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Hidden Labour in Funeral Directing: Providing Care to 'Difficult' Dead Bodies

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Abstract

This article uses the case study of Ian Brady to examine the previously hidden forms of labour that funeral directors do in managing the remains of particularly controversial criminals. Specifically, we extend the concept of the 'difficult dead' (Spokes, Denham, and Lehmann, 2018), which we use to describe those that have offended both legal and moral codes by defiling particularly vulnerable victims in life. This offending makes their remains 'dirty' (Douglas, 2002) and difficult to classify among other remains. They must be kept separate and controlled as an 'other' as they risk contaminating the public. With this in mind, the article argues that funeral directors conduct extra, hidden forms of labour in navigating the risk of becoming contaminated by the dirt attached to the remains of the difficult dead. We make three contributions. First, we drive forward the valuable intersection between criminology and death studies, which has overlooked the ramifications that 'difficult' dead bodies have on the labour of death professionals. Second, we highlight some of the limits in current funerary codes of practice. Third, we generate a starting point for a discussion on the labour of funeral directors when attempting to care for the remains of difficult offenders.

Keywords: Difficult Dead, Disposal, Funeral Director, Criminal, Labour

Introduction

In 1966 Ian Brady and his romantic partner, Myra Hindley, were sentenced to life imprisonment; Brady for the murder of three children, Lesley Ann Downey, Edward Evans, and John Kilbride, and Hindley for the murders of Lesley Ann Downey and Edward Evans. It was also revealed in 1985, that the pair were responsible for the murders of Keith Bennett and Pauline Reade after they confessed. After renewed searches, Reade's body was

uncovered from the Saddleworth Moor where the other victims were buried and Bennet is thought to still be. Hindley died in West Suffolk Hospital in 2002 and was cremated at Cambridge Crematorium after a short funerary service. In 2017, Brady would die in Ashworth High Security Hospital where he had been held since 1986. Whilst Hindley received a funerary service and her disposal was short, Brady's would be the opposite. He did not receive a funeral service and the disposal of his remains was long and proved problematic for those tasked with carrying this out.

This article examines these challenges in detail and uses them to discuss the difficulties that the remains of controversial criminals pose for the labour of UK funeral directors. In particular, we consider how funeral directors provide care to human remains when they inspire feelings of moral disgust. Brady's case captures this as his remains did not lose the monstrous identity that he had in life (Shilling, 2004), continuing to characterise who he was long after his death. This posed problems for his disposal. For example, his remains were notoriously held in the 'monster' morgue[1] (Speirs, 2017) for six months as no funeral director wanted to take responsibility for the disposal. It was only after a local authority contracted a funeral director and crematorium that the disposal could be carried out (Robins, 2017). Drawing on the case, as well as legal codes, funeral directing advisory codes, and media reports, we reveal the hidden forms of labour that funeral directors do in the disposal of these remains.

Central to this is the concept of the 'difficult dead' (Spokes, Denham, & Lehmann, 2018), which we use as a tool to aid us with analysis. The term 'difficult dead' (ibid) is understood as deceased individuals whose criminal acts defiled an 'ideal victim'; those person(s)

[1] Speirs, K. (2017, July 25). 'Ian Brady's body 'stuck in Monster Morgue' as undertakers refuse to touch it'. Glasgow Live. Available at: https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/ian-bradys-body-stuck-monster-13381149

intertwined with sacredness; the vulnerable, often young victim of a violent crime (Christie cited in Fattah, 1986). Due to the perpetrators' defiling of the vulnerable in life, the remains are difficult to classify alongside other sets of human remains (Douglas, 2002). They must be kept distinct from these as an 'other', a status that stems from their actions which undermine not only legal codes, but threaten and disrupt moral codes, too. As a consequence, the remains of the difficult dead are labelled and handled as identifiably different to other human beings. Ian Brady embodies the label of the difficult dead as the symbolic toxicity he represented in life as a serial child murderer, torturer, and sexual predator was compounded by his identity as deceased. In death, he still represented all these things, remaining a source of danger and contamination that had the potential to cause harm and which needed to be tightly regulated.

