

**Making Sense of Murder Abroad:
Exploring the Post-Homicide Experience of
Co-Victims of Murder which Occurs in a
Foreign Country**

By

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ABSTRACT

The act of murder carries a range of significant consequences, not only for the direct victim of the interpersonal violence, but also for those closely related to them. In the time following their bereavement, “co-victims” of murder must come to terms with the sudden, unexpected, and irreversible absence of a loved-one, which – unlike in cases of non-violent bereavement – is attributable to the malicious and intentional actions of another. Regardless of the location in which it occurs, the traumatic impact of murder on surviving family members is considerable. However, several, additional complications arise in the “post-homicide experience” of those bereaved through murder which takes place in a foreign country.

As such, through a series of semi-structured interviews with the family members of murder victims who were killed abroad, this thesis documents and explores the key elements of their post-homicide journey and draws attention to the way in which their experience of co-victimisation has been shaped and influenced by the international nature of the crime.

Throughout the thesis, it is argued that the co-victim experience in cases of murder abroad is distinct from those who are bereaved through murder in national circumstances, due primarily to the presence of several practical issues including repatriation, language barriers, international travel, media attention, and variations in foreign policing practice and criminal justice procedure. These issues, when viewed holistically, can often prolong, exacerbate, and intensify the already traumatic nature of their experience and subsequently prevent co-victims from being able to “make sense” of their bereavement.

This thesis augments and advances the limited body of qualitative work that explores the implications of murder in these relatively rare and particularly challenging circumstances. Therefore, having presented and discussed the subjective experience of co-victimisation in seven cases of murder involving British citizens in a foreign country, this thesis makes several academic and practical recommendations for the future. By emphasising the importance of the co-victim narrative to a more comprehensive understanding of crime, this thesis represents a point of departure for the continued criminological investigation into the phenomenon of murder abroad.

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Since the start of this PhD in 2015, there have been so many people who have in some way been a part of my journey to completion. In this acknowledgments section, I want to say thank you to everyone that has supported me. I would also like to take this opportunity to share some of my own personal reflections on the process.

In April of 2016, just a few months into the PhD journey my life changed in a way that I could never have expected – my Dad, Philip Brolan, was informed by his doctor that he had terminal bowel cancer and that it had progressed significantly by the time of his diagnosis. The following months, for my family and I, were probably some of the most challenging times that I have ever had to face. My Dad’s condition deteriorated relatively quickly and I remember struggling to cope with the way that the cancer was affecting him both physically and mentally.

In late November, after several short stays at Good Hope Hospital, he was admitted to the John Taylor Hospice in Erdington. The care he received there was incredible and I will always be grateful for the kindness and compassion that was shown not only to my Dad, but also to my Mom, Christine, and my sister, Eloïse, who was just 16 at the time.

On Tuesday 6th December 2016, I received the news that I had been anticipating for several weeks prior – my Dad had passed away. In that moment I knew that my life was never going to be the same again.

Prior to his death, I had been spending as much time as I possibly could with my Dad. Despite him looking and feeling very unwell, he made every effort to talk to me when I visited. He

would often ask me about my goals and ambitions in life and it was clear that he was very proud of the fact that I had decided to study for a PhD. Despite not really knowing how I was going to do it, I promised him that I would finish what I had started, and that I would see the PhD through to completion.

That promise, undoubtedly, has been a major source of personal motivation throughout this entire process. There have been several times where I have felt overwhelmed by the enormity of the task and I have certainly doubted whether I would be able to continue. In those moments, I realise now, that whilst I was struggling with grief, I found the strength to continue by reminding myself of the conversations that I had with my Dad before he died.

That is why for me, this PhD represents much more than just the production of a thesis or the achievement of an academic award. It also symbolises the fulfilment of the final promise that I made to my Dad and therefore allows me to draw to a conclusion, a chapter in my life that has been both emotionally and intellectually challenging. It is also why I worked so hard (despite testing positive for COVID-19 just two days prior) to ensure that I would be able to submit the final version of the thesis on Monday 6th December 2021 – exactly five years since my Dad passed away.

Whilst I would do anything to have my Dad here with me now, I am certain that as a result of his passing, I have become a stronger, more resilient and more empathetic person – these qualities, I believe, make me the man I am today and I hope, continue to make him proud.

Thank you, Dad, for being my inspiration and for everything that you have done for me.

I would like to say a sincere thank you to Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner at the charity Murdered Abroad. Without your willingness to be involved in the research, I can honestly say that there would be no PhD. Not only did you share your own stories of bereavement, but you also provided me with an invaluable opportunity to speak to some of the families that you support on a daily basis. I am very grateful to have been able to learn from and share some of their experiences and I hope that the thesis draws attention to the invaluable work that you continue to do for families affected by murder in a foreign country.

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our several trips to Glasgow and the Ubiquitous Chip – although I’m still not a fan of blue cheese and red wine. I genuinely do appreciate your friendship and hope that we will have many more conversations about life, crime, business, and everything else in the years to come.

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Finally, having reached the end of this PhD journey, it feels appropriate to return to the words which were written by my Dad before he passed away. These words continue to guide and motivate me in all aspects of my life:

“I just wanted to let you know how much I love you and how proud I am of all that you are and all that you have achieved so far in your life. As your Dad, all I have ever wanted is for you to make the most of your talents and ambitions to get to where you want to be.

It’s a hard path, Son, there will be lots of ups and downs along the way with many challenges and distractions. But with your determination and drive, I’m absolutely convinced that you will follow your dreams and find your place in the world and that you will achieve great success.

Keep focused and live the dream...”

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group
BBC	British Broadcasting Company
BCS	British Crime Survey
BN	British Nationals
BPS	British Psychological Society
BSC	British Society of Criminology
CCEW	Chief Coroner of England and Wales
CSEW	Crime Survey for England and Wales
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FLO	Family Liaison Officer
NCADP	National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty
NPCC	National Police Chiefs Council
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PGD	Prolonged Grief Disorder
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAT	Routine Activity Theory
SAMM	Support After Murder and Manslaughter
SAMMA	Support After Murder and Manslaughter Abroad
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VOTCS	Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme
VSHS	Victim Support Homicide Service

DEDICATION

In memory of

Roderick (Jock) Henderson

Lianne (Lee) Burns

James Kouzaris and James Cooper

Liam Hogan

Nicholas Mockford

Laura Hill

Joanna Parrish

“To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die”

Thomas Campbell

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

It never ends, whether someone is caught or whether there is a verdict, it's never going to end. You're always going to be at different phases of this hideous new life, this post-murder life, forever.

– Kim Spooner

1.1. Introduction

Losing a loved-one through murder is undoubtedly one of the most challenging experiences that anyone can face. However, what additional complexities – emotional or practical, are present when the murder occurs in a foreign country, and what impact do they have on the surviving family members who are left behind? Through semi-structured interviews with the relatives of victims who were murdered abroad, this thesis aims to explore and make sense of their experiences in the aftermath of murder in these unique circumstances. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to provide a context to the study, whilst offering an overview of its structure.

First, this chapter presents the rationale of the study, which scopes out the problem at the heart of the thesis and highlights the need for criminological research in this particular area of inquiry. Second, the aim and objectives of the research are presented and discussed in more detail. This provides an opportunity to clearly identify the motivation behind the study, and to ensure that the thesis remains focused on meeting its primary purpose. Third, preliminary attention is given to the epistemological assumptions that underpin key decisions made throughout the research process – most notably in regard to the way in which the primary data

was collected and subsequently analysed. Fourth, this chapter provides some initial commentary on methodology, with particular attention given to the process of data collection and the accompanying issues of access to and recruitment of suitable research participants and data analysis. Here, some early attention is given to the central role played by the charity Murdered Abroad in enabling the research, and facilitating the data collection process. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief commentary on the structure of the thesis with the view to providing a holistic overview of the chapters which explore in greater detail the phenomenon of murder which occurs in a foreign country and its subsequent impact upon the surviving family members who reside in the United Kingdom.

At the heart of the primary research were seven interviews with individuals who had been bereaved following a murder which had taken place outside of Britain. The time span of these murders ranged from 1990 to the most recent in 2012, and there were differences as well as similarities within each case. For example, the family member who agreed to be interviewed might have been abroad on holiday with the victim at the time of the murder, whilst other interviewees heard about the murder in Britain after it had been committed. Issues surrounding the numbers of interviews are discussed more fully in Chapter Three. These interviews were supplemented using print and broadcast news reports about the murders. Crimes such as those which feature in the thesis often attract a great deal of local, national and international publicity – as a result of what Jewkes (2015) describes as “news values”. This data triangulation through news reports was a form of external fact checking about what was described within the interviews, and an interesting number of ‘rubbing points’ emerged between what was said, and what had been reported. These rubbing points are discussed in Chapter Five.

There was also a form of internal triangulation as all of the interviewees collected a great deal of data about the murders of their loved ones. This data might include: reports of any coroner's inquiry into the murder; court transcripts – if a suspect had been arrested; medical reports; witness statements; and a variety of other secondary data related to the case. This data was again useful in amplifying, moderating, and validating what was said within the interview. A reflexive diary was also kept during the course of the research, which helped to make sense of the issues that each of the interviewees shared, and was an essential guide and prompt in remaining sensitive to the reality that the interviewees were sharing information about a tragedy in their lives, and the lives of their families.

All of the interviewees agreed to be identified within the research, and this allows for specific details about their cases to be discussed. Many agreed to participate as they wanted others who might be in a similar position to learn from their experiences. The majority of the interviewees were directly identified by the charity Murdered Abroad. This might be viewed as a weakness of the research, given this 'gatekeeping role' performed by the charity – and limitations of the research are discussed fully in Chapter Six. However, it is clear that the experiences of those who agreed to be interviewed are unique, even if they share similarities which, in itself, is indicative that their stories had not been 'cherry picked', for example, to present the charity in the best possible light. Contact was also made with two interviewees at the charity's annual conference in Northampton, and this also allowed for people to discuss the research independently of the charity.

Here it should be acknowledged that discussing murder – even murders that might have occurred several years ago – is always a sensitive matter. As Wilson has recently described about his research into a murder in 2015, "I needed to ask people, often family members and

friends, some difficult and often intrusive questions, and that raking over these historical coals could easily cause distress or annoyance,” (Wilson, 2021:5). I too had to be mindful not to cause distress or annoyance, and the very fact that this subject area was “difficult”, as Wilson describes, also helps to explain the relatively small number of interviewees who were prepared to engage with the research. Here again the role of the charity in endorsing the research created a culture of permissibility – my work was as an academic, not a journalist and therefore the research had different ethical standards, and a clearly identifiable aim. Re-reading my reflexive diary I can still sense that these differences, and the support of the charity were crucial in encouraging people to come forward to tell their story. Indeed, the people involved in the charity were not people who wanted to ‘file away’ the murder, or to try to forget about it. It was something they wanted to talk about and for others to learn from. So, in a way, accessing people through the charity minimised the potential for re-traumatisation that may have occurred through the ‘cold-calling’ approach. This perhaps also helps to explain the failure to identify research participants during the first stages of the research, when contact was made without the help of the charity.

1.2. Research Rationale

This thesis aims to document, explore, and make sense of what is referred to in the interdisciplinary literature as the “post-homicide experience” of “co-victims” (close relatives of the deceased) of a murder which has occurred in a foreign country (Armour-Peterson, 2002). More precisely, it seeks to investigate the multi-faceted impact of murder on the surviving family members of the primary victim, who are usually, although not always, residing in the United Kingdom at the time of the incident. The thesis aims to uncover the emotional and practical difficulties associated with co-victimisation, and to understand to what extent these challenges are influenced by the international nature of the crime itself, the accompanying foreign legal

and judicial proceedings, and the presence of both local and global media attention. Based on this understanding, the thesis aims to uncover and explore the sources and utility of the support that is available to co-victims affected by murder in these particular circumstances, with attention given to the role of the charity Murdered Abroad. In addressing these aims, the thesis answers the following question: *What impact does murder which takes place in a foreign country have on the “post-homicide experience” of the surviving family members, otherwise known as “co-victims”, who reside in the United Kingdom?* Each of these key terms will be defined in the introductory stages and discussed more thoroughly throughout the thesis.

This thesis is informed by literature taken from a variety of academic disciplines, including: trauma and bereavement studies; tourism studies; and the inter-related areas of criminology and victimology. By synthesising conceptual, theoretical and empirical contributions from across these research areas, the thesis benefits from a variety of understandings of crime and victimisation in general, and of the consequences of traumatic bereavement through murder.

Depending on the nature and severity of the crime, the impact of victimisation more generally on the direct victim – that is the person against which the crime has been committed – can be profound and long-lasting (Hough, 1985; Kilpatrick *et al.*, 1987; Skogan, 1987). Indeed, several researchers have documented a variety of negative psychological and behavioural responses to victimisation, in both the immediate aftermath of the event, and in the longer term (Winkel and Denkers, 1995; Gray, Jackson and Farrall, 2011). Whilst the experiences of primary victims warrant investigation, it is clear that the consequences of crime extend far beyond those directly involved in the criminal event itself. Condry (2010:219) refers to this as the “ripple effect” of crime, suggesting that the impact of victimisation is felt by those who – through relation or association – are known as the “co-victims” of crime (see also Gross,

2007). Notwithstanding suggestions in the literature that the parameters of the term co-victim can be expanded further, this thesis adopts the definition proposed by Amick-McMullen, Kilpatrick and Resnick (1991) who limit their analysis to the family members and close friends of the direct victim.

Until relatively recently co-victims of crime were largely neglected in academic literature with Howarth and Rock (2000:58) observing a “guarded and limited acceptance” of their analytical significance to criminological enquiry. Described by Armour (2002:372) as a “vulnerable yet invisible population”, these “victims of crime by extension” have, at least historically, been largely ignored by the research agenda within criminology (Masters, Friedman and Getzel, 1988; Costa, Njaine and Schenker, 2017:308). Such an oversight is clearly unfortunate, and as argued by Rock (1998:186), criminology as a discipline is “incomplete without an appreciation of how crime is experienced by those who it injures and by those observe that injury”. Indeed, Rock (ibid:187) goes on to suggest that the failure to acknowledge the experiences of co-victims of crime “impairs a proper analysis of the social organization and meanings of criminality”. Therefore, it has been argued that co-victims are deserving of criminological attention, given that they can offer a unique perspective on the nature of crime and the impact of victimisation (Armour, 2002; Dowsley, 2003).

The experiences of co-victims are of particular significance in cases of murder where, borrowing the words of Rock (1998), the “injury” of crime is perhaps most severe. In the absence of the primary victim – who as a result of the permanent and irreversible nature of the crime is unable to share their experiences, co-victims can provide a valuable insight into the reality of living with the consequences of this most serious form of violent crime. Indeed, to develop a more thorough and meaningful understanding of the multi-faceted and far-reaching

impact of murder, this thesis is solely reliant upon the lived experiences of a small number of surviving family members – with a total of seven individual cases included in the research. As will be discussed in more detail, these co-victims have willingly shared their stories of bereavement, trauma, and victimisation. So, too, they have provided detailed accounts of their experiences in the days, months and even years after the murder occurred. These stories – and the experiences contained within them – are therefore central to the research, and form the foundation on which the thesis is based.

It is important to note in the early stages of this introductory chapter that the terms “murder” and “homicide” are used interchangeably throughout the thesis, particularly regarding the use of the term “post-homicide experience”. However, all of the cases involved in the primary element of the research, by definition, concern the specific crime of murder. A more comprehensive discussion of the definition of homicide and the sub-category of murder can be found in Chapter Two.

The post-homicide experience has, more recently, attracted the attention of researchers working within a variety of academic disciplines who are keen to document and understand the impact of murder on those most closely associated to it (Getzel and Masters, 1984; Armour, 2002; Miranda, Molina and MacVane, 2010; Connolly and Gordon, 2014; Shute, 2016). This inter-disciplinary body of literature indicates that in many, if not all cases of murder, the post-homicide experience begins at the moment where the co-victims are notified of the unexpected death of a friend, or family member. It is at this point in time when they embark on a post-murder journey that is as unique as the circumstances that surrounded the crime itself. However, despite the subjective nature of the post-homicide experience, previous research highlights several recurring features in the co-victim narrative that seem to form central

components of their lives following the murder. Most notably, research draws attention to the often substantial consequences associated with the unexpected loss of a loved one in traumatic circumstances. In other words, it is widely accepted that losing a friend or family member to murder can result in a range of psychological, physical, and emotional complications in those who are left behind (Allen, 1980; Zedner, 1997).

Further to this and unlike non-violent bereavement, the inescapable element of criminality in cases of murder, necessitates the involvement of a variety of agencies from within the criminal justice system – which subsequently influences the co-victim’s post-homicide experience (Shapland, 1984; Brown and Crego, 2019; Reed *et al.*, 2019). Pre-existing research examines how, in some cases, the initial police investigation, the apprehension and charging of a suspect and the subsequent judicial proceedings, may serve to amplify the effects of an already traumatic and life-changing experience, through what is referred to as “secondary victimisation” (Gekoski, Adler and Gray, 2013).

Moreover, previous research has also focused on the role of the media in the post-homicide experience (Spungen, 1998; Adkins, 2003; Barak-Brands and Shaul, 2014; Pugach, Peleg and Ronel, 2017). Highlighting the contrast between the very private nature of bereavement and the media fascination with violent crime, co-victims of murder must often learn to deal with the additional pressure of the local, national, and even international publicity that cases of murder tend to generate (Lundström, 2015; Yardley, Wilson and Kennedy, 2015).

For the co-victims, the irreparable nature of the crime means their post-murder journey can have no readily identifiable conclusion. Previous research has therefore also explored the cumulative effect of the additional, complicating factors, on the ability of co-victims to grieve

and ultimately “make sense” of their experiences (Jannoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997; Gross, 2007). Here “sense-making” refers to the process whereby co-victims of crime attempt to revalidate their earlier assumptions, beliefs, narratives, constructs or schemas about their identity and the world around them (Jannoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997). Furthermore, grief – due to traumatic bereavement – particularly when it is attributable to the intentional and malicious actions of another (Norris, 1992) is distinct from that which results from the loss of a loved one in non-violent, or natural circumstances (Currier, 2006; Malone, 2007; Prigerson, 2010) and therefore, can be considered as an important element of the post-homicide experience.

It is important to note, that with some prominent exceptions (Patel, 2003; Casey, 2011; SAMM Abroad, 2011; Victims’ Commissioner, 2019; All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2019), the vast majority of the co-victimisation literature is based on cases of murder which have occurred in *national* circumstances. In other words, the crime, the victim, their families, the perpetrator and the subsequent investigative processes and judicial proceedings are all contained within the geographic and jurisdictional boundaries of one particular country. As such, a significant distinction can now be seen regarding the problem that lies at the heart of this thesis. Of primary concern to this research, is the impact of murder on co-victims when the crime takes place in *international* circumstances. Put simply, the research aims to make sense of murder abroad by focusing on the stories of those who have been bereaved through murder in a foreign country. By doing so, the research seeks to identify and understand the ways in which their post-homicide experience is shaped and influenced by the international nature of the crime in terms of the changes and continuities that the inter-jurisdictional context introduces.

The topics introduced in this preliminary commentary are discussed in greater detail in the more comprehensive review of the pre-existing literature contained in Chapter Two.

1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Research

This thesis aims to explore the implications of murder which occurs in a foreign country on the surviving family members of the direct victim, who are referred to throughout as co-victims. Given the broad nature of this aim, several inter-related objectives are provided below, which serve to guide and direct the research process. The objectives are to:

- Identify and describe seven cases of murder involving British citizens abroad;
- Document the post-homicide experience of the co-victims involved in these cases;
- Explore the emotional and practical implications of the murder in these circumstances
- Recognise common issues and strategies for coping with bereavement, noting the international nature of the crime;
- Highlight the origin and extent of the support available to the co-victims of murder abroad.

Each of these objectives directs attention to an important element of the research area. However, when viewed holistically, the combination of these objectives provides a comprehensive insight into the post-homicide experience of a select group of co-victims of murder, in circumstances where the crime has taken place in a foreign country.

1.4. The Stories Behind the Research: The Cases of Murder Abroad

Whilst these cases are described in greater detail in Chapter Four, it should be noted in these introductory stages that the production of this thesis would not have been possible without the stories of those who willingly participated in the research. In the first instance, Eve Henderson, in her role as co-founder and director of the charity, Murdered Abroad, was instrumental throughout the research process – most notably regarding the recruitment of participants. In both the pilot and concluding interview, Eve offered an insight into her own personal experience of losing her husband, Roderick (Jock) to murder in France in 1997 (Case One). She was also able to describe her professional experience of running the charity, and outlined the support she and three fellow Trustees continue to provide to those who have lost a loved-one to murder abroad. Indeed, according to their website, the charity has provided support to over 200 families who have been bereaved through murder in these circumstances (Murdered Abroad, 2021).

The circumstances surrounding each case of murder included in the research are unique. However, when viewed as a whole, the cases draw attention to the emotional and practical implications of murder on the family members of the direct victim when the murder occurs in a foreign country. In other words, these cases highlight common issues in the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder abroad – issues which feature heavily throughout the remainder of the thesis.

Given the local, national, and even international media coverage that often accompany incidences of murder abroad, it was possible to form an initial understanding of the circumstances of the murder in each of the cases. These descriptive accounts – based on

newspaper reports obtained via a search of the online newspaper repository Nexis – are presented in Chapter Four. Newspapers as a source are not without their limitations. Indeed, some cases received less coverage than others, meaning that it was not always possible to provide a detailed account of the circumstances surrounding the murder, or its consequences. So, too, some of these descriptive accounts are shorter in length as there were no arrests, trials, or convictions, and therefore less information was available. Where possible, relevant information was taken from the subjective accounts provided by family members during the semi-structured interview process to substantiate and authenticate the depiction of their case. They also offered secondary information related to the case which supplemented the process of triangulation.

In each case, family members of the direct victim – or co-victims – willingly agreed to participate in the research. The significance of this decision should not be underestimated, given the aim of the research and the potential for the interview process to illicit a conversation which concerns a particularly stressful and traumatic experience on behalf of the participants. Indeed, as will become clear, each family member recalled to the best of their knowledge the circumstances surrounding the murder, and the subsequent impact of the crime on their lives since learning of the news that their loved-one had been killed. Clearly, this is no easy task to complete. Whilst no concerns were raised during the research – either on behalf of the researcher or the participants – it is important to acknowledge the potential for re-traumatisation when conducting qualitative, primary research with those who, as a result of their past experience are considered to be particularly vulnerable (British Society of Criminology, 2015).

The stories behind the research were obtained through a series of semi-structured, qualitative interviews. The interviews which were conducted with the family members in each of the cases were preceded by a pilot interview with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner. Kim is also a Director of the charity Murdered Abroad and her sister, Lianne (Lee) Burns, was murdered in Saint Martin in 2011 (Case Two). This interview took place at the beginning of the research at Eve's home in Kent. This key step in the methodological process helped to establish trust between the researcher and Eve in her role as a gatekeeper – or, in other words, someone who is able to provide access to a particular group of research participants (Clarke, 2010). This preliminary interview therefore also acted as a catalyst for the recruitment of participants, given that Eve was subsequently able to provide details of the research to families who expressed an interest in participating. Each of these key methodological decisions in the research process is examined in greater detail in Chapter Three.

Pete and Hazel Kouzaris were the first to agree to being involved in the research. Their son James was 24 when he was killed in Sarasota, Florida, in 2011, whilst he was on holiday with his best friend – James Cooper, who was also killed (Case Three). During the interview, which was conducted in mid-2017 at Birmingham City University, Pete and Hazel reflected on their son's character, describing him as a "young man with a desire to live life to the fullest". So, too, they spoke openly about the circumstances surrounding their son's death and the subsequent impact of the murder on their lives – describing a "life before and life after James".

In the time since James' death, Pete and Hazel have become active members of the charity Murdered Abroad, and provide support and advice to other families who are affected by murder in a foreign country. They have also founded a charity in memory of James and James called *Always a Chance*, which aims to "encourage young people who are outside full-time education

and employment to re-engage with the education system or support them as they take their first steps into employment” (Always a Chance, 2021).

The second interview, which took place in Bristol, in early December 2018, was with Elizabeth Chandler – grandmother of Liam Hogan – who was killed in the town of Ierapetra on the Greek Island of Crete in 2006 (Case Four). Six-year-old Liam was pushed from a balcony along with his younger sister, Mia, aged two at the time, by their father, John Hogan, who then also jumped from the balcony. Both Mia and John sustained injuries from the fall but were able to make a full recovery. Despite the efforts of his mother, Natasha, a nurse, and local paramedics, Liam died at the scene as a result of the injuries he sustained during the fall. Whilst the case is described in more detail in Chapter Four, during the interview, Elizabeth Chandler provided a thorough account of the impact of the death of her grandson on her own life, and the lives of those around her. She recalled in detail the moment that she was notified by the hotel in Greece that something had happened to her grandchildren, and described her experience of dealing with national and international law enforcement, as well as the difficulties associated with foreign legal systems and the multiple inquests into the circumstances of the death, which took place in the United Kingdom.

The third interview took place in mid-2019 with Alison Eagleton – ex-wife of Nicholas Mockford – who was killed in 2012 in Brussels, Belgium (Case Five). Nicholas, known as Nick, was described as a caring, gentle man who, despite his demanding job as an executive at the international oil and gas company ExxonMobil, was still able to enjoy playing golf, sailing, and riding his motorbike. After his marriage to Alison ended in 1997, Nick spent more time abroad, moving between Belgium and Singapore before marrying again in 1998. Whilst in Brussels, after having food at a local Italian restaurant, Nick was shot three times as he made

his way to his vehicle, although his wife Mary – who was also injured, survived. Despite the efforts of local paramedics, Nick died on the way to hospital on the evening of Sunday 14th October 2012. The investigation into the circumstances of Nick’s death has so far yielded no results. Claims have been made that Nick may have been the victim of a targeted attack, or a failed robbery, although no one has ever been arrested in connection to his death. During the interview Alison spoke openly about her reaction to the news that her ex-husband had been killed. She recalled the immediate and ongoing emotional impact not only on herself, but also on her and Nick’s three children. She was also able to reflect on the lack of assistance that she has received throughout the case, both from the authorities in Belgium and in the United Kingdom, and highlighted the important role played by Murdered Abroad in providing her with support.

The fourth interview was conducted with Alison Hill – mother of Laura Hill – who was killed in Buenos Aires, Argentina – in August 2019 (Case Six). Described as being “close to her family” and “free-spirited”, Laura was aged 25 when she travelled, without her parents’ knowledge to Argentina. She had reportedly become involved with individuals associated with Angelmiro Cáveres García, a Colombian gang operating an international drug-smuggling network, and may have been asked to smuggle cocaine back into Europe. In October 2007, Alison received a knock on the door from her local police force who informed her that Laura had died in Argentina, and that her death was attributable to natural causes. During the interview, Alison was able to recall the moment that she found out that Laura had died, and remembers her immediate sense of suspicion regarding the circumstances of her death. Alison was also able to provide an insight into the difficulties she and her family have faced in the years following Laura’s death, including the possibility of corruption and incompetence within the Argentine police force, poor investigative standards, a lack of communication, issues with

repatriation, and an inconclusive inquest verdict. Despite Alison's ongoing efforts to discover the truth about what happened to Laura, no arrests have been made, and the case remains unsolved.

The fifth interview was conducted via telephone in April 2020 with Brian Chandler – who is Treasurer, Director and Trustee of the charity Murdered Abroad. The interview was conducted via the phone due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented face-to-face data collection throughout 2020 and 2021 (See Torrentira, 2020). Brian is also the step-grandfather of Liam Hogan (Case Four) and was therefore able to provide additional descriptive information about the circumstances surrounding Liam's death, the subsequent judicial proceedings in Greece, and the inquest process in the United Kingdom. Brian provided a detailed insight into the practical considerations that accompanied the emotional burdens of losing his step-grandson in a foreign country. So too, given his role as Trustee at Murdered Abroad – a position which he accepted due to the support he had received from the charity, Brian was able to draw upon and discuss his experience of working with families who have been bereaved in similar circumstances, highlighting the unique nature of their situation, but also drawing attention to the similarities in their experiences in terms of the difficulties they can face in the aftermath of murder abroad.

The sixth interview, which was also conducted via telephone initially took place in May 2021 with Roger Parrish – father of Joanna Parrish – who was killed in 1990 in Auxerre, France (Case 7). Due to a technical issue, the audio recording of the first interview did not save correctly, and therefore could not be transcribed. However, Roger kindly agreed to participate in a second interview, which was conducted via telephone in June 2021, and which was successfully recorded and transcribed.

Roger's daughter, Joanna, was an undergraduate student, studying French, at the University of Leeds. As part of her studies, she was given the opportunity to travel to France to further her knowledge of the French language and culture. Whilst abroad, Joanna undertook a work placement at a Lycée Jacques Amyot – a secondary school in the Auxerre region where she taught English. To supplement her income, Joanna also advertised her services as an English teacher in the local newspaper. According to her flatmate at the time, on 16th May 1990, Joanna left to meet with someone who had contacted her asking for English lessons for his son; she did not return. Her body was found the following day in the River Yonne, three miles away from Auxerre.

Roger was at work when he received notification from a local police officer that Joanna had been killed. The case went unsolved for more than 30 years, with several potential leads amounting to nothing. Throughout this time, Roger and his family have campaigned to ensure that Joanna's case remains under investigation by the French Authorities. Having been closed in 2010, the case was re-opened by the French Police in 2012 following new information which directed suspicion towards Michel Fourniret – a serial killer convicted in 2004 of the murder of seven women. Fourniret had previously been arrested in connection with Joanna's murder, but due to unusable DNA evidence, he was released. This time, whilst in prison, Fourniret admitted to the murder of three more women, including Joanna. He was due to stand trial for Joanna's murder but died on 10th May 2021. Despite the absence of a formal conviction, both the confession and Fourniret's death were moments of considerable importance for Roger and his family, and signified the end of a 30-year search for the truth about what happened to Joanna.

The concluding interview with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner, was conducted online, via Zoom, in August 2021. This interview signalled the completion of the data collection process. It therefore provided an opportunity to reflect on, discuss and further reinforce the themes that were highlighted by the individual family members who participated in the research.

1.5. Epistemological Overview

Consideration must be given to the epistemological assumptions that underpin all forms of social research, given the implications of the philosophical approach for the study's conceptualisation and design (Sosa, 2017). In essence, by adopting a particular epistemological standpoint, researchers align themselves with a set of assertions and beliefs about the nature of knowledge, and the means by which it is produced (Bruce and Williams, 2006). These theories of knowledge then inform and guide important decisions throughout the research process, most obviously regarding the role of the researcher, the object of inquiry, the methods of data collection, and the process of data analysis.

Traditionally, proponents of the positivist epistemology usually found within the domain of the natural sciences, have argued for the existence of a universal reality that can be observed and measured, through rigorous and objective scientific investigation (Dieronitou, 2014). Knowledge in this sense, is that which can be tested, validated, and generalised, both now and in the future (Holden and Lynch, 2004). However, within the domain of the social sciences, where researchers focus their attention on social, rather than natural phenomena, an alternative, interpretivist epistemological position has gained prominence (Lynch and Bogen, 1997). Those who adopt an interpretivist epistemological standpoint reject the positivist notion of a single reality which is universal across space and time, and instead argue for the existence of

multiple realities, which are intrinsically linked to human experience and therefore subjective in nature (Mills and Birks, 2014). As Darlaston-Jones, (2007: 19) suggest, “these multiple “realities” are socially constructed and therefore “are shaped by the cultural, historical, political and social norms that operate at that time”.

The role of the interpretivist researcher is not simply to observe and remain objective. Rather it is to acknowledge their own subjectivity, to consider their positionality and to appreciate their role in the co-construction of knowledge in the research process. This thesis adopts an interpretivist epistemological standpoint – common to studies in the field of victimology (Wright and Hill, 2004). As such, the research is less concerned with the positivist preoccupations of reliability and replicability and instead seeks to establish authenticity, through an appreciation of the subjective experiences of those involved in the research process. Indeed, in echoing the words of Bogdan and Biklen (1998), the research aims to empower the voices of those who might otherwise have remained silent – in this instance the family members of direct victims of murder which occurs abroad.

The implications of the interpretivist epistemological standpoint are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three. However, it is pertinent to note here the broader characteristics of such a position, and to present a summary of its suitability to the topic under investigation. This research seeks to explore and understand the experiences of a unique group of individuals who have been bereaved through murder in a foreign country. At the heart of the study therefore are the stories of those who have direct, lived experience of the issue in focus. These stories, obtained through semi-structured interviews with family members of the primary victim, offer detailed, authentic, victim-led, personal insights into the impact and meanings of murder and its consequences. The epistemological position that underpins this research, recognises the

subjective nature of these stories and as such, the interpretivist researcher is less concerned with the generalisation of the research findings, and is more concerned with providing a meaningful account of the particular cases included in the study. According to Pierre and Roulston (2006:667) this encourages a “richer, thicker description that might yield a true representation of authentic, real, lived experience”.

1.6. Methodological Considerations

Conducting successful criminological research requires consideration to be given to a variety of methodological concerns. First, it is important to recognise the influence of epistemology on decisions made throughout the research process. As previously discussed, this research is based upon an interpretivist theory of knowledge and therefore rejects the positivist notion of the existence of a single, measurable reality and instead argues that reality is multi-faceted, and experience is subjective (Ryan, 2018). To develop a meaningful understanding of the plurality of human experience, interpretivists draw upon a range of methodological tools with the view to producing in-depth, qualitative data on a particular social phenomenon (Nguyen and Thahn, 2015). Whilst the research methodology is presented in more detail in Chapter Three, this section offers a brief overview of the key methodological decisions made throughout the research, with particular attention given to the inter-related processes of data collection and analysis.

1.6.1. Methods of Data Collection

The primary data that forms the basis of this thesis, was collated using several semi-structured interviews with the family members of victims of murder who were killed in a foreign country.

Gaining access to this unique group of co-victims would prove to be one of the most challenging aspects of the research process, with several failed recruitment attempts in the early stages of the study. Despite these initial setbacks, a working relationship was established with a charity named Murdered Abroad. Following a successful pilot interview with co-founder and director, Eve Henderson, it was agreed that the charity would act as a gatekeeper, mediating access between the researcher and families who were receiving support from Murdered Abroad, as a result of them losing a loved one to murder or manslaughter in a foreign country. In addition to the pilot interview, six interviews were conducted throughout the course of the research, lasting on average between sixty to ninety minutes each. These interviews were largely conducted in the homes of the families, although some were conducted over the phone, given the impact of the COVID-19 crisis that emerged in the first half of 2020. A concluding interview with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner in August 2021 signalled the end of the data collection process. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as an appropriate data collection tool given their flexible and open-ended nature. The researcher was able to adopt a more passive role in the interview process, allowing participants the time and space to talk openly about their experiences without interruption. Using a semi-structured interview schedule, the researcher was able to guide the process, prompting participants if and when necessary, in order to ensure that key areas of discussion were covered during the interview. Further to this, prior to completion, participants were given the opportunity to make further comment on areas that had not been discussed, which helped to inform and guide subsequent interview schedules.

1.6.2. The Process of Data Analysis

The data collected using semi-structured interviews was later transcribed and subjected to the process of Thematic Analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a thematic analysis

consists of several inter-related stages, each of which are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. This process facilitated the identification, analysis, and reporting of themes within the primary data, and ultimately generated the research findings which are presented and discussed in Chapter Five.

1.7. Structure of the Thesis: A Brief Overview

The thesis, which consists of several distinct but inter-related chapters, adopts the following structure. Following this introductory chapter, the thesis embarks on a comprehensive review of the pre-existing literature (Chapter Two) that is relevant to the research aim, and by doing so establishes the parameters of the study within the broader research area. As previously noted, the literature review is informed by research which emerges from a variety of academic disciplines. This inter-disciplinary nature facilitates a multi-faceted exploration of the phenomenon of murder in general, and its impact upon those defined as co-victims in particular.

Next, Chapter Three offers a detailed examination of the methodological approach adopted throughout the study. This chapter considers the importance of epistemology and surveys the broad range of practical and ethical issues that are pertinent to primary, qualitative research into sensitive topics such as bereavement through murder and co-victimisation.

Chapter Four explores the stories behind the research, and provides a descriptive account of each of the cases of murder abroad that have been included in the study. As will be discussed in more detail, this provides an opportunity to document the circumstances surrounding the murder and, where possible, to highlight the investigative processes, legal proceedings, and

subsequent outcome of the case – all of which are important elements of the post-homicide experience. These descriptive accounts serve to contextualise the experiences of those who have participated in the study, and as a result help to substantiate the subsequent analytical chapters.

The findings of the research are presented and discussed in Chapter Five. Here the focus is on providing a coherent account of the experiences of those who participated in the study. Resulting from a thematic analysis, this chapter offers a synthesis of the primary data collected through a series of semi-structured interviews with the family members of victims of murder which occurred abroad. As such, the findings chapter is structured to highlight and explore the key elements of the post-homicide experience of those who have been bereaved through murder in these unique circumstances. Throughout this chapter, extracts from various interview transcripts are presented verbatim. This “thick description” gives prominence to the voices, feelings, and actions of the participants, and to serves to substantiate many of the points in discussion throughout the chapter (Denzin, 1989). The presentation of the research findings is also accompanied by an in-depth discussion of their meaning and significance to the thesis. As such, this chapter directly addresses the research question at the heart of the thesis, and thus makes sense of the phenomenon of murder abroad.

The final chapter (Chapter Six) concludes the thesis. A concise summary of the research is presented which reiterates the implications of the findings, and makes several recommendations for the continued investigation into the phenomenon of murder abroad.

1.8. Conclusion to the Chapter

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the component parts of the thesis, and has offered some preliminary insight into the key stages of the research process. The rationale for the research has been presented to provide a clear justification for a qualitative investigation into the phenomenon of murder abroad. Building upon this, the aim and objectives of the research have also been articulated, which serves to further refine the problem at the centre of the thesis, and brings into focus the gap in the literature that the study aims to address.

So, too, attention has been given to the epistemological position that underpins the methodological decisions made throughout the research process, including those related to the collection, and analysis of the primary data generated through semi-structured interviews with the co-victims of murder which has occurred in a foreign country.

The next chapter presents an in-depth discussion of the relevant literature, which is interdisciplinary in nature. The chapter scopes the broader contours of the research landscape, explores several inter-related areas of interest, and directs attention to the small but important body of literature to which the thesis aims to contribute.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

THE PROBLEM OF MURDER ABROAD

2.1. Introduction

The following chapter provides the conceptual and theoretical context for the research study by drawing attention to the pre-existing literature which, in broad terms, explores the “post-homicide experience” of “co-victims” of murder (Armour, 2002). Given their significance to the research, the terms “co-victim” and “post-homicide experience” are defined and examined in more detail later in the chapter. Whilst the topic of murder is regularly discussed within criminology (See Brookman, 2005; D’Cruze, Walklate and Pegg, 2006), these overviews of the subject tend to be nationally focused and broad in their scope. This review of the literature is therefore more concerned with issues arising from cases of murder, specifically when they cross legal jurisdictions and geographical boundaries – issues which have been largely neglected within mainstream criminology. With globalisation, specifically the continued expansion of international travel, these issues are, and will continue to be important.

In essence, what therefore follows is a synthesis of academic literature which investigates the impact of murder on the lives of those who are indirectly affected by it – who are often characterised as co-victims, and therefore covers literature related to victimology (Armour, 2002). However, it is important to acknowledge from the outset, that the vast majority of the literature that is about to be discussed is based on murders which have occurred in *national* circumstances, within the geographical and legal boundaries of a nation state and/or legal system – for example, England and Wales. In other words, the co-victims in these cases have resided in the country in which the crime occurred, and the subsequent investigative processes

and criminal justice proceedings were contained within the geographic and legal boundaries of one country in particular. As was made clear in the introductory chapter, this thesis is based on seven cases of murder which have occurred in six countries outside of England and Wales: notably France; Saint Martin; the United States of America; Greece; Belgium; and Argentina. The aim of the research, therefore, is to survey and understand the emotional and practical difficulties that are present in the stories of the co-victims when the murder takes place in an *international* context. This review of the literature brings into clear focus the paucity in the research landscape that the thesis hopes to fill, and provides both context and impetus for the remainder of the study.

Whilst each of the primary cases included in the research involve the specific crime of murder, the terms “homicide” and “murder” are used interchangeably throughout the thesis, most notably in reference to the term post-homicide experience. As such, for clarity, the chapter begins with a discussion of the academic study of homicide and differentiates between the sub-categories of murder, manslaughter, and infanticide.

Given its focus on the stories of co-victims of murder, this thesis is victimological in nature. It is therefore distinct from much homicide literature in that it does not focus on the motivations or aetiology of the offender, but upon the lived experiences of co-victims. As such, included within this chapter is a brief discussion of the history and development of victimology as an academic subject, as distinct from criminology, given its preoccupation with the victims, rather than perpetrators of crime (Wemmers, 2009:398). Quite apart from arguing for the inclusion of victims in the criminal justice process, victimologists have explored the nature and impact of crime on those who are most closely affected by it (Fattah, 2002). Whilst victimology seeks to understand victimisation through a variety of social, cultural and political lenses (Zedner,

1997), this thesis aligns with, and is informed by the body of literature collectively referred to as “narrative victimology”. This extension in victimological thought gives precedent to the voice of the victim and, through their stories, aims to develop an understanding of their subjective experience of victimisation (Pemberton, *et al.*, 2018). As this thesis is based solely on the stories of those who have experienced the murder of loved one in foreign country, a narrative victimological perspective, which is explored in greater detail in the Chapter Three, facilitates a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the lived experiences of those affected by murder in these circumstances.

Considerable attention has been given to the impact of crime on the “direct” or “primary” victims – or, in other words, those who were present at the criminal event itself. However, it is now widely acknowledged that the impact of crime extends beyond the binary categories of “victim” and “offender” (Masters, Friedman and Getzel, 1988; Condry, 2010). To understand the far-reaching and multi-faceted impact of victimisation, the experiences of the friends and family members of the direct victim have become a prominent feature in the victimological research landscape (Rock, 1998). As such, this chapter serves to highlight the “ripple effect of crime” (Condry, 2010), and by doing so explores the body of literature which gives prominence to the “co-victim narrative” in the experience of victimisation.

Following this, the chapter narrows in focus to explore the impact of homicide victimisation in particular and attention is given to those interchangeably referred to as “co-victims”, “in-direct victims” or “survivors of homicide” (Bucholz, 2002). Here the chapter introduces and surveys the interdisciplinary body of literature which concerns the post-homicide experience and the phenomenon of “homicide survivorship” (Hertz, Prothrow-Stith and Cherry, 2005). In a broad sense, the post-homicide experience refers to the stories of those who have been bereaved as a

result of the murder of a loved-one (Armour, 2002) and the literature draws attention to the range of emotional and practical difficulties that frequently feature in the co-victim narrative in the aftermath of this particularly harmful form of violent crime.

As previously noted, the literature that substantiates this chapter is largely based upon cases of murder that have occurred in *national* circumstances. To reiterate the aim of the thesis, in the later stage of this chapter, attention is given to the limited but valuable body of knowledge that speaks directly to the topic under investigation. Here, the discussion draws upon several preliminary studies that have begun to document the post-homicide experience of those bereaved through murder in an *international* context. The scarcity of such literature brings into sharp relief, the problem at the heart of the thesis, and re-emphasises the opportunity to make a genuine contribution to knowledge by furthering the understanding of the phenomenon of murder abroad.

2.2. The Academic Study of “Homicide”

This thesis focuses on the impact of homicide on the friends and family members of the direct victims of the crime. Exploring the consequences of homicide first necessitates an appreciation of the way in which the act itself is defined. The purpose of this introductory overview is therefore to bring into focus the terminology associated with this particular form of violent crime and to establish from the outset, the specific type of homicide that is of concern to the research study.

In its broadest sense, the term homicide, according to D’Cruze, Walklate and Pegg (2011:2) is used to “cover the killing of one human being by another, regardless of motive or

circumstance”. It is a uniquely harmful crime, the consequences of which are irreversible and irreparable (Aldrich and Diya Kallivayalil, 2013). Homicide has a profound impact not only upon the direct recipient of interpersonal violence, but also upon those most closely associated to them (Moroz, 2019). Whilst the repercussions of the act of homicide are indisputable, several issues arise when considering the definition and use of the term within social, legal and academic contexts (May, 2003; Lynes, Yardley and Danos, 2021).

To elaborate, it is commonly accepted amongst criminologists, that crime is a social construct (Barack, 1995; Matthews, 2014; Przemieniecki, 2017), an idea closely associated with the work of Christie (2004) who suggested that crime does not exist. Instead, he suggests crime can be viewed as a concept which is applicable at certain times, in certain societies, by those who have the power to apply that concept. In other words, those behaviours which are classed as criminal, and which subsequently attract both formal and informal sanctions, vary on both a temporal and geographic basis and are intrinsically linked to structures of power within society (Hulsman, 1986).

Like many other types of crime, homicide can be considered as an act which is either lawful or unlawful. In other words, whether an act of homicide is to be deemed within or in contravention of the law is dependent upon the wider social and cultural circumstances in which it occurs. The taking of life during wartime and the implementation of the death penalty provides just two examples whereby homicide may be considered lawful or justified (Brookman, 2005; Lynes, Yardley and Danos, 2021).

However, despite there being circumstances which might render the act of taking a life as criminal, according to Hall and Wilson (2014:636), the specific crime of homicide presents a

unique challenge to the social constructionist argument that underpins contemporary understandings of criminality. They note how unlike other crime types, “legal and cultural definitions of homicide are very similar across nations and regions of the industrialised West” suggesting the “consensual” nature of homicide allows for international statistical comparisons to be made with a greater degree of confidence.

To elaborate, criminologists tend to treat official crime statistics with a degree of caution, acknowledging the existence of a “dark figure of crime” – that crime which occurs, but for a variety of reasons, is never reported to or recorded by the police (Skogan, 1977; Coleman and Moynihan, 1996; Jansson, 2007). However, it is generally accepted that the police will be made aware of a high proportion of homicides in comparison with other offence categories (Brookman, 2005) meaning statistical information regarding homicide is more reliable than those concerning crime and violence in general (Hall and Wilson, 2014).

Whilst there might be consensus surrounding the definition of homicide in countries around the world, it is important to recognise that there will be considerable variation in the way in which homicide is dealt with within and between different countries. Homicide involving a foreign victim poses a range of issues to both local and international authorities and the indeed to the family members of the victims (Letschert and Groenhuijsen, 2014). Difficulties attributable to variations in legal systems and judicial processes are exacerbated by the potential barriers of culture, custom, religion and language (Blackwood, 2014). So, too standards of investigative practice can vary greatly, with Blackwood (2014) noting how some countries have little or no access to computers, DNA or fingerprinting technology. This is of particular concern to the present research due to the post-homicide experience of the victim’s families being direct influenced by the country in which the crime occurred. This is most

apparent in relation to their expectations of the criminal justice process that follows, and the subsequent response of the authorities in that country in terms of investigation, prosecution, and punishment.

Within the legal jurisdiction of England and Wales, the overarching category of unlawful homicide can be sub-divided into “murder”, “manslaughter” and “infanticide”. Whilst these acts share a common “actus reus” (guilty act), differences arise in regard to culpability and intention, otherwise referred to “mens rea” (guilty mind). Here, culpability refers to the extent to which the perpetrator can be considered responsible for the violent act and its consequences (Maher, 2010; Lynes, Yardley and Danos, 2021).

Despite being formulated in the 19th century, the legal definition of murder remains as per the Offences against the Persons Act (1861). The crime of murder is committed, where a person:

Of sound mind and discretion (i.e. sane); unlawfully kills (i.e. not self-defence or other justified killing); any reasonable creature (human being); in being (born alive and breathing through its own lungs); under the Queen’s Peace (not in war-time); with intent to kill or cause grievous bodily harm (GHB).

Intent, therefore, is central to the definition of murder. Whilst both murder and manslaughter include an intention to harm the victim, Yardley (2017:10) suggests “manslaughter applies where there are circumstances that reduce the gravity of the crime – for instance, the killer was provoked or not in control of their behaviour”. As a result of these factors, the crime of manslaughter commonly carries a reduced penalty, however, aggravating and mitigating factors such as the use of a weapon and previous offences play a role in the sentencing of the offender (Dell, 1984; D’Cruze, Walklate and Pegg, 2011; Lynes, Yardley and Danos, 2021).

So, too, there are separate provisions in English and Welsh law that concern homicide resulting from infanticide (Infanticide Act, 1938), terrorism (Terrorism Act, 2000), corporate homicide (Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act, 2007), and deaths occurring as a result of a road traffic accident (Road Traffic Act, 1988), none of which fall within the remit of the current research study.

The focus of the research is on “interpersonal murder” which concerns the “more routine” kind of murder that “conjures the kinds of violent practices that are familiar and feared” (D’Cruze, Walklate and Pegg, 2011:2). Therefore, this thesis explores those circumstances where the use of interpersonal violence results in the loss of life. Particular attention is given to the consequences of such violence upon the family members – “co-victims” – of the direct victim of the crime, both in the immediate aftermath of the event and in the weeks, months and years that follow (Gross, 2007; Amick-McMullen, Kilpatrick and Resnick, 1991).

Despite its international focus, the present research uses the definition of murder contained within the Offences Against the Persons Act (1861), which applies to the legal jurisdiction of England and Wales. Such a definition provides a single point of departure for an analysis of the impact of murder upon the surviving family members of the direct victims. However, it should be noted that the terms “murder” and “homicide” are used interchangeably throughout the thesis, particularly regarding the use of the term post-homicide experience, although all of the cases involved in the research, by definition, involve the specific crime of murder.

2.3. The Victim-Focused Study of Crime

Traditionally the focus of criminology as an academic subject has been to identify the causes of crime, and to “devise methods and means for its control” (Muncie, 2000: 218). Reflecting the “rendezvous” nature of the discipline, criminologists have attempted to explain criminality through a variety of theoretical lenses – each emphasising the importance of biological, psychological, sociological, or other contributory factors (Fattah, 1991; Young, 2003).

