

Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide: Clinical, Forensic, and Investigative Considerations

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Burglary, the third most common crime after larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft, is rarely the focus of forensic psychiatric study. While most burglaries are motivated simply by material gain, there is a subgroup of burglaries fueled by sexual dynamics. The authors differentiate two types of sexual burglaries: 1) fetish burglaries with overt sexual dynamics; and 2) voyeuristic burglaries, in which the sexual element is often covert and far more subtle. Many forensic practitioners have informally noted the relationship of burglaries to sexual homicide, but this relationship has not otherwise been studied in any detail. In this article, the incidence of (sexual) burglaries by 52 sexual murderers whom the authors evaluated, as well as the incidence in cases reported by others, is reported. Implications of these findings for forensic assessments and profiling of unidentified offenders are discussed.

Since the early 1990s, crime in general has declined in the United States, including the overall rates for burglary (Federal Bureau of Investigation: *Uniform Crime Reports*. Washington, DC: FBI, 1997). Nevertheless, a burglary is committed every 13 seconds, and the rates for burglaries committed by juveniles increased three percent between 1995 and 1996. Two of every three burglaries are residential, and contrary to popular belief, only

slightly more burglaries occurred during the day (51%) when, supposedly, the occupants would not be home. The vast majority of burglaries remain unsolved. Of the 2.5 million burglaries reported during 1996, there has been only a 14 percent clearance rate by law enforcement. However, despite the seriousness of the problem, there is, as Revitch¹ has pointed out, a noticeable dearth of publications on burglary in the forensic psychiatric literature.

Most crime, including burglary, is stimulated by social, situational, and environmental causes as opposed to being an outgrowth of psychogenesis.² Although most burglaries are committed for

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material gain, there are a group of burglars for whom material gain either plays a secondary role or is connected to emotions unrelated to what would seem to be the primary intent. Law enforcement has always recognized a subgroup of burglars: "Cat burglars burglarize dwelling units while the occupants are on the premises. These individuals differ in criminal technique from regular burglars who take special pain to make sure no one is at home during the time they are engaged in their crimes. . . . Cat burglars are thought to differ in psychological make-up from other burglars. . . . They are suspected of aberrant motives" (Ref. 3, p. 13).

The motivation for burglary may be conceived of as falling on a hypothetical spectrum.⁴ At one end of the spectrum is the professional or semiprofessional burglar with logical and obvious gain-oriented motives, and at the other end of the spectrum are the symbolic, maladaptive⁵ crimes that are ego-dystonic or outright bizarre. The more the offenses are compelling and without logic, the more likely they are sexually motivated.⁶ Banay⁷ believes that many crimes that are seemingly nonsexual, such as burglary, actually have hidden sexual forces lying at their root: "[some] burglars. . . tell of achieving orgasm at the moment of entering a window or breaking a locked door" (p. 94). Guttmacher⁸ also recognizes that many offenses legally viewed as nonsexual are actually sexual, the sexual basis remaining less obvious: "Burglary, assault, and cutting cases often have a sexual origin" (p. 382).

Burglaries and Sexual Aggression

In Guttmacher's⁸ group of 36 dangerous aggressive sexual offenders, only 1 had a history of exhibitionism, whereas 8 (22%) had a history of burglary. He concludes that "the basic personality structure of the burglar resembled that of the rapist far more closely than that of the exhibitionist. In fact, the legal term 'breaking and entering' bears just such a connotation" (p. 383). This finding is confirmed by Revitch's⁹ study of 43 men who had made serious attacks on women, including beating, choking, knifing, and nine murders. Here, only 3 offenders had a history of prior sexual offenses while 12 (28%) had a record of burglary. Four of the 12 (33%) combined burglary with assault on the female occupant. MacDonald¹⁰ also has described several cases of dangerous sex offenders with a history of burglaries escalating to rape and serious assault.

Burglaries and Sexual Homicide

The true incidence of sexual homicide and of burglaries with sexual dynamics remains unclear. The FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports* categorize assaults as sexual only if they have distinct manifestations of genitality (such as rape), whereas definite sex murders, even with such overt signs, are listed under murder and are not specified as an independent group. Similarly, even those burglaries with overt sexual dynamics are listed only as burglaries. Nevertheless, we believe that sexual burglaries are not an uncommon event, and we also agree with Ressler *et*

Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide

*al.*¹¹ that sexual murders occur more frequently than has been thought and are increasing in number.

