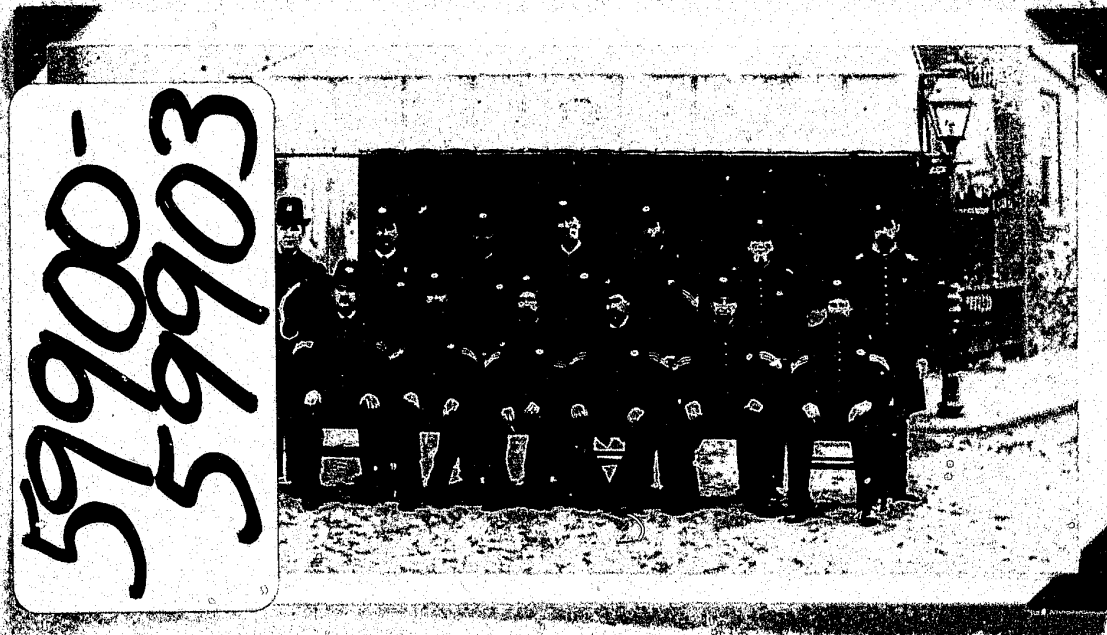
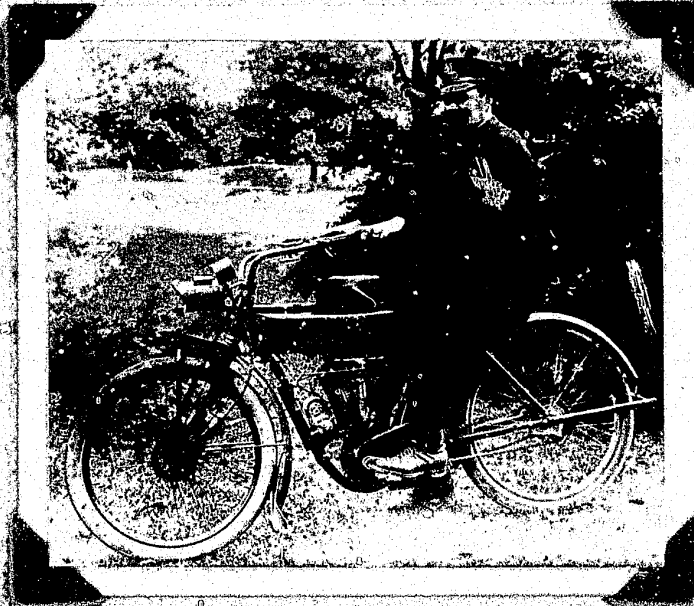


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# obsessive compulsive behavior

## THE NUISANCE OFFENDER

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Many crimes which appear to be sexually related have their origins in obsessive-compulsive behavior. Law enforcement officers have daily contact with individuals displaying this type of behavior in exaggerated forms. Therefore, officers should be aware of the personality involved in these crimes and know the motivating factors involved.

