Stranger Danger: Analyzing Offender Behaviours Based on Victim Approach Tactics in Sexual Homicide

by

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Abstract

Perpetrators using a ruse in sexual homicide may experience delayed detection and provide the offender with an opportunity for a subsequent attempt if the initial effort fails. This study explores associations between victim characteristics and offender behaviours in sexual murderers targeting stranger victims using a "con" approach versus alternative methods (blitz or surprise). The results from the logistic regression revealed that "con" approach offenders had more male victims, targeted vulnerability, and displayed post-crime organization. Their crimes more often involved fellatio and lower rates of victim beating when compared to other approaches. The cluster analysis identified three groups: "Abandoners," "Relocators," and "Eclectic." "Abandoners" do not move the victim's body and sometimes use a con approach. "Relocators" always move the body and occasionally target vulnerability. "Eclectic" offenders target both genders, exhibit diverse behaviours, prey on vulnerability, almost half involve fellatio, and often use a con approach. The implications for investigations are discussed.

Keywords: Sexual Homicide; Crime Script; Manipulative Approaches; Stranger; Rational Choice.

Dedication

To my grandad, who guided me to places I thought impossible.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

Ted Bundy, an infamous figure in the realm of sexual homicides, gained notoriety as an American serial killer in the 1970s (McClellan, 2006). His case has attracted significant attention from various academic fields, including criminology, psychology, and forensic science (James, 2019; McClellan, 2006; Williams, 2020). Bundy's ability to charm and manipulate his victims is well-documented, often involving false pretenses to approach strangers under the guise of needing assistance or posing as an authority figure (Williams, 2020).

In an interview, Bundy described his approach to potential victims as a mental game, carefully observing and seeking opportunities to approach them and adapting his methods to effectively gain their trust (Michaud & Aynesworth, 2000; Williams, 2020). Bundy's methods of 'hunting' his victims are consistent with the literature relating to the approach used by sexual murderers (e.g., Dietz et al., 1990; Gerard et al., 2007; Keppel & Walter, 1999; Stefanska et al., 2015). However, not all potential victims are swayed by the ruse (Beauregard et al., 2007d; Douglas et al., 1992).

In one of the most comprehensive reviews of sexual homicide in the context of Canada, Beauregard and Martineau (2013) found that two out of five offenders who committed a sexual homicide between 1948 and 2010 used a con or ruse to initiate contact with victims (p. 1740). The researchers point out that almost half of the murderers possessed the skill to approach victims under false pretenses (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013).

Sexual homicides involving strangers pose a unique challenge to law enforcement due to the absence of typical investigative starting points, unlike cases involving known victims (Salfati & Canter, 1999). In those cases, investigators can often work outward from the victim's prior connections. In contrast, in stranger-perpetrated sexual homicides, there is a lack or absence of clear connections to their aggressor, making them exceptionally difficult to solve. The use of manipulative tactics can exacerbate the situation by establishing a foundation of deceit and trickery, which is intended to mislead the victim.

Identifying unique cues and patterns associated with the con approach can benefit law enforcement and the general public. Offenders who use this tactic can often seem unthreatening to victims and witnesses. By understanding how the offender gained access to the victim using deception in a stranger attack, investigators can assist in suspect identification, narrow down potential crime scenes, and work toward avoiding further incidents.

This study aims to provide informative insights into investigating sexual homicide cases involving offenders who use a con approach to initiate contact with victims who are strangers to them. Specifically, this research aims to answer the following research questions:

1. During the commission of sexual homicide, are there significant behavioural differences between those who employ a "con approach" and those who use alternative tactics (i.e., blitz or surprise) to approach stranger victims?
2. What specific behaviours and victim characteristics serve as significant predictors for an offender's choice between using a 'con approach' or alternative tactics in stranger-perpetrated sexual homicides?
3. Can distinct typologies or categories of stranger-perpetrated sexual homicides be identified based on predictive behaviours of offender approaches, and are these typologies statistically associated with the strategy employed by the offender?

A sample of single offender, non-serial sexual homicide cases in both Canada and France was examined, comparing the approaches used by offenders who initiate contact through a con, versus those who use other methods.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

2.1. Defining Sexual Homicide

Sexual homicides are a rare occurrence in the overall number of homicides. According to studies, sexual homicides account for only 1% of all homicides in the United States (Meloy, 2000), while in Canada, the percentage is higher at 4% (Roberts & Grossman, 1993). Dealing with such cases can be complex for investigators due to the infrequency, which may lead to a lack of experience and difficulty in solving them (Adhami & Browne, 1996, as cited in Greenall & Richardson, 2015; Dietz et al., 1990; Meloy, 2000).

Over time, various definitions have been proposed to standardize what constitutes a sexual homicide. One of the early definitions was put forth by Krafft-Ebing (1892), known as "lust-murder" (p. 62). He described these murders as having excessive mutilation beyond what is typically observed in assault cases, as well as additional acts of body mutilation or dismemberment (Krafft-Ebing, 1892). Krafft-Ebing's work was ahead of its time and recognized that perpetrators may differ significantly, including in their level of control, fantasies, and the extent to which they find the act of homicidal violence sexually arousing.

Not all homicide cases of sexual murder are necessarily intentional (Chopin & Beauregard, 2019; Krafft-Ebing, 1898,1965). There are instances in which the primary intention is to commit assault, with murder being an unintended or instrumental outcome (Chopin & Beauregard, 2019; Krafft-Ebing, 1898/1965). Krafft-Ebing's (1965) acknowledgment of the spectrum of motivations and behaviours in homicidal acts represented a significant step in the understanding and classification of sexual homicides. Although Krafft-Ebing's work laid the foundation for understanding the psychological underpinnings of certain types of sexual violence, the study of manipulative tactics and offender behaviour in a broader context became more prevalent in later criminological and psychological research.

Today, one of the most cited definitions is that which was proposed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). According to their definition, a homicide can be classified as sexual if at least one of the specified criteria is present at the crime scene (Ressler et al., 1988). The criteria include partial or complete nudity of the victim, exposed genitals, the victim's body being posed in a sexual position, objects inserted into body cavities, evidence of sexual intercourse, and signs of substitute sexual activity or sadistic fantasies (Ressler et al., 1986; Ressler et al., 1988).

In recent years, the definition of sexually motivated homicide provided by the FBI (Ressler et al., 1988) has been expanded to include several criteria that may not be present at the crime scene (Chan, 2015). The updated operational definition consists of an offender's confession or personal belongings (e.g., home computer and/or journal entries), which broadens the scope of what may be considered a sexually motivated homicide (Chan, 2015, p. 7). Although subsequent definitions and considerations have emerged (Chan & Heide, 2009; Chan, 2015; Kerr et al., 2013; Ressler et al., 1986; Ressler et al., 1988; Schlesinger, 2007), the presence of nudity remains a fundamental component.

2.2. Rational Choice

To understand the crime-commission process, the rational choice approach assumes human action to be logical, regardless of whether it is criminal (Cornish, 1993; Cornish & Clarke, 1994a). According to Cornish (1993), offenders go through a decision-making process based on self-interest. They do this by assessing the potential risks, effort, and rewards associated with different criminal activities before choosing the one that will offer them the highest return on investment for their time and energy (Chopin et al., 2020; Cornish, 1993; Cornish & Clarke, 1985; Cornish & Clarke, 1994a; Piquero, 2002).

The rational choice perspective is a widely applicable framework that can be used to analyze a broad range of criminal activities, including violent crimes (Beauregard et al., 2007b; Beauregard et al., 2007d; Chopin et al., 2020; Rossmo, 2000). Rather than focusing on *why* crimes occur, this approach emphasizes *how* they are committed (Piquero, 2002). Individuals involved in criminal behaviour are not fundamentally different from the rest of us in terms of their motivations; instead, their desires,

preferences, experiences, and motivations are continuously evolving and shaped by their surroundings, which can either encourage or discourage criminal activity (Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Cornish & Clarke, 1994a; Cornish & Clarke, 2008, p. 21). The decision-making process, although seemingly basic, is a crucial factor in how a crime unfolds as it reflects a certain degree of rationality on the perpetrator's part (Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Cornish & Clarke, 1994a; Cornish & Clarke, 2002). While some individuals may be more skilled at this process, understanding the actions throughout the crime helps to comprehend the case (Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Cornish & Clarke, 1994a).

The approach taken by offenders typically begins by selecting a victim, which may involve targeting a specific individual (Beech et al., 2005; Ressler, 1988) or choosing someone they perceive as accessible and worth the risk of approaching (Martineau & Beauregard, 2016; Quinet, 2011). In cases of adult sexual assault, perpetrators often target individuals whom they consider vulnerable and more accessible to access (Beauregard et al., 2007b).

Vulnerability resulting from factors such as lifestyle and disabilities can make someone a target, regardless of their gender. A study by Stermac et al. (2004) on male assault victims found that they frequently had high rates of vulnerabilities, including homelessness and physical, psychiatric, and cognitive disabilities. John Wayne Gacy, a notorious serial murderer from the 1970s in Chicago, serves as an example of an individual who followed this pattern.

Between 1972 and 1978, Gacy targeted, lured, and brutally murdered at least 33 young, vulnerable boys and men (James, 2019). Gacy admitted that he intentionally enticed his victims rather than using force, stating, "Understand this, everybody that ever came to my house, there was never a struggle, and nobody was ever forced into my house" (Rogers, 2021). Gacy's manipulative approach made him appear non-threatening and trustworthy, leading victims to enter his home despite him being a stranger. By taking them to a place he was familiar with, he was able to increase their vulnerability and exert greater control over the situation, making it easier for him to carry out his plans without any interference from them (for example, see Beauregard et al., 2007d; Michaud & Aynesworth, 2000; Williams, 2020).

In a study conducted by Beauregard et al. (2007), it was found that almost half of the serial sexual offenders (48%) preferred the "con approach." The study participants explained that using a ruse allowed them to gain access to their victims with minimal violence or distractions. However, as anticipated by the rational choice perspective, it is important to note that the decision to use one approach over another does not guarantee success. Approximately 28% of those interviewed needed to change their focus from their original target to another victim. According to the findings, the perpetrators adopt a planned and strategic approach, assessing the risks and benefits involved to determine the most appropriate method for achieving their objectives and targeting victims. Still, the context in which they operate might influence their decision-making process.

According to the rational choice theory, the approach phase of a criminal activity can differ based on the surrounding circumstances (Cornish & Clarke, 2008). This could account for the various techniques employed during the approach, such as those involving cons or ruses, which may vary between cases (Beauregard et al., 2007b; Keppell & Walter, 1999; Meloy, 2000). In South Africa, for example, serial murderers exploit the high unemployment rate by offering work opportunities to their victims (15.5%). In comparison, a smaller number target those involved in the sex trade (5.5%) (Salfati et al., 2015). During the pre-crime stage, offenders engage extensively with victims, often convincing them to follow to isolated locations where they comply in hopes of securing employment (Salfati et al., 2015). In North America, serial sexual murderers have a different selection when targeting vulnerable victims. They tend to focus on individuals who could be viewed as more accessible, such as hitchhikers or those involved in the sex trade (Martineau & Beauregard, 2016; Quinet, 2011). These differences between continents showcase the adaptable nature of offenders' decision-making processes and highlight the unique person-situation criminal interactions that vary from place to place (Beauregard et al., 2007b; Cornish, 1993).

Criminal behaviour is often shaped by situational factors instead of individual characteristics or predispositions (Cornish & Clarke, 2008, p.21). Chopin and Beauregard (2019) highlighted that even minor changes in a situation can significantly impact the course and outcomes of crimes. For instance, in a study by Beauregard et al. (2007b), it was pointed out that when offenders approach children further from their homes, they may resort to more forceful methods since it is difficult to persuade the victims to comply. This scenario exemplifies how humans adapt to situations and how

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criminal actions can escalate, leading to varying levels of violence (Beauregard et al., 2007b; Chopin & Beauregard, 2019; Keppel & Walter, 1999). Therefore, it is essential to understand how situational factors shape criminal behaviour, as Cornish and Clarke (2008) emphasized, instead of solely attributing it to individual characteristics or predispositions.

