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Detective Magazines: Pornography for the Sexual Sadist?

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ABSTRACT: The origins of detective magazines can be traced to 17th and 18th century crime pamphlets and to 19th century periodicals that Lombroso called "really criminal newspapers." Content analysis of current detective magazines shows that their covers juxtapose erotic images with images of violence, bondage, and domination; that their articles provide lurid descriptions of murder, rape, and torture; and that they publish advertisements for weapons, burglary and car theft tools, false identification, and sexual aids. Six case histories of sexual sadists illustrate the use of these magazines as a source of fantasy material. We postulate that detective magazines may contribute to the development of sexual sadism, facilitate sadistic fantasies, and serve as training manuals and equipment catalogs for criminals. We recommend that detective magazines be considered during policy debates about media violence and pornography.

KEYWORDS: psychiatry, criminal sex offenses, deviant sexual behavior, detective magazines, sexual sadism, pornography, criminal behavior, sexual homicide

A class of popular periodicals known as "detective magazines" has apparently eluded the attention of researchers and commentators concerned with media violence and pornography. These magazines provide factual accounts of crimes and criminals, and are thereby distinguished from mystery fiction. They rarely contain photographs of nudes, and are thereby distinguished from those publications that most individuals casually refer to as erotic, pornographic, or obscene.

In this paper, we review the historical roots of these detective magazines, report data on the content of current detective magazines, present six case histories in which detective magazines were a source of fantasy material, and discuss the possible psychiatric and criminologic significance of detective magazines.

We postulate that detective magazines serve as pornography for sexual sadists. The works of the Marquis de Sade and his literary disciples, though known outside the literati, are too

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erudite and too remote in setting from everyday life to appeal to the sexual sadist of average intelligence and educational level. In contrast, detective magazines depict and describe sadistic acts in familiar settings, using the imagery and language of tabloid newspapers. This class of periodicals receives little commentary in comparison with those that are considered obscene or pornographic on the basis of their explicit use of erotic imagery. Detective magazines characteristically pair violent and sadistic images with erotic images, yet are more accessible for purchase by young persons than are magazines that depict naked bodies.

The Origins and Readership of Detective Magazines

Periodicals reporting crime are thought to have originated in 17th century England [1]. Crime pamphlets and related publications appeared at a time when oral renditions of crime were still provided by street merchants for a fee. Around 1864, Mayhew described "death hunters" and "running patterers" who were paid to shout out stories of crimes [2]. Death hunters went to the scenes of murders and reported on the details of the killings; running patterers fabricated or embellished the stories of infamous crimes. Mayhew also described "caravan shows," a form of "peep show" in which carts containing a miniature stage, curtains, and scenery were used by puppeteers to reenact infamous murders [3].

Crime pamphlets flourished throughout 18th century England and appeared in America during the last half of that century. By the middle of the 19th century, as British and American journalists embraced sensationalism [4], the chaotic relationship between crime and law enforcement [5] found its natural literary outlet. Gradually, newspapers and crime magazines began to replace other forms of information about crime.

The first financially successful American crime magazine was *The National Police Gazette*, which appeared in 1845 [6]. This magazine was highly celebrated, and at least 22 related magazines followed in its wake [7-9]. The *Gazette* survived well into the 20th century. We examined all issues of the *National Police Gazette* from its first year of publication. Initially, it featured stories of actual crimes and made modest use of woodcut illustrations. There were many advertisements for home remedies, sexual enhancement and augmentation preparations, trusses, clothing, hats, boots, jewelry, guns, and "cheap" books. By the late 19th century, the *Gazette* was printed on pink paper and had detailed illustrations of shootings, stabbings, hangings, and debauchery, as well as graphic descriptions of bareknuckle boxing, wrestling, and cockfights. Advertisements offered revealing photographs of women; treatments for venereal diseases, impotence, and "self abuse"; and the services of lawyers and detectives. The *Gazette* was "for some years the most widely circulated of weekly journals" [10].

The *Gazette's* decline began around 1920, and "modern" detective magazines appeared by 1924. They were quickly assessed as having virtually no cultural value [11, 12], and they proliferated. More than 20 are currently published on a regular basis. Four detective magazines for which data were available had a combined monthly circulation of 996 000 issues in about 1980 [13].

Otto examined eleven detective magazines as part of a larger study of newsstand magazines in the 1960s and found that they offered the most sexual and nonsexual violence of all general circulation magazines, even though his data excluded advertisements and covers [14]. Reporting on the content of two detective magazines, Lyle noted that "the stories in general are fairly explicit in describing what kind of violence was committed, how it was done, and to what effect" [15]. Beattie studied one issue each of *Official Detective* and *True Detective* as part of his study of mass market magazines and concluded that detective magazines were among those with the most violent content [16].

