Sex offenders of the elderly: Classification by motive, typology, and predictors of severity of crime ☆

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Abstract

A sample of 77 convicted sex offenders of elderly victims was classified by severity of and motivation for the crime. The opportunistic and non-sadistic rapists committed the lowest level crimes of no penetration. Offenders classified as pervasive anger and vindictive had the highest severity of crime scores and committed the full range of crimes from no penetration to multiple rapes and murders. Although the sample and power were small for this study, the predicting factors by severity of crime were expressive aggression, mood state — anger, victim restrained, and offense planning. Continued study on gerontophilia is necessary to discern if this behavior constitutes a paraphilia.
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1. Sex offenders of the elderly: classification by motive, typology, and predictors of severity of crime

The rape or sexual assault of an elder is a felony. In some states, the sentence for the crime carries special sanctions because of the victim's advanced age. A common question that arises when describing elder rape victims is one that focuses on the offender's motive for committing such a heinous crime? We sought to answer this question by studying 77 convicted rapists of women aged 60 and older and interviewing 25 of them in prison. This paper will report on the characteristics of these men and their crimes, classify them using the Prentky and Knight (1991) MTC: 3R typology, and provide case examples of the subtypes.

2. Literature review

One of the few studies published on elder sexual abuse victims was a British study whereby the Nuffield Foundation sponsored a project in 2000 to Professors Olive Stevenson and Katherine Jeary at the Nottingham University School of Sociology and Social Policy. The researchers, over a 20-month period and using a qualitative research design, studied 52 cases involving 54 elder victims. Fifty-two unrelated abusers were examined as well. Two major findings concluded that minimal, if any, services were offered to elderly victims with respect to coming to terms with their traumatic experiences, and scant information was presented on understanding the motivations of offenders or identifying intervention protocols to reduce the possibility of their re-offending.

2.1. Theories of offending

Groth (1979) reviewed his clinical files of convicted sex offenders for sexual offenses where the victim was substantially older than the offender. He noted many offenders had difficulties in early adolescent adjustment, came from families with unstable parental relationships, and were inclined to show a lack of respect to the mother. The mothers were perceived (by the offenders) as highly-strung, overprotective, domineering or provocative.

Pollack's study in 1988 reported just the opposite findings from Groth. Pollack (1988), using study and control groups, observed no discernable differences in demographic details of marital, employment, psychiatric or criminal history or in childhood behavior problems or adjustment. However, both Groth and Pollack commented on the offender of an elderly victim being more likely to use brutality or a weapon in the offense. Safarik and Jarvis (2005) examined the sexual assault homicides of 128 women over the age of 60 (mean age = 77) using a scale measure to quantify the qualitative values of injury severity and found results similar to those of Groth and Pollack. Nearly half of the victims

sustained intentionally inflicted excessive injury. They also concluded that an inverse relationship existed between offender age and the level of inflicted violence.

This view of brutality, however, is not supported in the early descriptive studies on genital trauma of victims. Muram, Miller, and Cutler (1992) reviewed 53 elder cases compared to 53 younger victim cases. More injuries were found in the elder group (51%) compared with 13% of the younger group ($p < 0.003$). There was no observed significant difference found between the two groups in regard to type of assault or violence used during the assault. The authors concluded that the genital injury that was greater in the elderly women was due to the post-menopausal status of the genital anatomy rather than any offender associated factors.

Genital trauma is stated to be more evident in the postmenopausal sexually assaulted woman than it is in their younger counterparts (Cartwright, 1987). However, as with those 65 and younger, rape may occur without obvious injury (Cartwright & Moore, 1989). In one comparative study, medical and forensic records were reviewed between 1986–1991 from 129 women 50 years or older and 129 women from a comparison group ages 14–49 (Ramin, Satin, Stone, & Wendel, 1992). Trauma, in general, occurred in 67% of the older group and 71% in the younger group. Genital trauma was more common in older than younger victims (66 vs. 49%). Although forensic findings were similar in both groups, in the older group motile spermatozoa were seen only in those examined within 6 hours of the assault.

Ball (2005) identified two conceptual models emerging from the literature attempting to explain the motivation behind sexual abuse of the elderly. The first theory is based on sexual intent. In essence, the perpetrator is viewed as sexually deviant and the term "gerontophilia" is suggested. However, there has been no empirical study to support the view that most – or even a significant number of offenders have a sexual preference for elders. Neither the studies by Groth (1978) nor Pollack (1988) reported on the sexual preferences of their samples. Safarik, Jarvis, and Nussbaum (2002) identify the elderly females vulnerability and availability as the primary reason why offenders target them. Nevertheless, two of the six cases presented by Ball et al. (1992) did demonstrate gerontophilic tendencies.

A second model of sexual offending of the elderly is a variation of a psychodynamic interpretation of rape. Groth referred to this variation as "anger rape". In this type of rape, the offender offends as a way to direct feelings of rage onto the victim. The offense is not primarily a sexual act but one that occurs within a sexual context and where emotions of anger and control are exerted onto the victim. Groth continued to suggest that the object of the rage, the victim, represented an authority person who needed to be controlled, hurt and degraded. Pollack's (1988) study supports this view in that the offender is acting out motives of rage and sadistic intent rather than motives of sexual desire. Lanyon (1991) has suggested that the victim becomes a substitute for the original source of the offender's anger, often noted to be the offender's mother. Safarik et al. (2002) like Groth, Pollack, and Lanyon concluded that the offender is motivated by the need for power and control and not sexual desire, intentionally inflicts excessive and sadistic injury, and that many of these women serve as symbolic or surrogate victims.

Clinical studies of elder sexual abuse cases range between 2–7% of all reported sexual assaults. It is not uncommon for a woman over 60 to become a victim. Sexual offending against the elderly is not a new phenomenon as it has been recognized in psychiatry since Kraft-Ebing's (1886) writings. However, any link with a specific paraphilia remains unclear and poorly understood. A substantial amount of work is necessary to provide theoretical explanations for offender motivation.

