

Assessing Physical Batterers and Sexual Predators: The Importance of Finding the Offenders' Pornography Stash

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When assessing and investigating crimes involving physical assault, domestic and child abuse or sex crimes, it is important to gather as much information about the offender as possible. I will use the term physical abusers to include domestic batterers, child abusers, and relationship assaulters. I will use the term sexual predators to include all offenders of sex related crimes, including child molestation, rape, and date rape.

Physical abusers and sexual predators tend to use pornography at a significantly higher rate than the average person (Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2014; Johnson, 2015). The use of pornography by violent offenders may involve several hours per week or per day. This allows for fantasizing about what type of sexual contact the offender wishes to engage in and may become more extreme in theme and nature over time. For some, the viewing of pornography may be a stop-gap, that is, for some it may be enough to view and masturbate to deviant (themes involving non-consenting people or illegal acts) pornography and not act on the desire with an actual person or victim. For others, however, the time spent on viewing and masturbating to deviant and more extreme themed pornography results in a desire to try what they are viewing. Many sexual predators have admitted that the pornography became more of an obsession for them, and that they felt driven to act-out what they viewed in the pornography on others, resulting in sexual offenses, kidnapping, and even murder (Castro (when interviewed) who kidnapped three women and held them for over 10 years in his basement in Ohio; Jeffery Dahmer as reported in Osanka and Johann (1989) reported an interview that Dr. Dobson conducted with Ted Bundy) as well as having interviewed hundreds of physical abusers and sexual offenders I found most admitted to the role pornography played in their quest for acting out sexual and physical violence.

Pornography does not make a person act violent or commit sex offenses. Pornography, however, provides a private showing of more deviant and extreme violent and sexual themes and may introduce the offender to new ideas for their sexual arousal and general curiosity. Pornography provides the fuel for new and deviant ideas. Viewing hundreds of hours of more deviant themed pornography, which is done in private with no one to offer feedback about the possible deviant and harmful nature of the viewed material, the offender is allowed to fantasize about engaging in the acts viewed. In addition,

masturbating to the deviant and extreme themed pornography is an obvious reward for the viewer, thereby strengthening the acceptance of the material and behavior depicted.

For law enforcement, probation and mental health professionals, it is important to find the offender's pornography stash which may consist of thousands of pornographic images and other media. It is the pornography stash that provided a picture into the themes of what the violent offender views as acceptable. Collecting an extraordinary amount of deviant and extreme pornographic material inherently infers that the offender accepts the theme of the material as justified and likeable, or they would not collect and view it. The pornography stash is the best indicator of what the offender likes and would like to do. Therefore to find the offender's pornography stash is imperative.

In addition, I have found that many offenders incorporate their victims into their collection, often mixing their victim's photos or videos into the pornography collection, allowing the offender's offense evidence to be hidden in plain sight. Search the offender's residence and computers and flash drives to find their pornography stash and I argue you will often find the offender's victim/s contained in the collection.

Contained in my previous articles is a plethora of other research on the topic. Please feel free to contact me at scott@forensicconsultation.org

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