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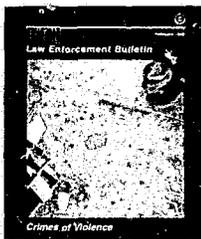
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**Cover:** By improving their ability to analyze violent crime scenes, investigators will be better equipped to apprehend the offender. See article p. 1. Front and back cover photographs copyright Frank Siteman Studios.

**United States Department of Justice  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, DC 20535**

**William S. Sessions, Director**

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The Attorney General has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of the Department of Justice. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

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The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (ISSN-0014-5688) is published monthly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 10th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20535. Second-Class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C. 20535.

# The Criminal Sexual Sadist



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**A**ny investigator who has taken a statement from a tortured victim or who has worked the crime scene of a sexually sadistic homicide will never forget the experience. Human cruelty reveals itself in many kinds of offenses, but seldom more starkly than in the crimes of sexual sadists.

This article describes the more commonly encountered actions of sexual sadists and differentiates sexual sadism from other cruel acts. It also describes the common characteristics of sexually sadistic crimes and offers investigators suggestions that they should follow

when confronted with the crimes of the sexually sadistic offender.

### WHAT IS SEXUAL SADISM?

Sexual sadism is a persistent pattern of becoming sexually excited in response to another's suffering. Granted, sexual excitement can occur at odd times even in normal people. But to the sexually sadistic offender, it is the suffering of the victim that is sexually arousing.

The writings of two sexual sadists graphically convey their desires. One writes:

"...the most important radical aim is to make her suffer since there is no greater power over

another person than that of inflicting pain on her to force her to undergo suffering without her being able to defend herself. The pleasure in the complete domination over another person is the very essence of the sadistic drive."

Of his sexually sadistic activities with a victim he killed, another offender writes:

"...she was writhing [sic] in pain and I loved it. I was now combining my sexual high of rape and my power high of fear to make a total sum that is now beyond explaining...I was alive for the sole purpose of

causing pain and receiving sexual gratification...I was relishing the pain just as much as the sex...."

Each offender's account confirms that it is the suffering of the victim, not the infliction of physical or psychological pain, that is sexually arousing. In fact, one of these men resuscitated his victim from unconsciousness so that he could continue to savor her suffering. Inflicting pain is a means to create suffering and to elicit the desired responses of obedience, submission, humiliation, fear, and terror.

### PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERING

Specific findings uncovered during an investigation determine if the crime committed involves sexual sadism. The critical issues are whether the victim suffered, whether the suffering was intentionally elicited, and whether the suffering sexually aroused the offender. This is why neither sexual nor cruel acts committed on an unconscious or dead victim is necessarily evidence of sexual sadism; such a victim cannot experience suffering. For this reason, postmortem injuries alone do not indicate sexual sadism.

Rapists cause their victims to suffer, but only sexual sadists intentionally inflict that suffering, whether physical or psychological, to enhance their own arousal. Neither the severity of an offender's cruelty nor the extent of a victim's suffering is evidence of sexual sadism. Acts of extreme cruelty or those that cause great suffering are

often performed for nonsexual purposes, even during sexual assaults.

### SEXUALLY SADISTIC BEHAVIOR

The behavior of sexual sadists, like that of other sexual deviants, extends along a wide spectrum. Sexual sadists can be law-abiding citizens who fantasize but do not act or who fulfill these fantasies with freely consenting partners. Only when sexual sadists commit crimes do their fantasies become relevant to law enforcement.

### Sadistic Fantasy

All sexual acts and sexual crimes begin with fantasy. However, in contrast with normal sexual fantasies, those of the sexual sadist center on domination, control, humiliation, pain, injury, and violence, or a combination of these themes, as a means to elicit suffering. As the fantasies of the sexual sadist vary, so does the degree of violence.

The fantasies discerned from the personal records of offenders are complex, elaborate, and involve detailed scenarios that include specific methods of capture and control, location, scripts to be followed by the victim, sequence of sexual acts, and desired victim responses. Sexual sadists dwell frequently on these fantasies, which often involve multiple victims and sometimes include partners.