3. Classification — an overview

Science has traditionally proceeded by simplifying complex, diverse domains of information. Simplification is typically achieved through a methodological process of assigning members of a large heterogeneous group to subgroups that possess common characteristics, thereby bringing some degree of order to diversity. The science of classification ("taxonomy") is fundamental to all science. The task is to uncover the laws and principles that underlie the optimal differentiation and reduce the domains into subgroups that have theoretically important similarities. The more heterogeneous the area of inquiry, the more critical classification is. The resulting subgroups or subtypes are not simply notational; they connect the content of science to the real world. One might argue, in fact, that classification reflects a normal cognitive process of integration and reduction. Through such a process of classification we make sense of our experiences. The process that helps us to apprehend our world at the sensory level is the same process that scientists use to order and simplify their world at the empirical level.

One of the few indisputable conclusions about sexual offenders is that they constitute a markedly heterogeneous group (Knight, Rosenberg, & Schneider, 1985). The childhood and developmental histories, adult competencies, and

criminal histories of sexual offenders differ considerably. The motives and patterns that characterize their criminal offenses also differ considerably. As such, it would be misleading, at the very least, to suggest that sex offenders have a single "profile," or that we can pronounce judgments about all sex offenders with any degree of accuracy (e.g., "sex offenders cannot be treated," or for that matter, "sex offenders can be treated"). Indeed, it would be equally misleading, not to mention erroneous, to suggest that there is a profile for all rapists or for all child molesters. Classification research reveals that rapists and child molesters are very heterogeneous and that each offender group may include a half dozen to a dozen discrete subtypes.

3.1. Usefulness of classification

There are a variety of potential areas of usefulness for valid taxonomic models of sexual offenders.

3.1.1. Criminal investigative analysis

In temporal order, the first relevant "event" is the crime itself. Thus, the first possible benefit of a classification system would be in aiding the apprehension of the offender through behavioral investigative profiling. Profiling, in its general application, involves the use of crime scene data to draw inferences about the offender in order to aid with apprehension. The use of a classification system introduces two stages into this process. Victim statements (assuming that there is a live victim) and crime scene data such as evidence found at the location of the offense, photographs of the scene, forensic reports, and witness statements are used to bootstrap a classification of the offender. Assuming that it is possible to estimate, with reasonable confidence, the offender's subtype, the profile of that subtype is then used to assist with apprehension.

3.1.2. Informing decisions within the criminal justice system

The second relevant "event," after the offender has been apprehended, involves the discretionary and dispositional decisions made by the criminal justice system. In this capacity, a valid classification system can indeed inform the many staff within the criminal justice system about issues such as recidivism risk, risk of violence, appropriateness for probation, custody level (i.e., security risk), etc. At point of consideration for parole or discharge from community-based treatment, risk decisions once again become important. This clearly is an area where classification could serve a very useful purpose. Although there has been relatively little research on validating a classification system for this specific purpose, recent predictive validity studies on two empirically derived taxonomies are promising.

3.1.3. Treatment planning

The third relevant "event" occurs either during incarceration or when the offender has been returned to the community via probation or parole. This event is treatment. Thus, the third possible benefit of a classification system would be to inform treatment planning and clinical decision-making (e.g., increasing the specificity and accuracy of treatment plans). To the extent that rehabilitation within the criminal justice system remains a goal and to the extent that limited resources require strict allocation, classification systems that can shed light on treatment planning will be very important.

3.1.4. Etiology

One of the most important aspects to understand about sexual offending is etiology. Classification systems can tell us something about the course of life events that led to the onset of sexual offenses. Indeed, it may be possible to discern the unique roots of each subtype (i.e., the path that led from childhood or adolescence to becoming a particular type of sexual offender). For example, the pattern of life events that led to an outcome of becoming a type 2 rapist might be, hypothetically, quite different from the pattern of life events that led to an outcome of becoming a type 4 rapist. Most empirical work to date has focused on the development of "path models" that predict taxonomic outcome from familial, childhood, and adolescent variables (e.g., Prentky, Knight, Rosenberg, & Lee, 1989; Rosenberg, Knight, Prentky, & Lee, 1988). These concurrent validity studies of current classification models have begun to shed light on the different life experiences that lead to different taxonomic outcomes (i.e., different subtypes).

Although classification of sexual offenders has a long history (Knight et al., 1985), it has been, essentially, a non-empirical, one. The only validated classification system for rapists' emerging from lengthy, programmatic research is MTC: R3 (Knight & Prentky, 1990). Although there is no strong theoretical basis for hypothesizing the taxonomic structure of rapists with elderly victims, there is some basis for speculation (Prentky, Cohen, & Seghorn, 1985).

3.2. MTC: R3 classification

The nine subtypes that makeup the MTC: R3 classifications are grouped according to four primary motivational dimensions that comprise the model. These motivations include Opportunistic, Pervasive Anger, Sexual, and Vindictive. The Opportunistic (Types 1 & 2) are based on the level of social competence, Type 1 is High Social Competence and Type 2 is Low Social Competence; Pervasive Anger is Type 3; Sexual Motivation subtypes are based on the level of sadistic behavior (Sadistic/Overt is Type 4 and Muted/Sadistic is Type 5). The other Sexual subtypes are Nonsadistic Low Social Competence (Type 6) and Nonsadistic High Social Competence is Type 7. The last subgroup, labeled Vindictive, is further broken down by level of social competence; Vindictive/Low Social Competence is Type 8 and Vindictive/High Social Competence is Type 9. These four motivational factors are related to the enduring behavioral patterns that distinguish particular groups of offenders (Prentky & Knight, 1991). For the Opportunistic Rapists aggression is likely to be instrumental and display no evidence of pervasive anger or gratuitous violence. These offenses do not appear to be sexualized, or compulsive, and there is little evidence of premeditation. In the Type 2 (Opportunistic Low Social Competence) there is evidence of moderate impulsivity, a moderate level of antisocial behavior in adolescence and adulthood, and little evidence of premeditation. The Type 3 rapist (Pervasive Anger) is characterized by a high level of aggression or gratuitous violence found in the offense, along with a history of aggression directed toward men and women. The Sexual rapists as previously mentioned are broken down into two subtypes — Overt Sadism (Type 4) and Muted Sadism (Type 5). Primarily a high level of aggression and gratuitous violence where there is a history of pervasive or generalized anger characterizes the Overt Sadist Rapist. The sexual offenses are marked by sadism, or a fusion of aggression with sexual arousal. In these cases there must be clear evidence of a connection between the sexual acts and the pain, suffering or humiliation of the victim. There is usually a history of other paraphilias and evidence of offense planning and premeditation. The Muted Sadistic-Type Rapist will display less violence and although impulsive, antisocial behavior may be present, although it is not a critical feature of this type. The sexual offenses are marked by sadism with a low level of violence and limited physical injury to the victims. The sexual act tends to be symbolic and non-injurious. The key difference between Overt and Muted is the relative absence of aggression (Knight & Prentky, 1990; Prentky & Knight, 1991).

