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CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILING

Stephen James Moree  
B.S., University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, 1984  
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THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of  
the requirements for the degree of

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in

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at

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### Abstract

#### Statement of the Problem

Criminal psychological profiling is potentially one of the most innovative new techniques available to criminal investigators. However, profiling is viewed skeptically by many criminal justice practitioners and academicians, which has limited the use of this process. The purpose of this study is to offer a balanced history and description of psychological profiling, accessible to both laymen and experts.

#### Sources of Data

A comprehensive review of the current literature on the history and procedure of profiling was accomplished. The literature included books, journals, reports, and criminal case files. The literature was obtained from the following sources: California State University, Sacramento, library; University of California, Davis, main library and law library; California State Library, and the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Investigation. Additional information was obtained through interviews with criminal justice practitioners and academicians.

#### Conclusions Reached

Criminal psychological profiling is a useful tool for the criminal investigator. However, in order to maximize the effectiveness of this procedure, the profile must be composed by professionals skilled in the areas of criminal psychology and criminal investigation. Also, the profile must be used by an investigator familiar with the limitations of the technique. When these conditions are met, a psychological profile can aid the investigation of violent crime.

CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILING

A THESIS

by

Stephen James Moree

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Date: 18 October 1995

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Thomas R. Phelps  
Thomas R. Phelps, Graduate Coordinator

18 Oct 1983  
Date

Department of Criminal Justice

Abstract  
of  
CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILING  
by

Stephen James Moree

Statement of the Problem

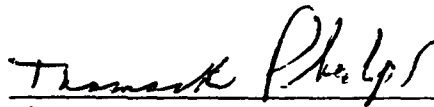
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\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Thomas R. Phelps

## Dedication

This study is dedicated to Doctor Thomas R. Phelps. Without his expert advice, insightful criticism, long hours, and good humor, this thesis would not have become a reality.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Criminal psychological profiling is one of the most innovative techniques available to the criminal investigator. Using this procedure, law enforcement officials can gain useful insights into the minds of their suspects that might otherwise be unavailable to them. Profiling a criminal places the investigator into the mind of the criminal.

Despite these apparent advantages, the practice of profiling has received severe criticism from inside and outside the field of law enforcement. It is referred to as "vapid", "vague and general", and "basically worthless" by opponents.<sup>1</sup> These labels are representative of a field that does not understand the basis of compiling a profile, and thus views it with skepticism. This lack of knowledge results in the under-utilization of what is potentially an extremely viable investigative tool.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to provide the reader with a better understanding of the art of criminal psychological profiling. This will be accomplished by providing an in-depth review of profiling as it is represented in past and current literature. Additionally, the profiling process will be examined in great detail, with particular attention

given to profile compilation. Hopefully, the reader will be provided with a concise and objective presentation which will enable him or her to make an informed decision on the usefulness of psychological profiling.

### NEED

Currently, the availability of literature dedicated to criminal psychological profiling is limited. While profiling has been used on a primitive basis for many years, the scientific study and use of criminal profiling is barely twenty years old. This dearth of knowledge has created a vacancy, which is then filled with rumor and supposition. A thorough review and description of the procedure, understandable by both professionals and laymen, will help fill the gap and lead to a better understanding of the procedure.

### SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study will be to offer a broad introduction to the topic of criminal psychological profiling. All past and current literature dealing with this subject will be examined, and interviews with experts in the field will be conducted. Additionally, a step-by-step examination of the profiling process will be presented.

This study is limited to a comprehensive review of the literature dealing with profiling, and to interviews conducted with experts in the field. Time constraints do not allow for in-depth field research examining the accuracy

of psychological profiles. Additionally, due to the sensitivity of on-going criminal cases, the author was not allowed to participate in the construction of an actual profile. However, profiles compiled for and used in closed cases, along with all investigative records, were made available for study.

#### METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is based on document analysis, interviews, and criminal case examination. A comprehensive review of profiling literature will be conducted, interviews with profiling experts in academia and law enforcement will be presented, and an in-depth review of actual cases where profiling was used will be furnished.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

In an effort to provide a clear understanding of this subject, terms used throughout this study are defined below.

**Criminal Psychological Profile:** An investigative technique used to identify the major personality and behavioral characteristics of the offender based upon an analysis of the crime(s) he/she has committed.<sup>2</sup>

**Profiler:** The person(s) constructing the profiler.

**Serial Murderer:** A individual(s) who commits a second or subsequent homicide that is relationshipless (between victim and perpetrator). Also, it is committed at a different time and has no apparent connection to the initial homicide; and is usually committed in a different geographic location.<sup>3</sup>

**Serial Rapist:** A person who commits ten or more rapes.<sup>4</sup>

**Occult Crime:** A crime that encompasses ceremonial actions and/or ritualistic acts, involves cult related behavior patterns, and is motivated by a belief in some occult ideology.<sup>5</sup>

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 2 of this study contains an in-depth review of the literature of criminal psychological profiling. First, profiling will be examined as to how the technique has been portrayed in popular movies and fiction. This section is critical, due to the fact that popular exposure has helped generate some of the myths and misconceptions which surround profiling today.