2.3. Crime Scripts

To better understand how these crimes may unfold, Cornish (1994) proposed the crime script model. The model is grounded in rational choice theory and offers a structured framework for analyzing criminal behaviour from a decision-making perspective (Cornish, 1994). This model allows for the consideration of the natural variability in human behaviour and is a helpful guide for understanding how a crime is committed (Cornish, 1994). Scripts are mental frameworks that represent our knowledge about typical events or routines, while plans are more specific and goal-oriented, outlining the actions required to achieve a particular objective (Schank & Abelson, 1977). Goals represent the desired outcomes individuals strive to achieve, providing motivation and direction for their actions and decision-making. Through the analysis of the entire crime commission process, including preparation, target selection, commission of the act, escape, and aftermath, investigators can gain insight into the choice-structuring properties of crimes and the offender's characteristics (Beauregard et al., 2007a; Beauregard et al., 2007b; Cornish, 1994a; Cornish, 1994b; Folino, 2000; Rossmo, 1997; Rossmo, 2000)

Crime scripts have been utilized in criminology to better understand the processes involved in sexual offences, including the approach tactics (Beauregard et al., 2007b; Beauregard et al., 2007d; Rossmo, 1997; Rossmo, 2000). How a perpetrator manages to get to a victim can provide valuable insight into their methods to carry out their crime. For example, in a study by Chopin and Beauregard (2019), the researchers analyzed violent stranger rapes and the factors that led to sexual homicides and identified seven specific combinations that increase the risk of such an outcome. According to Chopin and Beauregard's findings (2019), the highest risk of lethality occurred when the attackers and victims knew each other; the attackers used non-coercive tactics like deceit or surprise, and the victims fought back physically but were ultimately beaten. The second most dangerous situation was when a stranger used

coercion, such as a sudden attack, on victims who resisted and were beaten by their attacker. In these cases, the intent may not have been murder, but the offenders may have selected the approach based on the victims (i.e., relationship or ability to fight back), and their interactions may have influenced the outcome of the crime (Chopin & Beauregard, 2019; Folino, 2000; Healey et al., 2016).

Crafting a convincing and credible script is crucial for offenders who employ deceptive tactics while dealing with stranger victims (Deslauriers-Narin & Beauregard, 2010; Holmes & Holmes, 1998). However, due to unforeseen circumstances such as encountering obstacles or failing to find their intended victim (Beauregard et al., 2007d; Hazelwood & Warren, 1999) or variations in the offender's motivations and goals (Chopin & Beauregard, 2019; Schlesinger, 2007), offenders may deviate from the script.

An offender motivated by anger may have a different crime script than one motivated by sexual gratification (Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Folino, 2000; Stefanska et al., 2015). In a comprehensive study conducted by Beauregard et al. (2007b), 361 serial crimes committed by 72 serial offenders were examined to shed light on their motivations and behaviours. The study identified three hunting process scripts that offer some offenders' strategies during the approach and commission of their crimes.

The first script, the *coercive script*, involves isolating the victim in a location where they cannot be seen or heard (Beauregard et al., 2007b). This could be in the victim's home or a public place. Offenders following this script often use tactics like abduction, threats, or physical violence during both their approach to the victim and the commission of the crime (Beauregard et al., 2007b).

In contrast, the *manipulative script* is designed to target vulnerable individuals, and these offenders employ manipulation techniques that are tailored to the victim (Beauregard et al., 2007b). For example, suppose the target is someone from the sex trade market. In that case, the offender may use tactics such as seduction, deception, or offering money or gifts to lure the victim to an isolated location where they can commit the crime (Beauregard et al., 2007b). On the other hand, if the perpetrator has infiltrated a family to gain access to a child, they typically do not lure the victim from their home (Beauregard et al., 2007b). In some cases, these individuals may use gifts or money to

manipulate their victims, while in others, they may offer drugs or alcohol to lower inhibitions and facilitate their criminal activities (Beauregard et al., 2007b).

Lastly, the *non-persuasive script* represents a more direct and forceful approach to the crime without persuasion or manipulation to isolate the victim (Beauregard et al., 2007b). The *non-persuasive* offender simply sees an opportunity and goes for it (Beauregard et al., 2007b).

Each of these scripts offers insights into the distinct processes employed by serial offenders and highlights the diversity of strategies and tactics used during the approach and commission of their crimes. The behavioural analysis of these scripts serves as a crucial tool for investigators, allowing them to identify patterns, establish case connections, and anticipate an offender's future actions (Beauregard et al., 2007a; Beauregard et al., 2007b). This analytical process plays a pivotal role in developing typologies, a vital resource for law enforcement agencies seeking to streamline their investigative efforts. However, constructing accurate and effective typologies depends on understanding the crime script itself, making it the cornerstone of this process.

2.4. Typologies Of Sexual Homicide

Before the 1990s, classifications of sexual homicide were primarily based on motives, clinical characteristics, or crime scene details (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Chan, 2015; James & Proulx, 2014). These classifications often relied on practical experience and theories rather than robust empirical or methodologically sound approaches (Chan, 2015). Despite being criticized for lacking an empirical foundation, researchers found that these typologies shared similarities (Martineau & Beauregard, 2016).

Arguably, one of the most cited and earliest classifications of sexual murderers was developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (Burgess et al., 1986; Ressler et al., 1988). The FBI's classification system initially divided sexual murderers into two primary types: organized and disorganized. This categorization stemmed from the examination of police records and interviews with 36 convicted sexual murderers, with 'organized' offenders exhibiting behaviours like careful planning and disposal of victims' bodies, while 'disorganized' offenders tended to commit impulsive crimes and

leave victims' remains at the crime scene (Ressler et al., 1986; Ressler et al., 1988). Further research indicated that 'organized' criminals usually choose targets who are unfamiliar to them, utilize manipulative strategies, commit crimes across different locations, and often control the conversation as well as the victim (Meloy, 2000; Ressler et al., 1986; Ressler et al., 1988). On the other hand, 'disorganized' offenders are more prone to victimize acquaintances and choose locations they are familiar with (Meloy, 2000; Ressler et al., 1986; Ressler et al., 1988). Over time, the FBI expanded its classification system for sexual homicides by introducing additional categories like 'mixed' and 'sadistic' (Douglas et al., 1992; Meloy, 2000).

Previous research efforts laid the groundwork and pointed to future research possibilities. In recent years, we have witnessed progress in evidence-based classifications of sexual homicide offenders. New findings challenge the traditional FBI classification system by suggesting that the success of sexual offenders in committing their crimes may not solely stem from their level of organization. Instead, it may be attributed to learned strategies, such as targetting vulnerable victims (Chopin et al., 2019; Mott, 1999; Proulx et al., 2007) and careful planning of when, how, and where to approach them (Chai et al., 2022; Beauregard & Bouchard, 2010; Reale & Beauregard, 2019). At the same time, others have examined and categorized them by their motivation, such as Schlesinger (2007), who identified 'catathymic' and 'compulsive sexual homicides' motivational models.

Although previous research has tried to address the limitations of the 'organized' and 'disorganized' typologies, the current range presents its own challenges. Higgs et al. (2017), for example, pointed out that there are inconsistencies in the variables used for categorizing sexual offences. Some studies have included children (Gerard et al., 2007; Kocsis et al., 2002) and serial sexual murderers in the analysis (Beech et al., 2005; Gerard et al., 2007; Keppel & Walter, 1999; Kocsis et al., 2002), while others have not (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Stefanska et al., 2015).

These are important considerations, as previous research has found notable differences between those who target children or have multiple victims and those who do not (Campos & Cusson, 2007; Carter & Hollin, 2010; Prentky et al., 1989). Serial sexual killers, for example, tend to exhibit a history of childhood traumas, engage in deviant sexual behaviours, and may manifest violence in their lives, such as cruelty to animals

(Campos & Cusson, 2007; Carter & Hollin, 2010). They often report fantasies of murder or assault and frequently target strangers as victims (Campos & Cusson, 2007; Carter & Hollin, 2010; Prentky et al., 1987). Whereas non-serial killers generally display fewer characteristics of organized crime scenes (Carter & Hollin, 2010; Prentky et al., 1989) and should be differentiated from their counterparts, as Carter and Hollin (2010) suggested. Acknowledging these differences, researchers have begun distinguishing between the two groups and designing studies dedicated to each or delineating the groups within the sample (Balemba et al., 2014; Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Gerard et al., 2007; James & Proulx, 2014).

Although there have been improvements, the study of sexual murderers has led to the development of numerous types and subtypes of offenders, making it challenging to apply them practically (Higgs et al., 2017). To streamline the various classifications, researchers have attempted to synthesize the literature (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002, 2007; Chai et al., 2021; Higgs et al., 2017; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Miller, 2013). As a result of these efforts, three overarching subtypes of sexual murderers have been identified: sadistic murderers driven by sadistic sexual actions (i.e., mutilation and humiliation), anger-prone murderers with grievances directed at women, and murderers killing to evade being caught (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Beech et al., 2005; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Higgs et al., 2017). In the most recent synthesis, Higgs et al. (2017) utilized a large sample of sexual murder cases (N = >700) to develop themes using empirically grounded typologies. The researchers found evidence of three typologies: grievance murder, sexualized murder, and rape-murder (Higgs et al., 2017, p. 4), which bear a close resemblance to Proulx and Beauregard's (2009) 'sadistic,' 'angry,' and 'opportunistic' categories.

2.4.1. The Angry Sexual Murderer

Several studies have identified the "angry" and "grievance" models of sexual murder, as delineated by existing literature (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Chai et al., 2021; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Higgs et al., 2017). These offenders have been referred to as "opportunistic-impulsive" (Gerard et al., 2007) and "fury" (Kocsis et al., 2002). They have also been labelled based on their motivations, such as "motivated by grievance" (Beech et al., 2005), "grievance driven" (Stefanska et al., 2015), or by their level of violence, such as Chai et al.'s (2021) "expressive" group.

However, the fact remains that the angry/grievance model encompasses a distinct array of characteristics illuminating the modus operandi, offender attributes, and crime scene dynamics associated with this particular type of sexual murderer (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Higgs et al., 2017). Researchers have categorized several existing sexual murderers' typologies and determined that "grievance murders" are typically unplanned, involve a victim known to the perpetrator, a history of substance abuse, and often involve multiple violent acts on the victim (Higgs et al., 2017, p. 6, 9). These findings are similar to those presented in the more detailed "anger" model of non-serial-sexual murders proposed by Beauregard and Proulx (2002), where the offender's emotions of anger, frustration, and humiliation play a crucial role in motivating the crime (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009).

According to Beauregard and Proulx, individuals classified under the "angry" model possess narcissistic and dependent personality disorders, leading to a life of promiscuous and antisocial behaviour (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). These individuals are primarily motivated by a desire for revenge against those they perceive responsible for their problems (Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). Stefanska et al. (2015) found that in cases of "grievance-driven" murder, the offender's actions may originate from initially consensual situations that subsequently escalate into violence.

Studies on angry and grievance-driven offenders suggest that premeditation is not a common factor in their crimes (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Stefanska et al., 2015), and the intention to commit a sexual offence often precedes victim selection (Beech et al., 2001; Higgs et al.., 2017). These offenders may have a history of hypersexuality, but interestingly, prior convictions for rape are uncommon (Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Stefanska et al., 2015). Instead, they tend to have a history of physical abuse toward women (Beech et al., 2001).

Angry-type sexual aggressors typically use a blitz attack to initiate contact with female victims (Beauregard et al., 2007c; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). The assailant may approach the victim casually on foot or use a ruse to access the victim's location, such as their home and becomes aggressive once the victim is isolated (Keppell & Walter, 1999). Although the victim may comply initially, most victims physically resist

their aggressor during the usually short duration of the offence (Proulx & Beauregard, 2009).

Offenders who commit this type of murder often display high levels of violence (Beech et al., 2001; Kocsis et al., 2002; Gerard et al., 2007; Stefanska et al., 2015). They may use overkill tactics and inflict non-fatal violence, resulting in unpatterned wounds and blunt-force facial trauma (Beech et al., 2005; Beauregard et al., 2002). Their violent behaviour may be driven by long-standing grievances, resentment, and anger toward women (Beauregard et al., 2002; Beech et al., 2005).

