

# Understanding the psychopath: investigative strategies. a follow-up on understanding the violent personality: antisocial personality disorder, psychopathy, & sociopathy explored (Johnson, 2019)

## Abstract

Identifying and dealing with the psychopathic offender is challenging. Psychopathic individuals live lives that can be chronically unstable on one extreme to appearing stable on the other. Their anti social behavior may or may not have been revealed as they are good at not getting caught for their criminal behavior or at least at times not caught for several years or even decades of engaging in deviant and antisocial behavior. Psychopaths are callous and engage in the remorseless use of others and live a chronically antisocial lifestyle. The psychopath has the job of fooling investigators, of effectively blaming victims, and of portraying themselves in a favorable light. The goal for investigators is to pay attention to the indicators of a lack of emotionality and a sense of faking emotional reactions as well as to paying attention to the language the offender uses. This article updates what we have learned about psychopaths.<sup>1</sup> Certain personality factors have been correlated to violence in general, including sex crimes. Those with personality traits including, but not limited to narcissism, antisocial, psychopathic and other deviant traits may simply not be concerned with the risks involved in violent crime or may become aroused to hurting or taking advantage of other and to the risk of getting caught. In addition, such individuals may give little if any regard to the consequences or punishments for their behavior.<sup>2,3</sup> Those who engage in the more severe form of psychological abuse of *gaslighting* appear more likely to present with psychopathic traits: high degrees of cunningness, being able to calmly con others (lie, manipulate- even towards law enforcement), and their apparent lower degree of anxiety or fear expressed when others are present.

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## Introduction

### Sociopaths

***Sociopaths are psychopaths with less skill!*** They are thought to have been born with a relatively normal brain, but through extreme adversarial circumstances the brain is damaged, rewired.

They are more likely to be angry, defiant, resistive, and provocative. They are not skilled at hiding their true feelings and emotions as psychopaths are. They openly and aggressively resent any accusation made against them. They are likely to be terminated from treatment either because they simply refuse to cooperate or are terminated due to inappropriate behavior, risk behavior related to their offense, or because they reoffend. They are likely to be angry and always blaming others, even their victims, for causing them to behave the way they did. They likely have sporadic employment and relationships are problematic.<sup>1,4,5</sup> In addition, they are more likely to loudly boast about their crimes and are far more likely than psychopaths to get caught and are caught more frequently for subsequent crimes.

### Psychopaths

**Psychopathy** is associated with chronic violent offending and low levels of non-violent offending.<sup>5,6</sup> The psychopath may not be caught for years and even when detected and investigated, charges may not be filed due to the time between when the crime occurred and time of discovery. The psychopath may have pled guilty to a lesser offense and therefore the criminal history appears insignificant, or they may have

no criminal history.<sup>1</sup> Primary psychopaths are born with a damaged brain, limiting their experience of emotions.<sup>7</sup> Secondary psychopaths are probably born with a normal brain, but through adversarial environmental circumstances the brain is rewired/damaged to a psychopath brain.<sup>7</sup> Secondary psychopaths likely have more ability to experience emotions than primary psychopaths. Psychopaths are skilled at hiding their deviant beliefs and more obsessive in the planning of and carrying out their crimes.

***Psychopaths*** often appear smooth, charming, and conning.<sup>8,9</sup> They often offer explanations of any wrongdoing with plausible explanations. They are likely to be overly cooperative with investigations and in treatment. On the other hand, they may fail treatment because of narcissistic or arrogant traits. The psychopath learns to superficially comply with treatment and supervision requirements yet maintain their deviant and antisocial thinking. They are adept at modifying their violent and offense behavior to avoid making the same mistake again or because they are bored and need to find new ways to meet their needs. They may convince the victim that the offense/violent act was the victim's fault. They may superficially accept responsibility for their antisocial behavior but not believe it. They may also produce many children, whom they rarely if ever take care of and are highly promiscuous. Some maintain professional employment while others con and manipulate others so that they can live off others which is referred to as a parasitic lifestyle.<sup>1</sup> Psychopathy is the single best predictor of violent behavior.<sup>10,11</sup> Individuals with traits of psychopathy and/or with psychopathy are disproportionately involved in violence.<sup>12-14</sup>

Psychopaths tend to dissociate from responsibility for their behavior and experience significantly less guilt for their behavior, which can make them more dangerous than sociopaths.<sup>4</sup> Psychopaths have the ability to project a prosocial personality, fooling others with ease. They may come off as charming and caring and can con and manipulate others with ease. When they commit crimes, they tend to carefully plan every detail and calmly engage in the crime (*cool, calm, meticulous*). Psychopathic traits of **criminal versatility** and **pathological lying** may make other psychopathic symptoms and traits worse.<sup>9</sup> Psychopaths demonstrate callousness, unemotional mindset, and remorselessness. Psychopathy involves patterns of affective, interpersonal, and behavioral characteristics more extreme than *Antisocial Personality Disorder*.<sup>1</sup> The psychopath has a need to hurt others, whether psychologically, physically, sexually, or financially. They can exhibit superficial charm, grandiosity, the need for pathological lying (lying for the sake of lying), are cunning and conning, have limited remorse and empathy, tend to have shallow, limited emotions, and fail to accept responsibility for their behavior. They can be impulsive and exhibit behavioral control problems.<sup>15</sup> For a more in-depth examination of psychopathy.<sup>1,15</sup> Perpetrators may exhibit psychopathic traits, but not all are true psychopaths.

Many have correlated factors of psychopathy to sex offenders, specifically the factors of deceitfulness, manipulation, lack of empathy, antisocial lifestyles, etc.<sup>16–20</sup> Psychopathy has been shown to be related to serious and violent offending trajectories in youth.<sup>5,6</sup> Psychopathy has been related to sex offending including rape, sexual coercion, sexual homicide, child molestation, and sadism.<sup>18,20–24</sup> Both juvenile sex offenders and juvenile non-sex offenders who demonstrate **callous-unemotional** traits demonstrate more severe and aggressive antisocial behavior patterns than those who do not score high on this factor.<sup>25,26</sup> Callous-unemotional is a trait consistent with psychopaths.