Throughout its history, criminology has been subjected to rigorous critique and most notably for its failure to provide an adequate, theoretical explanation for increasing levels of crime – famously referred to as the “aetiological crisis” by Jock Young in 1997. So, too, criminology has been criticised for its apparent concern with a narrow conception of its core subject – crime. To elaborate, criminology has largely operated within the boundaries of the legalistic definition of crime focusing its attention on those behaviours which are deemed to be against the law at any given time, in any given society (Tappan, 1947). Highlighting the socially constructed nature of the concept, Hillyard and Tombs (2007) for example, suggest that criminology’s pre-occupation with the dominant, state-defined notion of crime, has inhibited its potential to understand and explore a variety of important issues. They suggest that criminology would benefit from an expansion of its focus to include “social harms”, which would allow for an examination of a broader range of harms that “individuals, communities or whole societies may be subjected to” (ibid). This “zemiological lens”, according to Pemberton (2016) would provide a more nuanced understanding of the range of behaviours which despite not being legally sanctioned, still cause harm to individuals and society more generally. This is further supported by Hall (2012) who argues that Western criminological theory has largely come to ignore the underlying circumstances that create the conditions in which rates of harmful crime

increase. This “fetishistic disavowal”, according to Hall (2012:1) has resulted in criminology being largely unable to answer its most fundamental question: “why individuals or corporate bodies are willing to risk the infliction of harm on others in order to further their own instrumental or expressive interests”.

These fundamental issues, combined with the fascination with the causes of criminal behaviour has meant that criminology, at least historically, has largely ignored the voices of victims in the development of a more meaningful understanding of crime (Goodey, 2004; Nelken, 2005; O’Malley, 2018). The apparent disciplinary reluctance to focus on the “victim” rather than the “offender” is perhaps also reflective of the subsidiary role of the victim in the wider criminal justice process. To elaborate, victims of crime often have been described as the forgotten party of the criminal justice system (Pemberton *et al.*, 2018) with Mankis (2019:12) characterising them as “mute” and “invisible”. This notion of passivity in the criminal justice process is captured eloquently by Reddi (2006:1) who states:

In an adversarial system... criminal cases become a contest between the accused and the State... There is very little role envisaged for the victim, who is the most affected by the crime. [Their] plight is forgotten in the battle for supremacy between the State and the accused. Instead of being the focus of the debate, [they] become the mere cause for it.

According to Wemmers (2009) the status of the victim in the criminal justice process was not viewed as an issue until the 1970s when researchers began to focus upon the impact of crime, in particular rape, against women. Since then, a substantial body of work has sought to question the role of victims in the criminal justice system, to the extent that Zedner (1997:577) suggests the “victim has gone from being a ‘forgotten actor’ to key player”. The increasing level of academic attention has also contributed to the development and implementation of

governmental policy which focuses on the rights afforded of victims of crime (Tobowlosky, 2001; Daigle and Muftic, 2019).

This renewed interest in the role, views, attitudes and experiences of victims in the aftermath of crime, was underpinned and driven by the simultaneous development of what was initially considered a sub-discipline of criminology – one which placed at the heart of its enquiry, the victims of crime (Shapland, 1984; Mawby and Walklate, 1994). So too, the rise of left-realist and feminist criminology provided further impetus to the development of a more victim-oriented approach. These standpoints emphasised the actual harms that resulted from crime rather than fixating on the conceptual and definitional elements that preoccupied the social constructionists.

Victimology seeks to shed light on both parties involved in the criminal event and is defined by the World Society of Victimology (2021) as:

The scientific study of the extent, nature and causes of criminal victimization, its consequences for the persons involved and the reactions thereto by society, in particular the police and the criminal justice system as well as voluntary workers and professional helpers.

It should be noted, that akin to criminology, victimology is not a single entity characterised by a linear progression. Throughout its history, various schools of thought have emerged in response to changing social and cultural circumstances. In its rather controversial infancy, the focus of victimological enquiry was upon identifying characteristics in victims which made them “particularly susceptible to victimisation” (Miers, 1989:3). Indeed, founding texts focused primarily on the role played by victims in their own victimisation (Eilenberg and Garland, 2008). The work of scholars including von Hentig (1948); Mendelsohn (1956); and,

Wolfgang, (1957), collectively referred to as “penal” or “interactionist” victimologists argued that “victim precipitation” could help to explain the incidence of crime and that the “victim was a key figure in the social processes resulting in and following from criminal acts” (van Dijk, 1997:2). This work came under criticism for “victim blaming” particularly from feminist criminologists exploring domestic and sexual violence, placing an onus upon the actions of the victim as opposed to the decisions and choices of the perpetrator to do harm.

Later work by Amir (1967:493), furthered the notion of victim precipitation with regard to forcible rape, arguing that in certain circumstances “if the victim is not solely responsible for what becomes the unfortunate event, at least she is often seen as a complementary partner” (ibid). Unsurprisingly, the suggestion that a victim of rape might play a contributory role in their victimisation, attracted extensive criticism from scholars who suggested that an attempt to attribute blame to rape victims diverted attention away from the patriarchal mindset that underpinned the structural causes of violence against women at the time (van Dijk, 1997: 3). Given the tendency to “reassign the responsibility for crime”, early studies in victimology were largely discredited by criminologists whose focus remained firmly on “offender-oriented studies” (Zedner, 1997:579).

However, despite its troubled foundations and the accompanying criticism, victimology has undergone significant change since its inception (Mawby and Walklate, 1994), and has established itself firmly as an academic discipline in its own right (Wolhulter *et al.*, 2008). Indeed, Fattah (2002:1) has described victimology as a “young, promising and fascinating subject” noting its potential to fill a “serious theoretical void” in the wider study of crime. So, too, “radical” and “critical” forms of victimology have now departed from the traditional notion of “victim precipitation”, and instead focus on understanding the nature and implications of

victimisation through a particular social, cultural or political lens (Zedner, 1997) with each school thought ultimately emphasising the significance of victims in the development of a more holistic understanding of crime (Karman, 2012).

Furthermore, Zedner (1997) suggests the development of the victim survey was an important factor in the regeneration of criminological interest in victims. To elaborate, in 1983, the British Crime Survey (BCS) was first used to obtain information about victimisation from a representative sample of 11,000 people in England and Wales. The primary goal of the survey was to capture the experiences and attitudes of victims towards the criminal justice system (Hough and Mayhew, 1983). However, in addition to this, the survey also provided supplementary evidence for the existence of a “dark figure of crime” – a term which describes the gap between the amount of crime that takes place and that which is reported to and recorded by the police and thus subsequently published in the “official crime statistics” (de Castlebajac, 2014; Doorewaard, 2014; Penney, 2014).

Despite this, it is generally accepted that national crime surveys, such as the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW), offer only a limited statistical overview of the nature and extent of crime (Reiner, 2016). Whilst they have contributed to a shift in focus towards the victim, they have also attracted criticism in regard to the extent to which they can provide a detailed understanding of the subjective experience of victimisation (Zedner, 1997). For example, the willingness of marginalised groups to share experiences of victimisation with a survey interviewer who they are only meeting for the first time. This is particularly the case in relation to crimes which carry a social stigma, like men’s experiences of sexual victimisation (Gadd *et al.*, 2003; Heggarty *et al.*, 2011; Morgan and Wells, 2016). This also relates to crimes that may not be recognised as such given the strength of myth and stereotype around what “real”

victimisation looks like. For example, in the context of domestic abuse Monckton-Smith *et al* (2014) emphasise the power of the Violence Model, in which only incidents which result in visible, physical injury are considered to be abuse, despite the growing awareness of coercive control and its criminalisation in a number of jurisdictions in recent years. In light of this critique, “smaller scale, qualitative studies have focused on particular types of crime or specific victim groups”. Notable studies have for example, explored crimes including burglary, violence, and rape, giving consideration to the impact of these crimes on individuals, families and the wider community (Zedner, 1997:590). Such studies, which place emphasis upon the experiences of the victim, rather than the offender, can offer a rich insight into the lived experiences of those adversely affected by criminality.

2.4. Narrative Victimology

Pemberton *et al.*, (2018) have argued for the development of a “narrative victimology” which seeks to understand the subjective experience of victimisation through the stories of crime victims. In this sense, victimisation is seen to disrupt the victim’s pre-existing life story, their sense of self, and the accompanying feelings of continuity and security. Drawing upon the work of Abele and Wojciszke (2013), Pemberton *et al.*, (2018: 3) suggest that victimisation challenges the “two fundamental modalities” of human life: (1) agency which concerns respect, control and status; and, (2) communion, which concerns the interactions between victims and their immediate or wider social surroundings. Such a disruption in the victim’s ongoing narrative can often result in feelings of uncertainty, doubt and shame (Pemberton *et al.*, 2018). In other words, victimisation shatters those fundamental assumptions about the nature of the world and the victims’ position within it. To begin the process of restoration, victims must attempt to “make sense” of their experiences and subsequently incorporate them into their

“ongoing life autobiography” (Pemberton *et al.*, 2018). The extent to which this process can be considered “successful” is dependent upon a variety of inter-related factors. Perhaps the most significant variable is the nature of the victimisation itself.

2.5. Contextualising the “Co-Victim” Narrative in cases of Murder: The “Hidden Victims” of Lethal Violence

The “victim narrative” has gained prominence in the study of victimisation and offers a unique perspective on the impact of crime (Sanberg and Ugelvik, 2016). It is now widely accepted that victim’s stories serve as a valuable tool for understanding how people “experience wrongdoing” and how they incorporate victimisation into their “narrative identity” (Pemberton *et al.*, 2018). Through the study of the victim narrative, researchers have been able to identify a range of emotional and physical responses to the experience of victimisation (Zedner, 1997).

However, notwithstanding the more recent academic enthusiasm for the victim narrative, prior to 1979, the scholarly record is “virtually silent” on how the relatives of the direct victim were affected by murder (Master *et al.*, 1988:109). To elaborate, Howarth and Rock (2000:58) suggest that despite the “general acceptance of the analytic significance of primary victims” there is a “more guarded and limited acceptance of the significance of secondary victims”.

Writing just over a decade later, Rock (1998:186) once again draws attention to this apparent scarcity in the academic literature. In his pioneering study, entitled *Murderers, Victims and ‘Survivors’* Rock explores the social organisation of practical and political responses to the aftermath of murder and warns that criminology, as a discipline, is “clearly incomplete without an appreciation of how crime is experienced by those who it injures and by those who observe

that injury”. Furthermore, Armour (2002) suggests family members of homicide victims are often neglected, and not recognised as the victims of a criminal act, despite the vast literature on the subject of homicide.

A potential reason for this lack of research can be found in the conceptual ambiguity which surrounds the use of the term “victim”. This ambiguity leads some to question homicide survivors’ claim to legitimate victim status and the extent to which they should be able to make legal, administrative, and moral claims on the government and its agencies as a result of the crime (Rock, 1998).

Despite the ongoing debates regarding the use and application of the term victim, it seems contradictory to the development of criminology as an academic discipline to disregard the lived experiences of those considered co-victims of crime. Howarth and Rock (2000:59) lend support to this idea and suggest “the additions to the roster of victims of crime can have a very real usefulness to criminology”. Expanding the parameters of criminological research to include the spectrum of those claiming victim status “can highlight the complexity of crime, the abundance of the groups which it creates and affects, the multiple consequences that it inflicts, the diversity of responses that it elicits and the concomitant intricacy and scale of the social structures it generates” (ibid). Furthermore, Rock (1998:187) suggests that a failure to acknowledge the experiences of co-victims of crime “impairs a proper analysis of the social organization and meanings of criminality.” Indeed, as Rock identifies, co-victims of crime are often “forced to develop an understanding [of homicide] that can never quite be intelligible to the outsider”.

In contrast to primary victims, who are easily identified and quantified, “secondary” or co-victims of crime often “remain unknown, with little to no support to their needs and [are] truly outcast in many contexts” (da Costa, Njaine and Schenker, 2017:3088). The initial lack of scholarly interest in the experiences of co-victims is unfortunate. Indeed, Dowseley, (2003: 186) notes the potential value of co-victims as research participants, given the “dramatic and emotive nature of their experience”. So, too, co-victims, as a research group, may help to appease some of the practical challenges associated with qualitative research which focuses specifically on cases of murder. In the absence of the primary victim, who as a result of the permanent and irreversible nature of the crime, is unable to share their experiences, co-victims can provide a valuable insight into the reality of living with the consequences of this most serious form of violent crime.

Whilst much of the literature focuses on the consequences of criminality upon the primary victim, a growing body of work has begun to explore how crime impacts on those who were not directly involved in criminal event itself (Dowsley, 2003; Corcoran, 2018; Batomski and Duane, 2019). To elaborate, when a crime takes place, depending on the nature of the offence and the degree of harm which occurs as a result, the psychological and physical impact upon the direct victim – that is, the person against which the crime has been directly committed – can be devastating (Zedner, 1997). It should be noted at this point that when discussing the term “violence” or “violent crime” the reference is to what Žižek (2009:1) terms “subjective violence” – or in other words, violence that is performed by a clearly identifiable agent – rather than the symbolic or systemic violence which result from the structures in place in society (Gatlung, 1969).

Direct victims of violent crime can often “suffer numerous emotional consequences including depression, anxiety and suicidal ideations” both in the immediate aftermath of victimisation and in the weeks, months and even years that follow (Ruback and Thompson, 2001:87). In addition to this, it has been suggested that victims of crime may also suffer behavioural and cognitive affects such as drug and alcohol abuse or dependency, and a heightened sense of vulnerability to victimisation (Ruback and Thompson, 2001). Furthermore, Lurigio (1987: 453) found victims of crime may also engage in various “preventative or avoidance measures” to reduce the likelihood that they will fall victim to crime again in the future.

Shapland and Hall (2007) conducted a systematic review of the literature focusing on the impact of crime, and suggest several common effects of victimisation upon direct victims. They suggest that victimisation can often lead to: shock; guilt; physical injury; direct financial loss, through the loss of or damage to property and loss of earnings; psychological difficulties including fear, anger, depression and a loss of sleep; social effects which result in changes to the victim’s lifestyle, such as avoiding certain areas, or locations; and consequential effects, whereby the victim’s perceived risk of further victimisation is increased. Such a wide arrange of potential consequences associated with direct victimisation has therefore reinforced the importance of understanding the impact of victimisation on primary victims within criminological research (Mawby and Walklate, 1994; Shapland and Hall, 2007; Green and Roberts, 2008).

Despite the notable effects of primary victimisation, it is important to acknowledge, that in many cases where a crime has taken place, the direct victim is not the only person that can be adversely affected as a result. Co-victims, interchangeably referred to as secondary victims, in-direct victims, or survivors, are individuals that are not directly involved in the criminal

event itself. Instead, they are in some way affected by the crime, since they are often closely related to, or associated with, the direct victim. In other words, they are victims of crime by extension (Masters, Friedman and Getzel, 1988). Although there is some debate regarding definition, co-victims frequently include, but are not limited to, the immediate family members of the primary victims comprising of their spouse/partner, parents, siblings, grandparents, and children (Zinzow *et al.*, 2009).

When considering cases of murder, the direct victim suffers the greatest consequence of the criminal act. Echoing the words of Brookman (2005:1), murder is considered to be a uniquely harmful crime, as it often “strikes at the very heart of what most of us hold most precious – our lives”. Indeed, Rock (1998:30) notes “death is irrevocable, final and irreversible”. He states, “unlike other crimes, there is no undoing of death, no possibility of making good the damage that has been inflicted”. As such, the resultant “legacy of violence” that follows in cases of murder, impacts upon communities, cultures and, perhaps most significantly, upon the immediate family members of the victims (Humphrey, 2002:1).

Redmond (1989:1) notes “the psychological trauma of murder of a loved one leaves survivors feeling victimised physical, emotionally, financially, socially and spiritually” and acknowledges that “no one can be prepared for the level of emotional turbulence created by murder”. So, too, Pemberton (2018:11) observes, despite often being a primary concern, it is difficult, if not impossible for the families of victims to come to terms with the harm committed against them, given that the injustice visited upon the victim cannot be fully undone”.

The potentially far-reaching impact of co-victimisation in cases of murder brings into sharp relief the need to understand the effects of murder on those who have been described by Sprungen (1998: 238) as the “hidden victims of lethal violence”.

2.6. The “Post-Homicide Experience” and the Phenomenon of “Homicide Survivorship”

So far, this chapter has established the significance of narrative in furthering the understanding of the impact of victimisation on those directly involved in the criminal event, and on those who through relation or association, are referred to as co-victims, in-direct victims, or survivors (Bucholz, 2002). So too, the chapter has given attention to the debates surrounding the use of the term victim and the importance of co-victims to the criminological research agenda. The discussion now narrows in focus and gives specific attention the body of literature which investigates the post-homicide experience and the broader phenomenon of homicide survivorship (Hertz, Prothrow-Stith, and Cherry, 2005). This inter-disciplinary research area explores the “legacy of violence” left behind in cases of murder (Humphrey, 2002:1) and acknowledges the existence of two categories of victim – the direct victim who, did not survive, and the associated or co-victims who are the surviving loved ones, friends, and family members (Hertz, Prothrow-Stith and Cherry, 2005:289).

As previously noted, co-victims can offer a unique insight into the impact of victimisation, given their proximity to the direct victim. Their potential to further the understanding of victimisation is perhaps no greater than in cases of murder, where the injury of crime is most severe and where, given its irreversible nature, the direct victim is no longer able to reflect upon and share their experiences. It has been suggested by Connolly and Gordon (2014) that in each case of murder, there are six to ten family members who become co-victims, with

Armour (2002) arguing that the number of victims, when co-victims are included, rises significantly depending on the amount of family members and close friends are affected. The potentially far-reaching “ripple effect” of murder (Condry, 2010) has resulted in the development of a wealth of literature which seeks to understand the post-homicide experience of co-victims in these particularly harmful circumstances (see, for example: Connolly and Gordon, 2014; Dowsley, 2018).

The so-called post-homicide experience encapsulates a variety of emotional and practical consequences that manifest themselves in the lives of co-victims, in the aftermath of murder. These difficulties, many of which are unique to co-victims of murder (Hertz, Prothrow-Stith and Cherry, 2005) can be attributed to the intersection of the interpersonal, situational, and criminal justice domains (Miranda, Molina and MacVane, 2010).

As such, the chapter now surveys the post-homicide experience literature, and emphasizes the following elements of the co-victim narrative: (1) the significance of “sense-making” following a traumatic experience; (2) the psychological and physical impact of co-victimisation in cases of murder; (3) the influence of the criminal justice process on the co-victim experience; and, (4) the involvement of the media and the impact of publicity post-murder.

2.6.1. “Making-Sense” of a Traumatic Experience

The concept of “sense”, or “meaning-making” is well-established within bereavement literature (Gillies and Neimeyer, 2005; Neimeyer, 2006; Holland, Currier, Neimeyer, 2006), and there is a general acceptance of its importance in the post-bereavement restoration process amongst scholars in this area (Lichhtenthal, Currier and Neimeyer, 2010; Stretesky *et al.*, 2010;

Joran and McIntosh, 2011; Hibberd, 2013). Having emerged initially from the work of Janoff-Bulman and Frantz – who in 1997, began to assess the impact of traumatic life events upon the survivors of such experiences – the concept of meaning is prefaced on the idea that as individuals we develop a set of “core assumptions” about ourselves, the external world, and the relationship that exists between them.

These core assumptions form the foundation of our “cognitive-emotional systems” (Janoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997:92). They foster within us, “a sense of meaning regarding the daily events we experience and our evolving life narrative (Milman *et al.*, 2018). As such, meaning is found in our perceived ability to control, at least to some extent, the outcomes of our interactions with the world around us. This perception affords a “considerable level of comfort” whereby we “maintain an illusion of invulnerability” characterised by feelings of “safety and security” (Janoff-Bulman, Madden and Timko, 1983).

These fundamental assumptions about the nature of the world and our relationship to it, can be disrupted when a traumatic event occurs, leading us to “experience the terror of our own vulnerability” (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Trauma, according to Campbell (2004), can manifest as a consequence of rape, violence, disaster, illness, grief and mourning, genocide and abortion, and work by Flood (2018) has drawn attention to the potentially traumatic nature of incarceration. However, regardless of its source, traumatic experiences often elicit a realisation that bad things can happen to us, and to those around us. As a result, the world we have been used to, characterised by safety and security, ceases to exist and our former sense of meaning is lost to a state of “disequilibrium, dread and hyperarousal” (Janoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997:4).

Those who survive traumatic events, subsequently embark on a journey of meaning, or sense-making whereby they attempt to “revalidate” their earlier assumptions, beliefs, narratives, constructs or schemas about their identity and the world (Janoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997; Milman *et al.* 2018). In many cases this “search for meaning” begins with a re-evaluation of one’s role in the traumatic event, in what Janoff-Bulman and Frantz (1997:97) refer to as a “person-outcome contingency.” Survivors may, for example, question the extent to which their action, or inaction contributed toward the occurrence of the traumatic event. Interestingly, Janoff-Bulman and Frantz (1997) suggest the tendency to “self-blame” represents a positive coping impulse in the aftermath of the traumatic event, even in those circumstances where the survivor played no contributory role in the event itself. Following this, to further make sense of their experience, survivors of traumatic events may seek to find value in their own lives. They may do so by “recognising or creating significance and worth” in their daily existence through a reconsideration of their values and priorities (*ibid.*).

In their pioneering work, Janoff-Bulman and Frantz, (1997:99) suggest, through the development of close personal relationships and commitment to altruistic causes, survivors of traumatic experiences are able to engage in “powerful forms of meaning-making and discover value and significance in their lives”. However, as suggested by Thompson *et al.* (2017), sense-making is a subjective process. Indeed, not everyone who endures a traumatic event will be able to find meaning in their experiences and the extent to which they are able to do so is dependent upon a variety of inter-related factors (Litchenthal *et al.*, 2013). To elaborate further, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2014) suggest the way in which traumatic experiences are interpreted, differs greatly based on culture, family beliefs, prior life experiences and learning, personality, and other psychological features.

Furthermore, the ability to make sense of an event is also dependent upon the source of the trauma itself (Stroebe and Schut, 1999; Shakespeare-Finch and Armstrong, 2009). In that sense the Australian Psychological Society (2021) states psychological trauma can result from: acts of violence, including terrorism and war; natural disasters; involvement in a serious accident; or interpersonal violence, including rape, child abuse, and the suicide of a family member. However, for those affected by murder abroad, the source of their trauma is found in the sudden and unexpected death of a loved one.

2.6.2. Bereavement as a Source of Trauma

Bereavement has been identified as a common traumatic experience, and the extent to which survivors can make-sense of their loss has been well-examined in the literature (Green and Grant, 1998; Rubin *et al.*, 2000; Neria and Litz, 2003). Milman *et al.*, (2018) suggest losing a loved one in any circumstances is a profoundly challenging event with Buckley *et al.*, (2012) describing the experience as one of life's greatest stressors. Holland, Currier and Neimeyer (2006: 175) suggest the "universal human experience" of losing a loved-one through non-violent bereavement – as a result terminal illness or other natural causes – can lead to a range of "debilitating physical and psychological symptoms". As such, much attention has been given both to the identification and treatment of bereavement related conditions (Goodkin, *et al.*, 2001; Ott *et al.*, 2010) and to development of an understanding of individual differences in adjustment to the bereavement experience (Stroebe *et al.*, 2006).

Ryanearson (1994) describes the distinct nature of death which is attributable to murder suggesting that it is (1) forceful, sudden and traumatic; (2) transgressive; and, (3) intentional. When a death is violent or malicious in nature, and involves the intentional use of physical

force or power against another, the impact of the subsequent bereavement can be exacerbated by the sudden, upsetting and unexpected circumstances in which it occurred (Norris, 1992; Zedner, 1997; Neria and Litz, 2004). Clearly in such cases where the severity of the crime results in the loss of life, it is those most closely associated to the victim who are likely to suffer the consequences of the traumatic experience. Described interchangeably within the literature as co-victims, secondary victims, or survivors, it is the family members, friends and acquaintances of the primary victim that must face the challenge of making sense of the loss, which is markedly more difficult than in cases of non-violent bereavement, and indeed other traumatic events such as terminal illness (Bonanno and Kaltman, 1999). Indeed, the difficulties associated with the sense-making process can leave those affected by violent bereavement trapped in a state of “meaninglessness”, whereby they are unable to fully come to terms with traumatic nature of their experience (Currier and Neimeyer, 2006). Such circumstances often lead to a variety of psychological and physical complications in the aftermath of the event (Asaro, 2009).

Research also suggests that the disruptive impact of murder on an individual’s ability to understand their experience can be exacerbated if the case remains unsolved (Wellman, 2016; Unnithan, 2021). To elaborate, Stretesky *et al.* (2010) conducted interviews with 37 co-victims from 29 “cold cases” in order to explore the extent to which the investigative process had prevented them from making sense of their experiences. From the stories of those included in their study, Stretesky *et al.*, (2010) were able to highlight several important themes which hindered the sense-making process: (1) a lack of communication about the investigation; (2) perceptions about law enforcement’s reaction to the victim’s status; (3) perceptions about the prosecutor’s unwillingness to charge the suspect with murder; and, (4) co-victim’s responses to perceptions of police inactivity. Collectively, these themes highlight the importance that co-

victim's place upon the identification, apprehension and subsequent prosecution of the person responsible for the murder. Where communication about the investigation breaks down, or in those circumstances where the case remains unsolved, it may be difficult for co-victims to construct "post-loss meaning" and can result in "little faith in notions of justice and fairness" (Stretesky *et al.* 2010:887). This is of particular importance in cases of murder abroad, where given the interjurisdictional nature of the investigation and subsequent criminal justice proceedings, these outcomes are likely to be less certain, take longer and be more complicated in nature.

2.6.3. The Psychological and Physical Impact of Co-Victimisation to Murder

Murder can have a detrimental effect upon the psychological wellbeing of those who are in some way, related to the primary victim, given that they are victimised not only through the loss of a loved one, but also by the difficult circumstances surrounding the death (Miranda, Molina, and MacVane 2003). Zedner (1997:593), suggests the families of murder victims suffer "perhaps the most profound trauma of any crime victim." So, too, Milman *et al.* (2018:2), in their study of homicide survivors, found disproportionately high levels of distress among those grieving a loss due to murder, suicide, or fatal accident. According to Allen (1980:58) this, at least in part, can be attributed to the "stigmatising, unnatural, especially burdensome, and unexpected" nature of the event.

In addition to symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), research suggests co-victims of homicide can experience additional physical and psychological complications including behavioural, emotional, and cognitive changes in the aftermath of the event (Connolly and Gordon, 2014). To understand the long-term impact of murder on co-

victims, van Wijk et al. (2017), conducted a longitudinal study involving 28 co-victims over a period of more than five years. They reported that the co-victims in their sample experienced a range of emotional and psychological complications in the aftermath of the murder. Feelings of loss, periodic outbursts of anger and feelings of revenge were commonly experienced immediately after the crime had taken place. Most of the co-victims in the sample reported a disruption to their sleeping pattern, with many experiencing insomnia, nightmares, and fear of the dark. So, too, co-victims frequently reported that they felt as though the crime has changed certain aspects of their personality. They were, for example, more assertive, less self-effacing and were less sensitive to what other thought of them. This was often accompanied by an increased fear of losing other loved ones (van Wijk et al., 2017).

According to van Wijk *et al.* (2017), all 28 of the co-victims included in their study experienced physical complications in the aftermath of the crime. Headaches, stomach and bowel complaints, sleeping problems, tiredness, cardiac complaints and loss of appetite were listed as the most common issues. Many of these physical issues were attributed by the co-victims to the stress they experienced as a result of the crime (2016). So, too, co-victims reported experiencing difficulties being in the presence of other people shortly after the crime had taken place with some literally “locking themselves into their rooms” and not going outside (ibid:8).

Research suggests that the negative psychological impact of homicide can often manifest in co-victims in the form of “traumatic”, “chronic” or “complicated” grief (Currier *et al.* 2006). For context, there is an important distinction to be drawn here between what has been described by Rock (1998) as “mundane grief” which usually occurs following the death of a loved one in non-violent circumstances. The process of grieving, under these conditions, usually follows the traditionally accepted “stages of grief” which, according to Maciejewski *et al.* (2007)

consist of: disbelief; separation; distress; depression-mourning; and, recovery. To elaborate, Bonanno and Kaltman (2001:728) suggest the majority of bereaved individuals “endure similar types of disruptions in daily functioning, which when considered together appear to constitute a normal reaction to the stress of interpersonal loss”. Such disruptions include cognitive disorganisation; dysphoria; health deficits; and, disrupted social and occupational functioning. Importantly, Bonanno and Kaltman (2001:710) suggest, in most cases, the effects associated with this “common grief pattern” are temporary in nature, with the majority of bereaved individuals returning to a “normal level of functioning by the end of the first year”.

Rando (1992:47) however, advises there are “high-risk factors, which pre-dispose the bereaved to a complicated mourning reaction”. This reaction differs from the mundane grief pattern seen in cases of non-violent bereavement in terms of both longevity and severity (Rock, 1998). One such risk factor surrounds the death being unexpected, especially when it is violent or traumatic in nature. Indeed, Bonanno and Kaltman (2001:728) argue that “loss due to violent death may be one of the factors that most strongly contributes to the eventual development of chronic grief”. In this context a death is considered violent in nature when it involves the intentional use of physical force or power, against oneself or another (Norris, 1992).

Research by Malone (2007:375) further highlights the distinctions between the patterns of grief that are exhibited in cases of non-violent and violent bereavement, with particular emphasis being placed upon death that occurs as a result of murder. Having conducted several interviews with bereaved individuals, as well as representatives from Victim Support – an independent charity based in England and Wales that provides specialist emotional and practical support to victims and witnesses of crime (Victim Support, 2021) – Malone suggests that the grief following murder is distinct from other forms of grief. She advises, those affected [by murder]

often experience “over-whelming emotions over a long period of time, and many suggest that the depth of suffering is impossible for anyone who had not had the same to imagine” (ibid: 374). This idea is further supported by Riches and Dawson (1998), who suggest the grieving process is delayed for those families who experience loss as result of murder. They state “unexpected, sudden, untimely deaths appear to create more problems of initial acceptance and long-term adjustment than anticipated ‘natural deaths’”.

The distressing impact of violent bereavement can manifest in a variety of ways among those who have experienced it. Research conducted by Prigerson *et al.*, (2009:7) has, for example, focused on the onset and implications of Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD), describing it a “protracted, clinically significant and functionally impairing form of grief” which can occur in the aftermath of violent loss. PGD can lead to a range of additional health problems including heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, suicidality, substance abuse, anxiety and overall life disruption (Prigerson *et al.*, 2009). So, too, it has been suggested that PGD can impair the ability of the bereaved to find meaning in, or make sense of, their loss and its consequences.

It would appear then, that grief following the loss of a loved-one in violent circumstances disrupts the traditional grief framework consisting of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Maciejewski *et al.*, 2007). As a result it is limited in terms of its application to co-victims of homicide due to the fact that it does not accurately represent the full breadth of their experience (Hertz, Prothrow-Stith and Chery, 2005:298). Indeed, given the “rigid nature” (Parkes and Prigerson, 2010) of the grief framework, Stretesky *et al.* (2010:881), advises that it is “counterproductive and dangerous to apply normal patterns of grief to traumatic loss”. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to recognise the experiences of those affected by homicide as distinct from those bereaved in non-violent circumstances. The sudden,

unexpected, and often violent nature of the loss can lead to complications in the grieving process, and should therefore invite careful consideration on behalf of those wishing to work with or conduct research into this particular group of individuals.

In addition to the onset of complicated, traumatic, or chronic, several studies have highlighted the prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among co-victims of murder. PTSD is a “disorder that people may develop in response to one or more traumatic events such as deliberate acts of interpersonal violence, severe accidents, disasters or military action” (British Psychological Society, 2015:5). PTSD is most commonly characterised by “re-experiencing symptoms” where “sufferers involuntarily re-experience aspects of the traumatic event in a vivid and distressing way” (BPS, 2015:6). Such symptoms often include flashbacks; nightmares; and, repetitive and distressing images or other sensory impressions from the event. In addition to this, those suffering from PTSD often experience “hyperarousal; hypervigilance; exaggerated startle responses; irritability; difficulty concentrating and sleep problems” (BPS, 2015:6). So, too, people living with PTSD often describe symptoms of “emotional numbing” characterised by an “inability to have any feelings; detachment from other people and, withdrawal from previously significant activities” (BPS, 2015).

Those at the most risk of developing PTSD include: victims of violent crime; members of the armed forces and police; victims of war; survivors of accidents and disasters; and, those diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses (BPS, 2015). Interestingly, however, it is not only those who have been directly affected by a traumatic event that are at risk of developing PTSD. The BPS (2015) suggest that witnesses, perpetrators and those who help PTSD sufferers may also develop symptoms.

In their exploratory study, Amick-McMullan, *et al.* (1991) conducted interviews with 206 people who had lost a family member or friend to homicide. The interviews were designed to assess demographic characteristics and DSM-III-R criteria for homicide related PTSD. Of their sample, 23.3% developed PTSD during their lifetime, with 4.5% meeting the full diagnostic criteria for PTSD (Amick-McMullan, *et al.*, 1991). Further to this, they reported a higher incidence of participants demonstrating single symptoms of PTSD with 15% reporting intrusions; 10.4% reporting avoidance; and, 22.3% reporting hyperarousal. In light of their study, Amick-McMullan, *et al.* (1991:16) were able to conclude that “the experience of losing a family member to homicide places an individual at risk for developing PTSD”.

In a similar vein, Zinzow *et al.* (2009) examined the prevalence, demographic distribution, and mental health correlates of losing a loved one to homicide. They conducted telephone interviews with 1753 young adults which measured violence exposure, mental health diagnoses, and loss of a family member or close friend to a drunk driving accident or murder. Based on the analysis of their findings, they were able to conclude homicide survivors were significantly more likely to report past year posttraumatic stress symptoms.

More recently, van Denderen (2018) conducted a cross-sectional study in the Netherlands, which examined the prevalence of self-rated PTSD in a community-based sample of 312 spouses, family members and friends of homicide victims. Participants in the study were recruited by three support organisations and by case managers in the governmental organisation, Victim Support The Netherlands. They were then invited to complete a self-report questionnaire based on their post-homicide experience. Symptoms of PTSD, as defined in the DSM-IV, were measured using the 17-item PTSD Symptom Scale, Self-Report (PSS-SR). From their analysis of the data, van Denderen (2018) found that PTSD was prevalent in

30.9% of the participants recruited via the support group and 37.5% of the participants recruited via a Victim Support case manager. van Denderen (2018:61) acknowledges that PTSD was not “formally assessed and diagnosed by a structured interview” and that the PSS-SR “cannot diagnose PTSD.” He therefore concludes that the research can only suggest probable PTSD or PTSD related complaints”.

As has been discussed, through the loss of a loved-one in violent or malicious circumstances, those affected by murder not only have to deal with the often “debilitating impact” of bereavement (Buckley *et al.*, 2012) but also with the “ripple effect of crime” (Condry, 2010). In the absence of their loved one, they must not only deal with the psychological, physical and practical implications of their loss, but now must also contend with the additional demands placed upon them in light of their status as co-victims.

2.6.4. The Criminal Justice Process and “Secondary Victimization”

Experiencing a bereavement in any circumstances can impact upon the psychological and physical wellbeing of surviving family members. When the loss is violent in nature, the mundane grieving process is often interrupted (Rock, 1998) and replaced by a traumatic or complicated grief (Bonanno and Kaltman, 2001). Violent bereavement and the associated complicated grieving process can be further exacerbated by the unavoidable intrusion of agencies of the criminal justice system into the lives of the family members in the aftermath of the event. To elaborate, Malone (2007:387) observes “the period of emotional shutdown following a murder often coincides with the most intense period of police investigations, post-mortems and media attention”.

The invasive nature of the social and legal proceedings that surround cases of murder, including the police investigation, the inquest, and trial, have in some cases, left co-victims of murder feeling shamed, and re-victimised by the very system that should serve to support them (Campbell *et al.*, 1999). Secondary victimisation, according to Gekoski, *et al.* (2013:2) occurs when “victims of crime feel they have been subjected to inadequate, insensitive or inappropriate treatment, attitudes, behaviour, responses and/or practices by criminal justice or social agencies, which compound their original trauma”.

To identify the extent to which they had been subjected to secondary victimisation, Gekoski, *et al.* (2013) interviewed 14 women who had been bereaved by homicide. Based on an analysis of their data, they were able to identify several experiential themes that were common amongst the women included in their sample. Concerning their interactions with the police, several participants reported that they were frustrated by the lack of information provided in regard to the progress of the investigation. In some cases, the police even refused to provide families with information, despite repeated requests. As a result, participants reported feeling “marginalised” and “powerless” (Gekoski *et al.* 2013:6). Further to this, participants expressed concerns about insensitive, inconsiderate, and even accusatory remarks about the victim by police officers dealing with the case.

Furthermore, research by the Centre for Victim Research (2019) suggests that co-victims of murder may also face secondary victimisation as a result of the community reaction to their situation. Doka (1999), for example, suggests that some co-victims of murder experience “disenfranchised grief” – a type of grief that cannot be openly acknowledged or socially supported. In other words, the violent circumstances surrounding the death result in the loss being ignored, discouraged, or invalidated by society or cultural norms and thus the grief

reaction is invalidated (Piazza-Bonin *et al.*, 2015). This, according to Allen (1981) is particularly evident in communities of colour and other marginalised groups, where loss is minimised or stigmatised to a greater degree. Indeed, Piazza-Bonin *et al.* (2015) conducted a study which aimed to explore disenfranchised grief amongst African Americans following homicidal loss. Their study, which focused on the lived experiences of just one person – an African American woman whose son was murdered in his early 20s – offered a subjective insight into the impact of violent bereavement and the subsequent consequences of disenfranchised grief – which included a lack of support from immediate family members and the wider community, feelings of abandonment, guilt and shame. Piazza-Bonin *et al.* (2015) suggest that when the circumstances surrounding the death or the emotions of the grieving parties violate social norms, there can be an empathetic failure in the bereaved individual's support network. In support of this, Lawson (2013) conducted a study which examined how disenfranchised grief is experienced by African Canadians who had lost a friend or family member to gun-related violence. She suggests that racial stratification and perceptions of criminality amongst young black men has an impact on how the deceased person is grieved and on how the co-victims are treated.

Several other studies have reported on the way in which dealings with criminal justice agencies and organisations can be detrimental to the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder. Riches and Dawson (1997) give particular attention to the impact of the criminal justice process on the ability of family members to grieve. They suggest that co-victims of murder are forced to prioritise the demands of the criminal justice system above their own need to grieve the loss of their loved-one. The inevitable police investigation, and the subsequent formality of the coroner's and criminal courts often lead to circumstances where grief is subordinate to justice. Participants in Riches and Dawson's study, all of whom had lost a loved-one to murder, were

able to recall situations where they had been interviewed as suspects in the investigation, where they had felt powerless and isolated given their unfamiliarity with the legal system, and where they had felt that justice had not been achieved for their loved-one. Such experiences, according to Riches and Dawson (1997), impact upon the grieving process, particularly in regard to the extent to which families are able to come to terms with their bereavement. They note, “parents bereaved through murder have difficulty in finding any meaning in their child’s death” (ibid, 144).

2.6.5. The Involvement of the Media and the Impact of Publicity

The role of the media in cases of murder is a recurrent theme in the post-homicide experience literature, with the impact of publicity featuring often in the co-victim narrative. Particularly in the early stages of their post-homicide journey, co-victims of murder can be subjected to “extraordinary” levels of attention from the media (Rock, 1998: 83). Given the fact that murder is frequently publicised to a greater degree than other crimes (Hertz, Prothrow-Stith and Chery, 2005), family members and friends of the murder victim have reported being exposed to excessive media coverage and questioning (ibid, 2005). This disproportionate level of media attention highlights the contrast between the private nature of bereavement and the public fascination with cases of murder (Yardley, Wilson and Kennedy, 2015; Yardley, 2017) and presents a unique challenge for co-victims in these circumstances (Riches and Dawson, 1997:145).

The needs of co-victims in the aftermath of their traumatic experience are often subordinate to the demands of the media, given that they serve to “further personalize stories about homicide, making them more emotive and hence engaging for audiences” (Yardley, Wilson and Kennedy,

2015:6). Indeed, da Costa, Njaine and Schenker, (2017:3092) note how the “lack of sensitivity that permeates most sensationalist materials overshadows the press’ role to inform and gives way to its tendency to turn tragic deaths into news”.

So, too, Sprungen (1998:216), warns that the actions of the media “have the potential to turn private grief into public spectacle”. Often for the first time, the friends and families of the victim are faced with having to deal with attention from local, national and in some cases, international media coverage, depending on the severity of the crime. Indeed, Rock (1998:83) remarks “if only for a while, and particularly at the beginning, when a homicide has just been announced, survivors can well be the subject of quite extraordinary attention”.

Statistically, murder in the United Kingdom is a rare phenomenon, with other forms of crime against the person, and property crime making up the vast majority of the police recorded data taken from the 43 police forces across England and Wales (ONS, 2021). However, despite this, murder, in comparison to other forms of violent and non-violent crime, is frequently featured in the contemporary media landscape (Marsh, 1991; Greer, 2007; Yardley, Wilson and Kennedy, 2015). Several criminologists have attempted to provide explanation for the increased media attention that surrounds cases of homicide. Sprungen (1998) for instance notes how the media are in a position to “capitalize on some of society’s worst fears and anxieties” and suggest a “good” murder and subsequent trial can sell a lot of newspapers, gain viewers for the nightly news, and provide material for docudramas and miniseries”. This media and public interest with murder and the accompanying trauma can in part, be explained by Seltzer’s (1997) idea of “wound culture”. Seltzer suggests that violence – particularly serial murder – has become intrinsically linked to public culture and that there is tendency for people to converge around shock, trauma and the wound.

Notably, Jewkes (2015) suggests the crimes stories which are reported upon in the news media, are purposefully selected, based on a specific set of criteria. A particular story is considered “newsworthy” if it presents what Jewkes refers to as “news values”. Jewkes (2015:47) states that news values are “the value judgements that journalists and editors make about the public appeal of a story and also whether it is in the public interest.” In other words, these news values can determine which stories are featured in the various forms of media, and as a result, ultimately which stories are consumed by the public more generally. Jewkes proposes that there are 12 news values that shape crime news, these are: Threshold; Predictability; Simplification; Individualism; Risk; Sex; Celebrity or high-status persons; Proximity; Violence or conflict; Visual spectacle or graphic imagery; Children; and, Conservative ideology and political diversion.

To elaborate further, Alves-Costa *et al.* (2017:4) conducted a study which aimed to understand the experiences of families bereaved through murder. They carried out a series of semi-structured interviews with a total of 21 participants to explore their “individual perceptions and experiences post-loss, coping strategies used and support needs”. During the interviews, several participants commented upon the influence of the media on their post-homicide experience, highlighting the “dual private and public nature of the grieving process” as a result of the interest in their case. Alves-Costa *et al.* (2017:9) found, that for many of their participants, their interactions with the media were characterised as being “disrespectful towards their families and loved one’s memories”. Such interactions resulted in family members feeling “exposed” and “vulnerable” due to the perception that the press was more concerned with obtaining a “sensationalist story that sells” rather than with their wellbeing.

The work of Rock (1998) offers a similar assessment of the negative impact of the media upon co-victims of murder. Having spoken to several families who had been bereaved through murder, Rock (1998: 84) notes how participants would frequently describe the “onslaught” of media attention as a “siege” and would express concerns about the “unruliness of reporters and photographers”. So, too, participants within a longitudinal study conducted by van Wijk *et al.* (2017:9), reported that the media “had often been a source of irritation in the immediate aftermath of the crime due to inaccurate reporting about the victim in the newspapers and television programmes”.

Furthermore, sensationalist reporting, which places emphasis upon the death, rather than the victim, can disrupt the grieving process and make it difficult for co-victims to focus on happier memories of their loved one (Rinear, 1998). In some cases, the reporting may even make the details of the murder seem worse than they really were or, alternatively, provide a negative portrayal of the deceased family member. da Costa, Njaine and Schenker, (2017:3092) note how distorted representations of the victim and the circumstances surrounding the murder can lead to families feeling as though they have “lost control of their own truth about the victim”. Indeed, Riches and Dawson (1997) note how, notoriety for the victim and their families may result from new media reports, particularly if the coverage links the victim with deviant behaviour. So, too, Adkins (2003) reports co-victims of murder worry that their loved ones will be portrayed in less favourable terms and in some cases, as less deserving of sympathy. The domestic homicide literature has noted that this process can be an inherently gendered one, in which female victims’ perceived failures in their roles as partners, wives and mothers are often drawn upon in media explanations of the homicides, holding them responsible for their own murders (Monckton-Smith, 2017).

Interestingly however, Alarcão *et al.* (2008) suggest that the involvement of the media in cases of homicide can have both positive and negative consequences. In some instances, they suggest, the media can act as an “ally” of the homicide survivors in the search for justice.

Several studies have also explored the role that the police can play in helping families to navigate the media attention during the investigative stages of the process. For example, Wright (2016), conducted a study which explored the experiences of bereaved family members’ contact with Greater Manchester Police during the investigation into homicide and sudden death. One family member from within their sample reported how the police Family Liaison Officer (FLO) had provided advice on how they should deal with the press, including what they should or should not say and what photos they should or should not release.

The role and impact of newer forms of media, such as social media in the post-homicide experience is yet to be explored to a great extent. However, research by Yardley (2017) acknowledges the way in which the changes in the contemporary media landscape have presented potential challenges to those most closely affected by crime. It is generally accepted that the emergence and expansion of social media platforms has enabled the widespread creation and distribution of original content and therefore has blurred the boundaries between the traditional concepts of the producer and consumer (*ibid*). As such, social media has been described by the Centre for Victim Research (2019:11) as a “critical component that shapes the grieving experience of co-victims” which carries with it, the potential to cause additional distress in the aftermath of the crime. Most notably, social media can be particularly harmful if it is the primary source from which the co-victims learn of their loved one’s death. Further to this, the networked nature of social media, provides a platform upon which the general public can share content and opinion related to the event, which in some cases, can lead to the

development of a “prevalent narrative” which does not always provide a “true representation of real-life events” (ibid).

2.7. Returning to the Research Question: “Making Sense” of Murder Abroad

To scope the contours of the research area, this chapter has presented an in-depth discussion of the implications of murder on co-victims – those who are in some way related to or associated with the direct victim of the crime. Literature from a variety of academic disciplines, including trauma and bereavement studies, criminology and victimology has informed and guided a discussion of the way in which murder impacts primarily upon the lives of those who are referred to as co-victims. The stories and experiences of people who have been bereaved through murder have formed the basis of much of the academic literature that has so far been discussed. Co-victims of murder are faced with a broad range of challenges, unique to the circumstances of their bereavement. Quite often, they will struggle to make sense of their experiences, which is widely accepted as being an important part of the post-loss recovery process (Janoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997). The causes of such difficulty vary but can often be attributed to the violent or malicious nature of the death, the often-unwanted intrusion of the media, and the inevitable involvement of the police and other criminal justice agencies. An inability to find meaning in the loss of a loved one as a result of murder can also disrupt the normal grieving process, resulting in what has been described as chronic, or complicated grief (Currier *et al.*, 2006).

As is clear, the co-victims of murder experience profound difficulties in a variety of arenas in the aftermath of the crime. A synthesis of the relevant literature has offered a detailed insight into the state of knowledge in this area, and has highlighted a broad range of issues which are

pertinent to the present research study. However, despite this, it is important to re-focus on the research question that this thesis aims to address.

As stated at the outset of this chapter, the vast majority of the literature that has been included within the discussion, has focused on the impact of murder on co-victims, in circumstances where the crime has occurred in a national context. In other words, the victim of the murder and the surviving family members have resided in the same country. So too, given the circumstances, the subsequent investigation into the murder was undertaken by the authorities in the country in which it occurred. A significant distinction therefore can now be drawn between the focus of the studies that have formed the basis of this chapter, and the direction in which the thesis is now headed.

To date, very little scholarly attention has been given to understanding the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder when the crime occurs in an international context. In such circumstances, the consequences of murder transcend legal jurisdictions, and expand beyond geographic boundaries – and thus pose a variety of practical and procedural problems to law enforcement agencies and criminologists alike. Whilst it is evident that the surviving family members of murder in these circumstances share some, if not all of the difficulties associated with murder co-victimisation more generally, this research seeks to understand as to what extent these difficulties are influenced or exacerbated by the crime taking place in a country other than the one in which the victim and their family hold permanent residence.

Despite the academic scarcity in the wider research landscape, several important pieces of research have been published by charities and governmental organisations which, to varying

degrees, draw attention to the experiences of co-victims of murder specifically which occurs in a foreign country – and which are now described in more detail.

First, in 2011, the then named Support After Murder and Manslaughter Abroad (SAMM Abroad) produced a report entitled “Who cares for the Families?” which documented the experiences of fifty families, partners, and friends of victims of murder or manslaughter in a foreign country. For context, SAMM Abroad – which has since been renamed Murdered Abroad – is a registered charity which provides “peer support for families, partners and friends of the victims of murder and manslaughter abroad. It is also an action group working for the improvements in the support U.K. agencies offer families after their loved one is murdered abroad” (SAMM, 2011). A more detailed discussion of the work of Murdered Abroad can be found later in Chapter Three and Chapter Five.

The findings of their 2011 report were generated through a questionnaire, which was distributed to members of the SAMM Abroad support network. Fifty-two of the one-hundred-and-thirty-eight questionnaires were returned and were subsequently included in the analysis. The questions contained within the survey aimed to explore the experiences of the families regarding several key areas of their post-homicide experience including the death notification, the role of the FCDO and the British Embassy/Consulate, repatriation, the role of the U.K. police, foreign criminal justice processes, inquests and health and wellbeing. The report recognised that whilst only a small number of families are affected by the murder of a loved-one abroad, they are extremely vulnerable and in need of practical and emotional support (SAMM, 2011).

Further attention was given to cases of murder involving British citizens abroad when, in 2011, the then Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses, Louise Casey, conducted a review into the needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide. The findings and subsequent recommendations of the report were based on a review of relevant literature and on primary research in the form of a survey of those bereaved by homicide. A total of 417 responses were received, with the vast majority of cases taking place in England and Wales. Despite the emphasis on cases of murder occurring in a national context, there was a clear acknowledgement of the distinct nature of the experiences of those families who have been affected by murder in a foreign country. Indeed, Casey (2011:10) notes the effect of homicide abroad “will be similar to those bereaved by homicide in England and Wales with the added complexities, frustrations and difficulties of dealing usually with a foreign police and justice system and the logistical problems alongside this”. Whilst Casey (2011) acknowledges that cases of homicide in a foreign country were not examined in as much detail as those cases which occurred in a national context, she notes how the effects of death in these circumstances have more similarities in terms of the devastation they cause to the lives of the families. With specific reference to murder abroad, Casey (2011:65) notes that “families bereaved by murder abroad have very similar needs to those bereaved in England and Wales – but with the additional complexity and sometimes added trauma of dealing with a foreign criminal justice system” and therefore suggests that families bereaved through a homicide abroad should have guaranteed access to help and support from a peer support organisation that specialises in families bereaved through homicide abroad.

