

APPENDIX E:  
WALL STREET JOURNAL ARTICLE

August, 1990, the Wall Street Journal published an article by Ann Hagedorn regarding the unexplained deaths of Native Americans in Lawrence. Hagedorn expressed the fear that many in the community believe the deaths were at the hands of a "Serial Killer." This led to an article published in the Kansas Police magazine by Chris Mulvenon, Spokesman for the Lawrence Police Department, who joked about the situation saying, "In truth, the only evidence pointing to a serial in these deaths was cereal malt beverage."

This led to an outcry from various individuals and groups. To follow are excerpts from the two articles, copies of the articles, and press releases that followed Mulvenon's article.

From: THE WALL STREET JOURNAL , August 16, 1990

SOME FEAR SERIAL KILLER OF INDIANS IS AT LARGE IN LAWRENCE  
KANSAS

Rash of Unexplained Deaths, All Without Witnesses,  
Stymies Police and Sheriff

What About the Skinheads?  
By Ann Hagedorn

LAWRENCE, Kan. For five days after the body of a 19 year old Indian named Christopher Bread was found in a ditch on the outskirts of town, it rained. Mr. Bread's parents and other native Americans saw the downpour as a sign, a washing away of evil.

On the morning of the memorial service last March, as the sun rolled across the prairie once more, mourners embraced the sunshine as a harbinger of hope. Soon, they said among themselves, the mysteries surrounding this death and the deaths of several other native Americans here would surely be solved.

But that hasn't happened. In the past year and a half, four unexplained deaths of Indian men have occurred in this eastern Kansas town. No witnesses have come forth to explain them. There appeared to be no suspects. And while police and the local sheriff say they are doing everything they can to crack the cases, fears that a serial killer is responsible haunt the Indians.

Moreover, local Indian leaders worry that the deaths and the way they've been investigated are manifestations of racism. "We feel like an isolated community. We have felt that view outside our community is that these are just some drunken Indians, that it's all an Indian problem," says Donald Bread, the father of the late Christopher and a law instructor at Haskell Indian Junior College here...

Lawrence Police Spokesman, Chris Mulvenon, responds to the Wall Street Journal Article, with an article in Kansas Police magazine.

The Cops, The Media, and Responsibility, or: Dealing with the Media is not the Bestest Job in the World, or: How I Conquered Writer's Block Just in the Nick of Deadline. by Chris Mulvenon, Lawrence Police Department.

I sat down some months ago with the belief I could bang out in less than an hour, a great story about news organizations. Media coverage of our police department seemingly had reached a new low. My self appointed cause: to write about reckless, inaccurate, unfair media coverage...

...There are well intentioned professionals in the world of journalism. Some, not many. And, it would appear most media writers are looking for the "big story." The "big story" is defined as the inside look into a real life situation that can be parlayed into a book, script treatment, or movie contract, you know; pure unadulterated wealth. (Newspapers would probably capitalize that. They always do when talking bread and butter.) The definition of "big story" also must include a correct political perspective, which by definition is somewhat contrary to any held by anyone who carries a badge. Reporter perception: "It worked for those guys with Watergate why not in this town, Bygod America."

This premise is best explained by a troubling media episode with a reporter from the highly regarded Wall Street Journal. A reporter came to town to inquire about the deaths of several Native American Indians in Lawrence and Douglas County. She left linking two drownings, two hit and run accidents, and a sexual assault as the work of a serial murderer. What should suffice in this instance is to tell you that this reporter wrote half a story, full of half truths, complete with speculation and innuendo. WHAT A FIASCO! But if there were a serial murderer, by god, that reporter is ready with her shocking, riveting, never to be believed best seller. In truth, the only evidence pointing to a serial in these deaths was cereal malt beverage...