*Case:* One offender, who is believed to have kidnapped, tortured, and murdered more than 20 women and young girls, wrote extensively about

his sexually sadistic fantasies involving women. These writings included descriptions of his victims' capture, torment, and death by hanging. At the time of his arrest, photographs were found depicting the subject in female attire and participating in autoerotic asphyxia. The offender apparently acted out his fantasies on both himself and others.

### Sadism Toward Symbols

Some individuals act out their sadistic desires against inanimate



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objects, most often dolls, pictures, and clothing, but sometimes corpses. As in the case of fantasy, the suffering in such activity is imagined.

*Case:* A female doll was found hanging outside an emergency room of a hospital. Around its neck was a hangman's noose, and its hands were bound behind its back. Needles penetrated one eye and one ear. Burn marks were present on the doll, and cotton protruded from its mouth. Drawn on the chest of the doll were what appeared to be sutures. An incision had been made between the legs, creating an orifice to which hair had been glued and into which a pencil had been inserted. Nothing indicated that a crime occurred.

Although it is commonly believed that sexual sadists are cruel toward animals, it has not been determined that such cruelty is related to sexual sadism. Violent men were often cruel to animals during childhood, but without sexual excitement. Cruel acts toward animals may reflect nonsexual aggressive and sadistic motives or may be sacrifices demanded by religious rituals or delusional beliefs. Someone who is sexually excited by an animal's suffering is probably both a sexual sadist and a zoophile (one attracted to animals).

#### **Consenting or Paid Partners**

Sexual sadism may also be acted out with freely consenting or paid partners, e.g., prostitutes who specialize in roleplaying the "sub-

missive" for sexually sadistic clients. The nature of the acts varies from simulations of discomfort to actions that result in severe injury. A consenting partner turns into a victim when her withdrawal of consent goes unheeded or when an act results in unexpected injury or death. This is when such acts come to the attention of law enforcement.

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#### **Compliant Victims**

Some sexual sadists cultivate compliant victims, i.e., those who enter into a voluntary relationship but are manipulated into sado-masochistic activities for an extended time. These victims are wives or girlfriends who underwent extreme emotional, physical, and sexual abuse over months or years of a relationship that began as an ordinary courtship. In these instances, the offenders shaped the behavior of the women into gradual acceptance of progressively deviant sexual acts, and then, through social isolation and repeated abuse, battered their self-images until the women believed they deserved the punishments meted out by their "lovers."

*Case:* One woman in her thirties advised authorities that she had been coerced into an emotionally, physically, and sexually abusive relationship

over an 18-month period. At first, she considered her offender to be the most loving and caring man she had ever known, and she fell deeply in love. Having occasionally used cocaine in the past, she was receptive to his suggestion that they use cocaine to enhance their sexual relations. Eventually, she became addicted. After 6 months together, he began to abuse her sexually. This abuse included forced anal sex, whipping, painful sexual bondage, anal rape by other males, and the insertion of large objects into her rectum. This abusive behavior continued for a full year before she made her initial complaint to the police.

These cases pose special problems to investigators and prosecutors because it appears as though the complainant "consented" to the abuse. However, the transformation of the vulnerable partner into a compliant victim resembles the process by which other abusive men intimidate and control battered women into remaining with their abusers.

#### **BEHAVIOR PATTERNS CONFUSED WITH SEXUAL SADISM**

Many crimes involve the intentional infliction of physical and psychological suffering. Sexual sadism is only one of the several motives for such crimes. To avoid misinterpretation, investigators should be aware of those behavior patterns that appear to be sexually sadistic, but which, in fact, arise from different motives and contexts.

## Sadistic Personality Disorder

Persons with this condition usually exhibit cruel, demeaning, and aggressive behavior in both social and work situations, most often toward subordinates. They tend to establish dominance in interpersonal relationships and convey a lack of respect or empathy for others. Such individuals are often fascinated by violence, take pleasure in demeaning, humiliating, and frightening others, and may enjoy inflicting physical or psychological abuse. In this condition, the purpose of these behaviors is not that of becoming aroused.