The disposal of these 'difficult' dead bodies unsettles a key philosophy of funeral directing, which is to provide care and maintain the dignity of the deceased (Bartlett and Riches, 2007; Bailey, 2010; Hockey, 1996; Parsons, 1999; 2003). Specifically, in disposing of these remains, funeral directors must navigate between providing care to the remains of those that they may not want to. Yet, this disposal also requires a secondary form of labour tied to the exertion of control, which is used to keep the remains from contaminating the wider public (Douglas, 2002). The balancing between these provides a risk for funeral directors because, in administering care to the remains, funeral directors also work to not become contaminated by their symbolic dirtiness, resisting being seen by the wider public as 'scum serving scum' (Tracy, 2005, pg.272). In essence, we argue that funeral directors conduct extra, hidden forms of labour in navigating the risk of becoming contaminated by the dirt attached to the remains of the difficult dead.

In making this argument, three contributions are made. First, we develop on the concept of the difficult dead, which we use to drive forward discussions that integrate death studies and criminology together. Certainly, the corpse has steadily received more interest in the social sciences in the past decade (Krupar, 2018; Moon, 2014; Olson, 2014; 2016; Schrift, 2016; Troyer, 2008), showing it to be a rich point of analysis. This is further demonstrated by the focus that human remains have had in recent global empirical projects, such as Claire Moon's 2018-2021 Wellcome Trust Project: *Human Rights, Human Remains: Forensic Humanitarianism and the Politics of the Grave (2018 - 2021)*, and Sarah Tarlow's Wellcome Trust Project: *The Archaeology of the Criminal Corpse*. However, despite these projects showing clear connections between crime and death studies, the corpse has played a smaller role in criminology (Denham, 2016; Penfold-Mounce, 2010; 2016; Shute in Dreyfus & Ansett, 2014), and the area of how funerary labour is conducted on 'difficult' deceased offenders in the UK is barely touched. Therefore, in driving forward the concept of the difficult dead, we highlight the problems that the remains of the difficult dead can have on funeral directors' labour. Our second contribution is that we have drawn attention to an area that funerary codes of practice have not yet covered. Whilst care is central to these codes, how this care is to be done in relation to difficult dead bodies is something that is currently unclear. The third contribution is formed from these other two, which is that attention is drawn to the absence of these hidden labour practices from funerary codes of practice. Thus, our aim is for this article to provide a foundation for a discussion about the funerary labour required in the disposal of 'difficult' dead bodies, which is intended to contribute to both academia and funerary professions both in England and internationally.

The Difficult Dead

We use the concept of the 'difficult dead' (Spokes, Denham and Lehmann, 2018) as a tool for framing our investigation into how funeral directors provide care to human remains when they inspire moral disgust. The concept is used by Spokes et al (2018) to assess the politicization of, and public reaction to the heinous criminal actor in memorialization and heritage. However, in this paper we operationalise the concept of 'difficult dead' in a different context, and use it to consider the challenges that the remains of the controversial criminal, in this case Ian Brady, pose for the funeral directors managing such bodies. Specifically, the concept is useful in demonstrating the impact certain deceased identities can have on the living, not only in the immediate future following their death, but often decades later. Brady's corpse is symbolic of the 'difficult dead' because of the complications and difficulties the remains presented not only for their physical, material disposal by funeral directors, but also the management of their symbolic meaning in social life (Hetherington, 2004; Munro, 1995; 1998; 2001; 2016). The main factor that contributes to Brady's 'difficult' posthumous identity is the 'ideal victim' (Christie, 1986) status of his victims, which informs the 'dirtiness' of his remains (Douglas, 2002). This section will highlight the role that these ideal victims play in Brady's identity as emblematic of the 'difficult dead'.