Intoxication due to substance abuse can exacerbate violent behaviour in offenders. According to one study, 68% of such cases show that those fitting the angry type were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of committing the crimes, a dangerous combination that can exasperate violent tendencies (Stefanska et al., 2015). In some cases, the crimes may involve sexual violence, including vaginal, anal, or oral sex (Gerard et al., 2007; Stefanska et al., 2015). While mutilation and restraint may be less common, some offenders may humiliate or insert foreign objects into their victims (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Beech et al., 2001). Interestingly, offenders who conform to the "anger" model often surrender to authorities and accept full responsibility for their actions (Beauregard et al., 2002, p. 392).

2.4.2. The Sadistic Murderer

Sadistic murderers, unlike their anger-prone counterparts, are primarily motivated by deviant sexual fantasies, where the act of murder is an integral part of their offence (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Dietz et al., 1990; Stefanska et al., 2015). Their crimes involve meticulous planning, often selecting strangers and approaching victims under false pretenses (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Beauregard et al., 2007c; Dietz et al., 1990).

Sexual sadists may also involve their consensual sex partners in the act of killing stranger female victims (Meloy, 2000, p.5). Meloy (2000) provides a case example involving a 37-year-old nurse with a history of sexual abuse who entered a relationship with a man ten years her junior. Their relationship, spanning eight tumultuous months, was characterized by a shared life of sexual fantasy. At her boyfriend's insistence, they

began engaging with and targeting sex trade workers in Los Angeles, ultimately resulting in a series of murders (Meloy, 2000, p. 5). Their modus operandi involved manipulation, as the two convinced young women to enter their car, sit in the back seat, and perform oral sex on her boyfriend, while she watched (Meloy, 2000, p.5). Amid this act, the boyfriend would unexpectedly shoot the victim in the back of the head without warning. As time passed, their crimes escalated and included molestation, necrophilia, and mutilation (Meloy, 2000, p.5).

In a study by Beauregard and Proulx (2002) involving 36 adult sexual murderers, they found that the sadistic group (n = 16) tended to engage in behaviours such as humiliation (82%), use of physical restraints (38%), and body mutilation (44%) more frequently compared to anger-prone murderers. This pattern of offence characteristics has been consistent in related study findings as well (Balemba et al., 2014; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Beech et al., 2005; Beech et al., 2001; Gerard et al., 2007; Higgs et al., 2017).

There are mixed findings when it comes to the use of a weapon. The conflicting findings could be due to the role the gun plays in the murder; for sadistic offenders, it could be part of the perpetrator's deviant fantasy (Balemba et al., 2014; Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Gerard et al., 2007). In some studies, sadistic murderers are more likely to use weapons (ranging from 53% to 69%) compared to angry killers (ranging from 38% to 80%), while in others, the reverse is true (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Proulx et al., 2007).

Among the sexual acts forced upon their victims, the most common include sexual penetration (vaginal and anal), forced fellatio [1] (Dietz et al., 1990), and foreign object insertion (Balemba et al., 2014; Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Gerard et al., 2007). Each act may not be forced upon the victim in isolation; they could be numerous. According to Dietz et al. (1990), 67% of these offenders compel their victims to endure at least three sexual acts.

Sadistic offenders pose a significant challenge for law enforcement due to their higher levels of education, strategic thinking, and lack of empathy (Stefanska et al., 2015). They often display evidence of premeditation in their crimes, attempt to conceal victims' bodies, and are less likely to confess or surrender themselves to authorities

(Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Stefanska et al., 2015). Additionally, they are less likely to engage in overkill, be under the influence of substances during the offence, or accept responsibility for their actions (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Stefanska et al., 2015).

The increased level of sophistication and organization exhibited by these offenders may explain why sadistic offenders are associated with more victims (Kocsis et al., 2002). Interestingly, cases involving sadists are more likely to be solved (Reale et al., 2017); however, they have been found to delay detection (Reale et al., 2017). Given their inclination to re-offend (Berner et al., 2003) and accrue more victims, understanding how they approach their victims, who are commonly strangers, becomes crucial for preventing future fatalities.

2.4.3. The Witness Elimination Murderer

Researchers have identified a third subtype of sexual murder, driven by instrumental or situational motives. Higgs et al. (2017) classified this murder type as a "rape-murder," Stefanska et al. (2015) as the "sexually driven" offender, both of which are similar to Proulx and Beauregard's (2009) earlier classification as the "opportunistic" offender. The "opportunistic" subtype[1] involves a murder that follows a sexual assault and appears to be driven by instrumental or situational motives (Higgs et al., 2017; Chai et al., 2021; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Stefanska et al., 2015). Offenders in this category may intend to commit sexual offences without necessarily intending to commit murder (Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Higgs et al., 2017; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Stefanska et al., 2015). However, they are willing to use violence if required, either to overcome resistance or as a strategy to avoid detection (Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Proulx et al., 2007; Stefanska et al., 2015), a category of offenders Proulx et al. (2007) refers to as "witness elimination."

Chopin and Beauregard (2019) identified specific combinations of factors that significantly increased the risk of a lethal outcome in cases of sexual violence. These combinations involve various elements, such as the relationship between offenders and

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[1] According to Higgs et al. (2017), the "opportunistic-impulsive" offender, as classified by Gerard et al. (2007), is more similar to the "angry" or "grievance murder".

victims, the approach used by offenders, and the victims' resistance. Ultimately, as the elements came together, they resulted in a similar outcome: the victims' death.

Interestingly, the researchers suggest that the relationship between the offender, the victim and the approach used, although important, may not be the leading factor in explaining the lethal outcome of these crimes (Chopin & Beauregard, 2019). Instead, the most important variables were the victim's resistance and the offender's aggression (Chopin & Beauregard, 2019). The study findings suggest that there may be two distinct types of sexual homicides, non-intentional and intentional, depending on the events that led to the victim's death (Chopin & Beauregard, 2019).

What sets detection avoidance murders apart from other categories, such as sexualized and grievance murders, is the absence of patterned behavioural indicators (Higgs et al., 2017). In contrast to other subtypes, violence in these cases is not associated with deviant sexual interests or triggered by negative emotional states. Consequently, the sadistic tendencies and extreme violence, such as overkill or premeditation, commonly observed in other subtypes, are not typically found in the context of these murders (Balemba et al., 2014; Kocsis et al., 2002; Stefanska et al., 2015).

Various typologies indicate that the approach tactics employed by individuals targeting strangers can vary based on the offender type. Solving sexual homicides involving strangers presents unique challenges, as these cases often lack a pre-existing relationship between the offender and victim, are high-profile, and commonly require significant resources for investigation. Therefore, it is crucial not to underestimate the significance of approach tactics in these crimes and the clues they may offer, which can help investigators prioritize their investigative efforts.

Chapter 3.

The Current Study

Sexual murderers may exploit victims' vulnerabilities through grooming tactics or presenting a facade of normalcy to gain trust, making it difficult for victims and witnesses to recognize the impending danger. This tactic is common among sadistic offenders, who go undetected for more extended periods of time and have been found to have more victims (Berner et al., 2003; Kocsis et al., 2002; Reale et al., 2017). Therefore, insight into these tactics is vital for early identification of perpetrators, protecting potential victims, and prioritizing suspects in cases where a crime has occurred.

The current study examines the behaviours of sexual murderers and how such behaviour can predict the approach they may have used to access their victims, offering practical insights to identify meaningful patterns associated with specific offender types. The primary objective is to provide usable distinctions in behaviour exhibited by sexual murderers who target strangers using a con approach when compared to those employing different methods (i.e., "blitz" or surprise).

Given the pivotal role of the decisions made during the commission of an offence, the study explores the unfolding crime script for each crime phase. These factors include the victim's characteristics and activities leading up to the offence, the level of violence, and offender modus operandi (MO) indicators, such as sexual acts and post-crime behaviours. Previous research has demonstrated the potential of these factors to categorize the type of sexual murderer, aiding investigators in understanding the available evidence and the relationship to the victim.

By comprehensively understanding the intricate nature of these crimes and the contributing factors, this research provides invaluable direction that can be used for crime prevention, victim protection, and case resolution (Chopin et al., 2019; Proulx et al., 2007). The improved comprehension of such behaviours is particularly essential in stranger-perpetrated sexual homicides, given that they are amongst the most challenging murder cases to solve (Dietz et al., 1990; Meloy, 2000; Salfati & Canter, 1999). The ultimate goal is to empower investigators to solve cases effectively, bring perpetrators to justice, and enhance outcomes for the victims.

Chapter 4.

Methods

4.1. Sample and Procedure

For the current study, the sample was taken from the Sexual Homicide International Database (SHIeID), comprising 762 cases of sexual homicide that occurred between 1948 and 2017 in France (n = 412) and Canada (n = 350). The information in this database was input by trained analysts skilled in coding violent crime data for international databases (see Chopin & Beauregard, 2021).

The sample selection adhered to specific criteria: all cases were considered completed homicides (i.e., no attempted homicides), featured at least two sexual elements (i.e., each case exhibited evidence of sexual activity or sexual motivation), involved a sole offender, and included only offences where the victim was a stranger to the offender (i.e., refers to situations where both the offender and victim were unfamiliar at the time of the crime) (N = 323). A 'sexual element' in homicides was defined by the FBI criteria, encompassing various aspects such as (a) victim's attire or lack of attire; (b) exposure of victim's sexual parts; (c) sexual positioning of the victim's body; (d) insertion of foreign objects into victim's body cavities; (e) evidence of other sexual activity, interests, or sadistic fantasies (Ressler et al., 1988; Chopin & Beauregard, 2022; Chopin & Beauregard, 2021).

In order to examine variations in how a crime unfolds based on the approach tactic selected, a binary variable was used to classify whether the offender used a con approach during the sexual homicide (0 = different approach (such as blitz and surprise), 1 = con approach). When the relationship between the offender and victim was purely one of strangers, denoting no prior acquaintance, it was coded as '1'. Conversely, cases involving offenders and victims in an acquaintance relationship, such as friends, employers, neighbours, or internet contacts, were coded as '0' (Chopin & Beauregard, 2019). Within the sample, 55.1% of cases involved a con approach (n = 178), while 44.9% did not (n = 145), and most of the cases were solved (n= 315, n = 8 unsolved) (Table 1).

4.2. Measures

Dependent variable: The dichotomous dependent variable in this study relates to the approach method used by perpetrators when engaging with stranger victims in cases of sexual homicide. In distinguishing between the approach methods employed by perpetrators, '1' was assigned when a con approach was used, characterized by manipulation or trickery to gain access to the victim. Specifically, this approach involves deceiving the victim to achieve the perpetrator's goals, such as convincing the victim to enter their vehicle or feigning the need for assistance, which is typically non-threatening (Beauregard et al., 2007a; Beauregard et al., 2007b). Conversely, '0' represented cases where other methods were employed. These alternative methods encompass coercive tactics, such as a "blitz" approach involving physical assault on the victim, surprising the victim through abduction, or threats (Beauregard et al., 2007a; Beauregard et al., 2007b; Chopin & Beauregard, 2019). Among the sampled cases, 55.1% of sexual homicides involved perpetrators who employed con tactics (n = 178).

Table 1.   Descriptives and coding for the variables included in the analysis

Variable	Coding	Frequency (n = 323)	%	Range
Pre-crime phase = 1 (yes)				
Victim targeted	0 = no, 1 = yes	73	22.6	
Victim Characteristics				
Victim > 16 years	0 = no, 1 = yes	268	83	
Victim sex	0 = Male, 1 = Female	284	87.9	
Victim vulnerable lifestyle	0 = no, 1 = yes	77	23.8	
Victim was a loner	0 = no, 1 = yes	20	6.2	
Routine Activities				
Victim was engaged in domestic activity	0 = no, 1 = yes	80	24.8	
Victim was partying	0 = no, 1 = yes	24	7.4	
Victim engaged in risky activity	0 = no, 1 = yes	33	10.2	
Crime Phase = 1 (yes)				
Sexual Acts				
Penetration	0 = no, 1 = yes	196	60.7	
Fellatio	0 = no, 1 = yes	64	19.8	

Variable	Coding	Frequency (n = 323)	%	Range
Foreign object insertion	0 = no, 1 = yes	33	10.2	
Unusual acts	0 = no, 1 = yes	42	13	
Number of Sexual Acts	0 = no, 1 = yes	1.5[a]	1.22[b]	0 - 5
Violence				
Lethal weapon involved	0 = no, 1 = yes	137	42.4	
Other weapon involved	0 = no, 1 = yes	58	18	
Multiple acts of violence	0 = no, 1 = yes	238	73.7	
Offender beat the victim	0 = no, 1 = yes	140	43.3	
Strangulation/ asphyxiation	0 = no, 1 = yes	146	45.2	
Post Crime Phase = 1 (yes)				
Weapon was recovered	0 = no, 1 = yes	54	16.7	
Case solved	0 = no, 1 = yes	315	97.5	
Body was recovered outdoors	0 = no, 1 = yes	138	42.7	
Body was discovered partly in water	0 = no, 1 = yes	19	5.9	
Body was buried	0 = no, 1 = yes	30	9.3	
Body was moved	0 = no, 1 = yes	83	25.7	

[a] Represents the mean.
[b] Represents the standard deviation.