4. Method

4.1. Sample

The methodology used to identify convicted offenders for interview was through national media surveillance of elder abuse cases. As cases were identified, press releases issued by the jurisdiction's district attorney via the Internet were reviewed whenever available. A convenience sample of 112 cases of elder sexual abuse was located in public domain newspaper and media reports. Tracking cases by offenders with multiple victims was useful in identifying repeat offenders. The full names and prison locations of inmates were obtained and matched to the state inmate locator for the inmate's number. The state central prison office verified the prison location and obtained the inmate's consent to be interviewed (Morgenbesser, Burgess, Boersma, & Myruski, 2006).

Out of 112 cases, 77 files had adequate data to be classified using MTC: R3 subtypes and 25 were interviewed in prison. There were two levels of institutional review, first by the Boston College IRB and second by the IRB of the research division of the state Department of Correction. All interviewees read and signed consent forms. The files were reviewed by two independent raters and classified by consensus using the MTC-R3 typology.

4.2. Typology and examples

4.2.1. Opportunistic

Opportunistic motive refers to an impulsive rapist type who shows little planning or preparation. He usually has a history of unsocialized behavior and the rape serves as an example of the degree to which he lacks interpersonal awareness. These rapists show no concern for the welfare or comfort of their victims. The rape is for immediate sexual gratification rather than the enactment of a highly developed fantasy or sexualized ritual. The rape is in the service of dominance and power. There were 10 offenders classified as Opportunistic. The Opportunistic type offender in this elder sample differed from other rapists with this classification in that 8 of the 10 offenders claimed not to have

penetrated the victim, but rather committed acts of fondling, kissing, and molestation. This classification is similar in the nature to the sexual act committed by some child molesters.

4.2.1.1. Case example 1. Mike has been convicted of sexually assaulting 4 women ages 74, 83, 50 and 77. He had a juvenile history of adjudication and was sent to a state home for boys at age 9 where he said he learned to fight and protect himself. He began using alcohol, cough syrup and glue as a teenager and after setting a house on fire was admitted to a psychiatric unit. There was a long history of sexual acts committed on him and by him as a youth. He joined the service at age 17 but continued his drug use and was discharged for going AWOL. At age 23 he married, moved away, and was drug-free for 4–5 years. After his wife became pregnant they returned to their original neighborhood after the wife told him her mother had a heart attack and needed her assistance. When Mike found out this was not true, he became angry and once again began using drugs. This is when he claimed the crimes against the elderly began.

Mike claimed that all the elderly women either looked like or reminded him of his mother-in-law. During the first rape, he was at a store parking lot and saw a woman with a flat tire. He reported, "Something clicked, especially the hair." The victim was heavy set like his mother-in-law. He changed her tire and conned a ride intending to rob her. The woman asked him not to hurt her and this, he said, "sexually aroused him." He forced her to perform oral sex while he was driving. He then tried to force her a second time but she resisted and tried to jump out of the car. After seeing a police car, he stopped and put the victim in the trunk of the car. After the crime he reportedly felt "gloom and doom" and did more drugs to relieve the feeling. He felt no empathy. He had learned from the first rape. During his second rape he flattened a tire and kidnapped the elderly woman. Oral assault was forced after anal sodomy. He used a weapon and threatened her. He broke into the house of a third victim and tried to force oral sex but she was unable to comply, so he anally penetrated her. The 4th victim was a neighbor that he planned only to scare. He wore a ski mask, but she kept pulling on it, so he hit and punched her before forcing her to perform oral sex after he sodomized her. He also tied up his victims.

The offenses listed in Mike's chart included contributing to the delinquency of a minor, 3 charges of possession, terroristic threats, 3 counts of kidnapping, and 3 counts of aggravated assault. His psychiatric diagnoses included Axis I: Amphetamine Dependency in Remission, Axis II: History of Antisocial Personality and Paraphilia NOS.

4.2.2. Pervasive Anger

A second classification in the MTC: R3 typology is termed Pervasive Anger. The degree of force used in this type of assault is excessive and gratuitous. The violence is an integrated component of the behavior even when the victim is compliant. Resistance from the victim is likely to increase the level of aggression where serious injury or death may occur. The rage is not sexualized suggesting that the assault is not fantasy-driven. The violence is a life-style characteristic that is directed toward males and females alike. The rape is but one feature in a history of unsocialized aggressive behavior noted across various social settings. There were 17 cases classified as Pervasive Anger type.

4.2.2.1. Case example 2. At age 22, Garth attended a party, met a girl, and raped her that same night. She was 13 years old; although he reportedly thought she was older. He was convicted and served 5 years in prison and was required to register as a sex offender. When released from prison at age 27, he felt angry and resentful toward the community because he felt ostracized. He was playing ball in a field one day and someone yelled, "You aren't supposed to have any contact with kids." He described feeling embarrassed and angry. Later that evening while getting drunk, he suggested to a woman they have sex. She rejected him. He then hitched a ride home during which time he reported thoughts of rape and murder, with an elderly victim. The reason for this decision was to incur the death penalty; feeling life was not worth living. He did not want the burden of killing himself but wanted to be dead. He reported seeing an elderly woman (age 83) and was introduced to her by his cousin. He had worked odd jobs for this woman and knew her door was unlocked since her daughter lived close by. He attempted to rape her, but was unsuccessful because he could not maintain an erection. She scratched, pushed and pulled his hair; he punched her in the ribs. He then put a pillow over her face but during the process felt guilty and stopped. In the dark, he stayed with her, apologized to her, and asked her not to report him. She then asked his name and he gave one of his previous fellow inmates. She said she would not report the rape in order to saver her life, and after he left she called the police. After being picked up by the police, they indicated they had hair and fiber evidence from the crime scene. He eventually confessed. He pled guilty to attempted aggravated assault and robbery and was sentenced 1–15 years. He said the rape was very dissatisfying, that he was just feeling angry.