The driving force that constructs Brady's remains as 'difficult' is the identity of his victims. Christie's (1986) theory of victimisation is particularly useful in helping us to elaborate on this. Christie's (1986) eminent theory of 'ideal victims' speaks to how the victimisation of individuals such as children, women, or the elderly, represent a uniquely abhorrent attack on social norms and values. According to Christie (1986), such individuals, because of their supposed weakness and innocence, have high levels of social capital and value. In essence, an 'ideal victim' is "a person or category of individuals who – when hit by crime – most readily are given the complete and legitimate status of being a victim" (in Fattah 1986: 18). Were we

to consider a hierarchy of victimisation, ideal victims feature above all others (Greer, 2017; Smith, 2018). As such, Brady's crimes signified not only an act of violence, but a more symbolic defiling of vulnerability. In the years following the attacks, 'mass media institutions relied heavily upon characterisation of the [victims] as vulnerable and passive, and whose victimisation emotively represented the corruption of innate purity' (Smith, 2018: 120).

When they died at the hands of the Moors Murderers Ian Brady and Myra Hindley between 1963-1965, Pauline Reade, John Kilbride, Keith Bennett, Lesley Ann Downey and Edward Evans were aged between 10-17 years old, and their position within the sanctified boundaries of childhood positioned Brady, by comparison, as a symbol of 'antithetical monstrousness' (Smith, 2018: 121). The mass media was saturated with discourses of opposition between the vulnerability of victimhood and Brady's inherent malevolence. The case served as 'the symbol of the nation's revulsion at all those who prey on innocent children'[2] (The Guardian, 1995). The Moors murderers 'didn't just take innocent lives, they crushed an age of innocence'[3] (Reade, 2017) and in so doing the 'case signified our loss of innocence as a nation'[4] (Motte, 2006). Echoing theories of childhood that have dominated sociological thinking since the eighteenth century, children and young people are perceived as inherently vulnerable and passive (Elkin, 1968; James & James, 2004; James & Prout, 1997; Jenks, 1992; Morgan & Zedner, 1992; Wilczynski, 1997).

Owing to the status of innocence and purity as defining essences of youth, Brady was positioned socially and culturally as a distant being. This speaks to Christie's (1986) theory that ideal victims and ideal offenders are interdependent; their identities feed and reinforce

[2] The Guardian. (1995, December 18). Myra Hindley: My Story: The 'Normal, Happy Girl' Who Became the 'Icon of Evil'. The Guardian. Retrieved from www.nexis.com
[3] Reade, B. (2017, May 16). Brian Reade on the evil of chemistry of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley and how they crushed an age of innocence. The Mirror. Retrieved from www.nexis.com
[4] Motte, A. (2006, May 13). Slaughter of the innocents. The Sun. Retrieved from www.nexis.com

one another. As such, by emphasising the sanctity and therefore effortless manageability of the victims, Brady's status as a defiler of vulnerability is reinforced and his 'difficult' identity compounded. His actions simultaneously violated both legal codes and tainted the unsullied immaculacy of childhood. The vulnerability of Brady's victims serves to highlight the moral repugnance of his character; his abhorrence as a being that exists outside of order, which only continues in his posthumous existence.

The 'ideal' status of Brady's victims and the moral abhorrence that their deaths represented informed the cultural construction of his remains as 'dirty'. With this in mind, what constitutes a 'difficult' dead body is rooted in the work of Mary Douglas (2002) on *'Purity and Danger'*. Douglas' argument is that cultures place matter into classes and categories to render their social world as ordered. Ordering a social world involves maintaining the purity of those categories of matter, separating, and holding apart that which does not fit. Of particular interest to Douglas is the matter which is held apart; the matter that confuses or contradicts these culturally constructed classifications. The well-known concept that she uses to express this is 'dirt', which is simply understood by Douglas as 'matter out of place' (2002, pg.44). Dirt, in its challenging of the purity of classifications, presents pollution to social life. These are symbolic dangers that inspire pollution behaviours which are '..the reaction which condemns any object likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications' (Douglas, 2002, pg.45).