More recently, a report entitled “Struggling for Justice” was published by the Victims Commissioner in 2019. This report, which was the result of collaborative effort between the Victims Commission of England and Wales, Dame Vera Baird QC, the charity Murdered

Abroad, and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deaths Abroad, focuses on the entitlements and experiences of bereaved families in England and Wales following a murder abroad. The report draws upon the experiences of twelve families who have lost a loved one to murder in a foreign country and highlights several of the common issues that they have faced in the wake of their co-victimisation – issues including how they were informed of the death, the level of support provided by the FCDO, repatriation, translation and interpretation, legal representation, financial issues, the role of the police and, post-mortem examinations and inquests. The report acknowledges that the effect of murder on surviving family members is traumatic, regardless of the location in which the crime occurred but emphasises that for the families of people murdered abroad, there are additional financial, legal, and logistical burdens to overcome. So, too, the report suggests that families bereaved through murder abroad experience the added complexities, frustrations, and difficulties of dealing with foreign police and justice systems as well as disputes over post-mortem examinations or release of the body and therefore require specialist advice and support.

In 2019, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Report on Deaths Abroad, Consular Services and Assistance (2019) chaired by Hannah Bardell MP, produced a report entitled “Why families in the UK deserve better and what can be done.” The report is based on evidence provided by approximately 60 families who have lost a loved-one to murder abroad. It also draws upon the work and insight of a broad range of third-party organisation who exist to support people in these specific circumstances. The report acknowledges once more the difficulties associated with cases of murder in national circumstances but also reiterates the prevalence of a range of additional issues unique to cases of murder in a foreign country. It suggests that families must navigate a foreign legal system, a foreign language – which in most cases, they do not speak or understand – a foreign police force with varying standards of

investigative practice, unfamiliar geography, issues related to insurance, costs associated with travelling to and from the country, and media intrusion. The main aim of the report was to understand these issues and to make recommendations for improvements to the overall level of service provided by all relevant government departments, agencies, services, and third-party organisations in their efforts to those affected by murder abroad.

The key themes of each of these reports are explored in more detail in Chapter Five with reference to the research findings.

2.8. Conclusion to the Chapter

This chapter has contextualised and substantiated the aim of the thesis by exploring the body of literature which, in a broad sense concerns the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder – those who are in some way, closely related to the primary or direct victim of the criminal event. As was noted at the beginning of the chapter, criminology, as an academic discipline, has given considerable attention to the phenomenon of murder. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, these criminological accounts have tended to be nationally focused and, as a result, have often neglected to consider the implications of murder which occurs in an *international* context. In an ever-more globalised and inter-connected world, there is a pressing need to better understand the consequences of cases of murder that extend beyond geographic boundaries and across multiple legal jurisdictions. It is to this seemingly overlooked area of criminological inquiry that this thesis offers a contribution.

This review of the relevant literature has drawn attention to several substantive themes which are pertinent to the remainder of the thesis. Most notably, the post-homicide experience – or,

in other words, the stories of those closely affected by murder – has been presented as an important framework for exploring and understanding the subjective experiences of those who have been bereaved in violent circumstances. Referred to within the literature as co-victims – which can include but are not limited to the friends and family members of the direct victim – these individuals are uniquely placed to further the collective understanding of the wider implications of murder in the absence of the direct victim, who, given the irreversible nature of the crime, is unable to reflect upon and share their experiences of victimisation.

As has been discussed, prior to 1979 the voices of the co-victim were largely absent from the criminological research agenda. The pioneering work of scholars such as Rock (1998) – who argued for the importance of the co-victim narrative in the development of a more comprehensive understanding of criminality – laid the foundations for a considerable amount of victim-centred, interdisciplinary research. Indeed, this chapter has drawn upon literature emerging from the academic fields of trauma and bereavement studies, tourism studies, criminology and victimology. Furthermore, this thesis aligns with and is therefore informed by the body of literature collectively referred to as narrative victimology, which seeks to develop a greater understanding of victimisation by amplifying the voices of the victims, rather than perpetrators of criminality.

The synthesis of the literature presented throughout this chapter, has highlighted several substantial themes in the co-victim narrative that are encapsulated within the overarching framework of the post-homicide experience. In sum, the literature suggests that a variety of emotional and practical issues can manifest in the lives of co-victims of murder as a result of the intersection of the interpersonal, situational and criminal justice domains.

For example, research indicates, that given the sudden, traumatic and intentional nature of the death, co-victims of murder do not always follow the traditionally accepted stages of grief. Instead, they may experience complicated or traumatic grief which can result in a range of psychological complications including Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It has therefore been suggested that those working with or conducting research into this particular group of co-victims, should be considerate of the disruptive nature of murder upon their ability to mourn the loss of their loved one. Furthermore, in addition to onset of traumatic or complicated grief, research also highlights the wide range of psychological and physical complications that can occur in co-victims of murder in the days, weeks, months and even years following the murder.

The post-homicide experience of co-victims is often exacerbated by practical, financial and legal considerations. At a time where they are already having to cope with the loss of a loved one in traumatic circumstances, co-victims of murder often have to find it within themselves to deal with the inevitable involvement of law enforcement agencies and the wider criminal justice system. In some cases, due a lack of consistency and clear information in their time of need, families are left feeling re-victimised by the very services that should exist to support them. The limited qualitative data that explores the concept of “secondary victimisation” serves to highlight the importance of accurate and reliable information being passed to the family in a timely manner and, sadly, it would appear that this is seldom the case.

So, too, given the media fascination with cases of murder, co-victims also have to face the prospect of dealing with reporters, journalists and photographers who are keen to obtain and report upon the details of their case. The literature indicates that for the majority of co-victims, this media attention is viewed as an intrusion upon their privacy at a time where they need it

the most. Particularly insensitive or sensationalist reporting can also have a detrimental impact upon their ability to grieve, especially if their loved one is portrayed in a negative or misleading way. Whilst some co-victims of murder have had more positive experiences with the media, their praise tends to be reserved for individual journalists who have offered their assistance, rather than for the media involvement as a whole.

Importantly, attention has also been given to the way in which co-victims of murder begin to make sense of their experiences and re-build their lives following the crime. As has been discussed previously, the violent and often sudden nature of their loss means that co-victims struggle to come to terms with or find meaning in their experiences. As a result, they frequently find themselves in a world which no longer aligns with the fundamental assumptions of safety and security which characterised their lives prior losing a loved one to murder.

The literature review has highlighted that given their unique and often difficult experiences, co-victims of murder are worthy of further criminological attention. Their narratives can offer a unique insight into the emotional, as well as practical complications of co-victimisation in the aftermath of murder, where, given the finality of the crime, the direct victim is no longer able to do so. Whilst it is evident that much attention has been given to the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder, the existing research has almost exclusively drawn upon the experiences of co-victims in cases where the crime occurred in a national context. In other words, the murder itself, the subsequent investigation and the associated legal proceedings have all taken place in the country in which both the direct victim and their families resided.

Criminology has largely failed to consider the implications of murder which occurs in an international context. To this end, by documenting and analysing the post-homicide

experiences of co-victims of murder aboard, this thesis aims to further the understanding of the impact of this particularly harmful form of violent crime in these relatively rare and unique circumstances. As is to be discussed, the violent nature of the bereavement itself, the unavoidable involvement of the criminal justice system and the inevitable intrusion of the media, means that for co-victims of murder which occurs in a foreign country, the post-homicide experience is a long and protracted one and is often without a readily identifiable conclusion. Those individuals, who are at the heart of this research – in addition to the complications that have already been discussed – also have to deal with the difficulties associated with the fact that the murder of their loved one took place in a foreign country. It is the aim of this thesis therefore, to identify to what extent, these international circumstances further exacerbate the already traumatic experience of losing a loved one to murder. The details of these difficulties and the efforts made to overcome them are contained within the stories of those most closely affected by murder which occurs abroad. It is those individual, subjective stories of co-victimisation that underpin, substantiate and give meaning to this research – and it is those stories are that have formed the bedrock of the thesis.

Having now presented a discussion of the relevant literature, the next chapter outlines and provides a justification for the methodological approach that was adopted in to generate and analyse the primary data.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

RESEARCHING MURDER ABROAD

3.1. Introduction

The following chapter discusses the methodological approach taken to generate and analyse the data contained within the research study. As outlined in previous chapters, this thesis aims to answer the following question: *What impact does murder which takes place in a foreign country have on the “post-homicide experience” of the surviving family members, otherwise known as “co-victims” who reside in the United Kingdom?* In other words, the research seeks to understand as to what extent the already traumatic experience of bereavement through murder is influenced or exacerbated by the international nature of the crime. This chapter offers an insight into the efforts made to provide an answer to this question – and therefore addresses a variety of methodological concerns.

According to van Wijk *et al.* (2017), the term co-victim refers to anyone who has been impacted by the death of a loved one through murder. However, the participants involved in this study were the immediate family members of the direct victim and included parents, grandparents, siblings and ex-spouses. Throughout this chapter, the “how” and “why” of the research is presented to provide a justification for the methodological decisions made at each stage of the research process. To this end, an exploration of the underlying epistemology is followed by a discussion of ethical considerations, the methods of data collection and the analytical framework that was implemented to interpret the information contained within the research data.

First, this chapter focuses on epistemology. In its broadest conception, epistemology refers to a variety of “theories of knowledge” (Bruce and Williams, 2006:23). Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge and compels researchers to consider important questions about what constitutes good knowledge, how knowledge is generated, and what kind of knowledge research should produce.

A consideration of epistemology is therefore fundamental to the research process. It requires the researcher to recognise and reflect upon their assumptions about what can and should be considered knowledge and, subsequently, the most appropriate way of producing knowledge within their particular field of enquiry. Such a discussion demonstrates an understanding of how the chosen epistemological standpoint influences the nature of the researcher’s role and the practical decisions made at each stage of the research process – particularly regarding the methods of data collection and the framework adopted for data analysis. So, too, the chapter presents a discussion of the notions of validity and trustworthiness in qualitative research, and the steps taken to ensure research transparency regarding the data collected, and its subsequent analysis.

Second, this chapter discusses the importance of operating within ethical boundaries when conducting social scientific research. Ethical considerations should underpin every stage of the research process (Johnstone, 2005; Marks, 2012). Indeed, the British Society of Criminology’s Code of Ethics advises that researchers should “recognise their responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of an individual participating in research is not adversely affected by participation in the research” (British Society of Criminology, 2015). Primary research, in particular, requires researchers to anticipate a variety of ethical issues which, should they arise, may potentially result in harm to either the

participants, or the researcher. It is essential to acknowledge the ethical implications of the current research and to offer a discussion of how these ethical issues have been approached, in order to minimise the possibility of adverse effects on those involved in the research process. In brief, the ethical issues which are discussed during this chapter include the requirements: to ensure that the participants are offered fully informed consent; to inform them of their right to withdraw at any stage of the research process; to notify them of their rights regarding privacy, confidentiality and anonymity; and to ensure that the risk of psychological or physical harm to either the researcher or the participant has been minimised if not eliminated altogether.

Third, having considered the potential ethical implications associated with the current research, this chapter discusses the practical steps which were taken to generate the primary data, and presents the methodological framework that was utilised to guide the research process. Such a discussion also affords the opportunity to reflect upon some of the practical challenges associated with data collection that can arise when conducting research of this nature. Most notably, the discussion focuses on: the difficulties associated with gaining access to suitable participants; the importance of identifying and establishing a working relationship with a gatekeeper (the charity Murdered Abroad) and the strengths and limitations of this relationship; and, finally, the implications of the sampling methods used to identify appropriate participants.

It is acknowledged that the underlying epistemology will guide the overall research design and thus influence the choices made regarding the process of data collection. As there are a variety of options available to the qualitative researcher, further justification of the chosen data collection method is also required. As such, a detailed discussion of the semi-structured interview process is accompanied by a critique of its use within qualitative research, and within criminology more specifically.

Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the analytical framework chosen to interpret the research data. The decision was made to conduct a thematic analysis to identify, interpret and report upon themes contained within the data. Drawing upon the work of Braun and Clarke (2006), the discussion provides an overview of the six-phases of thematic analysis. Doing so offers an insight into the analytical process which generated the primary data presented and discussed in Chapter Five. As there are several alternative methods of data analysis available, the discussion also presents a critique of thematic analysis and, as such, justifies its selection as the most appropriate method of data analysis for this research.

3.2. Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the “nature of knowledge and its origins, limits, and justification” (Hofer and Bendixen, 2012:227). By questioning how knowledge is developed, interpreted, analysed and justified, researchers can develop what has been referred to as an epistemic cognition (Greene *et al.* 2008) whereby they can critically consider their own beliefs about the nature of knowledge, and the subsequent impact these beliefs have upon their interpretation of the world in which they conduct their research.

The following discussion explores the importance of epistemology, and provides context and justification for the decisions made throughout the research process. The discussion offers an opportunity to reflect on pre-existing beliefs about what can and should be considered knowledge, and consequently the most appropriate way of producing knowledge. Contained within each epistemological standpoint is a set of assumptions about the nature of knowledge, and how knowledge should be generated (Scotland, 2012). These underlying, epistemological assumptions, therefore, guide the processes involved in the research – most notably the chosen

method of data collection and the analytical framework – and, as a result, directly influence the nature of the knowledge that is generated (Bracken, 2006; James and Busher, 2009). Due to their influence on the research process, failure to acknowledge these epistemological assumptions may result in an inappropriate research design. Therefore, to negate or minimise the likelihood of such criticism arising, a more comprehensive discussion of the research epistemology is required.

Researchers within the natural sciences adopt an positivist epistemological standpoint (Dieronitou, 2014). They believe that knowledge about their particular field of study should be generated through rigorous scientific enquiry. In this sense, rigour refers to the soundness or precision of a study regarding planning, data collection, analysis and reporting (Marquart, 2017). The empirical nature of their enquiry means that researchers operating within a positivist theoretical framework are concerned with concepts of “validity” and “reliability”, and seek to produce findings that are replicable and generalisable. Researchers who align themselves with this objectivist theory of knowledge favour the use of quantitative methods of data collection, and employ similarly quantitative frameworks to analyse their findings (Holden and Lynch, 2004).

While it has been widely acknowledged that research within a positivist epistemology provides a valuable contribution to knowledge within the natural sciences, it is essential to consider the extent to which this scientific epistemology is appropriate for studying and generating knowledge about social phenomenon including crime, criminality, punishment and victimisation. In support of this epistemological scepticism, Bryman (1984:75) suggests “researchers should question the most appropriate foundation for the study of society and its manifestations”.

3.2.1. Interpretivism: An Alternative Epistemological Position

Crime, as a category of behaviour, is socially constructed (Rosenfeld, 2010; Polizzi, 2016). Inherent to statement is the assumption that crime has no ontological reality (Beirne, 2002; Hillyard and Tombs, 2007; Stubbs, 2008). Whilst there are many acts that are intrinsically harmful to others, an act only becomes a crime when a law is passed to make it such. To elaborate, Hulsman (1986:300-301) suggests, “crime is not the *object*, but the *product* of criminal policy [and] criminalization is one of the many ways to construct social reality”. The widely accepted socially constructed nature of crime has encouraged many researchers within criminology, and the social sciences more generally, to adopt an alternative epistemological position – one which departs from positivist assumptions about what constitutes valid knowledge and the accompanying reliance on a quantitative methodology. This thesis adopts an interpretivist epistemological standpoint, and therefore rejects the idea that there is a concrete, objective reality that can be understood through scientific methods (Lynch and Bogen, 1997). In other words, this relativist, ontological position is one which “proposes the existence of multiple realities [and] acknowledges the significance of subjective interpretation” in the generation of knowledge about phenomenon which occur in the social world (Mills and Birks, 2014:22). These multiple “realities” are socially constructed and therefore “are shaped by the cultural, historical, political and social norms that operate at that time” (Darlaston-Jones, 2007: 19).

Further important distinctions between a positivist and interpretivist standpoint arise when considering the purpose of research within these respective epistemologies. For the interpretivist researcher, the positivist notions of “internal” and “external” validity are replaced by trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Furthermore, interpretivist

researchers do not tend to exhibit a preoccupation with operational definitions, objectivity, replicability [and] causality (Bryman, 1984). Their focus, instead, is upon exploring the lived experiences of the people involved, or who have been involved, with the particular issue that they are researching (Groenewald, 2004; Miner-Romanoff, 2012; Chowdhury, 2014). Therefore, interpretivists see the social world from the point of view of the actor. They value subjectivity and seek to develop an understanding of behaviour that is contextualised within the meaning systems employed by a particular group of people, or a society more generally (Bryman, 1984). Furthermore, interpretivists believe that the social world cannot be measured in a literal way and that it is a social creation, constructed in the minds of people and reinforced by their interactions with each other (Denscombe, 2009). Based on this epistemological assumption, Cryer (2006) suggests the focus of interpretivist research is less about establishing statistical confidence, and much more about answering questions about how and why something is occurring.

3.2.2. Validity, Transparency and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Highlighting the distinction between positivist and interpretivist enquiry, Guba and Lincoln (1985), suggest that qualitative researchers should seek to establish “trustworthiness” and “transparency” rather than “validity” in their research findings. According to Moravcsik (2014: 48) transparency “is the cornerstone of social science”, and is the process by which “scholars reveal to their colleagues the data, theory and methodology on which their conclusions rest”. Underpinning this process is the intention on the behalf of the researcher, to clearly demonstrate how and why certain decisions were made during the research and how this may have impacted upon the data generated as a result. Moravcsik (2014: 49) suggests

there are three dimensions of transparency: (1) data transparency; (2) analytic transparency; and, (3) production transparency.

The issue of transparency is rooted in the broader discussion of validity in research practice. The criteria by which the findings of a study are considered valid varies dependent on whether it is quantitative or qualitative in nature. Reflecting its interpretivist epistemology – which argues for the existence of multiple, subjective realities, rather than a single, objective reality characteristic of positivist enquiry – validity within the qualitative research paradigm can be thought of as “relating to the degree to which researchers’ claims about knowledge correspond to the reality (or research participants’ *constructions* of reality) being studied” (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017: 4). To elaborate, within the positivist paradigm, validity is assessed against internal and external criteria with the view to measuring reliability and confirming objectivity. Such concerns are less important to qualitative researchers, who instead consider subjectivity to be central to the research process and the co-construction of knowledge regarding the topic in focus. Despite this, the concept of validity should not simply be disregarded from the qualitative researcher’s vocabulary. Indeed, it has been argued that validity is an important aspect of rigorous qualitative inquiry, albeit one which is based on criteria that differs considerably from its quantitative counterpart. To elaborate, Lueng (2015:352) provides one example and suggests that to establish validity, qualitative researchers should consider:

[W]hether the research question is valid for the desired outcome, the choice of methodology is appropriate for answering the research question, the design is valid for the methodology, the sampling and data analysis is appropriate, and finally the results and conclusions are valid for the sample and context.

It should also be noted that the notion of validity has been reconceptualised to establish a more appropriate way of demonstrating rigor within qualitative research. An early example of this

can be found in the important work of Guba and Lincoln (1989) who suggest that the goal of the qualitative researcher should instead be to establish “trustworthiness” throughout the research process. According to Guba and Lincoln for research to be “trustworthy” it should meet standards concerning four key criteria, all of which fundamentally acknowledge the fault line that runs between positivist or rationalist and interpretivist or naturalist enquiry. In other words, the pursuit of “trustworthy” research findings is premised upon an appreciation of the epistemological considerations that characterise each respective research tradition. Perhaps most fundamentally, Guba and Lincoln acknowledge that the nature of reality differs between rationalist and interpretivist researchers, with the former arguing for the existence of a single, objective reality, and the latter suggesting the presence of multiple, subjective realities. They go on to detail further important differences which underpin their re-characterisation of validity for the interpretivist researcher including the relationship between the researcher and object of inquiry; the nature of what is considered to be true; the methods of data collection and the setting in which data is collected; and the nature of the knowledge that is produced as a result.

What constitutes valid research then, differs considerably between the two epistemological positions. As previously noted, some qualitative researchers have argued that the concept of validity, at least in a traditional, positivistic sense is of no relevance to their research paradigm. However, despite such perceptions, a more convincing alternative posits that there should be a re-consideration of the criteria against which qualitative research is valid or, in the words of Guba and Lincoln, trustworthy. Afterall, it is of the utmost importance that the work of the qualitative researcher offers a meaningful contribution to knowledge that is robust and academically rigorous. As such, Guba and Lincoln suggest that an assessment of trustworthiness within qualitative research should be based upon the truth value and applicability of the research findings.

Truth value, which concerns the extent which the findings of a study represent the truth for a particular group of participants. Establishing truth value in this context can be done by testing the credibility of the finding with various audiences or sources from which the data has been drawn. As is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, many of the themes which emerged from the data were triangulated with other sources of information, including media reports, and with conversations with gatekeepers because of a pilot and concluding interview. It should also be noted that given the interpretivist assumption that truth and reality are subjective concepts, the data collated during the interviews, and the themes derived from them seek to represent the subjective reality of those involved – the family members bereaved through murder abroad – and not to identify, or characterize the existence of a universal truth for others who might be affected by similar circumstances.

Applicability, which when understood in positivist terms, refers to the external validity or generalisability of research findings. In other words, it is assumed that the findings of research are unchanged over time and are in-dependent of context. However, in naturalistic enquiry, the researcher is less concerned with generalizing their findings and argues instead that “phenomena are intimately tied to the times and contexts in which they are found” (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; 75). Therefore, it should be noted that the findings that are discussed throughout this chapter are context specific, and relate specifically to the individual experiences of unique group of people at a particular moment in time. It is therefore hoped that the findings of the research have a degree of transferability, rather than generalizability and that they can be used to further the understanding of the experiences of those affected by the phenomenon under investigation, although it is acknowledging that there will inevitably be variation on a variety of levels.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

Having addressed the influence of epistemology on the research process and the importance of validity, transparency and trustworthiness, the chapter now offers a discussion of the ethical implications associated with conducting research within criminology more generally, and into murder. These are important and sensitive considerations which shaped how the research was conducted, and the findings that were gathered and analysed.

Within social scientific research, ethics refers to the “moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of the researcher throughout the research process” (Edwards and Mauthner, 2012:14). Published in 2015, the British Society of Criminology’s Code of Ethics, discusses in some detail, the standard of behaviour that researchers should endeavour to adhere to during the research process. The Code of Ethics, also “provides a frame of reference to encourage and support reflective and responsible ethical practice in criminological research” and seeks to ensure that all researchers are aware of the range of ethical issues that might occur before, during and after the research process has been completed (British Society of Criminology, 2015). Criminological researchers have a responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the ethical issues that are pertinent to their study. Perhaps more importantly, they should be able to demonstrate that they have taken appropriate steps to manage these issues with the view to reducing the likelihood of the research harming those involved. Indeed, Batchelor and Briggs (1994) suggest failing to address ethical issues has resulted in researchers being ill-prepared to cope with the unpredictable nature of qualitative research.

A consideration of important ethical issues should underpin all types of criminological research. Engaging in primary research, in particular, requires attention to be given to the

ethical implications of the study, both on the participants involved and on the researcher. In most cases, qualitative, primary research methods require the researcher to have an active involvement with human subjects. Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2000) state that any research including people requires an appreciation of the ethical issues that might be derived from these interactions. To elaborate further, according to Damianakis and Woodford, the interpersonal nature of qualitative research provides the researcher with “temporary access to the participant’s world” (2012:709). This interaction can expose the researcher to “experiences and reflections which might be highly sensitive and involve unforeseen risk for the participant and possibly others” (ibid) – this section, therefore, presents a comprehensive account of the ethical implications associated with conducting research with co-victims of murder – or in other words, those who are in some way closely related to or associated with the direct victim of the crime.

3.3.1. Vulnerability

Given their experiences of co-victimisation, the participants in the research are considered to be a vulnerable group (British Society of Criminology, 2015). This classification necessitates a careful consideration of the range of ethical issues that can arise and, more importantly, how these ethical issues might be prevented or overcome.

To gain access to the participants, contact was made with the charity Murdered Abroad – a more comprehensive discussion of access and recruitment is presented later in this chapter. Co-founder and director of the charity, Eve Henderson, acted as a gatekeeper, and through her work with families affected by murder in foreign countries, was able to identify co-victims of murder were willing to participate in the research. As such, participants were able to voluntary

apply to be interviewed, based on the information provided to Eve and the charity in the preliminary stages of the research. This, therefore, prevented the researcher from having to make initial, unsolicited contact with the families and alleviated some of the ethical concerns associated with recruiting vulnerable participants.

Once initial contact had been established via the gatekeeper (Murdered Abroad), participants were provided with an overview of the research and an *Interview Guidance and Consent Form*. This document was designed to highlight and address the range of ethical issues associated with the study and can be found in Appendix B. At this point, it is worth deliberating on each of these ethical issues and the steps taken to overcome them.

3.3.2. Informed Consent

Seidmann (2006:61) states:

Informed consent is the first step towards minimizing the risks participants face when they agree to be interviewed – in order to willingly consent in the truest sense, potential participants must know enough about the research to be able to gauge in a meaningful way whether they want to proceed.

With this in mind, participants were first made aware of the aims and purpose of the research with the view of obtaining their informed consent to participate. To obtain fully informed consent, it is essential to provide the participants with a full and meaningful explanation of the study and the role of the participants in the research process. According to the British Society of Criminology's (2015) Code of Ethics, the researcher has a responsibility to explain to the participants as fully as possible, and in terms which they are likely to understand "what the

research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken and how the research findings are to be disseminated”. In other words, the researcher must provide the participants with sufficient information to allow them to exercise their rights to voluntarily accept or refuse participation in the study (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2001).

As discussed, a prerequisite of gaining fully informed consent requires an understanding, on behalf of the participant, that their involvement in the study is voluntary and based on an autonomous decision. In addition to this, it is essential for the participants to understand that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage throughout the research process without fear of reprisal or consequence. Given the dynamic nature of informed consent, Ellis (2007:23) suggests researchers might wish to engage in “process consent”, whereby they continually seek to confirm consent from their participants throughout the research process up to and including the dissemination of the findings. In other words, according to Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2001:95), consent is a “negotiation of trust [which] requires continuous renegotiation”.

3.3.3. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Semi-structured interviews can provide researchers with an opportunity to generate in-depth, qualitative data regarding a particular phenomenon of interest. The use of such a method within the context of criminological research can often result in researchers engaging their participants in discussions surrounding sensitive, or emotive topics. As a result, for some participants, the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity may be an essential prerequisite to their involvement in the research study. This is of particular relevance to research projects which include participants who have or are currently involved in criminal activity. For example, in

their research into contract murder, MacIntyre *et al.* (2014), discuss how their main informant agreed to participate in the research on the understanding that his identity would not be revealed. While there is no legal obligation for researchers to report details of criminality to the police, the British Society of Criminology (2015) advises that researchers should be aware of the limits of confidentiality. In particular, researchers are legally required to disclose to the relevant authorities, information related to: (1) an act of terrorism, (2) money laundering, and (3) the neglect or abuse of a child. In those cases where the researcher feels it necessary to break confidentiality, they should seek to inform the participant, unless doing so would increase the risk to those concerned (British Society of Criminology, 2015).

In this research, all participants were advised of the steps taken to ensure the information they provided remained confidential. Such measures included the storage of interview recordings and transcripts on a secure, password protected laptop. So, too, participants were informed before the interview that, should they wish to do so, they could have their contributions to the research study anonymised through the use of pseudonyms. All of the participants who contributed to the research agreed to waive their right to anonymity and consented to have their names published.

3.3.4. Protection from Harm (Participant/Researcher)

Engaging in qualitative research requires the researcher to consider the potential harm that might be caused both to the participants and the researcher themselves throughout the research process. Protection from harm is of particular importance when the research involves participants who are considered to be vulnerable. The individuals who are the focus of this research have experienced the loss of a loved one through murder in a foreign country.

Therefore, it should be acknowledged that they may still be dealing with the effects of bereavement in traumatic circumstances – which was discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two. In some cases, this bereavement is more recent and in other cases less so. Nonetheless, the researcher should be aware of the potential for psychological harm and should be respectful and considerate of the participant’s well-being at all times.

As noted, the research uses in-depth, semi-structured interviews to obtain primary data. These interviews focus specifically on the circumstances surrounding the death of a person who is closely related to the research participant. In particular, the interviews provide an opportunity for participants to share their stories of co-victimisation, and therefore invites them to reflect upon the impact of traumatic bereavement on their lives in the aftermath of murder. Given the sensitive nature of the interview topic, there is considerable potential for participants to become distressed during the interview process. With this in mind, to reduce the likelihood of a participant becoming distressed, Olsen and Jordan (2015:242) suggest:

Researchers may adopt specific techniques, such as posing gentle, introductory questions at the beginning of the interview, ensuring a non-intrusive line of questioning where possible and ending the data collection process on a hopeful note, in particular, if it has been emotionally challenging.

During the interview process itself, participants were reminded that they can pause or stop the interview at any point, should they feel the need to do so. Attention was also given to any visual indications of discomfort or distress such as facial expressions and body language. Upon completion of the interview, particularly where sensitive issues have been explored, the researcher should consider the availability of further support mechanisms and debriefing for participants (Tee and Lathlean, 2004).

Having acknowledged the importance of protecting participants from psychological harm, it is necessary to reflect on the measures taken to ensure the researcher does not suffer adverse psychological, or emotional consequences as a result of their involvement in the research process. Most notably, there has been regular contact with the supervisors of the PhD project, who have been available throughout the research process to offer support and guidance. So too, in the early stages of the research, additional support services at the university were made available.

A reflexive journal was also used throughout the research. Wallendorf and Belk (1989) describe a reflexive journal as a document, kept by the researcher, in order to reflect on and tentatively interpret each stage of the research process. At various stages within the thesis extracts from the reflexive journal will be used to clarify, amplify or develop arguments, or prompt themes.

Given that qualitative research projects are often complex in their design, and can take several years to complete, Thorpe (2010) suggests that keeping a personal record of processes, decisions, and feelings, offers the researcher an opportunity to learn from the research process. Indeed, the notion of reflexivity is central to the qualitative research design. As noted by, Dodgson, (2019) reflexivity describes the process whereby the researcher turns the lens back onto themselves in order to recognise and take responsibility for their own situatedness within the research process. As such, in order to highlight this journey of discovery (Palaganas *et al.*, 2019), several extracts from a reflexive journal have been used to inform the following methodological discussion.

3.3.5. Reflexivity in Qualitative Research

The inclusion of extracts from a reflexive journal necessitates an appreciation of the importance of reflexivity in the qualitative research process, particularly where the research topic is sensitive in nature, and where the participants can be considered vulnerable. Conducting qualitative research often requires the researcher to enter the participants' life world where conversations on sensitive topics, such as bereavement and victimisation, have the potential to bring to the surface traumatic memories which can illicit emotional responses. As suggested by Band-Winterstein, Doron and Naim (2014), it is therefore important for researchers to acknowledge, and reflect upon, their thoughts about (1) himself or herself, (2) his or her relationship with the participants, and (3) the research topic.

The extracts which have been included throughout this chapter, serve to demonstrate the ongoing process of reflection that was intrinsic to the production of the thesis on each of these levels. To elaborate, the use of reflexive diary provided an opportunity to pause and reflect on the progress of the research, the ongoing role of the researcher, the relationship between the researcher, the gatekeepers, the participants, and the process of data collection and analysis. The diary also created a space for the researcher to become more attuned to the issues that can arise at all stages of the research process whilst also becoming more aware of their own subjectivity and positionality (Holmes, 2020). In other words, by adopting a reflexive approach to the research, it was possible to develop a more nuanced understanding the complexities that can arise when conducting research into sensitive topics, and perhaps more importantly the emotional impact of the research process on both the participants and the researcher alike (Band-Winterstein, Doron and Naim, 2014).

The following extract, taken from my research journal, offers an insight into my thoughts and feelings towards the end of the research and highlights the ways in which I have grown and developed throughout the process:

This research – the topic, the process, the people I have met, the conversations I have had, the places I have visited – have changed me as a person. The last five years of my life have been dedicated to exploring an understanding the experiences of families affected by murder in a foreign country. I have spent a considerable amount of time reflecting, not only on the research itself, but on the way in which I have grown and developed, in both an academic and personal sense. The topic I have studied has encouraged me to be more reflective and thus more appreciative of the delicate approach that working with vulnerable participants requires. I have become more aware of my emotions, I have empathised with those in front of me, I have almost cried following interviews and comforted families who have struggled to recall the details of their experience. This has, undoubtedly, been a profound and life changing experience for me. As I approach the end of the PhD journey, I feel a renewed sense of responsibility, to continue working with and conducting research into the experiences of those affected by murder and violent crime more generally – *Research Journal, November 2021*).

3.4. Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative tradition is a well-established methodological approach within the social sciences and provides a mechanism through which researchers can explore the changing nature of “lived social realities” (Jackson *et al.*, 2007). Qualitative research is a form of “systematic empirical inquiry into meaning” (Shank, 2002:5) which can “inform the researcher’s understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon” (Astalin, 2013:118). As such, the qualitative research design is well-suited to the interpretivist epistemology that underpins the thesis. Indeed, this study seeks to understand as to what extent the post-homicide experience

is influenced or exacerbated by the crime taking place in a country other than the one in which the victim, and their family, hold permanent residence – something that could not be adequately captured or understood through quantitative techniques such as a questionnaire.

3.4.1. Researching Victims: A Narrative Victimology Lens

At the heart of this research are the stories of the families who have been bereaved through murder in a foreign country. Indeed, researchers such as Rock (1998) and Brookman (2005) have previously adopted a similar approach by drawing upon stories of co-victimisation to inform their work on the consequences of murder for surviving family members. As such, the research provides a platform upon which this particular group of co-victims can articulate and share their experiences of crime and traumatic bereavement. As was explored in more detail in Chapter Two, these profound and impactful stories have rarely received attention from those conducting research into murder, or indeed within criminology more generally. Despite this, the immediate family members of victims of murder have the potential to offer a meaningful insight into the experiences of bereavement through murder, in cases where that murder has occurred in a country other than the United Kingdom.

The importance of stories within criminological research should not be underestimated. There exists a significant body of literature which emphasises the significance of narrative in developing a more meaningful understanding of the impacts of crime and the effects of victimisation (Sanberg and Ugelvik, 2016; Pemberton *et al.*, 2018; Cook and Walklate, 2020). Indeed Presser (2009) notes the relevance of narrative to the study of how people understand their own experience in relation to their identity, and the wider collectives to which they belong.

Pemberton *et al.* (2018) have argued for the development of a narrative victimology which brings the stories of those most closely affected by crime to the forefront of our consciousness as researchers within the social sciences. A narrative victimological approach provides a framework through which a meaningful understanding of victimisation can be developed and theorised. Unlike narrative criminology, which focuses on why people harm, narrative victimology instead, seeks to understand how people experience wrongdoing (Pemberton *et al.*, 2018). It therefore presents itself as a useful methodological framework, upon which the current research is based.

Victimisation has been described by Pemberton *et al.* (2018:5) as an “ontological assault on one’s sense of self”. Central to this idea is the belief that victimisation has a disruptive impact upon the “life-narratives” of the person(s) who experience it. Our life-narratives provide an overarching structure through which we develop our sense of self and form what is referred to as our “narrative identity”. Life stories play an important role in the development and maintenance of a narrative identity and can provide us with a sense of continuity in our lives. Victimisation “challenges the basic assumptions of life of which the challenge to continuity can be argued to be the most profound” Pemberton *et al.* (2018:6).

Much of the narrative victimological literature is concerned with exploring the effects of victimisation on primary victims – the people to whom the most immediate and direct harm is done – and seeks to understand how they make sense of their experience. It has been increasingly acknowledged that the impact of victimisation goes beyond the immediate victims of the crime and impact upon the victim's friends, families, and broader community (Masters, Friedman and Getzel, 1988; Condry, 2010). Building upon the existing victimological literature, this research seeks to explore the impact of victimisation on co-victims of murder,

particularly when the crime has occurred in a foreign country. Using semi-structured interviews, the research documents the life narratives of the family members of victims of murder in an attempt to understand how they make sense of their experiences and re-construct their narrative identity in the aftermath of losing a loved one abroad.

3.5. The Process of Data Collection

The following section of this chapter documents the “how” and “why” of the research in order to demonstrate the steps that were taken in order to: identify and gain access to suitable research participants; establish and maintain a working relationship with Eve Henderson, the founder and director of the charity, Murdered Abroad; plan, conduct and transcribe several semi-structured interviews with families affected by murder in a foreign country; and, analyse the data obtained as a result of those interviews.

3.5.1. Initial Search for Participants

One of the most significant challenges during the preparatory stages of the research concerned the most appropriate way of identifying and subsequently accessing participants who would be willing to partake in semi-structured interviews. Given the aims of the research, the most suitable participants for the study were the immediate family members of British citizens who had fallen victim to murder while in a foreign country.

As a starting point, efforts were made to quantify those cases in which a British citizen had fallen victim to murder in a country other than the United Kingdom. Notwithstanding the widely accepted limitations of using official statistics as a source of information, figures

produced by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) seemed to provide some outline of the extent of the phenomenon.

The FCDO produces an annual report entitled “British Behaviour Abroad”, which details the consular assistance they have provided to British nationals around the world. The most recent version of this report discloses that there were a total of 17,517 cases of consular assistance in the 2013/14 period. In addition to this, there were also some 717 drug-related arrests, 5,418 arrests (including drug arrests), 4,110 deaths, 3,157 hospitalisations, 106 rapes, 152 sexual assaults, 4,488 cases of other assistance and 31,134 cases of lost and stolen passports/emergency travel documents. The statistics provided in the FCDO report do not distinguish between cases whereby a British national has died abroad as a result of murder or manslaughter and therefore are of limited use in terms of quantifying cases of homicide involving British citizens abroad.

Further information regarding cases of murder involving British citizens abroad was made publicly available by the FCDO in 2015, in response to a request submitted under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and is shown in Table 1. The FCDO request and subsequent information was located via a Google search and was not carried out as part of the research process. According to the FCDO (2015), the table contains “the number of cases currently recorded on the FCDO’s consular management information system under the attribute ‘murder’” (FCDO, 2015). The figures stated range from 2011 to September 2015, and the FCDO advises that “it is not mandatory for the death of a British National (BN) to be reported to the FCDO or one of its diplomatic missions, so these figures may not be complete”.

2011	78
2012	53
2013	78
2014	83
2015*	74
*2015 figures up to September 2015	

Table 1: Total number of murders recorded on the FCDO’s consular management information system.

These figures indicate the number of British nationals that have been murdered in a foreign country each year over a period of five years. However, more recent formal statistics about this phenomenon remain difficult to source, although the charity Murdered Abroad (2021) claims that on average some 60-80 Britons are murdered abroad each year. The absence of formal statistics is perhaps explained by the fact that it is not mandatory for the death of a British citizen in a foreign country to be registered in this country.

This absence of data can also be seen in the lack of additional demographic or criminological information about each of the individual cases. This gives rise to several methodological issues that subsequently limits the value of these statistics to the overall aims of the research, particularly concerning the identification and recruitment of participants.

To obtain further information about the cases disclosed in the FoI disclosure, contact was made with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. It quickly became apparent through telephone communication that the FCDO could not elaborate on those cases of murder which were included in their annual estimates for the previous five years. Given the absence of a statistical data surrounding cases of murder involving a British citizen in a foreign country, and the refusal by the FCDO to provide further information on those cases about which they were aware, it became necessary to adopt an alternative approach to the identification and recruitment of participants. It is beyond the scope of the thesis, but it is interesting to question

why the FCDO was not in a position to offer further help. This seemed to be a question of administrative process, rather than positively trying to frustrate the research process, but it served to underscore the paucity of thinking, research and general understanding about this topic. Not only did this mean that other research avenues needed to be pursued, but it also served to remind the researcher of the frustrations that many family members themselves experienced in their dealings with the FCDO and others in authority. The following extract from my reflexive journal describes my increasing concern about participant recruitment:

I am beginning to realise that reaching out – almost like a form of ‘cold calling’ – is not working. The FCDO is unable to help, and families are unlikely to be receptive to my unsolicited requests for participation. I guess this isn’t surprising. I often think to myself, “What if I was in their shoes, would I want to talk about the murder of a family member?” – I’m beginning to realise that not only are these issues painful and sensitive – and so they want to block things out, but there may also be a sense that I am using their stories of murder for my own ends. I hope that I don’t come across like that, but how do you begin to encourage people to talk about murder? Why should they trust me with those stories? The formal approach just doesn’t seem to work. Maybe it’s time to revise my strategy.” – *Research Journal, October 2015.*

Validation of this diary entry also came in the early stages of the research when a high-profile case of a young man who was murdered in a foreign country in 2012 began to generate national headlines. Frustrated by a lack of progress in the case, the family reached out to the media and it subsequently became possible for contact to be made made with the family via email, and through contacts at the University. It was initially agreed that I could discuss my research with the family with a view to their participation. This initial contact appeared to go well – the research was outlined and the family seemed willing to help. Looking back at my reflexive account this seemed like the real start of the field research. However, despite repeated requests thereafter, it soon became clear that the family had changed their minds about participating.

No explanation was ever offered as to why this was the case, but in retrospect it would appear that this type of individualised approach was insufficient in itself to guarantee participation. The reason for this remains obscure but it might be suggested that approaches of this kind – even if seemingly welcomed – are ultimately regarded as intrusive, and therefore not deemed as valid to warrant participation. It was now clear that another type of approach to the recruitment of participants was necessary.

3.5.2. Research Gatekeeper: The Charity “Murdered Abroad”

An online search for literature related to the topic of the research returned a website entitled Murdered Abroad. It was soon apparent that the website belonged to a charity named Murdered Abroad which exists specifically for people whose loved ones are the victims of murder or manslaughter abroad. Funded only by donations, they offer advice to families in need, as well as working for change within the United Kingdom to improve the support that families receive after their loved one has been murdered abroad. Director and trustee, Eve Henderson, co-founded the charity after her husband Roderick Henderson was killed in France in 1997, whilst on a weekend away in Paris celebrating his birthday. Based on her own experiences of the difficulties associated with losing a loved one abroad, which included language barriers, unfamiliar cultural settings, foreign criminal justice systems and judicial processes, Eve, alongside several others, established Murdered Abroad as a way of offering help and support to other families who find themselves faced with a similar situation. The following extract from my reflexive journal highlights the difficulties encountered in the earlier stages of the research regarding participant recruitment.

The process of identifying participants for the research, so far, has been problematic, mainly due to the absence of any official data and the unwillingness of the Foreign and

Commonwealth Office to disclose further details of relevant cases. Thankfully, the discovery of Murdered Abroad – a charity which provides support to families affected by murder in foreign countries – would seem to offer a potential solution to the problems I have been facing. This is a considerable relief, given that I was becoming progressively concerned about my ability to locate suitable research participants and subsequently, the viability of the research project. Maybe, there is hope, after all. – *Research Journal, 19th March 2017.*

Following an introductory email, an initial meeting was scheduled with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner (Director and Trustee) in London in April 2017, which took place prior to the beginning of the formal process of data collection. This was an informal meeting but which in retrospect, served as a scoping exercise. The decision was made to meet in a local coffee shop to discuss the aim and purpose of the research, and to explore the work that the charity undertakes on a day-to-day basis. This was considered to be a valuable opportunity, to learn more about Murdered Abroad, the people involved and the support that they offer to families who have experienced bereavement through the murder of a loved one in a foreign country.

Establishing a connection with Murdered Abroad seemed to offer several instrumental advantages to the overall aim of the research. In particular, it was anticipated that such an association would prove to be beneficial in terms of overcoming the issue of identifying and recruiting individuals/families who were willing to be involved in the semi-structured interview process. In the first instance, since its creation, the charity has grown a support network consisting of over 200 families, all of whom have experienced the loss of a loved one through murder or manslaughter abroad. Through their work, Murdered Abroad have been able to establish trusting relationships with those whom they aim to support, offering face-to-face advice, and regularly holding members meetings.

Following the initial meeting, Eve Henderson agreed to act as a gatekeeper for the research and would mediate contact between the researcher and the participants moving forward. According to de Laine (2000) gatekeepers are typically identified as individuals or organisations who possess the power to either grant, or withhold access to a research population. The involvement of a gatekeeper in the research process may be advantageous in several ways. Most notably, given their often-respected position within a particular community or group, gatekeepers can act as “guarantors of the researcher’s legitimacy”. By acting as a mediator between the researcher and the research group, gatekeepers can influence a participant’s decision to engage in the research and therefore can “speed up the recruitment process” (McAreavey and Das, 2013:116).

During the initial meeting, both Eve and Kim were receptive to the premise and aims of the research. They expressed a sense of appreciation that the experience of co-victims of murder abroad was to be given, for the first time, academic attention. The following extract from my reflexive journal provides an account of this meeting:

What a day today has been. For the first time I felt actually like a researcher and a criminologist. The journey from Birmingham to London to meet with Eve and Kim was certainly worthwhile. Despite the busy surroundings, we spoke for more than two hours about the purpose and aims of the research, the work of the charity and the potential for collaboration. Although I did feel a little out of my depth to begin with (probably attributable to the imposter syndrome that I have been experiencing), Eve and Kim were welcoming and were certainly receptive to my ideas about the research project. – *Research Journal, April 2017.*

Given her own experience of bereavement, combined with her unique position as research gatekeeper, Eve suggested that a pilot interview should be carried out prior to the interviews being conducted with other families. The request to conduct this type of interview may have

been indicative of Eve's desire to understand the nature of the research process, and also to assess my ability to carry out an interview. This is understandable, given the sensitivity of the topics in discussion and the potential for re-traumatisation to occur during and after an ill-prepared interview schedule or an inconsiderate line of questioning.

In October 2017, the semi-structured pilot interview was conducted with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner. The following extract from the research journal reflects upon this process:

Today was a considerable step forward regarding the process of data collection in particular, and indeed, for the PhD research more generally. Having discovered Murdered Abroad by chance, today I met with co-founder and director Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner, also a director and trustee of the charity to carry out a "pilot interview" at Eve's home in Kent. I arrived at Eve's house in plenty of time, and after enjoying a lunch of chicken and potatoes, I spent over two hours in conversation with Eve and Kim. I provided them with an overview of the research and what I hope to achieve. They provided me with detailed insight into the day-to-day work of the charity and the support they provide to families affected by murder abroad. In light of this "pilot interview" Eve has agreed to act as a gatekeeper and will contact families whom she feels might be prepared to be involved in the research. My anxiety about the process of participant recruitment has, it would seem, finally been addressed – *Research Journal – 25th October 2017*.

The process of conducting a pilot interview proved to be a beneficial exercise for several important reasons. It first provided an opportunity to articulate in more depth the purpose, aims and significance of the research. So, too, by engaging in a semi-structured interview, both Eve and Kim were able to gain an insight into the data collection method that would subsequently be used to explore the cases of homicide involving the families they had supported, or were currently supporting. Oka and Shaw (2000) suggest trust between the researcher and gatekeeper is critical and should be carefully maintained throughout the research

process. Therefore, the pilot interview also offered a chance for the researcher to begin to establish a trusting, professional relationship with Eve and Kim as gatekeepers.

During the pilot interview, Eve and Kim were able to make recommendations regarding the questions contained within the draft semi-structured interview schedule, and suggested several additional areas for consideration prior to beginning the data collection process, including the role of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the common issues faced by families they have worked with over the years. The overall success of the pilot interview resulted in Eve and Kim agreeing to share details of the research with the wide range of families that look to Murdered Abroad for support following the murder of a loved one in a foreign country.

3.5.3. Sampling, Access, and Recruitment

Perhaps one of the most significant challenges faced throughout the research process, centred on the interwoven issues of sampling, access and recruitment. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, careful consideration was given to the process of identifying and gaining access to individuals who have been bereaved through having a loved one murdered in a foreign country.

First, Gentles *et al.* (2015: 1775), define sampling in qualitative research as “the selection of specific data sources from which data are collected to address the research objectives”. The research drew upon a non-probability sample, which aligns with the epistemological assumptions that underpin the study. In contrast to probability samples, non-probability samples, according to Donnelly and Kanika (2015) do not involve the random selection of

participants. In other words, a purposive sampling method was used to identify and recruit participants into the research process. Purposive sampling, according to Patton (2002), is used to identify and select cases which are perceived to be rich in information. Such cases often include individuals or groups of people who have lived experience of or are particularly knowledgeable about the phenomenon which is of interest to the researcher (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). As such, the participants that were selected to be involved in the research were the immediate family members of victims of murder which have occurred abroad and included parents, grandparents, and siblings.

The study adopted a dynamic approach to the recruitment of participants, given the difficulties associated with gaining access to a suitable target group in the early stages of the research. To elaborate, several potential participants were identified, based on recommendations made by a supervisor. Despite preliminary contact being made with these families, their participation in the research did not come to fruition, perhaps due to the unsolicited nature of my communication or, understandably, because they did not want to discuss the details of their trauma with a stranger. In a subsequent attempt to identify suitable participants, contact was made with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, who publish figures relating to the number of British citizens who have “died in suspicious circumstances abroad” each year. The limitations concerning these statistics have been discussed previously in this chapter, and it should be noted that no further information regarding these cases was provided by the FCDO. Thankfully, despite these initial concerns, the issues of access and recruitment were overcome due to the establishment of a working relationship with Murdered Abroad.

This pilot interview and the accompanying transcript provided a detailed insight into Eve and Kim’s personal experience as a co-victim of murder abroad, but also offered a comprehensive

overview of the wide range of emotional and practical issues that many families are likely to face in similar circumstances. As such, the data collected during the pilot interview highlighted several areas of potential interest – practical issues including travel, repatriation, and language; the emotional consequences of traumatic bereavement; and support needs of families – and thus proved useful in designing the semi-structured interview schedules that were utilised in the remainder of the data collection process. Furthermore, in due course, a concluding interview was carried out with Eve and Kim to consolidate and strengthen the initial themes which were emerging from an early analysis of the data. Symbolic of the commencement and completion of the data collection phase, both the pilot and the concluding interview with Eve and Kim form an important element of the overall thematic analysis, and help to substantiate many of themes that are to be discussed in Chapter Five.

Following the pilot interview, Eve also agreed to act as a gatekeeper which created a neutral meeting point between the researcher and those families who had expressed a willingness to participate. This process simultaneously supported the legitimacy of the research, but also prompted the recruitment process (McAreavey and Das, 2013).