Differentiating **child molesters** (*minimal if any sexual attraction to children*) from **pedophiles** (*primary sexual attraction to children*) is important. **Child molesters** are more likely to be psychopathic than pedophiles,<sup>27</sup> though both are more likely to demonstrate more severe psychopathic traits than other violent offenders. **Child molesters** sexually offend against children and adolescents with motivations such as prerogative, convenience, availability of victim, and just because they can. **Pedophiles** prefer sexual contact with children and/or adolescents than with adults and that makes it even more unlikely that they would ever cease their sexually abusive behaviors. **Pedophiles** also tend to have more victims over time than child molesters, are more likely to reoffend, and less likely to do well in treatment than **child molesters**.<sup>28,29</sup> Both pedophiles and child molesters who have psychopathy are more likely to reoffend.<sup>29,30</sup>

Both **juvenile sex offenders** and **juvenile non-sex offenders** who demonstrate **callous-unemotional traits** (*a trait of psychopathy*) tend to demonstrate more severe and aggressive antisocial behavior patterns than those who do not present with callous-unemotional traits.<sup>25,26</sup> This suggests that juvenile sex offenders and juvenile violent offenders are more likely to continue their violent sexual and nonsexual behavior into adulthood.<sup>25,31,32</sup> In addition, juvenile sex offenders were found to have significantly higher scores for psychopathy than juvenile non-sex offenders.<sup>25</sup> Juvenile violent sexual and nonsexual offenders are more likely to demonstrate more criminal diversity and most studies suggest a higher rate of both sexual and nonsexual recidivism.<sup>33–35</sup>

Psychopathy does not go away with time and is not treatable. Psychopathy has been shown to be related to serious and violent offending trajectories in youth. In simple terms psychopathy involves

the rewiring of the brain which decreases prosocial capabilities and increases antisocial proclivities.<sup>36</sup> Many have correlated factors of psychopathy to sex offenders, specifically the factors specifically of **deceitfulness, manipulation, lack of empathy, antisocial lifestyles, etc.**<sup>16–20</sup> Psychopathic traits of **criminal versatility** and **pathological lying** may make other psychopathic symptoms and traits worse.<sup>9</sup> A psychopath can effectively lie, with minimal or no anxiety or remorse.

## Gaslighting

Psychopaths and narcissists may be physical abusers and sex offenders, which makes them more proficient in utilizing **gaslighting**. Gaslighting is perhaps the most severe form of psychological force/abuse. Gaslighting is used by perpetrators of abuse and sex crimes to control others. Narcissism is about characteristics and behaviors that involve a grandiose sense of self (superiority) and the belief that they are special compared to others. They tend to have a constant need for attention and admiration and have a sense of entitlement. The narcissist is exploitive, a user of people, and lacks normal degrees of empathy. They can appear arrogant, misogynistic, and believe they are superior in intelligence.<sup>37</sup> Narcissists and psychopaths can engage in **gaslighting** with ease.

Psychology Today<sup>38</sup> defines **gaslighting** as a form of manipulation and control in which a victim is continually led to believe false information which causes the victim to doubt themselves. This impacts the victim's memory and perception of situations. Over time, the victim begins to have doubts about their sanity, self-worth, and of their ability to make decisions. Others may observe the perpetrator who is engaging in gaslighting: 1) criticizing the victim and the victim's credibility; 2) project blame unto the victim for causing the perpetrator to behave violently, thereby justifying their violent behavior; 3) either befriending the victim's support people (e.g., family, friends) while portraying the victim to them as troubled and portraying themselves as the victim's savior, or severely limiting the victim's contact with their support people, thereby isolating the victim.<sup>39,40</sup> As a result of psychological abuse and **gaslighting**, the victim may experience fear—of the abuser, of being harmed, or of others finding out about the abuse—as well as feelings of being trapped, shamed, worthless and exploited.

## Sexual gaslighting

The perpetrator may be adept at the use of psychological abuse to control consenting and nonconsenting sex partners, which often involves **“gaslighting”** to make their partners/victims question their own sanity and role in a rape. I will use the term “rape” to include sexual assault, rape, child molestation, and any forced sexual contact. It is common for a sex offender to blame the victim for the sexual assault, molestation, or rape while at the same time portraying themselves as a victim of the situation. Perpetrators often claim that they were **“out-of-control”** or **“mislead”** by the victim, neither of which are true. **Sexual gaslighting** is a form of psychological abuse used to rape and to gain sexual contact against the victim's will.

Wahl<sup>38</sup> describes **sexual gaslighting** as an attempt to cause confusion around a sexual situation. The victim may have been unconscious, impaired, or simply not wanting sexual contact to occur. The perpetrator attempts to confuse the victim by questioning the victim's intent and accusing the victim of really wanting sexual contact, when in fact the victim did not. Forcing a victim to consume more alcohol than they wanted, to use drugs against their will, or secretly drugging the victim further complicates the situation. The perpetrator will likely blame the victim for the increased alcohol or drug use despite forcing the victim to consume the alcohol or drugs.

In addition, when the victim is in an impaired state or unconscious, others may not believe them. The goal of *sexual gaslighting* is to create confusion in the victim by challenging victim resistance as consent or as a sign that they do not love the perpetrator, or that the victim really wanted the sexual contact despite resisting. This can lead to the victim distrusting their own experience and memory. This can also result in a victim appearing more confused and unreliable in their recollection of the sexual assault or rape. But that is the very reason the perpetrator engages in *sexual gaslighting*.

Psychological force/abuse is used by all sexual offenders, whereas use of physical force is used by approximately 21% of sexual offenders.<sup>41,42</sup> The role of alcohol is further explained by Johnson<sup>43</sup>. Victims are often held more responsible for being raped than perpetrators are held accountable for raping. Others may be coned by the perpetrator of gaslighting to blame the victim as well and to cause others to question the mental wellbeing and credibility of the victim.<sup>43</sup> Perpetrators are adept at blaming their victim as well as blaming their own alcohol use for their violent behavior. Time and time again perpetrators of violent crime use alcohol intoxication as an excuse for reprehensible behavior.<sup>44</sup> Female victims who are intoxicated are often less believed and often portrayed as deserving of the rape in some way.<sup>45,46</sup> As a contradiction, sex offenders and offenders in general who are intoxicated at the time they commit their crime are often portrayed as being less culpable for their actions.<sup>47</sup> Interesting situation- blame the victim and support the offender (Stone {2013} provides an interesting legal opinion on this matter). There is a direct association between men's attitudes about women (e.g., misogyny, use of coercion, misinterpretation of women's behavior) and sexual assault and rape in general.<sup>23</sup> When the victim of *gaslighting* is interviewed, he/she likely appears to be a mess- distraught, depressed, angry, yet the perpetrator often appears blaming and calm, too calm.

### Sexual sadists

I want to include a brief statement about sexual sadism. I would argue that sexual sadists are psychopaths as well. Sexual Sadism involves becoming sexually aroused to the physical or psychological suffering of another person.<sup>37</sup> Sadists cause pain, suffering and humiliation to their victims and become aroused to the victims' suffering. The goal is to break the victim of resistance and gain total submission.

**To identify a sadist:** when the victim states that they cried, yelled, and plead with perpetrator to stop, and the perpetrator smiled and continued to cause pain or humiliation, this is sadistic. The smile is an acknowledgement of the victim's pain, suffering and/or humiliation and continuing the painful and humiliating behavior is an admission that the perpetrator enjoys the victim's suffering and painful reaction. All sadists are psychopaths except they have an extreme need to humiliate and physically, psychologically and sexually hurt their victims.

### Deceptive communication styles

Psychopaths present several telltale indicators suggestive of deceptive communication styles.<sup>48</sup> They exhibited a wholly selfish orientation and profound emotional deficit. They appear to have limited or no conscience.<sup>15,49</sup> They can easily dupe an experienced Investigator. Most cues of deception are faint and unreliable. Verbal cues and language are often more accurate indicators of deception.<sup>50</sup> It is important to understand and appreciate that both liars and truth tellers attempt to suppress nonverbal cues, and to suppress nervous behaviors.<sup>51,52</sup> Truth tellers attempt to "tell it all" and try to be detailed. Liars tend to be somewhat vague to avoid contradicting facts possibly known to the investigator.