After his conviction in 1966, Brady was sentenced to three concurrent life sentences and spent the rest of his natural life incarcerated. Douglas' framework of 'dirt' is helpful in understanding the symbolic threat that Brady posed both in life and after death. His crimes inherently challenged cultural norms surrounding behaviour; they threatened categories of social order and as a result he became labelled as one who 'does not fit'. To re-establish and

revitalise a sense of order Brady was imprisoned; institutionalised within the penal regime to live alongside those who similarly represented material and symbolic social chaos. Brady was contained and kept apart from the purity of cherished cultural classifications. Yet after his death, he still held the potential to disrupt culturally constructed classifications, and so, mechanisms of control were still subjected to the remains. The need to instil order and minimise agency continues; following his conviction, as a punishment, he was denied liberty. But beyond this, because of the severity of his crimes, freedom from the shackles of control were equally denied after death.

Using Douglas' perspective reveals the cultural construction of Brady's remains as 'dirt' and a source of pollution. His remains were culturally translated as symbolically troubling and offensive; 'difficult' to place with respect to the purity of other established UK cultural classifications revolving around corpses and the deceased. This is because Brady's remains stand in to embody his identity (Shilling, 2004) as a serial child murderer. His character does not fit into ordered categories of society, but instead symbolises 'the enemy'; a source of violence, atrocity, and loss (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; Khalid, 2011). In this sense, mirroring Brady's position as 'other' in life, his remains exist outside of symbolic categories of order where the accepted dead body fits, and more than this, could pollute the purity of established, 'cherished' classifications of these corpses. His remains were placed at the cultural periphery as dirty, which framed how they were to be disposed of as they entered into the funerary institution. In this way, our interest is in the pollution behaviours of funerary institutions, which condemn Brady's transcending of established classifications, and aim to limit the pollution his remains present to these. This control occurs through his disposal, which is the way of ordering his pollution and neutralising the danger that his remains present for public life (Munro, 2001).

The ‘difficulty’ of Brady’s remains therefore lies in the difficulty of managing them with respect to ordered cultural classifications, specifically they risk contaminating established classifications of human remains, and must be kept separate as ‘other’. As such, the case demonstrates the intricate and often complicated challenges that must be navigated when society is presented with legacies and symbols of horror. There are certain similarities to what Glaser (2017: 1 cited in Spokes, Denham and Lehmann, 2018: 1) poignantly asks of confederate statues, that symbolised legacies of white supremacy and slavery in the United States; ‘do we just toss them into the ash bin of history, purging them as if they never existed?’ While Brady is not a statue, the sentiment is still relevant for, much like the Confederacy, Brady constitutes a significant figure in the British imagination and around whom questions of morality and outrage orbit.

Funeral Directing and the Difficult Dead

As it stands, we have introduced and set up the concept of the ‘difficult dead’ and this section will now focus on applying it to funeral directing. It has been shown that Brady’s posthumous identity as ‘difficult’ stems from his symbolic ‘dirtiness’ (Douglas, 2002) which was crafted through the vulnerability of his victims (Christie, 1986). The more conventional classifications tied to human remains have routine forms of management used by death professionals to discard of them. These can be seen in codes of practice that emphasise the care and maintaining of the dignity of the deceased (National Association of Funeral Directors: Code of Practice, 2018). However, due to his symbolic dirtiness, Brady’s remains are an anomaly, and their management challenges patterns of labour undertaken by death professionals by contradicting the values of care and dignity that underpin codes of practice and funerary labour more generally (Parsons, 2003).

Specifically, these routine practices are contradicted when a funeral director refuses to provide care to the remains of a deceased person. For example, it was widely reported that Brady's remains were kept in a morgue for six months because no funeral director wanted to work with them. News reports emotively described the deadlock surrounding Brady's body and how his remains were 'stuck in Monster Morgue'[5] (Speirs, 2017), 'left abandoned'[6] (Evans and Rodger, 2017) because 'Cemeteries and crematoriums...want nothing to do with the...murderer'[7] (Robertson, 2017). Underpinning this dilemma is a tension between two things. The first is that there is a social requirement and expectation that the remains of the dead will be treated with respect and care (Conway, 2016). Yet, funeral directors are human beings with value judgements, and are under no obligation to provide this care and chose not to. Nevertheless, despite no funeral director wanting to work with the remains, they inevitably required a final disposal, and a funeral director and crematorium were contracted by the local authority to carry this out.