Independent variables: A total of 24 variables related to an offender's behaviours and decisions throughout the crime process were included for analysis. The variables were selected based on previous research findings and organized into three phases: (1) the pre-crime, (2) the crime, and (3) the post-crime phase.

Independent variables: the victim characteristics. The study examined four victim characteristic variables and whether the victim was targeted. All the variables were coded dichotomously (0 = no, or 1 = yes) (see Table 1). These variables were selected based on previous research indicating that offenders may intentionally target victims with specific characteristics or belonging to high-risk populations (e.g., Beauregard & Proulx, 2017; Chopin et al., 2021).

One of the influential victim characteristics considered in this study is the victim's age. This variable acknowledges the potential changes in a person's autonomy,

impulsivity, and risk-seeking behaviour from childhood to adulthood. Additionally, researchers have noted variations in age ranges within sexual murder typologies. For instance, Beech et al. (2001) found that offences motivated by the urge to rape and murder typically select victims under the age of 30. In contrast, those driven by the intention to sexually offend, not necessarily leading to murder, tend to involve victims older than 30.

The age of 16 was used to denote whether the victim was a child, which is consistent with the prevailing literature on sexual violence, where individuals under 16 are typically regarded as child victims (Beauregard & Martineau, 2015; Chopin & Beauregard, 2019; Proulx et al., 2018; Skott, 2019). While studies on sexual homicide of children often employ a cut-off range of 12-18 (Skott, 2019), recent research by Proulx et al. (2018) used 16 as the threshold.

As presented in Table 1, descriptive statistics for the sample employed in the current study reveal that nearly one in five offenders targeted their victims (22.5%). Most victims were older than 16 years (83%), and a significant proportion were female (87.9%). Furthermore, almost a quarter of victims (23.8%) were classified as leading vulnerable lifestyles characterized by psychological disorders and drug or alcohol abuse, and few were considered loners (6.2%).

Independent variables: routine activities. Studies have suggested that sexual offenders may be successful in carrying out their crimes due to learned strategies, which include selecting vulnerable victims and planning the approach carefully (Chai et al., 2022; Beauregard & Bouchard, 2010; Reale & Beauregard, 2019). Certain activities, such as sex work, partying, and hitchhiking, have been found to increase the vulnerability of victims (Quinet, 2011). The current analysis included domestic activities since most non-serial sexual murders occur in either the victim's home (Grubin, 1994; Langevin et al., 1998; Roberts & Grossman, 1993) or public places (Martineau & Beauregard, 2013; Roberts & Grossman, 1993).

The current sample revealed that 24.8% of victims were engaged in domestic activities before the crime. In comparison, only 10.2% were involved in risky activities like sex work or hitchhiking, and even fewer were partying (7.4%).

Independent variables: sexual and violent acts. Moreover, previous research has shown that offenders carefully evaluate the potential benefits and risks of their actions, which can lead to variations in violence and sexual acts inflicted upon the victim (Beauregard & Proulx, 2017; Chopin & Beauregard, 2022). These behaviours reflect criminal expertise and deliberate decisions made by the offender (Beauregard & Proulx, 2017; Chopin & Beauregard, 2022).

Furthermore, the typology of the offender plays a pivotal role in organizing the patterns of violence and sexual acts observed in sexual homicides and were therefore included in the analysis. For example, sadistic offenders, motivated by sexual fantasies, often target their victims (Beech et al., 2005), tend to exhibit distinctive behaviours, including strangulation (Balemba et al., 2014; Beech et al., 2005; Higgs et al., 2017), sexual penetration (primarily vaginal), physical beatings, and the insertion of foreign objects (Balemba et al., 2014; Gerard et al., 2007; Higgs et al., 2017). In contrast, the "angry" and "grievance murderers," motivated by resentments toward the victim (directly or indirectly), tend to involve multiple acts of violence and may exhibit evidence of both anal and vaginal penetration (Beech et al., 2001; Gerard et al., 2007; Kocsis et al., 2002; Stefanska et al., 2015). These distinctions are necessary as the approach tactics employed by the "angry" and "sadistic" offenders differ (Proulx & Beauregard, 2009, 2014).

With the literature mentioned earlier as a foundation, four variables were selected for inclusion to analyze the differences in the offenders' sexual acts. In the current sample, most cases included penetration (60.7%), and almost one in five cases (19.8%) forced victims to perform fellatio. On average, each case had 1.5 sexual acts (range 0 to 5), and unusual acts (13%) and foreign object insertion were relatively infrequent (10.2%).

Furthermore, sexual homicides often involve intimate and close-range killing methods, distinguishing them from other forms of homicide. Research has shown that personal (i.e., fists) and edged weapons are frequently employed in these crimes (Chan & Heide, 2008; Beauregard & Martineau, 2013), with knives being the most chosen weapon (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013; Gerard et al., 2007). Therefore, five variables relating to the violence employed during the crime were introduced to distinguish between those who used a con approach and those employing other methods like "blitz"

or "surprise." These variables considered the presence of lethal weapons (e.g., firearms or knives) versus other standard weapons (e.g., blunt objects or ligatures) and the amount of violence and physical force. Research has established that the presence of a knife or gun increases the likelihood of a lethal outcome during a crime, while the use of blunt objects and non-knife/gun weapons is associated with a lower chance of a deadly outcome (Felson & Messner, 1996).

As depicted in Table 1, among the cases involving a weapon, most utilized a lethal weapon (42.4%) and/or inflicted beatings upon the victim (43.3%), while 18% employed other weapons (e.g., blunt objects or ligatures). However, a substantial proportion of cases featured multiple acts of violence (73.7%) and 45.2% involved strangulation or asphyxiation.

Independent variables: post-crime behaviours. Finally, the inclusion of post-crime offender behaviours serves to provide insights into the level of organization and the typology the offender may fall into. The selection of these variables is rooted in existing research demonstrating that offender characteristics influence their post-mortem management of the victim's body and efforts to delay police detection (Salfti & Canter, 1999; Beauregard & Martineau, 2014). For instance, Dietz et al. (1990) found that sadistic offenders often approach victims under pretenses and tend to conceal the victim's body.

Furthermore, considering the impact of the crime location on solvability, a dichotomous variable indicating case status was included (e.g., Jiao, 2007). As shown in Table 1, only a small fraction of offenders left the victim's body partially in water (5.9%) or buried it (9.3%), while most cases involved outdoor locations for body disposal (42.7%). Despite the forensic awareness strategies employed, such as moving the body (25.7%) and the limited cases involving the recovery of weapons (16.7%), a remarkable 97.5% of the cases analyzed in this study were successfully solved.

4.3. Analytical Strategy

To fulfill the study's objectives of examining the behaviours associated with sexual homicide perpetrators who employ a con approach versus those who do not, a three-stage analytical strategy was employed. The analysis began with a Pearson chi-

squared analysis involving 23 dichotomous variables, and an independent sample t-test was used to compare the number of sexual acts for both outcomes of the dependent variable (use of a con approach or another method). The goal was to investigate significant associations at the bivariate level between these independent variables and the dependent variable, which denoted the approach method used by perpetrators when targetting victims who were strangers.

Subsequently, those independent variables exhibiting significant associations ($p < .05$) in the Pearson Chi-Square analysis were retained for further exploration in a multivariate logistic regression model. The logistic regression aimed to assess the impact of these independent variables on the approach tactics and uncover which variables were the most influential predictors of the approach.

To comprehensively evaluate the performance of the binary classification model developed through logistic regression, a Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve was employed. The ROC curve illustrates the model's ability to distinguish between the two classes, presenting a trade-off between sensitivity (true positive rate) and specificity (true negative rate) across various threshold values. The area under the curve (AUC) served as a critical measure of the model's overall performance, with a higher AUC indicating superior discrimination ability while a value of 0.5 suggesting random classification.

Following the sequential logistic regression, a two-step cluster analysis was conducted to unveil latent patterns within the dataset. These variables were selected based on their significance in the logistic regression. The selection process was refined to include variables with established common behavioural patterns within a typology. These chosen variables were explicitly those that were either readily observable to investigators or had the potential to stand out. Before conducting the Two-Step cluster analysis, potential multicollinearity among the relevant variables was assessed by examining the correlation matrix. The absence of correlations exceeding 0.36 confirmed the absence of multicollinearity.

Leveraging SPSS auto-clustering, the study employed the Schwarz Bayesian Criterion (BIC) and the Ratio of Distance Measures to discern the most optimal classification solution. Once the classifications were determined, the bivariate

relationships were explored using Chi-square analyses to validate the external classification of clusters. Through these analyses, the study tested the external validity of the cluster solution by examining the relationship between the identified clusters and our dependent variable.

Chapter 5.

Results

As shown in Table 2, the bivariate analyses examined the pre-crime characteristics that distinguished stranger sexual homicides using a con approach from those using a different method (i.e., surprise or blitz approach). Three of the five variables analyzed displayed significant associations using a con approach. Offenders who chose vulnerable victims (i.e., lifestyles characterized by substance abuse and psychological disorders) (φ = 0.111, p = 0.047) and those involved in risky activities such as hitchhiking or the sex trade (φ = 0.14, p = .012) displayed a higher propensity for adopting a con approach. Conversely, stranger-perpetrated sexual homicides involving victims aged 16 or older (φ = -0.111, p = .046), female victims (φ = -0.201, p < .001), and victims engaged in partying (φ = -0.124, p = .026) exhibited significant associations with alternative methods (i.e., blitz or surprise).

During the crime phase, three variables showed significant associations with the offender's approach to initiating contact with the victim. Specifically, instances involving fellatio (φ = 0.152, p = .006) and the use of alternative weapons, such as ligatures and blunt objects (φ = 0.114, p = 0.040) were significantly related to stranger-perpetrated sexual homicides where the con approach was employed. Whereas cases, where the offender beat the victim (φ = -0.115, p = .039), were significantly associated with other approach methods such as "blitz" or surprise.

Three variables were significantly associated with the offender's selected approach during the post-crime phase. Notably, when a victim's body was partially submerged in water (φ = -0.118, p = .034) and a weapon was recovered (φ = -0.163, p = .003), this was related to non-con approaches (φ = -0.118, p = .034). Conversely, moving the victim's body (φ = 0.132, p = .018) was significantly associated with offenders using the con approach.