The readership of detective magazines has not been identified. Lazarsfeld and Wyant included 1 detective magazine in their study of reading habits in 90 American cities [17], but their statistical analysis excluded the genre. Freidman and Johnson surveyed media use among "aggressive" and "nonaggressive" eighth and ninth grade boys, 20% of whom read "crime

and detective magazines"; differences between the two groups in amount and type of magazine reading were not significant [18]. In contrast, Lyle and Hoffman reported that 9% of a sample of sixth grade boys and girls, and 6 and 7%, respectively, of a sample of tenth grade boys and girls, preferred to read "detective/mystery" magazines [19]. Whether these data refer to such magazines as *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* and *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* or to the detective magazines considered here is not known. Thus, there is no audience whose rate of use of detective magazines is known.

The Content of Detective Magazines

Detective magazines are readily available at newsstands, drugstores, supermarkets, convenience stores, and elsewhere. One copy of each detective magazine issue available on a single day at ten suburban Boston stores was purchased and studied in detail. The mean purchase price was \$1.11; the range was from \$0.95 to \$2.50. These magazines generally were displayed along with women's, "confession," and children's magazines, usually adjacent to adventure and gun magazines, and always on a different rack from espousedly erotic men's magazines. We have subsequently confirmed these observations regarding display patterns in stores in Charlottesville, VA; Chicago, IL; Columbia, MO; Houston, TX; Kansas City, MO; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; St. Louis, MO; Washington, DC; Toronto, Ontario, Canada; and Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Nineteen detective magazine issues, representing eighteen different titles from six publishers, were studied. They were: *Detective Cases*, *Detective Diary*, *Detective Dragnet*, *Detective Files*, *Detective World*, *Front Page Detective*, *Guilty! The Best from True Detective*, *Headquarters Detective*, *Homicide Detective*, *Inside Detective*, *Master Detective*, *Offical Detective Stories*, *Police Detective* (two issues), *Real Detective*, *Startling Detective*, *True Detective*, *True Police Cases*, and *True Police Yearbook*.

We analyzed several aspects of the content of these 19 issues. First, we analyzed the violent and sexual imagery in photographs used for front covers, article illustrations, and commercial advertisements. Second, we analyzed the words expressive of violence and sexuality used in the titles of articles promoted on the front covers and listed in the tables of contents. Third, we analyzed the textual content of articles for descriptions of violent and sexual behavior. For this third purpose, a stratified, random sample of 38 articles was selected (2 articles randomly selected from the signed articles in each issue). The results of these content analyses are presented in the following sections.

Illustrations

The covers of the 19 magazines bore 21 photographs. The most common image on front covers was that of a woman in an inferior or submissive position. Seventy-six percent of the cover photographs showed domination and submission imagery. Men dominated women in 71% of cover pictures, while women dominated men in 5%. Some pictures showed a woman alone in a submissive or subjugated position. Bondage was depicted in 38% of the cover pictures, and all of the bound subjects were women. Ropes, chains, handcuffs, and cloth were used to achieve this bondage with equal frequency. In order of decreasing frequency, other repetitive cover imagery included violent struggles, brassieres, guns, accentuated breasts, strangulation, corpses, blood, and knives or other cutting instruments. Table 1 shows the percentages of each type of image in covers, articles, and advertisements.

In contrast to the cover photographs, the illustrations accompanying articles most often pictured buildings or other settings and conventionally dressed people. Law enforcement personnel were often shown processing a crime scene or working at a desk; they were always men. Violent and erotic imagery was much less prevalent in article photographs than in cover photographs. Where it did occur, the most prevalent form was domination and submission imagery.

TABLE 1—Percentages of photographs depicting particular types of images in detective magazine covers, articles, and advertisements.

Images	Covers (N = 19)	Articles (N = 891)	Advertisements (N = 926)
Bondage and domination imagery			
bondage	38	5	0.1
domination	76	36	0
Struggles			
strangulation	14	0.6	0
other violent struggles	29	2	3
Weapons			
guns	29	4	6
knives or other cutting instruments	14	0.7	2
blunt instruments	5	0.8	2
bombs	5	0.1	0
saws	5	0	3
other weapons ^a	0	1.5	0.1
Sadistic imagery			
corpses	14	3	0
blood	14	1	0
mutilation/slashing	0	0.3	0
Body parts			
breasts accentuated	24	1	3
buttocks accentuated	5	0.2	2
genitals	0	0	2
Clothing			
brassiere	29	1	3
negligee	5	2	0
panties	0	2	4
other "erotic" clothing ^b	0	1.5	3.1
Sexual behaviors			
intercourse ^c	0	0.1	3.2
masturbation	0	0	1
crossdressing	0	0.2	0.1

^aIncludes fire, whips, gas chambers, gallows, and brass knuckles.

^bIncludes stockings, garters, hoods, exaggerated shoes and boots, and constrictive waist garments.

^cIncludes heterosexual and homosexual genital intercourse, fellatio, cunnilingus, and anal intercourse.

Men dominated women in 5% of the article pictures, and women dominated men in less than 1%. Individuals were most often bound with ropes or handcuffs, less commonly with leather, chains, or cloth.

In illustrated, commercial advertisements (that is, excluding classified advertisements), potential weapons such as guns, knives, blunt instruments, or saws were depicted slightly more often than body adornments such as panties, brassieres, or stockings. The guns, knives, and blunt instruments were for sale. The saws appeared in advertisements offering instruction in sharpening saws. Undergarments most often appeared in the illustrations of advertisements for other merchandise.