Eve agreed to provide details of the research to a selection of families who had been receiving support from the charity. Initial contact between the researcher and the prospective participants would be in the form of an introductory email, sent from Eve. The commentary below provides an example of such an interaction:

Liam, we held our Members' family meeting in London on Saturday where we were able to explain a little bit about your research project. You will be pleased to hear quite a few people signed up for it. I know you are eager to get started on a couple of interviews prior to Christmas and hopefully, you will be able to liaise with Hazel and Pete Kouzaris direct – Hazel and Pete, thank you very much for agreeing to take part

in Liam's research project and also for allowing me to share your contact details. This email is mainly to introduce you to Liam and exchange email addresses so that you can be in direct contact with each other to organise a convenient time for Liam to interview you. I hope it goes well – *Email sent from Eve Henderson – 13th November 2017.*

Following this initial introduction, the first participant interview took place in June 2018, following communication with Pete and Hazel Kouzaris – their son, James, was murdered in Florida, in 2011, whilst on holiday with his friend, who was also called James. The extract below, taken from my research journal offers an insight into my personal reflections on this experience:

As we were speaking, I couldn't help but think that I was roughly the same age as James when he was killed, and that we had very similar interests and shared a passion for travel. I remember thinking about my own plans for the summer, and how my research has heightened my awareness of the risks associated with international travel. Thinking about it now, I wonder if Pete and Hazel realised, and perhaps saw in me what James might have become had he lived. We call this 'proximity' in academic language, but as I sat opposite them, I sensed that they didn't see me as an academic, but as a young man who could easily have been James. Was this a good or a bad thing? Is this, as Freud would describe it, 'transference'? Indeed, this is something Eve had mentioned to me during the pilot interview. She said "When I asked Pete and Hazel if they wanted to be involved, I did wonder how difficult it might be for them to talk to you, because of your age and because you look a bit like James, so just bare that in mind but they said straight away that they definitely wanted to do it". Following the interview, and as I said goodbye, I remember feeling an overwhelming sense of emotion to the point where I felt that I was going to cry. Perhaps for the first time, I had been made aware of the harsh reality of the consequences of murder and the sadness that it leaves behind – *Research Journal, 24th June 2018.*

The process of recruitment was accelerated following an invited to deliver a guest talk at the charity's Annual General Meeting, which took place on Saturday 18th May 2019 at the

University of Northampton. The following extract, taken from my research journal, provides an account of the day, and reflect on the significance of the talk regarding the recruitment of additional participants:

Having established a working relationship with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner, I was invited to be a guest speaker at the charity's Annual General Meeting, which was scheduled to take place on Saturday 18th May 2019 at the University of Northampton. Initially, I had been asked by Eve if I could arrive at 13:00 in time for lunch, ahead of my talk at 14:00. However, the invitation to the Annual General Meeting seemed to me to present a unique opportunity to immerse myself in the workings of the charity and to see first-hand, the level of support that they are providing to the families who would be in attendance. As a result, I decided to attend for the entirety of the day – *Research Journal – 19th May 2019*.

Arriving early in the morning provided an opportunity to speak to families in a more informal environment, namely, the lobby of the hotel where the meeting was being held. This time also offered a chance to “break the ice” and listen to family members talk freely about the circumstances of their bereavement.

The day began with an “around the room discussion” which provided an opportunity for the 20-25 families that were in attendance to share their stories. This was a particularly poignant way to start the day. Several family members struggled to withhold their emotions as they spoke of the circumstances in which they had lost a loved one to murder in a foreign country. I found myself sitting in a room with people who had lost brothers, sisters, parents and children to murder, some recently and others less so. Hearing their stories was a powerful reminder as to the significance of my research – *Research Journal – 19th May 2019*.

Listening to the stories of the families in the room demonstrated the complexity of the issues they have faced in the aftermath of murder. So, too, it reinforced the importance of the work

that Murdered Abroad do in supporting them. Each person in the room, in their time of need, had reached out to the charity for guidance, in the absence of any meaningful or consistent support from elsewhere. The role of the charity in supporting families bereaved by murder abroad is discussed more comprehensively in Chapter Five. The extract below, taken from my reflexive journal, offers a personal insight into the day:

The time of my talk arrived, and I spent an hour discussing my work as a criminologist, lecturer, and researcher at the University. I provided an overview of the work that I had been doing in relation to the PhD and highlighted the importance of the charity and the willingness of the families to participate in moving the research forward. The talk was very well-received and immediately after I had finished presenting, I was approached by several other families who expressed their wish to be involved in the research. Clearly, speaking at the annual conference was clearly a good decision – people saw me, heard me, listened to me and, I think, they made a calculation that there was more to be gained than to be feared by telling me their story. That is beginning to feel like a major responsibility – of course the research needs to be accurate, but I'm also beginning to feel that it is impossible to see this as just 'research'. These stories have consequences – or should have consequences – in the public policy agenda – *Research Journal – 19th May 2019.*

Whilst the annual meeting presented a valuable opportunity to further the research, it also represented both a personal and academic challenge, given the circumstances and the experiences of those who were in attendance. The following extract from my reflexive journal describes my anxiety in the lead up to the talk and my sense of relief following positive feedback from the families who were there on the day:

As the day of my talk grew closer, I began to feel increasingly nervous about the prospect of talking in front of an audience of people who had direct experience of bereavement through murder in a foreign country. I am used to delivering lectures to students at the University, but this felt completely different. I remember thinking,

“How will I be perceived?”, “Who am I to be talking to these people about something that they have actually lived through?”, “What if I upset or offend someone, or unintentionally say the wrong thing?”. However, my concerns, seemingly, were alleviated on the day of the meeting. I spoke to several families prior to my talk, and they were receptive to the idea of the research and, in a sense, seemed almost grateful for the opportunity to talk to me about their experiences. Several days after, I received an email from Eve which contained feedback that she had collected from some of the families who were in attendance. It read: “You were great and absolutely saved the day (if you get my drift, I won’t elaborate). It is very easy to see why you were awarded Inspirational Teacher of the Year. I am in the process of collating comments from our Feedback Forms and at first glance I can see that everyone was very complimentary about you and your presentation” – *Research Journal, July 2019*.

Indeed, in the days following the talk, Eve emailed the feedback that had been given by some of the families who were present. It read:

(1) Very well-prepared young man, informative and has taken on tasks and willing to interview victims of murder/manslaughter; (2) Great speaker, brought some animation to the meeting, was interested in us as people, knew his subject; (3) Liam Brolan – informative session. Saved the day!; (4) Really interesting. Gave excellent understanding; (5) Very inspiring; (6) Brilliant. It was something a little different and made us all think about something else; (7) Excellent – opposite end of the scale (to Tony Rafter). Good, interesting, and challenging speaker.

I felt an enormous sense of relief knowing that I had made a good impression. I also felt especially grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the meeting and to speak to several other families affected by murder abroad. The day was emotional, upsetting but at the same time, inspiring and motivational – the stories of these individuals need to be shared and I hope that I can provide, at least some of them, with a platform on which to do so – *Research Journal, July 2019*.

During the data collection phase, a total of seven interviews were conducted with the family members of direct victims of murder abroad – some participants were selected by the charity and others chose to participate following the talk given in Northampton. It is worthwhile noting that not all of those who initially expressed an interest in participation at the meeting were subsequently interviewed, despite being sent a follow-up email which provided more information about the research and the data collection process. Perhaps this was due to practical or logistical issues, or maybe the prospect of recalling and reliving their experience of traumatic bereavement was too much to bear.

Those interviews which did take place, were conducted in the participant's location of choice and were carried out in a one-to-one format. Those interviews where more than one family member was present have been clearly identified in Chapter Five and their associated contributions have been appropriately indicated throughout the discussion. In the later stages of the data collection phase, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and its unprecedented impact on society, several interviews had to be conducted either via phone, or using video-calling technology. Whether conducted in-person or facilitated through technology, these interviews were, on average, between sixty to ninety minutes long, depending on the number of participants present, the amount of information they felt able to recall, and the level of input from the researcher. With the consent of those involved, the audio from each interview was recorded and stored securely, before later being transcribed verbatim in preparation for thematic analysis. The following extract from my reflexive journal offers some insight into my thoughts and feelings during the data collection phase of the research:

To what extent is my involvement in this research changing me as a person? In what ways I am growing, developing and learning as a result of my interactions with people who have been affected by murder abroad? The more I reflect on these questions, the

more I realise how transformative this process has been, on both an academic and personal level. I have found myself, on several occasions, interviewing families who have been bereaved through murder in a foreign country. I have asked them to tell me, in detail, about the most traumatic experience of their lives. I have asked difficult questions, which have elicited complicated and emotive responses. What impact does this have on my participants? What impact does this have on me? – *Research Journal, September 2020.*

Of note, it is acknowledged that the research may be subject to criticism on the grounds of recruitment, given that the participants originated from one source, namely the charity Murdered Abroad. However, as has been made clear, several barriers – both personal or practical, prevented alternative methods of recruitment from gaining traction, and forming the basis of the research. Furthermore, given the rarity of the phenomenon that forms the focus of the thesis, alternative methods of recruitment were rather limited. Therefore, to deter potential criticism, it should be noted that in the absence of any viable alternatives, the most effective way of progressing with the research was to draw upon the working relationship that had been established with the charity Murdered Abroad, whilst bearing in mind, the potential limitations of adopting such an approach.

3.5.4. Semi-Structured Interviews

The choice of the most appropriate data collection method in any research study is influenced by epistemology. The interpretivist assumptions which underpin the present study, place value upon notions of subjectivity and seek to understand social phenomenon through an exploration of the lived experiences of those most closely associated with it. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the study seeks to understand the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder which occurs in a foreign country. The research, therefore, is less concerned with

the positivist preoccupations of replicability and generalisability and instead, seeks to generate in-depth, qualitative data which offers a detailed insight into the subjective realities of those affected by the phenomenon of murder abroad.

However, this is not to suggest that interviews as a method of data collection are incompatible with the positivist paradigm, or indeed that they are incapable of producing data which would be of interest to the quantitative researcher. To elaborate, structured interviews, which follow a rigid structure, require the researcher to present each participant with the same questions, in the same order (Wincup, 2017). Often structured interviews contain closed questions, which purposefully elicit a limited range of responses from participants (Mathers *et al.* 1998). The pre-coded nature of these responses, for many quantitative researchers, is a key strength of the structured interview. Stanley (2018:322), for example, comments upon the value of structured interviews within a quantitative study and “structured interviews are easily replicable, and their resultant data can quickly be compared”. Indeed, having conducted a content analysis of 232 social science articles, Bryman (2006) was able to conclude that structured interviews were the predominant method of data collection used within the quantitative studies included in his sample, second only to the self-administered questionnaire.

However, the rigid nature of structured interviews has been critiqued on several levels by researchers who prefer to adopt a qualitative approach to their data collection. A significant criticism of the structured interview concerns the role of the researcher in the interview process. The empirical nature of positivist research dictates that data collected through the use of interviews should be objective. In other words, the researcher should seek to eliminate or minimise their influence on the interview process to ensure that the data collected is impartial and value-free. Edwards and Holland (2013:15) suggest, the “positivist approach to interviews

demands a mechanistic conception of questions as stimulus and answers as response”. This structured approach to interviewing, according to Wincup (2017:98), “stifles the interaction [between the researcher and the researched] and compromises the quality of data generated”. Further to this, Leavy (2014:286), acknowledges the usefulness of structured interviews in some circumstances but suggests “they do not take advantage of the dialogical potentials for knowledge production inherent in human conversation”.

In contrast, the epistemological assumptions that underpin interpretivist enquiry allow for a higher degree of involvement on behalf of the researcher, and their subsequent use of semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. Interpretivists see value in the exchanges between the researcher and the participant and suggest that is the subjective interactions between the two parties that leads to the generation of knowledge. Inherent to this interaction is an acknowledgement of the fact that the individuals involved in interpretive research are subjects rather than inanimate objects (Jupp, 1989). As a result, “they should not be treated as would a chemist treat a chemical substance, or a geologist would treat a rock. The objects of criminological inquiry are not inanimate” (Jupp, 1989: 130). Reflecting the social constructivist epistemology, the purpose of semi-structured interviews, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2008:3), is to obtain a “description of the lifeworld of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena”.

With this in mind, the process of conducting a semi-structured interview is one which requires the researcher to acknowledge their influence upon those participating in the research and process of the data collection more generally, for both epistemic and ethical reasons (Leavy, 2014: 287). Berger (2015:220) suggests that researchers should engage in the process of reflexivity, whereby they “engage in a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation

of [their] positionality as well as active acknowledgement that is position may affect the research process and outcome.” The importance of reflexivity in research is argued by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000:6) who state:

The research process constitutes a (re)construction of the social reality in which researchers both interact with the agents researched and, actively interpreting, continually create images for themselves and for others: images which selectively highlight certain claims as to how conditions and processes – experiences, situations, relations – can be understood, thus suppressing alternative interpretations.

The semi-structured schedules which were prepared in advance of the interviews follow the framework suggested by Arthur and Nazroo (2003) consisting of: an introduction; opening questions; core in-depth questions; and closure. An example of a semi-structured interview schedule can be found in Appendix C.

Legard *et al.* (2003) discuss the practical elements of the interview process and suggest a six-stage model for researchers to follow when utilising this data collection method. These stages include:

1. Arrival – usually the first meeting between the interviewee and the interviewer. It is at this stage where researchers should seek to put participants at ease in preparation for the interview itself.
2. Introducing the research – at this point, the researcher should provide the participant with all of the necessary information related to the study. Participants should be informed of the aims and purpose of the research with the view to obtaining their fully informed consent, usually confirmed with a signature. The ongoing right to withdraw should be reinforced, and participants should be reminded that the interview is going to be audio recorded to allow for transcription at a later date.

3. Beginning the interview – at this point, the researcher should focus on instilling confidence within the participant and establish context for the remainder of the interview by gathering and confirming background facts.
4. During the interview – the main body of the interview will be guided by the overall topic of the research and the particular area of interest to the researcher. At this point, participants should be afforded the freedom to talk openly, drawing upon their own subjective experiences. Where necessary, the researcher can direct the conversation and encourage the participants to elaborate through the use of additional questions.
5. Ending the interview – when concluding the interview process, the researcher should confirm with the participant that they have covered all of the necessary topics and invite them to make any final comments or contributions.
6. After the interview – at this point, the researcher should thank the participants for their time, inform them of the next stages of the research process and ensure that they have been thoroughly debriefed (Legard *et al.* 2003).

The use of semi-structured interviews within the current research study allows for the collection of in-depth qualitative data concerning the phenomenon of murder abroad. The face-to-face nature of the interaction with those directly affected by the issue under investigation, according to Pierre and Roulston (2006:667) encourages “richer, thicker description that might yield a true representation of authentic, real, lived experience”.

Semi-structured interviews avoid the rigid nature of questioning that would accompany the use of a structured interview, and instead elicits interaction with the participant that is more conversational. According to Galletta (2013:24), semi-structured interviews are “sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon of study, while leaving space

for participants to offer new meanings to the study focus”. Having prepared a schedule of carefully considered questions, the role of the researcher during the semi-structured interview is to guide the conversation and to be an “active listener” making use of follow up questions to elicit more detail where necessary (Wincup, 2017:100). Thus, semi-structured interviews provide participants with an opportunity to talk freely and to pursue issues they feel are important (Longhurst, 2009) enabling them to tell their story in a way that allows nuances to be captured (Arksey and Knight, 1999:34). For those researchers who emphasise the importance of dialogue in the co-production of knowledge, the flexibility of the semi-structured is of substantive benefit to the research process (Leavy, 2014).

In addition to this, the use of semi-structured interviews provides several instrumental advantages to the qualitative researcher. Given their face-to-face nature, semi-structured interviews are characterised by “synchronous communication in time and place” (Opdenakker, 2006:1). The immediacy of the interaction means there is no significant time delay between question and answer” resulting in a more spontaneous response on behalf of the interviewee (ibid). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are usually recorded via the use of an audio recording device. Such practice allows the researcher to focus less on note taking during the interview, and more on listening to the responses given by the participant and more on directly the conversation in accordance with the aims of the research. So, too, the subsequent transcription of the interview signals the first stage of the data analysis phase and allows the researcher to begin the process of familiarisation with the data. Indeed, Bird (2005:227) suggests transcription should be seen as a “key phase of data analysis within interpretive qualitative methodology”.

Semi-structured interviews also facilitate a research environment that is more suited to an exploration of sensitive topics. As discussed earlier in this chapter, during the research process, the avoidance of psychological harm in the form of emotional distress is of utmost importance. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is potential for participants to become distressed during the interview process, the overall risk of emotional harm can be minimised as the researcher can talk through the topic with the participant, debrief them afterwards, answer their questions about why the research is being conducted and stop at any stage prior to or during the interview process (Miles and Gilbert, 2005).

Despite being advantageous to the qualitative researcher, semi-structured interviews are not immune to critique, and there are several limitations worthy of further discussion. Perhaps one of the most common criticisms of semi-structured interviews and the subsequent data they produce, concerns the difficulty associated with the generalisability of the research findings. In simple terms, generalising involves forming general and broad statements from specific cases (Schwandt, 2001). For context, the requisite of generalisability is rooted in positivistic inquiry where the researcher aims to produce laws able to explain and govern every observed phenomenon and to determine a universal knowledge (Delmar, 2010). As such, the emphasis is placed upon the importance of methodological rigour, whereby the researcher is expected to adhere to an exacting process of planning, data collection, analysis and reporting (Carminati, 2018). Such a rigorous approach leads to the production of objective, quantitative data which can be replicated in other studies and generalised beyond the immediate confines of the research study itself (ibid). However, it can be argued that the objective of interpretivist researchers is not to produce findings that are generalisable or replicable. The focus instead is on generating an in-depth, subjective understanding of lived experiences. As such, the critique

of generalisability can be negated, thus justifying the use of semi-structured of interviews in interpretivist research.

3.6. Analytical Framework

The choice of an analytical framework is guided by an interpretivist epistemological standpoint. Given the quantity and nature of the data collected, it was decided that the most appropriate way to analyse the data would be in the form of a thematic analysis. The following section of this chapter provides an overview of the process involved in conducting a thematic analysis, and offers a justification for its use.

3.6.1. Thematic Analysis

There are numerous data analysis methods available to the qualitative researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1994), such as discourse analysis, narrative analysis and content analysis. A common method, which is used by scholars in a variety of fields, is thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) define thematic analysis as a “method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data”. Thematic analysis, according to Boyatzis (1998:5):

Enables scholars, observers, or practitioners to use a wide variety of types of information in a systematic manner that increases their accuracy or sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations about people, events, situations, and organisations.

This research makes use of thematic analysis to interpret the qualitative data collected during the interview process and, as such, the purpose of the following discussion is twofold. First, the discussion draws upon the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) and outlines the “six-phases”

of a thematic analysis. By doing so, the process of identifying, analysing and reporting upon patterns within the data will be made transparent. Second, the discussion offers a critique of thematic analysis, noting both its strengths and limitations, therefore, highlighting the reasons as to why this particular form of data analysis was selected.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest there are six phases involved in the process of conducting a thematic analysis: familiarisation; generating initial codes; searching for themes reviewing themes; and, producing the report.

1. The first phase requires the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data collected by engaging in the process of “immersion”. This begins with the transcription of interview audio recordings, which are then read and re-read. At this stage, informal coding ideas are noted and returned to later in the process.
2. Once immersion has been achieved, phase two involves generating initial codes. A code is used to “identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst” (Braun and Clarke, 2006).
3. Coding involves “analysis, organising and sorting of data in order to draw meaning from a large mass of data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In other words, the data is organised into meaningful groups from which themes can be identified in the subsequent phase (Tucket, 2005).
4. Searching for themes involves a broader level of analysis, whereby codes are sorted into potential themes. A theme is a pattern in the data that is important or interesting and which can be used to address the research question (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Once identified, each theme is then subjected to *review*. Themes are modified, tested and refined to ensure that they “adequately capture the contours of the coded data” and that they provide an “accurate representation” of the data set as a whole (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 21).

5. Having reviewed the themes, the stage is to define them. Here, the researcher seeks to identify the essence of what each theme is about to provide an overview of the story that each theme tells and how it relates to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006).
6. The final phase, producing the report presents an opportunity for the researcher to “tell the complicated story of the data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis” (Braun and Clarke, 2006:23).

Thematic analysis was selected as the most appropriate form of data analysis due to the flexibility and freedom from theoretical constraints (Nowell *et al.* 2017). In other words, “the search for, and examination of, patterning across language does not require adherence to any particular theory of language, or explanatory meaning framework for human beings, experiences or practices” (Clarke and Braun, 2013:121). So, too, thematic analysis offers several practical advantages to the researcher. Most notably, it facilitates a well-structured approach to handling data, which is particularly useful when large amounts of information have been collected through the use of semi-structured interviews (King, 2004).

Despite these instrumental advantages, thematic analysis is not without its limitations. Javadi and Zarea (2016) suggest researchers should ensure that they remain unbiased when conducting a thematic analysis. They advise, researchers should refrain from personal inferences, and specific pre-judgements on the research content” as failure to do so might lead to an analysis that is lacking in coherence and consistency between the claims and the data (Javadi and Zarea, 2016:38).

The work of Nowell *et al.* (2017) provides a useful framework for establishing transparency, particularly in regard to the process of data analysis and is worthy of further consideration.

Nowell *et al.* (2017) explore in detail the methods by which qualitative researchers can improve the transparency of their research, specifically when conducting a thematic analysis. They make several recommendations for researchers wanting to ensure, as far as possible, that their findings and conclusions are rigorous and trustworthy, by being as open and transparent as possible about the decisions they have made at each stage of the analysis (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). As such, what follows is an insight into the steps taken by the researcher to ensure that the findings of this study are based on a thorough and systematic analysis of the primary data collected through semi-structured interviews with participants with experience of the phenomenon under investigation.

Following the well-known framework for thematic analysis provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) the development of a meaningful understanding of the primary data begins with familiarisation or immersion, which allows the researcher to familiarise themselves with the depth and breadth of the content. The data that forms the basis of this research was primarily obtained through semi-structured interviews (which are discussed in more detail later in this chapter). However, as is often the case within qualitative research, this was not the only source of primary information that would be included in the overall process of analysis. To elaborate, with reference to each of the cases included within the study, the researcher was able to search for a draw upon information that had been made available in media publications from a variety of outlets. In addition to this, in some cases, documents including letters, financial information, court transcripts and newspaper cuttings were provided by family members to substantiate the version of events that they had offered during the interview process. These supplementary sources, combined with the primary data in the form of written interview transcripts and audio recordings, presented an opportunity for the researcher to be immersed in the stories of those

involved and subsequently in the data they have provided but also to engage in a process of data triangulation (Denzin, 1978).

In line with recommendations provided by both Braun and Clarke (2006) and Nowell *et al.* (2017), each interview was listened to in its entirety at least twice before the process of coding began. The data contained within these transcripts was then cross-referenced with the information provided in media reports, or documentation provided by the families. This process of immersion was carried out after the pilot interview with the research gatekeeper and each subsequent interview. The extract below is taken from my reflexive journal and documents some of my initial thoughts that were recorded in the early stages of the data analysis process:

My introductory interview with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner has, at this early stage of analysis, highlighted several topics/areas that may be of interest to the research moving forward. I suspect that the issues highlighted in their own stories, may well feature in the stories of other families who are interviewed in the future. These areas, which include (but are not limited to) the emotional impact of the crime and the lack of support in the immediate aftermath, may well prove to be substantive themes within the research findings. I have to say that this process of ‘immersion’ has enabled me to more fully understand the purpose of my research. It is about giving a platform and a voice to those who have been affected by murder in these circumstances – their words, I feel, should feature heavily in the presentation and discussion of my findings – *Research Journal, August 2019.*

As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) and reiterated by Nowell *et al.* (2017), thematic analysis is an iterative process. In other words, researchers may be engaged in several stages of the analysis simultaneously, which consequently informs the researchers approach to the subsequent stages of analysis. This was indeed the case in the present research, as after each

interview, the researcher would engage in a process of immersion, which would be informed and guided by the process of coding that has been applied to the previous interview. The next stage of thematic analysis, referred to as coding is now discussed in more detail.

Coding is where the researcher begins to identify relevant elements contained within the data. Savage (2010) describes coding as a process of reflection and a way of thinking about and interacting with the data. Nowell *et al.* (2017) suggest that coding should be conducted in a systematic way whereby statements are analysed and categorised into themes that represent the phenomenon of interest. As noted above, the process of coding each interview began once immersion had been achieved and when the researcher felt confident in their understanding of the information presented to them. Coding was carried out using the data-analysis software NVivo, which assists qualitative researchers in the analysis of large quantities or rich, text-based information where a deep level of analysis is required (NVivo, 2021). Using software of this kind facilitated a consistent approach to the coding of data and provided a systematic method by which seemingly important data could be readily identified for future reference.

The consistent approach to coding each interview helped to develop a provisional template of codes that would later be applied to the full dataset to ensure each code has been given sufficient attention and was adequately represented in the discussion of the findings (King, 2004). Indeed, Welsh (2002) notes how using NVivo can add “rigor” to the analytical process and improve “validity” or “trust-worthiness” by allowing for quick and accurate searches of the dataset, thereby ensuring that all instances of a particular code have been included in the analysis. The extract below notes my reflections on this stage of the data analysis process:

I have now coded each of the transcripts taken from my semi-structured interviews so far. Using NVivo has certainly accelerated the process, as it has allowed for codes to

be assigned to large amounts of text-based data and for codes to be applied across a variety of data sources. I can already see that there are patterns in the coded data which I anticipate will underpin the final themes that result from this process. Given there are still several interviews to be completed, I believe the existing codes will be of relevance to the new data, however, I acknowledge that the collection of additional primary data may lead to new codes being applied, and thus the development of currently undiscovered themes – *Research Journal, September 2019*.

Once the interviews had been coded, the next stage in the data analysis process, is the search for, and the development of themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the identification of themes is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research. Whilst there is some variance in, definition of the term *theme*, DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000: 362) in Nowell *et al.* (2017) offer the following contribution and suggest:

A theme is an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole.

To identify themes in the present study, the research was once more able to make use of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. The software facilitated the analysis and group of large amounts of text-based data taken from the interview transcripts. From this, the researcher was able to identify what appeared to be “significant concepts that link substantial portions of the data together” (DeSantis and Ugarriza, 2000).

These substantial links or themes were then reviewed in the next stage of the thematic analysis process before being defined and named. The reviewing process provided an opportunity for the researcher to ensure that the extracts of coded data taken from across the interview transcripts formed a coherent pattern. Only when a pattern had been confirmed would the

researcher conclude that a theme had been identified. This process, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) is of considerable importance regarding validity in the data analysis process. To elaborate, by reviewing the data and the themes which are apparent, researchers can ensure that the themes “accurately reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole” (Nowell *et al.*, 2017: 9). The extract below, taken from the researcher’s reflexive journal offers some personal insight into this process:

At this stage of the research, I feel as if I have become immersed in the data that I have collected. I have now completed the process of coding the raw data and have started to identify themes in the dataset as a whole. Having followed the guidance offered in the methodological literature, I am now feeling quite confident that there are several important themes that will form the basis of my discussion, and indeed of the research more generally. Most notably, these themes relate to: the practical implications of murder abroad; the emotional impact of traumatic bereavement; the interactions between the research participants and the criminal justice system; and the role of the media. These seemingly important elements of the co-victim experience, seem to me, at this stage, to be relatively consistent with my prior reading. What I find especially interesting however, is the way in which the post-homicide experience of the participants has been shaped and influenced by the international nature of the crime. Issues of language, travel and repatriation, will, I am certain, need to be explored in more detail in the later stages of the thesis – *Research Journal, June 2020*.

Once satisfied that the reviewing process had been completed, it was then possible able to assign a name to each theme which, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) should serve to provide a succinct overview of the theme in discussion. The final names given to the themes encapsulate as far as possible, the key elements of each individual story, whilst situating and contextualising them within the data set as a whole. Each of these themes will be discussed at length later in the thesis, but it is hoped that this transparent insight into the data analysis process will help to ensure academic rigor by reflecting, as truthfully as possible, the

experiences of those who agreed to be interviewed, and indeed who have direct, lived experience of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.7. Conclusion to the Chapter

This chapter has presented an in-depth discussion of the methodological considerations which are pertinent to the current research. So, too, it has offered a discussion of epistemology and has thus acknowledged the underlying assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the subsequent impact of these assumptions upon each stage of the research process. The interpretivist epistemological standpoint, which forms the basis of the research rejects the positivist assumptions of a single, objective reality which can be understood through the use of quantitative methods. The research, therefore, does not seek to generate findings that can be replicated, and then generalised to larger populations. Instead, it acknowledges the existence of multiple, subjective realities and, through the use of qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, seeks to generate an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of co-victims of murder, when the crime has occurred in a foreign country. Furthermore, the variety of ethical issues relevant to the study which need to be taken into consideration throughout the research process have been discussed. These issues included: informed consent; the right to withdraw; confidentiality and anonymity; and, the protection from physical and emotional harm. Importantly, this chapter has documented the steps that were taken to minimise the likelihood of either the participants or the researchers being adversely affected by their involvement in the research.

Finally, this chapter presented a discussion of the practical steps that were taken in order to generate the primary data which forms the basis of the discussion and provided justification

for the methodological approach that has been adopted. Through such a discussion, the issues associated with conducting the current research and, perhaps more importantly, the steps that have been taken to overcome such issues at each stage of the process have been made clear.

The following chapter presents a descriptive account of the cases of murder abroad which were included in the research and thus explores the stories behind the research in greater detail.

CHAPTER FOUR: CASES OF MURDER ABROAD

THE STORIES BEHIND THE RESEARCH

4.1. Introduction

The following chapter provides a descriptive account of the cases of murder abroad included in the research. The chapter begins with some introductory commentary which offers an insight into the process of, and challenges associated with, collating and presenting case-specific information. From here, the chapter explores each of the seven cases of murder abroad in greater detail.

The details of the cases have been obtained through a combination of primary and secondary methods. Each case, to varying degrees, received coverage in the local, national, and even international news media. As such, a search of the database Nexis produced numerous articles related to each of the cases. *Nexis* is an electronic database which contains all major British newspapers, including national and regional titles, with over 2,000 global newspapers, newswires, and newsletters (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2014) – and thus is of great use to researchers within the social sciences. Whilst some cases received greater amounts of coverage than others, the articles obtained through Nexis provided some level of descriptive information, and therefore formed the basis of the stories contained in the following chapter. In the circumstances where important information was unavailable, unclear, or ambiguous in the news media reports, the descriptive accounts were substantiated, developed, and verified by the personal accounts of the family members who agreed to share their stories via the semi-structured interview process detailed in the Chapter Three.

This process of triangulating data sources (Denzin, 1978), ensured that the depiction of the cases, including the circumstances of the murder and the characterisation of the loved ones were accurate and represented the family member's understanding of the events. In each of the cases presented, the discussion highlights the circumstances of the murder and where possible, details the investigative process, legal proceedings, and subsequent outcome of the case – all of which form important elements of the post-homicide experience. This chapter thus serves to contextualise and substantiate the later analytical chapters.

A short methodological note follows each of the stories to explain how the cases came to be involved in the research. The cases are presented in the order in which the interviews were conducted, although it should be noted that the most recent case occurred in 2012 and the oldest occurred in 1990.

4.1.1. Case One: Roderick “Jock” Henderson – Paris, France (1997)

Roderick Henderson, affectionately known as “Jock”, was a father, grandfather and husband who enjoyed travelling, playing golf and spending time with his family. Having had a career in engineering, Roderick had always wanted to travel on the Channel Tunnel – a 50km railway tunnel that connects Folkstone, England with Coquelles in France. So, in 1997, as a surprise for his upcoming 54th birthday, Roderick's wife of 32 years, Eve, decided to book a family trip to Paris. In October of that year, Roderick and Eve travelled with their son Scott, his girlfriend Jenny, their daughter, Nicola and her husband, Andrew, to France where they planned to relax, enjoy some time away together and visit several famous Paris landmarks.

During their trip, the family attended a pilgrimage to the Pont d'Alma, the location where Princess Diana had died in a car crash just several months earlier (*The Telegraph*, 27th August 2017). Having paid their last respects, the family enjoyed a meal on a boat on the River Seine before heading to the Champs-Elysees to find a place to drink. After an enjoyable evening, Eve, Nicola and Jenny decided to return to the hotel where they had been staying. Roderick, Scott and Andrew continued with the evening, and enjoyed another drink in each other's company at a bar near the Arc de Triomphe. In the early hours of the morning on Sunday 27th October 1997, Roderick, Scott, and Andrew decided to also head back to the hotel. However, as they were leaving the bar, they were attacked by a group of people on rollerblades who attempted to rob them. During the attack, Roderick was punched to the ground, and kicked in the head by one member of the gang. As a result of the injuries he sustained, Roderick later died in hospital on Monday 28th October 1997.

In the time immediately following the death of her husband, Eve found herself having to come to terms with the complexity of her situation. It was soon evident that being in a foreign country at the time of the murder created several issues that would have otherwise been non-existent had the incident occurred at home in the United Kingdom – issues including but not limited to language barriers, cultural differences, and unfamiliar judicial processes.

For Eve, communication about practical matters was challenging and quickly became a source of frustration. At a time of significant distress, Eve faced difficulty attempting to organise return tickets to the United Kingdom on the Euro Star, given that her original tickets had expired. Having called the Foreign Office, who suggested that there was no alternative other than to purchase new tickets, Eve was eventually able to use her knowledge of the French language to communicate with staff, and after some initial resistance, was able to have her

original tickets endorsed for travel. So, too, when she visited the British Embassy in Paris, Eve was made to queue with other British citizens who were waiting to have their passport or visas renewed, and she was horrified by the fact that she would receive no further assistance from the embassy. Instead she would have to make her own way around Paris, trying to figure out what had happened and what to do next.

Being in France also meant Eve had to engage with the local authorities who were given the responsibility of investigating the incident and apprehending those responsible for Roderick's death. Highlighting the issue of inter-jurisdictional collaboration in cases of murder abroad – which is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five – the police in England and Wales were unable to “offer their services to investigating authorities overseas” (United Kingdom Parliament, 1998). As such, Eve was solely reliant on the police in France to investigate the murder of her husband.

Approximately nine months after returning to the United Kingdom, an inquest was held to explore the circumstances surrounding Roderick's death. After considering the available information – which included a Home Office pathologist's report – the coroner for Northwest Kent, Roger Hatch, recorded a verdict of unlawful killing. He also criticised the investigation conducted by the French police, describing it as a “very unsatisfactory state of affairs”. He noted that Eve had faced a “brick wall of silence” in her battle to find out what was being done to find those responsible. Furthermore, he continued to condemn both the French police and the Examining Magistrate in charge of the investigation for “their total lack of co-operation with the British Government and the Henderson family” (*News Shopper*, 25th July 1998). Despite the verdict, no further action was taken by statutory agencies in the United Kingdom (Murder Abroad, 2020). However, given her dissatisfaction with the service provided by the

French police in their investigations, Eve – with the assistance of pro-bono lawyers – took her case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on the basis of a negligent investigation – an action which would ultimately fail in 2015, almost 18 years after the incident occurred (Murder Abroad, 2020). Despite her on-going efforts to achieve justice, no-one has ever been prosecuted for Roderick’s murder.

Several years later, having processed the initial shock of what she had experienced, Eve realised that she was unsatisfied with the level of support she had received, and became increasingly frustrated by the absence of clear policy or procedure in relation to cases of murder abroad. Her experience of dealing with the emotional impact of bereavement, combined with her appreciation for the complexities that arise when the bereavement results from murder, led Eve to recognise that she was uniquely positioned to be able to provide support to other families who find themselves having to deal with the loss of a loved-one to murder in a foreign country. Having joined the charity named Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM) – which provides support to families bereaved by murder in the United Kingdom – Eve realised that there were several families seeking advice and assistance about cases which had occurred abroad. As such, Eve was instrumental in the creation of the then named Support After Murder & Manslaughter Abroad (SAMMA) – a branch of the charity which would focus specifically on supporting families who had been bereaved through murder in a foreign country.

Now re-named Murdered Abroad, the charity supports over 200 families who have experienced bereavement through murder or manslaughter in countries all over the world. As director of the charity, Eve has worked to improve the level of service provided by the authorities in the U.K. to those families affected by murder in these specific circumstances. The formation and

work of the charity, notable achievements, and the value of the support they provide to bereaved families is explored in greater detail in Chapter Five.

4.1.2. Case Two: Lianne “Lee” Burns – Saint Martin, Caribbean (2011)

Known to her friends and family as “Lee”, Lianne Burns was described as gregarious and outgoing, with an incredible personality, a brilliant sense of humour and zest for life. Having spent some time working as a fitness instructor in Southend, Lianne was ready for a change of scenery. Keen to challenge herself and eager to travel, she took up a new job as a fitness instructor on a cruise ship and spent several years travelling to new places, meeting new people and having new experiences. Despite these benefits, working on a cruise ship was demanding. So, when given the opportunity to start a new role on-shore, Lianne took the chance without hesitation. Having fallen in love with the island on a previous visit, she decided to settle in Saint Martin in 1999 – a small island in the Caribbean Sea which is divided between the overseas collectivity of the French Republic (in the North) and the Kingdom of the Netherlands (in the South). Lianne spent the next 12 years on the island, living in a tranquil, ocean-front apartment overlooking the Caribbean Sea, and working as a tour operations manager for a small company that specialised in tourist excursions (*The Express*, 17th March 2013).

In 2010, she met Younese El-Mami at Loterie Farm, a restaurant on a nearby nature reserve which was popular with both tourists and locals. The then 32-year-old Italian national had only recently arrived on the island. After starting a relationship Lianne invited El-Mami to move in with her. Several months later in April 2011, Lianne and El-Mami attended an awards ceremony at a bar named Doc Maarten in the island’s capital, Philipsburg. During the evening, Lianne collected an award on behalf of her company – Rendezvous Travel – and was keen to

celebrate the achievement. Witnesses at the event later described an argument between Lianne and El-Mami which began after he became jealous of her innocently hugging a male friend and colleague (*The Express*, 7th May 2011).

The following day, despite being due to work from her home office, Lianne's colleagues became increasingly concerned about her welfare when, after several attempts, they were unable to contact her by phone. At approximately 1:45 in the afternoon, her boss at the time, Ian Gurr, who lived in the house above, went downstairs to investigate further. Whilst doing so, he met El-Mami, who insisted that he had dropped Lianne to work earlier that day. Unconvinced by his explanation, Gurr returned to Lianne's apartment and having entered, found her body in a storeroom, where she had been wrapped in tape and her head covered with a plastic bag (*The Metro*, 12 March 2013).

On the evening of 28th April 2011, Lianne's sister, Kim Spooner, who lived in England, had received several missed calls to her mobile phone. Having spoken to her partner, James, who informed her that her dad had left a message asking her to call home, she knew that something was wrong. Indeed, her father subsequently informed her that Lianne had been murdered in her home in St Martin. She later described her reaction to the news, stating that "it was almost like being knocked over by a powerful blast of wind" (*The Daily Mail*, 12 March 2013). Having yet to come to terms with the situation herself, Kim began phoning Lianne's friends to inform them of the news.

Back in St Martin, the police had launched a murder investigation and subsequently arrested El-Mami in connection with Lianne's death. During the interview, he recalled the events of the previous evening, changing his story on several occasions before finally confessing and

admitting responsibility for her murder. The news of his confession – which came as a relief to Kim and her family – marked the start of a frustrating, difficult, and expensive, two-year wait for El-Mami to appear in court. During this time, Kim and other family members worked tirelessly to ensure that El-Mami would not only be found guilty, but that he would be given the maximum prison sentence available.

In March 2013, during his appearance at court, El-Mami “remained completely impassive” and did not show “one iota of emotion” (*The Daily Mail*, 12 March 2013), despite Kim and other members of Lianne’s family being present in the courtroom. Following a full trial, he was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment on the neighbouring island of Guadalupe – he will be required to serve at least three-quarters of his sentence before being eligible for parole.

During her search for support in the time following her sister’s death, Kim initially contacted Cruse – a bereavement charity which provide free care and counselling to people suffering from grief. Having informed them of the circumstances of her bereavement, Kim was advised to contact Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM) who put her in contact with the then named SAMM Abroad – the branch of the charity that exists specifically to support families affected by murder or manslaughter abroad. Kim then spoke to Eve Henderson, who was able to provide her with much needed specialist advice and support, given her own personal experience of losing her husband in France in 1997. Throughout her journey, Kim has remained in close contact with Eve and the charity and has since been appointed as a Director and Trustee. As such, she now helps to provide support and advice to other families who have experienced the loss of a loved-one to murder or manslaughter in a foreign country.

4.1.3. Case Three: James Kouzaris and James Cooper – Florida, USA (2011)

James Kouzaris was a 24-year-old university graduate with a friendly and approachable manner, a passion for travel and a desire to live life to the fullest. Family-oriented, good at sport and loved by those knew him, James was full of life, ambitious and hardworking. Having studied Town Planning at university, James was keen to find employment in regeneration, with aspirations of pursuing a career that would match his personal interests and satisfy his need to be outdoors whilst making a difference to the lives of those around him.

James was well-travelled and enjoyed meeting new people in countries all over the world. Back home, and during his time living in halls as an undergraduate student at Sheffield University, James met James Cooper and the two would quickly become very good friends. Their shared love for sport, combined sense of humour and their ongoing exchange of banter provided a solid foundation for their relationship, with the bond between them growing progressively stronger throughout their studies. After graduation, they remained in contact with one another, and their friendship continued even after their university years had come to an end.

For several years, James Cooper's family had hired a property in the Longboat Key area of Florida. It is a region well-known and widely marketed for its white sand beaches, waterfront golf-courses, fine dining, and luxury coastal resorts (Visit Florida, 2020). Despite having only returned to the United Kingdom just ten days earlier – having spent some time travelling around South America, a part of the world he was particularly fond of – when asked if he would like to accompany the Cooper family once more on their annual trip to the USA James accepted the invitation without hesitation. In the April of 2011, with pre-holiday preparations complete,

the two James and the Cooper family boarded a plane bound for Florida, ready for what was set to be another exciting and enjoyable holiday together.

During their time in Florida, James Cooper turned 25. By way of celebrating the occasion, James and James attended a meal with the Cooper family on the night of the 15th of April 2011. After an enjoyable evening, James Cooper's family decided to head back to their accommodation, which was approximately a 10-minute drive away. Still in high spirits and keen to make the most of their time in Sarasota, James and James decided that they wanted to stay out a little while longer to continue the celebrations. Throughout the course of the night, they visited several bars in the area, had drinks together and enjoyed each other's company. At approximately 02:00 local time on the morning of the 16th of April 2011, James and James left the Gator Club bar and went in search of a place to find something to eat (*BBC News*, 29th March 2012).

During his time in South America, James had followed the Machu Pichu trail, which at its peak, sits at some 2,400 meters above sea-level, amidst the spectacular tropical mountain forests of Peru (UNESCO, 2020). His active lifestyle and passion for travel meant that walking was second nature to James and as a result, on leaving the bar in Sarasota, the thought of waiting for a taxi simply would not have occurred to him. Having instead decided to walk home, James and James set off on their journey through the streets of Sarasota. It was not long before they discovered a donut store, which given the time, had closed for the night several hours prior to their arrival. Given this setback, they decided to continue walking in the hope of finding an alternative place to eat. However, unknown to them at the time, as their journey progressed, James and James had begun to leave behind the relative safety of downtown Sarasota and were approaching an area which had reputation for being one of the most dangerous in the region

(Guardian, 2011). In stark contrast to the upmarket, luxury feel of downtown Sarasota, Newtown – an area found on the periphery of the city – is characterised by unemployment, poverty, and high levels of criminality (*The Evening Standard*, 14th June 2011). It would later be described as a “neighbourhood that is never mentioned in the glossy tourist brochures that lure 41,000 Britons to Sarasota every year” (*The Express*, 23rd April 2011).

At this stage of their journey, it is understood that the two men took a wrong turn. This decision would ultimately take them further into Newtown, and on into a housing estate known locally as “The Courts” (*The Telegraph*, 18th April 2011). From this point onwards, they were being watched. They had been spotted by the then 16-year-old Shawn Tyson, who was sitting on his veranda, adjacent to the path that the two men were following. Having been given the street name of “Young Savage”, Tyson was suspected of having links to a notorious gang in the area known as “Second Line”, and was already known to the authorities in the local area (*Birmingham Mail*, 18th April 2011). Sensing an opportunity, Tyson decided to follow James and James before eventually confronting them in the street just a short while later. Armed with a .22 caliber weapon, Tyson held the two men at gunpoint, forced them to lower their trousers to prevent their escape and proceeded with what would come to be described as a “botched robbery” (*The Guardian*, 22nd March 2011). Upon realising that both men had very little money in their possession, rather than allowing them to continue their journey home, Tyson instead chose to shoot them both as they desperately attempted to make their way to safety.

At approximately 02:56 on 16th of April 2011, Sarasota police officers responded to a 911 report from a Newtown resident who had described hearing gunfire in the area (*The Guardian*, 22nd March 2011). On their arrival, the officers discovered the bodies of James Kouzaris and

James Cooper on opposite sides of the street. Both had received multiple gunshot wounds and had died at the scene as a result of their injuries (*The Guardian*, 29th March 2012).

Shawn Tyson was arrested by the Sarasota police department the day after the shooting occurred. Despite his age, due to the severity of the crime, Tyson was charged as an adult with two counts of first-degree murder and remained in police custody to await his trial (*BBC News*, 29th March 2012). The statutory provision known as a “mandatory direct file” meant that as with other cases of homicide, Tyson’s case would have to be heard in an adult rather than juvenile court (Hugelet, 2014).

During the trial, which concluded in March 2012, it would come to light that Tyson was in police custody in the days leading up to his encounter with James and James. He had been arrested for discharging a firearm where he had reportedly “sprayed a car carrying a group of teenage girls with gunfire” (*The Telegraph*, 29th March 2012). However, with insufficient evidence to secure a conviction for aggravated assault, Tyson was released from custody and allowed to return to his home in Newtown, where he lived with his mother. Within the next twenty-four hours, he was able to gain possession of the firearm which he would ultimately use to murder the two friends in the early hours of the morning of the 16th of April 2011.

The trial resulted in Tyson been found guilty of two counts of first-degree murder. In the state of Florida, whilst the death penalty can be given in cases of homicide, offenders under the age of 17 are exempt from capital punishment (Wilson, 2000). Having listened to impact statements from the two James’ friends who were in attendance, Judge Rick de Furia sentenced Tyson to two life sentences, to run consecutively, without the possibility of parole (ITV News, 2012).

The news of the sentence, which was welcomed by both friends and families meant that Tyson would spend the rest of life in prison, and with no chance of being eligible for release. However, in 2014, an appeal against the convictions later led to the initial sentence being overturned after a Supreme Court hearing questioned the imposition of mandatory life sentences without parole for juvenile homicide offenders (see *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. 460, 132 S. Ct. 2455, 183 L. Ed. 2d 407, 23 Fla. L. Weekly Supp. 455, 2012). Considering the ruling that such sentences had violated the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment, Associate Senior Judge, James R. Case stated "[W]e must reverse Mr. Tyson's sentence and remand his case for a new sentencing hearing" (*Tyson v. State*, 2014).

Two years later, in a re-sentencing hearing, Judge Charles E Roberts sentenced Shawn Tyson to two life terms at Lynn N Silvertooth Judicial Centre. He acknowledged that whilst there were special considerations when sentencing a juvenile on murder charges, he had not been persuaded that Tyson could be rehabilitated and that he had made the "conscious decision to kill both victims" (*BBC News*, 16 June 2016). Changes made by the Florida Supreme Court meant that due to his age, it was not possible for Tyson to be sentenced to life without parole – his case will therefore be up for review after a period of 25 years.

In the time following the death of their son, Pete and Hazel Kouzaris regularly attended meetings organised by the charity Murdered Abroad where they were able to reflect on and share their own experience of bereavement, as well as meet other who have faced found themselves in similar circumstances. They now offer their time to support the charity in organising and running the members meeting which is held annually and which provides an opportunity for families to come together to remember their loved ones and provide mutual support to one another. In addition to this, Pete and Hazel launched their own charity in

remembrance of James and James. “Always a Chance” aims to prevent violent crime by funding projects working with young people who are outside full-time education and employment, encouraging them to re-enter the education system or supporting them into employment (Always a Chance, 2020).

4.1.4. Case Four: Liam Hogan – Ierapetra, Crete (2006)

Described by his teachers as an “angel”, Liam Hogan was a happy, caring little boy who loved making friends and spending time with his family. His parents, John and Natasha, who met at the local pub in Bristol, later married when Liam was 2 years old and they lived together until the arrival of their second child, Mia. Both John and Natasha were hardworking parents – John was self-employed, whilst Natasha worked in health care – a career for which she had a great passion. During the early stages of their marriage, John and Natasha faced several difficult challenges, including the suicide of John’s older brother. Despite their commitment to one another, the increasing pressure of John’s family circumstances, combined with worries about work began to put a strain on their relationship. As time passed, Natasha became increasingly concerned about the stability of their marriage and she often described to her mother, Elizabeth Chandler (Liam’s grandmother) her unhappiness and how she felt the need for some time and space away from John. Despite this, in an attempt to re-build their relationship, John and Natasha decided to go on holiday together, with their son Liam (aged six) and daughter, Mia (aged 2), in the hope that the change of scenery might be beneficial to the whole family. So, in August of 2006, the family travelled to the Greek island of Crete, where they had booked to stay in a hotel in a town named Ierapetra, located on the southeast coast of the island.

During their stay, the atmosphere between John and Natasha became progressively more fractious. On the phone to her mother, Natasha described how she and John had been arguing regularly, and how she was becoming increasingly concerned for her own safety and the wellbeing of her children. She described how John had shouted at her in public and had threatened to cut the holiday short before telling Liam, who was crying hysterically, that his parents were going to split up. After ending the call with her mother, Natasha went to find John and the children, and made her way back to the room where they had been staying, which was located on the fourth floor of the hotel building. On entering the room, she saw that John had frantically been packing the cases in preparation to leave the hotel, despite being informed earlier in the day there were no alternative return flights to the United Kingdom available. The family remained in the hotel room, with John repeatedly walking out onto the balcony, whilst Natasha continued to rearrange and properly pack their belongings into their suitcases (*The Daily Record*, 27th March 2008). Due to her growing concern about the circumstances and John's increasingly irrational behaviour, Natasha rang her mother, Elizabeth, who was back in England, once again, saying "it's gone quiet, I don't know where they are". Whilst Natasha's back was momentarily turned, John Hogan took a hold of both of his children and proceeded to jump from the fourth-floor balcony, and fell to the ground approximately 50ft below (Press Association, 2008). A witness at the hotel later described the incident in greater detail, noting how she observed "two children standing at the edge of the balcony, motionless, when a male [John Hogan] came forward between the two children and pushed them off... the same male then fell almost instantaneously, just above the two children" (*The Bristol Post*, 2nd June 2011).