Researchers have provided common characteristics (profiles) of obsessive-compulsive nuisance offenders and keys to identifying their criminogenic patterns. They can describe the type of crimes they commit and suggest techniques for interviewing them. While this article focuses on the obsessive-compulsive individual, he is by no means the only type of person who is capable of committing the crimes of exhibitionism, voyeurism, and others set out. The psychopath, for example, may commit such crimes. However, the psychopath's motivations differ as do his actions in that there is an absence of the ritualization characteristics of the crimes committed by the obsessive-compulsive individual.

For the sake of clarity and brevity, the individual displaying obsessive-compulsive behavior may be referred to as an "obsessive-compulsive individual," but this is not a technical, diagnostic term.

Often referred to in the law enforcement community as nuisance offenses, acts of the obsessive-compulsive individual include exhibitionism, kleptomania, pyromania, voyeurism, fetishism, and obscene phone calls. A study of these crimes reveals sexual inadequacy, anxiety, and repeated stereotypic patterns of behavior or rituals on the part of the perpetrators. It is these ritualistic patterns, pervasive in the obsessional mechanism,<sup>1</sup> which provide the "key" to solving many crimes. To better understand the mental processes involved and to enable the law enforcement officer to identify readily these keys, it is necessary to examine the area of obsessive-compulsive behavior.

## The Problem

In discussing obsessive-compulsive behavior, it is important to define the terms "obsessive" and "compulsive." Obsessions are irrational, unwanted thoughts, usually of no value to the individual, which persist and force themselves into the individual's consciousness. Obsessions may become so disturbing and repetitive that the individual develops a maladjusted lifestyle. These obsessive thoughts may deal with many topics. However, the most common themes of these obsessions are: (1) Hostility toward, or aggressive thoughts about, parents or other loved ones; (2) anti-Christ or blasphemous thoughts occurring to individuals of highly religious or moral background; (3) excessive concern with disease; and (4) thoughts of extremely perverse sexual acts.<sup>2</sup>

The behavior patterns which stem from these obsessions are called compulsions. A compulsion, generally speaking, is an act performed by an individual in an effort to relieve himself of the anxieties which both cause and result from the obsession. (Not all obsessions lead to compulsive behavior.) Some consider compulsions to be irresistible to the individual—he feels compelled to commit the act or demonstrate some other form of behavior.<sup>3</sup> Compulsions which do not result in criminal acts and are commonly demonstrated by individuals categorized as obsessive-compulsive include repeated handwashing, clearing of one's throat, mumbling to oneself, and counting.<sup>4</sup> These compulsions can frequently take on the appearance of complex ritualistic behavior, particularly in dressing or undressing.<sup>5</sup>

It is the ritual which provides the valuable key to the solution of a crime. The law enforcement officer can then predict with some degree of accuracy the future actions of an individual whose crime pattern reflects ritualization or obsessive-compulsive behavior. The ritualized *modus operandi* of the nuisance offender is the key.

B. von Haller Gilmer suggests that a large portion of the population, though considered normal, experience mild obsessions.<sup>6</sup> In the nonneurotic sense, these obsessions are unwanted thoughts that come into consciousness; their expulsion cannot be accomplished voluntarily. Everyday worries of the average person are a good example, "Did I lock the door when I left?" or "Did I unplug the iron?" Another everyday form of a mild obsession is experienced by the individual who is unable to expel voluntarily a particular tune from his mind. Such repetitive and

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unbidden thoughts are common, mild obsessions and do not demonstrate abnormal behavior.

The law enforcement officer will not be concerned with these common and normal obsessions. Rather he will be dealing with its more bizarre forms, since these rituals, when flavored with abnormal sexual activities and carried out in public, are dramatic and call for police action. It is not necessary for the police officer to diagnose whether the individual committing the crime falls into one category of obsessive-compulsive behavior or another. What is important to know is whether or not the crime committed reveals a ritualistic pattern, which will help the officer predict the perpetrator's future behavior.

