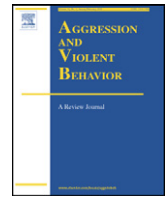




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

# Aggression and Violent Behavior



## A psychological and developmental profile of sexual murderers: A systematic review



Jonathan James <sup>a,\*</sup>, Jean Proulx <sup>a,b,c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Criminology, University of Montreal, Canada

<sup>b</sup> Institut Philippe-Pinel, Montreal, Canada

<sup>c</sup> International Center for Comparative Criminology, Montreal, Canada

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 16 January 2014

Received in revised form 23 July 2014

Accepted 6 August 2014

Available online 14 August 2014

#### Keywords:

Sexual murderers

Serial

Nonserial

Sadism

Antisociality

Anger

### ABSTRACT

The goal of this current systematic review is to identify the main characteristics of sexual murderers and the areas in which further research is warranted. It analyzes detailed data on 1836 sexual murderers (serial sexual murderers = 176; nonserial sexual murderers = 1660) taken from 45 empirical descriptive studies carried out between 1985 and 2013. In order to better characterise serial sexual murderers (SSMs) and nonserial sexual murderers (NSMs), three categories of variables were established: developmental variables; adult life and criminal career variables; and psychopathological variables. Characteristics of different types of sexual murderers were identified. Sexuality and sadism are the key features of SSMs. They are socially isolated, rejected, and humiliated, and take refuge in compulsive masturbation in paraphilias, which compensate for the poverty of their emotional, relational, and sexual lives. NSMs are polymorphic criminals who are easily angered when their immediate needs are not met. They adopt a victim stance, and sexual murder is a way of exacting vengeance and an outlet for their anger.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### Contents

1.	Introduction . . . . .	593
1.1.	The depiction of sexual murderers in the media . . . . .	593
1.2.	Definitions of sexual homicide . . . . .	593
1.3.	Epidemiology of sexual homicide . . . . .	593
1.4.	Evolution of research on sexual murderers . . . . .	594
2.	Method . . . . .	594
2.1.	Data sources . . . . .	594
2.2.	Study selection . . . . .	594
2.2.1.	Inclusion criteria . . . . .	594
2.2.2.	Exclusion criteria . . . . .	595
2.3.	Data extraction and assessment of study quality . . . . .	598
2.4.	Data summary and dissemination . . . . .	598
3.	Results . . . . .	598
3.1.	Developmental characteristics of sexual murderers . . . . .	598
3.1.1.	Violent behaviors during childhood . . . . .	598
3.1.2.	Nonviolent behaviors and internal problems during childhood . . . . .	598
3.1.3.	Evolution of behavioral and internal problems during adolescence . . . . .	598
3.1.4.	Juvenile victimization . . . . .	598
3.1.5.	Family environment . . . . .	598
3.2.	Characteristics of adult life and criminal career . . . . .	598
3.2.1.	Violent behaviors . . . . .	600
3.2.2.	Nonviolent behaviors and internal problems . . . . .	600
3.2.3.	Sexuality . . . . .	600

\* Corresponding author at: School of Criminology, University of Montreal, P.O. Box 6128, Downtown Station, Montreal, Quebec H3C 3J7, Canada.  
E-mail address: jonathan.james@umontreal.ca (J. James).

3.2.4.	Social interaction and occupation	600
3.2.5.	Criminal career	600
3.3.	Psychopathology of sexual murderers	600
3.3.1.	IQ	600
3.3.2.	Axis I disorders	600
3.3.3.	Axis II disorders	600
3.3.4.	Paraphilias	602
4.	Discussion	602
4.1.	Profile of serial sexual murderers	604
4.2.	Profile of nonserial sexual murderers	604
5.	Conclusion	605
	References	605

*A drama unfolded yesterday morning in Montreal. Jessica Bailey, a 32-year-old woman, was found savagely killed and mutilated in the woods of Parc Jean-Drapeau. The inspector in charge of the investigation reported that the police found restraints used to immobilize the victim, as well as a complex network of ropes hanging from the trees. The face of the victim bore several shallow and non-lethal knife wounds. The cause of death was suffocation. Preliminary findings indicate that the victim suffered various forms of sexual violence. Parc Jean-Drapeau is popular with tourists and athletes. This horrible crime has sowed fear in Montrealers, and raises memories of a similar series of murders in the early 2000s. Elisabeth Lindley and Carolanne Lapointe, 35 and 29 years old, were found raped and tortured in similar circumstances. No evidence has ever surfaced that allowed identification of those responsible.*

A hypothetical newspaper article that is representative of those published about sexual murder.