Shortly afterward the incident occurred, Elizabeth received another phone call, this time from the hotel where the family had been staying. The hotel receptionist informed her that "something terrible had happened", and that "John and the children had gone over the fourth-

floor balcony”. Back in Crete, realising what had happened, Natasha, who was a trained nurse, immediately rushed to the assistance of her children where she first attempted to resuscitate Liam – who had sustained serious injuries as a result of the fall – whilst waiting for the local ambulance service to arrive. Natasha’s daughter, Mia, suffered a broken arm and was being cared for by the hotel staff; whilst clearly shaken by her ordeal, fortunately, Mia was not in a life-threatening condition. When the local paramedic arrived at the scene, despite their efforts, they were unable to save the life of Liam who was pronounced dead at the scene, before his body was taken to hospital. John Hogan suffered leg, chest and arm injuries and was detained by the Greek authorities, and escorted from the scene to a secure hospital room in Heraklion, located approximately 90km away from the hotel resort (*The Bristol Post*, 2nd June 2011).

In the days following the incident, John Hogan remained under police guard at the University General Hospital, and was arrested on suspicion of the murder of his son, and the attempted murder of his daughter. Shortly afterwards, Natasha and Mia made their way back to the United Kingdom and they were soon followed by the body of six-year-old Liam. Once Liam’s body had been repatriated, an inquest was opened to examine the circumstances surrounding his death. However, the inquest was subsequently adjourned “pending further enquiries by the Greek authorities” (*BBC News*, 30th November 2011). Later in August, on completion of the police investigation into the incident, John Hogan was charged with the murder of his son and the attempted murder of his daughter, and was held in a prison in Korydallos, Athens. He remained in prison until the date of his trial, during which time he made an unsuccessful attempt on his life.

The trial, which took place in January 2008 – almost 18-months after the incident – returned a not guilty verdict, with the court ruling that he [John Hogan] was “incapable” of murdering his

son because of his mental state with the senior judge at the trial concluding that his “responsibility was diminished” and that there was a “good defence to murder on the grounds of insanity” (*BBC News*, 30th November 2011). Following the trial, having been found not guilty, John Hogan was committed to a psychiatric unit for a minimum of three years.

Despite the not guilty verdict, in April of 2008 the U.K. inquest into the circumstances surrounding Liam’s death resumed. Paul Forrest, the coroner responsible for handling the case, concluded that John Hogan unlawfully killed his son stating that:

“The evidence in this inquest, unchallenged, and clearly beyond reasonable doubt demonstrated that the act of pushing the children off the balcony was one which no reasonable and sober person would have perpetrated... the facts were abundantly clear in that the children were seen to be pushed off the balcony, objectively and unlawful act” (*BBC News*, 2008b).

However, despite this, just six months later in November 2008, John Hogan won permission to seek a judicial review in an attempt to overturn the verdict of unlawful killing. Whilst awaiting news of his appeal, Hogan lost a legal bid to return to the United Kingdom when his application to return was rejected by a court hearing in Athens (*BBC News*, 30th November 2011).

In May of 2009, the High Court in London quashed the verdict of unlawful killing with Sir Anthony May and Mrs Justice Dobbs suggesting that the case required further consideration because the original verdict was flawed (*BBC News*, 30th November 2011). Their ruling was based on “a really quite serious error of law”, where they suggested that the coroner in the original inquest had not addressed John Hogan’s mental state when arriving at a verdict (*ibid*). The following month, having spent 16 months in a Greek psychiatric unit, Magistrates in

Athens decided that Hogan had made an “adequate recovery and would not pose a threat to himself, or other passengers during the flight back to Britain” (*BBC News*, 30th November 2011). Despite the confidence of the Greek authorities in Hogan’s recovery, on arrival in the U.K. he was immediately admitted to a psychiatric hospital for continued care, and was advised not to attempt to contact Natasha, Mia, or other members of the family.

Later in 2011, a new inquest was opened in order to examine once more the circumstances surrounding Liam’s death and the mental state of John Hogan at the time of the incident. The second inquest heard evidence from eyewitnesses who saw Hogan “stand behind his two children and push them off the fourth-floor balcony before jumping to the ground himself” (*BBC News*, 30th November 2011). Furthermore, fresh evidence was provided by a British-based consultant forensic psychologist, Akuntundi Akinkummi, who said that he “did not believe [John] Hogan was insane or suffering from a ‘disease of the mind’” in Greece in 2006 and instead suggested that “he may have come to the conclusion that if he could not have the kids, then she wasn’t” (*The Guardian*, 30th November 2011). After further consideration, the Avon coroner, Maria Voisin, returned a second verdict of unlawful killing stating that “Liam’s father was not labouring with a defect of the mind [and therefore] the most appropriate verdict based on all the evidence is that of unlawful killing” (*ibid*). Despite the coroner’s verdict of unlawful killing, there has been no prosecution of John Hogan in the United Kingdom for murder.

It should be noted that two interviews were conducted which relate to the case of Liam Hogan. The first was conducted on Saturday 1st December 2018 with Elizabeth Chandler, Liam’s grandmother and the second, was conducted on Saturday 14th April 2020 with Brian Chandler, Liam’s step-grandfather. The interviews were conducted separately and provided an

opportunity for Elizabeth and Brian to reflect on the emotional impact of their bereavement, as well as the practical implications of the murder which manifested in the time immediately following the incident, and in the weeks, months and even years afterwards – their stories are explored in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Both Brian and Elizabeth regularly attended meetings organised by the then named charity Support After Murder and Manslaughter Abroad (SAMM Abroad). They found comfort in being able to talk to and listen to other people with similar experiences, many of whom were facing similar difficulties, attributable to the international nature of the crime. As a result of the support that had he and his family had received from the Murdered Abroad, when offered the opportunity to become more formally involved in the day-to-day running of the charity, Brian gladly accepted. He is now Treasurer, Director and Trustee of Murdered Abroad and works alongside Eve and others to provide support and assistance to families bereaved by murder in a foreign country. As such, during the interview, Brian, like Eve, was able to provide an account of his own personal experience of bereavement but was also able to draw from the extensive understanding he has developed because of his efforts to support others.

4.1.5. Case Five: Nicholas Mockford – Brussels, Belgium (2012)

Father of three, Nicholas Mockford – known as Nick – was described by his family as a “genuinely lovely, clean-cut, mild-mannered family man” (*The Independent*, 26th October 2012). Having worked at ExxonMobil – an American multinational oil and gas corporation – since the 1970s, Nick progressed to a managerial position within the company, working as head of marketing for interim technologies where he promoted new, more environmentally friendly fuels. Outside of work, he enjoyed sailing, playing golf, and riding his red Ducati motorbike.

He met his first wife, Alison Eagleton, in 1977. They were together for 20 years and during this time they had three children - Catherine, Elizabeth, and Richard. Due to the international nature of Nick's work, the couple often spent time living abroad and were frequent visitors to Belgium. In 1997, whilst they were away, Nick told Alison that he was facing redundancy, and that she should return to England. Having done so, it soon became apparent that Nick had in fact met someone else and later that year he and Alison were separated and divorced. Nick continued to work for ExxonMobil and spent most of his time living between Belgium and Singapore. He went on to marry again in January of 1998, and spent the next 15 years with his second wife, Mary.

Several years later, in the early hours of the morning of 15th of October 2014, Nick's first wife, Alison received a phone call from her eldest daughter Catherine, informing her that Nick had been killed in Belgium – apparently in a car accident. Shocked by what she had heard, Alison immediately contacted her other children, and arranged to meet them to share the news.

In the weeks after the initial reports, Alison and her family received further news that Nick had not died in a car crash – he had in fact been shot. According to the newspaper reports at the time, Nick had been out for a meal at Da Marcello – a local Italian restaurant – with his wife, Mary, on Sunday 14th October and had been shot three times whilst making his way back to his car at approximately 22:00. Mary, who was reportedly beaten and covered in blood, survived the attack. Despite their efforts, paramedics were unable to save Nick, who died because of his injuries on the way to hospital (*The Independent*, 26th October 2012).

Eyewitness accounts suggested that two men were seen running away from the scene shortly after the shots had been fired, but the circumstances surrounding the murder remain unclear.

In the early stages of their investigation, the Belgian Police stated that they were considering all possible motives for the shooting, including a carjacking, although Nick's car was not stolen during the incident. Due to the nature of the incident, the Belgian prosecutor's office said that there was a "judicial instruction" from Martine Quintin, the investigating judge, that meant they could give no "explanation" and no detail about the killing, which according to a spokesman, was "usual in such a serious murder investigation" (*The Independent*, 26th October 2012).

Despite the lack of information about the circumstances and the police investigation into the murder, as part of their enquires, Alison's three children were asked by Belgian police to visit the country to provide witness statements; due to her being divorced from Nick, Alison was considered a civil party and therefore was not asked to accompany her children. On arrival they received no assistance from the consular office since the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had previously contacted Mary, Nick's current wife, and had been told that she required no assistance moving forward.

Although no-one has ever been apprehended or prosecuted for the murder, there are several speculative theories about the motivation for Nick's murder. One such theory suggests that Nick may have been the victim of a targeted attack, with an anonymous family member suggesting that the "calm and quick manner of the shooting" was indicative of a targeted hit (*The Independent*, 26th October 2012). Describing it as one obvious line of enquiry, Belgian police were considering the possibility that Nick had been the victim of a contract killing, due to his link to the global oil company. Indeed, several hypothetical claims were made on Belgian websites that he had been killed by eco-terrorists, angered by ExxonMobil's involvement in Nigeria, Chad, and Indonesia (*The Daily Mail*, 27th October 2012). It was also suggested that

Nick was the victim of a failed robbery. Speaking to the Sunday Times, Mary suggested that at the time of the incident, she heard men shouting “Money, money, car, car” as they attacked the couple. According to the Daily Mail (2012), detectives investigating the murder suggested that Nick was killed by a “nervous criminal who experienced violent rage before firing the bullets in quick succession”.

Despite a variety of potential explanations, the Belgian police were unable to make an arrest in connection with Nick’s death, meaning that for Alison and her family many questions remained unanswered. Indeed, in the years following the incident, Alison was provided with very little information from the Belgian authorities about the progress of the police investigation, or the subsequent handling of this case. So, too, she received little support from the U.K. authorities and was never offered the support of a Police Family Liaison Office (FLO), which is common in cases of murder, both abroad and in the U.K.

Although Nick’s case is unsolved, Alison has remained committed to finding out the truth about the circumstances surrounding his death. Almost two years after the incident occurred, whilst reading the newspaper, Alison came across a story about the work of the charity Murdered Abroad. She decided to make contact and immediately felt a sense of relief, knowing that she was able to talk to someone who was genuinely able to understand her experiences. The research interview, which was conducted on Wednesday 7th of August 2019, was organised following a talk delivered at the 2019 Murdered Abroad annual meeting – details of which can be found in Chapter Three.

4.1.6. Case Six: Laura Hill – Buenos Aires, Argentina (2007)

Described as being “close to her family” and “free-spirited”, 25-year-old Laura Hill – like many other people her age – was a keen traveller. She enjoyed visiting new countries, having new experiences and loved the accompanying sense of adventure and independence.

In late September of 2007, whilst abroad, Laura made a phone call to her mother, Alison, informing her that she would be unable to attend their pre-planned holiday to Portugal as she had missed her flight back to the United Kingdom, and was stuck in Argentina. The call came as a surprise to Alison, given that neither she nor her husband were aware of Laura’s plans to travel to South America. Whilst on the phone, Laura informed them that she was there to attend a concert, but this provided little reassurance to Alison and her husband who, over the next couple of days, became increasingly concerned about their daughter’s welfare, not knowing who she was with, or where she was staying. Indeed, unbeknownst to them, Laura was in Argentina, not to attend a concert, but instead had accompanied another individual to the country with the intention of smuggling cocaine back into Europe. It would later become apparent that Laura had become involved with people connected to Angelmiro Cáveres García – known locally as “El Mago” or “Tabla” a Colombian gang who were operating an international drug-smuggling network with links to London (*Buenos Aires Times*, 7th March 2019).

Despite being unaware of Laura’s situation, in the days after learning of her whereabouts, Alison experienced an ongoing sense of unease, and a “terrible feeling [that] something really horrible had happened to her”. On the 2nd of October 2007, Alison was at home when there was a knock on the door. Realising that it was the police, she immediately knew something

was wrong. Indeed, the police officer proceeded to inform her that Laura had died in Argentina, and that her death was due to natural causes – a pulmonary edema, according to information they had received from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Left in state of shock and disbelief, Alison immediately contacted the FCDO to try to find out more about what had happened, and to seek guidance on what she should do next. She was informed once more that there were no suspicious circumstances, and that Laura had sustained no injuries prior to her death. Despite asking repeatedly if she should visit Argentina, Alison was advised that she and her husband should instead remain in the United Kingdom, and await further information from the Argentine authorities.

Early reports from the Argentine police suggested that Laura had been found on a park bench in the San Telmo neighbourhood of Buenos Aires – an area popular with young British tourists – and a post-mortem examination found that she had a high level of cocaine in her blood at the time of her death, indicative of a potentially self-inflicted overdose (*BBC News*, 12th April 2016). The magistrate in charge of the case at the time reported that “there were no blows or other injuries to suggest she was maltreated... it was clear that the death was caused by excess” (*The Daily Mail*, 1st August 2008) – information which was passed to the FCDO and then onto Laura’s family. However, describing her daughter as a “fit and healthy young woman” who “never ailed from anything” Alison was convinced that Laura had not died of natural causes, nor a self-inflicted overdose, and that there was more to the story than she and her husband had been told.

Uncertain of where to turn for help, Alison contacted the local coroner and made it clear that she was concerned that Laura’s death was suspicious, and that more needed to be done by the Argentine authorities to investigate what had happened. Without realising, Alison and her

husband had found themselves at the start of what would become a long and difficult search for the truth about the circumstances of their daughter's death.

To ensure that there could be an inquest into Laura's death in the United Kingdom, Alison also contacted a funeral director to begin organising the repatriation of Laura's body. Aware of the fact that the Argentine authorities may have removed some of her organs during their post-mortem examination – a practice that is common in most places around the world – Alison was insistent that Laura's body be returned along with her organs, to allow the United Kingdom authorities to conduct a more detailed forensic autopsy; she was assured by the funeral director in Argentina that this would be the case. Laura's body was returned to the United Kingdom in the December of 2007 and in January of 2008, Alison was contacted by her local police who informed her that Laura had been repatriated with no organs, and very few personal belongings.

Clearly distressed by the news, Alison and her husband were becoming increasingly concerned about the standard of the Argentine police investigation into their daughter's death, and the subsequent handling of their case by the Argentine authorities. Frustrated and in need of support, Alison was able to speak to a reporter from the Daily Mail newspaper, who was based in Argentina and had taken an interest in their story. Through their network of contacts in the country, the reporter was able to obtain further details about the case including photos from the scene of the crime and the mortuary where Laura had been taken. In direct contradiction to the information that had so far been provided to Alison and her husband, these photos revealed that Laura had in fact sustained several injuries prior to her death, including a broken nose, a split lip and bruising to her face and body.

Following this unsettling discovery, Alison decided to contact the prosecutor in charge of the case in Argentina, insisting that more needed to be done regarding the investigation. Once again, she was told that there were “no suspicious circumstances and that there was no reason whatsoever to investigate her death further”.

Despite Alison’s best efforts, several years passed with no further developments. However, in 2010 she learned for the first time about Laura’s potential involvement in the drug-smuggling network following a Lancashire Police operation named Operation Greengage – a four-year investigation that identified and disrupted an extensive organised crime group operating across the United Kingdom, Europe, and South America (*BBC News*, 12th April 2016). Through communication with a police officer involved in the investigation, Alison was able to identify a potential connection between Laura and several men recently convicted for drug-smuggling offences. Keen to learn more about their relationship and the circumstances surrounding her daughter’s death, Alison contacted the chaplain at several prisons across the country to explain her situation, and to request a meeting with the individuals concerned. These meetings provided an opportunity to speak directly to individuals with knowledge of the circumstances of Laura’s death. Indeed, during one such conversation, she was told that Laura was asked to smuggle drugs out of the country, and when she refused to do so, she quickly realised that her life was in danger. From these conversations, it also became apparent that the Argentine authorities knew that Laura was in the country and rather than arresting or deporting her, they decided to continue monitoring her during which time she would ultimately lose her life.

Later in 2016, an inquest was opened in the United Kingdom to explore the circumstances surrounding Laura’s death, during which several individuals were able to offer their opinion on what might have unfolded in Argentina almost ten years previously. Alan Bayle – a former

forensic senior examiner for the Metropolitan Police – told the court, that having examined photographs from the scene of the crime, he was sure that Laura had been assaulted before her body was moved to the place it was found (*The Argus*, 11th April 2016). Indeed, it would later be confirmed that rather than being found on a park bench – as had previously been reported – Laura was in fact found on the stairs outside the apartment where she was staying (*The Daily Mail*, 1st August 2008). So, too, convicted drug importer, Jason Bowley, told the inquest of the last time he saw Laura alive. He recalled that he had been asked to go to Argentina to help Laura after she had found herself in “some trouble”, and that she had “somehow become tangled up in the drugs gang and was reluctant to accept a job overseeing the smuggling of drugs out of the country” (*The Argus*, 11th April 2016).

Having considered the information, the coroner for East Sussex, Alan Craze, described the death as “suspicious and unexplained” (*BBC News*, 28th May 2018). He returned a narrative verdict, stating that whilst “Ms Hill may have been injected against her will, there simply was not enough evidence to prove it” (*ibid*). Following the verdict, he also criticised the Argentine police – who he believed had been bribed – and described their investigation as “hopeless”.

Reassured by the coroner’s verdict, Alison continued on her journey to discover the truth about what had happened to her daughter. Having asked the coroner to write a letter to the Argentine embassy, Alison was subsequently able to organise a meeting with the Argentine ambassador in London. During the meeting, she described the flaws in the investigation into Laura’s death and detailed what had happened in the years since. The meeting, combined with the renewed media interest led to a re-opening of the case – a considerable step-forward in the Alison’s search for answers. However, despite her ongoing efforts, no-one has ever been identified, apprehended, or prosecuted in relation to Laura’s death. Alison now believes that a conviction

is unlikely but lives in hope that one day the narrative verdict may be overturned – the emotional and practical implications of her experience are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

In the time following Laura’s death, whilst watching the news, Alison saw Eve Henderson – director of the then named Support After Murder and Manslaughter International – who was being interviewed about the difficulties faced by families who have lost someone abroad in suspicious circumstances. She decided to contact the charity directly and after several conversations over the phone, began attending their annual support meetings. Alison, like many others in similar circumstances, found the meetings to be both supportive and informative. The research interview, which was conducted on Wednesday 7th August 2019, was organised following a talk delivered at the Murdered Abroad 2019 annual meeting – details of which can be found in Chapter Three.

4.1.7. Case Seven: Joanna Parish – Auxerre, France (1990)

Joanna Parish was described by her father, Roger, as a bright, intelligent, and caring young woman. Despite re-locating as a family on several occasions during her childhood, Joanna always adapted well to her new home and school environments, and was quickly able to establish relationships with both her teachers and fellow classmates. As she moved into secondary school, Joanna had begun to develop a passion for language – something which she and Roger shared. She studied French, German and Spanish and as she progressed towards the end of her compulsory education, Joanna was encouraged by her teachers to consider applying to study at university. Having done so, she was offered a place at her first-choice university –the University of Leeds – and she was excited to begin her life as an undergraduate

student studying for a degree in French – as were her parents, who were proud to see her pursuing her passion for languages further.

Joanna's first two years at university provided her with opportunities to meet new people, learn new skills and have new experiences. During this time, she grew in confidence, developing both her academic and social skills whilst simultaneously advancing her knowledge of the French language. As part of her degree, Joanna was given the opportunity to take part in a placement year abroad. Excited by the opportunity and keen to travel, Joanna keenly accepted the offer and in her third of undergraduate study, travelled to the Auxerre region of France. Joanna quickly adapted to the French way of life, living in a small apartment with her flatmate, who she had met whilst travelling. Whilst she was abroad, she worked at a local secondary school named Lycée Jacques Amyot, where she taught English. Being immersed in the small French community helped Joanna to develop her language skills, which she was eager to demonstrated to her parents when they visited by engaging with the locals, and ordering in French at a nearby restaurant.

In addition to her work at the school, Joanna decided to offer her services as a language tutor, teaching English to local French children in her spare time. Having learned of the idea from a conversation with a fellow student at the university, Joanna decided to advertise her tuition in the local newspaper. Excited to share her passion for language and keen to help others, Joanna accepted a request to meet with an individual who had responded to her advertisement asking for English lessons for his son. Joanna left for the appointment on the 16th of May 1990 and she did not return.

Back in England, Joanna's father Roger was at work when he received a call from the company welfare officer asking if they could meet urgently. Having agreed, Roger was then taken to another room where he was met by two police officers. At this point he knew that something was wrong. He was informed by one of the police officers that Joanna had been killed in France. Shocked by the news, Roger was immediately put in contact with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who were able to confirm that Joanna's body had been found on the 17th of May in the River Yonne, approximately three miles away from Auxerre. Having yet to process the situation himself, Roger then had to share the news with his wife, Pauline, and their younger son, Barney.

In the hours and days that followed the notification of Joanna's death, Roger and his family received an outpouring of support from their friends, family, and members of their local community – support which would continue for many years to come. Whilst there was some initial communication from the French police regarding their efforts to investigate the circumstances, there was little scope for collaboration with the police in the U.K. and therefore the flow of information to Roger and his family was restricted. However, it soon became apparent that the police in France had no definitive leads, and the circumstances surrounding Joanna's death remained unclear. Despite their best efforts in the following weeks and months – which included regular visits to Auxerre, speaking to locals, and the production and distribution of thousands of appeal leaflets – the case would remain unsolved for more than 30 years. Whilst there were several potential lines of inquiry established during this time, none were substantiated and therefore were disregarded from the investigation.

In 2010, due to a lack of developments, the French police decided to close the case. However, just two years later in 2012, the case was opened following the emergence of new information

which directed suspicion towards an individual named Michel Fourniret – a prominent serial killer who had been convicted in 2004 of the murder of seven other women in the Auxerre region. Fourniret was arrested along with his wife, Monique Olivier who was also later jailed for complicity, after it was revealed that she would sometimes drive around and pick up unsuspecting victims for her husband. Whilst in prison, Olivier made a statement which suggested that Fourniret was responsible for Joanna’s murder, however she later retracted her statement, claiming that it had been made under pressure.

In addition to this, it would also later transpire that DNA evidence obtained from the location where Joanna was found, which could have potentially provided proof of Fourniret’s involvement in her murder, had become contaminated, and thus was rendered useless and inadmissible. Despite these setbacks, Roger was convinced that Fourniret was responsible for Joanna’s murder and several years later in 2018, his suspicions were confirmed.

Whilst in prison, Fourniret – who was already serving life a life sentence without the possibility of parole – admitted to the murder of three more women, including Joanna. Given their desire to prove Fourniret’s involvement in as many of these cases as possible, the French authorities wanted more time to gather evidence before prosecuting him in a court of law. This, combined with outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, meant that Roger had to wait several years following his confession for Fourniret to face trial for Joanna’s murder. Before being able to do so, Michel Fourniret died in prison on 10th May 2021. Despite the absence of a formal conviction, both the confession and Fourniret’s death were moments of considerable significance for Roger and his family and signified the end of a 30-year search for the truth about what happened to Joanna.

In the time following Joanna's death, Roger became aware of the then named Support After Murder and Manslaughter Abroad and began to attend the annual support meetings. He found comfort in learning about the experiences of others in similar circumstances and valued the opportunity to share his own experiences. Roger remains close to the charity and speaks highly of the work they do to support others who have been bereaved through murder or manslaughter abroad. The interview with Roger Parrish was conducted on Friday 14th May 2021, via telephone, due to the restrictions on face-to-face data collection imposed following the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic. Due to technical issues, the recording of this interview could be not used. Roger kindly agreed to complete a second interview in June 2021, the recording of which was subsequently transcribed and included in the analysis. During the interview, Roger spoke openly about his experiences. He provided personal reflections on Joanna's character and recalled in detail his reaction to the news that she had been killed. So, too, he offered an incredible insight into the journey that he and his family have been on over the last 30 years, and was able to recall the additional difficulties they faced due to the international nature of the circumstances. These difficulties are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

4.2. Conclusion to the Chapter

This chapter has provided a descriptive account of each of the cases of murder abroad that have been included in the research. As previously mentioned, the details of these cases were obtained via a search of the online newspaper repository, Nexis. The stories were then substantiated by the personal reflections of the family members obtained during the semi-structured interview process. To reiterate, the purpose of this chapter was to provide an insight into the circumstances surrounding the death of the primary victim, and to highlight the key

elements of the post-homicide journey for the surviving family members – otherwise known as co-victims.

Each case is unique – not least due to the location in which the murder occurred – but also regarding the way the case was handled by the relevant authorities, the subsequent legal and judicial proceedings and ultimately whether anyone was apprehended and convicted for the crime. Despite the variables that exist in the individual narratives, there are several key elements of the post-homicide journey that feature frequently in the stories that have been presented in this chapter.

As such, in the presentation of the research findings, the following chapter investigates these key elements in greater detail, drawing heavily from the semi-structured interview transcripts to highlight, and explore the practical and emotional implications of losing a loved-one to murder in a foreign country.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

MAKING SENSE OF MURDER ABROAD

5.1. Introduction

The primary aim of this chapter – which is divided into two distinct but inter-related parts, is to make sense of murder abroad. In other words, to provide an answer to the research question that lies at the heart of the thesis: *What impact does murder which takes place in a foreign country have on the “post-homicide experience” of the surviving family members, otherwise known as “co-victims” who reside in the United Kingdom?* Throughout the chapter, several key themes are presented, and their significance discussed, with reference to a variety of inter-connected audiences, including those who were directly involved in the research itself; those who might experience murder in these circumstances in the future; and those who have the responsibility of providing emotional and practical support to families following their bereavement. Where appropriate, this chapter establishes links between the research findings and the inter-disciplinary body of literature that was presented in Chapter Two. These links help to identify where and how the thesis contributes to the academic understanding of murder in general and, more specifically, to the body of knowledge that concerns the post-homicide experiences of co-victims of murder which occurs abroad.

It is important to reiterate that this chapter provides a platform on which the stories of a unique group of individuals can be shared. These individuals have experienced bereavement resulting from murder in a foreign country and its associated consequences – of which there are many. Above all else, they continue to live with the untimely and irreversible absence of a husband, sister, son, daughter, grandson, or other family member as a result of the most serious form of

violent crime – murder. Their words are used throughout this chapter to highlight and explore several key themes that feature in their collective experience of co-victimisation in these relatively unique, but particularly challenging circumstances. It is therefore appropriate to note that this thesis is indebted to the families who have willingly participated in the research, and their resolve in re-calling, often in great detail, the events which have change their worlds beyond recognition and for their consent in the publication and dissemination of the research findings.

Those who endure the loss of a loved-one to murder in a foreign country are faced with a multitude of challenges in the days, weeks, months, and sometimes even years that follow. Having been notified of the murder (formally referred to as a “Death Notification”), families embark on a journey, otherwise known as the post-homicide experience (Armour, 2002), that often has no clearly defined route nor a readily identifiable conclusion. Based on a thematic analysis – the process of which is discussed more comprehensively in Chapter Three – the first part of this findings and discussion chapter documents, explores and makes sense of the post-homicide experiences of co-victims of murder abroad, with particular attention given to the practical implications of their bereavement.

As such, having highlighted the distinct nature of murder abroad, this part of the chapter draws attention to the following key themes which emerged from discussions with the research participants: (1) the notification of the murder; (2) practical issues attributable to the murder, including language barriers, repatriation, international travel and the associated costs; (3) the overall response of the host country including their perception of foreign visitors, the role of various agencies of the criminal justice system and issues associated with inter-jurisdictional murder investigations; and, (4) the role of the media which includes the impact of publicity,

the disproportionate representation of cases of murder, the consequences of sensationalism and potential advantages of publicity. Within each of these overarching themes are several sub-themes which help to guide and direct the discussion, and which are presented in the table below:

Theme	Part	Sub-Themes
Notification of the Murder	One	Sense-Making Tasked-Oriented Coping Mechanisms Legacy Making Activities Training (Notifier)
Practical Implications	One	Language Barriers and Translation Repatriation, and International Travel Financial Considerations
Response of the Host Country	One	Perception of Foreign Visitors The Role of the Criminal Justice System Interjurisdictional Murder Investigations
Media and Publicity	One	Representation of Murder in the Media Consequences of Sensationalism Advantages of Publicity
Emotional Implications	Two	Complication in the Grieving Process Recovery and Counselling
Sources and Extent of Support	Two	Informal Sources of Support Professional Services The Charity <i>Murdered Abroad</i> Peer-Support Network Social Comparison

Table 2: Overview of the themes and sub-themes highlighted by co-victims of murder abroad

Each theme is illustrated by a selection of direct quotations, and the inclusion of these often extended quotations provides a space for the voices of the interviewees to be heard without interruption – something which arguably should remain one of the primary goals of the qualitative researcher, especially when co-constructing knowledge based on the lived experiences of the participant. Indeed, in echoing the words of Bogdan and Biklen (1998), this research, in its entirety, aims to empower the voices of those who might otherwise have remained silent.

Having explored the practical elements of their post-homicide experience, the second part of the findings and discussion chapter focuses more specifically on the emotional impact of murder abroad, and explores the following key themes which emerged from discussions with the research participants: (1) complications in grieving and the process of recovery; and (2) the sources and extent of the support provided to families affected by murder in these circumstances. Here, the discussion is informed primarily by the pilot and concluding interview with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner, and also by the interview with Brian Chandler. Given their prominent roles in the charity Murdered Abroad, they were able to offer a more comprehensive insight into the support needs and expectations of those who are affected by murder in these circumstances. However, this part of the chapter is also substantiated by the words of the remaining families who participated in the research, to further demonstrate the importance of the support provided to them, mainly by Murdered Abroad in the time following their bereavement.

This findings and discussion chapter is presented in a thematic format. However, it is important to acknowledge that despite there being some elements of similarity in their post-homicide experience, the story of each family is unique and ultimately influenced by a variety of inter-related factors – including the country in which the murder occurred and the subsequent response of the relevant authorities both abroad and in the United Kingdom. Given that this thesis draws from only seven cases, it should be reiterated that the aim here is not to make generalisations, nor to portray co-victims of murder abroad as a homogenous group, but rather to draw from the individual, subjective experiences to present and explore the commonalities in these narratives. To emphasise this point, Brian Chandler – step-grandfather of Liam Hogan (Case Four) and Treasurer and Trustee of the charity Murdered Abroad – notes that:

Every case is different. Every case is unique. The circumstances, the country, the way that the press handle it. Every case is unique, so it's difficult to get an overall picture.

It is also worth noting that some cases are utilised to a greater extent than others to explore and substantiate the theme in discussion. This disparity, in part, is attributable to the information provided by the participants during the interview process, as some were able to provide a greater amount of detail, particularly if the case was more recent. Here we should also note that this variation exists regarding the country in which the murder occurred (and associated issues of language, culture and, legal systems); the quality of the police investigation; and ultimately, whether or not there was a trial and conviction for the crime. Nonetheless, when viewed holistically, the key elements of each individual story contribute towards the overall narrative experience of co-victimisation to murder which occurs in a foreign country.

The main elements of the post-homicide experience are expressed diagrammatically in Figure 1. It should be noted that despite beginning with The Notification of the Murder, themes are not presented in a hierarchical format. In other words, no one theme is seen as more important than the other. Instead, each theme forms an equally important element of the post-homicide experience of those who participated in the research.



Figure 1: Diagrammatical representation of the themes highlighted by co-victims of murder abroad.

To provide further context, structure, and direction, the chapter now begins with a brief discussion of the distinct nature of the phenomenon under investigation.

5.2. The Distinct Nature of Murder Abroad

Murder in any circumstance is profoundly traumatic and has been described as an irreversible, irreparable, life-changing event (Aldrich and Kallaviali, 2013; da Costa *et al.*, 2017). As was discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, this research has been informed and guided by the interdisciplinary body of literature, which, in a broad sense, concerns the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder. A variety of emotional and practical issues can manifest in the lives of co-victims of murder as a result of the intersection of the interpersonal, situational and criminal justice domains (Miranda, Molina and MacVane, 2010).

To elaborate, emerging particularly from within the academic fields of trauma and bereavement studies (Janoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997; Redmond, 1989; Connolly and Gordon, 2014) and victimology (Pemberton *et al.*, 2018), previous research has, for example, highlighted the disruptive nature of bereavement, particularly when it is violent or malicious in nature, such as in cases of murder (Milman *et al.*, 2018; Norris, 1992, Zedner, 1997). Indeed, it is well-documented that bereavement through murder is particularly traumatic and that it can lead to a variety of negative emotional and physical responses, including but not limited to, trouble sleeping, eating, and maintaining familial and social functions, shock, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Complicated or Prolonged Grief (Amick-McMullan *et al.*, 1991; Zinzow *et al.*, 2009; Denderen, 2017).

Previous research has also suggested that co-victims of murder can experience a range of practical issues which, at least in part, can be attributed to the unavoidable involvement of the

criminal justice system (Riches and Dawson, 1997; Campbell and Raja, 2001). Indeed, as noted by Malone (2007:387), “the period of emotional shutdown following a murder often coincides with the most intense period of police investigation”. So, too, research has indicated that given the media fascination with cases of murder, co-victims may also have to deal with reporters, journalists and photographers who are keen to obtain and report upon the details of their case. For many co-victims of murder, this media attention is viewed as an intrusion upon their privacy at a time when it is most needed and appreciated (Rock, 1998; Hertz, Prothrow-Stith and Cherry, 2005).

As was discussed more fully in Chapter Two, the majority of the pre-existing literature has focused its attention almost exclusively on the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder which takes place in national circumstances. As a result, notwithstanding some notable exceptions (Patel, 2003; Casey, 2011; SAMM Abroad, 2011; Baird, 2019; All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2019), criminology as a discipline, has largely neglected to consider the additional complexities that arise in cases of murder which occur in a foreign country. Whilst it is acknowledged that some elements of the post-homicide experience are common amongst co-victims of murder regardless of its location, it is important to note that when the murder takes place in another part of the world, the experiences of the surviving family members of the direct victim, who often reside in the United Kingdom, are shaped, and influenced by the international nature of the crime. In direct contrast to murder which occurs in national circumstances – where the victim, the perpetrator and the subsequent investigative and legal proceedings are contained within one country in particular – the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder abroad transcends both geographic and jurisdictional boundaries. Throughout this chapter, therefore, it is argued that the international nature of the crime further exacerbates some of the common elements of the post-homicide experience whilst

simultaneously introducing several, additional complications, that would have otherwise been absent, had the murder occurred in the United Kingdom.

To illustrate the distinct nature of murder abroad, Brian Chandler summarises the complexities that are characteristic of murder in these circumstances:

Very often you've got not only the language differences, but you've also got cultural differences, you've sometimes got the differences between this country and the country that it occurred in, you've got the distance and the difficulty of being able to understand the legal processes in a foreign country. So, it's a whole other level of trauma.

So, too, when drawing on her experience of working with families who have been bereaved through murder abroad, Eve Henderson highlights the complexities which result from the international nature of the crime:

Families are in total shock. It would be exactly the same circumstances had the murder have occurred in the UK. They have the trauma and the grief, but in addition, they've got to deal with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Coroner, and the Police. Families are thrust into a situation where, suddenly, they are having to cope with questions such as "Who does what?", and "Who is going to help us?". In the first few weeks and months, they don't know where to turn or what to do next. It's a tremendous, steep learning curve.

These opening words articulate the distinction between the experiences of co-victims of murder in general, and those who lose a loved one to murder in a foreign country. Indeed, the distinct nature of murder abroad is further reinforced by the work of Casey (2011:10) who noted that whilst the experience of bereavement will be similar to families affected by murder in England and Wales, there are a variety of additional "complexities, frustrations and difficulties" that are characteristic of bereavement in a foreign country. What follows therefore, is a comprehensive

account of the post-homicide experience of a small group of individuals who have been bereaved by murder in these relatively rare but particularly challenging circumstances.

PART ONE: THE PRACTICAL

IMPLICATIONS OF MURDER ABROAD

5.3. Notification of the Murder of a Loved-One Abroad (Death Notification)

Despite the variation in their overall experience of co-victimisation, attributable in part to the circumstances and location of the crime, co-victims of murder abroad share a common starting point in what Reed *et al.*, (2019) describe as “their post-murder lives”. The Death Notification, where family members learn of the unexpected and often violent death of a loved-one, signifies the starting point in the post-homicide experience and is considered by those affected by murder in these circumstances to be a defining moment in their narrative accounts of co-victimisation. Indeed, for some, if not all the families who participated in the research, it became clear through their words that the notification of death was symbolic of the fracture that exists between their lives before and after the murder occurred (Stewart *et al.*, 2000). This is perhaps not surprising given that De Leo *et al.*, (2020) suggest, the death notification constitutes a break in the recipient’s narrative story which creates painful memories related to the loss that will never be forgotten. To illustrate this point further, Eve Henderson – whose husband, Roderick (Jock) was murdered in Paris in 1997 (Case One) – describes “a life before and a life after it happened” as do Pete and Hazel Kouzaris – whose son, James was murdered in Florida in 2011 (Case Three) – who refer to “life before James and life after James”. So, too, Alison Hill (Case Six) describes her emotional reaction to her bereavement and reflects on the irreversible, life-changing nature of her experience:

I feel like it has destroyed parts of our life and made me incredibly sad inside. It's a sadness you can't describe. The word sad doesn't really cover how I feel. It's made me realise how strong a human being can be. It just completely changes your life, and you know it's never ever going to be the same again. It does change you. It changes your whole outlook on things.

When a murder occurs in the country in which the victim and their family reside, co-victims are likely to be informed of the murder by their local police force (for an overview of the formal death notification process in cases of murder see Miller, 2008), friends or other family members, often in person. However, when a murder occurs in international circumstances, the family members of the direct victim are often residing in another part of the world which further complicates one of the most delicate and potentially traumatising stages of the post-homicide experience (Reed *et al.*, 2019). Indeed, this distance is of significance, given that previous research by Stewart *et al.* (2001) has indicated that the notification process, which includes the words or phrases used to deliver the news, the characteristics of the person who is delivering the news, and the physical setting in which the notification is given, can greatly influence the extent to which the recipient is able to cope with news of the death.

It is worth noting that there was some variation in the way in which the families included in the research were notified of the death of their loved-one. In some cases, family members accompanied the direct victim to the foreign country – on holiday or on a weekend away – and were therefore informed by the local police service, or by other family members who were also abroad at the time. More common however, were those circumstances where the families of the victims were in a different country, usually their country of residence (the United Kingdom) at the time of the murder. In these cases, the news of the murder was often communicated via telephone by another family member, or in person by the local police service.

Regardless of the method of delivery, it became apparent through their narrative accounts that the emotional impact of a death notification was intense, distressing and often overwhelming with families struggling to comprehend the gravity of the situation in the moments that immediately follow, and indeed, in the days and weeks to come. To elaborate, during the interview process, each individual participant was asked to reflect on the moment they learned that their loved-one had been a victim to murder. There was some variation in the level of detail provided in these recollections, particularly in those cases where the murder occurred many years ago. This is to be expected, given that it is not uncommon for those who experience trauma to have trouble in recalling and describing the details of such events, largely due to the particularly distressing nature of the experience (van der Kolk, 2002). Indeed, previous research suggests that memories of trauma are often fragmented, incomplete and lacking in narrative coherence (Brewin, 2011), with Strange and Takarangi (2015:1) arguing that memories of traumatic events, like all memories, are “malleable and prone to distortion”.

Despite the varying level of detail and the potential for memory distortion, each participant was able to recall to some extent, when and how they were made aware of the news, as well as their initial reaction. A number of examples highlight this point, but the discussion here presents and explores several sub-themes that were present in each individual narrative, with reference, where appropriate, to the inter-disciplinary body of literature contained in Chapter Two.

When recalling the moment that she learnt of the death of her grandson, Liam, in Crete (Case Four), Liz Chandler describes the circumstances of the incident, her initial reaction and the impact of the news on other members of the family:

I had a phone call from the hotel to tell me that something awful had happened, and that John and the children had gone over the balcony, the fourth-floor balcony, and that Tash was trying to resuscitate Liam. I was on my own and I phoned Brian because I didn't know what to do. I had to phone Amanda and tell her what had happened. I said come here Amanda, you need to come here. She turned up and she was hysterical when I told her, and it was just awful, awful.

So, too, when recalling the moment when he learned that something had happened to his daughter Joanna in 1999 (Case Seven), Roger Parrish reflects upon the difficulties he faced in comprehending the news himself, whilst also having to inform his then wife and son about what had happened:

I was at work, and I heard through our welfare officer, who happened to be a good friend of mine, and who knew Jo as well. No matter how professional people are, there's something that makes you think – there's something wrong here and I thought that straight away. I went to meet him in his office and there were two police officers waiting to speak to me – I knew then of course that it was something terrible... It just seemed impossible, absolutely impossible. It couldn't possibly have happened...it must be wrong.

He continues:

And then there was a case of going over to see Pauline where she worked to break the news to her. In a similar sort of way, she'd been warned beforehand, and she knew there was something wrong, but didn't know what. It's really hazy you know, it was a dark time. And the next most important thing was, of course, how to tell our son, Barney, who was at school at the time.

Pete and Hazel Kouzaris – who were themselves abroad in Paris at the time – describe the period leading up to and immediately after they were informed, over the phone, of the news that their son James had been killed in a country over 4,500 miles away (Case Three):

We were near a fountain where we sat down, and you said, “How is James?”; and you said, “He’s dead?”. I always remember that. Then we just went into shock I think, and this sounds stupid because then I said – you know most people would have broken down and cried – but I said we’ve got to have something to remember him by. I remember saying that to you, we’ve got to have something to have his legacy. It’s a ridiculous thing to say at the time.

The words of Pete Kouzaris presented above draw particular attention to both the emotional and practical response to a death notification. Pete’s initial reaction was characterised by a sense of shock, but also by a desire to take decisive and immediate action. Whilst Pete himself considered this to be an irrational response at this time, the notification of the death of his son represented a shattering of his assumptive world – or, in other words, the set of assumptions and beliefs that ground, secure and orient people and thus give a sense of reality, meaning and purpose to life (Kaufmann, 2002). To elaborate, bereavement, particularly when it is violent in nature, can challenge these pre-existing assumptions and overturn the guidelines with which the individual navigates the world (Janoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997). Beder (2005:259), for example, suggests that for those bereaved in violent circumstances “there are no answers, safety, logic, clarity, power or control” – instead, there is a state of *anomie*, where the “familiar representational structures which shaped their lives no longer hold” (Rock, 1998:42). As such, Pete’s assertion that something had to be done immediately to memorialise James, could therefore be understood as an attempt to make sense of his bereavement or, in other words, to find some explanation for a seemingly inexplicable experience (Holland *et al.*, 2006).

So too, the concept of control is of relevance here, given that previous research suggests that it is common for co-victims of murder, regardless of its location, to describe an inability to control the circumstances, and implications of their bereavement (Hoffer, 1984; Green, 1998). Therefore, rather than being considered as he describes, “ridiculous”, Pete’s immediate

response to the notification of death can be viewed as an initial attempt to regain control of his life narrative, through what is referred to as a task-oriented, or problem-focused coping strategy (Robinson and Marwit, 2007; Jung Huh *et al.*, 2017). To push this further, McNeil *et al.* (2021) suggest that fathers, in particular, tend to use goal-oriented tasks as a coping mechanism to manage grief, and to make sense of bereavement. Whilst these tasks can often include everyday activities such as household maintenance or physical labour, in Pete's case, his goal, almost immediately, was to establish a mechanism through which his son could be remembered. In line with the research conducted by McNeil *et al.* (2021), who also identified a tendency for bereaved fathers to engage in legacy building activities, Pete, alongside his wife and James' mother, Hazel, subsequently created a charity, called "Always a Chance", which aims to prevent violent crime whilst simultaneously honouring James' memory. Pete's response also highlights the gendered nature of the grieving process. In other words, the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional responses to bereavement can often differ between men and women as a result of gender socialisation processes and cultural beliefs (Doka and Martin, 2011; Stelzer *et al.*, 2019). Indeed, Lister (1991:220) notes that "individuals are socialised, directly or indirectly, to perceive and experience death and loss, as well as to express their grief about it in particular ways". The experience of bereavement and the subsequent ability to grieve, can thus be influenced by the pressure to conform to the traditional gender stereotypes. In some cases, therefore, Kenny (2003) suggests that men may mask their grief and hide their emotions.

In a similar vein, the words of Kim Spooner further demonstrate the disruptive impact of a death notification, and highlight once more the state of "disequilibrium, dread and hyperarousal" that can result from violent bereavement (Janoff-Bulman and Frantz, 1997:4). She notes:

You have absolutely lost control of life, just the fabric of life, and the things that you rely on, like that the police will help you. All those things that you believe about society, are all wrong, and all your faith and understanding of humanity has gone, so you are really left with nothing. So, you have absolute, no control in the situation. You just do not know, from one minute to the next, what is going to happen...

Kim continues to describe how, following the news of her sister's murder, she also took several, practical steps almost immediately after the notification of the news, which again can be understood as a problem-oriented coping strategy (Robinson and Marwit, 2007; Jung Huh *et al.*, 2017):

The first call I had with my other sister was bizarre. She said "Right, I've already opened up a spreadsheet, I'm going to share it with you, and this is what we are going to work off". It was literally the first thing we did, and this spreadsheet was just our absolute bible. For two years we put everything in there, every single thing that we did. I put all of Eve's contact details and everything in that spreadsheet so at least my other sister would have it if she ever needed it. I remember we had this feeling that everyone else was going to die, so we thought what happens if Lisa dies?

The sense of anxiety that is evident here also is worthy of note, as previous research into the impact of violent bereavement has suggested that co-victims of murder often report concerns regarding their own vulnerability (Lurigio, 1987; Ruback and Thompson, 2001; Vigil and Clements, 2003). In other words, co-victims of murder become acutely aware of the fragility of life, and therefore can fear for their own safety, and the safety of those around them, and as such, develop a hypervigilance (Asaro, 1992; Thompson, 2017). Clearly for Kim, the news of the murder of her sister Lianne (Case Two), directly challenged her pre-existing assumptions about the nature of human behaviour and more broadly, the nature of the external world itself. The hopelessness and helplessness that is evident in her narrative, can be understood as a psychological reaction to the absence of the former feelings of safety and security that were

present in her ongoing life narrative prior to the murder occurring (Pemberton *et al.*, 2018; Janoff-Bulman, Madden and Timko, 1983).

Indeed, the sudden nature of a death notification can interrupt the “fabric of everyday life” and, as suggested by Rock (1998:39), there are often no readily available conventions to “reconcile oneself to what has been so unexpectedly announced”. When reflecting on the impact of a death notification, Eve Henderson notes:

It [a death notification] has that traumatising effect of just shutting you down. We've spoken to clinical psychologists about it, and it is the brain trying to assimilate that sort of information, but it's got nowhere to put it. If it was a car crash, you get that, as terrible as it is, you understand car crashes, but murder is different.

Eve's words suggest that violent bereavement, like many other traumatic events, is a “schema-discrepant” experience meaning it is often inconsistent with an individual's pre-existing knowledge structure (König, 2014:15). “Schema” is defined by Janoff-Bulman (1989:115) as an “abstracted knowledge structure, stored in memory, that involves a rich network of information about a given stimulus domain”. When an individual is confronted with new information that is inconsistent with pre-existing schema, they must either assimilate (interpret the event in a way that fits into the schema), or accommodate (change the schema to incorporate the event) the experience to begin the process of recovery (Sobel, *et al.*, 2009). Bereavement, particularly when it results from the violent and often intentional actions of another, such as in cases of murder, is largely incompatible with pre-existing schema and, as a result, co-victims of murder often experience several emotional and psychological complications in the time following the notification of death (Janoff-Bulman, 1989; Rock, 1998). Alison Eagleton (Case Five), for example, describes how she struggled to come to terms with the death of her ex-husband Nick in Belgium in 2012:

You can't say life has been turned upside down, no, because it's more than that. It's something that you would never ever think would happen and when it does, you have absolutely no mechanisms to cope with it. It's beyond words. I still don't have the words. I still find it hard to believe. You know, sometimes I think, really? It's like a film or a book and I think, did that really happen? That somebody could do that? That somebody could go through the process of organising a killing?

The sense of disbelief that is evident in Alison's narrative is characteristic of victims of violent crime more generally (Jeavons and Greenwood, 2007). In the time following her husband's murder, Alison's pre-existing assumptions about her own safety and the safety of those around her were disrupted. In other words, her former "assumptive world" was shattered following the realisation that bad things no longer only happen to other people (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). Indeed, victims of crime often report that they thought "it could never happen to them" – this false impression of security is described by Janoff-Bulman (1989:117) as an "illusion" whereby people truly believe that they are invulnerable to negative life events such as disease, accidents, and criminal victimisation.

Previous research has also highlighted the delicate nature of the death notification process (NCADP, 2010; Reed *et al.*, 2019). Whilst a death notification can be delivered in a variety of circumstances – including death resulting from illness or accidental death – it is particularly traumatic for the surviving family members when the death results from murder. Indeed, Miller (2008) notes that the death notification is one of the most challenging facets of crime victim intervention, which can often result in feelings of shock, numbness, disorientation, hyperventilation, hyper-alertness, and panic attacks. In line with the pre-existing literature, it is clear in many of the participant narratives, that learning of the news of their loved-one's murder was a particularly traumatic and stressful stage of their post-homicide experience. Alison Hill, for example, recalls the moment that she was told her daughter had been found dead in Argentina:

On the 2nd of October, the police came to our door, and I remember them saying, “Are you a relative of Linda?”, and straight away I knew it was something awful and I said “No, no, no I don’t know a Linda”, but then he corrected himself and said “Laura”, and I knew. They informed us that Laura had died on the 1st of October in Argentina of natural causes, and she had no injuries, and they were told by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that it was pulmonary oedema.

She continues:

I’m still going through it, it’s a bit like, post-traumatic, if the police knocked on my door today for something, I would go into some kind of meltdown because the only two times that the police have knocked on my door is when I’ve lost my kids. So that’s how it’s how it leaves you and that feeling, I can feel it now, like the thought of them coming to my door, it would be something bad.