The history of obsessive-compulsive behavior reaches back to the medieval period when individuals suffering from this type of behavior were considered to be under the influence of the devil or victims of witchcraft. Obses-

sions were generally referred to as acts of evil spirits.<sup>7</sup>

Numerous theories since then have been postulated on the etiology of obsessive-compulsive behavior. David Abrahamson suggests that the thought intrusion (obsession) enters the consciousness of the individual without any external stimuli.<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud held that the seed for compulsive behavior is sown in early childhood, the behavior stemming from difficulties encountered during the psychosexual stage of development involving bowel training.<sup>9</sup> Leon Salzman cites several factors in the onset of obsessive-compulsive behavior, but emphasizes the obsessional individual's striving for omniscience through intellectuality.<sup>10</sup> A final theory to be mentioned (keeping in mind there are many others) is that of Solomon Snyder, who describes the obsessive-compulsive's many rituals as methods which enable the individual to control some aspects of everyday life. Such an individual needs to maintain control at all times. He or she is usually frightened by change, fearing loss of this control.<sup>11</sup>

While it may be advantageous to the law enforcement officer to know the specific cause of nuisance behavior, the goal is to be able to determine whether the criminal act is a result of some type of obsessive-compulsive behavior. The rituals involved in dressing and undressing, for example, may be of importance to the psychoanalyst. Law enforcement's responsibility is to identify the criminogenic patterns of the individual experiencing obsessive-compulsive behavior and to be aware that some individuals carry out acts as a result of this behavior.

It is frequently asserted that the obsessive-compulsive individual cannot stop himself from committing a particular act, but this is questionable. It has been stated, "He knows that his criminal acts are criminal, and that he will be punished for them. When he

engages in criminality he does so knowingly, deliberately, and willfully."<sup>12</sup> To provide an analogy, it may be fair to say that the obsessive-compulsive individual is to his act as a normal individual is to an act of superstition. For example, the normal individual when confronting a ladder can choose to walk around or under the ladder. He will do the act which is more comfortable to him.<sup>13</sup> A paradox in obsessive-compulsive behavior comes into play because the individual knows his behavior is self-defeating, yet if he resists acting on his compulsions he becomes ridden with anxiety, guilt, and frustration. Thus, the exhibitionist will expose himself with the realization that his act is abnormal because failure to commit the act leaves him anxiety-ridden.

### The Crimes

What makes nuisance offenses a problem? Aside from the police time consumed in attempts to investigate these offenses, they account for a substantial number of sex crimes. It has been generally established that exhibitionism alone accounts for one-third of all reported sex crimes in the United States, Canada, and Europe.<sup>14</sup> The remainder of nuisance offenses adds substantially to this percentage of sex crimes. This makes it important to examine each nuisance offense for the patterns exhibited.

### Exhibitionism

Many individuals categorized as exhibitionists, like other offenders discussed hereafter, may be experiencing obsessive-compulsive behavior. Individuals who expose their genitals to the opposite sex, and are subsequently arrested, are normally charged with indecent exposure. The motivation behind the exposure becomes important because there are differences between indecent exposure and exhibitionism. There are many reasons for indecent exposure, such as revenge, "kicks," or a dare. The factor which separates indecent exposure from exhibitionism

is that the exhibitionist exposes his genitals to the opposite sex for the purpose of sexual gratification, without any intention of sexual activity with the victims.<sup>15</sup> An exhibitionist exposes himself to show, among other reasons, that he is a man or to express symbolically his belief that he doesn't need women. Individuals in the latter category obtain their sexual gratification from the response of the victim. The exhibitionist customarily looks for a response of shock, fright, and other signs of recognition from the victim. The desired responses can vary from one exhibitionist to the next. While some may merely look for a visual response, other must talk "dirty" to the victim or direct lewd questions toward the victim during (and concerning) the exposure.

Indecent exposure is not a crime of recent history as substantiated by English court records of 1663. The first reported case of indecent exposure in England (1 Keb. 620, 83 ENG. REP. 1146 K.B. 1663) describes Sir Charles Sedley as standing on his balcony in the nude, urinating in bottles, and dropping them on passers-by into the street below.<sup>16</sup> Even before this, history records a certain amount of indecent exposure. Naked females were usually present to meet royalty and the like during royal visits to foreign countries. Together with indecent exposure, exhibitionism occurred long ago.