### 1. Introduction

Despite their rarity, sexual murderers attract the attention of both the scientific community and the general public. Research on sexual murderers initially focused on crime scenes, especially those suggesting sadistic behaviors, and on serial sexual murderers (Brittain, 1970; Krafft-Ebing, 1886/1965; MacCulloch, Snowden, Wood, & Mills, 1983; Ressler, Burgess, & Douglas, 1988). The description of the sadistic elements of sexual homicide in the media has elicited fear and fascination in the public.

#### 1.1. The depiction of sexual murderers in the media

The media's disproportionate coverage of serial sexual murderers has led to them being perceived as the prototypical sexual murderers. According to Hickey (2012), between 1990 and 1999, there were 23 films involving a serial sexual murderer, but since the early 2000s that number has ballooned to 270. The increase in the number of television series depicting sexual murderers (e.g., *Crime Scene Investigation*, *Criminal Minds*) is another indicator of the public's fascination with sexual and violent crimes.

A recent example of the public's interest in morbid content is the international fascination with the video depicting the sexual homicide committed by Luka Rocco Magnotta, a mixture of cannibalism, necrophilia, and exhibitionism. While the public previously had to rely on the traditional media, the new communication technologies have allowed even readier access to violent content. In 2013, interviews with serial murderers (Aileen Wuornos, Jeffrey Dahmer, Richard Kuklinski, John Hughes, Richard Ramirez) were viewed on the Internet more than 2 million times on average. Conversely, almost half of sexual

murderers follow their crimes in the media (Ressler, Burgess, Douglas, Hartman, & D'Agostino, 1986), and 83.0% keep newspaper clippings (Ressler et al., 1988).

The significant media coverage of sexual murderers feeds the perception that they lurk on every street corner. In the scientific literature, this perception can be seen in the choice of article titles, such as Pistorius (1997) "The Boy Next Door Syndrome in Serial Killers" (*Le Syndrôme du Garçon d'à coté chez les tueurs en série*). Despite scientific research on sexual murderers, several myths persist about them. Thus, the media typically describe sexual murderers as intelligent, manipulative, methodical, and sadistic individuals who attack their victims during their daily activities (e.g., jogging).

Despite the complexity and length of investigations of sexual homicides, the mean clearance rate is 75.0% (Roberts & Grossman, 1993). Many countries have established specialised units to investigate violent crimes: Behavioral Analysis Units (BAUs) in the United States, the Département des Sciences du Comportement (DSC) in France, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) in Great Britain, the Behavioural Sciences Branch (BSB) in Canada, and the Operative Fallanalyse (OFA) in Germany.

#### 1.2. Definitions of sexual homicide

In the countries in which sexual homicide has been most extensively studied (United States, Canada, Germany, England) the crime has no distinct judicial status—the sexual element is considered an aggravating circumstance of the homicide. Detecting the sexual nature of homicides is not a priority in police investigations. According to the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a sexual homicide is defined by the presence of at least one of the following characteristics:

victim attire or lack of attire; exposure of the sexual parts of the victim's body; sexual positioning of the victim's body; insertion of foreign objects into the victim's body cavities; evidence of sexual intercourse (oral, anal, vaginal); and evidence of substitute sexual activity, interest, or sadistic fantasy (Ressler et al., 1988, p. xiii).

Serial sexual murderers are characterised by "three or more separate events with an emotional cooling-off period between homicides. This type of killer usually premeditates his crimes, often fantasizing and planning the murder in every aspect" (Ressler et al., 1988, p. 139). Although 60.0% of serial murderers are sexual murderers (Geberth, 1995), only 2.0% of sexual murderers are serial murderers (Proulx, Bearegard, Cusson, & Nicole, 2007).

#### 1.3. Epidemiology of sexual homicide

Sexual homicide is a rare phenomenon. Furthermore, in North America, the proportion of homicides that are sexual has been

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/94593>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/94593>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)