Table 2.   **Bivariate analysis of stranger sexual homicide: A comparison between con approach and other approaches**

Variable	Other (n = 145) M (SD) / % (n)	Con Approach (n= 178) M (SD) / % (n)	Total (N = 323)	X^2/t, (df), φ/d, p
Pre-crime phase				
Victim targeted	22.1 (32)	23 (41)	22.6 (73)	$\chi 2$ (1) =, φ = 0.011
Victim characteristics				
Victim > 16 years	87.6 (127)	79.2 (141)	83 (268)	$\chi 2$ (1) = 3.97, φ = -0.111*
Victim sex	95.2 (138)	82 (146)	87.9 (284)	$\chi 2$ (1) = 13.02, φ = -0.201***
Victim lifestyle vulnerable	18.6 (27)	28.1(50)	23.8 (77)	$\chi 2$ (1) = 3.95, φ = 0.111*
Victim was a loner	5.5 (8)	6.7 (12)	6.2 (20)	$\chi 2$ (1) = .21, φ = 0.025
Routine activities				
Victim was engaged in domestic activity	26.9 (39)	23 (41)	24.8 (80)	$\chi 2$ (1) = .64, φ = -0.045
Victim was partying	11 (16)	4.5 (8)	7.4 (24)	$\chi 2$ (1) = 4.97, φ = -0.124*
Victim engaged in risky activity	5.5(8)	14 (25)	10.2 (33)	$\chi 2$ (1) = 6.34, φ =, 0.14*
Crime Phase				
Sexual acts				
Penetration	57.2 (83)	63.5 (113)	60.7 (196)	$\chi 2$ (1) = 1.31, φ = 0.064
Fellatio	13.1 (19)	25.3 (45)	19.8 (64)	$\chi 2$ (1) = 7.46 φ = 0.152**
Foreign object insertion	12.4 (18)	8.4 (15)	10.2 (33)	$\chi 2$ (1) = 1.39 φ = -0.065
Unusual acts	14.5 (21)	11.8 (21)	13 (42)	$\chi 2$ (1) = .51 φ = -0.04
Number of sexual acts	1.35 (1.18)	1.61 (1.25)	1.50 (1.22)	t (321) = -1.94, d = 0.21

Variable	Other (n = 145) M (SD) / % (n)	Con Approach (n= 178) M (SD) / % (n)	Total (N = 323)	X^2/t, (df), φ/d, p
Violence				
Lethal weapon involved	45.5 (66)	39.9 (71)	42.4 (137)	χ^2 (1) = 1.04, φ = -0.057
Other weapon involved	13.1 (19)	21.9 (39)	18 (58)	χ^2 (1) = 4.21, φ = 0.114*
Multiple acts of violence	77.9 (113)	70.2 (125)	73.7 (238)	χ^2 (1) = 2.45, φ = -0.087
Offender beat the victim	49.7 (72)	38.2 (68)	43.3 (140)	χ^2 (1) = 4.27, φ = -0.115*
Strangulation/ asphyxiation	43.4 (63)	46.6 (83)	45.2 (146)	χ^2 (1) = .326, φ = 0.032
Post Crime Phase				
Weapon was recovered	23.4 (34)	11.2 (20)	16.7 (54)	χ^2 (1) = 8.56 φ = -0.163**
Case solved	97.9 (142)	97.2 (173)	97.5 (315)	χ^2 (1) = .18, φ = -0.024
Body was recovered outdoors	40 (58)	44.9 (80)	42.7 (138)	χ^2 (1) = .80, φ = 0.05
Body was discovered partly in water	9 (13)	3.4 (6)	5.9 (19)	χ^2 (1) = 4.52, φ = -0.118*
Body was buried	9.7 (14)	9 (16)	9.3 (30)	χ^2 (1) = .04, φ = -0.011
Body was moved	19.3 (28)	30.9 (55)	25.7 (83)	χ^2 (1) = 5.62, φ = 0.132*

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

A logistic regression analysis was conducted using eleven variables to examine the relationship between the offender's approach strategy (con vs. other) and their behaviours across crime phases. The model showed statistical significance ($\chi2$ (11) = 68.413, p < .001), yielding a Nagelkerke R^2 of 25.5% and accurately classifying 67.2% of cases. However, the Hosmer and Lemeshow test indicated a lack of adherence to the logistic distribution assumption (p = .005), likely influenced by two outlier cases. After excluding the outliers, the model adhered to the logistic distribution assumption (p = .371) (Table 3).

The variable 'number of sexual acts' did not pass the Shapiro-Wilks test (W (323) = .880, p < .001). However, the absolute kurtosis and skewness values remained below two, indicating normality (Skewness = 0.816, Kurtosis = 0.171). Multicollinearity concerns were absent, as all variables exhibited values within the acceptable tolerance threshold (> 0.2) and VIF (< 5.0) (Garson, 2016).

Furthermore, there was a linear relationship between the variable, 'the number of sexual acts', and the logit of the dependent variable (offender used con-approach), which was substantiated by a non-significant Box Tidwell test (p = .916) (Box & Tidwell, 1962). Lastly, the variance of the number of sexual acts committed by con and non-con approach offenders displayed homogeneity, as the Levene's test was not significant (p = .604) and equal variances were assumed (t [321] = -1.94, p =. 0.053, Table 2). Consequently, no transformations were applied, indicating the fulfillment of all assumptions for logistic regression.

Among the predictor variables, eight out of eleven showed statistical significance while controlling for other factors (see Table 3). The logistic regression analysis revealed that female victims, in comparison to male victims, had significantly lower odds (OR = 0.186, p < .001, 95% CI [0.074, 0.468]) of being targeted by stranger offenders using a con approach. In this context, females had approximately 81.6% lower odds of being targeted by stranger offenders using a con approach than male victims.

Furthermore, offenders who selected victims engaged in drug and/or alcohol abuse had over twice the odds of employing a con approach compared to those who did not (OR = 2.403, p = 0.006, 95% CI [1.286, 4.488]). Similarly, victims involved in risky activities (such as hitchhiking or the sex trade) had approximately 243% higher odds of

being targeted by stranger offenders using a con approach compared to those not engaged in such activities (OR = 2.432, p = 0.007, 95% CI [1.271, 4.654]). Conversely, victims who were partying before the attack had 69.1% lower odds of being approached by an offender using a ruse (OR = 0.309, p = 0.022, 95% CI [0.113, 0.841]).

Moreover, while accounting for other factors, the act of fellatio performed by the victim was notably related to the offender's approach during the crime phase (p = 0.022). Offenders utilizing a con approach exhibited 291% higher odds of compelling the victim to perform fellatio compared to those employing different tactics to approach the victim (OR = 2.905, p = 0.022, 95% CI [1.168, 7.225]). Whereas, in instances involving the violent act of beating the victim, offenders who employed other tactics to approach stranger victims displayed 296% higher odds of subjecting the victim to beatings compared to those who employed conning tactics to engage the victim (OR = 0.561, p = 0.025, 95% CI [0.338, 0.931]).

In the post-crime phase, two of the three variables analyzed showed statistical significance in relation to the employed approach tactics. While controlling for other factors, it was observed that stranger offenders who used a con to approach the victim had 199% higher odds of relocating the victim's body compared to those who employed alternative methods of approach (OR = 1.986, p = 0.029, 95% CI [1.074, 3.673]). Moreover, individuals who adopted a con approach had significantly lower odds (56%) of their weapon being recovered by investigators, in contrast to those who used different methods to approach the victim (OR = 0.441, p = 0.02, 95% CI [0.222, 0.879]).

Initially, all cases were included in Model 1. However, two outlier residuals were detected, which led to the creation of a revised model (Model 2) with the exclusion of those outliers (n = 321). After removing the outliers, the logistic regression was re-run to examine the variable relationships. Model 2 adhered to the logistic distribution assumption, as indicated by a non-significant Hosmer Lemeshow test result (p = .371). The overall significance remained unchanged after excluding outliers ($\chi2$ (9) = 69.271, p < .001); however, their exclusion improved the goodness-of-fit, with Nagelkerke R^2 increasing from 0.255 to 0.276. Predictive accuracy slightly improved from 67.2% (Model 1) to 67.6% (Model 2), suggesting a somewhat better fit of the model. Moreover, when controlling for other factors, all previously significant and non-significant variables retained their original direction and significance.

Table 3.   Logistic regression of stranger sexual homicide: A comparison between con approach and other approaches

Variables	Including Outliers (N = 323) B (SE) OR	P	95% CI LL	UL	Excluding Outliers (N= 321) B (SE) OR	P	95% CI LL	UL
Pre-crime phase = 1 (yes)								
Victim > 16 years	-0.573 (0.352) 0.564	0.103	0.283	1.123	-0.654 (0.36) 0.52	0.069	0.257	1.052
Victim Sex	-1.693 (0.475) 0.184	<.01***	0.073	0.467	-1.74 (0.482) 0.176	<.01***	0.068	0.452
Victim lifestyle vulnerable	0.877 (0.319) 2.403	0.006**	1.286	4.488	0.923 (0.326) 2.517	0.005**	1.328	4.768
Victim was partying	-1.176 (0.512) 0.309	0.022*	0.113	0.841	-1.41 (0.535) 0.244	0.008**	0.085	0.697
Crime Phase = 1 (yes)								
Fellatio	0.889 (0.331) 2.432	0.007**	1.271	4.654	0.916 (0.334) 2.5	0.006**	1.299	4.814
Victim engaged in risky activity	1.066 (0.465) 2.905	0.022*	1.168	7.225	1.037 (0.468) 2.821	0.027*	1.128	7.053
Other weapon involved	0.631 (0.359) 1.88	0.079	0.93	3.797	0.615 (0.364) 1.85	0.091	0.906	3.774
Offender beat the victim	-0.578 (0.258) 0.561	0.025*	0.338	0.931	-0.642 (0.262) 0.526	0.014*	0.315	0.879
Post Crime Phase = 1 (yes)								
Weapon was recovered	-0.818 (0.352) 0.441	0.02*	0.222	0.879	-0.807 (0.356) 0.446	0.023*	0.222	0.897
Body was discovered partly in water	-0.669 (0.557) 0.512	0.23	0.172	1.527	-0.94 (0.594) 0.391	0.113	0.122	1.251
Body was moved	0.686 (0.314) 1.986	0.029*	1.074	3.673	0.79 (0.32) 2.203	0.014*	1.176	4.127
X^2	68.412***				69.271***			
Nagelkerke R^2	0.255				.276			
Overall % predicted	67.20%				67.60%			

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Finally, to assess the accuracy of the original model (Model 1), the Receiver Operating Characteristics-Area Under the Curve (ROC) was used as the method to assess the changes of specificity and sensitivity at various cut-off points instead of the standard 0.5 (50%); the positive state for this analysis was 1 (1 = Yes). The findings reveal that the area under the ROC curve is statistically significant at .747, and the confidence intervals are close to one another (Table 4). According to Rice and Harris (2005), a value of .747 puts the discrimination of this model at the lower border of a large effect, indicating the model does a good job of predicting whether someone who commits sexual murder used a con approach when the victim is a stranger (0.747, $p <$ .001, 95% CI [0.694, 0.8]) (Table 4).
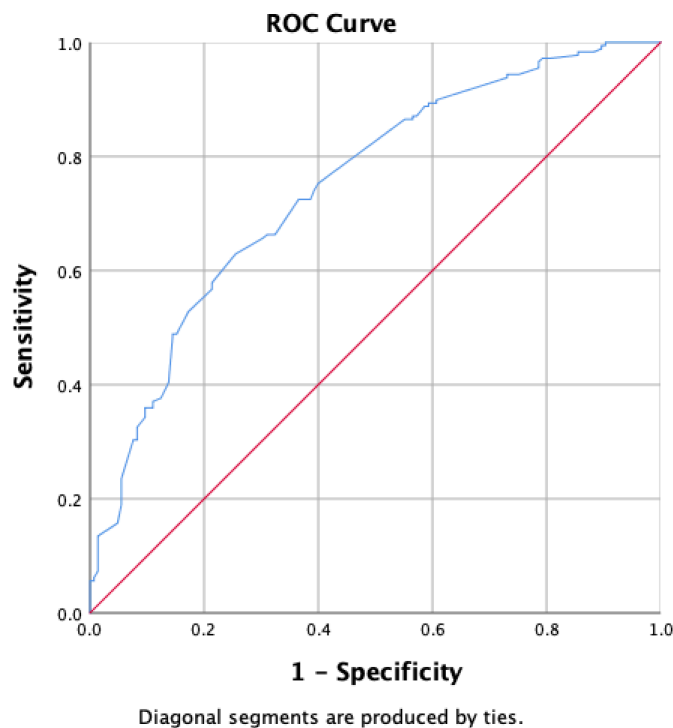

Figure 1. **ROC – AUC for all models with a con approach**

Table 4. **ROC-AUC for all models with a con approach**

			95% Confidence Interval	
Area	SE	P	LL	UL
.747	.027	.000	.694	.800

A two-step cluster analysis was conducted in the final stage of the analysis. Schwarz's Bayesian Criterion (BIC) and the Ratio of Distance Measures indicated that a three-cluster solution was the most appropriate to classify the 323 cases of sexual homicide involving victims who were strangers to their attackers. All three clusters exhibited relatively even distributions within the sample (Table 5). Cluster 3 emerged as the largest, encompassing 39.9% (129 cases) of the sample, while Cluster 2 was the smallest, comprising 22% (71 cases). Before conducting the Two-Step cluster analysis, the correlation matrix of the five variables was examined for potential multicollinearity. No correlations exceeded 0.34.