Research on general profiles of the exhibitionist reveals that exhibitionism is a male phenomenon. Women seem to have other releases for exhibitionistic urges, such as posing in pornographic magazines, acting in obscene movies, and enjoying liberalized dress codes.<sup>17</sup> Research conducted by McDonald on 200 individuals arrested for exhibitionistic acts in Denver, Colo., revealed that exhibitionism takes place mostly in daylight hours (142 out of 200).<sup>18</sup> This study also found the average age of the exhibitionist at first conviction is 26.5 years old, as opposed to Mohr who calculated the age as 24.8 years old.<sup>19</sup> Mohr contended that age as determined by McDonald is derived from court rec-

ords and that those court records are inaccurate. It is agreed, however, that young white males are the defendants in a majority of cases.<sup>20</sup>

Other commonalities found in the exhibitionist profile show most exhibitionists are or have been married,<sup>21</sup> and are intelligent<sup>22</sup> and well-educated.<sup>23</sup> Often he will have, or has had, a stammer when speaking.<sup>24</sup> There appears to be no common denominator in physical characteristics of the exhibitionist.

Cases show that the exhibitionist provides law enforcement with a key or pattern to his behavior, which may assist in his apprehension. His *modus operandi* reveals that he conducts his exhibitionist activities in the same type of area or neighborhood,<sup>25</sup> during the same time of day, and in the same manner each time.<sup>26</sup> Reinhardt advises that the victim of the exhibitionistic act must be a stranger to the subject.<sup>27</sup>

His ritual, therefore, has been established, and a study of past exhibitionistic acts may enable the officer to predict with some degree of accuracy the subject's future criminal behavior.

### Pyromania

Pyromaniacs, like others who set fires and are arrested, are usually charged with arson. However, their motivations for starting the fire differ from other firesetters. There are those whose purpose for starting a fire may range from revenge to monetary gain through insurance coverage.<sup>28</sup> The pyromaniac starts fires for the purpose of relieving sexual tension, and in many cases, his action is a substitute for the sex act.<sup>29</sup> This offender, in the vast majority of cases, is male.<sup>30</sup> He usually will not seek help on his own.<sup>31</sup> The profile of the pyromaniac often includes some traits found in other criminal typologies, namely a history of bedwetting,<sup>32</sup> cruelty to animals, and firesetting.<sup>33</sup> For the pyromaniac the desire for thrill or orgasm is the sole reason for the fire,<sup>34</sup> and fire has for

him the magical power to provide affection, potency, and love. The devastating power of the fire illustrates the intensity of the offender's sexual desires, as well as his sadism.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the pyromaniac's inadequate personal sexuality forms a foundation for his sexually symbolic offense.

The pyromaniac can be virtually anyone. However, James Reinhardt describes the pyromaniac as a male about 39 years old of borderline intelligence, poor social background, and low ethical standards. He continues that this offender is married in about 75 percent of the cases, usually to an older woman. However, one-third of these individuals are not living with their wives at the time of their arrest for starting fires. These individuals have often been arrested in the past for crimes other than firesetting and have a history of excessive use of alcohol.<sup>36</sup>

Most theorists believe that the pyromaniac usually stays at the scene of his fire, although there is some controversy on this point. There are those who state that some pyromaniacs simply start the fire and then leave.<sup>37</sup> If he is at the fire scene, he may appear to have a flushed face, wet pants, and uncontrolled urination. Also, he may constantly offer his help and make comments concerning the fire.<sup>38</sup> When there is suspicion of a pyromaniac, a standard investigative technique is to take photographs of individuals watching the fire at the crime scene. It is important that these photos be taken as soon as possible after discovery of the fire, because fire attracts many people for many reasons (curiosity, excitement, etc.). It is not unusual for the same person to be drawn to numerous fires because of his individual interest in them. The pyromaniac will be among the first at the scene, usually before the crowd gathers. Over a period of time and after several fires, the pyromaniac may stand out as a common denominator in each of the crime scene photos. It is also important to know that a pyromaniac may on occasion be a fireman or volunteer fireman, or may have wanted to be a fireman in the past.<sup>39</sup>

### **Kleptomania**

Another obsessive-compulsive affliction appearing as a nuisance offense is kleptomania.<sup>40</sup> The kleptomaniac steals items of no value—items he neither needs nor desires for the purpose of sexual excitation.<sup>41</sup> Although there are other theories on what causes the individual to steal, the prevalent Freudian theory holds there is erotic motivation behind the act. This type of crime is motivated by sex, but is not a sex crime.