As well as evidencing the traumatic nature of her experience, Alison’s words also highlight the role of the police in the delivery of a death notification. She draws attention in particular to the potentially harmful impact of an insensitive or inaccurate notification of death. By referring to her daughter as “Linda” rather than Laura, the officer delivering the news immediately demonstrated a lack of preparation, and a failure to acknowledge the severity of the circumstances, and the traumatic nature of a death notification. Whilst it might appear to be a relatively small and easily rectifiable mistake, previous literature suggests that the attitude and words used by the death notifier(s) not only impact survivors’ bereavement, but also may turn into “memories capable of accompanying them forever” (de Leo, 2015:703). Indeed, as suggested by the APPG (2019) an ill-prepared or poorly executed death notification can have significant ramifications for the family and can impact how they will be affected by the trauma of their loss in the longer term (APPG, 2019). As such, it is important for those who have the responsibility of delivering a death notification to receive an appropriate level of training to minimise the traumatic nature of the experience and to avoid any unnecessary complications

in the grieving process. Indeed, Eve Henderson recalls a conversation with a family who described the problematic nature of the circumstances surrounding the notification of death:

One family who came to see us were not happy. It was the police who came to deliver the death message and they just stood on the doorstep. It was a couple of PCSOs who were probably not experienced in delivering that kind of message. I mean, on the doorstep... I know that they did eventually go in, but they were totally out of their depth, and I do wonder, how often does that happen?

In a similar vein, Kim Spooner offers a personal assessment of the training provided to the police in delivering a death notification, particularly in cases of murder abroad:

The training amounts to about five minutes, and that's for any type of death notification. So, there's no additional training for the complexities of an overseas case, in terms of where families should go and what's going to happen next. So, the people delivering the message, when it's the police, even they don't know what's next. So, I struggle to see how it will ever be a very positive experience other than someone just being empathetic and experienced in delivering that sort of news.

Clearly then, the impact of a death notification on the surviving family members of murder is significant – regardless of the circumstances surrounding the notification and irrespective of the method of delivery. As such it is crucial that the death notification is delivered in a manner that is sensitive to the circumstances of the murder, and to the needs and experiences of the family. Particularly in the days following a death notification, families are often in desperate need of clear and unambiguous information about what to do next, and where to turn for support. Indeed, Eve Henderson notes:

Often, the first question families will ask is "How did they die?" or "Did they ask for me?" or "How long did it take to die?" Those are the questions that they want the

answers to. But because families affected by murder abroad don't have access to anybody immediately, such as a police officer in the foreign country, they don't get the answers to those questions, and they linger. They spread around in your brain to the point where you are making scenarios up in your head. That's what happens. And then when you do receive some more information, you have to re-adjust the scenario in your head.

These participant reflections suggest that it should be a priority for those delivering the news (usually officers from the local police force) to ensure that they are as well-informed as possible about the circumstances of the murder, and of the role and remit of the various organisations and agencies that are likely to feature in the lives of the families in the weeks, months and even years ahead. Indeed, the absence of consistent and meaningful support immediately following the notification of death can negatively impact on the subsequent experiences of families affected by murder, particularly in international circumstances. Kim Spooner notes:

There's a huge need for an independent navigator that can support the family from day one. If they are introduced into a family's case months or years down the line, it can be the most awful experience for them, because, had someone have been there from the start, they could have made a difference. They could have stopped years of pain, effort, and pointless pursuits if they were there to steer the family in the right direction. We have active cases like this now and it is absolutely heart breaking.

These findings are supportive of the body of pre-existing literature which explores the post-homicide experiences of co-victims of murder more generally. Brown and Crego (2019), for example, explored the relationship between co-victims of murder and the criminal justice system in the United Kingdom. Following a series of focus groups with families bereaved through murder, Brown and Crego (2019) suggest that effective communication with, most notably, the police, was essential to the establishment and maintenance of confidence in the overall criminal justice process. They also found that clear and regular updates, which were

free from legal and procedural jargon, helped to develop a sense of trust between families and other agencies of the criminal justice system. So, too, Monckton-Smith, Williams and Mullane (2014:119) note the importance of honesty and sincerity, suggesting that trust can “quickly be broken if it is perceived that an official is being disingenuous, if promised actions are not taken and the agencies do not communication on time or as frequently as they promised”.

These sentiments were shared by the those who participated in this research, who often highlighted the detrimental impact of delayed, inconsistent, or contradictory information, mainly from the police in the foreign country and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), in the time immediately following the notification of death and throughout the entirety of their post-homicide journey. Roger Parrish for instance, when reflecting on the limited information he received from the French police, describes the efforts he made to learn more about the circumstances surrounding his daughter’s death:

It’s even worse, of course, when you’re hundreds of miles away in another country, receiving absolutely no information at all, through our lawyers or anybody else for that matter. So, we decided that we were not going to accept this and that we would stir things up ourselves. We had some leaflets printed which cost about £2,000 in materials and they included photo and a message in French asking for information. We went over to France, and we simply walked around the area and posted the leaflets through letter boxes and placed them in cafes and restaurants. We, rather amateurishly, were just trying to get some information because we were not getting it from any other source.

Whilst much of the pre-existing literature has focused on exploring and understanding the impact of a death notification when the murder occurs in national circumstances, for co-victims of murder abroad, the impact of the death notification can be further compounded by the international nature of the crime. As Kim Spooner suggests, there are several complexities,

unique to cases of murder abroad, which further exacerbate the traumatic nature of a death notification – and the subsequent post-homicide experience – and which regularly feature in the narratives of those families affected by murder in these circumstances. Indeed, whilst the notification of death can be viewed as a particularly traumatising stage of the post-homicide experience, for co-victims of murder abroad, it is often only the beginning of what becomes a complex and long-lasting chapter in their lives – one which is characterised by a range of practical and emotional challenges that result from the intersection of the private, public, and multiple criminal justice domains. These issues are now discussed in greater detail.

5.4. Practical Implications of Murder Abroad

The discussion so far has drawn attention to the traumatic nature of a death notification, and has highlighted the immediate disruptive impact of violent bereavement on co-victims of murder abroad. It has become clear that a death notification can be a particularly distressing event for surviving family members as it often challenges their pre-existing assumptions about the world and contradicts the feelings of safety and security that were present in their ongoing life narrative prior to the murder occurring (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). The notification of death is a defining moment in the lives of those affected by murder in a foreign country, given that it represents the start of a life that is distinct from that which existed previously (de Leo, 2015). However, for co-victims of murder abroad, the death notification is often just the start of a difficult and challenging journey. Indeed the days, weeks and years which follow are characterised by a variety of inter-related factors, some of which are common amongst co-victims of murder, irrespective of location, and others which are unique to case of murder which occurs in these circumstances. As such, the following discussion surveys several practical issues which were present in the narratives of those who participated in the research

and highlights how their post-homicide experience was shaped and influenced by the international nature of the crime.

5.4.1. Language Barriers and Translation

When a murder occurs in national circumstances, issues related to foreign language seldom arise in the co-victim post-homicide narrative. In contrast to this however, when, for example, a British citizen is murdered in a foreign country, depending on the location, language barriers can further complicate the experiences of the surviving family members who are often unable to speak the native language of the county in question (Casey, 2011; APPG, 2019).

For those families who were bereaved through murder in a foreign country where English is the main language, the barriers to communication are less prominent, if non-existent, and therefore did not feature heavily in the narrative accounts of their post-homicide experience. However, despite this, when reflecting on the role of language in their own experience, Pete and Hazel Kouzaris – whose son, James was killed in the United States of America – draw attention to the potentially problematic nature of foreign language in cases of murder abroad:

We were lucky that they speak English. There are families who have problems with transcripts and translating. We didn't have any of that, so we were lucky.

When the murder of a British citizen takes place in a non-English speaking country, the language barrier can become an additional source of frustration for surviving family members, who are often in the United Kingdom in the time immediately following the murder. Not being able to speak or understand the native language of the country in which the murder occurred

can often hinder communication between the families and the authorities – who, depending on the location, may have a limited degree of proficiency in the English language.

During the interview process, some families reflected on the impact of the language barrier, and described the steps they took to try to overcome the difficulties they faced. Whilst these language difficulties can persist throughout the entirety of the post-homicide journey, they often begin with the initial police investigation. As cases of murder tend to generate large amounts of paperwork, some families were presented with emails, letters, and other documents related to the case that required translation into English. To stay up to date with developments in their cases, some families attempted to translate the information they received themselves, whilst others enlisted the support of a translator.

Kim Spooner, for example, draws attention to the large volume of paperwork that was produced during the investigation by the French police into the murder of her sister in St. Martin:

We had Google translate, but it was quite bad in 2011. We had to sit there and translate hundreds and hundreds of pages of stuff. We did it all manually because there was no way we could pay for it, and no one was going to do it for us. We had to translate it all two or three times, first into English and then we had to try to understand the archaic, medical terminology. It was an absolute minefield, but we had to translate and read every page.

Kim's observations highlight the practical issues that result from being unable to speak the native language of the country where her sister was murdered. However, it is also important to draw attention to the emotional burden that can accompany the process of manual translation. To elaborate, survivors of traumatic events often exhibit symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which can be exacerbated by repeated exposure to people,

incidents or circumstances that cause them to re-live their previous trauma. Although, some studies have shown that re-calling and re-telling the details of a traumatic incident can aid post-traumatic recovery (Zech and Rimé, 2005; Englehard *et al.*, 2019), if not careful mediated, the process can progressively extend the damage of the original trauma (Young, 2006).

Families affected by murder abroad may be faced with the task of translating, and thus closely examining documents related to their case. These documents may relate to the police investigation and wider criminal justice process and therefore may contain sensitive and potentially upsetting details of the circumstances of the murder or the injuries that were sustained by the victim. This re-living of the circumstances in which their loved-one was murdered, can serve as a “distressing reminder” of the traumatic nature of their experience, which may negatively impact their ability to process and recover from their bereavement (Lane *et al.*, 2006). Indeed, reflecting on her own experience of re-calling and sharing the circumstances of her bereavement, Alison Eagleton notes:

Every time you talk about it, you're traumatising yourself again. It's a huge effort to have these conversations and to have to go through it all again.

Roger Parrish, who instead enlisted the support of a professional translator, reflects on the utility of the service that was provided to him during his first trip to France following the murder of his daughter, Joanna in Auxerre in 1999:

The first time we went to France, the Foreign Office allowed us to have a friend, an English-speaking French woman with us for about a week that we were there, and she was very helpful and kind. And see, she was very adept at translation, for that week that she was with us, she did very well, and helped us with a lot.

The need for translation, which is evident here, is supportive of the limited amount of pre-existing literature that focuses specifically on the experiences of families affected by murder abroad. Whilst the problems associated with translation have not previously been explored in detail, several, preliminary studies have acknowledged the additional complexity posed by foreign language in cases of murder in these circumstances (Patel, 2003; Casey, 2011; SAMM Abroad, 2011; Victims' Commissioner, 2019; All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2019).

Despite the lack of pre-existing literature, this thesis argues that translation services should be readily available to co-victims of murder, when the murder occurs in a non-English speaking country. A dedicated translator could appease the sense of unfamiliarity experienced by families who often must deal with foreign police forces and criminal justice systems in the time following their bereavement. This service, which could be provided pro-bono, would help families to be more informed about their case at all stages of their post-homicide experience, whilst also reducing the practical and emotional burden associated with the process of manual translation.

5.4.2. Financial Implications of Murder Abroad

When a murder occurs in national circumstances, the surviving family members of the direct victim can often incur expenses associated with their bereavement. Indeed, previous research has indicated that co-victims of murder are often faced with costs relating to the funeral, legal processes, the criminal investigation, domestic issues, counselling, and loss of earnings through absence from work (Pollard, 2020). Indeed, Casey (2011) suggests that the average cost of murder co-victimisation to families in the United Kingdom is approximately £37,000. Whilst the financial implications of violent bereavement are evident, regardless of the location, the

costs incurred by co-victims in cases of murder abroad are often substantial and are further exacerbated by the international nature of the crime.

When reflecting on his experience of working with Murdered Abroad, Brian Chandler, offers an overarching assessment of the financial burden placed on families affected by murder in these circumstances:

We conducted a questionnaire with our members to identify what the tragedy had actually cost them. We wanted to know what the financial consequences of it were. We found that the average cost of the members that we had at the time, of their case, was £58,000 or £59,000... [had the murder of occurred in the United Kingdom], the equivalent cost was about £18,000, so it's at least three times as expensive to get murdered abroad.

Brian's observations suggest that the cost of co-victimisation of murder in a foreign country far exceeds that which is associated with cases of murder that take place in a national context. Whilst those who participated in the research were not specifically asked to discuss the financial implications of their bereavement, some families did speak of the costs they have incurred following the murder of their loved-one.

5.4.3. Repatriation

Repatriation – the returning of a body to the United Kingdom from abroad – is a unique feature of cases of murder which occurs in a foreign country. The process of repatriation can often be one of the greatest expenses incurred by families affected by murder in these circumstances. To elaborate, it should first be noted that little academic attention has been given the financial implications of violent bereavement which occurs in a foreign country. Despite this, a report

published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (2020: 50) acknowledges the “extremely high cost of a funeral or repatriation to the United Kingdom” as does Casey (2011), who lists repatriation as an additional financial consideration in cases of murder abroad. Indeed, according to Beyond (2021) – a company which provides specialist advice on matters related to death and dying – repatriating a body to the United Kingdom can cost between £1,800 and £17,000. Whilst the average is approximately £3,500, the exact cost of repatriation varies considerably depending on the country from where the body is being returned.

The extent to which families affected by murder abroad can receive financial support to cover the costs associated with repatriation largely depends on whether their loved-one had a valid travel insurance policy at the time that they were murdered. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO, 2021) suggest:

If the person who died did not have insurance, their family will usually be expected to cover all the costs associated with repatriation and funeral. This can be expensive.

The FCDO further advises that they are unable to provide financial assistance to families affected by murder abroad, and instead suggest that they can “liaise with insurance companies and signpost to other sources of help” (FCDO, 2021). Despite this, it became clear in the narratives of those who participated in the research, that they often felt a sense of abandonment when faced with financial implications of their bereavement. Highlighting the costs associated with the repatriation of her daughter’s body, Alison Hill describes the lack of financial support that she experienced:

You don’t get anything. You don’t get any help or any support financially. I mean at the time I was like, how much is it going to cost to repatriate her? The thing is, you don’t want to talk about money, but it is a factor, isn’t it? They [the FCDO] said “oh

well you will have to borrow it from relatives or get a loan”. That is how it is, it’s so sad.

The anxiety surrounding the financial implications of repatriation, in particular, is worthy of further consideration, given the consequences associated with the decision of the family either to have their loved-one’s body returned to the United Kingdom or to proceed with a funeral in the country in which the murder occurred. To elaborate, when a British citizen dies abroad in non-violent or natural circumstances, the death must be registered with the local authorities in that country. Families can then choose to have the body buried or cremated in the host country or instead they can have the body or ashes of their loved one returned to the United Kingdom. However, if there is suspicion regarding the circumstances of the death – or if it was violent or unnatural in nature – the decision regarding repatriation carries greater significance regarding the subsequent investigation into the death in the United Kingdom.

In circumstances where the decision is made by the family to return the body to the United Kingdom, a coroner has a statutory obligation to hold an inquest into the death. The purpose of the inquest, which is predominantly a “fact-finding exercise”, is to provide answers to four statutory questions concerning the identity of the deceased person and the circumstances surrounding their death, most notably, how, when and where the death occurred (College of Policing, 2021). As part of the inquest process, a coroner may request a Full Forensic Post-Mortem Examination to be carried out, even if one was undertaken by the authorities in the country in which the death occurred. These examinations, which can be helpful in gathering samples that are important to a murder investigation, can often provide more detailed information regarding injuries sustained and the subsequent cause of death (Murdered Abroad, 2021). As such, for several of the families who participated in the research, the inquest, which was carried out following the repatriation of the body to the United Kingdom, provided an

opportunity for them to further understand the circumstances surrounding the death of their loved-one.

Alison Hill, for example, had previously been told by the authorities in Argentina in 2007 that her daughter, “Laura, had died of natural causes with no injuries, that there were no suspicious circumstances and that they had no reason whatsoever to investigate further”. Despite this insistence, almost 10 years after the repatriation of Laura’s body to the United Kingdom, an inquest was conducted which examined in more detail the circumstances surrounding her death. Whilst the inquest resulted in a narrative verdict – meaning it was not possible to prove that it was an unlawful killing – the coroner “believed Laura had died in suspicious circumstances, that the investigation by the Argentine police was incompetent, and that he would re-open the case if any more information came to light”.

It is important to note that if the decision is made by the families not to repatriate, then an inquest will not take place. In other words, the repatriation of the body of a deceased person is a pre-requisite of the inquest process in the United Kingdom. Indeed, ACPO (2011) states there is:

No provision for a coroner in the United Kingdom to hold any form of inquiry into the death of a person who has died overseas and whose body is not brought to England or Wales. Furthermore, the coroner is also unable to hold any form of inquiry overseas.

The implications of the decision not to repatriate are most significant in those cases where families feel as though they have been let down by the authorities in the country in which the murder occurred. Without the possibility of an inquest in the United Kingdom, some families may never be able to find answers to their questions, or to achieve a sense of justice. This can

have a considerable impact on their ability to grieve and can exacerbate the emotional impact of bereavement in these circumstances. To this point, Eve Henderson describes the importance of the mandatory inquest process that follows the repatriation of a person who has been killed abroad:

When there is an inquest following the repatriation of a body to the United Kingdom, the coroner has to treat it as if the crime had occurred here. That's why it is very important to have an inquest. That's why we have campaigned to ensure that mandatory inquests following a death abroad are able to continue.

As Eve suggests, families affected by murder abroad must be fully informed of the potential implications of their decision not to have the body of their loved one repatriated to the United Kingdom. Drawing attention to this issue, Eve continues:

We spend a lot of time with the Foreign Office saying, "Please tell people if you do not repatriate the body, there will be no inquest." It's no body, no inquest and there's a tendency at the Foreign Office – and it's even stated in their literature – that a local cremation in the foreign country may be easier. Now they might not say the word cheaper, but it's the implication and when families are already struggling for money, they might think that it is a possibility. Then, when they come to a support meeting, where there are other families who have repatriated the body and they discover that they have had a Coroner's inquest as a result, they also have to deal with the guilt of their decision not to repatriate.

Whilst the financial costs of repatriation may be significant, for those families who decide not to repatriate the body of their loved-one and who then later discover that, as a result, there will be no inquest into the circumstances surrounding their death, the consequences of their decision may further exacerbate the traumatic nature of their experience. These circumstances, according to the research conducted SAMM Abroad (2011) are far from uncommon. To

elaborate, in their study involving families affected by murder abroad, SAMM Abroad (2011) found that 85% of their participants were unaware that there would be no inquest or investigation into the death of their loved one in the United Kingdom, if they made the decision not to repatriate the body.

When reflecting on her own case, Kim Spooner also highlights the potential implication of the decision not to repatriate:

Families have got to decide about repatriation, and they might not know whether the foreign police investigation is going to be good enough. In our case, we didn't repatriate because it was hugely complicated, hugely expensive, and my sister lived out there, and she had chosen to be out there, so we didn't want to forcibly bring her back. That was our thought process. Our foreign police investigation was good, but if it wasn't, we could have made that decision and would never have been able to have an opportunity to get answers in this country. Living with the fact that there was a chance to have answers that we didn't take would have been horrific.

She continues and draws attention to the difficulties some families experience in processing the circumstances of their bereavement whilst also having to make decisions which can significantly impact the remainder of their post-homicide experience:

It's about educating families about the implications of repatriation at a time when they are least able to process that information. They are often very emotionally driven. They have so much going on that they can barely consider the potential importance of an inquest in the United Kingdom. It's just too complicated for families to navigate on their own. And when their only official source of information is the FCDO, and possibly the police, who are sort of encouraging them to cremate abroad, because it's easier for everyone – that's really worrying. It can be at that point that family's journey is, completely changed because they will never be able to access information from this

country. They are potentially shutting off a really important avenue without necessarily realising it, I think that's really scary.

The narrative here highlights several difficulties faced by families affected by murder abroad in the aftermath of their bereavement. At a time when they are already facing considerable emotional distress, attributable to the unexpected and violent nature of the death of their loved-one, families also have to make a variety of important practical decisions. Repatriation, perhaps more so than any other decision they will face, carries considerable consequences for the family on a practical, financial and emotional level. Therefore, as evidenced through the words of the participants above, it is vitally important for families to be made aware of the implications of their decision either to repatriate or to have their loved-one buried or cremated in the country in which the murder occurred. This information should be provided to families as soon as practicably possible to ensure that they are able to make a fully informed decision regarding the repatriation of their loved-one's body and to prevent the possibility of them later having to deal with the additional emotional burden of guilt and regret.

5.4.4. International Travel

In addition to the costs and practical implications of repatriation, several participants also described the costs incurred from travelling to and from the country in which the murder of their loved-one occurred. Some families decided not to travel, and others were discouraged from doing so by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and therefore the costs associated with travel did not feature heavily in their narrative accounts. Reflecting on her own case, Kim Spooner first draws attention to the range of factors that can influence a family's decision to travel abroad in the time immediately following their bereavement:

[The decision to travel] will depend on the circumstances. So, was the person travelling alone, were they on holiday or were they already living out in the country where the murder occurred? In our case, my sister was living out there, she had a network and so there were people out there who were already on the ground. If she had just been on her own, on holiday, I think we would have immediately gone out, because who else is going to do anything? It depends on all sort of things, the age of the victim, which family members would want to go out and where it is in the world. It's not always easy but often it's easy enough to get to Europe, but if you have to travel to the Caribbean, or to Japan, or to Australia is a different matter, and it's a different matter in terms of expense.

Those participants who did choose to make the journey to the foreign country were able to describe the practical, logistical, and financial challenges that arose from international travel. Roger Parrish, for example, who visited France on several occasions in the years following his daughter's murder, highlights the financial implications of his bereavement:

We had to be pragmatic about these things. If we were going to go to France every year or every other year, it costs money. You know, nobody gave us any money, it was our money. We did get some award money from France through European Community legislation, but it didn't last very long. It went on lawyers' fees and that kind of thing.

As indicated above, Roger was initially able to gain access to financial assistance through European Community Legislation. The narrative here highlights several interesting points of discussion regarding the extent to which co-victims of murder are able access compensation following their bereavement. When a British citizen becomes a victim to violent crime in a foreign country, they may be to access a state compensation scheme, although the level of assistance provided largely depends on the country in which the crime occurred. In Roger's case, the murder of his daughter took place in France, a European country, meaning that as a British Citizen, he was able to apply for financial assistance under the Council of Europe

Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes. This assistance, in Roger's case, clearly offered some initial relief from the financial pressure he and his family were facing. However, as noted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (2019) the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union may reduce the eligibility of British citizens to apply for compensation in countries across Europe, meaning that it may be more difficult for families in similar situations to gain access to financial assistance at a time where it is often needed. Indeed, further research that explores the impact of Brexit on victims and co-victims of violent crime abroad will, undoubtedly, be needed in the years to come.

It is also important to note that there exists a discrepancy between the level of financial assistance provided to families affected by murder abroad and those who are bereaved following a terrorist incident in a foreign country. To elaborate, British Citizens who are affected by a terrorism abroad can apply for compensation via the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme (VOTCS). However, as noted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (2019) families affected by murder are ineligible for compensation under this scheme. This inequity, for those affected by murder in these circumstances, seems nonsensical, given that they will often face many of the same difficulties and financial pressures as those who are bereaved through an act of terrorism. Eve Henderson notes:

If you are murdered by a terrorist abroad, you can get compensation, but if you are murdered by a common criminal, then you get nothing – and that's from our own Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. How can they discriminate between, for example, someone who was shot by a criminal, and someone who was killed by a terrorist in a bombing?

So, too, Kim Spooner articulates the sense of frustration felt by families affected by murder abroad:

Why is there discrimination against these families? Is it just because their loved one wasn't killed by a terrorist? Why are they getting a different deal? It just makes no sense.

In the absence of any substantial support from the authorities in the United Kingdom, co-victims of murder abroad often have to find an alternative way to ease the financial burden of their bereavement. Eve Henderson comments on her experience of working with families affected by murder abroad and suggests:

If families do not have insurance, they are likely to have trouble getting the body of their loved-one back into the country. Some have had to create a GoFundMe page to try and raise the funds from family and friends. Some families are just too poor to be able to afford it.

Indeed, Eve's commentary is supported by the limited body of pre-existing literature which suggests that it is not uncommon for co-victims of murder abroad to engage in a variety of fund-raising activities to ease the financial burden of their bereavement (APPG, 2019). In a similar vein, Roger Parrish, describes the efforts he and his family made to fund regular international travel, repatriation and other costs associated with the murder of his daughter:

We had to earn money and we did it in the most pragmatic way possible – by doing articles for newspapers and magazines – we hated doing it but we got paid for it – there's no other way of putting it really. So, we put it in a fund and that's what we used to go to France to cover the travel expenses.

These participant reflections demonstrate that the financial implications of an unexpected death in a foreign country are significant and as such, can be a considerable source of anxiety for family members residing in the United Kingdom. The costs associated with their bereavement, which can often include the repatriation of their loved-ones' body, frequent travel to and from

the country in which the murder occurred and costs attributable to criminal justice and legal proceedings, can be further exacerbated by a loss of income due to ongoing absence from work (Casey, 2011). As such, given the already traumatic nature of their experience, this research suggests that co-victims of murder abroad should have access to a readily available funding scheme which could help to ease the financial burden placed upon them in the time following their bereavement. Whilst the circumstances of their bereavement differ from those attributable to acts of terrorism, co-victims of murder abroad face similar emotional and practical difficulties and therefore, their exclusion from state-funded financial assistance seems especially unfair, particularly given the relative rarity of such cases.

5.5. The Response of the Country where the Murder Occurred

How countries respond to the murder of a British citizen within their jurisdiction varies considerably between cases and between countries around the world. For the families who participated in the research, the way in which their case was responded to and handled by the authorities in the host country – which can often include the initial police investigation, a trial, and the subsequent punishment of the perpetrator – greatly influenced their post-homicide experience. Brian Chandler, for example, notes:

There are certainly some countries that, in my view, are very much ahead. Australia and America come to mind as being the two that are really caring, really switched on and really victim oriented. Then there are the other parts of the world, where the complete reverse is the case.

Brian's initial observations also draw attention to the relationship between tourism and crime more generally. To explore this further, emerging primarily from the academic discipline of tourism studies, previous research has attempted to understand the impact of an increasing level

of tourist activity on the host country and resident population (Mawby, 2010; Andrews, 2014). For context, according to Matakovic (2019), tourism is now one of the main global economic sectors, which has continued to grow throughout the 20th and 21st century. Indeed Gee and Solá (1997:12) suggests that despite periodic recessions, political upheaval, war, and uncertainties about the availability of fuel, tourism is now “the largest single item in the world’s foreign trade budget”. The increased availability and affordability of international travel, combined with growing levels of disposable income has led to an ever-increasing number of foreign visitors arriving in new destinations around the world.

Whilst the economic benefits of tourism have been well-documented (Khayrullova, 2020) several researchers have instead focused their attention on the negative consequences of international travel (Nicholls, 1976; Pizam, 1982). Previous studies have, for example examined a range of tourism-related security issues which includes but is not limited to terrorism and international conflict (Araña and León, 2008). In addition to this, research has also explored the nature and extent of crime committed by and against the tourist population (Chesney-Lind and Lind, 1986; Allen, 1999). It is worth noting that much of this literature tends to be location specific, and often focuses on non-violent, acquisitive crime, rather than more serious forms of violent crime such as murder. Despite this however, there are several themes which are worthy of further consideration. Most importantly, previous research suggests that crime against tourists is a multifaceted phenomenon which carries a range of consequences for both the individual and the country in which the crime occurred (Moore and Berno, 1995). Quite obviously, so called “tourist-oriented crime” can impact on an individual’s feelings of safety and security, as well as resulting in material loss or physical injury (Michalko, 2004; Mawby, 2014). However, crime against tourists, especially when it is violent in nature, can also have a significant negative impact on the reputation of a particular destination (Cohen,

1997). Indeed, Levantis (2000) suggests that the potential exposure to crime is a primary concern for tourists when choosing their travel destination.

This reputational damage, which is often exacerbated by both national and international media attention, can greatly influence perceptions of safety and security and subsequently lead to a reduction in the number of tourists choosing to travel to the country in question (Mawby, 2014). As such, when a tourist falls victim to a crime whilst abroad, it is arguably in the best interest of the host country to minimise the subsequent impact on their reputation as a tourist destination (Mawby, 2000; Saridakis *et al.*, 2013). This desire to minimise the implications of the crime can sometimes be at odds with the support expectations of the primary victim, and in cases of murder in particular, the victim's families who reside elsewhere in the world. Brian Chandler highlights this tension and suggests:

Some countries don't really care much about tourists being murdered. Thailand comes to mind. There is a lot of variation. In some countries, life is cheap, they are used to death, they don't see it as anything too unusual. A lot of them are tourist countries and they are more interested, in my view, in protecting their tourist reputation than publicising the case or assisting the family.

Brian's assertion that some countries do not care about tourists being murdered can again be understood through the pre-existing literature that focuses on the victimisation of the tourist population. To elaborate, several researchers have attempted to explain the increased incidence of crime against tourists through a variety of theoretical lenses. Drawing upon Routine Activity Theory (RAT), Mawby (2000) for instance, suggests that tourists may experience a higher rate of victimisation due to their appearance, a lack of environmental or spatial awareness and an absence of a capable guardian. So, too, Brunt *et al.*, (2000) suggests that in some countries, the tourist is symbolic of wealth and therefore, could be viewed as legitimate or justifiable

target of criminality. Indeed, Moore and Berno (1995) describes the “faceless” nature of the tourist, arguing that, due to their transient nature, tourists can often be dehumanised and depersonalised by the local population and indeed by the host country more generally.

5.5.1. Interactions with The Criminal Justice System

The element of criminality common in cases of murder abroad necessitates the involvement of various agencies of the criminal justice system – both in the country in which the murder occurred and, to a lesser extent, in the United Kingdom. When a British citizen is murdered abroad, the local police force in the foreign country has the primary responsibility for the investigation into the crime and the apprehension of the person(s) responsible. In those cases where the perpetrator is identified, the subsequent legal proceedings, which may include a trial and the sentencing and punishment of the offender, are also administered by the authorities in the country in which the murder occurred (ACPO, 2006). As such, it is important to highlight here, the considerable variation that exists amongst criminal justice systems in countries around the world. As suggested by Blackwood (2014), foreign legal systems and judicial processes are often influenced by local culture, custom, religion and language. So, too, the standards of investigative practice can vary greatly from country to country, with some police forces having little or no access to computers, DNA or fingerprinting technology (ibid). It is therefore worth noting, that the post-homicide narratives of the co-victims of murder were influenced by the country in which the murder occurred, and the extent to which the foreign criminal justice agencies were able to investigate, apprehend and where appropriate, punish those responsible for the crime.

The degree to which families interacted with the various agencies of the criminal justice system varied between cases, and was predicated on the apprehension of the perpetrator. In other words, in those cases where the perpetrator was identified and arrested by the police, families subsequently had to deal with foreign judicial processes, which often included a trial and a sentencing hearing, where, if found guilty, the perpetrator was (usually) sentenced to imprisonment in the country where the crime was committed. Conversely, for those families where no offender had been identified, their exposure to the workings of the criminal justice system was greatly reduced and was often limited to the police in the foreign country and in the United Kingdom. Despite these variations, each participant was able to offer an insight into the subjective experience of their role as a co-victim in the wider criminal justice process.

5.5.2. Inter-Jurisdictional Murder Investigations

During the interview process, participants frequently described their interactions with the police in the country in which the murder occurred, as well as the role of the police in the United Kingdom. Indeed, the collective narrative highlights the expectation of collaboration between the foreign and British authorities when investigating the circumstances surrounding the murder of their loved one.

According to Spapens (2010) in most circumstances, domestic law enforcement agencies will respond to and deal with crimes themselves, without the need for international co-operation. However, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO, 2006) indicates that more serious crimes committed against foreign nationals may require the authorities in the victim's country of origin to collaborate, share information, and in some cases, conduct further investigation into the circumstances of the offence (ACPO, 2006).

It is pertinent to note, the premise of cross-border collaboration in criminal investigations, both within and outside of Europe, is largely dependent on a system of “assistance upon request” (Spapens, 2010: 130). In other words, should the authorities in a particular country require the assistance of those in another, there is an established organisational framework through which a written request can be completed and submitted. Within Europe for example, a variety of multi-lateral conventions facilitate international co-operation regarding the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences, with the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (1959) laying the foundation for such collaborative efforts.

Despite the existence of these formal mechanisms to facilitate collaboration between the relevant, international organisations, the co-victims of murder abroad described a general sense of reluctance – on behalf of the foreign authorities – to engage in what is referred to by ACPO as an inter-jurisdictional homicide investigation (2006). To begin, when dealing with the Police in Argentina, Alison Hill recalls her frustration at the apparent lack of willingness to collaborate with the authorities in the United Kingdom:

I remember saying to the police “Why can’t you just reach out to Argentina and say that we are concerned” to which they replied “Mrs Hill, we’ve got more chance of going to the moon than to Argentina”. So, there is very little scope for collaboration and if you look at other cases, there’s lots of families who have been in our position.

So too, Brian Chandler describes the difficulties the police in the United Kingdom faced when trying to establish a working relationship with the authorities in Greece:

I am aware that the British police went to a great deal of trouble to try and communicate with the Greek police and never got any satisfactory responses, at least not until after the trial, which was 18 months later. In my own personal experience in Crete for example, they are absolutely, totally dependent on tourism for their economy, but they

were extremely unhelpful in every way, to us as a family, and to the UK police, they were totally uncooperative and they're signed up to the EU, they have an agreement, I couldn't believe it.

Some families also reported a similar sense of reluctance, amongst the police in the United Kingdom and from representatives of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, to interfere with the investigations of another country. For example, when reflecting on the role of the police in the United Kingdom, Elizabeth Chandler notes:

Our police are always worried that they're going to upset something. That's something they are very careful about, they are just like no, we can't do that, that's overstepping the mark, we can't do that.

Roger Parrish recalls how the both the French Police and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were reluctant for the police in the United Kingdom to become involved in the investigation into his daughter's death:

It occurred to me that two heads are better than one and it would be good to have some liaison between the two police forces. But the French weren't very keen on that. And the Foreign Office certainly wasn't keen on that. In fact, the Foreign Office positively discouraged the police here from getting involved. The police here were absolutely discouraged from communicating with the French authorities so early on there was no connection between the two police forces at all.

When recalling a meeting that he attended, Roger continues:

I was asked to go to a police conference in South Wales and the speaker there was from the Foreign Office. She commented on police involvement and said that they did not want to disturb the feelings of another country... and I really got quite irritated about that and told her afterwards – "What about our feelings?" She took it on board

because she said it was an insensitive thing to say but that seemed to me to sum up the advice that the Foreign Office had given... you don't want to upset other countries or individuals, for instance, by suggesting that your police force could perhaps, maybe help a bit... You know, I thought, well, if that's how you think, I'm just going to go my own way and that's what I've done.

Whilst family members often spoke of a lack of inter-jurisdictional collaboration, they also focused more specifically on the overall service provided to them by the police and other agencies of the criminal justice system – both in the country in which the murder occurred and in the United Kingdom. Some families described a predominantly positive experience of their interactions with the criminal justice system. To begin with, Pete and Hazel Kouzaris recall the efficiency of the Sarasota police in arresting the person responsible for the murder of their son James and his best friend, James:

From the time that the police got involved to the time of the state prosecution we couldn't fault them. They kept us informed. I'd like to think it was because they wanted to do the right thing. I suspect having the world's eyes on them may have just given them the incentive and given them extra focus to get it right. But they were magnificent, and they were magnificent when we went back as well two years ago.

In a similar vein, Kim Spooner recalls the largely positive experience of dealing with the authorities in St Martin:

In our case, we were lucky because the investigation was done really well. We were informed about the investigation as it went along, as a civil party, we could play a part in the investigation if we wanted things to be done, or if we wanted CCTV to be checked. We had access to the whole case file, so we read through that with a fine toothcomb, once we had translated it, obviously.

She continues:

I feel like we're really lucky because there are cases where no one is caught, where there is no outcome, or they have a trial and don't get the verdict they want. There are so many variations of what might happen, so for us to have a good investigation, to have a good sentence under French law, we felt that all of those things went as well as we could have hoped. Seeing all of the other families' experiences and knowing that at so many points it can go wrong – when it has already gone as badly wrong as it can, and it can still continue to go wrong – we just feel really lucky.

Finally, Roger Parrish describes the help given to him by the police in the United Kingdom in the time following the death of his daughter in France:

The police in this country have been very helpful. I know they get a bad press from time to time and I'm aware, I read all the stories in the newspapers about certain things that have gone wrong. But I can only say that, in our experience, I don't think there's ever been an occasion where I've not been able to phone up somebody from the local police and speak to someone who is fairly high ranking. There's always, always been somebody that to talk to. In terms of what help they can give, it's over and above what you can expect in my case.

These remarks draw attention to the efforts made by co-victims of murder to obtain as much information as possible about the circumstances of the surrounding their loved-one's death. This idea is supported by Rock (1998), who suggests that co-victims of murder often exhibit a “consuming appetite” for information in the time following their bereavement. Indeed, Asaro (2001), notes that those bereaved through murder frequently demonstrate an “almost obsessive” need to know the “who, why, where and how”. Interestingly, Rock (1998) also notes, in cases where there is no prosecution, co-victims of murder may engage in their own investigations into the circumstances of the death. This self-investigation was also evident in the narratives of several of the research participants and most notably, in those cases where the perpetrator had not been apprehended, or where there were perceived failings in the foreign police investigation. Alison Hill, for example, in the absence of information from the

Argentine police force, visited several prisons in the United Kingdom, in order to speak to those who she suspected of being related to the murder of her daughter. She describes the circumstances:

I went to see another guy and he sat down and spoke to me, with the Chaplain, and we were just chatting and I said “I just need to know what was going on – I am aware of what she was involved with” and this bloke started crying and he was really upset and he said “I saw Laura when she died, I went back to the apartment and the police were there and he said “I saw her” and he explained how she was and the chaplain said to him, “You must be truthful” – because he didn’t want to tell me – he said “You must be truthful, it’s her mom you know”.

So, too, in the absence of clear and regular communication with the French authorities, Roger Parrish and his family made several practical attempts to obtain further information about the circumstances surrounding his daughter’s murder:

We realised that we had to go [to France] and we went with the intention of getting some information. When we were there, we started to attract attention from the media, the local press and the local radio and television, and that's what we wanted. We had to keep the profile in the public eye. People knew who we were, and the story was going around because they saw us giving leaflets out. One or two people came forward and said, “Have you thought about this idea or thought about this person”. So, it wasn't without sort of a limited degree of success... we took everything on board and recorded everything that we were given in terms of information.

The need for information which is evident here further demonstrates the need amongst co-victims to make sense of their experience. Indeed, Monckton-Smith, Williams and Mullane (2014) suggest that information following bereavement through homicide may form an important part of the coping and recovery process. As such, the narrative here also highlights the importance of clear and consistent communication between the foreign police force and the

families of the primary victim who are often residing in the United Kingdom. In the absence of a clear line of communication, families are forced to engage in their own investigative efforts, which can often be driven by the perception that nothing is being done or that information is being withheld from them. Indeed, Roger Parrish notes:

We heard nothing for about two years. When you hear nothing, you don't know what to think. You start to wonder if it is being covered up. You think, why are people are doing nothing?

The overall participant narrative here highlights the delicate nature of the interactions between co-victims of murder abroad and agencies of the criminal justice system and brings into focus some of the diplomatic and jurisdictional issues that arise when murder transgresses geographic boundaries. What is also evident, is the value attributed to accurate and reliable information, from, for example, the police in the country in which the murder occurred. Inconsistent or contradictory information, understandably, frustrates co-victims of murder abroad, who, like those bereaved through murder more generally, often engage in a process of “compulsive enquiry” whereby their ability to make sense of their experience is predicated on a thorough understanding of the circumstances surrounding their loved one’s death (Ryaneason, 1994).

5.6. The Role of the Media and the Impact of Publicity

Indicative of the wider media fascination with violent crime, cases of murder feature more frequently in the news – despite the relative rarity in their occurrence when compared to non-violent forms of criminality (Yardley, Wilson and Kennedy, 2015). Whilst there is some variation in the amount of coverage given to each case – often based on what Jewkes (2015) describes as “newsworthiness” – incidences of murder and the subsequent investigation regularly attract local, national and sometimes even international media attention. Indeed, as

suggested by Hough and McCorkle (2014), whilst almost all individuals are interested in the details of a murder investigation, the news media thrives on it.

Keen to obtain and report upon the circumstances of the murder, journalists and reporters often turn to the families of the victims for insight and information. At a time when they are already having to deal with the intense emotional disruption that results from violent bereavement, families of the victims must also take into consideration the additional pressure of engaging with and responding to the media. Borrowing the words of Alves-Costa *et al.* (2017) this, often intense media attention highlights the dual private and public nature of the grieving process. Indeed, the additional pressure that accompanies the media attention has been well-documented within the pre-existing literature with Sprungen (1998:216) noting that the intrusive and insensitive actions on behalf of the media can potentially turn the private experience of bereavement into a “public spectacle”. So, too, Rock (1998: 216) suggests that the level of media attention given to co-victims of murder, particularly in the early stages, is “quite extraordinary”.

Research suggests that grief, regardless of its cause, is considered, by the bereaved, to be a private experience (Brown, 1993). In cases of non-violent bereavement, where the death results from natural causes, the bereaved family have a degree of control regarding the details they share and the extent to which they engage in public mourning. However, in cases of murder, families have little to no control over what is revealed to others about the deceased, the manner of their death or their personal relationships (Brown, 1993). This sense of anxiety which surrounds the absence of control regarding the presentation of their loved-one’s character was evident in the narratives of those who participated in the research. This is perhaps to be expected, given that co-victims of murder abroad are often subjected to similar,

if not greater levels of media attention than those cases which occur in national circumstances. Whilst there is some variation between the cases included in the research, generally speaking, cases of murder involving British citizens in a foreign country tend to attract a great deal of media attention, particularly in the early stages, both in the country in which the murder occurred, and in the United Kingdom. Knowing how and when to engage with the media presents an additional challenge to co-victims of murder in these circumstances and, if not carefully navigated, can serve to exacerbate the already traumatic nature of their experience.

The role of the media regularly featured in the narrative accounts of those who participated in the research and family members often described their interactions with and perceptions of both individual journalists, and the media more generally. Notwithstanding the variation that exists between cases, the words of the participants highlight the negative aspects of media attention but also accentuate those circumstances where, as suggested by Alarcão *et al.* (2008), the media can act as an “ally” in the co-victim’s search for justice.

The pressure of the media attention is perhaps most profound during the time which immediately follows the murder. Sometimes within hours, but often within days of learning that their loved-one has been murdered, families can be followed and surrounded by reporters seeking to obtain an interview. Pete Kouzaris, for example, reflects on the high-profile nature of his case and the growing media interest in the time immediately following the murder of his son, James (Case Three):

Even the police were taking in the enormity of the situation because it’s not like anybody has been killed on the streets of Sarasota. We are talking about two British tourists, and I think they knew that this was going to hit big, and it was big. It was worldwide at the time. We didn’t know quite how worldwide until we got back, we just wanted to insulate ourselves from the media, we didn’t want to hear anything.

Pete's words here also draw attention to the tension that exists between the need to broadcast details of the investigation, and the need for the families to break the news to significant others before the death is common knowledge (Brown, 1993). Co-victims of murder often express a concern about friends and other family members being made aware of the murder and the surrounding circumstances by the news media, rather than by the family themselves. As Pete indicates the murder of his son James, and his friend James, in Florida in 2011, attracted worldwide media attention and, as such, the news of the story would reach the United Kingdom in the time soon afterwards.

Brian Chandler, who was instrumental in helping his family navigate the difficult circumstances following the murder, describes his experience of dealing with the unwanted media attention surrounding their case:

In our case, the publicity was overwhelming, intrusive, not helpful. It was a burden to begin with to every member of the family. The press pursued not only Liz but Tash's sisters. Liz and I were going everywhere with motorbike helmets on because we constantly trying to avoid them. The press photographers were there, outside Liz's house, outside the daughter's houses for days afterwards, so it was very intrusive to behind with. But as time wore on, I dealt with all of the press side of things because I was able to it and we told the press very early on that nobody other than me would be making any statements whatsoever. I thought it was a good idea, it was a way to take the pressure of the family, to stop the reporters and photographers from following them around. If they knew they would get comments, but only from me and it made it easier for the rest of them.

For the families of murder victims, the exposure to the media is a completely new experience. As such, it is difficult for them to know if and how to respond to the questions of reporters, and

whether to engage them in conversation regarding the circumstances of the murder. Following the murder of her ex-husband, Nick, Alison Eagleton describes her family's sense of unfamiliarity with the media:

I had a reporter knocking the door and it's unpleasant. Catherine was just about to have her first child so, between us, we asked Lincolnshire Police to keep driving past her house to make sure that she didn't have a barrage. Elizabeth had the whole set, she was only missing the racing times, she had everybody but luckily her husband was quite fierce with them. Because you don't know how to handle it, you don't know whether to give somebody something, you just don't know what to do.

So, too, families expressed surprise at the lengths to which the media would go to obtain information about their cases. Pete and Hazel Kouzaris recall their experience:

Then the next day we got quite a big drive, everyone was there, the whole lot... They were knocking on neighbour's doors... they were following up the name Kouzaris, wherever there was a Kouzaris, they were in Leicester, all over. Our sister-in-law works at, well she did at the time, in Blue Water John Lewis and because it's quite an unusual surname and they'd managed to find her there. It's amazing, we were not naïve, but it's amazing how they can obtain information so easily.

Families also articulated their concern about the portrayal of their loved ones in the media. Whilst they acknowledged that the reporting is inevitable and perhaps unavoidable, they emphasised the importance of an accurate description of events, and a truthful portrayal of their family member's character. As such, speculation regarding the circumstances of the murder, inaccurate personal descriptions, and the use of sensationalist language were highlighted as negative experiences on several occasions in the co-victim narratives. As an ex-journalist, Kim Spooner felt to contact the media to ensure that her sister, Lianne, was portrayed in an appropriate and accurate manner:

My next big step was to make sure that we contacted the media and had our side, her side, and our side represented because we just felt like there was quite an opportunity for her to be portrayed in a way that we didn't want her to be portrayed, so we took control of that straight away.

In the days following the murder of James Kouzaris and James Cooper in Florida in 2011, the British media were quick to speculate on the circumstances surrounding the incident, claiming that the two men had been killed whilst in search of drugs in the early hours of the morning (Evening Standard, 2011; Express, 2011). James' parents, Pete and Hazel, who strongly refuted the claims, describe their reaction to the initial media speculation:

They thought it might be drugs because they were found with their jeans pulled down. Particularly the media in England. I mean they suspected them first. It was really, really strange because they were speculating what they were doing there. Initially it was very much about, why they were there and whether they were there for drugs.

They continue to recall details of an interview given in good faith to a local reporter with the view to publicising a fund-raising event for their newly formed charity, Always a Chance, which was set up in memory of James and James. They describe their frustration at a lack of attention to detail and the sensationalist language used by the publishing newspaper:

We had this reporter around and it was horribly stage-managed, but we went on with it. We did this interview and when she sent us the transcript, there were so many blooming grammatical mistakes which I then had to correct and send off to her... She said it's probably going to be published in a tabloid, probably the Sun. When we saw the original, we thought it was great, it was what we said, but then when it appeared in the Sun, they got their sensationalist bit. They dragged up a photograph of him which was not that flattering. The opening line is "riddled with bullets" and they use all of this emotionally charged phrasing. The bits we wanted were there, but it was surrounded by this sensationalism.

Hazel Kouzaris concludes:

I couldn't bear to look at any photographs and neither could you [Pete] because whenever I saw James, his face, I just couldn't deal with it. I know now that the media can work for you and perhaps it could have done, but at the time, our reaction was, we don't want anything because the media twist everything.

Furthermore, Alison Eagleton recalls her anguish at the portrayal of her then husband, Nick, in the newspaper. She draws particular attention to the apparent focus on his occupation and perceived lifestyle and expresses her concerns in regard to the long-lasting impact upon her family:

It's pretty grim reading in the newspaper and you see what other people are reading about your husband and you want to go and tell them that its rubbish... You know, the luxury lifestyle, the oil company executive on his own yacht... It was horrible. If there is a court case, we know what it will be like, that he will be portrayed in a shocking light... divorced once and wants to divorce again, it will be awful. It is just in the paper for a couple of days and then it will be gone, but it will be on the internet, and you think what if the grandchildren ever look up their grandpa? What are they going to see? So, we are very keen to tell them about the real Nick, to tell them what he was really like.

The involvement of the media clearly presents a unique challenge to co-victims of murder and highlights the contrast between the private nature of bereavement, and the public fascination with violent crime. If not carefully mediated, reporters, photographers and journalists can be regarded by families as being intrusive, insensitive of their circumstances and disrespectful to the memory of their loved one. Therefore, given the difficult and traumatic nature of their experiences, it is important that their right to privacy is respected at a time when they need it the most.

However, despite some of the notable negative implications of the media's attention, some families did speak of several occasions where they were able to use the publicity to their advantage. Having their cases featured in the local and national news resulted in increased public awareness, and sometimes even acted as a catalyst in the investigative process in the country in which the murder occurred. Brian Chandler describes the potential utility of the media in cases of murder abroad:

I think you get two extremes and everything in between. In our case the publicity was overwhelming, intrusive, not helpful but some of our members have got cases that need much more publicity, you know if more people knew about it maybe something would happen. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office don't help with the advice for the families, don't talk to the press basically you might jeopardise your case and in our experience as a charity, that is not the case, I don't know of any cases where publicity has brought difficulties to the case, but I do know quite a lot where it is the publicity that eventually gets something done.

So too, Kim Spooner notes how the media can act as a stimulus for action by drawing attention to the circumstances of the murder and the subsequent experiences of the surviving family members:

It recommended in one of the reports that the FCDO should be the spokesperson for the family or certainly that they should at least advise the family on dealing media. For me, that's a complete no because it's never going to be in the interest of family. Instead, it's going to be about protecting the FCDO, so basically making no comment about anything. They will scare families into thinking that by talking to the media, they are jeopardizing the trial, or that they are jeopardizing the investigation and more often than not, that's absolutely not the case. More often than not, any publicity families gain for their case is going to be positive.