### The impact of lying- pathological lying

Lying for the sake of lying, for the sake of arousal, is **pathological lying**. This is a hallmark of psychopathy. Cognitive load increases when lying because lying is more demanding than truth telling.<sup>53-57</sup> People who are more intelligent can appear to be telling the truth when lying when a quick response is necessary- though perhaps not as effectively when providing a broader narrative.<sup>58</sup> By increasing cognitive load, the perpetrator is likely to show signs of leakage of the truth, which can include uncertainty about the facts, vagueness in narrative detail, response latency represented by frequent pausing, leaning backward, and leaning the head and torso away from interviewers.<sup>55,59,60</sup>

Lying likely triggers an emotional response that leads to language cues including speech errors, emotional leakage, higher voice pitch, and personal distancing to the crime at hand. Cognitively, creating the challenge of generating a false narrative that is convincing becomes difficult. Further, presenting the lie in a calm, unsuspecting manner may lead to cues such as greater repetition and use of fillers, and the omission of story idiosyncrasies and contextual details.<sup>61</sup> Psychopathic liars often appear to be overly calm and either present far too many details or present a story that is far too vague and impersonal to be believed. Truth tellers prefer a "tell it like it is" approach<sup>62,63</sup> to provide a full description of what happened whereas liars prefer a "keep it simple" approach offering few details.<sup>64</sup> In summary, liars:

- I. Invent a story, pay attention to fabrication so that it appears plausible and matches everything the interviewer knows or might find out. They must remember what was said to maintain consistency.<sup>65</sup>
- II. Lying makes them less likely to take their credibility for granted- they monitor and control their demeanor to appear honest- which is cognitively demanding.<sup>66</sup>
- III. The liar must monitor the investigator's reactions carefully in order to determine whether their lie is working.<sup>67</sup>
- IV. The liar may be preoccupied with the task of reminding themselves to role-play which requires extra cognitive effort.<sup>50</sup>
- V. The liar has to suppress the truth while fabricating a lie which is also cognitively demanding.<sup>68</sup>
- VI. Activation of the truth may be automatic, but activation of the lie is more intentional and deliberate, requiring more cognitive effort because there is no memory of the event/story/lie.<sup>69</sup>

### Signs of deceit & psychopathy

Psychopaths and perpetrators in general demonstrate signs of deceit. Some of the more important are discussed below.

**Inappropriate emotion:** Psychopaths are known for either demonstrating a lack of affect or demonstrating inappropriate emotions. For example, they may appear detached and bored with the interview. They appear less intense in their emotional response. This is to give the appearance of not being concerned with the allegations or possible outcome of the interview (e.g., arrest). I have often found that psychopaths portray an unrealistically calm and unaffected appearance (appearing cool and detached). An innocent person would experience significant anxiety and fear and anger at being falsely accused. A non-psychopathic guilty criminal would also experience fear and anxiety of being caught. Overall, the psychopath appears less emotionally responsive.<sup>70</sup>



The expression of the psychopath appears non genuine.<sup>71</sup> A criminal non-psychopath would likely demonstrate anxiety and fear knowing that they were in fact caught. The psychopath may be unable to experience fear and anxiety or may experience some degree of fear and anxiety but distract this with their nonchalant and arrogant attitude and distracting behavior. The emotional response appears out of context for the topic.<sup>71</sup> This often appears to the investigator as a *detached, unconcerned attitude*.

Psychopaths often appear bored and detached with the interview as well as being conning and manipulative in their responses.<sup>48</sup> They also demonstrate deficiencies in their ability to experience and interpret emotion.<sup>15,72,73</sup> They portray the crime as a logical outcome (needed to be done to achieve outcome) suggesting the crime was instrumental in nature (means- end, deliberate).

**Distracting nonverbal behavior:** Psychopaths often engage in distracting hand gestures to distract from the question or circumstance being investigated. The psychopath's self- presentation of arrogance and grandiosity are attempts to persuade the interviewer that they are not concerned about the allegations and therefore to imply they are not guilty. The psychopath demonstrates minimal emotional body language, generally because they are not capable of experiencing the appropriate emotional response or because their twisting of the truth is not consistent with the emotions expected given the situation. The distracting nonverbal behavior demonstrated is often intense or exaggerated which serves to distract or guide the interviewer to change the course of questions and to believe the psychopath's story.<sup>48</sup>

Recall Jerry Sandusky, the Penn State assistant football coach convicted of 40 counts of child sexual molestation.<sup>74</sup> During the interview, he would often make exaggerated facial expressions. During his denial of whether he engaged in the behavior alleged in the 40-count complaint, he dramatically paused in his response, put his hands up in the air and waved them back-and-forth- making the "touchdown" signal. This was a grossly exaggerated gesture that had no functional use other than to distract and remind the interviewer that he was the famous assistant football coach. He also had frequent pauses in his response which allowed him to think about his response whereas an innocent person would likely respond immediately because they are telling the truth.

**Duping delight (Pathological lying):** Psychopaths tell lies just for the sake of telling lies. It is arousing for the psychopath to convince people they are telling the truth when in fact they are lying. Woodworth et al.,<sup>48</sup> highlight that the ability to convincingly lie combined with their ability to demonstrate a self-confident swagger make the lies more convincing. Psychopaths are very competent liars and lie for the sake of lying. It is psychologically arousing to fool people even when there is no need or other gain to do so. The pathological lying often frustrates even the most experienced investigator and can interfere with the investigator's direction of the interview.<sup>75</sup>

**Language indicating psychopathy:** psychopaths experience minimal guilt, remorse, empathy, or concern for others. Psychopaths tend to focus on themselves, refer to the crime in the past tense as if they have nothing to worry about today, and often pause or use filler words/disfluencies (e.g., "uh", "um") as they attempt to find the words they want or in an attempt to relate to others as they describe their offense<sup>21,70</sup> or stuttering as they search for their response.<sup>71</sup> This results in the psychopath appearing less fluent and less coherent in their speech in attempts to maintain impression management, therefore unable to focus on wording.<sup>21,76,77</sup> This can result in less cohesive language (more tangential and an incoherent quality) and is likely to be more contradictory with logically inconsistent statements.<sup>76,78</sup>

The psychopath attempts to dominate the conversation, is often talkative, and attempts to change the conversation when uncomfortable or not in control of the interview topic. They use less emotional words.<sup>71</sup> In addition, signs of vagueness and uncertainty in the details of the alibi suggest deceit as does a non-immediate response to a question.<sup>62,67</sup> Truth tellers tell it like it is and do not hesitate in presenting their story. Psychopaths tend to calmly blame their victims, belittle, and berate their victims, yet portray themselves in the most favorable light. One reason for the psychopath to pause or express filler words is that they genuinely have difficulty relating to the victim and difficulty if not an inability to relate to the harm they caused. They may actually enjoy the harm caused to the victim (sadistic quality). The psychopath demonstrates psychological detachment from the crime.<sup>21</sup>

Psychopaths include more self-referencing words than others (e.g., "I", "me", "my").<sup>48,70</sup> Voice tone does not often change with emotional words as would be expected from a non-psychopath.<sup>48</sup> Psychopaths can portray emotions though often have little connection to emotions. They may turn on/turn off emotions much more quickly than a non-psychopath because they do not experience a normal range or depth of emotions and have little connection to others on an emotional level. This appears odd/wrong to the interviewer, how quickly they express and move from one emotion to another. They may appear sincere in remorse or victim empathy, but this is short-lived as they are incapable of experiencing genuine remorse or caring for another person. Again, their emotional response appears exaggerated or out of context. They tend not to express concern or care for how they hurt the victim.