Forensic clinicians have long observed that many sexual murderers often have a history of burglary. Table 1 lists and describes 14 notorious sexual murderers with a recorded history of burglaries. Unfortunately, the details of many of the burglaries were not explored, probably because they were seen as unrelated to the progression of crimes culminating in homicide. Ressler and his associates¹¹ found that at least 2 of the 36 sexual murderers in their FBI-sponsored study had committed sexual burglaries days or hours before they committed a sexual homicide. Unfortunately, these authors did not report the total number of burglaries in their case histories. Keppel¹² has described in considerable detail 11 cases of notorious serial sexual murderers whom he either studied or investigated as a profiler. Five of these 11 cases (45%) had a history of burglary. In Ressler and Shachtman's¹³ description of 19 serial sexual murderers, 6 (32%) had a history of burglary. Douglas and Olshaker¹⁴ similarly report on 16 sexual murderers of which 6 (38%) had a history of burglary.

Fetish Burglaries: Overt Sexual Dynamics

Burglaries with overt sexual dynamics have sometimes been referred to as fetish burglaries, defined by Ressler and Shachtman¹³ as "breaking and entering cases in which the items stolen or misused are articles of women's clothing, rather than jewelry or other items of marketable value; often, the burglars take

these for autoerotic purposes" (p. 8). A classic case of a fetish burglar with obvious sexual dynamics is that of William Heirens, famous for writing on the wall at a victim's home, "For Heaven's sakes catch me before I kill more, I cannot control myself." Heirens killed two women and beat a third—all in their apartments. He also killed a six-year-old child, dismembered her, and threw the various body parts in sewers and drains. At the time of these murders, hundreds of burglaries were reported in the local area. Heirens was finally apprehended after an attempted burglary. He had been arrested four years earlier at age 13 and then again at age 15 for burglary. He was eventually convicted of 25 burglaries but was suspected of numerous others. Heirens developed a fetish for female underwear at age nine. He began to steal and collect female underwear and then burglarized to obtain them. "He had sexual excitement or an erection at the sight of an open window at the place to be burglarized. Going through the window, he had an emission" (Ref. 15, p. 117). Heirens also defecated and urinated on some of the premises. The compulsion to burglarize was so strong that he struggled to contain it: "I resisted for about two hours, I tore sheets out of place and went into a sweat. . . . I went out to burglarize" (Ref. 15, p. 118).

von Krafft-Ebing¹⁶ found that bodily injury, robbery, and theft are sometimes dependent on fetishism and that "pathological fetishism may become the cause of crimes. . . . Such crimes and the peculiar manner in which they are performed—in which they differ very much

Table 1
Notorious Sexual Murderers Who Committed Burglaries

| Offender | Type of Burglary ^a | No. and Location of Murder ^b |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Jerome Brudos | Fetish burglary began at age 16; shoe and foot fetish | Murdered 4 women in his home and outside of home |
| Ted Bundy | Voyeurism in adolescence led to voyeuristic burglary and "cat" burglary | Murdered 30 to 40 women in and outside of their residences |
| Richard Trenton Chase ^c | Committed fetish burglary and soiled premises | Murdered 10 women in their homes; engaged in vampirism |
| Nathaniel Code | Numerous undescribed cat burglaries; ejaculated on premises | Murdered 8 victims in their homes |
| Albert DeSalvo ^c | Voyeurism began in adolescence, voyeuristic burglaries began during military service; ejaculated on premises | Murdered 13 women in their homes |
| Robert Hansen | Undescribed burglaries began in his early 20s | Murdered 4 prostitutes outside and inside residences |
| William Heirens ^c | Fetish burglary began at age 13; soiled premises by defecation and urination | Murdered 3 women in their homes; dismembered a child |
| Cleophus Prince ^c | Found guilty of 21 undescribed daytime cat burglaries | Murdered 6 women in their homes |
| Richard Ramirez | Voyeurism since childhood; numerous voyeuristic burglaries | Murdered 13 women and men, mostly in their homes |
| Monte Rissell | Numerous undescribed burglaries began at age 12 | Murdered 5 women, prostitutes and others, outside their homes |
| Danny Rolling | Voyeurism, voyeuristic burglaries, and regular burglaries | Murdered 5 women plus 3 men and a child, in their homes |
| George Russell ^c | Numerous undescribed burglaries began in early adolescence | Murdered 3 women, two in their homes, one outside |
| Arthur Shawcross | Numerous undescribed burglaries | Murdered 2 children and at least 11 prostitutes outside their residences |
| Timothy Spencer | Numerous undescribed burglaries began at age 14; considered "a cat-burglar extraordinaire" | Murdered 4 women in their homes |

^a In various reports of these cases, the details of the burglaries were not provided.