Next, the academic and professional literature of profiling will be reviewed. This will trace profiling through its scattered usage in the decades after WWII, to its revival by the FBI in the 1970s and 1980s. The literature review will leave the reader with a firm grasp of the position of profiling within the academic and law enforcement communities. The reader will also be exposed to the major contributors, important figures, and theoretical and practical disagreements which exist.

Chapter 3 will contain the most important and critical information that is needed in order to make any judgment concerning this subject. In this section, four separate criminal cases, dealing with homicide, rape, and child

sexual abuse, will be examined in great detail. The important elements of each crime will be presented, and then examined from the profiler's point of view. As the profiler prepares the report, each step in the process will be reviewed and explained. This will enable the reader to "go behind the scenes" of the profile process, and see the reasons why a profile arrives at certain conclusions. The purpose of this section is to expose the process of profiling, and allow the reader to make an informed decision to accept psychological profiles as fact or fantasy.

Finally, Chapter 4 is a summary of the literature review and of the critical analysis. There is also a discussion on the future of psychological profiling, and an exploration of targets for future research.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jack Levin and James Alan Fox, Mass Murder: America's Growing Menace (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 174.

<sup>2</sup> John E. Douglas and Alan E. Burgess, "Criminal Profiling: A Viable Investigative Tool Against Violent Crime," FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 55, no. 12 (Dec. 1986): 10.

<sup>3</sup> Steven A. Egger, Serial Murder: An Elusive Phenomenon (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Robert R. Hazelwood and Ann W. Burgess, "An Introduction to the Serial Rapist," FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 56, no. 9 (Sept. 1987): 18.

<sup>5</sup> California State Office of Criminal Justice Planning, Research Update 1, no. 6 (Winter, 1989): 25.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### INTRODUCTION

The first section of the literature review will examine the way in which profiling has been portrayed in popular literature and the entertainment media. This section will identify and explain some of the popular beliefs and misconceptions concerning profiling.

The following section will review some of the basic theories of criminal behavior, leading up to the psychological explanations of crime. This is provided in an effort to establish the foundation on which psychological profiling is based.

The next sections will examine the early history of profiling, beginning with work done by Allied Intelligence during World War II. These sections will also explore the earliest uses of profiling as an investigative tool.

Successive sections will deal with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and its contribution to the scientific study and utilization of the profiling process. The FBI's research, implementation, and continual refinement of the process will be systematically reviewed.

The final sections will examine a diversity of non-FBI literature on the subject. Additionally, two studies, both of which have tested the accuracy and reliability of profiling, will be examined and discussed.

### PROFILING IN POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

For many years, the public has been entertained by stories and films that glamorize investigators who "get inside the head" of criminals in an effort (usually successful) to solve the case and bring the criminal to justice. In his article "The Mind Hunters", crime author Bruce Porter provides an excellent who's who in the genre. While these investigators are not criminal psychological profilers by the modern definition, they all specialized in trying to understand the criminal mind.

Heading Mr. Porter's list is the famous Sherlock Holmes. Created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the late 1800s,<sup>1</sup> Sherlock Holmes solved his cases by attention to detail, utilization of a wide range of knowledge, and a keen understanding of the workings of the human mind.<sup>2</sup>

Holmes was able to astound his friends, clients, and the police by his almost magical ability to examine some aspect of a crime, and then pronounce a detailed explanation of the act, and/or the perpetrator. Invariably, he was correct; stunning his audience, while modestly protesting that the answer was obvious for anyone who cared to look.<sup>3</sup>

Another famous member on Mr. Porter's list includes Nero Wolfe, who was created in the writings of Rex Stout. This fictional detective, who also became the subject of a TV series, was famous for rarely moving from behind his desk to solve his cases. Depending on the reports of his

confederates, and the testimony of those summoned to his office, he was able, in Sherlock Holmes fashion, to reach the truth behind the crime.<sup>4</sup> This ability to reach conclusions about a crime, without ever visiting the crime scene, further reinforces the stereotype of the investigator who can uncannily understand and predict human criminal behavior.

Mr. Porter includes several other well-known names, such as: C. Auguste Dupin (created by Edgar Allan Poe), Hercule Poirot (created by Agatha Christie), and Charlie Chan (created by Earl D. Biggers).<sup>5</sup> These detectives all share the common characteristic of understanding the motivations involved in human behavior, and using this information to solve the crime. Their outstanding successes, portrayed in books and movies, adds to the aura of mystery that envelopes any systematic study of human criminal behavior. This attitude is maintained in current fiction as well.

