



I21 Power Fantasies of a Serial Sexual Offender

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After attending this presentation, attendees will compare their knowledge regarding sexual offenders' "modus operandi" with other kinds of scientific experiences.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by explaining sexual offenders' behavior, their criminal and psychological profile, the power of their fantasies, and the meaning of their assaults.

Between September 2002 and November 2005, in two small southern Italian towns several miles apart, nineteen very similar sexual assault charges were filed by young women.

In all cases the following was reported: The victims were young women who were returning alone to apartment buildings located in the outskirts of the town. The aggressor followed them in as they entered the building, then silently approached while taking hold of the victim from behind. The aggressor held them by the hair and threatened them with either a knife to the throat or a gun (toy) to the temple, while whispering to remain silent as he caressed their genital areas.

In only one case was there sexual intercourse with a victim who fearing harm would be brought against her, gave herself to the aggressor after having undressed by herself in a field near the apartment building.

The aggressor vanished at any resistance by the woman. The aggressor did not use brute force or behavior. Although all of the women reported not seeing the aggressor's face, all reported the aggressor being young and acting gently.

All the acts took place between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

A 38-year-old man married with two children and an attendant for a private clinic was arrested for the charges of sexual assault. When arrested the man admitted not only to the charges but added an additional ten victims that had never been reported in the same towns. He explained that after leaving work he regularly took a walk through the outskirts of town in the hope of finding a suitable female victim leaving his car in the neighborhood for quick escape.

Medical-psychiatric observations of the subject showed narcissism traits in his personality, dissatisfaction in rapport with women, and problematic inter-relational skills. On a clinical level it was found that he suffered from depression, relational anxiousness, and impulsivity. The clinical diagnosis included SCID P and II, BECK AT scale (score: 37), MMPI-2, Rorschach and Barrat Impulsivness Scale (score: 78). The PCL-R test by Hare (result: <20) excluded any psychopathy.

In regards to the reasons behind the actions, the subject spoke of gratification prior to the assault linked to predatory behavior, in the idea of choosing a victim and having her under his power. The sexual excitement was more mental than physical in light of the fact that he never orgasmed with any of the women. He also expressed disappointment in the one sexual encounter he had.

What is unique about this case is that although responding to the motivational profile of 'Power Rape' by Groth, the subject used power fantasies brought on through the assaults for arousing himself and consummating the sexual act later at home with his wife. The hypothesis, which finds an almost concrete demonstration in this case, is that in this type of rapist, sexual abuse is none other than violence perpetrated through a sexual act. The man 'uses' this violence – which serves to charge him psychologically and give him power – to sustain a sexual rapport with other women at a later time. He looks for power situations which can compensate his belief of impotence, and then uses them as 'realistic fantasies' which are utilized while having sex with his wife or during masturbation.

The feelings of impotence and inadequacy were in this case fed not only by a self belief that he had a small penis, but also through physical problems; since the age of fifteen he was an insulin dependent diabetic who recently had been suffering erectile dysfunctions.

The underpinning problems were connected to a need to reinforce a weak "Self", and a fear regarding sexual intercourse when the subject's background became apparent; at the age of 20 he had not yet had any sexual experiences. Once enrolled in the Police Force, he assaulted a young woman with his service pistol, attempting to rape her but without successful penetration, despite the desire to do so. Once identified, he confessed to the charges and was convicted. However, once released he married and lived a normal life.

Serial Sexual Assault, Sexual Fantasies, Power Fantasies