The parameters for this requirement were legislative and can be seen in the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. In section 46 (1) the act states that

> *It shall be the duty of a local authority to cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died or been found dead in their area, in any case where it appears to the authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the authority (p. 27).*

[5] Speirs, K. (2017, July 25). 'Ian Brady's body 'stuck in Monster Morgue' as undertakers refuse to touch it'. Glasgow Live. Available at: https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/ian-bradys-body-stuck-monster-13381149

[6] Evans, N. and Rodger, J. (2017, July 25). 'Ian Brady and Salman Abedi bodies left abandoned in same morgue with undertakers refusing to touch them'. Birmingham Mail. Available at: https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/uk-news/ian-brady-salman-abedi-bodies-13380251

[7] Robertson, A. (2017, July 25). 'The monster morgue: Bodies of Ian Brady and Manchester bomber Salman Abedi STILL lie in the same mortuary because undertakers refuse to touch them'. Mail Online. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4726788/Ian-Brady-Salman-Abedi-lie-mortuary.html

This piece of legislation governed the need to dispose of Brady's remains and meant that his corpse would not be able to lie in the morgue indefinitely. Yet, there is vagueness in what 'suitable arrangements' entail. After all, in the case of a difficult dead body, what is suitable often substantially differs from what is suitable in the management of other corpses (Robins, 2017). For example, in Brady's case there were tight restrictions over where his cremated remains could and could not be scattered after cremation. There were public fears that they might be scattered on the Saddleworth Moor (as per Brady's request), where the murders occurred and many of the victims were buried, with one still thought to be buried there. As such, Brady's remains presented a risk of contamination for this site that has become entangled with the victims of the crimes. 'Suitable arrangements' is, therefore, a term that varies based on context as what is suitable in Brady's case evidently requires more stringent control than what is suitable in the discard of everyday, ordered sets of human remains.

For those tasked with disposing of the difficult dead body, meeting these suitable arrangements can have a complicated relationship with requirements of care, dignity, and following the personal wishes of the deceased. This is significant because funeral directors are trained to provide care for the deceased and bereaved, a point that can be found clearly backed by codes of conduct published by British advisory bodies for funeral directors. Specifically, in their code of conduct for members, the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) (2014) state that *'Members (3)) will respect and maintain the dignity of the deceased at all times.'* Similar discourses can be found in the code of ethics from the British Institute of Funeral Directors (BIFD) whose first ethical code is for a member to *'Treat with respect each dead human body.'*[8] The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF) (2018) also provide an extensive code of conduct for its members. From the

[8] British Institute of Funeral Directors (n.d.). 'Code of ethics'. Available at: https://www.bifd.org.uk/about-the-bifd.html

outset, the code states that *'Members must conduct themselves in a totally professional manner, and behave sensitively, with courtesy and complete dignity at all times, both privately and professionally.'* The point is that the predominant expectation of funeral directors in professional codes of practice is to provide a uniform service of care and to uphold the dignity of the remains. What none of them contend with, however, is what happens when those funeral directors may not be able to uphold these ideals of care and dignity due to the contradicting suitable arrangements that are required, as well as their own moral stance towards the remains.

According to the Chancellor of the High Court, Sir Geoffrey Vos, while, in Ian Brady's case, 'The deceased's wishes are relevant...they do not outweigh the need to avoid justified public indignation and actual unrest'[9] (Bowcott, 2017). As a result, following his death there was no funeral; the remains were brought into the crematorium after hours so as not to intersect with any ongoing funeral, no music was played, and the cremator was thoroughly cleaned after the cremation[10] (Meechan, 2017). These procedures are a cleansing; a way of limiting Brady's symbolic dirtiness from contaminating the purity of cultural classifications in death and dying. They show how the management of Brady's remains were primarily focused on limiting public anger, rather than being explicitly concerned with caring for and dignifying him as a deceased person. This culminates in an act of control that those disposing of the corpse felt to be suitable arrangements and which seemingly favour symbolic sanitizing rather than unimpeded care. The significance of this is that this requirement to control Brady's remains provides a contradictory relationship to providing care and dignity. By