Psychopaths often exaggerate the spontaneity of their crime, often blaming alcohol or drugs. They enjoy blaming the victim and others for the crime. Overall, the psychopath's language is less emotionally intense than would be expected from a non-psychopath.<sup>48</sup> Their grandiosity is evident in their presentation and statements. They may present with a mundane demeanor suggestive of callousness and a lack of conscience.<sup>48</sup> They overuse rational cause-effect descriptors (e.g., "since", "because") and focus little on any connection to social based needs.<sup>21</sup>

## Cognitive load

**Cognitive load** refers to the demands placed on the cognitive resources of attention and working memory needed to focus to lie effectively. This includes any demands on or loss of cognitive resources due to tasks or factors external to the act of lying- that makes lying more difficult.<sup>79</sup> Multitasking is difficult in any situation, but when needing to focus on lies while avoiding truthful facts is challenging. Increasing cognitive load increases the likelihood of slips and admissions. Though not without criticisms, the *cognitive approach* appears useful in the detection of deception especially with those interviewers more experienced and knowing what they are looking for in the offender's presentation.<sup>80</sup> Questions can be asked that raise more cognitive load in liars resulting in more blatant cues to deceit.<sup>81</sup> By increasing cognitive demands, such as by making additional requests, use of unanticipated questions, liars may not be able to cope with these requests.<sup>82,83</sup> Cognitive load will be discussed later in this article.

## Relationships & attachments to others

Most psychopaths do not bond with or attach to any significant degree to anyone. Yet some psychopaths appear to have established and maintained what appears to be a relatively normal or somewhat normal emotional attachment to a person or two, whereas most psychopaths are incapable of attaching to anyone with any degree of

significance. Psychopaths tell their grandiose lies to those they want to befriend and manipulate that relationship. It is highly likely that the “friends” know little about the psychopath’s true life.

There are several high-profile psychopaths who had intimate relationships with others. **Dennis Rader (the BTK Killer)**, who bound, tortured, raped, and killed his victims,<sup>84</sup> was married, had two children- no indication he was abusive towards his family and appears he was invested and attached to them. **Jerry Sandusky**, the Assistant Coach for Penn State University, was apparently happily married- as best as anyone will attest. Yet he was sexually molesting boys for decades, including his foster and adopted children. It is highly likely that his wife knew about the molestations and may well have participated in or abetted the crimes. **Ariel Castro**, who abducted three girls, holding them for over 10 years while sexually abusing them until one escaped, apparently did not physically or sexually abuse his daughters. However, he severely beat the mother of his two daughters in front of them, eventually resulting in her death from a head injury. Despite not physically or sexually abusing his daughters, he was sexually preying on his daughter’s female friends.<sup>85</sup>

### Psychopaths experience of fear & anxiety

Much of the literature supports that the psychopath experiences minimal if any anticipatory worry or fear of consequences for their actions. This implies an absence of fear responses, anxiety, or concern about punishment for their actions.<sup>12,86-88</sup> On the other hand, psychopaths may experience fear and anxiety, but find the emotions arousing and exciting. Psychopaths may have deficits in threat detection and responsivity, but not necessarily a reduced experience of fear.<sup>89</sup> People with higher psychopathic traits may experience threatening situations with appreciation and in a positive light.<sup>90</sup> This may lead to a decreased negative response to fear-inducing stimuli and an increased positive response.

Hosker-Field et al.,<sup>90</sup> proposed the Fear Enjoyment Hypothesis (FEH), which suggests that fearful and threatening stimuli may be linked to more positive appraisals in psychopaths, which has been supported by other researchers.<sup>91,92</sup> Book et al.,<sup>93</sup> supports this theory and found that psychopaths not only assess fear as less negative (possibly decreasing the fear-flight reaction) and may experience the opposite experience (increasing the likelihood of increasing approach behaviors). This appears in line with sensation-seeking (the need to experience something and the willingness to take whatever risks simply for the sake of doing it.<sup>94</sup> Sensation seekers appear to perceive the world and situations as less threatening.<sup>95</sup> Boldness was not always found to indicate fearlessness and may be a separate factor from fearlessness and/or a positive appraisal of fear.<sup>92</sup> Others have found that psychopaths may have a reduced experience of fear (*primary psychopath*) whereas other psychopaths have a normal sense of fear or reduced sense of fear (*secondary psychopath*).<sup>7,24,92,96-98</sup> Psychopaths have a difficult time understanding the perspectives of others.<sup>99</sup>

The concept of **Boldness** may be more related to sensation seeking and risk-taking.<sup>92,93,100-102</sup> However, boldness is not the same as “*fearless*”.<sup>92</sup> Boldness is defined as “a capacity to remain calm and focused in situations involving pressure or threat”,<sup>8</sup> and can reflect fearlessness<sup>103</sup> and appears related to narcissism and sensation seeking.<sup>104</sup> Boldness and fearlessness have always been considered part of the traits of psychopathy. However, some have argued that boldness and fearlessness are not necessarily always negative and not always associated just with psychopathy.<sup>104,105-109</sup>

For **homicide**, *novelty seeking* was the only psychopathic trait identified that both psychopathic and non-psychopathic murderers

shared to similar degrees.<sup>88</sup> Regarding the victim offender relationship, psychopathic murderers tended to have non-related victims versus non-psychopathic murderers having mostly known victims (*more emotionally motivated*).

### Non-verbal cues of psychopathy

Victims of psychopaths or narcissists often experience a feeling that something is off, that the perpetrator exhibits cruel behavior, makes cruel comments, and experiences a bad feeling about the perpetrator. But when the victim is getting to know the perpetrator, they have good intentions and may ignore the warning signs.<sup>39</sup> For law enforcement, there is a sense that the perpetrator, or alleged perpetrator, appears too calm, joking, and projecting blame onto the victim. The perpetrator appears to not demonstrate an affective or behavioral response that would be normally experienced. An innocent or guilty perpetrator generally demonstrates anger and anxiety but does not appear too calm like the psychopath or narcissist.

#### When the perpetrator is confronted by the victim or others:

- I. When in the presence of others the perpetrator is very adept at deflecting responsibility, projecting blame onto the victim for “*causing*” the perpetrator to behave the way they did. The perpetrator demeans the victim by making the victim appear crazy, having mental health problems, or being unstable and the problem in the relationship.
- II. When alone with the victim the perpetrator often becomes verbally, physically and sexually abusive, blaming the victim for not agreeing with them or blaming the victim for “*causing*” them to yell, assault, and/or rape. The perpetrator then showers the victim with loving statements and behavior. The see-saw of abuse and loving gestures takes a toll on the victim’s sense of sanity and safety.