^b The number of victims usually represents the number the offender was legally charged with; in many cases this number underestimates the actual murders committed.

^c Apprehended while committing a burglary; subsequently charged with murder.

Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide

from common robbery or theft—always demand a medico-legal examination” (pp. 401–402). von Krafft-Ebing also noted that fetishists have an impulse to “injure the fetish—which represents an element of sadism toward the woman wearing the fetish” (p. 183). One such fetishist, a man who had a long-standing fixation on female underwear, was eventually executed for murder. The connection between fetishism and sadistic impulses has also been noted by Gillespie.¹⁷ Sometimes transvestitism is associated with fetish burglaries as cited in a previously reported case.⁶ Ripping and destroying female clothing and the relatively rare practice of soiling the premises (either by defecation, urination, or ejaculation) have been found mostly, but not exclusively, in fetish burglaries. Sargent¹⁸ believes that burglars who soil premises are expressing repressed rage directed at the occupants, who symbolize the burglar’s parents.

The following unusual case of fetish burglary leading to sexual murder is illustrative.

Case 1 At the time of the first murder, A.A. was receiving psychotherapy because of an arrest for a series of bizarre solo burglaries that he was unable to explain. He would break into homes primarily in search of women’s black leather apparel. If he could not find black leather, he stole some insignificant item such as toothpaste.

One morning while driving his car, A.A. noticed a woman in another car who was wearing black leather gloves. He followed her about 40 miles to her home. When she entered her residence, he waited a period of time, knocked on the

door, pushed his way in, and forced her into the back of the house. He murdered her by inflicting about 40 stab wounds and then took her black leather gloves. A.A. was also under suspicion for three other sexual murders and sexual burglaries occurring around the same time period and under similar circumstances. He was never charged with the latter offenses, although he revealed his guilt years later.

During some 20 years’ imprisonment, he was a model prisoner, obtaining a college degree in his chosen field. He was paroled to attend additional courses at a nearby college. While out on parole, he again began fetish burglaries in an attempt to steal black leather apparel, particularly gloves.

He became so excited by the sight of black leather that he assaulted seven women outside of their homes over a 10-day period. He stated, “The smell of a woman was something special; I thought I turned on the whole campus because they knew I was from prison and they wanted to hear my story.” He was stimulated by one woman who was carrying a black leather purse, by another wearing black leather gloves, and by yet another wearing a black leather coat. He hit all these women over the head multiple times with a pipe; their survival was described as miraculous. In another incident, he assaulted a woman, took off her leather shoes, and then gave them back to her. He was arrested for trying to break into a home about a week later, looking for black leather apparel.

The offender was returned to prison and served about 10 more years. He was paroled once again and began to break

into homes in an attempt to steal black leather articles. After several break-ins, he assaulted and seriously injured a woman occupant. He was arrested about a week later while attempting to burglarize yet another home.

At the time of the initial break-ins, prior to his first murder, he had just graduated from high school and had earned a college athletic scholarship. He had been recently married, was considered very popular, and seemed to his classmates to be the all-American boy. Throughout his life A.A. presented himself as neat, well groomed, and handsome; he had superior intelligence and great verbal fluency.

Voyeuristic Burglaries: Covert Sexual Dynamics

In voyeuristic burglaries, where voyeuristic impulses often stimulate and dominate the act, the sexual dynamics are not as obvious as in fetish burglary. Many voyeuristic burglars express a strong urge to look around, to inspect the drawers, and they often entertain a fantasy of seeing a naked woman. Frequently such offenders steal something of minimal value to help them rationalize why they are there. As one offender stated, "I'd feel stupid if I broke in and didn't take nothing." The relationship between voyeurism and aggression has been noted by Yalom,¹⁹ who reports eight cases of voyeurs who progressed to rape, assault, and fire-setting. Three of his cases involved burglary, with some severe aggressive acts. Fenichel²⁰ also found a connection between voyeurism and aggression: "Very often sadistic impulses are tied up with scopophilia: the individual wants to

see something to destroy it. . . . Often, looking itself is unconsciously thought of as a substitute for destroying" (p. 71). Some burglars who attack and murder the female occupants seem to support this assumption because of the voyeuristic component of such burglaries. One of the authors (E.R.) evaluated a 17-year-old boy who was arrested for masturbating while peeping through the window of a woman he followed home. Seven years later, he entered an apartment through a window and hit the sleeping woman on the head with a pipe. This incident occurred while he was on parole after serving a sentence for other voyeuristic acts. A clear connection between voyeurism, breaking and entering, and attacks on women is obvious in this case.