Seventy-three advertisements in our sample promoted enhancement of sexual control, appeal, or function. Detective or law enforcement training was advertised in 68. Fifty-nine promoted "official" photographic identification cards, police badges, or other means of certifying identity. Mind control techniques were offered in 35 advertisements. Female wrestlers were depicted in 18, and male wrestlers in 9. Most issues had advertisements for mail-order brides.

lonely hearts clubs, "locksmith training," and equipment for picking locks, opening car doors, duplicating keys, and building handgun silencers.

Titles and Text

The titles of articles are similar in construction and terminology among detective magazines. Compare, for example, the titles from two magazines published two years apart by two different publishers: "A TRUNK-FULL OF FLESH"; "CANADA'S NUMBER 1 MURDER MYSTERY"; "MURDER BY FREIGHT TRAIN"; "ANNA TOOK THE BLADE 90 TIMES!"; "SEX COP'S DEATH CHAMBER"; "IT TAKES A COP"; "OLD FRIENDSHIPS DIE EASY WITH A .38"; "PORTLAND'S BLOODY SUMMER"; and "TORTURE-SLAYER OF EL TORO" (*Startling Detective*, Vol. 73, No. 3, May 1983, published by Globe Communications Corp.); "SATANIST SMILED AS HE SNUFFED THE SNITCH!"; "ROAST A FAMILY OF SIX!"; "BULLET BARRAGE KO'D THE BOXING REF!"; "WHO LEFT THE NAKED MAN'S HEAD SOAKED IN GORE?"; "THE HOLY VAMPIRE DRANK HIS VICTIM'S BLOOD!"; "WHO BLEW THE BICKERING COUPLE AWAY?"; "WEIRD FETISHES OF WASHINGTON'S RAPE-SLAYER!"; "HE WAS PLAYING HERO, SO I SHOT THE S.O.B.!"; "ORDEAL OF THE KIDNAPPED GIRL IN THE PIT!"; and "LETHAL LESSON: NEVER MESS WITH A MARRIED MAN!" (*Front Page Detective*, Vol. 48, No. 5, May 1985, published by RGH Publishing Corp.).

The magazine covers gave the titles of 77 of the 186 articles listed in the tables of contents. Table 2 shows the percentages of words about particular themes on the covers and in article titles. Words describing various forms of killing were most prevalent and included "kill," "murder," "execute," "slay," and "hit-man." Roles described included "stranger," "lover," "victim," "bride," "dame," "whore," "slut," "gigolo," and "mistress." Descriptors of mental states and traits included "crazy," "mad," "maniac," "greed," "treachery," "lust," and "hang-ups." Death-related words included "dead," "body," "corpse," "graveyard," "cemetery," "coffin," and "bloodthirsty." While law enforcement words such as "detective," "police," "crime," "case," and "cop" appeared in the names of every magazine, they were less commonly used in article titles. Sexual terms such as "rape," "gay," "drag," and "sex" made up the next most prevalent category. As can be seen in Table 2, the rank order of themes identified in article titles in the tables of contents was nearly identical to that for articles listed on covers.

In the 38 articles sampled for analysis, there were 40 killings. Fifteen involved torture, and the other twenty-five were less protracted murders of helpless victims. There were 44 episodes

TABLE 2—Percentages of detective magazine article titles mentioning particular themes.

Theme	On Cover (N = 77)	In Table of Contents (N = 186)
Killing	38	32
Roles	36	24
Mental state	34	16
Death	30	15
Law enforcement	25	10
Sex	19	14
Strangulation	9	5
Weapons	9	5
Mutilation	6	4
Relentless pursuit	6	3
Secret location	5	3
Life	3	2

of sexual violence (including 13 sexual mutilations), 14 robberies, and 3 burglaries. The incidents described included 50 shootings, 40 stabbings, 14 strangulations, 10 episodes of being bound and gagged, 7 bludgeonings, 3 burnings, 1 poisoning, and 1 electrocution.

Personal characteristics of victims and perpetrators were usually specified, adding to the credibility of the articles. Forty-seven perpetrators acted against ninety-eight victims. The offenders included 43 males and 4 females; the victims were 42 males and 56 females. When age was mentioned, offenders were usually between 15 and 35, while their victims were usually either 15 to 25 years old, or older than 46. Of the cases identifying race, 12 of 35 offenders and 4 of 44 victims were black. Twenty perpetrators were described as having been previously engaged in criminal activity, and seven were noted to have a history of psychiatric disorder. Five of the offenders were killed during gun battles with police, and all others went to trial. The insanity defense was raised in 13 trials, but only 1 defendant was acquitted by reason of insanity. The death sentence was given five times; three prisoners had been executed when the articles were written. Twenty-two victims were strangers, twelve were friends or acquaintances, and nine were lovers. Two male victims were noted to have been homosexual, and at least seventeen female victims were prostitutes. Men were killed, but virtually never sexually molested; women were almost always sexually attacked before being killed.