The majority of these offenders are females, who have been classified

**“The obsessive-compulsive individual who carries on a pattern of criminal behavior usually will not elicit help.”**

by some as extremely hostile and sexually unsatisfied. One theory depicts the kleptomaniac as a middle-aged woman, perhaps experiencing menopause, whose husband is “married to his profession.” In addition, her children may have all left home, either to work or go to school, and she is left alone. The act of kleptomania has been described as the symbolic stealing of the love and attention she cannot get at home. This theory is supported by the fact that unlike the occasional thief, the kleptomaniac steals openly and may cry and cause a considerable disturbance when caught. Even though under arrest, her thoughts may be that she is now getting the attention she needs.

The kleptomaniac is usually well-off financially,<sup>42</sup> although she may be found in all economic categories. As in other manifestations of obsessive-compulsive behavior, the kleptomaniac is able to exempt herself from human responsibility for her acts<sup>43</sup> and will not

usually seek help on her own. When interviewed, like those manifesting exhibitionism and pyromania, she tends to be evasive and denies her guilt.<sup>44</sup> Kleptomaniacs often frequent the same department store and are unique from the professional thief or the occasional shoplifter. The kleptomaniac does not steal for profit or for useful items, but for the sexual thrill involved. However, kleptomania is not always driven by an obvious sexual urge.

### **Voyeurism**

The voyeur gains his sexual gratification from viewing a naked or seminaked woman or watching couples engage in sexual intercourse.<sup>45</sup> This type of viewing is a step beyond the normal male curiosity about the opposite sex. The voyeur goes to great lengths to prowl through residential sections of cities, usually at night, hoping for a glimpse of a female in the nude or sexually engaged. His observations are a replacement for the sexual act.<sup>46</sup> Commonly referred to as the “peeping tom,” the voyeur may masturbate while watching his victim. Because of the practice of masturbation, he may have been arrested in the past for indecent exposure when a neighbor of the victim observed him while exposed.

This crime of young males<sup>47</sup> results in numerous prowler calls to police stations. Informal interviews with officers attending the FBI National Academy indicate that this offense tends to be a local offense, i.e., the voyeur usually operates close to the neighborhood in which he resides. He develops a pattern or route of selected windows throughout the neighborhood. In many cases, the voyeur operates at the same time of each evening, and often his voyeuristic practices are in conjunction with a legitimate function, such as taking the dog out for a walk. The voyeur acts during the hours of darkness as the night provides concealment and is the time when his victims are most likely to undress. His specific timetable each night may vary and be influenced by the undressing habits of the victims.



## Fetishism

A fetish is a nonsexual item which takes the place of a sexual partner to gratify sexual desires. There are an untold number of fetishists, and their fetish items may vary from shoes<sup>48</sup> to automobile exhaust pipes.<sup>49</sup> The fetishist may masturbate while holding, viewing, or fondling the fetish item; the embracing of the item can take on many forms, from kissing to tasting.<sup>50</sup> On occasion the item itself may not be the fetish, but rather its texture or odor.<sup>51</sup> The fetishist may resort to stealing in efforts to obtain his desired items; for example, stealing ladies undergarments from clotheslines.<sup>52</sup> On rare occasions a fetishist may resort to violence, as in the case where a woman was attacked on a public street by a man who ran off with one of her shoes.<sup>53</sup>

Reinhardt describes the sex murderer as a fetishist with a desire for some fetish organ or other part of the human body.<sup>54</sup> Males most commonly practice fetishism, although there are reported cases of female fetishists. Men are more likely to commit larceny in connection with obtaining the fetish items than are women.<sup>55</sup> The thefts committed by the fetishist are perhaps the most annoying problems faced by police (thefts from clotheslines), and in this sense, he becomes a true nuisance for police officers. Fetishists are found in all age groups.<sup>56</sup>

## Obscene Phone Caller

The verbal exhibitionist, as referred to by Hirschfield, is able to reduce his anxieties by calling females on the telephone and talking in an obscene manner. He may receive his sexual gratification either from the victim's alarm or her indignant tone following his initial obscene comments.<sup>57</sup> It would appear that no age is spared in this category either—for the victim or the subject.