Kim continues:

If families can take control of the story and share a positive message about their loved one, that can give them some sense of control. Obviously, they will never totally be in control of the media, but they can be a little bit more in control in terms of the information that is being given out, rather than just shutting themselves away and watching it all happen. I think families need that independent media guidance, which is not going to come from the police or the FCDO because they are always going to just shut it down because they will use the excuse of jeopardizing the trail or the investigation. And I think that's the position where we're in now with families who are guided or scared by that. And it's to the detriment of their case because the cases that have more publicity and get more action, it's simply as that.

Alison Hill also describes the role played by local and foreign journalists in reporting upon and uncovering important information about the murder of her daughter, Laura:

We were quite lucky because there was a guy at BBC News Southeast called John Young who has been in contact with me all the way through. He is so kind and has never ever used anything that was not true, he always tells the truth, and he was very, very, supportive of our cause. An Argentine reporter from Clarin gave me her number and she said if there's anything we can do just let me know. I stayed in contact with her, and she has written various reports about Laura over the years. She completely supported our theory that Laura was murdered, absolutely, so whenever she has done a report, she has always done it in our favour. She has also got great contacts and is also friends with the ambassador at the embassy, so that has worked out well.

She continues:

The Daily Mail also got involved which actually – even though people don't like the Daily Mail – did us a massive favour, because they had a reporter based in Argentina and this guy obviously had contacts as he was managing to get information about the case. He managed to get the photographs of Laura from the scene... he managed to

get a lot of information including taped phone conversations because it turned out Laura was involved in a drug network.

Kim Spooner also details the impact of the media interest in her own case:

We contacted the media which actually stirred up some interest that otherwise wouldn't have been there. Actually, no one would have even known about it, so we actually created media interest and that helped because it gave us a little bit of power to try and get things done.

So too, Roger Parrish recalls a conversation he had with John Ward – a man whose daughter was killed in Kenya in 1998 – which focused on the role of the media in cases of murder abroad:

We spoke on the telephone. He said you've got to try and engage the media. But be aware that it can be a double-edged sword. He was the one who said to me, getting the media on your side and get them talking about your case. Do everything you can to get a bit of publicity. There are things that they'll get wrong, but just accept that. I remember him saying to me and that encouraged us to go to France.

Roger continues and describes his own experience of the media attention given to his case:

I would say that the media have been largely supportive. There's been a few things which we would rather not have been said and which were not accurate. But by and large, they were not really important things. Both in France, and this country, especially in France, it has been important to us. Overall, we've got on well with the journalists. There have been one or two headlines saying things that that we didn't like, but we feel that it was the right decision to try and engage the media. I think it certainly helps to keep the profile of what happened to Jo in the public eye.

Overall, these observations suggest that there exists a fine line between useful media attention, and unwanted media intrusion. Whilst families have acknowledged the inevitability of the

media involvement in their case, their narratives serve to highlight the potentially fragile nature of the relationship between the media and co-victims of murder abroad. The families included in the research often expressed a sense of gratitude for the help and support offered mainly by individual journalists with a particular interest in their case. Indeed, in several incidences, the media attention was instrumental in raising awareness of the circumstances of the murder and the family's search for justice. However, despite this, it should also be recognised that families frequently expressed great concern about the depiction of their loved-one's character and the use of sensationalist language when reporting the details of the murder.

In summary, Eve Henderson suggests that journalists should be professional and courteous in their approach to dealing with families bereaved through murder abroad to avoid causing additional upset at a time of considerable emotional difficulty:

It's about the appropriate training of journalists. If they want to make contact, then they should send a written letter stating that they are interested in the story and that they are not going to sensationalise it.

A more considered approach, that is empathetic and aware of the traumatic nature of their experience is likely to be beneficial to both the family, who may need media exposure to progress their case, and to the journalists, who are wanting to report on the story. However, it is important to note that not all families affected by murder abroad will need, nor necessarily want to interact with the media. In such cases, wherever possible, their privacy should be respected in order to avoid compounding their original trauma by causing additional upset and distress.

5.7. Conclusion to Part One

The first part of this findings and discussion chapter has presented a detailed examination of the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder which occurs in a foreign country. Attention has been given to the variety of practical issues which were evident in the narratives of those who participated in the research. Indeed, their words have highlighted the way in which the international nature of the crime has shaped and influenced their post-homicide experience. What follows in the second part of the chapter is an exploration of the emotional implications of murder abroad, and the sources and extend of the support that is available to co-victims of murder in these circumstances.

PART TWO: THE EMOTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF MURDER ABROAD

5.8. The Emotional Implications of Murder Abroad

So far this chapter has presented and discussed the post-homicide experience of a small group of co-victims who were affected by the murder of a loved-one in a foreign country. By doing so, the discussion has drawn attention to disruptive nature of a death notification, and highlighted the range of practical issues that were prevalent in the narratives of those who participated in the research. These issues, which were attributable to, or exacerbated by the circumstances of murder, demonstrate the ways in which their post-homicide experience was shaped and influenced by the international nature of the crime. In the time following the notification of death, co-victims of murder abroad, quite apart from coming to terms with the unexpected and violent nature of their bereavement, have to navigate their way through

language barriers, cultural differences, financial expense, repatriation, investigative and legal proceedings, and attention from local, national, and even international media attention.

Quite often in the absence of prompt, coherent and consistent information from, for example, the foreign police force in the country in which the murder occurred, or the FCDO, co-victims of murder abroad must face these challenges alone. Through their narratives, families expressed their frustration at the lack of support they received throughout their post-homicide journey, both practical and financial. The second part of this findings and discussion chapter, therefore, serves to: (1) highlight how the culmination of these issues can exacerbate the overall emotional impact of violent bereavement and lead to complications in co-victims' ability to make sense of and recover from their traumatic experience and; (2) draw attention to the sources and extent of the support provided to co-victims in a foreign country.

5.8.1. Complications in Grieving

Whilst the time following the notification of death is particularly troublesome for surviving family members, the impact of bereavement through murder extends far beyond the first 24 hours following the news, and can continue for years after the incident has occurred (Zedner, 1997). Previous research has indicated that co-victims of murder can experience a variety of short-term and long-term psychological and physical health complications in the aftermath of their bereavement (see, for example, Connolly and Gordon, 2014) many of which can be attributed to the violent circumstances surrounding the death (Currier *et al.*, 2006), and to the “stigmatizing, unnatural, especially burdensome and unexpected” nature of the event itself (Allen, 1981:16).

Studies into the effects of bereavement through murder have, for example, suggested that co-victims can experience disproportionately high levels of distress (Milman, 2018); symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Connolly and Gordon, 2014); complications in the grieving process (Currier, 2006); disruptions in daily functioning (Bonanno and Kaltman, 2001); overwhelming feelings of loss, difficulty sleeping and an increased fear of further bereavement (van Wijk *et al.*, 2017; Milman *et al.*, 2018).

Whilst some of these consequences of bereavement were present in the participant narrative when they were asked about the emotional impact of the murder, families often focused on the process of grieving. More specifically, families regularly described how their ability to grieve had been disrupted, or delayed due to the sudden and violent nature of the crime and the variety of practical issues that they had faced in the time following their bereavement.

For context, it is widely accepted that those who have been bereaved in non-violent circumstances experience what is referred to as “mundane grief” (Rock, 1998). Under these conditions, the process of grieving usually follows the traditionally accepted “stages of grief” which, according to Maciejewski *et al.*, (2007) consist of: disbelief; separation; distress; depression-mourning; and, recovery. However, when the death is attributable to the malicious actions of another – such as in cases of murder – the process of grieving can be disrupted due to the violent and unexpected nature of the death. As such, the extent to which co-victims of murder can recover from their grief is influenced by the circumstances of the crime and their subsequent post-homicide experience. Indeed, Brian Chandler highlights the subjective nature of grief and the variation that exists between families in the extent to which they are able to recover from their bereavement:

Everybody is different and, if you ever recover, everyone recovers at a different rate. I think people never really recover from it, it's always there. Obviously, people try to go back to normal, back to work and all of the rest of it, but it's difficult.

Unlike non-violent bereavement, cases of murder inevitably involve the criminal justice system. When the murder takes place in a foreign country, this can often include the local police force as well as the police in the United Kingdom. In addition to this, depending on the progress of the police investigation, co-victims of murder abroad may also have to deal with foreign judicial systems, and accompanying legal proceedings. Several of the research participants described how their interactions with the criminal justice system, both abroad and in the United Kingdom often impeded their ability to grieve for the death of their loved-one. Kim Spooner, for example, notes:

This is the abnormal cycle of grief. When someone dies, from an illness, you can get over that initial shock, you have the funeral, and then you grieve, and you remember the person. You come full circle and then you're able to talk about them, etc. But when you're caught in a case, that's not resolved, for whatever reason, you can't do that. So, it's hard for it to become about the person because it's always about the death. Which is really, really damaging for families and it completely interrupts that of cycle of grief. And that can happen for decades.

Kim's observations suggest that for co-victims of murder abroad, the process of mourning is often restricted, or interrupted by the process of criminal justice. So, too, she draws attention to the damage that can be caused to families by the protracted nature of the criminal proceedings. This is perhaps not surprising, given that Connolly and Gordon (2014) note that the ability of co-victims to grieve properly can even be delayed until the criminal investigation into the murder has been completed. Grief in cases of murder, therefore, can be predicated

upon the successful completion of a police investigation and the apprehension, charging and punishment of the person responsible for the crime.

Whilst there was some variation in the quality and outcomes of the police investigation between cases, each participant was able to reflect on their own ability to grieve following their bereavement, and the impact of the criminal justice proceedings. For example, the person responsible for the murder of Alison Hill's daughter has never been apprehended, due to what would later be described as an "incompetent" investigation by the Argentina authorities. Here she describes the emotional difficulties that she has experienced in the years following the murder:

It's been harder for me. I can't cry anymore, to the point where somebody might say to my daughter "Oh, I didn't want to upset your mom" and she would say "You wouldn't upset my mom" because I can't cry anymore. It has left me with this inability to cry. I'm crying inside but I can't cry. I remember, I was hysterical to the point of – you don't know who is making that noise and it happens to be you – and it leaves you with the trauma of it all. You don't ever want to go back to that again.

Alison's narrative account of her experience also highlights how her ability to grieve for her daughter has been postponed due to the absence of a conviction. This sentiment is supported by the pre-existing literature which suggests that the process of recovery can be prolonged by a failure on behalf of the police to apprehend the perpetrator of the crime (Armour, 2006; Bucholz, 2002). Stretesky *et al.*, (2010: 880) suggest that it is extremely difficult for co-victims to construct a sense of post-loss meaning when the circumstances surrounding the murder are "unknown, uncertain and ongoing". Indeed, families in these cases, according to Masters *et al.*, (1998:116), have to live with continual awareness that "the murderer is out there somewhere" and often have no readily identifiable target for their anger and frustration. In a

similar vein, Alison Eagleton describes the importance of finding the person responsible for her husband's murder and the significance of a conviction to her post-murder recovery:

I don't think I have grieved yet. You can't grieve because you can't let it go. I think to grieve properly you have to express it and let it go and to be able to move on, but we can't do that. I am still stuck, and my children are still stuck, and I think the only way out of that is to get a prosecution. And on that day in court, there will be justice. It will be in the paper, and we will be able to stand on the steps outside the court and say "There is justice for him, there's justice for Nick" – he will never come back, we can't get him back, but at least there will be justice.

So, too it is also worth drawing attention to the anxiety that was described by families in those cases where the perpetrator has been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment but would, at some point in the future, likely be released back into society. Most notably, Pete Kouzaris reflects on the possibility the person responsible for the murder of his son might be released from prison earlier than expected:

The impact of finding out that he might be released was catastrophic. The way that we were able to cope was by knowing that he was behind bars for the good, that he's out of the way, we don't have to look at him anymore. But the possibility of him being released early, it was just awful, absolutely awful.

Kim Spooner describes her thoughts on the eventual release of the person responsible for the murder of her sister and the ongoing nature of her bereavement:

If and when people get let out, that's a whole different phase of the journey. In our case, we know that he's still going to have a fair bit of life to live, when he presumably gets out of prison. He will be all ready to start a new life wherever he chooses to live. He can't live in France, they won't let him set foot on any French territory again, which

is great, but that does mean he can come to England, and that's an interesting thing to ponder.

Returning to grief, Hazel Kouzaris also describes the impact of the murder of her son on herself and her husband, Pete:

I think men and women grieve slightly differently. I mean I couldn't really get out of bed for a bit, and he [Pete] was very good, he was sort of saying come on, James would want you to. I mean luckily as well we've got a very close relationship and I think that helps because I think something like this can either bring you closer together or break you. I can talk about it now – but I couldn't even use the word murder before.

Pete Kouzaris adds:

We were stuck in our own bubble... but we would do things to help ourselves. So, for example, in the early stages, a lot of the time you [Hazel] would just be talking, and you would just break down. It's like as soon as you felt this mist, this black mist coming over, it's like right, let's go out for a walk. We're lucky with where we are at the moment, a stone's throw from the countryside and that has helped. Getting out there and walking and talking it out. I think the grief was contained by being driven in those early stages. Stan and I would be on the phone, would be planning our campaign, who were going to ring, who were going to write to and so I was totally focused on that.

Furthermore, Elizabeth Chandler highlights the subjective nature of grief and describes how she, and her daughters have coped with their bereavement:

People have different ways of coping with grief, and Tasha and Amanda's have been, "just don't go there mother", they can't do it. Now for me, I needed to say "oh I miss him" but they have a different way, they couldn't talk to me about it, it was too painful... I knew I just had to be a mum, there was nothing I could do to make anything any better, I just had to be a mum, I was the donkey she could kick. She wouldn't show that anger

to anybody else, I got it, but I would iron her clothes, cook her meals, look after Mia, just be a mum, there was nothing else I could do, nothing at all.

Alison Eagleton also reflects on her inability to grieve following the death of her ex-husband:

I don't think I have, you know, you can't, in a way, you can't let it go and I think to grieve properly, you have to express it and let it go... but we can't do that, so no, I am still stuck and my children are still stuck and I think the only way out of that is to get a prosecution, but that is how it is.

Finally, when reflecting on the impact of his daughter's murder, Roger Parrish describes his sense of grief:

It has impacted on my ability to grieve, of course it has. The grief has been channelled into doing something, but it's always been there, you know, the cycle of grief. I have my moments, of course, when I'm by myself somewhere but then those moments have been followed by, right, roll your sleeves up and get on with it, what's the next stage, what are we going to do now... and I suppose that's how we cope with it really.

In addition to complications in the grieving process, Walters (2015) draws attention to the prevalence of survivor's guilt amongst co-victims of murder – where they may question their action, or inaction, in the time leading up to the moment their loved-one was murdered. This tendency to self-blame, according to Jannoff-Bulman and Frantz (1997), represents a positive coping impulse in the aftermath of a traumatic event, even in those circumstances where the survivor played no contributory role in the event itself. Whilst it was not a common feature in the narratives of those who participated in the research, when describing the events leading up to the death of her husband, Eve Henderson recalled her own feelings of guilt:

I had terrible guilt, it was my husband's birthday and we had been out celebrating. We had had a drink, we weren't driving or anything so there was no reason for us not to.

But my argument, my victim blaming, was that if you hadn't had a bloody drink, you'd have defended yourself... For years I had a terrible guilt, that if he hadn't of had a drink, and everyone would say, don't be stupid, it wasn't him that did it, but it's in your head that his person contributed to their own death.

As is the case with bereavement more generally, the co-victims of murder who participated in the research often described the process of grieving for their loved one's death. Clearly, however, what separates the grief experiences by co-victims of murder from the more "mundane" grief that is associated with non-violent bereavement (Rock, 1998), is the way in which the process can be compounded and delayed by the violent and intentional nature of the death, the interactions with the criminal justice system and the involvement of the media. The postponement and amplification of their grief, in many cases, resulted in co-victims needing to seek professional support to make sense of their bereavement and, ultimately, to begin the process of recovery.

5.8.2. The Process of Recovery

As has been evidenced through the words of the participants, co-victims of murder abroad can experience a variety of emotional responses to bereavement, which can include complications in the grieving process. Three negative psychological and physical manifestations can, in part, be attributed to the violent and unexpected nature of their loss. Whilst participants regularly reflected on the difficulties they faced, they were also asked to describe the ways in which they had attempted to come to terms with their bereavement, and to begin the recovery process.

Newsom *et al.* (2017) suggest most people who experience non-violent bereavement will be able to cope with the pain of a normal grief reaction without professional help and will begin to feel better over time. However, as Rando (1992) points out, when the bereavement is

unexpected and violent in nature, there is an increased risk of a complicated mourning reaction. In such circumstances, previous research has indicated that professional intervention in the form of bereavement counselling may be helpful in improving both psychological and social functioning following the loss of a loved-one (Newsom *et al.*, 2017). Given the considerable emotional impact of their bereavement – which can manifest in a variety of ways including the development of a complicated or prolonged grief reaction – participants in the research often spoke of the importance of counselling in helping them talk about and come to terms with their loss.

Elizabeth Chandler, for example describes her experience of counselling, which began almost 18 months after the death of her grandson:

I went for counselling, because I needed to say I missed Liam, I loved him, you know, but I mean it was a couple of years later when I realised, I had post-traumatic stress. I still get it, I am affected now by that. It just comes out of nowhere, makes you feel bonkers, absolutely bonkers.

She continues:

I went for counselling, about a year ago because I could see the complicated grief reaction. If you don't go through the stages of grief in a natural way, one minute you can be angry and the next minute you're in despair. I've gone through all of that myself, in different circumstances. But if you don't go through those stages in a healthy way, if you don't have the chance to talk about it, then in subsequent grief, there's this explosion of emotions.

So, too, Alison Eagleton discusses the importance of counselling in helping her to process and talk about her feelings following her bereavement:

I had some counselling about a year later and that was very good. It was from the NHS, and it was very good, and it got me through. I also went to a psychotherapist, probably about two years ago now and again, that was hugely helpful as you're a bit further on and you can start to talk about your feelings and work it out.

In a similar vein, Alison Hill comments on her perceived inability to cope with the impact of losing her daughter, and highlights the role of counselling in processing the pain and anxiety she was experiencing:

I felt like I wasn't coping and that I couldn't cope anymore. I was having lots of anxiety, so I was referred to a psychiatrist and psychologist... I always thought to myself, how can anyone help you? Nobody can make it go away, nobody can make your pain go away so what is the point of looking for help? But it does help actually, I believe that, especially the psychologist, they get it, they understand.

Finally, Kim Spooner emphasises the importance of counselling in helping her to cope with the loss of her sister:

Literally from the moment we heard, I knew I wanted some counselling and some support because it was such a massive thing. I just thought, I'm not going to survive this so I wanted that right away, so that someone could get right in and prevent me from, you know, well just exploding.

When viewed holistically, it is clear that the participants in the research attribute value to the counselling they received – regardless of whether the help was sought immediately, or in the months and years following the murder. Their words indicate that seeking and receiving professional support provided them with a much-needed opportunity to talk about the way in which their lives had been affected by their bereavement, and ultimately enabled them to begin to come to terms with their loss. Despite this, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations

of therapy in the recovery process. As argued by Ryaneanson (1994: 343), “no matter how resilient the patient, homicide will have a lasting impact on his/her life, and there is no therapy that is going to offer complete relief”.

5.9. Sources of Support

In addition to the role of counselling, several additional sources of support were identified in the narratives of those who participated in the research. The discussion here therefore serves to highlight the way in which the families of victims of murder abroad were provided with emotional and practical support in the time following their bereavement.

5.9.1. Informal Sources of Support

For many of those who participated in the research, support in the time immediately following the murder of their loved one was provided by friends, family members and wider social networks. Whilst the support came in a variety of forms, including practical assistance and emotional support, family members often expressed a sense of gratitude to those who supported them in their time of need. This notion is supported by previous research which has highlighted the importance of informal support networks in aiding the recovery of co-victims of murder (Hardesty *et al.*, 2008). Sharpe (2008), for example, suggests that the informal support provided by friends and family is often the primary source of support that is used by co-victims to cope with the murder of their loved ones. The reliance on friends and family in the time following their bereavement was evident in the narratives of many of those who participated in the research. When reflecting on the support provided by her family, Alison Eagleton describes the importance of being able to talk about the impact of losing her husband:

I've been lucky that I have had the support, certainly of my two brothers, we are very close, so I have always had their support. Elizabeth and I talk about it a lot, but as we say, were looking at it from a different perspective, so we don't see the same thing, but at least we do talk about it which helps.

When focusing on the supportive nature of their colleagues, Pete and Hazel Kouzaris noted:

So, we both have supportive work colleagues. Because that first thing of going through the door and seeing people and then having to tell you know, people don't know what to say to you. So, work was a, well it was a tonic in a way, wasn't it, it helped.

Finally, Roger Parrish reflects on the support he received from members of his local community in the time immediately following the murder of his daughter:

We had a lot of support from the community. A lot of support from the community straightaway really in the practical form, food and shopping, you know, all these things that you would normally do yourself.

Whilst the support provided by friends and family was clearly of benefit to many of the families included in the research, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the informal sources of support – these issues are discussed more comprehensively later in the chapter.

5.9.2. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO):

In addition to the informal support offered by friends and family members, those who participated in the research were able to reflect, to a varying degree, on the nature and extent of the support provided in a more formal sense, primarily by the Foreign, Commonwealth and

Development Office (FCDO) and from other professional services such as the police and Victim Support.

To begin, families often spoke of the role of the FCDO in handling their case. Many were under the impression, particularly in the time immediately following their bereavement, that the FCDO was the most appropriate governmental department to provide them with relevant information, support, and advice on their circumstances and what they should do next. However, the expectations placed upon the FCDO by families in the days, weeks and months following their bereavement were seldom met and for those who participated in the research, the involvement of the FCDO was described as a source of frustration, rather than support. This is both surprising and concerning, given that previous literature suggests that co-victims of murder can experience “secondary victimisation” in the time following their bereavement (Corcoran, 2018). According to Gekoski, Adler and Gray (2013:2) secondary victimisation occurs when “victims of crime feel they have been subjected to inadequate, insensitive or inappropriate treatment, attitudes, behaviour, responses and/or practices by criminal justice or social agencies”. For co-victims of murder abroad, their involvement with the FCDO, perhaps more so than any other organisation, seemed to increase the likelihood of them experiencing secondary victimisation. To begin, Kim Spooner reflects on the nature of the FCDO and offers and overview of the issues she and other families in similar circumstances have faced:

Families are still having problems. We're trying to get change quicker, especially with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which is such an archaic and slow-moving organisation, that's hard to do. And then of course now, we have the new dimension of terrorism, and that is taking away from the focus on our cases and those deaths are being treated differently and have different support.

Focusing more specifically on her own experience of dealing with the FCDO, Kim continues:

So, in our case, we told the FCO that my sister had died. We weren't informed by them, we were told by my sister's friends, so you just sort of feel like that's the natural thing to do. You know, maybe we should tell the Foreign and Commonwealth Office because, well, isn't that what you should do? So, we rang them and said my sister has been murdered abroad and they said, okay we know nothing about it, we will look into it and get back to you. We contacted the FCO, and the Desk Officer said, here's a PDF on how to arrange a funeral and would you like victim's support?'. He provided no explanation of what Victim Support was – I mean most people's experiences of it is when the shed gets broken into and someone comes around to talk to you, but how is that going to help in this situation? We don't want tea and sympathy, we definitely didn't want someone to come around and tell me that she's gone to heaven, so we were just like no, and we dismissed that as an avenue.

Furthermore, Alison Eagleton describes the lack of support received by organisations including the FCDO and highlights the traumatic nature having to deal with these agencies:

We have had nothing in terms of support. Absolutely nothing. We never had a family liaison officer from the police. We had had nothing. I've been to see the Foreign Office and they say "Oh yes, we'll do this, and we'll do that" but nothing happens.

She continued:

Six and a half years I've been fighting to get somebody to help... nobody cares, the Foreign Office aren't caring and it's hard, it's emotionally crippling. Even after six and half years its emotional, and it sounds ridiculous, making a phone call, but it's because every time I do, I am reminded of what has happened.

Pete Kouzaris offers a similar account of his interactions with the FCDO:

The desk officers are very young and inexperienced. They're there for a short time and then they move on. So, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was a no-go, they were rubbish. In fact, there were so rubbish at liaison that, eventually, our FLO decided not

to deal with them. Instead, he went directly to America and that worked much, much better.

He also describes the lack of support in the time immediately after he was notified of his son's death:

We're in shock and we have to go back to our hotel room. We were jaywalking across roads, we could have been run over, goodness knows how we made our way back to the hotel. We thought, you know, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, they could trace us as they knew that something had happened. They could have traced where we were. They should have come out and safeguarded us basically, but it was a no show at all.

Hazel Kouzaris adds:

I think the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were useless – they said manage your expectations – and that was the first time I was told to manage my expectations – a term we use such a lot now. But seven plus years ago when I was trying to get things sorted, they were basically like, steady on, you need to manage your expectations.

For Alison Hill, the advice provided by the FCDO following the death of her daughter led to complications later in the case. Reflecting on her experience of dealing with the FCO, Alison describes the impact of the advice she was given in time immediately following the notification of her daughter's death:

You are putting your hope in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, they're the ones that are giving you the information, so they are getting the information and passing it on to you... I found the support at that time, really not good enough. Absolutely not good enough because if you've never dealt with a murder abroad, you do not know what you're doing, or what to expect, so when your government speaks to you and gives you advice, you take it because you believe them and looking back, in hindsight, it was

very poor support, very, very, poor support... The biggest mistake we made was through listening to the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Commenting upon the FCDO advice not to travel to Argentina to formally identify her daughter's body, Alison continues:

I don't know why I listened to them, I really don't. It makes me really angry, but they were like "Look, Mrs Hill, there's no need to go, let's just get her back, let's just get her back". Obviously, I found out later down the line what had happened, so it does make you really very, very angry. I've got used to the fact that we didn't get support and it's only when someone speaks to you and points it out like did you get this? – no – we were just sort of left in limbo and its really unfair, it's not fair at all and I don't know why there isn't enough help. They should be able to have the resources simply because, I think there is about 80 deaths abroad a year, you know, they could cope with that.

Notwithstanding the predominantly negative experience of the FCDO amongst many of those who participated in the research, when reflecting on the support provided to her family in the time immediately following her grandson's death, Elizabeth Chandler highlights the role of the British Consulate in Crete:

I have to speak from memory as it was quite a long time ago, but for me it all happened so quickly, during that night there was no involvement from the police or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to my knowledge, although I subsequently learned that the Consulate in Crete had sent a lady who's name I forget to Tash in hospital during the night, or in the early hours of the following morning so, there was some support immediately for Tash out there, by the FCO.

In a similar vein, whilst the supportive role of the police in the United Kingdom did not feature frequently in the co-victim narratives, it is worth noting that some families offered a

predominantly positive assessment of their involvement in their case. Pete and Hazel Kouzaris for example, note:

In the early stages, we were grateful for our Family Liaison Officer. We used to look forward to their visits. They offered us a lot. Not everyone gets that but there were absolutely superb.

So, too, Roger Parrish describes the supportive role of the police in his case:

There are Family Liaison Officers designated to all of these murder cases now, but it wasn't quite so formalised back then. This guy came around, he was a senior policeman, and he said, we are aware of what happened made it clear that they would help in any way that they could, right from the start.

Whilst the discussion here has highlighted the potential value in the support provided by the police in the United Kingdom to co-victims of murder abroad, it should be noted that it did not feature heavily in the narratives of those who participated in the research. What was clear, however, was the problematic nature of the co-victims' interactions with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. This is particularly troubling to families affected by murder in these circumstances, given that it is often their assumption, that the FCDO represents the most logical source of information, support and direction in the time immediately following the notification of their loved one's murder. Indeed, an overall sense of incompetence was accentuated by complaints of inconsistent communication, contradictory information, and an accompanying lack of empathy toward bereaved families and their experience. In the absence of support from the FCDO, co-victims of murder abroad often have to look elsewhere for emotional and practical support in the days, weeks, months and sometimes even years following their bereavement. For some, the most valuable source of support is the charity, Murdered Abroad.

5.9.3. The Role of the Charity Murdered Abroad

Whilst a more comprehensive account of the role and development of Murdered Abroad is provided in Chapter Three, it is worth reiterating that the charity provides both practical assistance and emotional support to families who have been bereaved through murder in a foreign country, given that it was a prominent feature in the narratives of those who participated in the research. The charity provides this support through a variety of mediums including: four meetings each year where members can share their stories and seek support from those who have similar experiences; facilitating contact between members, particularly in circumstances where the murders have occurred in the same country; and, a dedicated phonenumber and email service that is available to members 24-7 (Murdered Abroad, 2021). Further to this, the charity often provides practical support to their members which includes: writing letters to MPs, the police, Embassies, the FCDO and other agencies; speaking to the police, coroners and the FCDO on behalf of their members; seeking pro-bono legal advice and support; advising members on how to handle the media; putting members in touch with others who have had similar experiences and may therefore be able to offer advice/support that is specific to a particular country; and, putting members in touch with victims organisations abroad (Murdered Abroad, 2020).

Offering a summary of their work, Eve Henderson states:

Supporting families is what we started out to do because they are struggling the same as we did and because you recognise it, that becomes your main purpose. We probably have 250 families on our mailing list and perhaps 50 have dropped out – so probably, over the years 300 in total. They rarely drop out, sometimes they move and don't tell us, so we just let them go – we never ambulance chase. If we got all of them, we would be so overwhelmed, we wouldn't be able to deal with it.

Reflecting on her role in supporting families since the charity's formation, Eve describes the delicate nature of the work:

The one thing that you have to keep in mind is that they are traumatised, like I was back then. You should never be critical and never be judgmental. You have to listen, and actually, by listening, you allow them a chance to talk things through and to clarify in their own mind, what they need to do. They are just looking for that little bit of guidance.

In addition to providing both emotional and practical support, the charity also campaigns for the rights of families affected by murder abroad to be recognised and supported by the British government in their time of need. Notably, the Victim Support Homicide Service for example, at least initially, provided support only to those families who had been affected by homicide in the United Kingdom. However, thanks to the efforts of Eve and the charity, the service is now offered to families bereaved through murder abroad, either by a police family liaison officer or a Foreign Office country caseworker (Victim Support, 2021). Eve recalls her concern about the prior limitations of the Victim Support Homicide Service and emphasises the importance of prioritising the needs of families bereaved in these circumstances:

I remember thinking to myself, why would they leave the abroad cases out? It's because the crime occurred somewhere else, but it's not always about the crime, it's about the family. We cannot control the rest of the world's judicial processes, we're going to have to come to terms somehow or other with somebody being caught or not being caught, or getting a prison sentence or not, we are going to have to accept that not all cases are solved, but the way you treat the victim's family is what it should be about, and that goes for all of our agencies, criminal injuries, the home office, coppers, victim support.

Other significant developments include the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Chief Coroner of England and Wales (CCEW). This document sets out how each of these agencies will “co-ordinate the delivery of their respective functions and responsibilities in relation to deaths resulting from murder, manslaughter or infanticide of a British national whilst abroad” (ACPO, 2011). Director and Trustee, Brian Chandler describes the importance of a co-ordinated response from these agencies and the intended benefits of the creation of the Memorandum:

We wrote the original one in 2012, which nobody had attempted to do before, it sets out the gold standard of how those three official bodies should be being helpful for the benefit of the victim's family. It's a who does what document, this is what the families struggle with, you know, who is going to tell us what to do about this, and I think it's guidance, it is such a steep learning curve, that a document that says, this is what you should expect, this is how to get it, these are the people that should be helping you in this area or that area, you know a document like that is invaluable to the family.

Despite the increasing number of families seeking their support, Murdered Abroad continues to rely solely on donations, with large volumes of work completed voluntarily, by Eve, Kim, Brian and others involved in the day-to-day running of the charity. Indeed, the board of trustees, responsible for the organisation and delivery of the charity's services, comprises of several individuals who themselves have experienced bereavement as a result of murder in a foreign country. To this point, Eve describes how, over the years, the charity has been refused funding from a variety of sources including the Ministry of Justice, and details the difficulty she has faced securing financial support from the government in the United Kingdom:

At one point we applied to the Ministry of Justice for funding, and we got turned down on the basis that we didn't cover enough people, per capita, so whatever we were asking

for wasn't in their sights, there was no consideration given to our cases. We have never had any funding and I'm blooming lucky that Kim will do it for nothing and Brian and I have done it for nothing for all of these years.

Co-Director and Trustee, Kim Spooner continues:

It's all about outcomes but how do you show that a family has coped and recovered? There's no end to it, so the idea that you could have a family come in, we could do something to them and then we have achieved an outcome is nonsense. What measures are you going to have to show your outcomes to get your funding?

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the charity provides an invaluable service to those families who reach out to them in search of support following the murder of a loved one in a foreign country. Indeed, the support provided by Murdered Abroad featured frequently in the narratives of those who participated in the research and was considered to be a central part of their post-homicide journey, both in the time after the murder and, in the months, and years that followed.

5.9.4. Peer-Support Network

Evident in the co-victim narrative was the value attributed to the face-to-face meetings that the charity facilitates, to which they invite those families who have previously contacted them for support. These meetings, which take place annually, present an opportunity for families affected by murder abroad to come together and to reflect on and share their experiences with others bereaved in similar circumstances. During the interview process, families often spoke of the beneficial nature these meetings. Alison Hill, for instance notes:

The charity has been very important. I was put in touch with Eve and from then on, we would often speak on the phone. I went to a few of the meetings. I found – simply

because some of the families were so lovely – that it actually became a bit of a get together and an opportunity to share information. It was really useful because there was often another family who were halfway down the line, or those that could say “Well this is what happened to us, and this is what we did”.

Roger Parrish also highlights the value he found in attending the Murdered Abroad support meetings:

In many ways, it has been helpful, both for me and for the other members of the organisation, to be able to tell of my experiences. People often say “We know how you feel” or “We’ve done this, and we’ve done that, and we’ve tried this, and have you thought about that?” That kind of comment. So, from that point of view, I’ve always found it quite valuable to go.

Reflecting on the circumstances of their own case, Pete and Hazel Kouzaris recall their experience of the peer support meetings and their current role in the charity:

The charity was really valuable for us. Although, I think they’re now more valuable to other members because, in a way, we were so lucky. For others, there has been corruption; the evidence has been corrupted; the coroner is faulty; something is wrong with him; they haven’t got a resolution; they haven’t got a body; and, yet we’re all done and dusted, so you know, we’re lucky in many respects. But Murdered Abroad is still therapeutic to us. I think we’ve turned into – not little helpers – but I feel our role now is almost to support Eve, because she has become a very good friend.

These observations are perhaps not surprising, given that “peer-support” networks are considered to be effective in aiding the recovery of people affected by a variety of issues including: mental health related conditions (Davidson, 1999); drug and alcohol addiction (Tracy and Wallace, 2016); and, suicide (Barlow *et al.*, 2010). These networks, according to

Mead *et al.*, (2001:135) are based on “a system of giving and receiving help founded on the key principles of respect, shared responsibility and mutual agreement”.

Previous literature has also drawn attention to the positive influence of peer support networks on a person’s ability to cope with and recover from bereavement with Aoun *et al.*, (2019) noting how they can often help people to find meaning and value in their grief. More specifically, it has also been suggested that peer-support networks are considered by those bereaved through murder, to have a positive influence on their healing process due to the fact they offer a safe, confidential, and secure place for them to share their feelings, memories and stories of their loved ones (Levey *et al.*, 2016). The constructive nature of peer-support, it has been argued, can be attributed to the sense of understanding that results from shared experience. Archibong (2006), for example, found that for bereaved parents of murder victims, support from those who had also experienced the death of a child was seen as being most beneficial. To elaborate further, Castellano (2012) suggests that the key to the peer support approach is the idea that those who have shared experiences and life circumstances are better able to establish connections of trust and therefore provide support to those in need.

Vlasto (2009) suggests that peer support networks can often help to normalise the experience of bereavement. In other words, the recognition of shared experience and the subsequent realisation that grief is a normal response to personal loss, can aid in the process of recovery (Pearce, 2018). During the interview process, several of the research participants described the sense of relief that they felt during the peer support meetings. Alison Eagleton, for example, describes her experience:

Murdered Abroad have been the sole support for me. When I spoke to Murdered Abroad for the first time and told them about what had happened, it was just such a

relief that there was someone who actually knows what you are talking about. I can understand why, when you talk to people about it, you get the glass eyes and the gasps, because I wouldn't have known what to say either, but to be around people who do know what you're talking about, it is just such a relief.

Brian Chandler reflects on the comfort in being able to attend the peer-support meeting, and highlights the ongoing exchange of information and support between families who are present:

We went to a local meeting which was at Somerset Police Headquarters, and we were both really impressed. I think it was enlightening for Liz, and it was for me in a way, that there were so many members there that had gone through all of the difficulties that we were having. In our case, we went to the meetings because we were learning as a result. We were using the charity to guide us in lots of ways and to educate us. But a lot of the families, once they have gone through that process, they still want to come to the meetings. Even though they are not having to learn anything anymore as their own case is over, they like to be in the situation where they can talk openly about what happened. In that sense, I think the peer support that the charity offers is good because families know that everybody else in the meetings know how they feel, they know exactly what problems they are having and what it's like to be in those circumstances.

The sense of comfort and shared experience that is being described here contrasts considerably with the perceived inability of others to fully comprehend the nature and extent of the impact of traumatic experience (Cook *et al.*, 2019). This “empathetic failure” (Piazza-Bonin *et al.*, 2015) is captured by Malone (2007:384) who notes that “the depth of suffering [that results from traumatic bereavement] is impossible for anyone who has not had the same experience to imagine” and by Rock (1998), who suggests that co-victims of murder are often “forced to develop an understanding that can never quite be intelligible to the outsider”. So, too, Kay (2006:20) indicates that relatives of murder victims may be “shunned by friends and associates, who appear to regard murder so far out of the normal human experience, that they cannot listen

to their friends' travails". Whilst several families described the supportive role of friends and family, particularly in the time immediately following their bereavement, they also acknowledged the limits of their understanding. Brian Chandler, for example, notes the potential complications that can arise between families as they continue to live with the longer-term implications of their bereavement, despite the value attributed to the informal support offered in the early stages of their post-homicide journey:

In the early stages, people turn to their friends and family, and they get a lot of immediate support. But that immediate support wears off and people expect you to recover in a matter of weeks. Especially once the funeral has happened and you've got to try to get back to normal. I think friends and family get fed up with you talking about it, either that or they themselves are reticent to talk to you because they don't want to upset you. I think with most of the families we have worked with, they feel a distance between themselves and their own family and friends because, well, they haven't got over it.

Brian continues and describes the potentially protracted nature of the trauma experienced by co-victims of murder abroad:

I think of the most difficult things for families is that people who haven't experienced a murder, kind of expect you to get over it in a matter of weeks. Most people know somebody that has died, and, well, I guess it's a grieving process, but, usually, you do eventually get over it. But when it is a murder, it is totally different, it takes much longer for these things to be resolved.

This sentiment is also reinforced by Hazel Kouzaris who states:

It's the old adage that when something happens to you of that nature, some people stay with you, some people you lose along the way, including family, which is strange. Some

don't want to talk about or can't talk about it, so you do lose people along the way. I think it's just so painful for them.

So, too, Alison Eagleton notes:

Nobody else really understands what it's like. I have got a couple of friends who ask me how it is going every now and then, but that's it. I mean, I was at a party just yesterday and somebody said to me, "It is still going on?" and I was like "Yeah, it is" – they just don't understand, but Murdered Abroad do, and they often say, "You just have to keep going, you can't give up".

Finally, Alison Hill describes her experience:

I've had people say to me, "Alison, perhaps just, you know, you're not going to bring Laura back, so maybe just leave it" but I won't accept that – if she had died from an injury, an illness or an accident, I could accept it, you have to accept it, but there was no way I was prepared to accept that. So now it's almost like a separate part of my life because I don't go on about it, I don't talk to anyone about it.

The withdrawal of both informal and formal sources of support tends to occur at a time where co-victims of murder need it the most. Malone (2007:338) argues that the “most intense and overwhelming feelings of grief and anger tend to emerge after the trial”. Indeed, previous research indicates that for many of those bereaved through murder, their emotional response to their bereavement is delayed until the completion of the criminal justice process (Bucholz, 2002; Connolly and Gordon, 2015). This subordination of grief (Riches and Dawson, 1998) to the often-unavoidable processes of criminal justice, means that peer support networks can often provide a much-needed source of emotional and practical support to those affected by murder in general and to those who experience bereavement through murder abroad in particular.

5.9.5. Social Comparison

On several occasions throughout this chapter, participants have described themselves as being lucky. Pete and Hazel Kouzaris, for example, suggested that they were lucky that their case occurred in an English-speaking country, and thus they did not have to face the additional practical burdens of language barriers and translation. Kim Spooner also noted that in her case, she was lucky given that the police investigation into the murder of her sister was well-handled and led to the apprehension and prosecution of the person responsible. So too, Alison Eagleton noted that she was lucky to have the support of her family in the time following the murder of her ex-husband.

Considering the traumatic nature of their bereavement, it seems counter-intuitive for co-victims of murder in these circumstances to describe themselves as being lucky. However, this tendency to compare the personal, subjective experience of bereavement with the experiences of others in similar circumstances is not uncommon amongst those who endure the death of a loved-one. To explore this further, Festinger (1954) originally suggested that people often engage in a process of “social comparison” whereby they compare themselves to those around them. Focusing specifically on bereavement, Wellman (2014) has more recently suggested that co-victims of murder in particular, will often assess their situation relative to those who have also experienced death.

The process of social comparison is multi-lateral. In other words, co-victims of murder may engage in “upwards comparison” whereby they consider themselves to be less fortunate than others who are bereaved, for example, in non-violent or natural circumstances. Indeed, Wellman (2014) notes, how in such circumstances, co-victims of murderer consider their

experiences to be distinct and particularly troublesome, given the sudden, violent and often unexpected nature of the death.

By viewing themselves as lucky, when compared to those in similar circumstances, the co-victims of murder who participated in the research can be seen to be engaging in a process of “downwards comparison”. In other words, they are comparing their own circumstances to others who they view as being less fortunate than themselves. The presence of language barriers, incompetent police investigations, the absence of a conviction or a lack of familial support all represent ways in which “it could have been worse”. This, according to Wellman (2014) can be seen as a positive coping mechanism through which co-victims of murder seek to enhance their own wellbeing and aid the recovery process. Indeed, Wellman (2014) suggests that when individuals view their own situation as being “less dire” than others, they can experience an “instant improvement in mood that can have long-term positive effects on self-regulation and personal growth”.

5.10. Conclusion to Part Two

As evidenced throughout the entirety of this chapter, there is a need for families to be adequately supported throughout their post-homicide journey – which begins when they are notified of the death either by other family members, or indeed by the authorities in the United Kingdom or country in which the murder occurred. As evidenced by the participant observations above, co-victims of murder require ongoing emotional, practical, and financial support in the time following their bereavement. They have, for instance, described the value of informal sources of support noting how friends, family members and in some cases, the

wider community, have provided much needed practical assistance in the time immediately following the notification of death.

As was demonstrated in the excerpts taken from the semi-structured interview transcripts, the families affected by murder abroad often experience a sense of helplessness which can be attributed, at least in part, to an apparent lack of emotional and practical support, most notably from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office – an agency that for many, seems to be the most obvious place to turn for support in the time immediately following the bereavement. Families were told by the FCDO to “manage their expectations”, in some cases were given inaccurate or misleading information and often felt that FCDO exacerbated the already traumatic nature of their experience through a process of “secondary victimisation” (Gekoski, Adler and Gray, 2013). Indeed, the predominantly negative portrayal of the service provided by the FCDO given by those who participated in the research is reflective of an overall sense of dissatisfaction amongst many co-victims of murder abroad. The absence of support from the FCDO often leaves co-victims of murder with little no information about the circumstances of the murder and the range of important, practical decisions that they will face. This research adopted a purposive sampling strategy. In other words, the participants were recruited specifically due to their subjective experience of the phenomenon under investigation. Given that all participants were identified and recruited through a Gatekeeper – the charity, Murdered Abroad – from whom they had been receiving support, the charity itself was a prominent feature in the narrative accounts of their post-homicide experience. Evidenced in the findings chapter by direct quotations from the family members themselves, it is clear that the charity, since its formation in 2001, has been an invaluable source of support, not only for those who directly participated in the research, but also for many of those families who regularly attend their annual meetings – who, for a variety of reasons, were unable to, or chose

not to participate in the research. At a time where they need it most, co-victims of murder often turn to the charity, Murdered Abroad for advice, guidance and support in the days, weeks, months and even years following their loved one's death. The charity, clearly, has been a valuable source of support to those participated in the research, on both a practical and emotional level. The provision of impartial and pragmatic advice to families about, for example, repatriation, or how to deal with the media, helps to ensure that they are as fully prepared as possible to deal with the multi-faceted nature of their bereavement. So, too, families attributed great value to the peer-support network that the charity provides through its annual support meetings. These meetings provide a safe space for families to reflect upon and share their experiences with those who have been bereaved in similar circumstances and can thus have a positive influence on their ability to make sense of and recover from the trauma of their bereavement (Levey *et al.*, 2016).

5.11. Conclusion to the Chapter

Throughout this findings and discussion chapter, several key themes have been highlighted and discussed with reference to the interdisciplinary body of literature to which this thesis contributes. More importantly, each of these themes has been substantiated by the words of those who participated in the research. By drawing from conversations with a small group of people affected by murder abroad, this chapter has drawn attention to several important elements of their post-homicide experience. As such, this chapter has provided an answer to the research question at the heart of the thesis, and thus highlighted the way in which the post-homicide experience of the surviving family members of victims of murder abroad is shaped and influenced by the international nature of the crime.

The notification of death, which represents a fracture in their on-going life narratives, is one of the most traumatic stages of their post-homicide journey, and if not carefully handled by those responsible for delivering the news, can have lasting consequences for families in terms of their ability to make sense of and subsequently recover from their traumatic experience. So, too, co-victims of murder abroad are faced with a variety of practical issues in the time following their bereavement. Some of these issues are exacerbated by the fact that the crime occurred in a foreign country, and others simply would not have been present had the crime occurred in the United Kingdom. The often-present issues of distance, language barriers and variations in culture, legal systems, and criminal justice proceedings, render the experience of co-victims of murder in these circumstances distinct from those who are bereaved in a national context. Given the traumatic nature of their experience, the co-victims of murder abroad who participated in the research often described the life-changing nature of their bereavement, with several families referring to a life before and a life after the murder.

In conclusion, bereavement to murder abroad, like violent bereavement in general, is a traumatic and life changing experience, regardless of the location in which the crime occurred. However, the presence of several additional practical complications, attributable to the international circumstances of the crime, further exacerbates the traumatic nature of the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder which occurs in a foreign country. As such, it is vitally important that co-victims of murder in these circumstances receive adequate emotional, practical, and financial support in the time following their bereavement.

As this chapter draws to a close it is important to reiterate that for the family members who have shared their stories, their lives have been irreversibly changed by the murder of a loved-one in a foreign country. They will continue to live with the absence of a family member and

will have to cope with the emotional burden of traumatic bereavement for the rest of their lives. Therefore, the implications of murder abroad that have been presented and discussed throughout the thesis, are much more significant and long lasting than can be adequately explored within the confines of this research. As such, the chapter closes with the words of those who participated in the study:

We always worry about the families that we never see, because there will be cases that the FCO don't even know about, that haven't come across their path and there are families that never come to us because they haven't got that sort of energy... for whatever reason, people just can't do it – Kim Spooner

I don't want to say that it's been nice to talk about it, because when it first happened, we just wanted to keep talking about it the time. Whenever anyone came, it was important to us that we did talk about how we were, about what had happened. And thinking back now, I think it was just like therapy for us. We just kept telling the story over and over again, and now we just don't talk about it. Were worried because obviously memories are beginning to fade and we always say that we won't get any new memories and that's tough, really tough – Hazel Kouzaris.

It's obviously impacted in every possible way both on me and my family. I've not got a very big family, but it's impacted us all so much really – in ways that I didn't even know really – Roger Parrish.

CHAPTER SIX:
CONCLUSION TO THE THESIS

6.1. Introduction to the Chapter

The previous chapter has presented an in-depth exploration of the post-homicide experience of a select group of individuals who have been bereaved through murder in a foreign country. Having presented and substantiated the most significant elements of their individual, subjective narratives in the aftermath of murder abroad, this chapter now concludes the study. First, the chapter begins by returning to the research question and re-addresses the research aims that were presented in the introductory chapter. This is followed by a brief synthesis of the research findings which serves to highlight the key contributions of the thesis to the broader, inter-disciplinary body of literature that concerns the inter-related areas of co-victimisation, the phenomenon of homicide survivorship and the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder abroad. The chapter then reflects on, and critically discusses the limitations of the research in order to anticipate and mitigate potential criticism of key methodological decisions, and the subsequent implications of these decisions on the interpretation and presentation of the research findings. Before drawing the thesis to a close, the chapter makes several academic and practical recommendations which, if implemented, could further develop the criminological understanding of murder abroad and, more importantly, improve the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder in these circumstances.

6.2. Returning to the Research Question

Through the presentation and discussion of the research findings, this thesis has documented, explored, and made sense of the post-homicide experience of a small group of co-victims of murder which has occurred in a foreign country. Based on a series of semi-structured interviews the thesis has investigated the multi-faceted impact of murder on the surviving family members of the primary victim who, in most cases, was residing in the United Kingdom at the time of the murder. By doing so, the thesis has uncovered a range of practical difficulties which are attributable to, or exacerbated by, the international nature of the crime. It has, therefore, been argued that these difficulties can intensify the overall impact of bereavement in these relatively unique and violent circumstances. So too, the thesis has identified and surveyed the sources and extent of the support provided to co-victims affected by murder abroad, drawing attention to areas of best practice, and to those which require further improvement. In addressing the research aims, the thesis has provided an answer to the overall research question: *What impact does murder which takes place in a foreign country have on the “post-homicide experience” of the surviving family members, otherwise known as “co-victims”, who reside in the United Kingdom?*

6.3. Synthesis of the Research Findings

The following section of this chapter presents a summary of the key findings, and thus highlights the contribution of the thesis to the broader academic literature. As noted throughout the thesis, losing a loved one to murder in any circumstance is a profoundly traumatic experience (Norris, 1992; Zedner, 1997; Neria and Litz, 2003). Whilst the wider implications of violent bereavement in cases of murder have been well-documented (Currier and Neimeyer,

2006; Asaro, 2009; Stretesky *et al.*, 2010) the stories of those bereaved through murder in a foreign country remain under-researched. Indeed, although some preliminary attention has been given to the experiences of co-victims of murder abroad (See Patel, 2003; Casey, 2011; SAMM Abroad, 2011; Victims' Commissioner, 2019; All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2019) the phenomenon has, until now, been absent from the criminological and victimological research agendas. This, clearly, is unfortunate, and as suggested by Rock (1998), criminology as a discipline, is incomplete without an appreciation of how crime is experienced by those who it injures, but also by those who observe that injury.