Many of the articles contained detailed descriptions of violent acts. Colorfully explicit descriptions of wounds and crime scenes were universal. Stalking or surveillance of the victim, methods of investigation, investigative reconstruction of the events, and crime laboratory work were commonly described. Networks of informants played a pivotal role in almost all investigations, and extensive media publicity was emphasized. Arrests tended to be rapid and overpowering. Extensive coverage was afforded to trials, verdicts, and sentences. Many articles ended by reporting a substantial prison sentence and reminding the reader that the offenders, or others like them, were still at large or might soon be.

Case Reports

The following six case histories illustrate how detective magazines are used as a source of fantasy material. The facts are drawn from investigative files submitted to the FBI Academy Behavioral Science Unit (Cases 1, 5, and 6) or from case files developed in the course of forensic psychiatric evaluations (Cases 2, 3, and 4). Cases 1 and 2 depict multiple murderers who enjoyed detective magazines. The offender in Case 3 used detective magazines during masturbation, but reportedly never acted out his most extreme fantasy scenarios. The pedophile in Case 4 used detective magazines to facilitate his masturbation fantasies and may have begun to act out those fantasies. The offender in Case 5 used detective magazines in the commission of his offense. Case 6 describes the victim of an autoerotic fatality, who used detective magazines in the course of acting out his fantasies.

Case 1

A multiple murderer of the late 1950s had a collection of the covers of detective magazines. He told police investigators that he liked detective magazines "sometimes for the words, sometimes for the covers."

He approached two of his victims on the pretext that he wished them to model bondage scenes for detective magazines. In his statement to the investigating officers he said:

I told her that I wanted to take pictures that would be suitable for illustrations for mystery stories or detective magazine stories of that type, and that this would require me to tie her hands and feet and put a gag in her mouth, and she [was] agreeable to this, and I did tie her hands and feet and put a gag in her mouth and I took a number of pictures, I don't remember exactly how many, of various poses and changing the pose from picture to picture.

He acknowledged that he never had any intention of submitting the photographs for publication, and added that he was impotent in the absence of bondage.

Case 2

A 35-year-old, married, white man was charged with approximately a dozen murders in several states.

He had never known his father, who had been executed for murdering a police officer and who also had killed a correctional officer during an escape. Shortly before being executed the father wrote: "When I killed this cop, it made me feel good inside. I can't get over how good it did make me feel, for the sensation was something that made me feel elated to the point of happiness . . ." He recalled his grandmother showing him a picture of his father and telling him that his father had been a heroic firefighter. Later, he learned that the photograph was from a detective magazine article about his father's murders and execution. Often told of his resemblance to his father, he came to believe that his father lived within him.

His mother was married four times and also had a series of short-term extramarital sexual partners. She frequently told her son that she had been raped by her father when she was nine. She ridiculed her son's bedwetting, which persisted to age 13, by calling him "pissy pants" in front of guests; he was also beaten for the bedwetting and for night terrors. For as long as he could recall he had had recurrent nightmares of being smothered by nylon similar to women's stockings and being strapped to a chair in a gas chamber as green gas filled the room. One of his stepfathers beat him relentlessly. For leaving a hammer outside, he was awakened by this stepfather burning his wrist with a cigar, which left a permanent scar. For playing a childish game while urinating, he was forced to drink urine. On the one occasion when his mother intervened, the stepfather pushed her head through a plaster wall. From then on she also actively abused her children from the earlier marriages.

Knocked unconscious on multiple occasions, he was once briefly comatose at age 16 and for over a week at approximately age 20. A computed tomography (CT) scan of the brain showed abnormally enlarged sulci and slightly enlarged ventricles. Results of the Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Battery and the Luria-Nebraska Neuropsychological Battery were interpreted as showing damage to the right frontal lobe.

As a juvenile, he had police contacts for vandalism, malicious acts, running away, and multiple burglaries (beginning at age seven in the company of an older brother). Apprehended for lewd contact with a 7-year-old girl at age 13, he was sent to reform school for a year. He was suspended from high school for misconduct and poor grades. At age 16, he was arrested for armed robbery, escaped, and later turned himself in to authorities.

At age 18, 2 weeks after the birth of his first child, he married the child's mother. Despite subsequent arrests for armed robbery, beating his wife, assault, burglary, auto theft, theft, parole violation, and other offenses, he was awarded custody of his daughter after divorcing his first wife. His second and third marriages ended in divorce after he beat his wives, and his fourth marriage ended in divorce for unknown reasons.

After many more arrests and a jail escape, he was eventually sentenced to prison on an armed robbery conviction. He initiated sexual contact with his seven-year-old daughter during a conjugal visit on the prison grounds. Prison records from his early 20s document a psychotic episode with paranoid delusions and suicidal ideation following the death of a brother. After he was paroled from prison he impregnated one woman and married another (his fifth wife). He separated from her after he was released from parole. His second through fifth wives appeared young enough to pass as teenagers.