The cluster analysis results revealed three distinct groups (Table 5). Cluster 1 (N=123) exhibited a notable absence of certain behaviours: they did not move the victim's body (0%), did not coerce victims into performing fellatio (0%), and did not specifically select individuals with vulnerable lifestyles (such as those characterized by substance abuse and/or psychological disorders) (0%). However, they did exhibit a preference for female victims (100%) and sometimes beat the victim (39%).

In contrast, Cluster 2 (N= 71) included offenders who moved the victim's body in all cases (100%), although they never forced the victim to perform fellatio (0%). Some cases within this cluster did involve victims with vulnerable lifestyles (22.5%), and the victims were exclusively female (100%). These offenders displayed a slightly higher propensity for beating the victim (40.8%) than Cluster 1.

Cluster 3 (N= 129) encompasses a diverse range of behaviours. Approximately one in ten offenders within this cluster moved the victim's body (9.3%), and almost half coerced the victim into performing fellatio (49.6%). These offenders demonstrated a greater tendency to select victims with vulnerable lifestyles (47.3%) and did not exclusively target female victims (69.8%). Almost half of the cases within Cluster 3 involved the offenders beating the victim (48.8%).

Table 5.   **Percentages of variables included in each of the three clusters identified**

Variables	Cluster 1 Abandoners (N = 123) % (n)	Cluster 2 Relocators (N= 71) % (n)	Cluster 3 Eclectic (N = 129) % (n)
Body was moved	0 (0)	100 (71)	9.3 (12)
Fellatio	0 (0)	0 (0)	49.6 (64)
Victim lifestyle vulnerable	0 (0)	22.5 (16)	47.3 (61)
Victim is female	100 (123)	100 (71)	69.8 (90)
Offender beat the victim	39 (48)	40.8 (29)	48.8 (63)

According to the findings, the most important variables in the cluster analysis were whether the body was moved, followed by whether the offender forced the victim to perform fellatio, whether the victim led a vulnerable lifestyle, the gender of the victim, and whether the offender beat the victim. A bivariate analysis was run for each variable included in the clusters to determine whether the variables were significantly differentiating the clusters. Since the variables were dichotomous, a chi-squared test was performed. Among the five variables analyzed, four of these five variables exhibited statistically significant associations across the three clusters (Table 5).

Based on the findings, the clusters exhibit significant differences concerning the offender's behaviour towards the victim. Regarding whether offenders moved the victim's body, Cluster 1 and 2 were particularly noteworthy, with offenders in Cluster 2 always moving the victim's body, while those in Cluster 1 never did (*Cramer's V* =0.907, p < .001). In contrast, Cluster 3 only exhibited this behaviour occasionally. However, Cluster 3 demonstrated the highest occurrence of cases involving fellatio, significantly contrasting to the other clusters, which never exhibited this behaviour (*Cramer's V* = 0.61, p < .001). Additionally, Cluster 3 had the highest propensity for selecting victims with vulnerable lifestyles, and Cluster 2 showed a lower incidence, while Cluster 1 never selected individuals with these vulnerabilities (Cramer's V = 0.49, p < 0.001). Regarding gender, Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 consistently targeted females, while Cluster 3 exhibited a more diverse pattern by selecting both male and female victims (*Cramer's V* =0.45, p < .001). It is also important to note that the variable indicating whether the offender beat

the victim was no longer statistically significant when compared among the three clusters and did not significantly differentiate the clusters in the analysis.

Table 6.   Offenders' behaviours according to the three clusters

Variables	Yes/No	Cluster 1 Abandoners (N = 123) % (n)	Cluster 2 Relocators (N= 71) % (n)	Cluster 3 Eclectic (N = 129) % (n)	X2 Cramers V	P
Body was moved	Yes	0 (0)	100 (71)	9.3 (12)	0.907	<.001
Fellatio	Yes	0 (0)	0 (0)	49.6 (64)	0.61	<.001
Victim lifestyle vulnerable	Yes	0 (0)	22.5 (16)	47.3 (61)	0.49	<.001
Victim is female	Yes	100 (123)	100 (71)	69.8 (90)	0.454	<.001
Offender beat the victim	Yes	39 (48)	40.8 (29)	48.8 (63)	0.091	0.259

A second bivariate test was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the use of a con approach by offenders and the three identified clusters. The analysis showed that Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 offenders most often used a con approach (*Cramer's V* = 0.306, p < 0.001).

Table 7.   Offenders' use of the con approach according to the three clusters

Variables	Yes/No	Cluster 1 Abandoners (N = 123) % (n)	Cluster 2 Relocators (N= 71) % (n)	Cluster 3 Eclectic (N = 129) % (n)	X2 Cramers V	P
Offender used con approach	Yes	35.8 (44)	64.8 (46)	68.2 (88)	0.306	<.001

Chapter 6.

Discussion

Understanding how criminals approach their victims is a crucial study area with practical implications for crime prevention and law enforcement strategies. If an offender's approach is unsuccessful, a crime may never occur. However, there is a significant research gap on the methods used by perpetrators in sexual homicides, as noted by Carter & Hollin (2010). This study aimed to fill this gap by shedding light on the most common tactics used in sexual homicides committed by strangers and examining how these crimes unfold. In cases where a perpetrator's con or ruse fails, it may be difficult for law enforcement and the victim to recognize the true nature of the interaction. If suspicions arise, the police may lack grounds to intervene, potentially allowing the offender to learn from the incident and continue their criminal activities without interception. Therefore, the findings hold practical significance for academic and practical purposes, including improving victim awareness programs, law enforcement training, and future research.

6.1. Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde or Both?

The narrative of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, used as an analogy, portrays the dual nature that can exist within an individual — one personality aligns with societal norms, while another deviates from them (Singh & Chakrabarti, 2008). The study draws a parallel to this analogy, as it exhibits a similar duality in the context of stranger-perpetrated sexual homicides, which involve some ruse. Perpetrators initially present a harmless front, akin to Dr. Jekyll, only to transition into violent behaviour, resembling Mr. Hyde (Kocsis et al., 2002; Meloy, 2000). Research indicates that between 34 and 90 percent of sexual homicides are initiated using some form of manipulation (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013; Dietz et al., 1990; Salfati et al., 2015; Stefanska et al., 2015). This tactic is particularly prominent among sadistic offenders, who target vulnerable victims and exhibit a greater degree of control during their crimes (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Beauregard et al., 2007c; Dietz et al., 1990; Meloy, 2000; Ressler et al., 1986; Ressler et al., 1988). The study's results highlight that offenders who opt for conning approaches (55%) tend to use less physical force and employ more strategic behaviours when

compared to their coercive counterparts, who favour blitz or surprise attacks. Each approach had a distinct crime script aligned with the rational choice and crime script perspectives (Beauregard et al., 2007a; Beauregard et al., 2007b; Cornish, 1994a; Cornish, 1994b; Rossmo, 2000). Notably, the analysis identified three distinct clusters within the study sample, each characterized by the offenders' choices:

- "The relocators," who opt to move the victim.
- "The abandoners," who choose to leave the body and
- "The eclectics," who exhibited a diverse range of behaviours irrespective of the victim's gender.

In the upcoming discussion, we will explore the study's key findings, analyze the differences between the two approaches, and examine the distinct groups that emerged within the study.

6.2. Pre-Crime Phase: Target Selection

While it is well-documented that most victims of sexual homicide are female (Meloy, 2000; Roberts & Grossman, 1993), one of the most notable distinctions uncovered in this study was the sex of the victim. Offenders who used coercive methods (i.e., blitz or surprise) commonly targetted victims who were female (87.9%). In contrast, male victims were generally associated with cases involving a ruse (i.e., pretending to need assistance). Chopin and Beauregard (2023) conducted an analysis of published literature on sexual murderers targeting adult male victims and found similar results. Their study revealed that those employing a con strategy and displaying sexual sadism were more inclined to target males. This inclination might be attributed to males' tendency to resist their assailants (Beauregard & Proulx, 2007; Chopin & Beauregard, 2023). As the researchers point out, employing a con or ruse helps offenders approach male victims discreetly. Without this tactic, resistance from male victims may result in a loss of control for offenders, hindering the completion of the crime and escalating associated risks like injury, detection, or inability to fulfill their intentions (Chopin & Beauregard, 2021).

Chopin and Beauregard (2023) proposed an interesting theory that males may unknowingly put themselves at risk through their actions, such as seeking sexual encounters with strangers in bars, which in turn could make them more vulnerable to

perpetrators who use a con approach (Chopin & Beauregard, 2023, p. 518). However, the current study's findings suggest differently that victims who were partying were more likely to be subjected to coercive approaches (i.e., blitz or surprise). It found that those employing 'con' approaches seem more inclined to target vulnerable victims (i.e., lifestyles characterized by drugs or alcohol, psychological disorders, and high-risk activities). The tendency of sexual murderers to employ coercive approaches when targetting individuals at social gatherings can be attributed to various factors. Firstly, the impaired judgment resulting from drug or alcohol use in such settings may make potential victims less capable of effective resistance and slower in their reactions (see Beauregard et al., 2007b). Secondly, perpetrators may opt for coercion to avoid the potential rejection that could accompany a more consensual approach involving deception. In a study by MacCulloch et al. (1983), a participant who favoured coercion explained his preference for avoiding the spotlight, stating, "I didn't want to put myself on show in case I made a mess of it" (p. 23). Similarly, 'angry' offenders, who may be intoxicated themselves and tend to employ coercive approaches, appear to be triggered by rejection or the inability to perform (i.e., achieving an erection) (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Stefanska et al., 2015), reinforcing that certain offenders may not be comfortable willingly putting themselves in a vulnerable position for fear of embarrassment or rejection.

Although the current study found that offenders tended to use con tactics when targetting vulnerable victims, the number of such victims was relatively low compared to a review conducted by Beauregard and Martineau (2013). Their study analyzed a comparable number of sexual homicide cases that took place in Canada over 62 years (N = 350 cases, while the current study analyzed 323 cases). However, the earlier study found a higher percentage of vulnerable victims with a history of alcohol (38%) and drug abuse (25.7%). Despite these disparities, the 'con' approach merged as the most employed tactic, accounting for 40% of the cases, reinforcing the consistency in this aspect across different studies (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013).

The research suggests that the offenders chose their tactics based on risk, aligning with previous studies and rational choice theory (Chopin et al., 2020; Cornish, 1993). In sexual crimes, offenders worry about facing resistance from victims and intervention from others, which could lead to their arrest (Chopin & Beauregard, 2023). Some use tricks to approach victims to avoid getting caught making it easier to commit

the crime without interruptions (Chopin & Beauregard, 2023). People who engage in high-risk activities may seem more approachable to strangers, making them vulnerable to being approached with a ruse (Chopin & Beauregard, 2023; Quinet, 2011). Specifically, sex trade workers face unique risks as their profession involves seeking private locations for their work. While not all encounters turn violent, there remains an opportunity for the situation to escalate, especially in isolated areas (Quinet, 2011).

Consequently, sex trade workers may be more inclined to resist or fight back in the face of violence (Apostolopoulos et al., 2012; Potterat et al., 2004; Romero-Daza et al., 2003). However, the fluctuations in their earnings mean that declining a customer due to mere suspicion results in a monetary setback (Quinet, 2007). Collectively, these elements and the challenges in forensic DNA sampling due to multiple partners create an environment that appears less risky to potential offenders, facilitating the commission of violent acts while minimizing the likelihood of being apprehended (Quinet, 2007).

