which is extremely useful in the integration of my PIP.

'TikTok - Make Your Day' (*TikTok.com*. 2020)

<<https://www.tiktok.com/@menendezsuppporter/video/7494300904720469270?q=support%20for%20the%20Menendez%20brothers%20&t=1745815684312>> accessed 27 July 2025

The social media post gave me insight into how the public in this generation supports the Menendez brothers and is advocating for their release, not only from this post but with the traction it received this was a contrast to Generation X when the crime was first committed as there was not as much support for them and his brothers in that generation. This secondary source shows the clear switch between generations and their support for the brothers.

'TikTok - Make Your Day' (*TikTok.com*. 2021)

<<https://www.tiktok.com/@cobieaep/video/7424703901040987434?q=menendez%20brothers%20hotedit&t=1745816934496>> accessed 27 July 2025

This was an interesting secondary source to integrate into my paper, as I thought it showed a different side of modern-day support for the Menendez brothers. By using this social media example, I was able to show how the Menendez brothers are sexualized in modern-day media and how this could play a part in their support. I think the source is a very raw example of social media and shows a clear bias towards the support for the Menendez brothers being swayed by attraction.

'TikTok - Make Your Day' (*TikTok.com*. 2025) <<https://www.tiktok.com/@tiarnievan>> accessed 28 July 2025

The social media tiktok account is a fascinating secondary example I chose to integrate into my second chapter as it shows clearly a individual who Hold a particular view on Ted Bundy as an individual and her attraction to him is evidence through her post that she makes which receive a lot of attraction ultimately showing how there are still fans Even with generational difference.

'When Crime Becomes Entertainment: The Menendez Brothers and Media Frenzy' (*Qmul.ac.uk* 13 May 2025)

<<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/lac/our-legal-blog/blogs/when-crime-becomes-entertainment-the-menendez-brothers-and-media-frenzy.html#:~:text=This%20influence%20on%20justice%20lies.proceedings%20even%20across%20international%20borders>> accessed 28 July 2025

This secondary source allowed me to show how the brothers' case came back into light within recent media due to a number of reasons, but also taking into consideration the Netflix documentary and TV show. Coming from a university, this source comes from an educated background of information and can be confidently used in my PIP. The source was a valuable secondary source to integrate throughout my third chapter and ultimately allowed me to use a number of quotes to justify my thesis.

'Why Are People Attracted to Serial Killers?' (*Birmingham City University*2023)

<<https://www.bcu.ac.uk/news-events/social-sciences/why-are-people-attracted-to-serial-killers>> accessed 28 July 2025

The secondary research from Birmingham City University is a highly reliable source that I integrated into my second chapter, as it discusses the term of Hybristsophillia, which ended up being a beneficial term when writing my second chapter, particularly when understanding the normalising of Sexual labels towards criminals or individuals that have committed inappropriate behaviour. However, I do have to recognise the possible bias that comes from this article as it is written by someone from a former generation.

(X formerly Twitter 2025)

<[https://x.com/netflix/status/1089950741064601600?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1089950741064601600%7Ctwgr%5E89eec91634e330b471802eb3401911c7e15f5c55%7Ctwcon%5Es1\\_&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanityfair.com%2Fhollywood%2F2019%2F01%2Fnetflix-ted-bundy-twitter](https://x.com/netflix/status/1089950741064601600?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1089950741064601600%7Ctwgr%5E89eec91634e330b471802eb3401911c7e15f5c55%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanityfair.com%2Fhollywood%2F2019%2F01%2Fnetflix-ted-bundy-twitter)> accessed 25 July 2025

This was an exciting secondary research source as it showed Netflix, a streaming platform that released a movie about Ted Bundy and went on to make a statement through Twitter, an online platform. This was extremely useful for my pip as the statement that Netflix made really unpacked some of the language and sexualizing that is seen in today's media. I think this source is reliable as it has come straight from the Netflix company itself; however, it is essential to take into consideration that this was posted on a social media platform where anyone can post, which can lead to misinformation.

'(X (formerly Twitter)2025) <<https://x.com/tenetsofpower/highlights>> accessed 25 July 2025

The source was an integral part of my project as it provided insight into how social media platforms use language to describe people who have committed crimes, in this case, Ted Bundy and how it is perceived on the internet. This source was used throughout my pip. Not only for the Central material, but I also used it as an example in my primary research for my questionnaire. The source is a reliable example of modern-day media; however, I would not trust it with accurate information as it is on

a Twitter forum, and ultimately, I have to recognise the bias of the person who posted the tweet in the first place.

(Youtube.com2025) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c1ch21ewXE>> accessed 28 July 2025

This secretary source has been imported through the duration of my PIP As this was one of the reasons I wanted to integrate the menendez brothers into my pip as a snippet of this video popped up on my social media seeing this I tried to incorporate it into my pit not only as a secondary resource but also into my primary research I did that through my focus group and interview as it gave insight into how these brothers were seen in Generation X at the time of the court case it shows a great deal of bias from the interviewers and interviewees around the case.

## Primary research

### **Interview with a student studying social work at university. Conducted May 2025**

Conducting this interview with an individual studying social work allowed me to grasp a better understanding of the way that young individuals' minds grasp the concepts of this investigation, and knowing that these individuals come from an educated understanding of society ultimately helps support some of the thesis that were brought out from this interview. This interview consisted of 12 questions regarding my topic, supplemented with secondary research sources to aid the investigation and enable the interviewee to form their own opinion on the subject. This interview helped collect qualitative research. This interview was also helpful as she is from Generation Z, which allowed me to have insight into the younger generation's opinion about this topic. However, there has to be some recognition of personal bias being from a younger generation and understanding the media's influence on her judgments might be guided. Nonetheless, this was still beneficial information that was contributed throughout my entire investigation.

### **Questionnaire Conducted with Generation Z and Generation X. Published February 2025**

This questionnaire was a helpful aid in conducting primary research into my personal investigation. It helped me conduct quantitative and qualitative data regarding my overall pick topic with a particular focus on Generation X and Generation Z. I focused on all scales throughout my question, looking at micro and macro. I asked questions like "In your opinion, which has a more significant influence on shaping public

perceptions of guilt or innocence?” which allowed me to gather information regarding my entire PIP; however, I also asked questions like “Do you think social media creates stereotypes of people as either heroes or villains?” This allowed me to gather information on specific chapters of my personal investigation. This ultimately assisted me in leading me to make my ultimate thesis about each chapter.

### **Focus group year 12 boys and girls conducted on 25 March 2025**

The focus group that I conducted on the 25th of March 2025 was a helpful primary research tool that allowed me great insight into my overall topic, particularly with Generation Z, as this focus group was conducted with year 12 boys and girls, enabling great insight into younger opinion towards my entire topic, but particularly the individual cases I reference. Most of the data I collected was qualitative; however, there were some instances where I was able to receive quantitative data regarding closed-ended questions. One beneficial aspect of this focus group was when the individuals were provided with secondary sources, and their initial reaction allowed me great insight into my ultimate thesis with quotes like “He looks normal”. Although this information is reliable, there is a consideration of bias from a younger generation and understanding the group setting may contribute to swayed opinions. Even so, this primary research tool ultimately led me to significant conclusions about my topic, specifically regarding generational perspectives on the social cost of inappropriate behaviour, and pushed me towards my ultimate thesis.