The Sexually Sadistic Serial Killer

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Abstract

This article explores characteristics and crime scene behavior of 20 sexually sadistic serial murderers. The pairing of character pathology with paraphilic arousal to the control and degradation of others is examined as it manifests itself in their murders. Commonalities across murders and across murderers are highlighted, i.e., the execution of murders that are well-planned, the use of preselected locations, captivity, a variety of painful sexual acts, sexual bondage, intentional torture, and death by means of strangulation and stabbing.

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Known famously as history’s most sadistic killer, Carl Panzram spent most of his life behind bars because of his criminal nature. Like many other serial killers in the past, Panzram too did not have a stable upbringing. Born to John and Matilda Panzram, Carl was raised on a farm along with five of his other brothers and sisters. When he was 8 and already drowning in poverty, his father abandoned them, a move that left a life-long scar on Carl. 

Sadistic Fantasy
All sexual acts and sexual crimes begin with fantasy. However, in contrast with normal sexual fantasies, those of the sexual sadist center on domination, control, humiliation, pain, injury, and violence, or a combination of these themes, as a means to elicit suffering. As the fantasies of the sexual sadist vary, so does the degree of violence. The fantasies discerned from the personal records of offenders are complex, elaborate, and involve detailed scenarios that include specific methods of capture and control, location, scripts to be followed by the victim, sequence of sexual... The worst type of sadists are sadistic serial killers. Dr. Schurman-Kauflin writes in her 2005 book “Vulture: Profiling Sadistic Serial Killers,” that sadistic serial killers spend their entire lives fantasizing about and creating new ways to make a person suffer. They live for causing damage and getting away with it. It is the theory of this paper that the ego of the adult female sexually sadistic serial killer has been so severely damaged that she no longer had a conscious (superego), which allowed her sexual urges (id) to completely take control. Her sense of right and wrong was clouded, disabling her to formulate judgment that was socially acceptable.