*Case:* A woman left her husband because of his verbal abuse, control over her relations with family members, intimidating behavior, and violent outbursts when drinking. Vengeful that she left him, he lured her back to the apartment under the pretext of dividing their possessions. He then attempted to tie her to the bed, beside which he had arranged a variety of torture instruments. In the ensuing struggle, he told her of his plans to kill her as he stabbed her repeatedly. She eventually persuaded him that she wanted to reconcile and convinced him to summon medical assistance, whereupon he was arrested.

The husband did not have a history of sexual offenses or deviations, nor did he give evidence of sexual sadism during the psychiatric examination. He denied any sexual arousal in response to the suffering

or any sexually sadistic fantasies. Although it is possible that the husband was a sexual sadist who only showed this tendency when he attacked his wife, the absence of evidence showing a persistent pattern of sexual arousal in response to suffering precluded this diagnosis.

## Cruelty During Crime

While many crimes contain elements of cruelty, the acts are not

necessarily sexually sadistic in nature.

*Case:* Two men, recently escaped from a State prison, captured a young couple and took them to an isolated area. After repeatedly raping the woman, they severely beat the couple and locked them in the trunk of their car. They then set the car on fire and left the couple to burn to death.

## Investigating Crimes of the Sexual Sadist



**T**he law enforcement community's concern rests with the criminal sexual sadist, who can be a noteworthy adversary. The sexual sadist is cunning and accomplished at deception. He rationalizes his actions, feels no remorse or guilt, and is not moved by compassion. He considers himself superior to society in general and law enforcement in particular. And, while he envies the power and authority associated with the police, he does not respect it.

## Sources

Invaluable sources of information about suspects in sexual offenses are their former spouses or girlfriends. As noted previously, sexual sadists sometimes force partners to become compliant victims. However, because of the embarrassing nature of the sexual acts involved, these individuals are often reluctant to divulge information.

## Search Warrants

Because offenders retain incriminating evidence and crime paraphernalia, these items should be listed in search warrant applications. This would include records and mementos, as well as photographic equipment, tape recorders, reverse telephone directories, and weapons or other instruments used to elicit suffering. Pornography, detective and mercenary magazines, bondage paraphernalia, women's undergarments, and sexual devices are other materials commonly collected by sexual sadists.

Although these men intentionally inflicted physical and psychological suffering on their victims, there was no indication they did so for sexual excitement. They beat the couple after the rape and left as the victims were screaming and begging for mercy. Sexual sadists would have been sexually stimulated by the victims' torment and would have remained at the scene until the suffering ended.

### **Pathological Group Behavior**

Cruelty often arises in offenses committed as a group, even where the individuals have no history of cruelty.

*Case:* A group of adolescents attacked a mother of six as she walked through her neighborhood. They dragged her into a shed where they beat her and repeatedly inserted a long steel rod into her rectum, causing her death. Some of her attackers were friends of her children.

Most likely, the participants in this attack tried to prove themselves to the others by intensifying the acts of cruelty.

### **Sanctioned Cruelty**

History is replete with reigns of terror during which powerful institutions sanctioned atrocious behaviors. Consider the rape and plunder of defeated populations during the Crusades of the Middle Ages, or the execution of women during the

Salem witch hunts in colonial America. One of the most notorious times of cruelty occurred in the 20th century, when millions of people fell victim to the Nazis.



*Case:* Commandant Koch, who headed the concentration camp at Buchenwald, punished a man who tried to escape by confining him in a wooden box so small he could only crouch. He then ordered that small nails be driven through its walls so that he could not move without being pierced. This man was kept on public display without food for two days and three nights until his screams ceased to sound human.<sup>1</sup>

In all likelihood, sexual sadists volunteered to perform such deeds, but the widespread deployment of such tactics was politically and racially motivated.

### **Revenge-motivated Cruelty**

Cruelty is often evident during acts that are inspired by an obsessional desire for revenge over either real or imagined wrongs.