In his early 30s, he lived as husband and wife with his 13-year-old daughter, whom he impregnated. The pregnancy was aborted. He continued to molest his daughter, who reported one of his rapes. He also sexually assaulted one of her girlfriends. He celebrated one of his

birthdays by sodomizing his then 14-year-old daughter. Eventually she moved to her grandparents' home, and he began living and traveling with another woman, who became his sixth wife and his partner in a two-year series of rapes and murders.

His wife knew of his fantasies of torturing young girls and his desire for women he could control and abuse, and she assisted him in each of his known murders by selecting the victim, orchestrating the abduction, and concealing the evidence. He beat, tortured, and raped his victims, whom he forced to play the role of his daughter in fantasy scenarios that he directed. Available data suggest that he killed his victims to avoid detection and not because the killing gave him sexual pleasure.

His early victims were all teenage girls; his later victims included adults. After his initial murders, he again raped his daughter and her friend. They reported these offenses, and an arrest warrant was issued. The offender changed his identity, as he had on previous occasions, using falsified identification papers. A gun enthusiast, he bought and sold various firearms; shortly before his last arrest, he possessed two revolvers, an automatic pistol, a derringer, and a semiautomatic assault rifle. Those victim's bodies that have been located showed death by gunshot wounds or blows to the head. Some of the bodies were still bound.

Masturbation he regarded as shameful, dirty, and unmanly. The first sexually explicit pictures he could recall having seen were photographs of his mother with a man he did not recognize. Although familiar with sexually explicit men's magazines, he had never been to an adult book store or an X-rated movie "because I didn't want anybody to think I was in that category." He considered *The Exorcist* and *Psycho* influential in his life. In speaking of sexual deviations, he referred to "sadism-masochism" [sic], but noted that this did not apply to him: "... sadism-masochism is where you like to be hurt while you hurt, and I don't think that's it. Maybe one half of it, cause I think I've been hurt enough." The imagery characteristic of bondage and domination pornography disgusted him: "That ain't me.... The ball in the mouth, the excess rope, I think what they've done is taken a fantasy and overdo it. The mask makes somebody look like out of Mars.... You're in a room and a girl walks out with a rubber suit or whip and she's subject to get shot." Asked about the covers of detective magazines, he responded by saying that they are what he really likes and that the interviewer seemed to read his mind, asking questions that allowed him to say what he was already thinking.

When he was 14, he learned that his fugitive father had been caught because his mother had told the police his whereabouts. After reporting this, he stated: "Sometimes I [think] about blowin' her head off.... Sometimes I wanta' put a shotgun in her mouth and blow the back of her head off...." For years, his favorite sexual fantasy was of torturing his mother to death:

I was gonna' string her up by her feet, strip her, hang her up by her feet, spin her, take a razor blade, make little cuts, just little ones, watch the blood run out, just drip off her head. Hang her up in the closet, put airplane glue on her, light her up. Tattoo "bitch" on her forehead....

This fantasy gradually changed and came to include forced sexual activity and other forms of abuse and torture. After his first wife left him, she replaced his mother in the fantasy; eventually their daughter replaced her.

Case 3

A 35-year-old, single, white man was charged with unarmed robbery. He had had several psychiatric hospitalizations, each time receiving a diagnosis of chronic undifferentiated schizophrenia. He was suspected to have committed the current act to gain readmission.

He left school after the ninth grade and never worked. He admitted to bouts of heavy alcohol consumption, but denied using other drugs. He had been arrested previously for threatening the President, attempted strong-arm robbery, and attempted bank robbery. He admitted several indecent exposures and burglaries for which he had not been arrested. During the burglaries he had taken food and women's underclothing, searched bureau drawers, and torn up

clothes. He also admitted to "peeping" and several episodes of crossdressing, donning panties, slips, dresses, and lipstick. On several occasions he had entered houses when the occupants were away and left notes threatening to kill them if they did not leave things for him to take. He denied urinating or defecating in these houses, although he had once thrown a litter box containing cat feces. He had also once tried to steal explosives.

At age ten he had engaged in sexual play with his sister and a niece; there had been at least one episode of intercourse. After he quit school at age 16, he lived briefly with a 14-year-old girl who became pregnant and miscarried. At some point thereafter he began having fantasies of forced vaginal intercourse, sucking and biting on breasts, and mutual oral sexual activity. He described subsequent enchantment with pornography depicting these activities and dated his first contact with detective magazines to approximately the same time.

By his mid-20s, his masturbatory fantasies were of lying on a woman, tying her with heavy, electrical wire, having intercourse with her, killing her by blows and strangulation, and then attacking her genitalia. He said that the detective magazines had not caused these fantasies, adding, "I had 'em before but the [detective] magazines bring them out." By his late 20s, he was having fantasies of mutilation, smearing and drinking blood, and continuing intercourse after his victim's death. He also had recurrent dreams of being a "bloodthirsty murderer."

He stated that he preferred masturbating while looking at the covers and contents of detective magazines. He regarded detective magazine photographs as the best match to his current sexual fantasies and as his most important source of sexual pleasure. He said he masturbated in his bathroom with detective magazine covers and pictures from explicitly erotic magazines so positioned that he could see himself and the pictures in a mirror. He particularly liked pictures in which women "look like whores," and he masturbated to orgasm while fantasizing about "killing whores."