Albert DeSalvo, more commonly known as the Boston Strangler, had a history of voyeuristic burglaries before and during his killing of 13 women during an 18-month period. Voyeuristic impulses began in his adolescence when he would climb on the roofs of buildings "and watch couples go at it in their rooms" (Ref. 21, p. 64). His burglaries began while he was stationed in Germany during his military service. He described his powerful voyeuristic impulses during burglary as follows: "I looked for things but I did not know what I was looking for. . . . A lot of times, when I was in a place, I stood in the bedroom doorway and looked at a woman in bed asleep. . . but I didn't have the guts to do something to her" (p. 62). At the age of 29 he was apprehended for a burglary attempt and sentenced to two years in jail. One month after his release, he committed his first

Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide

murder. After many of his murders he would frantically search through the apartment, with an incredibly strong urge to look, unable to explain what he was looking for. The police noted the common denominator in all of the murder scenes: the apartments had been searched thoroughly, but nothing of significant value had been taken.²² DeSalvo was finally apprehended in the process of committing yet another burglary.

The following case illustrates a voyeuristic burglary, culminating in the sexual murder of two women and a brutal assault on a third.

Case 2 B.B. began breaking into homes at age 15. He stated, "I started breaking into homes. I don't know why I did it. I just started when I was sleeping one night. Something woke me up and told me to go out and rob a house." When he broke into a home, he said, "It was like a dream." He would burgle about once a week, particularly when it rained. When he was asked why he committed these burglaries, he replied, "I was looking for something, I guess for money; I really don't know why. I didn't need the money. After a while it was just to get into the houses to look. . . . I was looking for something, maybe money."

His voyeuristic burglaries, as well as additional acts of voyeurism, continued for almost 18 months, and then the first murder occurred. On the night of that first murder, B.B. woke up at about midnight in "somewhat of a dreamlike state." He laid out his burglar tools on his table and then climbed out of his bedroom window, which was on the second floor of his one-family house. For some reason, he

said, he wound up at the home of one of his teachers. He broke in, looking for "any money that might be lying around." Subsequently, he entered the female teacher's bedroom and strangled her, leaving her in the bed to die. He went home, slept well that night, and was unsure the next morning whether he had actually committed the murder. While in his teacher's home, he "wanted to look and then to leave but I couldn't go until I finished it; I had to kill her."

The brutal assault took place several weeks later. B.B. broke into another home, where he found a woman in her bedroom. He gagged her, tied her up, and dragged her down the stairs. He sexually assaulted her, twisting her breasts and inserting various objects, including a toothbrush, into her vagina. After torturing her for several hours, he drove her around in his car and dumped her in a local park.

The second murder, like the first, occurred after an additional series of burglaries. One evening he left his home, in the same ritualistic manner, and broke into another house in the neighborhood. No one was home, so B.B. waited. He watched television and ate some of the occupant's food, all the while looking throughout the house. When the 60-year-old female resident entered the house, he gagged her, abused her sexually, twisted her breasts, and drowned her in the bathtub.

One month later, while attempting to peep into a home in the same neighborhood where the murders occurred, B.B. was apprehended. He stated that he was unsure of his motivation for the burglaries, but he thinks it was to obtain money.

Table 2
Incidence of Burglary in Cases of Sexual Homicide

| Investigator | No. of Sexual Homicide Cases Reported | No. with History of Burglary | Percent with History of Burglary |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Keppel (12) | 11 | 5 | 45.5 |
| Ressler (13) | 19 | 6 | 31.5 |
| Douglas (14) | 16 | 6 | 37.5 |
| Schlesinger and Revitch | 52 | 22 | 42.3 |
| Totals | 98 | 39 | 39.2 |

Clearly this explanation is a mere rationalization and an attempt on his part to make some sense out of what to him was incomprehensible behavior. The relationship and escalation of voyeurism to voyeuristic burglary to sexual homicide is obvious in this case.