*Case:* A physician married a show girl and came to believe that she was being unfaithful, even though there was no evidence to substantiate this. Eventually, his obsession overcame his logic, and he decided to ensure that no man would ever take her away from him. After lashing her to a table, he poured sulfuric acid over her body and face. She survived 84 days in agony before succumbing to her injuries.

The offender in this case wanted to punish his wife and make sure that she would not be desirable to any man. His act was not designed to gratify himself sexually.

### **Interrogative Cruelty**

Torture during interrogation may involve sexual areas of the body, which is sometimes misinterpreted as being sexually sadistic in nature.

*Case:* A government agent was captured in another country. During his months in captivity, he was continually subjected to physical torture, including beatings with clubs and electrical shocks to all parts of his body, even his genitals.

The victim was tortured in this manner to obtain information concerning his government's activities in that country, not to enhance sexual arousal.

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## Postmortem Mutilation

The intentional mutilation of a victim after death is often mistakenly attributed to sexual sadism. However, in a majority of these cases, the offender kills the victim quickly and does not try to prolong suffering, which is in total contrast to the actions of the sexual sadist.

*Case:* A father bludgeoned his adult daughter to death. After her death, he attempted to dispose of the body. On the day of his arrest, he bought a food processor. Investigators found portions of her remains in the bathtub, the kitchen sink, in pots boiling on the stove, and in the refrigerator.

The man killed his daughter either in self-defense or because of his frustration over her disruptive and hostile behavior caused by her chronic mental illness. His actions were not intended to provide sexual satisfaction in seeing his daughter suffer.

## STUDY CONDUCTED

We studied 30 male sexually sadistic criminals, 22 of whom were responsible for at least 187 murders.<sup>2</sup> Most of these cases had been submitted to the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC). Sources of information for the study included police reports, crime scene photographs, victim statements, statements by family members, confessions, psychiatric reports, trial transcripts, pre-sentence reports, and prison records. We also reviewed evidence created by the offenders themselves, i.e., diaries, photographs, sketches,

audio tapes, videos, calendars, and letters. These materials, which recorded their fantasies and represented memorabilia of their crimes, provided windows into the minds of sexually sadistic offenders.

In addition, we interviewed 5 of the 30 offenders. When interviewed, these men revealed less about their sexual desires than they had in their writings and recordings of the offenses. This is consistent with our experience when interviewing subjects during ongoing investigations, that is, offenders speak much more readily about their violent acts than about their sexual acts or fantasies.

Each of the 30 sexual sadists studied intentionally tortured their victims. Their methods of physical torture included the use of such instruments as hammers, pliers, and

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electric cattle prods, and such actions as biting, whipping, burning, insertion of foreign objects into the rectum or vagina, bondage, amputation, asphyxiation to the point of unconsciousness, and insertion of glass rods in the male urethra, to name a few.

Some offenders used a particular means of torture repeatedly. Such actions could constitute an

offender's signature, which shows that this is the work of a single offender. However, the absence of a common feature among crimes does not eliminate the possibility of a single serial offender, for he may be experimenting with various techniques in search of the perfect scenario or may be attempting to mislead investigators.

The 30 sexual sadists studied also inflicted psychological suffering on their victims. Binding, blindfolding, gagging, and holding a victim captive all produce psychological suffering, even if not physically painful. Other psychological tactics used included threats or other forms of verbal abuse, forcing the victim to beg, plead, or describe sexual acts, telling the victim in precise detail what was intended, having the victim choose between slavery or death, and offering the victim a choice of means by which to die.

## Offender Characteristics

All 30 of the sexual sadists in the study were men, and only one was non-white. Fewer than one-half were educated beyond high school. One-half used alcohol or other drugs, and one-third served in the Armed Forces. Forty-three percent were married at the time of the offense.

Sexual deviations are often associated with other sexual abnormalities, and our study confirmed this for sexual sadism. Forty-three percent of the men participated in homosexual activity as adults, 20 percent engaged in cross-dressing, and 20 percent committed other

## Interviewing the Sexual Sadist



**S**exual sadists are masters of manipulation. Therefore, the investigator must be well-prepared before conducting the interview. The investigator must know the suspect intimately and be aware of his strengths and weaknesses. Premature interviews of primary suspects often fail.

