



Det. John J. Baeza¹; Brent E. Turvey, MS²

Title: "CBLRP: Review of 'Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide'"

Reference: Baeza, J., & Turvey, B., "CBLRP: Review of 'Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide'," *Journal of Behavioral Profiling*, January, 2000, Vol. 1, No. 1

¹John J. Baeza is a sex crime detective with the New York Police Department in the Manhattan Special Victim's Squad. He has fifteen years of experience in law enforcement. He is currently serving as Chair of the Ethics Committee for the Academy of Behavioral Profiling, and is a member of their Board of Directors. He can be reached for comment or consultation by contacting: jbaeza@profiling.org;

²Brent E. Turvey, MS is a forensic scientist, criminal profiler, and a full partner of Knowledge Solutions, LLC. He is currently serving as Secretary of the Academy of Behavioral Profiling, and is a member of their Board of Directors. He can be reached for comment, consultation or reprints of this article by contacting: Knowledge Solutions, 1961 Main St., PMB 221, Watsonville, CA 95076; Phone (831)786-9238; bturvey@corpus-delicti.com.

Purpose & Rationale

The purpose of the *Criminal Behavior Literature Review Project* is to examine and critically review in a deliberate and consistent fashion any widely referenced and/ or seminal work published in the areas related to criminal profiling, criminal behavior, and criminal investigation. It is the short-term goal of this project to provide objective and informed reviews of published works to the professional community. It is the long-term goal of this project that the result will be a database of reviews from which conclusions about the overall quality of the published literature on a given subject may be drawn.

This project is being undertaken by the *Journal of Behavioral Profiling* due to the apparent lack of consistent, detailed peer review of published work within other venues in the professional community, and the widespread publication and referencing of unreviewed material by students and professionals alike. The benefits of this project include the provision for an informed readership and a mechanism for critical feedback into the professional community.

Procedure

Each review will include an assessment of the work being reviewed utilizing a uniform criteria, in order that potential biases and influences may be blunted. While not bound to any particular structure, each review includes consideration of the following issues:

1. Is the nature of the work made clear by the author(s) (opinion piece, editorial, original research, validation study, literature review, technical note, etc.)?
2. Is the training, education, and/ or experience of the author(s) related to the subject matter of the work?
3. Is the work written in clear, understandable language?
4. How does the author(s) establish any behavior that is being studied or discussed?
5. What is the reliability of the data used by the author(s)?
6. Does the author(s) clearly operationalize their terms of study or discussion?
7. To what extent does the author rely upon media accounts or works of true crime for data?

8. Are the appropriate controls utilized?
 9. Are the appropriate citations utilized?
 10. Does the author(s) present inductive hypotheses as deductive conclusions, or do conclusions flow clearly from the facts presented?
 11. Are the conclusions reached by the author(s) clear?
 12. To what extent does the author(s) rely upon their own education, training, and experience for interpretations given in the work, in place of articulable scientific fact?
 13. Is the training, education, and/ or experience of the author(s) commensurate to the nature of conclusions or opinions rendered?
 14. Overall assessment of the relevance and utility of the work to the professional community.
 15. Commentary
 16. Recommendations
-

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

Authors: Louis B. Schlesinger, PhD, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York; Eugene Revitch, MD, (posthumously) former Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. School of Medicine, Piscataway, New Jersey.

Reference: Revitch, E. & Schlesinger, L., "Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide: Clinical, Forensic, and Investigative Considerations," *Journal of American Academy of Psychiatry and Law*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1999

Note: On October 24, 1999, the following Letter to the Editor was submitted to the Editor of *Journal of American Academy of Psychiatry and Law* and the surviving author of the article by the reviewers. As of this date, neither party has provided a response to the reviewers.

October 24, 1999

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Det. John J. Baeza, Manhattan Special Victim's Squad, NYPD; Brent E. Turvey, M.S., Knowledge Solutions, LLC, Watsonville, CA

TO: Editor, Journal of American Academy of Psychiatry and Law; Louis B. Schlesinger, PhD, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York;

SUBJECT: **Letter to the Editor - Control Groups, Data Reliability and the True Crime Genre**

Sir;

We read with interest the recently published article: Revitch, E. & Schlesinger, L., "Sexual Burglaries and Sexual Homicide: Clinical, Forensic, and Investigative Considerations," *Journal of American Academy of Psychiatry and Law*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1999. As forensic caseworkers and fellow researchers, several of the elements of this article gave us cause for concern. This concern has subsequently manifested itself in the writing of this letter, in the hopes of having questions about the nature and quality of the research undertaken by Dr. Revitch and Dr. Schlesinger addressed and hopefully answered.

