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# Intellectual thievery in the business of serial murder, Part 2

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Hereford England January 24, 2012. Librarians' hands  
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It is unlikely that anyone who undertakes a thesis or dissertation in a new field would not look at previous theses or dissertations in a similar field. Nor is it likely that striking similarities between later works and earlier works would be merely coincidental. Why? First, because there are so few works to study and academic projects require a “review of the literature.” Second, because it is so easy to obtain precursor dissertations – they can be downloaded for free, as indicated in the [previous article](#). Third, a good researcher always includes similar works written previously. Not to do so makes no sense, for a researcher or a writer: Writing a thesis or dissertation is simply too difficult and arbitrary a task, its section titles too obscure and meaningless, not to take advantage of the work of others who have already fleshed out the foundation/premises. How likely is it, for example, that Stephanie [Petrucci](#) (1997, pg. 2) was being truthful in her thesis when she wrote, almost 10 years after Ritter’s dissertation (at a branch of the same university), “The way in which the serial sexual killer obtains his victims has never been studied”?

Two Examiner articles written by this author were based on Ritter’s 1988 dissertation and both discuss how serial killers obtain their victims. See the Examiner articles, [Ritter, July 2012](#) and [Ritter, August, 2012](#). The

latter discusses Petrucci's findings related to this author's work.

All Petrucci had to do was look at the author's List of Tables (Ritter, 1988, pg. ix) to find that two tables describe how serial killers obtain their victims: (1) Table 34, "Method of Operation: Obtaining the Victims: Commonality, Methods; Level of Constancy" wherein the specific methods used by each of the 27 identified subjects in the author's study were described. There was a commonality in the methods used to obtain victims in 70 percent of the cases. This 70 percent reflected both those killers who generally did not vary their MO and those who changed or switched their methods up to 3 times. Thus, the "Level of Constancy" column was subdivided into three categories: "same," "change" and "diverse." The percentage that changed their MOs was slightly greater (37 percent) than the percentage that remained the same (30 percent). "Diversity" was used to identify those who changed their acquisition methods four or more times.

(2) Table 35: "Classification of methods of obtaining the victims: *Seduction, Abduction, Sudden Attack*" (Ritter, 1988, pg. ix, pg. 305 in text). Petrucci (1997), who claimed no one had ever studied victim acquisition, came up with almost the same words to describe these patterns: *luring, abducting, attacking* (and a combination of these). What are the chances that she wouldn't have seen that someone else had already studied her topic – someone who had used almost the same words ten years before her? What are the chances that her professor and member of her committee, Eric Hickey, whose students repeatedly used this author's works (according to Debra Sousa, personal communication), did not know she was doing the same?

To be continued. . .

*Note: As explained, the dissertation is difficult to obtain, unless you are at a university or research center. Consequently, the dissertation, as well as the other works and materials mentioned here (e.g. Petrucci) and elsewhere in the Examiner articles, will shortly appear on the website, Homicide-BarrieRitter.com.*

## SUGGESTED LINKS

- [The serial killers' crimes: How they obtain their victims \(Part 15\)](#)
- [The serial killers' crimes: How they obtain their victims, continued \(Part 16\)](#)
- [The serial killers' crimes: Assumptions about Modus Operandi \(Part 17\)](#)
- [Serial killers' methods of operation, Part 18](#)
- [Part 9. Serial murderers: Major personality characteristics](#)

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