### Strategies used as countermeasures to deception & to increase cognitive load

**Having the perpetrator respond as fast as possible.**<sup>62,67,110,111</sup> I often speak rapidly and ask questions rapidly to keep control of the interview and to force the perpetrator to answer without pausing to think first. This helps to increase slippage. Demanding a rapid response provides less time for the perpetrator to edit and perfect their lies. When liars have to fabricate an answer on the spot, their answer may be more unstable than a truth teller’s actual memory. Liars contradict themselves more than truth tellers, of course because the truth teller is being honest and recalling the actual memory of the event. Liars’ imagined events are not experienced perceptually (e.g., no actual memory because it is a lie) but rather conceptually, without the benefits of sights and sounds. Truth tellers find it easier than liars to recall the event with more flexibility because they have a memory of the event and are being honest.<sup>22,63,112</sup>

**Ask the unanticipated question.** Unexpected questions make it more difficult for the liar to effectively lie and more likely to demonstrate cues of deception.<sup>65,81,113,114</sup> Liars prepare their alibi in advance<sup>64</sup> but cannot prepare for every possible question. However, planned lies may contain fewer cues of deception.<sup>50</sup> Lying is more taxing than truth telling and results in stronger emotions concerning being detected and more cognitive resources being used to prevent the truth from being detected. The goal is to ask questions that are more difficult to answer.<sup>115</sup> Unexpected questions force liars to fabricate an answer on the spot, which may be more unstable and implausible. Liars contradict themselves more than truth tellers. Liars’ imagined

events are one dimensional and have no memory to help with fabricating the lie. This is because the lie has no memory, no sensory cues, because it does not exist! Truth tellers find it easier than liars to recall the event more flexibly because they have an actual memory of the real event.<sup>22,63,112</sup>

Liars are expected to produce less information and less consistent responses because they have no memory of their lie versus truth tellers who can add details from genuine memory.<sup>50,65,69</sup> Unanticipated questions result in lengthier responses and more details primarily for temporal details than truth tellers.<sup>116,117</sup> Liars typically refuse to answer spontaneous questions or respond with “I don’t know” or “I can’t remember”.<sup>65</sup> Truthful individuals would simply answer the question based on their memory.

Strategic interviewing involves preparation including the unexpected question. I obtain the police reports and criminal complaints from everything in any criminal history check. Even seemingly innocuous offenses, regardless of the outcome (e.g., plea agreement, dismissed). This provides material for the unexpected question. The strength of questions that are true and fact based is that there is a memory of that incident which plays in the brain of the psychopath (or in any person for that matter). Once playing it is difficult for the perpetrator to stay focused on the current crime and the details from the previous crime interfere with the person’s ability to stay focused on their alibi, increasing the likelihood of slippage. The perpetrator is not expecting the questions, has not prepared for the questions, and therefore are forced to fabricate their response on the spot, increasing the likelihood of slippage.<sup>65,81,83</sup> Truth-tellers rely on their memory, liars must improvise their story. Imposing cognitive load on the perpetrator forces slippage and more cues of deception as they are unable to effectively develop lies on the spot.

**Accuse the perpetrator of things they did not do and let them correct you.** By doing so, a confession to at least some of the crime will likely emerge (if you know they likely slapped the victim then accuse them of punching the victim). They have a need to correct you but doing so results in at least a partial confession as well as placing the perpetrator with the victim at the time of the crime. This is one of my own techniques that often produces a confession!

**Have the perpetrator form a mental picture of the context of the crime.** Have the perpetrator explain what they saw, how they felt, etc.<sup>118–120</sup> Have them recall everything they can or are willing to recall about the crime. Have them recall in different orders of events (e.g., reverse order, middle of offense).<sup>115</sup> Lastly, have the perpetrator explain how things would appear from a variety of different perspectives, angles, etc. For example, ask “if you were looking into the window, what would you have seen?” Truth tellers tend to provide richer details and have far less hesitations than liars.<sup>121</sup>

**Asking open-ended questions.** This allows the perpetrator to provide a more elaborate explanation. Liars tend to demonstrate more vagueness in their answers versus truth-tellers, and they attempt to dissociate from the crime.<sup>62,67</sup> These cues of deception suggest the perpetrator is attempting to control the narrative and/or the interview.<sup>50,82,122</sup>

**Have the perpetrator tell their story in reverse.**<sup>57,115</sup> Lies have no memory, just fabrication. Liars must memorize their lie utilizing ROTE memory, which involves memorizing/learning the story from beginning to end using repetition to memorize. This creates a several problems of which one of the most significant is that when asked questions requiring the liar to recall a segment of the situation, they have to review the information in their head, first from beginning to

end, not being as capable of jumping into the middle of their lie. In part this is because their lie has no memory- it never happened the way the liar explains. A truth-teller can continue to explain what happened regardless of where the investigator questions about the situation because the truth-teller has a memory of the truthful situation. This makes it difficult for the liar to reconstruct the details of the situation.

**Have the perpetrator perform a secondary task while providing their statement.**<sup>81,123</sup> This may include drawing the scene, watching a video, etc. This distraction makes it very difficult for the liar to recall their alibi and more likely that the truth may be revealed via slippage.

**Have the perpetrator maintain eye contact with the interviewer at all times or at least when important details are being discussed.**<sup>51,60,82</sup> It is difficult to effectively lie when looking someone in the eyes, though psychopaths may be able to do this to some degree because of the decreased sense of fear and anxiety. Maintaining eye contact may be difficult when lying because looking into someone’s eye while talking is multitasking, making it difficult to do both at the same time. This may interfere with a liar’s ability to focus on their alibi/lie and increases the likelihood of slippage. The mental processes of maintaining eye contact and recalling a lie forces the focus on one or the other,<sup>124–126</sup> which most often results in gaze aversion. Maintaining direct eye contact produced less lying.<sup>127</sup> When the perpetrator must concentrate on their story, (e.g., asking them to recall what happened), they are inclined to look away from the interviewer (typically to a motionless point, to an area of the room with no one in) because to maintain eye contact is distracting.<sup>128</sup>

**Have the perpetrator say more- to expand on what they have already said.**<sup>55</sup> Liars have more difficulty with this demand because they have to fabricate information on the spot. The perpetrator may demonstrate more dysfluencies in their speech (e.g., word choice and sentence structure not smooth) and may sound more incoherent in their explanation and alibi. Guilty suspects have unique information about the crime because they were present. Guilty suspects are likely to use avoidance strategies (e.g., in a free recall avoid mentioning where they were at a certain time) or denial strategies (deny having been at a certain place at a certain time when directly asked). Truth tellers are forthcoming.<sup>64,129</sup>

**Ask open-ended questions followed by specific questions.** For example, “what did you do last Sunday afternoon?” followed by “did you or anyone else drive your car last Sunday afternoon?”. Truth tellers would likely have already mentioned what they were doing and that someone drove their car or when prompted to do so. Liars are less likely to spontaneously mention who was driving their car even after being prompted.<sup>130</sup> I prefer to ask the second question quicker than the first to force the perpetrator to respond without thinking. This increases the chance of slippage.