At the heart of this study, a chart is presented on p.234, with data shown from Robert Keppel's *Signature Killers* (1997) (n=11), Robert Ressler's *Whoever Fights Monsters* (1992) (n=13), John Douglas' *Mindhunter* (1995) (n=16), and Dr. Schlesinger & Dr. Revitch's own case files (n=52). These data are presented individually and then aggregated to elicit totals regarding cases of sexual homicide vs. cases where the known offender had a demonstrable history of burglary.

Firstly, the terms *sexual homicide* and *sexual burglary* are not clearly defined for use in the study by Revitch & Schlesinger. That is to say, the authors did not take care to clearly operationalize the meaning of these terms, despite having rendered a data chart and formed conclusions with them. It would be helpful if the definitions of these terms could be established by the authors so that case selection criteria may be known, and their study potentially duplicated.

Secondly, the "data" used to fill out this chart (and portions of the article), apart from that which comes from

the authors themselves, is taken from works which are at best described as true crime. Other true crime works are referenced by the authors as well, as the basis for offender behavioral information and inference, including Rae, G.W., *Confessions of the Boston Strangler* (1967), Frank, G., *The Boston Strangler* (1966), and Brussel, J., *Casebook of a Crime Psychiatrist* (1968). These works, it is easily discernible, are not objective independently peer reviewed research publications with the appropriate cites by any stretch of the imagination. Rather, they are sensationalized, mass-market materials, comprised of liberal author case reflections of dubious reliability.

We are puzzled as to why Revitch & Schlesinger have used these works as a basis for case data, as though they are factual and reliable. Arguably these true crime works have now done an end run around the peer review gateway by virtue of inclusion in Revitch & Schlesinger's study, which has been published in what is regarded as a peer reviewed professional journal. This should be a great cause for professional concern, and does a disservice to those who take care to perform legitimate research by carefully collecting and scrutinizing their case data before forming any conclusions about it, let alone seeking professional publication.

Thirdly, having read and reread the true crime works referenced by this study, we are aware that there are numerous case duplications across the three works, which comprise the "data" presented. For your benefit, we ask that you quickly examine a chart of our making:

<u>Case</u>	<u>Authors</u>
Carmine Calabro	Douglas, Ressler
Jeffrey Dahmer	Ressler, Keppel
Harvey Glatman	Keppel, Ressler
William Heirens	Douglas, Keppel, Ressler
Edmund Kemper	Douglas, Ressler
Steven Pennell	Douglas, Keppel
George Russell	Douglas, Keppel

This chart is meant to convey the fact that in-depth discussions of at least these seven cases are duplicated in the true crime works referenced by the authors of this article. It is also important to note that many of the cases discussed in the true crime works referenced by Revitch & Schlesinger are incomplete in regards to factual information presented, begging the question as to the actual number of cases that Revitch & Schlesinger can reasonably claim to have elicited. In any case, Revitch & Schlesinger do not specifically mention which cases have been elicited as data for inclusion in their study from the true crime works noted above. Therefore, we cannot know if any cases have been erroneously duplicated in their aggregation of these works with their own case files. It would be important to know this, to determine if the data presented by Revitch & Schlesinger, and their subsequent findings, have been effected by this duplication, as well as for purposes of research duplication.

Fourthly, we would like to make note of the fact that the use of statistical analysis does not automatically make research findings scientific and subsequently meaningful. Data by itself is only data (and then only as reliable as the source). It is the employment of the scientific method (i.e.- hypothesis testing, the use of the appropriate control groups) in the interpretation of data which gives it meaning. Statistics compiled regarding a particular group of criminal behaviors and characteristics, for example, have no meaning unless they are compared to the appropriate controls.

In this study, an appropriate control group might have been a group of burglars who had no history of sexual homicide. As it stands, Revitch & Schlesinger studied only sexual homicides, including serial homicides (without defining what those are in use), then separated out those offenders who also had a history of burglary and sexual burglary (without defining what those are in use). The authors also infer, numerous times, that many burglaries have an inherent sexual component or foundation. No facts or data were provided to support this hypothesis. Revitch & Schlesinger then conclude that their data is in line with this hypothesis (which is no surprise, as the data presented included only burglars who went on to commit sexual homicide).

This research contained no control groups for data comparison and poorly operationalized terms. As such we would suggest that any inferences or conclusions regarding the questionable data aggregated by Revitch & Schlesinger from true crime works, as well as their own case files, are premature. And arguably without legitimate scientific foundation.

They finally proceed to suggest, investigatively, that based on their findings, individuals with a history of burglary should become prime suspects in a sexual homicide investigation (despite the fact that their own

data shows that 60% of the cases studied involved sexual homicide offenders without a history of burglary). Though this suggestion is not necessarily bad when all other suspects have been eliminated (especially those with a history of sexual homicide), it has not been demonstrated by the authors that those individuals with a history of burglary should be advanced to the level of prime suspect. Arguably, to do so would be counterproductive to an investigative effort unless all other investigative avenues have been exhausted, because investigators would be sifting through thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of burglary suspects. The result would be a colossal waste of valuable investigative time and energy, unless, again, undertaken as a last resort. As such, we question the real world investigative utility of this conclusion and ask that it be explained more thoroughly.

