

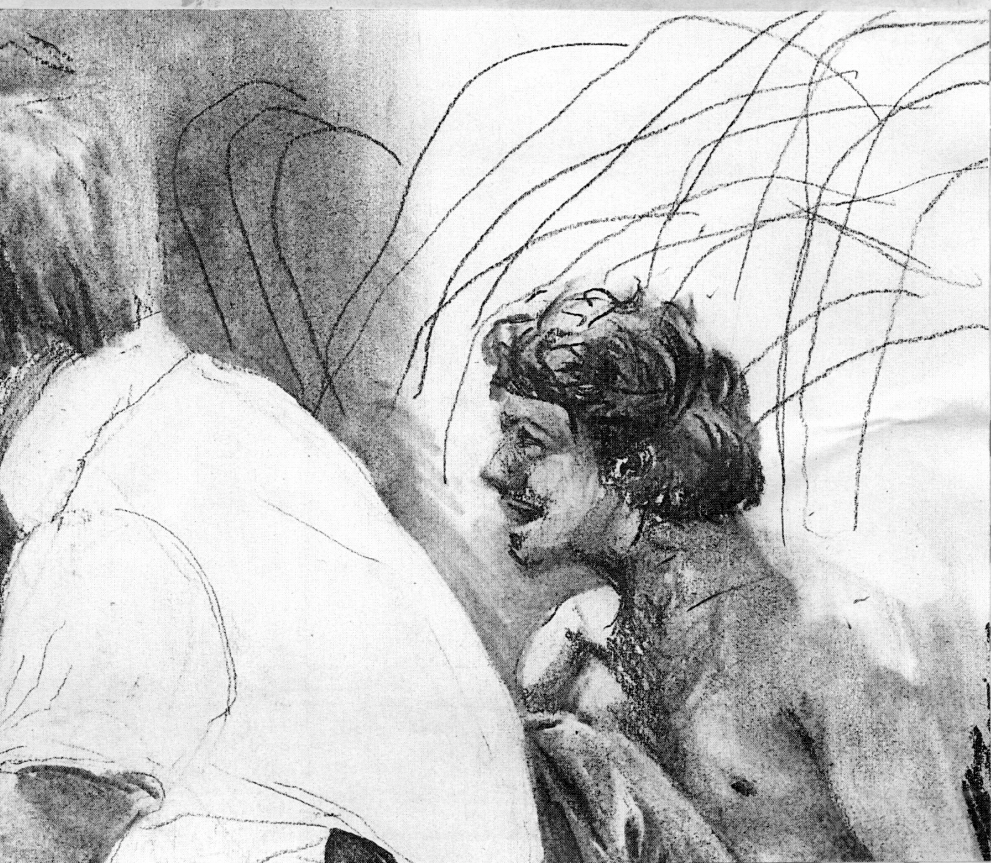


There are some facts I know - Elmer Wayne Henley Jr. was 15 when he was ~~was~~ recruited, essentially, by a murderer and a pedophile to get other boys to come to his house. He did this, alongside another boy, for a couple years. He was a popular child, grew up in an abusive household, and lived in a poor area of Houston - the Houston Heights.



He is associated with the murders of six teenage boys - Frank Aguirre, 18; Johnny Delone, 16; Billy Ray Lawrence, 15; Homer Garcia, 15; Charles Cobble, 17; and Marty Ray Jones, 18. All of which, I believe, were locals of Houston Heights.

When discussing his own reasons for continuing to procure boys for a monstrous man, he says that it was because of the promise of violence (against himself or his brothers) if he quit and the financial benefit - I believe it was 200 dollars per boy.