4.2.3. Sexual

Sexualization in the MTC: R3 typology essentially refers to a high degree of preoccupation with gratifying one's sexual needs. Sexual preoccupation is typically evidenced by highly intrusive, recurrent sexual and rape fantasies, frequent use of pornography, reports of frequent uncontrollable sexual urges, use of a variety of "alternative" outlets for gratifying sexual needs (e.g., massage parlors, X-rated movies, sex clubs, strip bars), and engaging in other deviant sexual behaviors (paraphilias), such as voyeurism, exhibitionism, or fetishism. The sexual assaults of these offenders are often well planned, as evidenced by a clear, scripted sequence of events, possession of assault-related paraphernalia, and an apparent plan to procure the victim and elude apprehension after the assault. There were 31 cases classified as sexualized type.

4.2.3.1. Case example 3.
This case involves a 67-year-old grandmother who was found lying face down on her bed with her legs spread. Her face was wrapped with duct tape and she had been severely beaten. There were signs of forced entry into the home and evidence of a violent struggle. A scream mask was found on the floor that contained the victim's blood. No offender DNA found. The cause of death was determined to be strangulation.

In this case, detectives narrowed their suspect list to a young employee at the store where the victim worked. He was said to be sexually obsessed with the victim, that he would talk to other employees about her "backside" saying that he liked it. A search of his apartment revealed her panties found under his sofa, a large collection of pornography and videotapes of himself spliced into the scenes. He also had placed a hidden camera at work and had the films of many "backsides" of persons bending over. The 24-year-old man confessed to the murder, saying, "it was an accident". The prosecutor's theory was that the victim pulled off the mask and could then identify him so she was strangled. The offender had no prior juvenile or adult record.

The Sexual type is further subdivided into Sadistic and Non-sadistic subtypes. Both sadistic types show evidence of poor differentiation between sexual and aggressive drives, and a frequent co-occurrence of sexual and aggressive thoughts and fantasies. To be classified as an Overt-Sadistic rapist, an offender's behavior must reflect his intention to terrorize his victim by inflicting emotional or physical pain and to manifest a high level of expressive aggression. Moreover, since the defining feature is the synergistic relationship between sexual arousal and feelings of aggression, there must also be some evidence that the aggression either contributed to sexual arousal, or at least did not inhibit such arousal. Since the two feelings (sexual arousal and aggression) have equal ability to enhance or increase the other, the sexual acts may precede aggression or the aggression may precede the sexual acts. The cardinal feature, in either case, is the intertwining or "fusing" of the two feelings such that increases in one lead to increases in the other. As a group, overt-sadistic rapists appear to be angry, belligerent men, who, except for their sadism and the greater planning of their sexual assaults, look very similar to the pervasive anger rapists. There were 3 cases classified as Sadistic types.

4.2.3.2. Case example 4.
Joe, at age 19, broke into a woman's house that he had been watching. The victim was a 62-year-old woman, who awoke to the light being turned on, then a small pocketknife was placed to her throat and a hand covered her mouth. Joe admitted he then pulled down her pajamas and "shoved his hand into her vagina in a violent way." He grabbed her breasts and pinched the nipples telling her they were "nice titties." He hit her on the right breast and she cried. He then proceeded to rape her vaginally, anally and then orally. He also inserted the barrel of a gun into her rectum. He was arrested after fingerprints were linked to him. This was his first arrest for a sexual offense. As a juvenile, he was arrested for shoplifting, theft, robbery, and assault. He admitted to sadistic rape fantasies of both men and women. He described feeling "over-sexed." He admitted being aroused by watching people urinate and in the presence of children. He was eventually sentenced to 15 years in prison.

To be classified as a Muted/Sadistic type rapist, there must be evidence that either the victim's fear or discomfort, or the fantasy of violence, contributed to the offender's sexual arousal (or did not inhibit such arousal), and that the amount of physical force used in the sexual assault did not exceed what was necessary to gain victim compliance. Symbolic expressions of sadistic fantasy characterize these offenders, who may employ various forms of bondage or restraint, non-injurious insertion of foreign objects, and other sexual "aids," such as a lubricant or shaving cream. What is absent is the high level of expressive aggression that is clearly manifest in the Overt-Sadism type. In general, muted sadistic offenders, except for their sadistic fantasies and their slightly higher lifestyle impulsivity, resemble the high social competence, non-sadistic rapists.

4.2.3.3. Case example 5.
Pat, age 33, entered this country on a work visa and was employed at a local nursing home as a certified nursing assistant. He voluntarily confessed to police to sexually assaulting 11 women in the nursing home

although the sexual abuse was never discovered before his confession. He said the victims all had dementia and were "not aware of what was happening." However, the daughter of a 98-year-old victim said that looking back there were signs that something was wrong. Whenever the daughter was in the room and the aide came in, her mother looked frightened, as though she did not like him. The daughter believes her mother was threatened that she would be taken away if she reported this to authorities. The offender worked at the nursing home for 2 years.

Non-sadistic type. For the Sexual Non-sadistic type rapists, the thoughts and fantasies that are associated with their sexual assaults are devoid of the synergistic relationship between sex and aggression that characterizes the sadistic types. Indeed, these two rapist types are hypothesized to manifest less aggression than any of the other rapist types. If confronted with victim resistance, these offenders may flee rather than force the victim to comply. Their fantasies and behaviors reflect sexual arousal, distorted "male" cognitions about women and sexuality, feelings of social and sexual inadequacy, and have masculine self-image concerns. Compared to the other rapist types, these offenders have relatively few problems with impulse control in domains outside of sexual aggression.

4.2.3.4. Case example 6. A 45-year-old man, dubbed the "Naked Burglar" wore a mask but no clothes when breaking into the homes of an elderly woman. He reportedly would cut the screen; the phone wires, and then unlocked the door. He forced oral and vaginal penetration on his victims. One 91-year-old victim testified that he asked her if she was "enjoying it" and that he bet she "hadn't had it for a while." Before he left, the offender took the bed sheets with him; however, the victim took a washcloth, scrubbed her face and vaginal area (to collect evidence), and then went to a nearby store to phone the police. The man had been previously arrested for a peeping incident involving a couple in their hot tub. Evidence included a mask, gloves, a video camera, and house and car keys. His previous victim was 89 years old. This offender was sentenced to life in prison.