Clinical Descriptive Findings

Fifty-two individuals who committed a sexual homicide were identified by a retrospective review of our case files. Forty-seven of these offenders had been referred for a forensic evaluation following their arrest for murder. Three were evaluated after they had been convicted, as part of a psychiatric consultation to prison, and two were seen for evaluation after they had been arrested for burglary and had subsequently committed a sexual murder. The number of documented murder victims for each offender ranged from one to six (although a few offenders denied guilt and others spoke of committing additional murders for which they were not charged). The mean age of the offenders at the time of the evaluation was 23.6 years (age range 17 to 46 years).

Among the 52 offenders who committed a sexual murder, 22 (42.3%) had a

history of burglary, a finding similar to that of Keppel,¹² Ressler and Schactman,¹³ and Douglas and Olshaker¹⁴ (see Table 2 for a comparison). Two of our offenders were suspected of committing a series of burglaries but denied guilt. We retrospectively evaluated the burglaries and classified them as being: primarily fetish burglaries with overt sexual dynamics; primarily voyeuristic burglaries stimulated by the act of voyeurism; or regular burglaries motivated by material gain only. Seven offenders (31.8%) committed fetish burglaries, while 15 offenders (68.1%) were classified as voyeuristic burglars. Five of the voyeuristic burglars additionally committed what seemed to be some regular burglaries. Two of the fetish burglars also seemed to have a mixed voyeuristic component to some of their acts. None of our sample committed only gain-oriented regular burglaries. All offenders committed their burglaries alone.

There were 106 victims, with an age range of 12 to 92 years (mean age 31.7 years). Almost all of the victims were women (97.1%), although one offender killed three adolescent boys in addition to a woman. Fifty-seven women were mur-

Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide

Table 3
Characteristics and Behavior of Offenders and Victims

| Characteristic/Behavior | Offenders (N = 52) | | Victims (N = 106) | |
|--|--------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| Age Range, years | 17–46 | | 12–92 | |
| Mean Range, years | 23.6 | | 31.7 | |
| Sex | | | | |
| M | 52 | 100 | 3 | 2.9 |
| F | 0 | 0 | 103 | 97.1 |
| History of Burglary | 22 | 42.3 | | |
| Fetish burglary | 7 | 31.8 | | |
| Voyeuristic burglary | 15 | 68.1 | | |
| Murdered in Residence | | | 57 | 53.7 |
| Murdered by offenders with history of burglary | | | 44 | 77.1 |
| Murdered by offenders with history of fetish burglary | | | 14 | 31.8 |
| Murdered by offenders with history of voyeuristic burglary | | | 30 | 68.1 |

dered in their residences. Among these women, 44 (77.1%) were killed by an offender who had a history of burglary. Fourteen women (31.8%) were killed by an offender who committed fetish burglaries, while 30 (68.1%) were murdered by an offender with a history of voyeuristic burglaries. Some characteristics and behavior of our offenders and victims are presented in Table 3.

Forensic Considerations

The cases and clinical descriptive data presented show a clear relationship between burglaries and sexual homicide in slightly more than one-third of the cases. Fetishism often leads to stealing of the fetishistic object, then to burglary, and sometimes to assault or murder of the female occupant. Peeping may escalate to break-ins and, in some cases, to assault and murder. Some burglaries may initially impress the forensic clinician as offenses committed for gain, especially if

something of value is actually taken. However, in-depth examination of the offender's fantasies and motives—especially in cases of voyeuristic burglary, where the sexual dynamics are more covert—often reveals the symbolic nature of the act. Masturbatory fantasies and feelings of sexual arousal upon entry of a dwelling need to be explored, even in routine assessments of burglars. Sexually sadistic and aggressive fantasies are found in many cases of sexual burglary that end in gynocide.²³

Revitch and Schlesinger^{4,23} have elsewhere reported additional ominous signs, when seen in combination with sexual burglary, that have predictive significance for sexual homicide: expression of fear, hatred, or contempt of women; violence against animals, especially cats; moral preoccupation and moral guilt; confusion of sexual identity; and generalized misogynous emotions. An unhurried examination, bolstered by the use of

projective techniques, is needed to gain a complete and accurate understanding of the dynamics and prognosis of the burglar. For example, one of our cases revealed, only under the influence of intravenously injected sodium amytal, that he fantasized seeing a naked woman while breaking into homes.