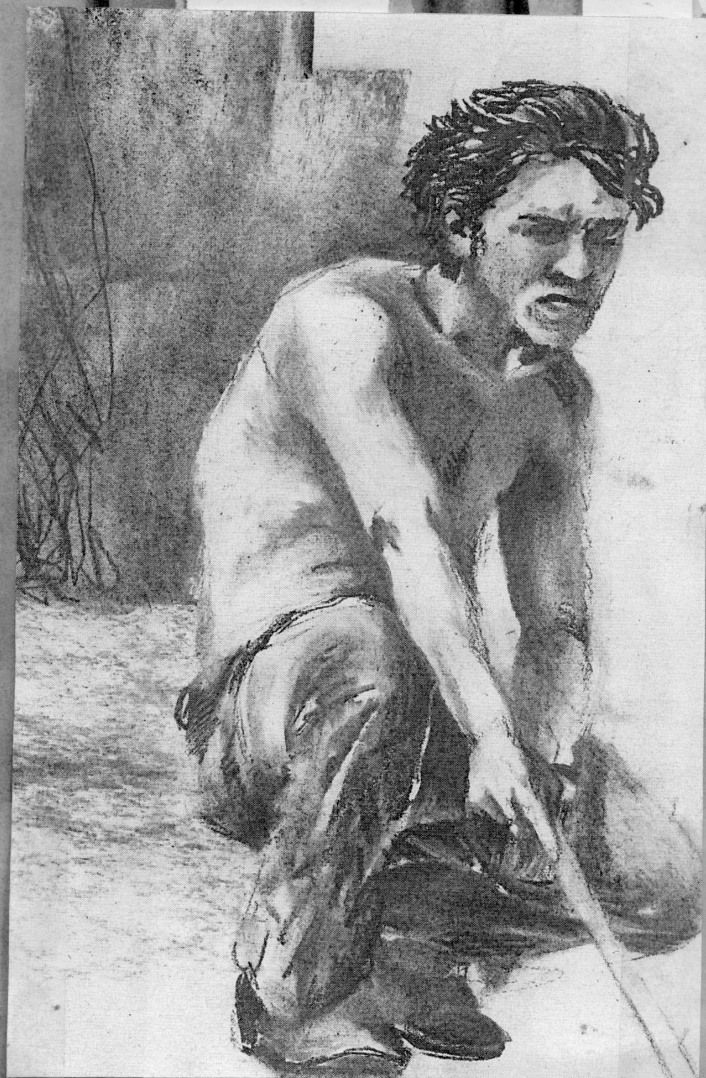




There's plenty I don't know. Certainly not enough to feel secure in my emotional attachment to this person. What I know is that the membrane between victim + victimizer can, in some, be incredibly thin.



I won't go into detail, but in my early childhood, I was not a stranger to feeling victimized and scared - put in situations, scary ones, entirely out of my control. I was also somewhat of a cruel child. I lashed out when it made me feel powerful.



So
When determining guilt, there's some yes-and-no.
Yes, I am responsible for hurting someone intentionally.
No, I am not at fault for feeling like I had
to. This line of thinking doesn't actually make me feel
better.

Of course the scale and impact here are different.
Massively so.

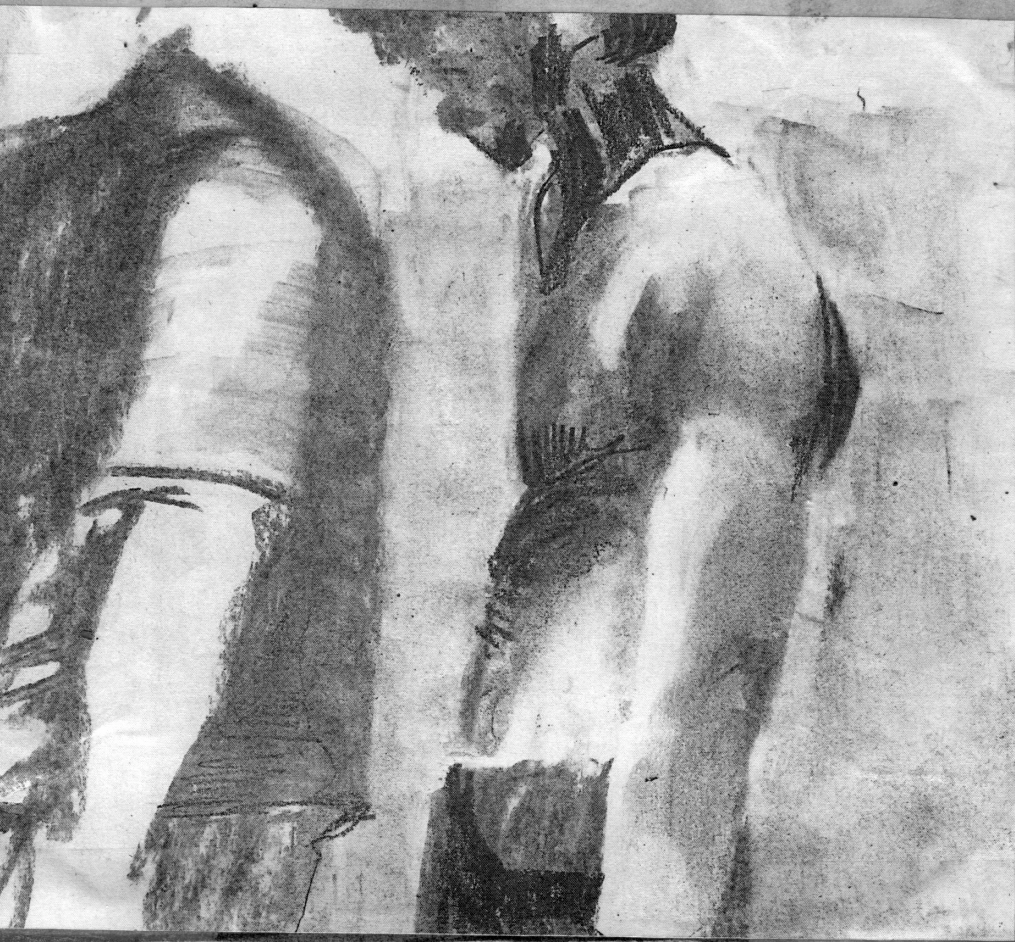




Henley ended up shooting the man he worked under five or six times after Henley brought a girl to the house, which pointed the murderous ire Henley's way. After that, he called the police, and he is still in prison to this day.

six life sentences

In discussing his shooting of the man who paid him, Henley says that he did it just as this man taught him. Henley says that the man he shot would have ~~been~~ proud of how he did it. ~~Even~~ Even as he was killing him, Henley craved his approval.



over 2
all un-
old

I don't feel good about the fact that Henley is the most interesting part of this story for me. There is a push in true crime media right now to center the stories of the victims and survivors, which I understand and support.



I don't feel good that I'm spending so much mental energy on a figure whose role is so very, highly debatable, and not on the boys who died because of his actions. I feel guilty. And yet, it is this guilt, Hanley's guilt (whether he truly feels it or not) that engages me.



The inconsistencies and gaps in my empathy - things
that are repulsive
to me - set so strangely next to the things I can
easily latch on to.