On the other hand, group activities, particularly in a party setting, can create an environment where individuals may seem less approachable to strangers. Consequently, employing a con approach may not seem suitable or might be deemed too risky (Cornish & Clarke, 2008). Perpetrators, driven by the fear of rejection, embarrassment or triggered by performance anxiety, may resort to coercive approaches (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; MacCulloch et al., 1983; Stefanska et al., 2015). Chan et al. (2015) note that these offenders actively wait for a "golden opportunity" when the guardianship is weak or absent, often in places they frequent, such as bars (p. 239). For example, they illustrate a scenario where an individual, to alleviate social anxiety from past experiences, turns to drinking, which helps them feel more powerful, interact more easily with others (particularly women), and feel more sexual (Chan et al., 2015, p. 239). Pedneault and Beauregard's (2014) research supports this idea, indicating that offenders engaged in a party lifestyle may initiate sexual offences in contexts involving alcohol, where both perpetrators and victims are more likely to be intoxicated.

Interestingly, while about a quarter of the victims (24.8%) were involved in domestic activities before the incidents, the offenders did not favour any particular tactic in approaching these individuals. While there were differences in how offenders approached victims who were engaged in activities like partying or high-risk behaviours,

these activities were not exclusive to all victims. Instead, they were simply the activities more commonly associated with a particular approach tactic.

6.3. Behaviours During the Crime Phase

The observed differences between the con offenders and their coercive counterparts continued into the crime phase. One in four offenders who used a 'con' approach persuaded their victims to participate in oral sex. Therefore, the offenders exploited the victims into playing an active role in the crimes committed against them. However, of interest, they were less inclined to resort to physical violence (i.e., beating). This result is noteworthy because it suggests that 'con' offenders may rely more on psychological control and require less physical violence to achieve their goals, compared to those who use alternative tactics, a characteristic also common amongst sadistic offenders (Meloy, 2000; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Reale et al., 2017).

On the other hand, offenders who use blitz or surprise attacks tend to resort more to physically beating the victim and exhibit less discernible behaviours during the commission of their crimes. These behaviours are more common amongst the 'angry' and 'witness elimination' offenders. In these cases, violence might be strategically employed to overcome resistance or avoid detection (Chopin & Beauregard, 2023; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Higgs et al., 2017; Stefanska et al., 2015).

6.4. Post Crime Behaviours

'Forensic awareness' refers to the intentional actions taken by offenders to avoid or delay detection, such as cleaning up or staging a crime scene (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013). In the current sample, the conning offenders displayed a higher likelihood of such actions, as they were more inclined to move the victim's remains and successfully dispose of any weapons used during the attack (i.e., police unable to locate the weapon). Moving a victim's body can increase the likelihood of being seen or heard, but if executed properly, it could also lead to the benefit of delayed detection (Beauregard & Martineau, 2014; Reale et al., 2017). These actions suggest that those employing a 'con' approach may choose riskier but more strategic methods to evade or

delay detection in anticipation of greater rewards than those using other tactics (i.e., blitz or surprise).

Similarly, research indicates that offenders categorized as 'organized' (Ressler et al., 1988) and 'sadistic' (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002) often employ tactics to evade capture. Despite their premeditation and planning (Beauregard et al., 2007c; Beauregard & Proulx, 2002), a study by Reale at al. (2017) revealed that sadistic sexual murderers face a higher risk of being apprehended by the police (Reale et al., 2017). While their actions cannot guarantee avoiding capture, their high level of organization may lead them to use strategies such as relocating or concealing victims' bodies (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002).

Although the 'con' exhibits more strategic behaviours in the post-crime phase than those employing coercive approaches, this study did not identify significant differences between them concerning various factors associated with sadism (i.e., inserting foreign objects or engaging in multiple sexual acts). These findings were somewhat unexpected since sadistic offenders typically display higher levels of organization, strategic planning, and a desire for control in their criminal activities, which are also foundational traits for successfully carrying out a ruse (Meloy, 2000). The study results suggest that sexual murderers may choose specific behaviours based on opportunities influenced by contextual factors such as time and location.

6.5. Classifications of Sexual Murderers Based on Their Approach Method

A recent study conducted by Rossmo (2023) analyzed the accuracy of criminal profiles that had been developed on Joseph James DeAngelo Jr., also known as the "Golden State Killer," a notorious sexual serial murderer. The study found that the most accurate predictions were related to DeAngelo's criminal characteristics, such as his criminal record. Importantly, Rossmo (2023) emphasized that for a criminal profile to be truly helpful, it should significantly contribute to investigative decision-making. This discovery and discussion tie in with our study's third and final goal, which aimed to identify specific clusters based on factors that law enforcement can observe or are unique enough to be a helpful guide. Our research identified three distinct groups, one exhibiting a wide range of behaviours and a preference for the 'con' approach.

Interestingly, the act of beating the victim did not differ significantly between these groups. This suggests that when offenders engage in this behaviour, it might depend more on the situation than just their personal tendencies.

6.5.1. The Abandoners

The 'abandoners' group is distinct from the other offender clusters due to their lack of key behaviours. Significantly, individuals within this cluster did not choose vulnerable victims, compel them to perform oral sex, or relocate the victim's body after the offence. Instead, they displayed a preference for female victims and occasionally resorted to beating them. Members of this group or cluster demonstrated the lowest likelihood of employing a con approach (36%). Instead, they relied on coercion, a characteristic often associated with 'anger' and 'grievance murderers' (Higgs et al., 2017; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). 'Angry' type offenders typically initiate contact with female victims using a blitz attack (Beauregard et al., 2007c; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). Some may employ a ruse, for example, to access the victim's home (Keppell & Walter, 1999). While the victim may initially comply, most of the victims have been found to physically resist their aggressor when the offender used coercive tactics, which might explain the lethal outcome in some of the cases analyzed within this study (Proulx & Beauregard, 2009).

The key distinguishing behaviour of the 'abandoners' is that they all chose not to move the victim's body, a decision akin to the 'angry' typology (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Beech et al., 2005; Chai et al., 2021; Kocsis et al., 2002). Chai et al.'s (2020) findings indicate that offenders tend to move the victim's body more frequently when they lead vulnerable lifestyles—a victim characteristic that is not associated with this cluster. Instead, these crimes may be aggravated by situational factors where offenders did not initially plan to kill their victims but became violent due to contextual elements, such as victim resistance (see Beech et al., 2001; Chopin & Beauregard, 2019; Healey et al., 2016; Stefanska et al., 2015). Given that their original intentions might not have included causing death and their actions have shown to be impulsive (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009), they may not have planned how to handle the victim's body post-mortem (Chai et al., 2020, p. 707). Thus, as Chai et al. (2020) suggest, their lack of foresight could account for their choice not to move the remains (p. 707).

Despite certain similarities of the 'abandoners' with the 'angry' offenders, the absence of behaviours, which is typically seen in other clusters, is more of a characteristic shared among 'rape murderers' (i.e., witness elimination), according to Higgs et al. (2017). Offenders in this category may intend to commit sexual offences without necessarily intending to commit murder (Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Higgs et al., 2017; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Stefanska et al., 2015). However, they are willing to use violence if required, either to overcome resistance or as a strategy to avoid detection (Beech et al., 2001; Beech et al., 2005; Proulx et al., 2007; Stefanska et al., 2015). The disparity in findings can be attributed to at least two reasons. First, the motives of 'angry' type murderers and 'rape murders' (referred to within as witness elimination) are not readily observable, and they share common characteristics (Proulx, 2008). Second, the current study focused on stranger-only offences, whereas studies categorized as 'rape murderers' by Higgs et al. (2017) indicated that this type of murderer targetted victims with whom they had some prior acquaintance (Beech et al., 2005; Kocsis et al., 2002).

Additionally, Chai et al. (2020) discovered that strangers were notably less inclined to move the victim's body. Therefore, the consistent behaviour observed in the 'abandoners' group, where they opt not to relocate the victim's remains, reinforces the notion that when a body is left at the scene without further distinguishing actions, the perpetrator is likely a stranger who employed a more forceful approach in targeting the victim. This suggests that the victim was likely not engaged in high-risk behaviours just before the crime. Such insights could prove valuable to investigators, particularly in cases of stranger-perpetrated sexual homicide, which often start with fewer and less obvious leads.

6.5.2. The Relocators

In contrast to the 'abandoners', the 'relocators' consistently moved the victim's body after the offence and often employed a 'con' approach. Beating was reported in more than a third of the cases, higher than the 'abandoners' but lower than the yet to be discussed 'eclectic' group. Despite these differences, both groups consistently targeted female victims but did not involve oral sex. The 'relocators' sometimes targeted victims with vulnerable lifestyles, constituting nearly one-fifth of cases in this cluster. These findings align with previous research indicating that in sexual homicides involving

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deceptive tactics, offenders tend to choose victims who are less likely to be linked to them through evidence (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013) or to be reported as missing (Quinet, 2007). Studies indicate that these offenders may be able to accumulate more victims than those who do not target people with vulnerable lifestyles (Quinet, 2007), which may also lead them to believe they are less likely to get caught (see Chopin et al., 2020).

In the specific context of sex workers, offenders targeting them average 6.4 victims compared to 5.3 victims for those not involved in the sex trade (Quinet, 2007, p. 91). Sex workers, already at an elevated risk for victimization, may fall into a category Quinet (2007) termed the "missing missing"—individuals who have gone missing but were never reported to the police. These victims often lead transient lifestyles, resulting in delayed reports by loved ones and slower police responses (Quinet, 2007). This gives offenders time to clean up, distance themselves from the scene, and rectify potential mistakes. In context, Quinet (2007) found that serial offenders targetting sex workers as their victims operate, on average, for 9.3 years—almost two years longer than serial murderers who target other victims, with an average operating span of 7.5 years (Godwin, 2008).

Surprisingly, despite primarily employing a 'con' approach, offenders in this group exhibited higher than expected rates of physical violence towards their victims compared to 'abandoners,' who more frequently utilized coercive tactics like blitz or surprise. This finding is intriguing, suggesting that their choice of victims may increase the chances of resistance and retaliation, particularly when victims realize they have been deceived and feel their safety is in jeopardy. Individuals involved in the sex trade frequently encounter violent clients; a study found that 60% of surveyed women reported incidents of rape while working, with one in four reporting attempted murder by a client (Romero-Daza et al., 2003).

The selection of vulnerable victims, although serving to distinguish the 'relocators' from the 'abandoners,' was still a minority within this cluster. However, a consistent characteristic among these perpetrators was their choice to move the victim's body—a risky decision (Beauregard et al., 2007b). This behaviour suggests a comfort with prolonged proximity to a corpse, a trait not universally shared but consistent with characteristics seen in sadistic offenders who derive power and pleasure from engaging

with victims' remains (Meloy, 2000; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). Sadistic offenders may exhibit distinctive "signatures," such as surgically removing body parts, as ritualistic and symbolic elements satisfying their dark fantasies (Meloy, 2000, p. 10). For example, Burgess et al. (1986) documented an individual who found excitement and sexual pleasure in recalling the violent acts committed during a sexual murder involving dismemberment (p. 267). The researchers noted that exerting control over someone's life represents the ultimate form of dominance (Burgess et al., 1986, p. 260).

While this cluster shares similarities with sadistic offenders, who seek pleasure and control (Dietz et al., 1990; Meloy, 2000; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009), there are also surprising differences. For example, the 'relocators' in our study showed a lower tendency to target vulnerable individuals and never compelled victims into performing oral sex. The observation opens the possibility that other typologies, such as those involving 'witness elimination' or expressing anger, may exist within this cluster. Connecting these offenders to witness elimination typologies, as discussed by Proulx (2008), proves complex, as instrumental and opportunistic factors may drive their crimes, occasionally displaying sadistic features (Beech et al., 2001). However, a distinguishing feature of the 'relocator' cluster is their consistent habit of relocating the victim's body, which separates them from witness elimination types, who are less likely to move victims' remains (Kocsis et al., 2002).

The contrast between consistently relocating victims' remains and avoiding oral sex suggests two possible explanations. Firstly, these offenders may possess forensic awareness, moving the remains to avoid detection while limiting sexual acts to manage physical evidence and time efficiently. Since vaginal penetration is the primary sexual act in sexual homicides, these offenders may have considered the trade-offs of including activities like fellatio, acknowledging the extra time and heightened risk of leaving evidence (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013). Managing the body emerges as a common and effective forensic awareness strategy, leading to delayed detection (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013), with offenders often sticking to a single strategy to minimize risks (Beauregard & Martineau, 2014).