He claimed never to have acted out his most extreme fantasies, but he believed that he might be "losing control over them." He admitted to having had intense "sexual thoughts" during the unarmed robbery, to "enjoying touching, feeling panties and bras," and to excitement at thoughts of women struggling.

A detailed review of his records uncovered no documentation of symptoms or signs of schizophrenia. He admitted to having feigned mental illness so that he could be stopped from acting out his fantasies.

Case 4

A 20-year-old, single, black man with no previous criminal record but several psychiatric evaluations was incarcerated for sexually molesting children. At least three complaints had been lodged previously against him without formal charges being filed.

He stood charged with two sexual assaults against prepubescent girls. In the first incident he asked a girl to go with him, claiming that a friend wanted to speak with her. He grabbed the girl, pulled her pants down, and fondled her genitals until someone appeared, when he fled. The second incident was similar, although reportedly more forceful, with the victim resisting more aggressively. He fled when the victim bit him. He denied any sexual contact with his victims, but did say that in one offense against a girl he "kept hitting until she was unconscious; I thought she was dead."

His father had been rarely present, and the family was on welfare. One of his brothers was said to be mentally retarded and institutionalized. He claimed to have had good relationships with family members and to have had friends. He completed ninth grade with below average grades; the school authorities had wanted him placed in special education classes, but his mother had refused. He was never married, had no military history, and worked intermittently in unskilled jobs. He acknowledged moderate use of alcohol and marijuana, but denied using other drugs.

During the screening psychiatric interview he denied any symptoms suggestive of a psychotic illness. He claimed his present offenses occurred because he was "too scared to ask out women." Fearing that older women might reject him and tell him he was "too young, just a kid, and I can't handle that," he felt anger toward older women, "like I want to kill them." He admitted to daydreams about "beating them up" followed by intercourse. His masturbatory fantasies involved bondage in which the hands of the women were tied behind their backs, their mouths gagged, and their legs tied to bedposts. He denied masturbatory fantasies involving other physical injury. He also denied crossdressing. He believed he would never act on his masturbatory fantasies: "I just couldn't see myself doing something like that; not if she don't do as I tell her. If I get mad I start tearing up stuff, but not kids; I like kids. If I had kids I wouldn't want someone doing that to them." He claimed his fantasies involved "mostly white girls" ages 12 to 13.

He said that he frequently used visual media to stimulate his masturbatory fantasies. His favorite images involved women wearing undergarments, such as brassieres and panties, or two-piece bathing suits, which he commonly found on detective magazine covers, but added that he found detective magazines less appealing than traditional pornography.

Case 5

A 34-year-old, white woman received a telephone call from a man claiming to represent a manufacturing firm that had developed a new line of brassieres and was conducting a marketing survey in her area. She was invited to participate in the survey. She would be sent six free bras to wear for six months, when she would be asked to complete a questionnaire as to their comfort, durability, and washability. She agreed and provided her bust measurements to the caller.

Approximately seven months later, the same man called the second time and said that he would like to deliver the bras to her home. She asked that he call back in a few days as she wanted to discuss the matter with her husband. When he rang, she told him that she had decided not to participate in the survey. He responded, "I don't want to have intercourse with you, I just want to deliver the bras." She hung up immediately.

Five months later, upon receiving a package in the mail which contained four sketches depicting her bound, in various stages of undress, she notified the police. Shortly thereafter, the man called again, asking for her opinion of the sketches.

A second package containing four sketches similar to the first ones arrived about four months later, again followed by a telephone call. During this conversation, the man requested that she meet him and said he would call again to arrange the meeting. He also described the wallpaper pattern in her bathroom. He used no profanity in the telephone conversations.

Approximately four months later he called for the sixth time, requesting a meeting. She hung up on him. Within days came another call during which she agreed to meet him at a shopping center near her home. She notified the police, who arranged surveillance. After waiting in vain for 45 min at the appointed location, she talked with the surveilling officers and drove home.

The following month, the man called and accurately described her movements at the rendezvous and her return home. He requested that she deliver two of her bras to a designated Salvation Army clothes bin. Again she notified the police and a surveillance of the drop site was arranged; however, the offender was able to pick up the bras undetected by entering the clothes bin from an opening in the rear. Shortly thereafter, she received a third package containing her bras, two pictorial pages, an advertisement page, and a cover from a detective magazine. The bras had semen stains and handwriting on them. The magazine cover and the pictorial pages each showed a woman being threatened by a man holding a knife; her name was written above the women and the word "me" was written above the men. The advertisement

was for Nazi paraphernalia. One month later he rang to ask what she thought about the package.

That same month, she received a letter containing polaroid photographs of a white male, nude except for a ski mask, masturbating in a hotel room. The letter said that he had rented the room, intended to kidnap her, and had bought rope with which to bind her and a camera with which to take pictures of her performing various sexual acts. He called her again shortly after she received the letter. The eleventh and final call came one month later.