FBI National Academy attendees advised that this is a common offense. Many officers also reported that these obscene phone callers usually keep a log or diary of their calls. The numbers called are placed in the diary with a

grade, or mark, concerning the victim's response. If poorly rated, she is usually not called again. These same informal surveys at the FBI Academy reveal that most obscene phone calls are numbers chosen randomly from telephone directories. If a negative response is received by the caller, but he continues to call the victim in spite of her lack of adequate response, chances are the caller knows the victim or knows of her. He merely needs to hear her voice or know she is on the phone. Average ages for the obscene phone caller range from 18 to 25 years old.

Often, voyeuristic acts may be employed by the obscene caller. He will view the victim through binoculars from a nearby apartment or house as she answers the phone.<sup>58</sup> This individual may also add obscene letters to his repertoire. Like a number of others discussed previously, this offender tends to follow a pattern, calling on the same day of the week and/or at the same time of day. Police officers' wives are frequent victims of obscene phone calls, but it is felt that these calls are for harassment or revenge, not the acts of the true obscene phone caller who calls for sexual release of tension and anxiety.

In the case of the obscene phone caller, as well as the kleptomaniac, pyromaniac, voyeur, and fetishist, it might be valuable to obtain a search warrant for the individual's residence. Conceivably, the obscene caller may have the log book of his calls at his residence, if not on him. The fetishist may maintain the items of clothing or other fetish items he has taken; the pyromaniac may have newspaper clippings regarding the fires he has started; and the voyeur may have a list of addresses with notations by each address of the best time to observe the victim, age of victim, and other related data.

Officers should also be aware that a number of nuisance offenders may consider suicide following their arrest. A large percentage of these criminals are married, and they can be pillars of their communities. Once arrested, the guilt for their acts becomes more acute. They begin to question how they can face their families or how they can

reenter society with the stigma of having been arrested for this type of crime. They should be watched closely during the time they are being booked and undergoing other arrest procedures.

## Other Ritualistic Crimes

There are other crimes which show signs of ritualization. In many cases, such ritualization may merely be a *modus operandi* with no obsessive-compulsive factors. Crimes such as rape and homicide often show a *modus operandi* in the normal sense. The rape committed out-of-doors, which is ritualized and motivated by compulsive behavior, can usually be distinguished by the fact that the rapist picks the *area* for the attack rather than picking the victim. The victims are always strangers to the subject, and in this crime, the subject waits for a likely victim of any age or description. The subject is always alone and often unable to complete the sexual act. It is not uncommon for the subject to apologize after the attack or show sudden concern for the well-being of the victim. He usually strikes in the same types of areas, uses the same methods of attack, speaks the same words on each occasion, and attacks at predictable intervals. The rape committed indoors is usually better planned, i.e., the victim tends to be the same age as the subject and of the same social strata. Often the indoor rape is preceded by voyeuristic activities.

Homicides, or homicides combined with rapes, may reveal patterns of ritualism. Numerous cases cite the subject's contention that he felt compelled to murder or that the thought of murder was an obsession with him. A study conducted by Palmer evaluated a number of convicted murderers and their brothers (a total population of 52). Thirty-four instances of phobias (morbid fears), compulsions, and obsessions were reported for the murderer group, while only three instances were found in the control group; the brothers.<sup>59</sup>

## The Criminal And Interviewing Techniques

Many investigating officers of nuisance offenses consider interrogating the arrestee as a mere formality in order to meet departmental guidelines concerning the arrest report. They really do not expect the arrestee to admit to this particular type of crime, and thus consider the interview a waste of time. However, this individual may be responsible for a number of similar offenses in the area, and therefore is worth interviewing. The type of offense should indicate whether he or she may have committed a similar offense in the past. Entering an interrogation with the attitude that it is a mere formality will all but guarantee the end results to be just that. Interviewing this type of individual is not an easy task, but it can be an excellent education for the officer if he is able to gain rapport with the arrestee. The ultimate goal is, of course, to solve the crime at hand. However, one should try to determine the motivation behind the act and provide this individual with the type of help he may be seeking.