Secondly, the fact that all victims in the 'relocator' cluster were female suggests that the 'relocators' might have prioritized sexual acts more common in male-female interactions, such as vaginal penetration. Chopin and Beauregard (2023) make an

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interesting observation regarding sexual homicides involving male victims, where sadistic acts (i.e., involving acts that embarrass a victim such as oral sex) were more frequent than intrusive acts like anal sex. They propose that the absence of anal sex in these cases could be because it is a common practice in consensual homosexual relationships and does not align with expected sadistic patterns for offenders targeting male victims (Chopin & Beauregard, 2023, p. 513). A similar theme may apply to the 'relocator' cluster when targetting female victims, as they may prefer intrusive sexual acts over fellatio. This aligns with patterns seen in sadistic offenders but is also more common among sexual murderers who typically target females (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013; Higgs et al., 2017).

6.5.3. The Eclectic

Unlike their two counterparts, the 'eclectic' group displays a diverse array of behaviours in their sexual homicides. They frequently utilize a 'con' approach, targetting both male and female victims. Also of note, almost half of the cases involved oral sex, a behaviour that was not present among the other clusters. The 'con' approach was favoured when targeting strangers with vulnerable lifestyles, with males being particularly susceptible (Beauregard & Proulx, 2007; Stermac et al., 2004).

The behaviours in this cluster mirror the tactics employed by sadistic murderers who, primarily driven by deviant sexual fantasies, tend to plan their actions and frequently approach strangers under false pretenses (Beauregard et al., 2007b; Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Dietz et al., 1990; Meloy, 2000; Stefanska et al., 2015). Once the sadistic offender gains access to the victim, they exert a heightened degree of control over both the victim and the unfolding crime; during this time, these offenders may also force the victim to perform fellatio (Proulx & Beauregard, 2009; Dietz et al., 1990).

The act of fellatio could serve one of two purposes: firstly, it may align with the offender's fantasy to humiliate and control the victim (Proulx & Beauregard, 2009); secondly, for males, it might be a ruse to manipulate the victim and facilitate a different crime, such as robbery (Beauregard & Proulx, 2007). Nonetheless, since the behaviour is not commonly observed in sexual homicide (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013), it serves

as an essential component in these crimes since almost half the cluster engaged in this type of sexual act.

Interestingly, despite the use of manipulation, the 'eclectic' group had the highest rate of beating their victim, which was noted in almost half of the cases. The findings suggest that despite having a degree of psychological control over their victim (see Reale et al., 2017), contextual factors may have required them to use force For example, the victim may have resisted (see Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007), which may be more common among male victims (Beauregard & Proulx, 2007) or those with vulnerable lifestyles, where violence is often more prevalent (Apostolopoulos et al., 2012; Potterat et al., 2004; Romero-Daza et al., 2003).

A surprising finding amongst this group is that fewer perpetrators moved the victims' remains. The finding contradicts previous research, as moving a victim's body is typically linked to sadistic offenders or situations where the victim is seen as vulnerable (Beauregard & Martineau, 2014; Chai et al., 2020; Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). The behaviour of moving the victims' remains is not determined by whether the case is solved or not, even though it is a strategy offenders use to lower the chances of getting caught (Beauregard & Martineau, 2014; Chai et al., 2020). One possible reason for the difference in our cases could be that the perpetrators were involved in more complex actions, like fellatio or manipulative approaches, which may have taken up more time (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002). As a result, the perpetrators might have thought that moving the victim's body posed too much risk, possibly explaining the lower occurrence of this behaviour in our study.

Chapter 7.

Conclusion

In sum, this study examined the behaviours of sexual murderers and how they differed based on their selected approach method. The results indicate that during the commission of the crime, the behaviours of individuals who commit those crimes to express anger or eliminate witnesses are like those who use coercive methods to approach the victim, such as in surprise or blitz attacks. Meanwhile, the adaptability and control demonstrated by conning offenders seem to align with those of sadistic offenders.

The conning offenders selected more victims from vulnerable populations and employed detection avoidance strategies by moving the victim's remains and successfully getting rid of the weapon they used. In contrast, offenders who used blitz or surprise attacks tended to select female partygoers, beat their victims, and were less concerned with using detection avoidance methods.

Research highlights that the longer it takes to discover a body after a homicide, the lower the chances of finding forensic evidence, which is often crucial for identifying, capturing, and convicting the perpetrator (Beauregard & Martineau, 2014). This delay exacerbates the substantial expenses of investigating such crimes (DeLisi et al., 2010) and the risk of another crime being committed (Kocsis et al., 2002). As a consequence, the societal impact can be profound. The case of Bruce McArthur, a serial murderer in Toronto who targetted males through a ruse, serves to highlight the significance of the need to understand the typical markings of crime types and the methods to access the victims at the outset of an investigation. The series of murders remained undetected for prolonged periods despite police having previously questioned McArthur about a violent incident which may have been an unsuccessful murder attempt. The consensual nature of the initial interaction between the victim and McArthur served to obscure any immediate evidence which could have pointed to his more sinister intentions. Given the fact that offenders who use the con approach often share characteristics with sadistic offenders, resolving the case in a timely fashion is paramount, as sadistic offenders are also linked to a higher number of victim counts (Kocsis et al., 2002).

Although there were some differences between the two groups, neither group was better than the other in getting away with murder, as most cases were solved. Nevertheless, their decision-making underscored a degree of rationality, aligning with Cornish and Clarke's (1986, 1994a) rational choice perspective, irrespective of the decision quality.

7.1. Theoretical Implications

At a theoretical level, this study supports the idea that those who commit sexual murder make rational choices when committing their crimes. Specifically, those who use manipulation tactics (i.e., con approaches) are more likely to choose victims whom they think are easy targets and worth the risk (Martineau & Beauregard, 2016; Quinet, 2011). The 'con' approach involves a strategic tactic based on the chance of encountering a victim who may resist if approached using coercive methods, like males. Instead of using violence, these offenders may trick and deceive their victims to reduce resistance and avoid drawing attention to the situation (Beauregard et al., 2007b). This way of making decisions is described by Cornish (1993) as self-interested, where individuals pick actions that give them the most benefit for their time and effort (Chopin et al., 2020; Cornish, 1993; Cornish & Clarke, 1985; Cornish & Clarke, 1994a; Piquero, 2002). A con approach strategy allows them to keep trying until they find a suitable victim, displaying that they can adapt their behaviour to the context and various situations— a key idea to the theory (Beauregard et al., 2007c; Cornish, 1993).

Moreover, the 'con' group, possibly to avoid detection, frequently employs tactics like relocating the victim's remains and strategically disposing of any weapons they used. These actions align with the behaviour of offenders actively seeking to evade apprehension (Beauregard & Field, 2008). Although these tactics may initially seem risky due to the potential of being seen or heard during the process (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013), successful execution of these strategies can yield benefits, including evading or delaying capture (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013).

In contrast, individuals who use more coercive tactics to approach victims may be driven by anger or the need to eliminate witnesses, often leading to a greater likelihood of employing more violent methods to control the victim (i.e., beating). Since these crimes typically entail less planning, they may be less complex, with the

perpetrators aiming to minimize the time spent on committing the crime to decrease those chances of getting caught (see Chai et al., 2021). Moreover, these individuals may also find comfort in executing surprise or blitz attacks, as offenders linked to these methods are often associated with a history of violence against women (Beech et al., 2001) and are typically less socially inclined compared to their conning counterparts (Beauregard & Proulx, 2002; Ressler et al., 1988).

It is evident from the study findings that sexual murderers carefully weigh the pros and cons before engaging in their crimes, regardless of their chosen approach method. The specific actions they take may differ depending on the situation, but identifying common characteristics can be helpful to investigators who want to understand the type of person they are dealing with (Higgs et al., 2017) or identify early warning signs of failed attempts.

7.2. Practical Implications

Recognizing the approach employed by sexual murderers, particularly those who use a con approach, can be helpful to the investigative decision-making process. Offenders who use this strategy have the ability to blend into everyday situations, which makes it difficult for victims and witnesses to identify potential danger or instances when they may have narrowly escaped harm. Therefore, it may require strategic efforts on behalf of law enforcement to recognize and link the failed attempts to their case of sexual homicide.

A study by Beauregard et al. (2007d) found that 28% of offenders faced difficulty accessing their victims initially, and 40% used deception to gain access. The results suggest that in more than one in four cases, potential witnesses could have aided investigations. Some offenders might have been identified or documented in police databases during these attempts, as research suggests that over one in five offenders may have prior convictions (Beauregard & Martineau, 2013). While those using a 'con' approach may not leave physical evidence at the initial scene, these interactions can provide valuable insight into the unfolding events. The current study's findings indicate common features in crimes committed by deceptive offenders, offering investigators recognizable characteristics in the early stages of an investigation. Understanding the offender's approach may not independently solve the crime, but it sets the stage for

determining whether strategic behaviours (e.g., relocating the body or successfully disposing of the weapon) or impulsive behaviours were likely involved. For instance, encountering a crime scene with signs of victim movement and specific activities, such as oral sex, may suggest that the victim was approached under false pretenses, regardless of their gender, and could have belonged to a high-risk population.

Building on the information available from the outset, investigators can strategically focus on specific locations or neighbourhoods frequented by the victim. The informed methodology may assist in identifying individuals whom the perpetrator may have approached, potential witnesses, or people capable of recognizing the victim. This becomes especially crucial when the victim's identity is not yet known, a common characteristic among high-risk victims (Quinet, 2007).

Moreover, perpetrators targeting strangers and high-risk victims tend to cover greater distances during their crimes (Martineau & Beauregard, 2016). Tools like geographic profiling can be utilized to align with the offender type and their typical movements to enhance the investigative process. For instance, this method could prove particularly valuable in cases involving sadistic offenders who frequently use deceptive tactics, as they are known to travel longer distances to commit their crimes (Dietz et al., 1990; Kocsis et al., 2002). As Rossmo (2023) demonstrated, integrating physical evidence, investigative tools, and accounts from victims and witnesses can effectively identify a stranger offender and play a vital role in solving major crimes. However, leveraging the right tool requires investigators to understand the characteristics common among offenders, which could be informed by distinguishing the approach they used to access the victim.

7.3. Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights, it's crucial to recognize its exploratory nature and role in paving the way for future research. The findings underscore the strategic tendencies of offenders using the 'con' approach compared to the less organized efforts of other strategies like blitz and surprise attacks. However, despite their calculated approach, these individuals were not more successful at avoiding detection than their counterparts. Actions such as relocating the victim's body may delay discovery but also increase the risk of being seen or heard. Therefore, although the

study suggests a planned strategy, the effectiveness of these tactics remains unclear. Addressing some limitations is essential to further fill the gaps in the existing literature.

Firstly, the study focused solely on the leading approach employed by an offender during the pre-crime phase without considering any additional strategies which may have been utilized. Future studies could benefit from a "mixed" approach method, such as when an offender uses a ruse to gain access to the victim's home and then attacks them immediately upon entering. Additionally, the study lacked contextual data, such as the length of the crimes and/or the number of crime scenes, which could also aid police investigations. In future studies, it would be helpful to compare strategies according to the location of the murder (i.e., public or private) and to consider the different victim-offender interactions that occur during the crime. It would be valuable to take into account the amount of time spent by the offender with the victim, considering that previous research has shown that sadistic offenders, who often use deceitful tactics to approach their victims, tend to spend more time with them (See Proulx & Beauregard, 2009). By understanding the duration of the interaction, it may be easier to determine if certain acts, such as oral sex, occurred simply because the offender had more time to manipulate the victim or if the interaction was initially consensual and then turned violent.

Given the potential value of this information for law enforcement, especially in relation to their access to unsolved cases, they could derive significant benefits from testing these findings. Through this process, law enforcement could gain insights into the reasons behind the offender's decisions and a deeper understanding of how the crime unfolded. This feedback loop can contribute to refining investigative strategies and enhancing the overall effectiveness of solving cases. As Rossmo (2023) noted, feedback is vital in improving performance and learning from successes and failures—a fundamental component crucial for our personal and professional growth (p. 12).

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