Most Evil: Serial Killers
Nature vs. Nurture

1. According to Dr. Pinkis, what are the three factors that may lead to a greater likelihood of creating a killer?

2. What specific area of the brain, if damaged, could be linked to murder and other violent acts? What was discovered from the autopsy of Charles Wittman? Where in the brain is this controlled?

3. What were some of the examples of mental illness that were demonstrated by Ed Gein following the death of his mother? How do these serve in the acts that Gein would commit?

4. What are characteristics of someone who is psychotic and what are the difficulties in proving or disproving this in court? How are cartoon frames used to diagnose an individual someone with psychosis? What has been learned about the violent, psychotic killer as a result?

5. Why is childhood abuse seen as the most important factor of the three and how do the other two play a role in allowing the violence to emerge?

6. What is the most effective research tool used by experts in determining the significance of childhood abuse?

7. What was revealed during the interview with Arthur Shawcross in regards to violence in childhood as well as the other two factors of brain injury and mental illness? How does this go along with the proposed theory of Dr. Pinkis?

8. What was used in the analogy of gun powder and the fuse in explaining violent behavior for adults?

9. What are the odds of a person being labeled as a psychopath, and what are the traits that exist for this type of personality?

10. What has been revealed through new studies and imaging technology to separate psychopaths from non-psychopaths? How is the processing of information different for psychopaths in terms of emotional response?

11. What is the factor that may keep psychopaths from giving up their behavior? What types of tests are conducted to determine this level in psychopaths?

12. What was discovered through the tests done with the convicted murderers? How did the brain of the killers differ from others and what specific part of the brain stood out as most distinct? Can this be used in all cases or are the "normal" people who may also possess these differences?