4.2.4. Vindictive motivation

The core feature and primary driving force behind the Vindictive type of rapist is anger at women. Unlike the Pervasive Anger rapist, women are the central and exclusive focus of the Vindictive rapist's anger. Their sexual assaults are marked by behaviors that are physically injurious and appear to be intended to degrade, demean, and humiliate their victims. The misogynistic anger evident in these assaults runs the gamut from verbal abuse to brutal murder. As noted, these offenders differ from pervasive anger rapists in that they show little or no evidence of anger towards men (e.g., instigating fights with or assaulting men).

Although there is a sexual component to their assaults, there is no evidence that their aggression is eroticized, as it is for the Sadistic types, and there is no evidence that they are preoccupied with sadistic fantasies. Indeed, the level of aggression in the sexual assault is often instrumental in achieving the primary aim of demeaning or humiliating the victim (e.g., forcing the victim to fellate the offender). Vindictive rapists also differ from both the Pervasive Anger and Overt Sadistic offenders in their relatively lower level of lifestyle impulsivity (i.e., they have relatively fewer problems with impulse control in other areas of their lives). There were 16 cases of Vindictive type offenders.

4.2.4.1. Case example 7

A police artist's sketch and tips from residents of a city housing project led to the arrest of Sam for the rape and murder of an 89-year-old woman. The victim was found badly beaten and tied to a bed; she had been choked with a scarf used to gag her. There were also multiple fractured ribs, fractured vertebrae and contusions to the head. It was unclear to the forensic pathologist if death was intentional. In his first attack, the offender, posing as an electrician, entered a 55-year-old woman's apartment, and raped her. On Valentine's Day a 62-year-old woman was raped after she opened her door to the offender who claimed to be a florist deliveryman, carrying flowers. Another victim reported the man followed her to her apartment from the elevator and then followed her inside when she unlocked her door. Sam had been paroled 10 years earlier for similar crimes. All victims were frail; Sam was 6 feet tall and weighed 220 pounds. He was sentenced 112 years in prison.

5. Data analysis

The sex offending crimes were clustered into categories of severity derived from the actions performed. They fell into five categories: no penetration, rape, aggregated rape, rapes and one murder, and multiple rapes and murders. Severity of crime was treated as the dependent variable in the multiple regression analyses and the related ANOVA.

Table 1
Models tested in regression analysis

Model	Independent variable tested
1	Expressive aggression
2	Expressive aggression
	Mood state — anger
3	Expressive aggression
	Mood state — anger
	Victim restrained
4	Expressive aggression
	Mood state — anger
	Victim restrained
	Offense planning

Existing motivational classifications do not directly address the type or severity of sex offenses committed. It would be valuable to identify factors that may help predict the severity of crimes by new or repeat sex offenders, given the high degree of heterogeneity already documented about sex offenders as a group. This study produced the first data to enable further investigation toward identification of such factors. It was hypothesized that one or more collected data variables may suggest correlations with the severity of crimes performed by subjects in the study. Factor analyses indicated the components to include in sequential models to test in regressions. SPSS Regression analysis was used to identify which factors, if any, bore any predictive relationship with the severity of crimes. The regressions for the dependent variable, severity of crimes, tested the models shown in Table 1 The models selected for factors of significance. ANOVA was used to analyze the significance of results of each model.

ANOVA was used to evaluate the different means for offender's age, expressive aggression, unsocialized behavior for both juvenile and adult, social competence, mood state, offense planning, use of weapon, victim's age, number of victims, and severity of crimes. Those with statistically significant differences were selected for further analysis. Motivational clusters based on the MTC:R3 classification were cross-tabulated in SPSS with expressive aggression, unsocialized behavior for both juvenile and adult, social competence, mood state — anger, and severity of crimes. Statistically significant differences were identified and SPSS cross tabulation was performed.

6. Results

6.1. Offender and victim characteristics

The offender age at time of offense included 10 teenagers (13%), 31 men in their 20's (40.3%), 22 men in their 30s (28.5%), 12 men in their 40s (15.6%) and one each in their 50s and 60s. Most of the assaults occurred in the home (54 or 70.1%). There were 17 (22.4%) assaults in a nursing home, and 5 (6.6%) in other locations. There was one case missing location.

In 47 (61.0%) of the cases, the victim did not know the offender (e.g., stranger category). However, on interview many of these offenders said they knew the victim from the neighborhood, the elder's daily pattern and that she lived alone. This suggests the victim was kept under surveillance prior to the assault. This observation is consistent with research by Safarik et al. (2002) in which the relationship, although categorized as stranger, in reality indicates

Table 2
Motivational clusters vs. expressive aggression

Motivational clusters	Expressive aggression		Total
	Low	High	
Opportunistic (1,2)	5	6	11
Pervasive anger (3)	1	14	15
Sexual (4,5,6,7)	27	7	34
Vindictive (8,9)	3	14	17
Total	36	41	77

Pearson's Chi Square: $F = 30.042$, df = 3, $p = .000$, Pearson's $r = .149$.

Table 3
Motivational clusters vs. unsocialized behavior — juvenile

Motivational clusters	Unsocialized behavior — juvenile		Total
	Absent	Present	
Opportunistic (1,2)	1	9	10
Pervasive anger (3)	1	14	15
Sexual (4,5,6,7)	11	10	21
Vindictive (8,9)	3	10	13
Total	16	43	59

Pearson's Chi Square: $F=11.545$, df$=3$, $p=.009$, Pearson's $r=-.252$.

something more and is categorized as a "relative stranger," that is, the offender usually knew of the victim and her living situation.

In 14 (18.2%) cases the offender was a caregiver, in 14 (18.2%) case the offender was an acquaintance of the elder and in 2 (2.6%) the offender was a family member.

Fifty-three (68.8%) of these men victimized only elderly women while 24 (31.2%) had victimized elders and younger aged women. There were 25 (32.5%) of the men who were incarcerated for one elder victim while 52 (67.5%) had two or more elderly victims at varying points in their criminal careers.

The victims' ages ranged from 60 to the 90s. There were 24 (31.2%) in their 60s, 24 (31.2%) victims in their 70s, 21 (27.3%) victims in their 80s and 8 (10.4%) victims in their 90s. The victim was restrained in 9 (11.7%) of the cases. The victim was injured and/or murdered in 48 (62.3%) of the cases. The offender used a weapon other than his hands or feet in 15 (19.5%) of the cases.