**The Devil’s Advocate Technique** is designed to detect deception in expressing opinions.<sup>130</sup> Ask the perpetrator to argue why what they did (the crime) was ok. Sell it- appear to be willing to hear them out, to support their belief. I have often found that the perpetrators justified their crime by blaming the victim. Even without getting to the second part of this technique, you may have already trapped the perpetrator into placing themselves with the victim at the time of the offense and listening carefully to how the perpetrator justifies their behavior and blames the victim, often results in confessions. The second part of this technique is to have them argue the opposite (why was what they did wrong). People think more deeply about opinions that support rather than oppose their beliefs.<sup>68</sup> This technique, in my opinion, is very effective not only in identifying deceit, but also in obtaining confessions!



## General issues in dealing with psychopathic & sociopathic offenders

Smooth approach, often cold & emotionless. This may be identified by the offender being overly calm and unconcerned about being found culpable for the current allegation/s. They often have alibis and explanations of the crime that may appear plausible, but unverifiable. The sociopath likely appears totally abrasive, resistant, provocative, and angry versus the psychopath appearing overly cooperative and calm.

### Case examples

#### Brian Laundrie

Gabby Petito was abused and killed by her fiancé, Brian Laundrie.<sup>131</sup> Officers pulled Petito's van over after a report that a man was hitting a female passenger. This case highlights how Laundrie, a psychopath, comfortably controlled the interview by law enforcement. He was overly calm, unemotional, and could care less when the officers told him that they were considering arresting Gabby, not him. Officers missed the cues that Laundrie was a psychopath.

#### Jerry Sandusky

Jerry Sandusky is a sexual psychopath & pedophile (*Seducer Type*) and you can find his interviews online. Specifically, view the interview with Jo Becker<sup>74</sup> highlights his belief that as long as he viewed the boys as part of his family, it was appropriate to be sexual with them. He appears overly calm, projects blame onto his victims as he is asked if the victims and other children viewed him as a "father figure", which in turn somehow justified him taking showers, naked, with the children and victims. As if somehow, being sexual with family members would be condoned. Also, how he calmly stated that "in my mind there wasn't inappropriate behavior". He goes on to give the police an appearance of cooperation by stating that "...and I said if you want, you could speak to the person, the young person that was involved". As if the police and child protection have not already interviewed the victim! Yet knowing that the victim has been interviewed (a fact- otherwise there would be no investigation) giving the appearance of cooperation of the situation in which he had no control. Classic psychopath tactic!

#### Sean P. (Diddy) Combs

Though not yet convicted of any crime, the allegations against him suggest that he is psychopathic, sadistic, and probably homicidal. Combs allegedly assisted his son in sexually assaulting a woman on his yacht.<sup>132</sup> He is facing several civil lawsuits from several women and one man, some assaults dating back 30 years. Federal authorities are investigating whether Combs was involved in sex trafficking.<sup>133</sup> Federal agents raided two of his homes. At least one male employee made accusations of having been sexually assaulted by Combs, and that Combs would have his staff move/carry drugs. Apparently, companies and others are distancing themselves from or terminating their relationship with Combs as a result of the allegations. Many in the hip-hop business commented that the allegations are "open secrets in the business that have proliferated for years".<sup>133</sup> Combs former lover/romantic partner also filed a civil suit claiming that Combs sexually and physically assaulted her, and had her gang raped in front of him.<sup>134</sup> Several other women alleged rape and sexual assault and at least one was 17 years-old when she was raped. Other allegations involve having his staff put drugs in people's drinks, push drugs, and recruit people to sexually assault and rape.<sup>134</sup>

Though demonstrating anger and denying the allegations, he went on life as usual, spending time with his children and appearing happy and not worried about anything. Of interest is the brazenness of the alleged behavior. He physically and sexually assaulted people in front of others, forced both women and men to be gang raped/engage in sex with others in front of others against their will, apparently distributed and used drugs, and purposefully took his yacht into international waters to commit some of the alleged physical and sexual assaults and rapes. He appears to feel emboldened by his violent and illegal behavior, narcissistic and either experiencing minimal if any anxiety or fear or becoming aroused to the anxiety and fear of getting caught. Again, he has not been convicted of any wrongdoing as of yet, and the civil suits are pending. But that others in the hip-hop industry claimed that this was simply par for the course in the music industry is appalling.

### How to identify gaslighting and a psychopath

Below are some indicators that suggest that gaslighting has likely occurred and again, psychopaths are adept at using gaslighting.<sup>131</sup> Family, friends, law enforcement, child protection, probation officers may observe the following:

**Context-** the victim is hysterical but offender calm, lacking concern normally expected in situation- too calm, rarely may be overly angry. If the partner is genuinely concerned about their partner's situation and mental state, they should demonstrate concern. For officers, never forget why you responded to the call, what was alleged? When the alleged perpetrator is too calm, belittling the victim, blaming the victim, and portraying themselves as an innocent victim of their alleged victim- that does not fit the expected context of attitude and behavior. Why is one person upset or distraught and the other calm? Even guilty suspects may demonstrate concern for their victim's response to the assault/abuse/rape. I gauge the victim's psychological state and non-psychopathic perpetrator should be equally as distraught or angry as the victim.

**Befriending the officer, child protection worker, or victim's family and friends-** in a law enforcement contact, it is expected that a person experiences some degree of anxiety and at times anger, but in moderation. Someone who appears to calm or too angry is generally not the victim. Victims may appear confused, scared, upset, but these same observations are not made of the perpetrator. Being overly friendly is a concern because it is not normal to remain calm during a law enforcement contact, or in a crisis situation. Being able to befriend the officer or others is an indicator that the perpetrator has psychopathic traits- especially traits of being cunning, conning, lacking normal emotional or empathetic responses, and demonstrating a lack of concern for the consequences- it is simply a game for the perpetrator.

**Laughing off concerns/minimizing the situation-** the ability to minimize the seriousness of a psychologically, physically, or sexually violent situation demonstrates psychopathic traits. Only a guilty individual would do so. An innocent person, accused of such a wrongdoing would likely experience anxiety, anger and fear of being wrongfully held accountable or accused. A non-psychopathic perpetrator would demonstrate anxiety and fear not laughing or minimizing the situation.

**Portraying concern for the victim but appearing calmer than expected and appearing to present information in a matter-of-fact manner rather than a genuinely emotional manner (e.g., uncaring, unimpacted by the victim's behavior or issues other than to blame)-** again, if the victim is emotionally distressed, yet

the perpetrator is calm, making jokes, or blaming the victim, they are not demonstrating appropriate concern but rather demonstrating psychopathic traits such as being callous-unemotional.