[9] Bowcott, O. (2017, October 13). 'No funeral for Moors murderer Ian Brady, judge rules'. The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/oct/13/ian-bradys-body-must-be-disposed-of-with-no-ceremony-judge-rules

[10] Meechan, S. (2017, November 3). 'Vile Moors Murderer Ian Brady's body was disposed of in the appropriate way'. Chronicle Live. Available at: https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/uk-news/vile-moors-murderer-ian-bradys-13852733

refusing to accept his remains, take responsibility for their disposal, denying him a funeral, and the absence of a 'typical' disposal demonstrates how his living identity of criminal 'other' fed into his posthumous management. Seemingly, Brady's crimes exempted him from typical funeral director disposal practices and presented hurdles to normative practices of care after death. The management of his remains shows how he was deemed to exist outside the realms of 'human' existence. With care and dignity being prioritised in funeral directing codes of practice but not prioritised in cases of managing a difficult dead body, certain limits to the current codes of practice emerge.

The point of contention is that this control of the difficult dead body borders on management practices akin to the criminal justice system. It is a way of protecting the public and keeping the pollution of Ian Brady from seeping into the public realm. In this way, the difficult dead body disrupts the routine patterns of labour conducted by funeral directors, which is typically not designed by discourses of the punitive. It centres on care, not punishment. To carry out the disposal of the difficult dead body, new forms of labour are required. We highlight the hidden, additional forms of labour to draw attention to the extra work that funeral directors do in the management of the difficult dead body.

Hidden Funerary Labour

Extra, hidden forms of labour are required of funeral directors when navigating the seemingly contradictory requirements of both controlling and caring for the remains of the difficult dead. These additional forms of work emerge when funeral directors are presented with a set of human remains that require management techniques which go beyond the remit of normal practice and as a result disrupt the routine patterns of funerary labour. Indeed, we have shown that the difficult dead force us to recognise the variation in human remains and how their lived identities inevitably feed into their disposal. There is a social acceptance that

’controversial criminals’, those who have committed heinous crimes such as Ian Brady, require careful management and exceptional treatment. For example, in life they are placed in a secure location, managed by individuals who are specially trained and equipped with the tools required to ensure safety and security for all. Yet, there is a gap in existing academic literature, codes of practice, and a failure to recognise that although deceased, the ‘difficulty’ of such an identity, still remains. In essence, what distinguishes controversial criminals from the criminally condemned in general, is that their need to be controlled continues after death as their identities persist in challenging social norms, values, and ethics. The posthumous control that controversial criminals require has a direct impact on those individuals tasked with their management and disposal, which we are focusing on by drawing attention to the labour of the funeral director in these scenarios.

The labour that must be done when funeral directors are contracted to handle the remains of the difficult dead is a navigation of seemingly contrasting philosophies of care and control. Of course, this is not isolated to the work of death professionals and is often seen in the labour of medical professionals that manage the living in palliative care in prisons. Specifically, Turner & Peacock (2017) interviewed sixteen healthcare professionals in an attempt to unpick medical practitioners’ views about palliative care provisions in prisons. Their findings showed the difficulty that medical staff had between balancing a philosophy of care and the more punitive philosophy of custody. Further research echoes this, arguing that prison guides can be confusing for custodial staff, particularly in the use of restraints on terminally ill prisoners (Robinson, 2019). From such research it is clear that personnel who interact with prisoners experience a tension between their duty of care and requirements of controlling the prisoner. Moreover, as Robinson’s research highlights, such an ambiguity exists perhaps not just at the individual level within the mind of the practitioner, but also within institutional and professional guidelines more broadly.

