

TRACKING A KILLER

Beltway's serial killer profiled as gun nut on a power trip.

DAVE WEDGE. Boston Herald. Boston, Mass.: Oct 23, 2002. pg. 006

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Methodically killing people at will, frustrating authorities, sending mixed messages and threatening to slaughter children are all the tactics of a power-hungry serial killer hellbent on proving his superiority, one expert said yesterday of the Beltway sniper.

"When the police said schools were safe, he wanted to prove they were wrong," serial killer profiler John Kelly said. "It was another way of him showing his superiority to them. So he shot a kid at school."

Kelly, a clinical social worker and forensic examiner who runs the profiling company, S.T.A.L.K. (System to Apprehend Lethal Killers) Inc., says the maniac mowing people down around the nation's capital is likely a detached gun nut who is obsessed with proving he can do whatever he wants.

Kelly, who has worked with the FBI to profile the Green River Killer in suburban Seattle and the Unabomber, calls this murderer "a hybrid between Timothy McVeigh, 'Son of Sam' (David Berkowitz) and the Zodiac Killer."

The sniper's threats to kill children are his way of "upping the stakes," Kelly said.

"He's upping the ante," Kelly said. "The riskier the behavior, the more violent and vile - like going after kids - the more excitement he gets out of it. He's injecting more fear into the population. These guys get off creating a lot of fear and feeling like they have control."

In addition to Kelly, S.T.A.L.K. includes three other clinical psychologists and Detective Frank Adamson of the King County Police Department in Seattle, who headed the Green River probe. The group has released a profile of the Beltway sniper and is working with greater Washington, D.C., authorities on the investigation, Kelly said.

The profile says the sniper is a white male between the ages of 22 and 35, whose hobbies include target shooting and hunting, "to the point of addiction." He also likely enjoys violent shooting games and movies and gun shows.

Kelly also said the killer is now reacting to the police response to the killings and may have been insulted by their handling of his phone message on Monday.

"I think he became highly insulted (Monday), when the police said they got a garbled message and wanted him to call back," Kelly said.

"He probably felt like he was being conned in some way to call back and that's why he acted out as quickly as he did (yesterday) morning."