6.2. MTC: R3 subtypes

The sample of offenders was grouped into four subtypes. There were 34 (44.2%) in the sexualization (types 4, 5, 6, 7) class, 17 (22.1%) in the vindictive (types 8, 9) class, 15 (19.5%) in the anger class, 11 (14.3%) in the /opportunistic (types 1, 2) class.

As expected, the sexual motive offender was low in expressive aggression while the pervasive anger and vindictive offenders were high (Table 2). Offenders classified as opportunistic were represented about equally as low and high in expressive aggression.

Unsocialized behaviors as a juvenile and as an adult are shown in Tables 3 and 4. The majority of the opportunistic, pervasive anger, and vindictive classified offenders had unsocialized behavior as a juvenile (90.0%, 93.3%, and 76.9%, respectively). Sexually classified offenders were almost equally split between those with and without. A very high percentage of pervasive anger and vindictive classified offenders had unsocialized behavior as an adult (100% and 92.9%, respectively). Seventy-five percent of the opportunistic offenders had unsocialized behavior as an adult. Sexually motivated offenders were evenly distributed as to unsocialized behavior as an adult.

Table 5 shows the cross tabulation of mood state — anger with motivational classification of offenders. As expected, the pervasive anger had the majority of offenders with an angry mood state. Opportunistic and vindictive were about evenly spread between those with an angry mood state and those without, 54.5% with 45.5% without,

Table 4
Motivational clusters vs. unsocialized behavior — adult

Motivational clusters	Unsocialized behavior — adult		Total
	Absent	Present	
Opportunistic (1,2)	2	6	8
Pervasive anger (3)	0	14	14
Sexual (4,5,6,7)	12	12	24
Vindictive (8,9)	1	13	14
Total	15	45	60

Pearson's Chi Square: $F=15.048$, df$=3$, $p=.002$, Pearson's $r=-.090$.

Table 5
Motivational clusters vs. mood state — anger

Motivational clusters	Mood state — anger		Total
	Absent	Present	
Opportunistic (1,2)	6	5	11
Pervasive anger (3)	3	12	15
Sexual (4,5,6,7)	28	6	34
Vindictive (8,9)	8	9	17
Total	45	32	77

Pearson's Chi Square: $F=18.106$, df=3, $p=.000$, Pearson's $r=-.221$.

47.1% with and 52.9% without, respectively. Sexually motivated offenders were more likely not to display an angry mood state.

Table 6 shows opportunistic and sexual rapist types did not murder their victims. The sexually motivated rapists also committed the lowest level crimes of no penetration. The pervasive anger offender committed the full range of crimes from no penetration to multiple rapes and murders. The vindictive offenders committed crimes from a single rape to multiple rapes and murder. The data also suggest the mood state of the offender typed pervasive anger and vindictive triggers the impulse and behavior to commit rape and murder. These offenders have the highest severity of crime scores.

The sexualization variable is dominant in sexual offenders (types 4, 5, 6 and 7). The data suggest these offenders are predominately low in expressive aggression, predominately have an absence of anger, extend the severity of their crime no further than rape, and are equally distributed between absent or present juvenile and/or adult unsocialized behaviors.

6.3. Predictors of severity of crimes

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to test for significance the contributions of factors reported in Table 1 allocated to four models. The fourth step of the regression indicated that the four-factor model had the strongest results for predicting the severity of crimes. The predicting factors were expressive aggression, mood state — anger, victim restrained, and offense planning. Per Table 7, Model 1 results indicate that expressive aggression was a significant predictor ($R^2_{change}=31.2\%$) at $p<.01$. Model 4 reflected modest power to predict the severity of crimes.

All four models were significant at $p<.01$ in predicting the severity of crimes (Table 8).

The distribution of the severity of crime events modestly predicted is reported in Table 9; and the mean of the severity of crimes is shown in Table 10.

7. Policy and investigative implications

A practical question is how can this classification of rapists of elders and the predictors of the severity of such crimes be useful to investigators and policy makers in the criminal justice field? There are two answers to discuss: (1) motive in the escalation of rapists to sexual homicide and severity of crimes and (2) the forensic utility of classification of rapists of the elderly.

Table 6
Motivational clusters vs. severity of crimes

Motivational clusters	Severity of crimes					Total
	No penetration	Rape	Aggregated rape	Rapes+1 murder	Multiple rapes and murders	
Opportunistic (1,2)	1	7	3	0	0	11
Pervasive anger (3)	1	3	3	3	5	15
Sexual (4,5,6,7)	6	24	4	0	0	34
Vindictive (8,9)	0	3	7	6	1	17
Total	8	37	17	9	6	77

Pearson's Chi Square: $F=48.590$, df=12, $p=.000$, Pearson's $r=-.029$.

Table 7
Regression model summary [a]

Model	R	Rsquare	Adjusted Rsquare	Standarderror of the estimate	Change statistics				
					Rsquare change	Fchange	df1	df2	Sig.Fchange
1	.559 [b]	.312	.303	.902	.312	34.040	1	75	.000
2	.597 [c]	.356	.339	.878	.044	5.061	1	74	.027
3	.618 [d]	.382	.356	.867	.025	2.994	1	73	.088
4	.639 [e]	.408	.375	.854	.026	3.207	1	72	.078

[a] Dependent variable: severity of crimes.
[b] Predictors: (constant), expressive aggression.
[c] Predictors: (constant), expressive aggression, mood state — anger.
[d] Predictors: (constant), expressive aggression, mood state — anger, victim restrained.
[e] Predictors: (constant), expressive aggression, mood state — anger, victim restrained, offense planning.

7.1. Motive and escalation in serial sexual homicide

FBI agents at the Behavioral Analysis Unit have conducted further work on serial sexual murderers, in particular on elderly women. Myers, Husted, Safarik, and O'Toole (2006) argue that authors who attribute the actions of serial sexual murderers to "anger" actually may have meant to use the terms "aggression" or "violence." These two terms are not synonymous with anger. Certainly the behaviors of serial sexual murderers toward their victims can be considered aggressive or violent. However, the commission of aggressive acts does not mean the offender was "angry."