The labour of funeral directing is different to that of prison officers and medical practitioners, but it does share certain similarities in the difficulties of balancing care with control. The most significant difference is that funeral directors are dealing with the deceased rather than the living. To take Ian Brady as an example, the symbolic abhorrence of his identity was compounded after death. In life he was a serial child murderer and because of this criminal label he was pushed to the margins of society, cast aside and contained within prison confines. After death, Brady also took on the role of 'deceased'. Much like Heidensohn's (1989) argument that women who commit crime are doubly deviant because they transgress gender norms as well as legal codes, we can see how death compounds the symbolic dirtiness of Brady's criminal, difficult identity. His remains must be managed not only as a serial child murderer, but also as a *dead* serial child murderer, categories which both have the potential to generate feelings of revulsion and fear. Not only does this distinguish the difficult dead from the 'difficult living' outlined in research carried out by Turner & Peacock (2017) or Robinson (2019), but also from 'normal' remains which are not imbued with a legacy such as Brady's. The remains of the difficult dead, such as Ian Brady, necessitate additional labour from funeral directors because they represent those who are 'doubly dangerous'. This labour is currently understated within both codes of practice that govern funerary workers as well as our cultural imagination surrounding death disposal and management more broadly.

The labour of caring for the difficult dead body reflects a form of dirty work because, in handling those who could be seen as doubly provocative, funeral directors put themselves at risk of being seen as morally objectionable by the wider public (Rivera, 2014). As funeral directors navigate the remains of the difficult dead, they must do extra work not to become tainted by the dirt attached to these remains; they take on the burden of control as well as

care. There are certain parallels between our argument and Tracy's (2005) exploration of care work among prison officers. She states that

> *The discomfort of serving and nurturing inmates, therefore, is not just about being forced to ''fake'' emotions. Rather, when macro discourses imply that service is usually performed for the high status by the low status, and when inmates are socially classified as deviant (Davis 1998), it is no wonder that officers find it difficult to muster up the emotions associated with nurturing and respecting inmates. Doing so can imply that officers are, themselves, tainted and dirty (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999) - scum serving scum* (Tracy, 2005, p. 272).

Tracy's research shows the emotional difficulties among prison officers when dealing with the worst of the worst. In this way, it is particularly relevant to highlighting the extra labour that funeral directors must do when navigating this contradiction between controlling the difficult dead body and being required to care for and dignify the remains. The hidden labour here is manifested through a challenge for the funeral director not to become dirty by proxy of handling those, such as Brady. As previously mentioned, a number of funeral providers and directors refused to take charge of Brady's body by choice, and the disposal required a funeral director to be contracted by the local authority (Robins, 2017). In not wanting to be associated with the remains, and thus not choosing to care for them, the funeral director resists the possibility of becoming *scum serving scum* (Tracy, 2005). They resist becoming contaminated by the dirt attached to Brady's remains. Yet, inevitably, a funeral director was required to take Brady's remains into their jurisdiction and, as such, made themselves vulnerable to his dirty identity.

There is always a possibility of becoming contaminated by the matter of the difficult dead body, and this extra, hidden labour involves navigating the possibility of dirtying one's

identity and reputation. Like dirt gets on hands and under the fingernails, it gets into the cracks of one's self; it risks contaminating death professionals on the most fundamental symbolic level (Rivera and Tracy, 2014). Providing care to the remains of the difficult dead risks the dirt lingering on one's own reputation. This therefore highlights the grander argument of this paper, which is that in providing care to the remains of the difficult dead, regular patterns of funerary labour are disrupted. The funeral director must undertake extra, hidden forms of labour so as not to become contaminated by the dirt attached to the remains of the difficult dead body.

Conclusion

The legacy of Ian Brady has continued after death and his remains disrupted the normal disposal and labour practices of the funerary institution. They required the funeral director to handle the body and dispose of the remains in ways that fall outside the boundaries of 'normal' practice. Despite clear regulations that define the parameters of funerary work, and the labour of death professionals more generally, they rely on the assumption that all bodies are equal in death. While the physical remains may share common material qualities, and while all bodies retain a sense of their lived identity, very few of these posthumous identities are deemed nationally, if not internationally, controversial and abhorrent. Brady was one such body that necessitated an atypical response. Such bodies are not visible in funerary codes of practice nor are they discussed sufficiently within academic research. Until such gaps are rectified, the additional labour that controversial corpses demand of funerary professionals will remain hidden and inconsistent.

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