Despite their seeming sophistication, sexual sadists are likely to consent to be interviewed, even after being advised of their rights. These offenders often have an exaggerated self-image and consider themselves intellectually superior to the police. They believe they are in no danger of divulging detrimental information about themselves. More importantly, they expect to learn more information from the officer than they provide during the interview. From the questions asked, they hope to determine how much the investigator knows and the current status of the investigation.

The interviewer should be of detective status or above, prefer-

ably older than the suspect, and superior to him in physical stature, personality, and intelligence. The interviewer must appear confident, relaxed, and at least as calm as the suspect. Any personal feelings about the crime or the suspect must be suppressed. The interviewer should not attempt to become "friends" with the suspect, as this will cause him to lose respect for the interviewer and provide him with an opportunity to manipulate the conversation. Instead, the interview should be conducted in a formal and professional manner.

Because these offenders enjoy attention, the interviewer should be prepared for an exhausting and lengthy interview. Questions should be thought out in advance and be structured in such a way that the offender cannot evade a line of questioning with a simple "no" answer.

For example, rather than asking the suspect if he likes to torture women, it is preferable to ask him his favorite instruments for torturing women. Posing questions in this manner reflects the interviewer's knowledge, does not provide additional information to the suspect, and may facilitate incriminating disclosures by the subject.

Above all, the suspect must not be allowed to provoke anger. In all likelihood, he will probably attempt to shock or antagonize the interviewer, and if the interviewer yields to human emotion, the suspect will score a significant victory.

sexual offenses, such as peeping, obscene phone calls, and indecent exposure.

*Case:* As a teenager, one sexual sadist "peeped" throughout his neighborhood, masturbating as he watched women undress or have sex. At home, he masturbated repeatedly to fantasies in which he incorporated what he had seen while peeping. As a young adult, he made obscene telephone calls, which led to his first arrest when he agreed to meet a victim who informed the police. He later exposed himself to a series of victims, which he eventually explained was for the purpose of eliciting their "shock and fear." He followed women home from shopping malls, determined how much cover was available for peeping and entering the residence, and eventually raped a series of women. In his early rapes, he depended on weapons of opportunity, but later, carried with him a rape kit, which consisted of adhesive tape, handcuffs, pre-cut lengths of rope, and a .45-caliber pistol. He became progressively violent in his sexual assaults, torturing his victims by beating, burning, and pulling their breasts. His violence escalated to the point that he so severely pummeled one victim that she lost both breasts. He forcibly raped more than 50 women and was contemplating murder when he was finally apprehended.

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Investigators should not be misled by the fact that the sexual sadist may have been involved in what are commonly referred to as "nuisance" sexual offenses. A history of such activity is common, but not universal, among sex offenders of all types. It is a myth that individuals who engage in "nuisance" offenses do not have a propensity for violence.<sup>3</sup>

### Crime Characteristics

Careful planning epitomizes the crimes of the sexual sadist, who devotes considerable time and effort to the offense. Many demonstrate cunning and methodical planning. The capture of the victim, the selection and preparation of equipment, and the methodical elicitation of suffering often reflect meticulous attention to detail.

The overwhelming majority of offenders we studied used a pretext or ruse to first make contact with the victims. The sexual sadist would offer or request assistance, pretend to be a police officer, respond to a classified advertisement, meet a realtor at an isolated property, or otherwise gain the confidence of the victim.

Almost invariably, the victims were taken to a location selected in advance that offered solitude and safety for the sadist and little opportunity of escape or rescue for the victim. Such locations included the offender's residence, isolated forests, and even elaborately constructed facilities designed for captivity.

*Case:* A white male entered a respected modeling agency

and advised that he was filming a documentary on drug abuse among preadolescents. He made arrangements to hire two young girls from the agency, and two elderly matrons accompanied them as chaperons. He drove them to his trailer, and at gunpoint, bound the women and placed the girls in a plywood cell he constructed in the trailer. The cell contained beds and additional mattresses for sound-proofing. He murdered both women, placing their bodies in garbage bags. He terrorized the girls for more than 2 days before they were rescued.

