Research Paper

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

**Introduction**

Crime is one of the biggest social issues prevailing in the society currently, in fact, it is the biggest issue. Human beings have been involving in criminal and illegal activities since the very beginning of time. The term “crime” refers to any illegal or deviant activity that is offensive and is punishable by law, and the person or persons who indulge in any such activity are known as criminals.

The first illegal or criminal activity that took place on the surface of the earth was a murder. This murder was committed by the earliest humans, who were brothers. One brother, Cain, murdered his own brother, Abel, out of jealousy. This is where the series of crime started in the society which is still continued. The only difference is that in the past, the occurrence of crime was a rare occurrence, but as the human population started to grow, and people started to spread over face of the earth in the form of various tribes, groups, and families, it became a regular occurrence and the rate of crime continued to increase (Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2018). The law enforcement agencies report that every second, a crime takes place in any part of the world. As per the data provided by the FBI, a violent crime takes place in the United States of America, every 23.9 seconds. A violent crime includes murder, rape, kidnapping, and robbery (Bartol & Bartol, 2014).

There are many notable criminals in the history of the world who have become famous due to their unique criminal activities and behavioral patterns. Some became famous due to their murdering techniques, some due to their unique robbing style, and some due to their lavish lifestyle. One of such notorious criminals is John Gotti.

**Discussion**

John Gotti was a notorious gangster of Italian Descent, who became involved in a number of criminal activities. He was a prominent member of the Gambino crime family and later became its boss as well, after killing his own mentor and the former head of the Gambino crime family, Paul Castellano. Gotti immediately rose to fame as a notorious gangster not only in New York City but in the whole United States. He was not only famous for his sharp mind and smart criminal techniques but also for multiple other aspects of his personality. Although he was considered to be one of the most powerful and dangerous criminals in the history of the United States of America, he was also known for his outspoken personality and flamboyant style. His stylish personality and expensive dressing attracted and inspired many people. John Gotti was also a great attention seeker;’ he always wanted to be noted. He always wanted a huge fan following since his childhood days, which he got after he became famous for all his illegal activities in the country. Unlike many of his other fellows in the same filed, John Gotti always craved public attention, which is why he always made public appearances and remained in the news. He got many nicknames as well for his unique and stylish personality traits like "The Teflon Don", The Dapper Don", "Black John", "Johnny Boy", "Dark Horse", and "Black Horse".

Apart from his attention seeking behavior, John Gotti also had a very sharp mind. He knew all the criminal tactics and performed very well to fulfill all his dreams that he could not in his early age. According to his fellow and the former underboss in the Gambino crime family, Sammy Gravano, Gotti used to make almost $5 to 20 Million in a year during his period as the Gambino boss.

**The Criminal Behavior**

John Gotti was involved in a number of criminal activities during his criminal life. He was arrested thrice by the FBI but he always got out of the hands of the law. Only in his last arrest, he was sentenced to life imprisonment and a fine of $250000 without parole. He finally agreed to provide statements for his criminal activities and the FBI found the accurate and undeniable evidence against him. His arrest became possible due to the Gambino family’s Underboss Salvatore "Sammy the Bull" Gravano Corporation with the FBI. He was charged with various charges of hijacking, racketeering, extortion, pornography, prostitution, illegal gambling, book making, and drug trafficking.

**Subject’s Life History**

John Gotti was born as John Joseph Gotti Jr. on October 27, 1940. He was born in a poor family in the Bronx, New York. His parents, John Joseph Gotti Sr. and John Sr.'s wife Philomena, were born in the United States but his ancestors belonged to Italy. His father John Gotti Sr. was a day laborer by profession and a gambler. He used to loathe his father for not being able to provide enough for his family. He had 12 siblings and was the fifth among them. John Gotti Jr. started his criminal activities at a very early age when he became a member of New York Mafiosi at a tender age of 12. He also attempted to steal a cement mixer at the age of 14 but failed. He started bullying his fellow school mates and became notorious as a bully in his high school, Felon K. Lane High School. He was very non-serious about his education and dropped out of high school at the age of 16.

John Gotti Jr. was one of his five brothers who became a full-fledged member of the mafia at a very early age. He met his wife, Victoria DiGiorgio, in a dance bar in 1958 and the couple got married on March 6, 1962. They had 5 children together. Gotti tried to live a normal life and joined a coat factory as a presser in 1962, he also worked as an assistant truck driver, but could not stay away from the criminal life and soon returned back to it.