Prior to interviewing these individuals, certain personal characteristics and traits should be known. Individuals who fall into the category of nuisance offenders tend to carry idealism to extremes. They may appear to be generous, kind, and considerate, but this may merely be to conceal their hostility or curb their feelings of anger. Often these individuals emerge from the superficial facade of kindness as stubborn and stingy people.<sup>60</sup> The rigidity of their personalities make them difficult to interview. This rigidity, coupled with a need for precision and accuracy, causes them to overemphasize details,<sup>61</sup> seem somewhat detached from their statements at times, and lead conversations away from the original intent of the investigator's questions.<sup>62</sup> Language is their magic, and this magic, together with the rituals, is prominent in obsessive-compulsive individuals.<sup>63</sup>

When interviewed by authorities, the obsessive-compulsive nuisance offender will not usually feel free to speak openly.<sup>64</sup> The initial response to accusing questions may be one of de-

nial. His statements will appear intimate in that he demands intimacy (despite his absence), but he will initially avoid incriminating statements. His first thought may be that whatever he has done it must have been correct. He manufactures this thought because of his need to be in control, to be decisive, but never to be wrong. Concern for his responsibilities regarding an offense appear lacking.<sup>65</sup>

Yet, if and when he admits his act, the verbal magic may begin along with evasive answers. Phrases such as "I am sorry," "I didn't mean it," and "Ex-

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cause me," often used by children to avoid spankings and other forms of punishment, are used by this individual for close to the same reasons. The difference is that the nuisance offender is attempting to excuse himself, and soon this verbal magic becomes automatic, a substitute for correcting his future actions. Here again we find the coupling of verbal magic with "verbal excuses." The excuses, together with the evasive and detailed answers leading away from the intent of the question, are used together to confuse and distort. These become almost automatic defenses for the offender.<sup>66</sup>

While appearing as a sexual deviant to law enforcement authorities, this individual may surprise the interviewing officer by proclaiming a very high standard of moral conduct, at least philosophically. More often than not, this is merely another mental step toward his personal need to appear perfect.<sup>67</sup>

Even the most normal individual is not likely to admit to a sexual crime because of the social stigma. He may show a certain amount of disgust at the very thought that he is suspect. If in

fact he is the guilty party, he has an extra incentive to provide false information and be extremely uncooperative. Added to these reasons for uncooperativeness and elusiveness is the guilt and anxiety experienced by the obsessive-compulsive nuisance offender.

Since interrogating this individual, particularly following an arrest for a nuisance offense, may be a difficult task, an inappropriate introduction or the wrong initial question may bring the interrogation to an abrupt end. It is perhaps better to assume that this individual will not feel free to speak openly about his crime. This way, the law enforcement officer may be able to "get off on the right foot." It has been suggested that the officer use indirect questioning for the first 5 minutes or so when confronting a nuisance offender.<sup>68</sup> One could ask him how long he has resided in the particular neighborhood, his family background, and other similar questions.

A certain amount of empathy and understanding by the investigator may aid the individual in "opening up" about his crime and the motivation behind it, if in fact he is aware of the motivating factors. This empathy should fall short of sympathy, so that the investigator's authority image is not completely eradicated during the interview. These indirect questions are an effort to reduce the individual's anxiety. It is usually helpful and makes the interview more successful if a good relationship is established between the subject and the interviewer. Legal guidelines must be followed, but there should be minimal introduction. This individual, due to his personal inadequacies and guilt over his crime, may become quite overwhelmed by excessive display of credentials, badges, legal forms, etc.

If the investigator continually asks direct questions, it makes the individual dependent on the investigator. This technique of interviewing should be avoided. A narrative response should be elicited. However, it should be remembered that the obsessive-compulsive individual may go into great detail in areas not pertinent to the questions

being asked. Thus, it becomes the investigator's task to keep the answers in line with the questions at all times. The investigator must guide the interviewee when required to ask specific questions relating to the crime committed and should not overrespond to the answers given. Perhaps the best response would be simple reinforcing, such as saying "yes," or restating the last portion of the individual's comment.