Controversy exists in the literature and society regarding what motivates serial sexual killers to commit their crimes. Hypotheses range from the seeking of sexual gratification to the achievement of power and control to the expression of anger. Myers et al. (2006) argue that serial sexual murderers commit their crimes in pursuit of sadistic pleasure. The seeking of power and control over victims is believed to serve the two secondary purposes of heightening sexual arousal and ensuring victim presence for the crime. Anger is not considered a key component of these offenders' motivation due to its inhibitory physiological effect on sexual functioning. On the contrary, criminal investigations into serial sexual killings consistently reveal erotically charged crimes, with sexual motivation expressed either overtly or symbolically. While anger may be correlated with serial sexual homicide offenders, as it is with criminal offenders in general, it is not causative.

An offender's motive is the purpose or intent for his committing the crime. The motive of a crime, including a violent crime or series of crimes, is more objective and may be inferred from a crime scene. Offenders can have

Table 8
ANOVA [a]

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Predictors	Beta
1	Regression	27.690	1	27.690	34.040	.000 [b]	Expressive aggression	.559
	Residual	61.011	75	.813				
	Total	88.701	76					
2	Regression	31.596	2	15.798	20.472	.000 [c]	Expressive aggression	.446
	Residual	57.105	74	.772			Mood state — anger	.238
	Total	88.701	76					
3	Regression	33.846	3	11.282	15.014	.000 [d]	Expressive aggression	.403
	Residual	54.855	73	.751			Mood state — anger	.222
	Total	88.701	76				Victim restrained	.168
4	Regression	36.185	4	9.046	12.403	.000 [e]	Expressive aggression	.401
	Residual	52.516	72	.729			Mood state — anger	.203
	Total	88.701	76				Victim restrained	.185
							Offense planning	−.164

[a] Dependent variable: severity of crimes.
[b] Predictors: (constant), expressive aggression.
[c] Predictors: (constant), expressive aggression, mood state — anger.
[d] Predictors: (constant), expressive aggression, mood state — anger, victim restrained.
[e] Predictors: (constant), expressive aggression, mood state — anger, victim restrained, offense planning.

Table 9
Frequency of crimes by severity of event

Category number	Category of severity	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1	No penetration	8	10.4	10.4
2	Rape	37	48.1	58.4
3	Aggregated rape	17	22.1	80.5
4	Rapes and one murder	9	11.7	92.2
5	Multiple rapes and murders	6	7.8	100.0
	Total	77	100.0	

multiple motives for a single offense and in serial offenses motive(s) can evolve over time (Myers et al., 2006; Safarik, Jarvis, & Nussbaum, 2000). Motive, however, is not synonymous with the offender's affective or emotional state. Affective state–what the offender is feeling at the time of the crime–is much more difficult to discern. Despite this significant distinction, emotions are frequently identified as motives for crimes, particularly in violent crimes in which there is a great deal of violence and physical damage to the victim. In crimes involving extreme reactive violence, strong emotions, such as anger, rage, hatred, and hurt, likely underpin or fuel the offender's behavior (Safarik, 2006).

7.2. Investigative profiling and risk assessment

The utility of classification for forensic examiners is in two important domains: (a) investigative profiling, and (b) risk assessment.

7.2.1. Investigative criminal analysis

The taxonomic "profiling" of sex offenders essentially started with a deductive methodology using the systems first developed by Cohen and Groth in the 1960's and 1970's. The rapist system developed by Cohen and Seghorn, which was conceptually very similar to Groth's system, was put to empirical test by researchers at the Massachusetts Treatment Center in the 1980's. The current system for classifying rapists (MTC: R3) is the second major revision of the original Cohen/Seghorn system (cf. Knight & Prentky, 1990). MTC: R3 is the only known system to date that has been examined empirically with regard to efficacy in crime scene analysis.

One empirical study that applied a classification system (MTC: R3) to crime scene data used an FBI dataset on 116 rapists and a second dataset on 254 repetitive rapists incarcerated at the Massachusetts Treatment Center to predict MTC: R3 subtypes (Knight, Warren, Reboussin, & Soley, 1998). If we are to profile repetitive offenders with any degree of accuracy, we must demonstrate that the evidence and behaviors are more-or-less consistently observed across crimes. Knight and his colleagues looked at across-crime consistency, finding that a few variables, such as gun or rifle present, victim's clothing cut or slashed, excessive response to victim resistance, victim bound, how restraints were obtained, what the restraints were, how the victim was bound, and planning of the rape, had high consistency, while most of the other variables (31 of the 54 examined) had low to no consistency. In general, however, the composite scales had greater consistency than the individual items that comprised them.

Knight et al. (1998) also attempted to predict rapist classifications (MTC: R3) using crime scene variables that were determined to be very similar to those dimensions that had shown the greatest consistency in the FBI sample. The dimension of expressive aggression yielded the best overall predictive accuracy, followed by the dimensions of adult antisocial behavior and sadism, which were moderately accurate. The remaining dimensions of sexualization, compensatory behavior, pervasive anger and vindictiveness, were marginal or did not predict at all. In sum, the study by Knight and his colleagues suggested that crime scene variables were good predictors of expressive aggression and adult antisocial behavior (two dimensions in MTC: R3). Other dimensions (sadism, offense planning, and relationship with

Table 10
Mean of severity of crime events

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standarddeviation
Severity of crimes	77	1	5	2.58	1.080

victim) had high internal consistency within individual offences and good across-crime consistency, but did not work well at predicting classification. The necessary task is to identify better crime-scene indicators for those dimensions.

7.2.2. Informing CJS decisions

A parallel in elder abuse may exist between research findings in assessing child molesters and the strength of sexual preoccupation with children. On interview, many of the offenders described their sexual interest in an elder. Although there are various non-actuarial ways of assessing this variable (e.g., using penile plethysmography [PPG]), the most common method is to examine the strength or intensity of an offender's preoccupation with a specific age group as sexual objects (i.e., "fixation"). Strength of sexual preoccupation with children is repeatedly identified as a critical predictor of sexual recidivism (e.g., Hanson & Bussiere, 1998; Proulx et al., 1997). As noted, an offender's degree of preoccupation with children as sexual objects has often been measured using phallometry [PPG] to assess behaviorally the offender's sexual arousal to depictions of children of various ages. Although such a direct measure is appealing and sexual arousal patterns have been shown to predict sexual recidivism, it has its drawbacks, including the logistical problems of obtaining phallometric data, the cost of the assessment procedure, the invasiveness of the procedure, and the increased likelihood in forensic contexts that dissimulation may compromise the validity of the assessment.