From the photographs the police were able to identify the hotel, where they found that he had registered under his real name. He was later arrested, convicted, and sentenced to one year in jail. At the time of his arrest, the police seized a folder containing 30 detective magazine covers that depicted women in potentially lethal situations.

Case 6

A 30-year-old white man was discovered dead in his apartment. He was partially suspended in a doorway by a length of plastic clothesline which encircled his neck twice with a knot on the right. The clothesline went up to and through an airspace above the door and was affixed to a hinge beside the victim. His arms hung at his sides, and his feet touched the floor. A pair of wire cutters and more clothesline were found on a washing machine in the apartment. He wore eyeglasses, a brassiere, jockey shorts, and black calf-length socks.

Propped up on a stand directly in front of him was a detective magazine cover which depicted a man strangling a young woman who wore a black brassiere. Two lingerie advertisements taped to a nearby wall showed a woman from the waist up who wore only a brassiere and a woman wearing a brassiere and a panty girdle. A nearby phonograph was on, and the first song on the record was "Barbie Ann." An album cover lying beside the phonograph had a picture of a man with two young women wearing halter tops.

The decedent's wife, Barbara, had been separated from him for four months; she and their only child had moved to another state. He had appeared to be in normal spirits during a visit with his parents six days earlier. A friend with whom he had played pool on the evening before his death and who was the last person to see him alive described him as having been in good spirits at the time of their parting.

The death was ruled to be an accident occurring during autoerotic activity. The decedent's attire and visual props suggest a brassiere fetish, while the detective magazine cover in front of him depicting the sexual murder of a woman wearing a brassiere suggests that he entertained a sadistic fantasy that he had been enacting with his own body. The object of his fantasies may have been his wife. (This case has been reported in less detail elsewhere [20].)

Discussion

Detective magazines juxtapose conventionally erotic images (for example, pictures of scantily clad women or descriptions of sexual acts) with images of violence and suffering. Detective magazines are not the only source for this combination of images; many recent horror films, crime films, and rock video productions have similar characteristics. One study found that bondage and domination was the primary theme of 17% of the magazines sold in "adults only" bookstores [21]. Unlike these magazines, however, detective magazines, being inexpensive and available on many newsstands, have a large circulation. They are always openly displayed, unlike magazines showing nonviolent nudity, and there is no effort to discourage sales to minors.

The cases reported in this paper show that some readers who use detective magazines as sources of sexual fantasy material also act on their fantasies. MacCulloch et al [22] have described men who progress from sadistic masturbation fantasies to crimes that enact portions of

the fantasy sequence, and thence to more serious offenses based on an elaborated fantasy sequence. A similar pattern can be recognized in Cases 3 and 4 above.

At least two previously published case reports mention the use of detective magazines as a source of sexual fantasy imagery. Graber et al [23] reported the history of a 36-year-old man who forced a woman to fellate him at knife-point in a women's restroom of a public park. This attack was followed several weeks later by "an abortive attack on a woman that ended when she was cut by his knife." The offender had no prior criminal record. He reported a lack of sexual experience, including masturbation, until marriage at age 23. The frequency of intercourse with his wife decreased after he experienced a business failure. About a year before his arrest he had begun masturbating while reading the sex crime articles in a detective magazine, which thereafter became his preferred sexual outlet. The offense for which he was arrested was inspired by a detective magazine article.

Wesselius and Bally [24] recorded the history of a 24-year-old man who practiced autoerotic asphyxia by self-hanging for ten years. He first masturbated at age ten while suspended from the bar of a swing set. He began using the pictures in *True Detective* magazine while masturbating around age 14. The authors report: "From this magazine he developed the idea of dressing in female clothing which he would take from the family laundry hamper. . . ." Within months, he became sexually aroused while watching a hanging scene in a cowboy film, and was particularly excited by the man's struggle and kicking feet. He then began masturbating while hanging himself. The authors noted that "[h]e continued to use *True Detective* magazines with only occasional use of other more common soft pornography publications." He would become most aroused by dressing in soiled women's undergarments and hanging himself. He also became aroused by wearing such clothing and binding his limbs and neck. He fantasized strangling a woman and was particularly aroused by imagining her helpless struggling and her kicking feet.

Goldstein and Kant [25] quoted a rapist as saying:

I can remember looking through *True Detective* and stuff like this and seeing articles about women that had been murdered or something. . . . I remember partially nude bodies. There was a lot of magazines on the stands I used to buy all the time. these horror stories, "trips of terror," weird stories, stuff like this. Soon after this, they banned 'em from the newsstands. I used to like to read them all the time.

While there is no doubt that detective magazines provide a rich source of sexually sadistic imagery, the role that these magazines play in the development of sexual sadism, if any, is unknown. To the extent that paraphilic responsiveness is acquired by repeatedly associating sexual arousal with particular images, the availability of sexually sadistic imagery may be important. Detective magazines are one source of such imagery.

The cases we have described do not prove that detective magazines "cause" sexual sadism or sadistic offenses. Only unethical experiments could prove or disprove such causation, and we do not encourage that they be contemplated. Tests of the arousal of normal men and of sexual sadists to the cover imagery we describe could, however, tend to support or refute our postulate and could be conducted in an ethical manner that minimizes the risk of harming the subjects.