In the case of more serious crimes, such as a ritualistic rape or ritualistic homicide, it may be worthwhile, along with minimal identification, to look "casual." It has often been said that uniforms don't get answers. Once the ground work has been set with indirect questions, the anxiety level reduced appreciatively, and some rapport developed, the interviewer should then gradually proceed into the specifics of the crime being investigated. Through this technique, the individual will be more relaxed and agreeable to a question and answer session. A distinction must be made between subtle coercion and these procedures, which merely assist the subject in relaxing and alleviating himself of some of his guilt feelings.

Questioning of the obsessive-compulsive nuisance offender is all but an art. Each individual will share certain personality traits, but will be different in other respects. Rapport must be gained for the interview to succeed. The offender will be more apt to respond if he believes the interviewer is on his side, even though the interviewer's capacity in questioning him is that of a law enforcement officer. Because of the obsessive-compulsive's timid exterior and the amount of guilt he is experiencing, the order of the questions, as well as the way they are phrased, may make an important difference in the responses. The initial and innocuous questions will not only build rapport but dissipate the tension and nervousness which is commonly experienced prior to an interview. The

answers to such questions may also provide some psychological background information for use in later questioning.

The obsessive-compulsive individual rigidly adheres to rules he has set up for himself in an effort to overcome uneasiness and indecisiveness.<sup>69</sup> Decisions are therefore not an easy task for him. Often decisions which seem very strong and determined are in fact the results of his own efforts to overcome indecisiveness. This inability to make decisions should be understood, particularly when obtaining a signed statement or confession. He is as unable to make an easy decision as a difficult one; hence, his resulting decisions may be impulsive.

### Conclusion

The obsessive-compulsive individual who carries on a pattern of criminal behavior usually will not elicit help. The possibility of this individual walking into the police station and confessing to his crimes is marginal. Therefore, the law enforcement officer must conduct a proper and thorough investigation to seek him out and cause his arrest. The keys set out can be a great source of information concerning the nuisance offender's behavior pattern, allowing the police officer the opportunity to predict his behavior. Individuals committing nuisance offenses can graduate to offenses which are far from a nuisance, such as rape and homicide. Thus, it is important for the law enforcement officer to identify the keys provided by the offender and make proper use of them. Ultimately, understanding these behavior patterns (rituals) and properly interpreting them may enable the law enforcement officer to bring the investigation of a nuisance offense to a speedy conclusion. By understanding the nuisance offender, law enforcement agencies may be able to deal more successfully with his crimes.

**FBI**

### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Leon Salzman, *The Obsessive Personality* (New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1973), p. 57.
- <sup>2</sup> Walter J. Coville, Timothy W. Costello, and Fabian L. Rouke, *Abnormal Psychology* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), pp. 112-113.
- <sup>3</sup> B. von Haller Gilmer, *Psychology*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 562.

- <sup>4</sup> Coville, Costello, and Rouke, p. 113.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.
- <sup>6</sup> Gilmer, p. 562.
- <sup>7</sup> Harold E. Russell and Allan Beigel, *Understanding Human Behavior for Effective Police Work* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), p. 87.
- <sup>8</sup> David Abrahamson, *The Psychology of Crime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 127.
- <sup>9</sup> Salzman, p. 12.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>11</sup> Solomon H. Snyder, *The Troubled Mind: A Guide to the Release from Distress* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1976), p. 13.
- <sup>12</sup> Arthur S. Aubry, Jr., and Rudolph R. Caputo, *Criminal Interrogation* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1965), p. 18.
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- <sup>32</sup> Karpman, p. 146.
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- <sup>52</sup> Reinhardt, p. 241.
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- <sup>60</sup> Coville, Costello, and Rouke, p. 113.
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- <sup>62</sup> Salzman, p. 33.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- <sup>64</sup> Rickles, p. 106.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.
- <sup>66</sup> Salzman, p. 33.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.
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- <sup>69</sup> Salzman, p. 21.



**END**