Knight, Carter, and Prentky (1989) developed an archival measure of fixation for use with the classification of child molesters (MTC: CM3) that could serve as a reliable proxy for phallometric assessment. We suggest a parallel of this construct of fixation to assesses the strength of an offender's gerontophilic interest (i.e., the extent to which elders are a major focus of the offender's thoughts and attention) from archivally documented preoccupation with older adults as sexual interest or from the report of specific patterns of behaviors from which such preoccupation can be inferred.

7.2.3. Antisocial behavior and psychopathy

A second key taxonomic variable, both for child molesters and rapists, is impulsive, antisocial behavior. Abel, Becker, Murphy, and Flanagan (1981) found that child molesters with a high Pedophilic Aggression Index (psychophysiologically-assessed degree of arousal to scenes depicting aggressive sexual acts compared to scenes depicting nonaggressive sexual acts) were in fact the most dangerous (in terms of their actual behavior). In the risk factors study with child molesters, Prentky, Knight, and Lee (1997) noted that non-sexual, victim-involved offenses and violent offenses (of any sort) were best predicted by a history of impulsive, antisocial behavior. This factor of impulsive, antisocial behavior should be noted as a red flag in rapists of elders.

Although a high level of psychopathy is most certainly a marker for interpersonal violence, the relation between psychopathy and sexual deviance is less certain. Serin, Malcolm, Khanna, and Barbaree (1994) examined 65 sexual offenders, half rapists and half child molesters. The correlation between deviant sexual arousal assessed using the PPG, as psychopathy was significant although low ($r = .28$). The relation between deviant arousal and psychopathy was most apparent for extrafamilial child molesters. As Serin et al. (1994) pointed out, however, the mean scores on the PCL-R for all groups was quite low, well below the cutoff for psychopathy. It may well be the case that a clearer relationship between psychopathy and deviant sexual arousal becomes apparent at a higher level of psychopathy.

Brown and Forth (1997) divided 60 rapists into those with PCL-R scores of 30 or greater (21, 35% of the sample) and those with PCL-R scores of 29 or less (39, 65% of the sample). Brown and Forth found that psychopathy was not related to sexual offense history, age of onset of sexual offending, or victim injury. Psychopathy was positively (and strongly) related to prior nonsexual offenses, and negatively related to age of onset of general criminal activity, number of sexual victims, and the intensity of negative emotions experienced prior to sexual offenses. Nonpsychopaths were significantly more likely to report feeling alienated and stressed, whereas psychopaths were more likely to report feeling positive emotions.

Brown and Forth (1997) looked at the role of fantasy and other motivational precursors to committing violent sexual assault and compared 60 psychopathic and non-psychopathic rapists on personality and behavioral motivational forerunners to sexual assault. Notably, fantasy and prior imagined visualization of the crime played a function in the offender's ultimate decision to act out the violent sexual offense. Researchers concluded that the reoccurrence of deviant sexual fantasies, interpersonal stress, feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and rejection were risk factors for sexual recidivism in a sample of sexually motivated rapists," (p. 855). The team was careful to point out that emotional precursors vary significantly among different types of sexual offenders and required different treatment approaches for various types of rapists. The team tempered their findings with a caution that it may not be possible to address sufficiently the varied nature of offenders through categorization by psychopathic tendencies or criminal history.

Brown and Forth classified their rapists using the taxonomy (MTC: R3, Knight & Prentky, 1990). From a taxonomic perspective, psychopaths were twice as likely to have been classified as opportunistic (types 1/2) and pervasive anger (type 3) while sexual, nonsadistic rapists (types 6/7) were much more likely to be classified as nonpsychopathic. What Brown and Forth (1997) found was quite consistent with what Knight and colleagues (1998) found.

Knight and colleagues (1998) reviewed existing validity data on MTC: R3. The strongest support for predictive validity (i.e., recidivism) came from 4 dimensions: juvenile antisocial behavior, adult antisocial behavior, pervasive anger, and offense planning. We can reasonably infer that these four dimensions are critical risk predictors for rapists. Pervasive anger captures a long-standing pattern of undifferentiated, nonsexualized, gratuitous anger that often results in serious physical injury to the victims. All three dimensions – juvenile and adult antisocial behavior and pervasive anger – reflect chronic problems controlling aggression, and general problems controlling impulsivity in most domains of the offender's lives. Thus, these results are entirely consistent with many other studies supporting the robust predictive importance of impulsive antisocial lifestyle.

Again, from a taxonomic perspective, it is clear that rapists classified on MTC: R3 as opportunistic [types 1/2] and pervasive anger [type 3] would be at highest risk for reoffending, though not necessarily sexual reoffending. The role of offense planning broadens the scope of prediction from generic violence to include sexual crimes, and, once again, increases the potential utility of the taxonomy. We would infer that those subtypes with the highest degree of offense planning sadists [types 3/ 4] and sexual, non-sadistic [types 6/7], would be at highest risk for sexual recidivism.

In conclusion, classification is a rather odd tool. When applied properly, it can help to reveal profound insights into intractable problems. When applied improperly or misused, it can wreak havoc. In an article over three decades old on the "care and feeding of typologies," Hans Toch (1970) warned that, "Classifying people in life is a grim business which channelizes destinies and determines fate. A man becomes a category, is processed as a category, plays his assigned role, and lives up to the implications. Labeled irrational, he acts crazy. Catalogued dangerous, he becomes dangerous, or he stays behind bars," (p. 15). Hans Toch, who has spent much of his professional life attempting to classify violent people, reminds us that, "the game of labeling has consequences," and that, "Individuals can be jailed as representatives of a probable category,"(p. 18). Toch's message, which is as true today as it was over 30 years ago, is a sobering one. We must not turn back from the task of classification, because it is potentially a very powerful tool. However, we must adhere to rigor in development and utmost care in application. In a word, casual or careless assignment of individuals to categories is far worse than no assignment at all. And improper use of a system is far worse than no use at all.

Acknowledgment

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