**Blaming the victim-** it is common for perpetrators of abuse, rape, and gaslighting to attack the victim. Projecting blame onto the victim while justifying their own behavior as somehow normal or caring in nature requires a cold and calculating personality, someone who is callous-unemotional in relating to others. Perpetrators of physical abuse, sexual assault, rape, and of course, gaslighting are adept at blaming the victim for anything that occurs that draws attention. Likely, again, the perpetrator of gaslighting remains much calmer than expected in the situation and may even laugh-off/minimize their involvement in the problem at hand. In addition, the perpetrator likely attacks the victim based on personal information the victim disclosed, using things against the victim as an ongoing problem, an attack on the trust and vulnerability of the victim, which may result in the victim experiencing more guilt and shame about their own history that the perpetrator is using against them. This may make the victim appear more mentally unstable when in fact their psychological demeanor makes sense given the context of ongoing abuse and gaslighting.

Blaming the victim often involves attacking and impacting many areas of the victim's life. For example:

**I. Mental health-** telling others that the victim has a mental health diagnosis, yet no one in the victim's family or friend network is aware that the victim has any mental health disorder. It is common to claim that the victim is depressed, bipolar has OCD, substance abuse, and that the victim is the psychologically or physically assaultive person, not the accused perpetrator. Again, context matters as discussed above. In many cases, the family and friends of the victim have never witnessed the psychological concerns or when they have noticed the concerns, everything appeared to begin when the victim and perpetrator began dating.

**II. Temper-** blaming the victim of being the one who is aggressive is a common claim by the perpetrator. The victim of gaslighting has experienced ongoing verbal and likely physical and sexual attacks. The victim is constantly bombarded with the perpetrator being nice and loving at times and then psychologically mean or cruel. So yes, the victim appears psychologically stressed and angry, confused and may well have acted in an aggressive manner following the powerful gaslighting that has occurred. However, the victim's response would be considered normal given the context of ongoing gaslighting.

**III. Depression/Bipolar-** as mentioned above, the victim is likely depressed- victims naturally become depressed. In most situations, however, the depression began after the relationship with the perpetrator began. However, likely no official diagnosis has ever been given. Many victims never seek help or if they attempt to do so are stopped by the perpetrator of gaslighting to avoid detection or the perpetrator may support the victim obtaining mental health services and portray to the mental health professional that the victim is the one with the problem. Again, family and friends of the victim can attest to when the mental health concerns did not begin (if are even present) until after the relationship with the perpetrator began.

**Identify when the victim allegedly developed any personal problems the perpetrator is complaining of-** usually the alleged problems began *after* the dating relationship with the perpetrator began. Again, the victim's family and friends are likely to have not noticed said problems until the dating relationship began if at all.

## Investigative applications summary

**I. Always prepare for the interview.** Interviewers should avoid going into interviews cold.<sup>135</sup> *The strategic use of evidence* is possible only with preparation. Only through a thorough preparation and understanding of the perpetrator and the perpetrator's history can things appear to fit or not fit the context of the crime.

**II. Complete the criminal history check and obtain the police reports and criminal complaints** for everything in the criminal history check even if no arrest or prosecution occurred. The more that is known about the perpetrator, the more context becomes clearer and the higher the likelihood of verbal slippage.<sup>135-138</sup> I found that when I obtained the police report and criminal complaint for prior police contacts and convictions that the perpetrator's offense history and deviant preferences became clearer. This is one of the richest sources of information about the perpetrator that is often ignored. Also, obtaining a copy of the most recent *Presentence Investigation Report* (PSI) if the perpetrator has prior convictions is extremely helpful in understanding the perpetrator's history and offers information about how to approach the investigation and interview.

**III. A thorough interview of the victim is essential.** You want to know everything that happened, every verbally threatening statement, every violent behavior, every sexual behavior (e.g., fondling, digital insertion, object insertion, being forced to role play or repeat phrases or words, number of times penetration occurred over the duration of time captive- not an exhaustive list!) I provide a checklist for free of some of the more important questions that often are not asked.<sup>39</sup>

**IV. The strategic use of unexpected questions is crucial,** and one of the richest sources of information here is the prior criminal behavior and any police contact. The perpetrator is not expecting you to be aware of this information and is not prepared to discuss the past. Unexpected questions increase cognitive load making it more difficult to stay focused on their alibi. If their alibi statements appear plausible or are verifiable, check them.<sup>140</sup> Again, a complete background check including obtaining the police reports and criminal complaints for all law enforcement contacts and a thorough interview with the victim is necessary and provides strategic areas for important questions.

## Interview with psychopaths

Here are some important strategies and facts to pay attention to (*some taken from Child Porn Offenders, Solicitation Offenders and Child Sexual Abusers: What the Literature Has to Say, by Scott A Johnson!*):

**I. Pay attention to the perpetrator appearing too calm for the situation and demonstrating minimal if any anxiety or concern for the situation.** This is the most important cue to identify and if it is missed, the investigator may be misled by the perpetrator! The perpetrator's emotional response may appear exaggerated or out of context, usually far too calm, overly cooperative & emotionally detached.

**II. The suspect of assault, domestic abuse or any sex crime should be approximately as upset as the victim.** If not, the perpetrator is likely a psychopath.