Unfortunately, the sex offender laws in most jurisdictions classify sex offenders solely by the overt manifestations of the act. Many individuals who commit an offense that is sexual in nature may do so out of social, situational, or impulsive motives. These individuals may not truly be compulsive repetitive sex offenders whose offenses were fueled by sexual dynamics. Conversely, many overtly non-sexual offenses, such as arson and burglary, may be basically sexual but are never classified as such legally. The purely legal classification also ignores the issues of dangerousness, potential for repetition, and escalation of criminal behavior. An improperly classified sex offender (i.e., without a sexually driven compulsion) may be relatively innocuous, whereas a sexually motivated burglar might eventually commit a sexual homicide.

Some sexual burglars can be helped with treatment, as can some sexual offenders.²⁴ We previously reported the case of a 16-year-old who committed fetish burglaries, assaulted an adolescent female occupant in her home, defecated in her residence, and entertained daydreams of killing and stabbing girls.²⁵ He was treated by one of the authors (E.R.) for 5.5 years and made generally good progress. During a 16-year follow-up, he showed no further inclinations toward

burglarizing or acting out. Such cases, however, need to be followed for a considerable period of time, because we believe they always present an ongoing potential danger. For example, we evaluated several cases where very long periods (as much as 11 years) had intervened between burglaries, sexual aggression, and sexual murder.

Investigative Issues

For many years, law enforcement officers have used criminal investigative profiling techniques in an attempt to narrow the field of potential suspects.^{26, 27} Forensic psychiatrists and mental health clinicians are consulted regularly in the investigation of sexual murders, particularly serial cases. Because our exploratory study (combined with the findings of others) shows that about 40 percent of sexual murderers have a history of burglary, individuals with such a background should become prime suspects in an investigation. Liebert²⁸ notes that, in cases of sexual murder, "any suspect with a history of burglary or assault must be thoroughly investigated for a history which has either been distorted by the Court or inadequately investigated" (p. 198). In cases where a woman is killed in her residence, we have found that there is about a 77 percent chance that the offender has a history of sexual burglary. A recent study²⁹ of sexual assault occurring in the victim's home supports our findings. Additionally, many sexual murderers, such as Albert DeSalvo, Richard Chase, William Heirens, Cleophus Prince, George Russell, and Timothy Spencer, to name a few (see Table 1),

Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide

were apprehended not for committing a murder but for committing a burglary. Burglars must be examined thoroughly, especially if the burglary is a solo act, appears sexual in nature, and even if some items of value are taken, as is common in voyeuristic burglaries with covert, less obvious dynamics that are often not recognized.

Discussion

Burglary is the third most common crime, behind larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft (FBI *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1997). The vast majority of break-ins are committed for gain. Nevertheless, a number of burglaries are sexually motivated and are very important in the understanding and prediction of serious violent crime, particularly sexual homicide. The relationship of burglary to sexual murder has been informally noted by many investigators, but a study of the rates of burglary and sexual homicide has never been previously attempted. In fact, the significant lack of psychiatric study of the problem of burglary is quite remarkable.

Burglaries committed solo and under bizarre circumstances in which material gain is minimal or rationalized often have a strong sexual motivation. Fetish burglars frequently begin by stealing the fetishistic object and then progress to break-ins and in some cases to sexual assault or murder. In these cases, the sexual dynamics are overt, because the fetish item is typically female underwear or personal effects such as handkerchiefs, stockings, shoes, or gloves. In many burglaries, however, the sexual dynamics are covert and often missed. Here, the of-

fender is usually stimulated sexually through voyeurism. He begins with peeping, which is one step away from entering the premises and then assaulting or murdering the female occupant. In voyeuristic burglaries primarily, the offender may ultimately take some items to give a semblance of logic to his ego-dystonic behavior, which he does not fully understand. Infrequently, mostly in fetish burglaries, the premises are soiled. In our series of sexual burglars, about one-third were fetish burglars and two-thirds were voyeuristic.

A prospective and cooperative study of cases of sexual burglary and sexual homicide, by centers and individuals, needs to be undertaken to replicate the initial descriptive findings of our clinical investigation. A purely legal approach to the sexual burglar will not protect the public, deter the offender, or help in rehabilitation before the acts of burglary escalate to sexual assault or gynocide. Not every sexually motivated burglar will kill or seriously assault a woman, but the forensic psychiatrist needs to be aware of the ominous significance of sexual burglary and thoroughly evaluate such cases.

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