**Theories of Criminal Behavior**

Once the scholars and experts came to know about the various forms of criminal behaviors and the types of crimes that are committed by the criminals, they started to find various forms of explanations behind this kind of behavior. Sociologists, psychologists, and the personnel in legislature and law enforcement departments have long tried to analyze the possible reasons behind the deviant behavior of a person. This understanding of criminal behavior is also very necessary in order to control and stop those factors that contribute to the making of a criminal in society. In this attempt of finding a reason and explaining the behavior of a criminal, theorists have proposed multiple theories, so that these behaviors can be explained and rationalized.

**Differential Association Theory**

Differential Association Theory explains that criminal behavior is a learned pattern, which is leaned by a criminal through society. This theory puts focus on the close social circle and the relation of a criminal, that these factors contribute the most in making a person criminal. These factors include family, close friends and peers (Walters, 2015) this theory states that a criminal learns different techniques of crime, motives of crime and finds a rationale to the crime in an association of his or her social circle. Differential Association Theory finds its roots deep in sociology and was developed by Edwin Sunderland.

**Anomie or Strain Theory**

One of the most influential social deviance assertion, Strain or Anomie Theory was developed by Robert Merton. Merton explained that crime is neither a learned pattern, nor it is an inherited trait, but it is a necessary and integral part of society. He was of the view that for a society to make progress and achieve stability it is very much essential that the crime occurs in a society (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2017). Robert Merton also argued that it is the social structure, that creates criminals, especially the pressure of achieving the big American Dream and the portrayal of achieving a happy and financially stable social status, pushes the people towards illegal and deviant paths.

**Theoretical Application to the Subject’s Life History**

There are many theories that can be used to explain the behavior of the chosen criminal subject, John Gotti, but two theories (Hagan & Daigle, 2018), Deferential Association Theory and the Strain Theory or Anomie Theory have been found as the closest explanation of the subjects’ s behavior. Both these theories have been found out to be fitting perfectly in the context of the explanation of John Gotti's criminal behavior.

The Differential Association Theory can be used to explain John Gotti’s criminal behavior in a way that he learned his criminal techniques motives from his close social circle (just like explained by the theory). His brothers were already involved in mafia activities and were associated with the Gambino mafia family. He learned the techniques of robbery, extortion, murder from his very own brothers and the art of gambling was taught to him by his father, who was a regular gambler. He indulged in criminal activities at a tender age of 12, where he formally joined a mafia gang in his locality. In addition to all this, he indulged in bullying and teasing other fellow students in his school along with other students.

The Differential Association Theory can also be used in explaining the thought process of the notorious gangster. John Gotti was always obsessed with his social status. His life history proves that he led a much-ignored life in his childhood. He always wanted to have prominent social status in society and wanted to be recognized. His this desire led him to join the Gambino Family, which promised a good career and a high class in the society.

The second proposed theory, in this respect, to explain John Gotti’s behavior is the Strain Theory or the Anomie Theory. It can be clearly seen that John Gotti was born in a very poor family and his family lived from hand to mouth. His father was a day laborer and used to spend all his money on gambling activities. These habits led to hatred towards his father from this side of John Gotti and he vowed never to be like him. He used to watch the rich and elite class of society.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that John Gotti’s criminal behavior was majorly due to his social circle and the pressure of society in which he was living. No criminal ever deviates from the right path without any reason or motive, and same happened in the case of John Gotti Jr. As he was born in a poor family, he used to hate his financial status and wanted to be rich. He remained devoid of many luxuries and even the necessities of life, which created a gap in his life. Due to this gap, he always longed for the necessities that other people in the society were enjoying. This gap and longing led him to find shortcuts to becoming rich and powerful. He deviated from the right path and adopted shortcuts for the fulfillment of his dreams. John Gotti’s Criminal behavior and illegal activities can be explained precisely in the light of tow sociological and criminal theories, Differential Association Theory and the Strain or Anomie Theory.

**References**

Bartol, A. M., & Bartol, C. R. (2014). *Criminal behavior: A psychological approach*. Boston: Pearson, c2014. xxiii, 644 pages: illustrations; 24 cm..

Hagan, F. E., & Daigle, L. E. (2018). *Introduction to Criminology: Theories, methods, and criminal behavior*. Sage Publications.

Lilly, J. R., Cullen, F. T., & Ball, R. A. (2018). *Criminological theory: Context and consequences*. Sage publications.

Messner, S. F., & Rosenfeld, R. (2017). The present and future of institutional-anomie theory. In *Taking Stock* (pp. 127-148). Routledge.

Walters, G. D. (2015). Proactive criminal thinking and the transmission of differential association: A cross-lagged multi-wave path analysis. *Criminal justice and behavior*, *42*(11), 1128-1144.