- III. Remind yourself why you are there, what initiated the contact. In most circumstances, the initial call for contact involved the perpetrator engaging in abusive behavior yet the perpetrator is more than calm and cooperative with the investigator, which most non-psychopathic abusers are not.
- IV. Pay attention to the strategies the perpetrator uses to justify their behavior and how ***matter-of-fact*** they appear (*this is what callous-unemotional looks like*).
- V. Pay attention to their lack of any genuine sense of concern for the victim or for the possible consequences they may face. They need to debase their victim and make their victim appear psychologically disturbed but demonstrate no concern for the alleged psychological problems of their “loved one”.
- VI. Go along with their projection of blame onto victim trapping them in their own alibi. If they believe you are buying their story, they will likely add more details and many of the details may appear egregious and contradictory to the facts and victim statement.
- VII. Accuse them of things they did not do and let them correct you.** By doing so, a confession to at least some of the crime will likely emerge (if you know they likely slapped the victim then accuse them of punching the victim). They have a need to correct you.
- VIII. Stick to the facts without revealing too much of what you know.
- IX. Show no special favors, do not attempt to befriend perpetrator.
  - X. Pay attention to the risks the perpetrator has taken to abuse and control the victim, the brazenness by which they acted and how unconcerned they are of being caught and questioned.
  - XI. Often calmly explains that victim has psychological disorders but is not upset or concerned with the alleged disorders. The victim’s support people do not see the symptoms and unlikely that victim has been formally diagnosed, in fact victims most often are psychologically stable until they met the perpetrator.
  - XII. Never underestimate the significance of nuisance offenses as these offenses often are part of an offender’s larger deviant scheme.<sup>141</sup> I cannot stress the importance enough of obtaining the official records as explained below.
  - XIII. Always obtain a police report and/or criminal complaint for any police contact mentioned in the criminal history check.<sup>131</sup> Every police contact offers some information that helps illustrate the offender’s criminal sophistication and offense behavior history. Most have years of engaging in sexual and physically violent crimes but do not get caught. Even when caught, lack of evidence may result in no further investigation or no criminal charges being brought. The police reports and criminal history of every police contact highlight the offender’s violent history and escalation of offense behavior. Imagine during an interview, questioning the suspect about their prior behavior and they are not prepared or expecting that would have been brought-up.
  - XIV. Pay attention to probation violations and any failed court orders including the use of alcohol, failing to report as directed all indicating a willingness to ignore rules and to engage in potentially risky behavior that could result in the perpetrator being incarcerated. Offenders with a prior history of violation of conditional release were more likely to offend, violently and nonviolently.<sup>142</sup>
- XV. Pay attention to any similarities between the nuisance offenses and actual sexual offense behavior.<sup>143</sup>
- XVI. Grooming strategies used by online offenders and offline (contact) offenders are very similar.<sup>144</sup>
- XVII. Many of the child porn offenders with the most contact offenses went undetected at least in part to their not having a criminal history and skills at grooming.<sup>141</sup>
- XVIII. For child porn cases, always investigate for contact offenses. Look into any contact they may have with children/minors, any position of power/authority they may have had with minors.<sup>141</sup> This should also include investigating the neighborhood they live in (e.g., playgrounds, churches, pools, schools) as the offender may hang around those areas watching children or engaging the children in activities. Child porn offenders with no prior sex offense convictions admitted having the most undetected victims, and their ability to remain undetected for so long requires special attention to investigate the offender’s life.<sup>145</sup>
- XIX. A high percentage of children sexually abused likely never report the sexual contact or may not do so until they are much older, reducing the likelihood of prosecution due to the time lapse.<sup>146</sup>
- XX. Always ask victims if the offender took pictures of them. Also ask specifically if the offender made video of them. If so, find the pictures and what was used to take the pictures or videos (cell phone, camera). The sexual behavior with the child is almost always recorded by the offender for sexual gratification and may also be used to blackmail and threaten the child into continued submission and compliance and secrecy.<sup>147-151</sup>
- XXI. Child porn offenders are likely to confess to possessing child porn; this is often misleading because by accepting a plea agreement, law enforcement is not likely to investigate for the presence of contact victims.<sup>143,145,152,153</sup> This is especially true when the offender is very anxious to plead guilty.
- XXII. Use of polygraphy during the investigative process yields more admissions of contact victims.<sup>154-158</sup> It is estimated that likely 62% of child porn only cases would turn out to be contact offenses if polygraph is used.<sup>145</sup> Again, 40-85% of child porn only offenders self-reported having undetected contact victims.<sup>154,159,160</sup>
- XXIII. Offenders demonstrate strategic capabilities in their assessment of potential victims, the specific grooming process, and their ability to coerce victim compliance and secrecy. This suggests predatory behavior and strategic capabilities which are often underestimated with the solicitation offender.<sup>161</sup>
- XXIV. View any porn collection as a probable ***Practice and Premeditation*** process. *Practice* because the offender uses the porn to strengthen deviant sexual and/or aggressive fantasies and even rehearsing how to re-enact the fantasy in real-life. *Premeditation* because of the planning and fantasizing that occurs prior to initiating contact with the victim, especially when the themes or behaviors depicted in the porn matches the offenders’ offense behavior. In addition, pornography is often used by the offender to desensitize children and adolescents before sexually abusing them.
- XXV. Perpetrators often hide their homemade porn in their commercial porn collection.
- XXVI. The psychopath’s language is less emotionally intense & their grandiosity is evident in their presentations and statements.

- XXVII. The psychopath's crimes tend to be carefully planned and the perpetrator carried out the crime while often remaining calm (appearing to the victim as *cool, calm, meticulous*).
- XXVIII. Psychopaths present themselves with an extremely selfish orientation and profound emotional deficit.
- XXIX. They appear to have limited or no conscience; however, may have some degree of conscience for select people.
- XXX. They appear psychologically detached from the crime and have an unconcerned attitude.
- XXXI. They can easily dupe an experienced interviewer. They lie comfortably. Most cues of deception are faint and unreliable. Verbal cues, language, are often more accurate to detect deception. Statement analysis and review of interview tapes is very helpful.
- XXXII. Truth tellers attempt to "tell it all" and try to be detailed. Liars tend to be somewhat vague to avoid contradicting facts possibly known to the interviewer.
- XXXIII. Lying likely triggers an emotional response that leads to language cues including speech errors, emotional leakage, higher voice pitch, and personal distancing to the crime at hand. Presenting the lie in a calm, unsuspecting manner may lead to cues such as greater repetition and use of fillers, and the omission of story idiosyncrasies and contextual details.
- XXXIV. Pay attention to when the perpetrator appears uncertain about the facts, provide vague narrative detail, and when they respond with frequent pausing, leaning backward, and leaning the head and torso away from interviewers.
- XXXV. Psychopathic liars present far too many details or present a story that is far too vague and impersonal to be believed.
- XXXVI. Psychopaths demonstrate a lack of affect or demonstrate inappropriate affect. They may appear detached and bored with the interview and may appear unconcerned about the allegations or possible outcome of the interview (e.g., arrest). They appear cool and detached.
- XXXVII. They portray the crime as a logical outcome to the victim's behavior and project blame into the victim.
- XXXVIII. They demonstrate intense or exaggerated behaviors to distract the investigator.
- XXXIX. They may appear less fluent and less coherent in their speech (e.g., more "uh", "um") in response to unanticipated or rushed questions (requiring rapid response). This may also be because they do not relate to the harm caused to the victim.
- XL. They use less emotional words and do not immediately respond to an unanticipated question.
- XLI. They attempt to change the conversation when uncomfortable or not in control of the interview topic.
- XLII. The perpetrator may actually enjoy the harm caused to the victim, suggesting they are also sexual sadists.
- XLIII. For forensic mental health I recommend that any sex offense warrants a diagnosis of a Paraphilia. While several Paraphilias are provided in DSM-5, perhaps the most important is Paraphilia-Unspecified. To pair sex, sexual

behavior, sexual arousal with love, respect, excitement is understandable. To engage in a sexual offense, regardless of age of victim, the opposite must be true. To be able to maintain sexual arousal with a nonconsenting partner, an unconscious partner, an animal, or any other deviant arousal, would be nearly impossible without some degree of acceptance for use of force, coercion, or to maintain sexual arousal and/or complete a sexual act despite victim resistance, pain, suffering, humiliation, young age, etc. The offender must have some degree of acceptance for engaging in deviant sexual behavior. When using Paraphilia-Unspecified, put into parenthesis the adjective that best describes the offender's offense behavior (which in turn gives a picture of the offender's thoughts and cognitive distortions), for example, "forced sex", "rape", "sex with an unconscious person".<sup>162-164</sup>

## Summary

The psychopathic perpetrator presents many difficult challenges for investigators. First and foremost is the psychopath's ability to remain overly calm and unconcerned about allegations of crimes. They have minimal ability to experience emotions on one extreme to have some degree of genuine emotional experiences with some people or in some situations. Victims of psychopathic offenders often appear mentally unstable and unreliable though it is only because of the perpetrator's abuse. Paying attention to the lack of emotion, being overly calm and overly cooperative with investigators is the best indicator that the perpetrator is a psychopath.

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## Conflicts of interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest.

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