Whilst the experience of co-victimisation to murder in a foreign country has received little attention from the academic community, the value of the co-victim narrative is now widely accepted amongst those wishing to develop a more nuanced understanding of crime and victimisation (Masters and Getzel, 1998; Armour, 2002, Pemberton *et al.*, 2018). This thesis, therefore, offers a primary contribution to the body of literature that focuses on the co-victim experience of criminality. As such, the thesis has endeavoured to give a voice to those who participated in the research who, in the absence of the primary victim, have provided a detailed and personal insight into the reality of living with the consequences of this irreversible, and particularly harmful form of violent crime.

This thesis also contributes, more specifically, to the body of literature which concerns the phenomenon of homicide survivorship (Hertz, Prothrow-Stith and Cherry, 2005) where attention is given to the "legacy of violence" that is left behind in cases of murder, and to the impact of violent bereavement on the surviving friends, family members and wider social and professional networks (Humphrey, 2002). Notwithstanding the utility of this body of literature in informing and directing the thesis, it has almost exclusively focused on cases of murder

which have taken place in national circumstances – or in other words, on cases where the crime, the victim, their families, the perpetrator and the subsequent criminal and legal proceedings, have been contained within the geographic and jurisdictional boundaries of only one country.

Until now, this inter-disciplinary body of research, has largely neglected a consideration of the additional emotional, practical, and financial complexities that are intrinsic to cases of murder which transgress these boundaries. This thesis, therefore, has adopted a unique approach to the phenomenon of homicide survivorship, and has directed academic attention to the experiences of those who are affected by murder which occurs in a foreign country. As such, the thesis has argued that the international nature of the crime further exacerbates some of the common elements of the post-homicide experience, whilst simultaneously introducing several, additional complications that would have otherwise been absent had the murder occurred in the United Kingdom.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the thesis has also demonstrated the value of adopting an inter-disciplinary approach to the development of a more comprehensive understanding of homicide in general, and to the experiences of co-victims of murder abroad in particular. Highlighting once more the rendezvous nature of criminology (see Young, 2003), this thesis has been informed by, and thus also offers a contribution to the academic disciplines of trauma and bereavement studies, death studies, tourism studies and victimology.

6.4. Limitations of the Research

The following section of this chapter examines several limitations that have been identified and reflected upon throughout the research process. Here, the discussion anticipates some of

the potential criticism that could be directed toward the study, most notably regarding key methodological decisions and the subsequent impact on the research findings. By doing so, the discussion provides a justification for these decisions, whilst acknowledging possible areas of weakness in the research design.

The study could be criticised for using a single gatekeeper to provide access to the research participants. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge that the use of a gatekeeper directly influences the recruitment of research participants, and thus impacts on the generation and analysis of the primary data obtained during the interview process. However, the decision to use just one gatekeeper, in the form of the charity Murdered Abroad, seemed logical given that it facilitated mediated access to a group of potential participants with lived experience of the phenomenon under investigation. The importance of the access provided by Murdered Abroad should not be underestimated. As discussed more comprehensively in Chapter Three, several strategies for the identification and recruitment of participants were attempted prior to the establishment of a working relationship with the charity. Most notably, initial efforts were made to contact the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) who, unfortunately, were unable to provide further details of the cases of murder they had included and published into their annual report on British behaviour abroad. Nor did simply reaching out to individuals create a network of research participants.

The discovery of Murdered Abroad, the only charity in the country who were providing support and advice to those affected by murder in a foreign country, offered a pragmatic and rational solution to the barrier of participant recruitment. This does not imply that the use of a single gatekeeper is not without its limitations. Indeed, it could be suggested that the gatekeeper “cherry-picked” interviewees in order to present the work of the charity in the best possible

light. However, this potential criticism seems unfair, as the stories of those who came forward to participate at the peer-support meeting were consistent in what was said with those participants selected by the charity. There will, of course, be families who have experienced bereavement through murder in these circumstances, and have not, for a variety of reasons, approached the charity for support and who could not therefore be included in the research. As such, their experiences of bereavement remain undocumented, and whilst not included in this study, their stories of co-victimisation are worthy of further academic attention. How to identify and access this hidden group of co-victims of murder is, undoubtedly a challenge for future research to consider.

The study could also be criticised for having a relatively small sample size given that the research was based on a sample of only seven case studies (Marshall *et al.*, 2015; Boddy, 2016). The limitations of a small sample size, whilst still important, are of greater significance to positivist studies, where one of the primary aims of research is to generate large amounts of quantitative data that can be used to establish relationships between variables with some degree of statistical confidence (Edwards and Holland, 2013). So, too, large sample sizes may also improve the generalisability of the research findings – or in other words, the extent to which the findings can be applied to a broader population (Delmar, 2010; Carminati, 2018).

However, as was discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three, this research is underpinned by an interpretivist epistemology which gives prominence to subjectivity, rather than generalisability (Lynch and Bogen, 1997; Darlaston-Jones, 2007; Mills and Birks, 2014). To elaborate further, the decision to adopt a smaller sample size produced findings that were largely reflective of the subjective, lived experience of those who participated in the study. Whilst some common elements of the post-homicide experience have been identified amongst

the research participants, it was not the aim of the study to produce findings that could be considered representative of all those who experience the murder of a loved one in a foreign country. Indeed, given the variation that exists between cases of murder in these circumstances, which is largely attributable to the international nature of the crime, a smaller sample size seemed to be a more appropriate way of exploring the nuances of individual narratives, whilst simultaneously developing a broader understanding of the overall experience of co-victimisation because of murder which occurs abroad. In addition to this, the research also benefitted from the supplementary insight provided, during the pilot and concluding interview with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner. Whilst both Eve and Kim have experienced bereavement to murder in a foreign country, they were also able to reflect on their extensive experience of working with, and providing support to over 200 families who have been bereaved through murder in similar circumstances. The concluding interview, in particular, further substantiated several of the key themes that were identified in previous interviews with the research participants and thus alleviated some of the concerns regarding sample size. It is suggested therefore, that the findings of this research have a degree of transferability, rather than generalisability.

Finally, the research could also be criticised for being reliant upon self-report data (Baldwin, 1999). Given that the findings of the research were largely based on the interpretation of subjective accounts of co-victimisation, it is not possible for their accuracy to be independently verified (Razavi, 2001). However, despite the potential for memory distortion that is sometimes prevalent in the recollection of traumatic experiences (Strange and Takarangi, 2015), self-report data was the most suitable method of data collection, given the epistemological approach that was adopted throughout the research process and the subsequent emphasis on the subjective nature of the participant experience. Indeed, the semi-structured

interview process, which offered participants an opportunity to engage in a guided conversation with the researcher, is undoubtedly a strength of the interpretivist epistemology (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008). So, too, the qualitative research design, which emphasises the role of the participant in the co-construction of knowledge, encourages a richer, thicker descriptive account of co-victimisation, which, arguably, yields a truer representation of their authentic, lived experience (Denzin, 1989; Pierre and Roulston, 2006). It is, after all, the stories of the participants, that have informed, substantiated, and authenticated the research.

6.5. Academic Recommendations

This thesis has documented the post-homicide experiences of a small group people who have been bereaved through murder in a foreign country. In doing so, the research has identified and explored the most pressing issues that frequently featured in their narratives of co-victimisation. The key themes that were presented and discussed in Chapter Five highlighted how the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder in these circumstances has been shaped and influenced by the international nature of the crime. Whilst the thesis has therefore addressed its primary aim in answering the overarching research question, it is important to reflect upon the parameters of the findings and to make recommendations regarding the future direction of criminological and victimological research into the phenomenon of murder abroad.

As has been made clear throughout, the thesis did not aim to make generalisations about co-victims of murder abroad, but rather to explore in detail the subjective experiences of several families affected by murder in these circumstances. However, the commonalities that were present in the co-victim narratives do provide a useful framework for others wishing to explore the post-homicide experiences of families bereaved by murder in a foreign country. Indeed,

future qualitative studies could, for example, draw upon the key narrative elements that were identified in this study to inform and direct a series of additional semi-structured interviews with a greater number of individuals, who share the lived experience of the phenomenon under investigation. Increasing the level of participation, whilst staying true to the principles of interpretivist enquiry, would provide an opportunity to reinforce the themes that have been identified here, and would also re-emphasise the importance of lived experience in the co-construction of knowledge within criminology and victimology. Whilst a similar study on a larger scale would be beneficial to the overall research agenda, it is worth noting the potential methodological issues that might arise. Most notably, the issue of access to and recruitment of families with direct experience of bereavement in international circumstances. Given the sensitive nature of their experience, future researchers should seek to mediate access through a gatekeeper – such as the charity Murdered Abroad. By doing so, the potential for causing further emotional distress to families is reduced.

Future studies might also choose to adopt a micro, rather than macro approach to the post-homicide experience of co-victim of murder abroad. In other words, rather than focusing on the entirety of their post-murder journey, others could focus more specifically on one element of the post-homicide experience in particular. Future studies could, for example, explore in greater detail, the circumstances surrounding the notification of the murder, specifically when it has occurred abroad, with the primary aim of better understanding the emotional impact of the news on the surviving family members. So, too, there is potential for research of this nature to identify areas of best practice amongst those responsible for delivering a death notification, which could, in turn, improve the service provided to families by the police during one of the most traumatic stages of the post-homicide experience.

In a similar vein, future studies could more comprehensively explore the nature and extent of the support provided to co-victims of murder abroad in the time following their bereavement. In particular, attention could be given the positive influence of peer-support networks, such as the one facilitated by Murdered Abroad through their annual member meetings. Whilst this thesis has offered a preliminary assessment of their value to those bereaved by murder in these circumstances, future research could more closely examine the psychotherapeutic role of peer support networks in the post-homicide recovery process. This research could identify areas of best practice and thus provide impetus to the widespread implementation of a peer support network for co-victims of murder abroad.

Similarly, future research studies could adopt a longitudinal approach by conducting a series of interviews with families affected by murder abroad over an extended period of time. This would provide an opportunity to explore the changing nature of their experience of co-victimisation. In other words, this approach could potentially draw attention to the range of emotional and practical issues that are prevalent in the co-victim narrative immediately following bereavement but also, through a follow-up interview, identify those issues which persist and perhaps those which arise later in the post-homicide experience. Research of this nature could also provide a more accurate assessment of the support needs of families affected by murder abroad at various stages of their recovery journey.

Whilst this thesis has focused solely on cases of murder involving British citizens, there is scope for a similar, comparative study to be conducted in other countries around the world. In broad terms, such a study could document and explore the experiences of co-victims of murder in cases where people (other than Britons) are killed abroad, including in the United Kingdom. This type of research, whilst constrained by geographic boundaries, would allow for a

comparison to be drawn between the way in which the authorities in different countries around the world respond to the murder of one of their own citizens in a foreign country – and could explore, for example, the circumstances surrounding the murder and the subsequent police investigation and judicial proceedings. Such an investigation could also highlight the nature and extent of the support that is provided to the families of victims of murder abroad in countries other than the United Kingdom. Research of this nature could thus prove useful in identifying and implementing more effective yet empathetic means of supporting co-victims of murder abroad in this country.

Finally, the establishment of a national database of cases of murder involving British citizens abroad would provide several instrumental advantages to researchers, the authorities, the charity Murdered Abroad, and to those who are bereaved through murder in a foreign country in the future. Whilst this would be no easy undertaking, a large-scale database would provide information about the victim, the location, the response of the country where the murder occurred including the quality and outcome of the police investigation and, where appropriate, the punishment given to the perpetrator. From this it may be possible to identify and explore demographic and geographic trends amongst cases of murder abroad which in turn, may inform future criminological and victimological research. In addition to this, a database which contains a comprehensive list of previous cases of murder abroad, could also be used to identify common issues in the co-victim experience which are specific to the country in which the murder occurred. The issues, which are based on the lived experiences of those previously affected by murder abroad, could then be used to more comprehensively support families affected by murder in similar circumstances in the future.

With these academic recommendations in mind, it is important to reiterate that this thesis represents a starting point for the continued enquiry into the phenomenon of murder abroad. Indeed, families affected by murder in these circumstances deserve to have their stories heard and the pain of their bereavement recognised within the academic community and beyond. Whilst their trauma can never be fully resolved, participation in future research, may, at least provide families with a sense of comfort, knowing that by sharing their experience, they may offer others in similar circumstances a way of navigating the otherwise unfamiliar territory of bereavement through murder in a foreign country.

6.6. Practical Recommendations

In addition to the suggestions made for future research, this thesis makes several practical recommendations regarding the experiences of co-victims of murder abroad in the United Kingdom. Throughout the thesis, it has been made clear that co-victims of murder abroad experience a wide range of practical and emotional difficulties that are influenced by the international circumstances surrounding the crime. What is also evident, therefore, is the need for co-victims of murder to receive adequate emotional, practical, and financial support, both in the time immediately following their bereavement, and in the weeks, months and sometimes even years that follow.

The provision of this support should begin prior to the notification of death. The death notification not only symbolises the distinction between life before and life after the murder but is also one of the most delicate and potentially traumatising stages of the post-homicide experience (Miller, 2008). The death notification, if not handled sensitively by those who are given the responsibility, can further exacerbate the traumatic nature of the news and thus impact

on the ability of the family to recover from the experience (de Leo, 2015). As evidenced in the findings and discussion chapter, some participants expressed a sense of frustration about the way in which the death notification was delivered to them, with outwardly minor errors on behalf of the police, creating memories that will remain with them forever. This sentiment was further reinforced by in the concluding interview with Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner, who expressed their concern about the unnecessary disruption that can be caused to families following an ill-prepared, or poorly executed notification of death. Whilst this research does not intend to be overly critical of the police's ability to deliver a death notification, it must be acknowledged that cases of murder abroad introduce an additional layer of complexity to the death notification process. Indeed, unlike cases of murder which occur in national circumstances, co-victims of murder abroad, will face a range of additional, practical considerations including but not limited to a considerable distance between themselves and their loved-one, barriers of language and culture, and foreign criminal justice and judicial processes. The unique nature of the circumstances surrounding their bereavement therefore necessitates careful consideration, on the behalf of the police, regarding the information they provide to families in the time immediately following the notification of death. As such, this research recommends that all police forces across the United Kingdom should develop a supplementary training programme which could then be conveyed to those officers with the responsibility for the delivery of a death notification in cases where the victim has been murdered in a foreign country. This training should highlight the role each of the key domestic organisations that families are likely to encounter during their post-homicide experience, which may include the local police force, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Victim Support Homicide Service (VSHS) and, perhaps most importantly, the charity Murdered Abroad. Further to this, a digital fact-sheet, produced by Murdered Abroad, could be distributed to every police force across the country. This resource would provide police

officers responsible for the delivery of a death notification with accurate and up-to-date information about the process itself and the subsequent emotional and practical difficulties that families are likely to experience in the time immediately afterwards, particularly in those cases where the murder occurred in a foreign country. Such a resource, combined with appropriate, specialist training would ensure that families no longer have to deal with avoidable and upsetting errors during what is likely to be one of the most traumatic times of their lives.

Following the notification of death, co-victims of murder abroad, will often be required to engage with agencies of the criminal justice system, both in the country in which the murder occurred, but also in the United Kingdom. Unlike cases of murder which take place in national circumstances, co-victims of murder abroad will often have to communicate with a foreign police force, who have the primary responsibility for the investigation into the death and the apprehension of the person responsible. Depending on the quality and outcome of the police investigation, they may also have to deal with foreign judicial procedure, including the trial, sentencing and punishment of the perpetrator. Regardless of the outcome of their case, the co-victims of murder included in the research often expressed their frustration at the limited or inconsistent information that was provided to them by the authorities, both abroad and in the United Kingdom. In many cases, in the absence of a clear line of communication with the investigating police force, families were often left to ponder the circumstances of their loved-one's death. This, as suggested by Rock (1998), can further exacerbate the trauma of violent bereavement, and prevent co-victims from making sense of their experience. As such, this research recommends that when a murder occurs in a foreign country, the investigating police force should endeavour to provide regular updates about the progress of their investigation, either to the authorities in the United Kingdom, or to the family directly. This would help to mitigate feelings of paranoia or frustration and ensure that the experience of the co-victims is

not overshadowed by the criminal justice process. In other words, it is fundamentally important for the investigating police force to provide as much information as possible to those families who reside in the United Kingdom and to do so in a timely and efficient manner. Families should no longer have to wait days, weeks or even months for an update in regard to the police investigation, as the absence of information serves only to further exacerbate the trauma of their experience. In those countries where the standard of investigative practice and subsequent communication falls below what families expect, families should receive specialist support from their local police force in the United Kingdom, and also from relevant agencies such as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Whilst territorial and jurisdiction boundaries should be respected, it is crucially important that families affected by murder in a foreign country are not adversely impacted by the inability of law enforcement agencies or governmental organisations to communicate effectively with one another, or with the families themselves.

Attendant to the previous recommendation, families often described the frustrations they experienced when having to translate into English, large amounts of information that had been provided to them by the authorities in the country in which the murder occurred. This, perhaps unsurprisingly, was often described as a time consuming, yet essential process, as it provided families with an opportunity to learn more about the circumstances of their loved one's murder and to remain informed about the progress of the police investigation. Clearly, the process of manual translation places not only an administrative burden on co-victims of murder abroad, but also exposes them, through the examination of potentially upsetting material, to the possibility of re-traumatisation, which can, subsequently impact on their ability to make sense of and recover from their bereavement. To appease both the emotional and practical implications of foreign language, this research therefore suggests that professional translation

services should be offered to families involved in cases of murder which take place outside of the United Kingdom. It seems completely illogical and considerably unfair for families affected by murder in these circumstances to have to face the prospect of either translating information themselves, or paying for someone else to do so. The provision of a professional translator, fluent in the native language, and preferably attuned to the culture and custom of the country in which the murder occurred, would immediately appease the sometimes insurmountable barrier that is posed by foreign language. Families should no longer have to worry about missing important developments their case, or misinterpreting key information. It is recommended therefore that a professional translation service be provided on an ongoing basis and tailored specifically to the requirements of the family.

For those who participated in the research, the need for clear and consistent information remained throughout the entirety of their post-homicide experience. For many families, their primary source of information was their local police force, or the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Co-victims must engage with these organisations, often for the first time, when they are already having to deal with the considerable emotional trauma of violent bereavement. As discussed in the previous chapter, co-victims of murder abroad face several, practical decisions in the time immediately following their bereavement. Most notably, co-victims must decide whether to visit the country in which the murder occurred, and whether to have the body of their loved-one repatriated. The decision regarding repatriation, perhaps more than any other, carries significant consequences for families and therefore it is crucially important that they are made aware of the implications of not having the body of their loved-one returned to the United Kingdom. Deciding not to repatriate and thus proceeding with a burial or cremation in the country in which the murder occurred, will prevent a coroner's inquest being conducted in the United Kingdom. Particularly in those cases where the standard

of the foreign police investigation is poor, or where a perpetrator has not been apprehended, an inquest in the United Kingdom can provide families with more information surrounding the circumstances of their loved-one's murder. If families decide not to repatriate, whilst being unaware of the implications of their decision, they can unknowingly deprive themselves of the opportunity to have some of their questions answered. As noted in the concluding interview by Eve Henderson and Kim Spooner, this can have a considerable impact on the family's ability to make sense of their bereavement, and can often result in additional feelings of guilt and regret. Given the gravity of consequences, this research suggests that it is vitally important for families to be made fully aware of the implications of the decision not to repatriate. Information on the process of repatriation should be provided in a timely manner following the notification of death, either by the local police force, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) or, perhaps most appropriately, an independent body, such as the charity Murdered Abroad – although the practical application of this recommendation is currently constrained by the resources available to the charity. Most importantly, the advice given to families regarding repatriation should be impartial and should promote their best interests. Rather than being advised to take the most pragmatic, or least expensive course of action (which is often to have the body of the deceased buried or cremated in the country in which the murder occurred), families should only make a decision regarding repatriation once all the implications of their choice have been fully explained to them.

The thesis has also drawn attention to the lack of financial assistance that is provided to families affected by murder abroad throughout their post-homicide experience. The costs associated with bereavement in a foreign country regularly featured in the co-victim narrative, with particular attention given to the cost of translation, repatriation, and international travel. Whilst in some cases, families received financial support from their travel insurance company, this

assistance was largely inconsistent and unpredictable. As evidenced in the previous chapter, in the absence of formal, financial support, families often engaged in their own fund-raising efforts to meet the costs associated with their bereavement. In some cases, families had to borrow money from friends and other family members, create GoFundMe pages, and sell their story to magazines and newspapers. This, clearly, is not acceptable, especially when compared to the state-funded assistance that is provided to families who are bereaved through an act of terrorism abroad. Whilst the circumstances of their bereavement differ, families affected by murder abroad will, undoubtedly, face many of the same emotional and practical difficulties as those who lose a loved-one through an act of terrorism. This research therefore suggests that there should be a provision, similar to the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme that offers financial assistance to those families affected by murder in a foreign country. Clearly, the practicalities of such a scheme will require further deliberation. However, for families who are facing considerable emotional distress, the alleviation of financial pressure would provide some much-needed relief in the time following their bereavement.

Finally, this thesis has drawn attention to the multi-faceted role of the media in cases of murder abroad. For some families, the media frenzy surrounding their case was viewed as an additional burden in their post-homicide experience. The intrusive approach adopted by some journalists and photographers, particularly in the early stages, exposed families to the media fascination with murder, which contrasts abruptly with the very private nature of their bereavement. So, too, there was a general sense of anxiety surrounding the portrayal of both their loved-one's character, and the circumstances of the murder. Families often expressed their concern about the tendency of the media to sensationalise the details of the case and to misrepresent their version of events. However, it must also be acknowledged that in some cases, the media were

instrumental in raising awareness of the murder and even acted as a catalyst in the investigative process. Having recognised the duplicitous nature of their experience, this research therefore suggests that families affected by murder abroad should receive independent and impartial advice about their interactions with the with media. This advice, which should be provided soon after the notification of death, could ensure that families are prepared for and thus, not adversely affected the influx of media attention.

These practical recommendations reflect the exploratory nature of the thesis, and the limited availability of pre-existing literature which has explored the phenomenon under investigation. As such, the viability of these recommendations will require further consideration in consultation with families affected by murder in these circumstances, the charity Murdered Abroad, and other interested parties including the police and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. What is evident however, is that co-victims of murder attribute a great deal of importance to clear, consistent, and timely information about their case and the practical steps they need to take in the time following their bereavement. These recommendations, therefore, emphasise the need for regular and reliable communication between the families affected by murder abroad, and those organisations who they often turn to for support. In closing, it is hoped that these initial, practical suggestions highlight the potential for the academic understanding of co-victimisation to improve the post-homicide experience of those bereaved through murder in a foreign country.

6.7. Conclusion to the Chapter

This thesis contributes toward the limited body of literature that aims specifically to explore the impact of murder which occurs in international circumstances on the surviving family

members of the direct victim, who reside in the United Kingdom. The thesis has drawn attention to the range of practical and emotional issues which often arise in the narratives of those affected by murder in these relatively rare, but particularly challenging circumstances. Whilst it is accepted that some of these issues are common amongst co-victims of murder, regardless of location, this thesis suggests that when the murder occurs in a foreign country, the overall post-homicide experience of the surviving family members, is shaped and influenced by the international nature of the crime. The presence of language barriers, cultural differences, variation in investigative practice, criminal justice processes, combined with the attention of local, national, and international media, renders the experiences of co-victims of murder abroad distinct from those who are bereaved in national circumstances. These additional complexities, which are characteristic of murder abroad, also highlight the need for co-victims to receive appropriate emotional, practical, and financial support which adequately reflects the unique nature of their bereavement.

This thesis offers only an initial contribution to the academic understanding of the implications of murder abroad. Despite this, it should be noted that this thesis also represents a point of departure for the continued criminological and victimological investigation into the experiences of co-victims of murder in these unique circumstances. In keeping with the approach that underpins this thesis, those wishing to research the phenomenon of murder abroad should ensure that it is the voice of the co-victim that remains central to their analysis. Only by documenting and exploring the nuances of their experience can researchers continue to develop the scholarly understanding of the multifaceted nature of their bereavement.

As this thesis reaches its conclusion, it is important to underscore the debt of gratitude that is owed to those who participated in the research. For the co-victims of murder abroad, who

openly shared their stories, the impact of their experience extends far beyond the confines of this research study. After all, they continue to live with the unexpected and untimely absence of a husband, sister, son, daughter, grandson, or other family member and the associated consequences – of which there are many. Without their willingness to participate and their courage in recalling the details of the events which changed their lives forever, the production of this thesis would not have been possible.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Application for Ethical Approval



**BIRMINGHAM CITY
University**

Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences

Application for Ethical Approval for RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Please read the guidance notes to assist with completion of this form.

All researchers will need to complete ALL SECTIONS.

Once the form is completed, please forward to: BLSS Ethics@bcu.ac.uk

Section 1: Project Information

A. About you and your research team:					
Name of Project Lead	Liam Brolan				
School/Department	BLSS – Centre for Applied Criminology				
Course	PhD Criminology				
Level of Research: - staff research - staff research PhD/EdD - PhD/EdD - undergraduate	PhD				
Name of supervisor (if applicable) e.g. module tutor, MA supervisor, PhD/EdD supervisor (if applicable)	Professor David Wilson (Primary) Dr Elizabeth Yardley (Secondary)				
School/Department	BLSS – Centre for Applied Criminology				
Other members of the research / supervisory team /who are not based at BCU (if applicable)	N/A				
Name					
Position	N/A				
Qualifications	N/A				
Telephone number	N/A				
Email address	N/A				
Name of employing organisation	N/A				
Address of employing organisation	N/A				
<i>*Please attach a short CV for each person</i>					
B. About your project and research:					
Project title	Making Sense of Holiday Homicide: A Study of the Nature, Extent and Law Enforcement Implications of Britons Murdered Abroad				
Expected start date	January 2016				
Expected end date	January 2018				
C. If you are intending to involve children, young people, or vulnerable adults do you have an enhanced DBS certificate?					
Yes	At another institution – may have expired	No		N/A	
D. About your research field work: Where will this research take place?					
In the Faculty of BLSS	Yes – Possibly conducting interviews on campus.				
In another Faculty	No				
In other HEI / FEI / Schools / any other organisation in the UK.	Yes – Possibly with employees of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).				
In the NHS	No				
In another EU country	Yes – Possibly in person or online				
In a country outside the EU	Yes – Possibly in person or online				
In Canada or the US	Yes – Possibly in person or online				

If your research will require NHS Research Ethics Committee approval please complete section 1 **AND** the NHS REC application form found on the integrated research application system (IRAS) website.

<https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/> Submit section 1 of the form together with the completed NHS REC application form to BLSS Ethics@bcu.ac.uk.

Section 2: Ethical Dimensions of Your Project

A. Overview		
1.	<p>Brief background to and outline of proposal including a justification for the research, why it's needed and potential benefits and beneficiaries</p>	<p>This study intends to produce a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of "Holiday Homicide" with specific focus on those cases which involve the murder of a British citizen whilst on holiday in a foreign country. Research into "Holiday Homicide" is important for a range of reasons. It is hoped that the research will identify both strengths and weaknesses in the current processes that are in place to deal with the death of a British citizen abroad. So too, it is hoped that relevant government departments will be able to, where necessary implement change based on this critique. The study aims to be of use to law enforcement, both foreign and domestic in terms of providing a cross-cultural understanding of the complexities that surround homicide in a foreign country. Finally, it is hoped that the research will give a voice to those families affected by "Holiday Homicide" who may not have previously had the opportunity to share their stories.</p>
2.	<p>Are you applying for funding from an external body?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grant awarding body • NHS Trust • charity organisation* • faculty or university grant scheme • other 	<p>No. Funded internally by Birmingham City University through the GTRA Scheme.</p>
3.	<p>Could the research lead to the development of a new product, process or some form of intellectual property? If so, what arrangements have been set in place for this?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
4.	<p>Why are you suitable to conduct this research?</p>	<p>I have achieved a BA (Joint Honours) Degree in Criminology and Security Studies and a MA Degree in Criminology. I have also successfully completed a Post-Graduate certificate in Research Practice. I believe that I am approachable, friendly and compassionate. I am a good listener, something which I feel is vital for this type of research. I am also keen to undertake training with the Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM) charity. They provide specialist training for those working with people who have experienced bereavement through homicide. I feel that this would be of great</p>

		benefit to ability to conduct this type of research.
5.	What are your research questions	<p>Impact - On specific locations: Does this affect tourism? Perceptions of safety? People's decisions to visit certain places? What effect does murder of a tourist have on the locals; other tourists and the economy? What effect does it have on the victims' families? How is the news of the death communicated? How is the death recorded and by whom? What assistance is provided to families who have lost a loved one whilst abroad?</p> <p>Extent: How common is the phenomenon of "Holiday Homicide"? How many British people are murdered each year whilst abroad on holiday? Where is the most likely destination to be murdered whilst on holiday? What factors influence this? Do the officials in the United Kingdom keep a record of these murders? If so, how easy is it to access?</p> <p>Law Enforcement Implications: How do the police in the United Kingdom and in the country of the murder respond? What systems and processes do they have in place in order to prevent the victimization of tourists? How do police forces overcome geographical, logistical and cultural barriers to ensure that the investigation in to the murder of a British citizen is prompt and effective? What lessons have been learnt from previous cases that could be used to prevent future cases from occurring?</p>
6.	Please outline the methodology and theoretical perspectives that you will be working with over the course of this research	The study adopts an interpretivist approach, primarily gathering qualitative data through ethnographic research in the form of a number of semi-structured interviews. The final number of cases/interview is still to be decided.
7.	How are you planning to analyse your data?	Transcription of interview recordings and via thematic analysis.
8.	Children or young people under the age of 18?	No
	Vulnerable adults (<i>please see definition in Guidance Notes</i>)	Yes – I will be conducting interviews with people who have experienced the loss of an immediate family member in extremely difficult circumstances.
	Prisoners or young offenders?	No
	Settings within the Defence Forces?	No
B. PARTICIPANTS		
9.	Provide an overview of any other participants and participant groups who are likely to be involved in the study in	I would like to conduct an interview with a representative of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who specialises in dealing with cases of

	addition to those outlined in section 8.	British tourists murdered abroad.
10.	How will different groups of participants be recruited?	Suitable participants will be identified through the analysis of secondary sources, primarily but not exclusively newspaper articles which relate to their cases.
11.	What is the benefit to participants of participation? Will they be paid for their time? Reimbursed their expenses?	The participants will be given the opportunity to discuss and describe their experiences openly – something they may not have had the chance to do before. Their involvement in the research may be viewed as honouring their loved ones memory. Participants will not be paid for their time but a reasonable allowance for travel expenses would be useful.
	In which parts of the research have potential research participants and/or service users been involved in the design of the research either as co-researchers, members of a project group, and advisors to the project? Please indicate if they have had no involvement and briefly explain why.	No involvement. Potential research participants have had no input in the initial stages of the research. This may change as the interviewing process begins. Each interview may direct and inform the questions to be asked in the next. Informal participant involvement.
12.	Is there a risk that any third party might be harmed physically or psychologically by taking part in this research? <i>You should identify any physical, psychological or emotional risks and clearly explain what you will do to minimise these risks. If this will involve you referring participants to a particular organisation, department, service or other source of help you should provide written evidence that the organisation etc. has received information about the project and has agreed to help you in this way.</i>	Participants who are involved in this research may experience strong emotions when discussing the circumstances which surrounded the death of their loved one. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, this is perhaps unavoidable but strenuous efforts will be made to ensure that the participant is comfortable to continue with the interview process. This will include ensuring that they are fully aware that they are under no obligation to participate in/continue with the interview. They will also be fully informed as to the aims of the research so as to best prepare them for questions they will be asked during interview. I will also familiarise myself with a number of bereavement counselling services that could be recommended to the participant if necessary.
13.	Is there a risk of physical, psychological or emotional harm to you, or other members of the research team, as a result of undertaking this research? <i>You should identify any physical, psychological or emotional risks and clearly explain what you will do to minimise these risks. If this will involve you referring participants to a particular organisation, department, service or</i>	There is the potential for myself as the researcher to experience emotional distress during the course of this research. This is due to the fact that I will be hearing stories of tragedy and loss from those who I will be interviewing. To deal with the potential emotional burden that conducting these interviews could place on me, I will be keeping a comprehensive reflexive diary throughout the course of the research. This will allow me write down my thoughts, feelings and reflections and

	<i>other source of help you should provide written evidence that the organisation etc. has received information about the project and has agreed to help you in this way. You may also need to consult relevant policies e.g. lone working.</i>	alleviate the potential for emotional distress.
14.	<p>How will you obtain informed consent? Explain clearly how you plan to obtain and record consent. In particular explain:</p> <p><i>Who will be responsible for obtaining consent?</i></p> <p><i>How long will participants have to decide whether or not to take part?</i></p> <p><i>How will you ensure that consent is fully informed and voluntary?</i></p> <p><i>If participants cannot read or cannot read English, or have other communication needs, how will you ensure that they are fully informed about the research?</i></p> <p><i>If you cannot obtain consent in writing, how will you record it?</i></p>	I will be solely responsible for obtaining informed consent from participants prior to commencing their involvement. The participants will be given a sufficient amount of time to make a decision regarding their involvement in the study – this will be at the very least a period of one month. I will ensure that their consent is fully informed and voluntary by producing and distributing a participant information sheet which will clearly outline the scope, aims and potential outcomes of the research. Participants will be told how their contribution will inform and aid the research process. If participants cannot read or cannot read English I will take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that they are fully informed – this may involve the use of an audio recording of the consent form or the use of a translation service. If I cannot obtain consent in writing, I would ask the participant if they are happy to record a video in which they declare that they are happy to participate in the research.
15.	<p>What steps would you take if a participant who has given consent Loses capacity to consent during the research?</p> <p>Changes their mind?</p>	If a participant loses their capacity to consent or changes their mind during the course of the research, they will be made aware that their involvement is not compulsory and that they are free to leave the interview environment if they feel the need to do so. The participants will also be given the option to have any contributions made withdrawn from the study.
16.	Please include copies of the information and consent form to be given to potential participants.	Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet (Draft) Appendix B: Participant Consent Form (Draft)
17.	<p>How will you disseminate the results of your research?</p> <p>Will this research be registered on a public database?</p>	The results of this research will be disseminated through the production of an 80,000 word thesis which will be distributed through the usual publication channels available at Birmingham City University. The final theses will also be broken down in to a number of peer-reviewed articles and published in relevant journals.
18.	How will you inform participants about	Participants will be contacted personally using the

	the outcomes of your research?	details they provided prior to interview. I will conduct a face-to-face meeting to discuss the outcomes and results of the research. If participants are unable to attend this meeting, I will conduct a phone call instead.
19.	How will you ensure anonymity in collecting data, coding, interpreting and storing it and disseminating your results?	Each participant that is involved with the research will be assigned a unique Participant Identification Number (PIN). Any recordings, transcripts or other personal research material that is collected will be categorised and stored using the PIN. Any sensitive material and a database which contains the PIN and the corresponding participant details will be stored securely on a desktop machine – which will be password protected. As an additional level of security, the database will also be password protected. Prior to the interpretation and writing up stages of the research, participants will have been given the option to have their contributions anonymised. It is not foreseen that this will be the case for many participants - but if they do choose to have anonymity, their names will be removed from the research and replaced with pseudonyms.
20.	Please indicate any additional issues that may arise relating to diversity and equality whilst undertaking this research and how you will manage these.	I cannot foresee any issues that relate to diversity and equality during the course of this research.
21.	Will your data collection involve asking questions about:	
22.	Sensitive topics?	Yes
23.	Information that might require disclosure to another body?	No
24.	Information that might be about criminal activities or behaviour?	Yes
25.	<i>If you have answered YES to any of these questions please provide details of the actions you will take if/when such situations occur. You should include here details of how you will handle sensitive or embarrassing topics or information that may require further action e.g. child protection.</i>	Participants will be discussing the circumstances which surrounded the murder of their loved one and therefore will inevitably be discussing information that centres on criminal behaviour. However, it is not foreseen that participants will disclose information relating to crimes for which they are personally responsible, particularly if they have not been apprehended for those crimes. If information of this nature is disclosed the appropriate steps will be taken to pass this information on to the authorities.
C. DATA MANAGEMENT		
26.	What different types of data will you be working work with and what issues related to data collecting handling and management will you need to address?	Interview recordings (audio/visual) and transcriptions. No need for anonymity at this stage – may change dependent on interviewee preferences. All data will be stored securely in the

	<p>Please consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How data will be anonymised - How access to data will be managed and controlled - How will be stored and how long for (faculty policy is 5 years but other organisations vary) 	<p>One Drive online storage system provided by Birmingham City University. Hard copies of interview transcripts and other important information will be stored securely. Any data obtained from the study will be kept for 5 years, in accordance with faculty policy.</p>
D. RESEARCH INTEGRITY		
27.	Has any responsibility for this research been delegated to a sub-contractor?	No
28.	Will individual researchers receive any personal payments over and above their normal salaries for undertaking this research?	No
29.	Will individual researchers receive any other benefits for undertaking this research?	No
30.	Will individual researchers receive any other benefits in excess of the costs for this research?	No
31.	Does the lead researcher have any personal involvement e.g. shareholding, personal relationship with the funding organisation?	No
<i>*If you have answered YES to any of these questions please give further details.</i>		
32.	<p>What arrangements are in place for monitoring the conduct of this research?</p> <p><i>*Please include details of any steering or advisory committees and any other arrangements for the internal monitoring of the project, In the case of student research, you should include arrangements for supervision.</i></p>	<p>The Centre for Applied Criminology has an extensive track record for conducting research about sensitive topics such as murder and homicide. Throughout the course of the research, I will be meeting regularly with my supervisory team. I will be liaising with supervisors before key milestones (for example beginning the interviews) to ensure sufficient preparation has been conducted. I have already passed a 6 month progress review which found my work to date to be satisfactory for continuation. My work will be subject to additional progress reviews throughout the course of the research.</p>

CHECKLIST

Please complete this checklist to make sure that you have included all the documents required for review	
Completed application form*	Yes
Signatures of lead researcher /student and supervisor scanned as a pdf*	Yes
Research proposal*	N/A
Interview schedule	No
Validated questionnaire	N/A
Non-validated questionnaire	N/A
Other research tools	N/A
Written permissions for the use of copyright research tools	N/A
Letters from any persons or organisations that have agreed to provide support for participants or to help e.g. interpreters, counsellors etc.	N/A
Copies of advertisements or any other materials used to recruit participants	N/A
Letter of invitation for research participants	No
Participant information sheet	Yes (Appendix A - Draft)
Participant consent form	Yes (Appendix B - Draft)
Flow chart (for studies with multiple methods/stages)	N/A
Statement about payments to participants (<i>if appropriate</i>)	N/A
Written evidence of consultation/partnership arrangements with research participants/other bodies where applicable	No
Letters from managers/consultants/other persons giving permission for access to patients/staff/students etc. *	N/A
Letter from statistician	N/A
Other relevant documents? (<i>please list and specify and continue on a separate sheet if necessary</i>)	N/A

*essential

Please print this page for signatures and scan the signed copy as a pdf and attach it to this form

Applicant Declaration

The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and I take responsibility for it.

I undertake to abide by the relevant disciplinary good practice guidelines on the proper conduct of research (see guidance notes).

If the research is approved, I undertake to adhere to the terms of the full application for which the BLSS Faculty Research Ethics Committee has given approval.


I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of patient, participant or other personal data, including the need to register when necessary with an appropriate Data Protection Officer as appropriate. I understand that I may not disclose identifiable data to third parties without the consent of person contributing that data or I may be legally required to do so.

I understand that research records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required.

I understand that the information contained in this application, any supporting documentation and all correspondence with BLSS Faculty Research Ethics of Committee relating to the application:

- Will be held by the Committee until at least 5 years after the end of the study.
- May be reviewed as part of the normal monitoring procedures in Faculty of Health to ensure that all applications are processed correctly or to investigate any complaints.

For which category of proposal are you applying for ethical approval?			
Category A		Category B	X

STAFF RESEARCH	
Signed by	
Date	
STUDENTS ONLY (including staff doctoral students)	
I have discussed and agreed this application for ethical review with my supervisor	
Signed by	
Date	06.04.2016

SUPERVISORS ONLY

Declaration

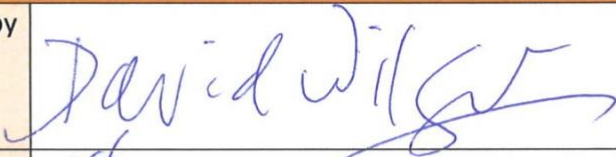

I have read and approved both the research proposal and this application. I am satisfied that the scientific content of the research is satisfactory for an educational qualification at this level.

I take responsibility for working with the student named above to ensure that this study is conducted in accordance with the relevant disciplinary ethical guidelines.

I take responsibility for ensuring that the applicant is up to date and complies with the requirements of the opinion and any conditions set out by the Committee in giving its favourable opinion.

I undertake to seek an ethical opinion from the BLSS Research Ethics Committee before implementing substantial amendments to the protocol or to the terms of the full application of which the Committee has given a favourable opinion.

I undertake to submit progress reports as required by law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of patient and other personal data, in conjunction with clinical supervisors as appropriate.

SUPERVISOR	
Signed by	
Date	 06.04.2016

For all Category B applications:

Once completed, please include your signatures above and submit all sections, along with other required documents to the following email: BLSS Ethics@bcu.ac.uk

Confirmation of ethical approval- Category A

To be completed as indicated, by module leader, supervisor and/or chair of ethic sub-committee

I confirm that the proposal for research being made by the above student/member of staff is a Category A proposal and that s/he may now continue with the proposed research activity:	
For a student's proposal – Name of module leader or supervisor giving approval	N/A
For a member of staff's proposal – Name of chair of FREC (or nominee) giving approval	N/A
Signed	N/A
Date	N/A

**PLEASE SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS FOR ALL CATEGORIES TO BLSS Ethics@bcu.ac.uk
In the email subject header please insert the category being applied for and the name of the applicant.**

Appendix B: Interview Guidance and Consent Form (Template)

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE AND CONSENT FORM

Making Sense of Murder Abroad: Exploring the Post-Homicide Experience of Co-Victims of Murder which Occurs in a Foreign Country

Introduction and Purpose:

My name is Liam Brolan. I am a PhD Researcher and Lecturer in Criminology at Birmingham City University. I would like to invite you to take part in my research which seeks to understand the post-homicide experience of co-victims of murder which occurs in a foreign country.

This research seeks to identify and explore a number of cases whereby British citizens have fallen victim to murder whilst abroad. The study hopes to gain an understanding of the issues and difficulties that families may face when, for example, dealing with issues such as repatriation; liaising with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and dealing with both foreign and domestic support services, criminal justice systems, and law enforcement agencies.

This research forms the basis of a PhD in Criminology and is funded by Birmingham City University.

Procedures:

If you would like to participate in this research, you will be kindly asked to attend a telephone interview with the researcher (Liam Brolan) on a mutually agreed date and time. During the interview, you will be guided through a number of open-ended research questions which will help the researcher gain an insight into your experiences of losing a loved one in a foreign country as a result of murder or manslaughter.

During the interview, you are free to answer the questions in as much or as little detail as you feel comfortable. With your permission, an audio recording device will be used during the interview in order to allow for a detailed and accurate transcription at a later date. If you agree to being recorded, but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, the audio recorder can be turned off at your request. Audio recordings and any subsequent digital transcripts will be stored securely on a password protected computer or in the online storage system provided by Birmingham City University. Printed copies of interview transcripts and other important information will also be stored securely. Any information collected within the interviews will be kept for 5 years, in accordance with University policy.

The results of this research, including the whole of or parts of your interview, will be distributed through the production of an 80,000 word thesis which will be published through the usual channels available at Birmingham City University. The final thesis will also be broken down in to a number of peer-reviewed articles and published in relevant academic journals.

Your Rights:

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline from taking part in the study. You are at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice, without consequence and without providing a reason. If you decide to withdraw either during or immediately after the interview, any information that has been obtained will not be included in the final report.

Risks:

Given the nature of the research, some of the questions that you are asked may be upsetting. With this in mind, you are welcome take a break or call an end to the interview at any point.

Confidentiality:

All efforts will be made to ensure that the information you provide during the research is handled as confidentially as possible. As a participant in this study you will be assigned a unique Participant Identification Number (PIN). Any recordings, transcripts or other personal research material that is collected from you will be categorised and stored using the PIN. Any sensitive material and a database which contains the PIN and the corresponding participant details will be stored securely on a desktop machine – which will be password protected. As an additional level of security, the database will also be password protected. Prior to the writing up stages of the research, you will have the option to have your contributions anonymised.

You should also be aware of the limits of confidentiality when conducting research. Participants are advised to refrain from disclosing details of any unspent criminal convictions, which would legally require the researcher to break confidentiality.

Consent:

This consent form ensures that you are happy with the information that you have received about the research; that you are fully aware of your rights as a participant; and, to confirm that you wish to take part in the research.

	Yes	No
Have you read and understood the information about the research that has been provided in the Interview Guidance Form?		
Have you had the opportunity to discuss any questions that you may have with the researcher prior to beginning the interview?		
Have you received enough information about the research to decide whether you would like to participate?		

Do you understand that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in the research and that you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions?		
Do you understand that you can withdraw from the study at any time without providing reason and without penalty?		
Do you understand that all of the information you provide will remain confidential unless you are happy to be identified?		
Do you understand that the interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed for use in the final research report?		
Do you understand that upon completion, the research will be published in the form of a Doctoral theses and in a number of peer reviewed journal articles?		
Based on the information you have received, do you agree to participate in this study?		

Participant Name	
Participant Signature	
Date	

Researcher Name	
Researcher Signature	
Date	

Appendix C: Example Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

MAKING SENSE OF HOLIDAY HOMICIDE: A STUDY INTO THE IMPACT, EXTENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IMPLICATIONS OF BRITONS MURDERED ABROAD

**HAZEL AND PETER KOUZARIS, PARENTS OF JAMES KOUZARIS
INTERVIEW 1 – SATURDAY 23RD JUNE 2018 – 12:00**

Introduction/Background

Why the research is being done – lack of research which focuses on the relationship between tourism and violent crime, in particular cases of homicide. Very little criminological research into the experiences of ‘co-victims’ of homicide, particularly involving foreign cases.

Who was James Kouzaris?

- Can you describe to me, the kind of person that James was? What was he like growing up, as a teenager and a young man?
- Having graduated from Sheffield University, what had James planned to do next? Was there a particular career that he was interested in?
- Whilst at University, James became friends with an individual by the name of James Cooper, can you describe the kind of friendship that they had?

The Circumstances Surrounding the Murder

- In April 2016, James and James decide to go away together and accompany James Cooper’s family on a visit to Florida in the United States. I have read that James enjoyed travelling so, presumably this would have been something that he and indeed James Cooper were both excited about? (The build-up to the trip; why it came about).
- Did you have much contact with James whilst he was away? (Did he appear to be having a good time?)
- On the 16th April, which was roughly half way through the trip, James and James were out having food with James Cooper’s family, celebrating his 25th Birthday. It was a date that would ultimately have consequences that nobody could have predicted. I have read various accounts in newspapers and online which detail what happened next, but I wondered if you could describe to me your understanding/recollection of the events that unfolded on that evening?

Notification of the Murder

- Whilst the events of the 16th April 2011 were unfolding, you were both over 4000 miles away in the UK, can you tell me, first of all, when and secondly, how, you learned of the news that something had happened?
- Can you describe to me your initial reaction upon hearing the news?

The First 24 Hours after the Murder

- Having heard the news that no parent would ever wish to hear, what did you do next? How did you begin to process the information you have just received?
- Are you able to take me through the first 24-hours after you had heard about what had happened?
- Who did you notify? Did you speak to the police in the UK, in Florida? Did you notify the Foreign and Commonwealth office? Where did the support come from in the early stages? Did you know where to look or who to ask for support? Did you have to seek out support or was it readily provided?

The Arrest and Trial and Sentencing of Shawn Tyson

- When and how did you first hear that someone had been arrested in connection for what had happened to James and James? How did this make you feel?
- How did you feel when you learned that Shawn Tyson, the person arrested, was only 16-years old?
- What level of involvement did you have with the court proceedings? Can you describe your interactions with the police, the courts and the criminal justice system in Florida more generally? How long did the process take from start to finish?
- Shawn Tyson is convicted of two counts of First Degree Murder and given two consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole. Can you describe to me how you felt upon hearing the conviction he had received? (Maybe refer to online videos of James' friends providing statements at court).
- Shortly afterwards, Tyson's defence team appeal against the conviction and sentence, claiming that a sentence of life without parole was unsuitable for a minor, given that he was 16 at the time of the offense. How did this make you feel?
- Overall, how would you describe your experience of dealing with the criminal justice system in Florida? Were there any aspects of the process that stood out to you as being particularly good or bad? (Were you kept informed throughout the process?)

- Did you receive any support from UK agencies such as the police, the FCO throughout the criminal proceedings? If so, can you provide an overview of this? Was there anything missing in terms of support that you would have found beneficial during this time?

Media Interest in the Case

- I would like to talk about the media involvement in the case and the impact that this had on you. To what extent did you have to deal with the media throughout this entire process?
- Do you feel that the media interest in the case was detrimental/beneficial and if so, in what ways? Did the media provide a fair representation of James and James? Did you receive any advice/support in regards to dealing with the media and if so, from where did you receive this support?

Emotional/Overall Impact

- How have the events of 16th April 2011 and the subsequent years that have followed impacted upon you both as people? What sort of emotional/physical impact has this had on you? What impact has it had on your personal and professional lives?
- Did the legal and practical issues, combined with the media interest that surround cases such as this, impact upon your ability to grieve?

Support

- From where have you received the most support following what happened to James? What were the main sources of support? Did support come from the places that you expected it to? Murdered Abroad – How did you find out about the charity? How beneficial has that relationship been?

Always a Chance

- At what point did you decide that you wanted to start a charity? Can you please tell me a bit more about the charity? What was the main reason behind this?

Moving Forward

- How do you see the future for you both? What is next for Pete and Hazel Kouzaris?

Summary/Additional Comments

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

INTERVIEW COMPLETE