We assume that conventionally erotic elements in detective magazines would arouse many males and that responsiveness to particular stimuli can be learned. We postulate that repeated pairing of arousal with the unconditioned stimuli in these magazines, such as depictions of bondage, domination, weapons, strangulation and other struggles, blood, and corpses increases the probability that the viewer will subsequently be aroused by exposure to these stimuli, whether or not they are presented in an erotic context.

We know that some boys and men repeatedly use detective magazines to achieve sexual arousal and that at least some of these individuals are sexual sadists. Of these latter, however, we do not know what proportion were sexual sadists before their exposure to detective magazines. We consider it plausible that some boys and young men turn to detective magazines for

such conventional sexual imagery as scantily clad women or descriptions of sexual interaction, and through repeated exposure learn to be aroused by elements of the photographs and articles that otherwise would have had no sexual associations. We recognize, however, that horror movies and other films probably expose more boys and young men to the pairing of erotic and violent images.

Detective magazines might affect the established sexual sadist by reinforcing his paraphilia (particularly if he masturbates to orgasm while looking at or reading the magazines), by adding details to his fantasies and preferred imagery, and by providing consensual validation that lessens the extent to which he considers his preference abnormal or unacceptable.

Beyond their significance with respect to sexual sadism, detective magazines have other potentially criminogenic effects. None of these potential effects is unique to detective magazines, but each should be considered in assessing the social value of these magazines.

Detective magazines publicize particularly serious crimes. In an era in which many value fame more highly than esteem or freedom, the prospect of publicity serves as an inducement to crime. While detective magazines reach a smaller audience than network television, national news magazines, wire services, or the most widely read newspapers, they reach an audience with greater than average interest in crime, provide lengthier and more detailed accounts of particular offenders and offenses, and emphasize the degree of publicity received by the offender.

Detective magazines are an unsurpassed source of public information on techniques for committing crimes, on the errors of unsuccessful offenders, and on the methods available to law enforcement agencies for preventing crimes and apprehending offenders. We have examined and studied offenders who have sought out, filed, and used such information to commit crimes, but we also know law enforcement officers who use such information as a source of continuing education.

The advertisements in detective magazines provide access to information and paraphernalia that are sometimes used to commit crimes, including weapons, burglary tools, and car theft equipment. Police badges and other false identification obtained through these advertisements have been used by offenders to gain entry to dwellings or to stop motorists. Cases have been documented of persons murdered or otherwise victimized by persons whom they met through lonely hearts advertisements such as those appearing in detective magazines [26].

Conclusions

Detective magazines have a lengthy heritage and generate substantial sales. No doubt some readers examine detective magazines out of curiosity or casual interest. Sexual sadists, however, are particularly drawn to detective magazines, and some of these individuals translate their fantasies into action. Clinicians should learn to ask their patients about reading preferences and should also have sufficient knowledge of popular publications to be able to interpret the responses. Since few patients spontaneously mention sadistic sexual fantasies in the course of assessment or psychotherapy, inquiries about reading habits provide an important route through which to explore a patient's fantasy life.

Patients with a particular interest in detective magazines may have problems other than sexual sadism. In our experience, many individuals who are paranoid or preoccupied with violence read or collect detective magazines, mercenary magazines (such as *Soldier of Fortune*, *Commando*, and *Gung Ho*), and hunting and gun magazines. Peterson [27] noted that "the market of a medium [usually] coincides with that of its advertisements" and that advertisements generally reflect consumer needs and desires. Some of the advertisements in detective magazines cater to those with pronounced feelings of inadequacy by offering greater sexual control, appeal, or function; techniques of mind control; and certification of identity.

Our view that the harmful effects of detective magazines probably outweigh whatever contributions they may make to law enforcement, entertainment, and the economy is, of course,

not entirely original. Writing at the end of the 19th century, Cesare Lombroso considered newspaper reports of crime the source of many imitative ("copycat") crimes, of which he gave multiple examples. He concluded:

This morbid stimulation is increased a hundred-fold by the prodigious increase of really criminal newspapers, which spread abroad the virus of the most loathsome social plagues, simply for sordid gain, and excite the morbid appetite and still more morbid curiosity of the lower social classes. They may be likened to those maggots which, sprung from putrefaction, increase it by their presence [28].

We suppose that Lombroso put it too strongly, as was his custom. Nonetheless, we are concerned that detective magazines—today's equivalent of "really criminal newspapers"—may contribute to the development and persistence of sexual sadism; facilitate sadistic fantasies; and encourage crime by rewarding it with publicity, disseminating technical information, and easing access to criminal equipment.

We therefore urge policymakers to consider detective magazines in their deliberations concerning violence in the media and pornography. We recommend that the new national commission on pornography [29] include detective magazines and other sources of sexually sadistic imagery among the classes of materials that it studies. Whatever definition of pornography or obscenity emerges from the ongoing public policy debate should surely be formulated to encompass those materials that present the greatest risk of promoting the erotization of violence.

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