Twenty-three (77 percent) of the offenders used sexual bondage on their victims, often tying them

Sixty percent of the offenders beat their victims. Twenty-two of the men murdered a total of 187 victims; 17 of them killed three or more people. The manner in which they killed varied.

*Case:* Two men, who offended as a team, used a variety of methods to kill a series of victims. One victim was strangled during sex. Another was injected in the neck with a caustic substance, electrocuted, and gassed in an oven. A third victim was shot.

Twenty-nine of the 30 men selected white victims only. Eighty-three percent of the victims were strangers to the offender. While the majority of the men selected female victims, one-fourth attacked males exclusively. Sixteen percent of the

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***Sexually sadistic offenders  
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concealed crimes.***  
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with elaborate and excessive materials, using neat and symmetrical bindings, and restraining them in a variety of positions. Eighteen (60 percent) held their victims in captivity for more than 24 hours.

The most common sexual activity was anal rape (22 offenders), followed in frequency by forced fellatio, vaginal rape, and foreign object penetration. Two-thirds of the men subjected their victims to at least three of these four acts.

men assaulted child victims only, and 26 percent attacked both children and adults.

### Evidence of Crime

These offenders retained a wealth of incriminating evidence. More than one-half of the offenders in our study kept records of their offenses, including calendars, maps, diaries, drawings, letters, manuscripts, photographs, audio tapes, video tapes, and media

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accounts of their crimes. For the most part, these secret and prized possessions were hidden in either their homes, offices, or vehicles, kept in rental storage space, or buried in containers.

Forty percent of the men took and kept personal items belonging to their victims. These items, which included drivers' licenses, jewelry, clothing, and photographs, served as mementos of the offense, and some of the offenders referred to them as "trophies" of their conquests. However, none of the offenders retained parts of their victims' bodies, though some kept the entire corpse temporarily or permanently.

### CONCLUSION

Sexually sadistic offenders commit well-planned and carefully concealed crimes. Their crimes are repetitive, serious, and shocking, and they take special steps to prevent detection. The harm that these men wreak is so devastating and their techniques so sophisticated that those who attempt to apprehend and convict them must be armed with uncommon insight, extensive knowledge, and sophisticated investigative resources.

**LEB**

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> R. Manvell and H. Fraenkel, *The Incomparable Crime: Mass Extermination in the Twentieth Century—the Legacy of Guilt* (New York: Putnam's, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> P.E. Dietz, R.R. Hazelwood, and J. Warren, "The Sexually Sadistic Criminal and His Offenses," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 1990, 163-178.

<sup>3</sup> R.R. Hazelwood and J. Warren, "The Serial Rapist: His Characteristics and Victims," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, February 1989, 18-25.



*Charles Thurman Sinclair*

### Crime:

Charles Thurman Sinclair, known since 1985 as J.C. Weir, was responsible for murders around the country of at least 14 dealers of coins and precious metals. Murders in Canada are likely, with a possibility of other international murders. The first murder associated with Sinclair occurred in 1980, and he apparently continued to kill regularly until his arrest on August 13, 1990, in Alaska. Although Sinclair died of an apparent heart attack on October 30, 1990, while in custody, he may have committed other unsolved crimes.

### Modus Operandi:

Sinclair owned many different weapons, including shotguns,

rifles, and several pistols. He may have carried a .44-, .357-, .38-, or .22-caliber handgun. He used the .22-caliber weapon in most of his murders. Sinclair was well-versed in the trading of coins and precious metals. He would travel for days, weeks, or months, supposedly buying and selling coins. During these trips, he would often take a few days to case a coin dealer's shop, developing a rapport with the owner by negotiating precious metal purchases and discussing numismatics. Sinclair also shared personal information, often telling victims he was a farmer and an army captain during the Vietnam war and talking about his real family. Once close to the victim, Sinclair would await a profitable time, such as store closing, when