In light of the above concerns, we would appreciate a response and look forward to reading it at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,

Det. John J. Baeza

Brent E. Turvey, MS

Review

Is the nature of the work made clear by the author(s)? This article appears to be a literature review of the subject of sexual and/ or fetish burglaries, and a presentation of quasi-original research findings. The term quasi-original is used due to the clumping of the author's original research with work published elsewhere as part of their findings. The second part is a surprise, occurring without warning on the seventh page of the article.

Is the training, education, and/ or experience of the author(s) related to the subject matter of the work? Certainly the authors possess the academic credentials and experience to perform research in the area related to the subject matter of this work, given their respective criminal justice and psychiatric backgrounds. However as part of their findings, they make the investigative suggestion that individuals with a history of burglary should become prime suspects in a sexual homicide investigation. This is despite the fact that their own data shows that 60% of the cases studied involved sexual homicide offenders without a history of burglary. Given the low quality of this suggestion, and its lack of foundation within their own work, we found ourselves questioning the investigative experience of the authors. No mention of investigative experience was made in the authors' information or within the article itself. As such there is some question as to whether it is appropriate for the authors to make investigative suggestions or opine on investigative issues.

Is the work written in clear, understandable language? This work is written in easy to read language, and presented in a clear format.

How does the author(s) establish any behavior that is being studied or discussed? There is no specific discussion of this issue in the article. The authors state that one set of data is taken from "a retrospective review of our case files." The other sets of data, taken from true crime and memoir genre publications, are assumed to be reliable without any discussion or qualification.

What is the reliability of the data used by the authors? The reliability of the data used by the authors is not discussed in the article, rather readers are left to assume its veracity. However, given that data was taken from non-peer reviewed true crime and memoir genre publications, which for the most part have no citations as to source, the reliability of much of the data is very low.

Does the author(s) clearly operationalize their terms of study or discussion? As discussed in the Letter to the Editor given above, the authors do not adequately define the two research terms used routinely within their article: *sexual homicide* and *sexual burglary*. This could make independent duplication of their findings difficult, if not impossible. It also makes the findings hard to understand and apply.

To what extent does the author rely upon media accounts or works of true crime for data? The authors rely exclusively on works of true crime for some of their data, including *Confessions of the Boston Strangler* (1967) by G.W. Rae and *The Boston Strangler* (1966) by G. Frank.

Are the appropriate controls utilized? No control groups are utilized in the interpretation of data by the authors.

Are the appropriate citations utilized? Clear and consistent citations are utilized when referencing the material of others.

Does the author(s) present inductive hypothesis as deductive conclusions, or do conclusions flow clearly from the facts presented? Are the conclusions reached by the author(s) clear? No clear findings are presented other than that the data presented "show a clear relationship between burglaries and sexual homicide in slightly more than one-third of the cases." The nature and extent of this correlation, which is referred to as a relationship, is not discussed other than in terms of other correlations. The potential causes of this correlation are also not discussed. What the authors argue, repeatedly, is the need for looking carefully at burglary cases to accurately identify any sexual components or aspects. The authors adduce several examples to illustrate this point, but provide no specific guidelines for making these types of identifications.

To what extent does the author(s) rely upon their own education, training, and experience for interpretations given in the work, in place of articulable scientific fact? This article contains few, if any, clear interpretations of the data presented other than it supports the notion that sexual burglaries occur and that all concerned should keep a watchful eye for them.

Is the training, education, and/ or experience of the author(s) commensurate to the nature of conclusions or opinions rendered? As stated already, the authors present an investigative discussion for which no qualification is provided, which has dubious reliability and real world utility.

Overall assessment of the relevance and utility of the work to the professional community? For reasons that should be clear at this point, this article is empirically and scientifically weak. It also contains few meaningful or useful conclusions. As such, its relevance and utility to the professional community of investigators and forensic practitioners is greatly diminished. However, this article might be of some interest to a forensic practitioner that had never heard of sexual burglaries. This provided that the data presentation and clinical descriptive findings were omitted, and that the operationalization of the terms was undertaken.

Commentary: Given the uncritical reliance of the authors on true crime and memoir genre mass media publications as data worthy of study, the potential duplication of data within the agglomerated findings presented, and the lack of useful or substantive conclusions, it is the opinion of these reviewers that this article should not have been published.

Recommendations: This article should not be referenced as legitimate scientific research, nor should its data or findings be included in future research.