The best examples of this type of writing are found in the writings of Thomas Harris. The first book, The Red Dragon, relates the story of a former FBI agent and his search for a serial killer.<sup>6</sup> During the hunt, the agent must study in detail every aspect of the crimes. He revisits the old crime scenes alone, and at the same time of day that the attacks occurred, in an effort to create an almost mystical bond with the murderer. In this way, the

investigator feels, he will be able to better understand the killer, and give him a hint as to his identity.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout the story, the agent becomes so successful in understanding the killer that it creates in him great stress and anxiety. However, this understanding also leads him to the vital clues that result in the killer's identity and eventual death.<sup>8</sup>

The second of the two books, The Silence of the Lambs, was also the basis for an enormously successful movie. Here, the focus is also on an FBI agent who is called upon to help track a serial killer. However, this agent is a novice, who is just beginning to learn about the criminal mind.<sup>9</sup>

In an effort to gain information, she seeks the advice of an imprisoned serial killer. Delighted to receive this chance, the killer takes the agent on an extended trip through the twisted mind of a serial criminal. By using what she learns from this criminal, and carefully studying the victims of the killer she is tracking, the agent is able to isolate the serial killer, who she kills in self-defense.<sup>10</sup>

Both of these stories, while excellent fiction, combine with the previously mentioned literature to expand on the fallacies that are associated with the art of criminal profiling. The "hunch" and "gut-feeling" are both exaggerated, while the excruciatingly hard work that goes

into producing a criminal psychological profile is minimized.

Special Agent Robert K. Ressler, at one time the senior profiler for the FBI, addressed this issue in his book, Whoever Fights Monsters, the story of his twenty-year career in the FBI:

Writers of articles - and even more so, of fiction - often expand in their work the idea of what the FBI can accomplish through profiling. They make profiling seem like a magic wand that, when available to the police, instantly solves the crime. . . . magic has nothing to do with it. Profiling is merely the application of sound behavioral science principles, and years of experience, gained in part by evaluating crime scenes and evidence, and also by interviewing incarcerated criminals, with the goal of pointing the police toward the most likely category of suspects.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, from Mr. Ressler's description, profiling is far more advanced and complicated than is represented in fiction. However, Ressler's style of profiling was not achieved easily. It was a long and involved process that began with a mix of psychology and theories of criminal behavior. The next section will explain some of these theories, and examine the beginnings of psychological theories of crime.

#### THEORIES OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

Throughout history, humans have tried to understand the dynamics of criminal behavior. Why do some members of

society purposely and willingly break laws, rules, and norms that have been established for the maintenance of good order in that society? Criminal psychological profiling does not seek to determine motives, but to try and identify the person who committed the crime. However, in an effort to do this, the profiler must have a thorough knowledge of the causes of criminal behavior. Consequently, a brief review of criminological theories would be appropriate.

The Marquis de Beccaria, an Italian writer and thinker, wrote about crime and criminals in the late 1700s. He believed that inter-acting societal pressures created criminal behavior.<sup>12</sup> In his thinking, criminal behavior was a logical outgrowth from these pressures. To Beccaria, it was essential to have swift and certain punishment, which would be heeded by a logical man and persuade him to conform to the law.<sup>13</sup>

Another Italian, Cesare Lombroso, writing in the late 1800s, took a different approach. From his work in prison hospitals, he had observed that many criminals shared the same type of physical features. He theorized that some criminal behavior was biologically based, and manifested through various physical characteristics. His theories became known as "Positivism", which went on to have an impact on criminal theory and criminal justice systems throughout the world.<sup>14</sup>

Another theorist, Edwin Sutherland, wrote about

criminal theory in the 1930s. He believed that criminal behavior was learned behavior, which was explained in his theory of Differential Association. Sutherland theorized that the associations one makes in life help to establish behavior patterns. Positive associations lead to a life which functions within societal norms, while negative associations tend to disrupt these norms and lead to criminal behavior.<sup>15</sup>

Societal forces, biological characteristics, and the learning process are all valid explanations for explaining a large group of criminal activities. However, there are many crimes, due to their irrational or heinous nature, that defy any of these categorizations. A Viennese medical doctor named Sigmund Freud would lay the foundation, through psychiatry and the psycho-analytical approach, for explaining certain types of criminal behavior.

Freud began his study of the mind in the 1890s. Based on his observations of patients, he postulated several ideas that would explain human behavior. First, he divided the human personality into three parts: the *id*, the *ego*, and the *super-ego*. These sections, while dominated by the *id*, were in a continuous state of conflict that occurred beneath the level of awareness. This conflict, depending on the severity of the condition, could alter the way in which a person would behave. To Freud, all behavior, good or bad, was a result of the inter-action of the three parts.<sup>16</sup>

Freud also theorized about certain stages that a person went through on their way to establishing mental health. These stages are the *oral*, the *anal*, and the *phallic*. In each stage, the developing human will associate pleasure with the sensations received from the corresponding part of the body. If a person is denied that pleasure in any stage, he/she develops a *fixation* in that stage, which can alter behavior for the rest of one's life.<sup>17</sup>

Freud did not address criminal behavior. However, he was the first researcher to undertake a systematic study of the dynamics of the human personality, and how these interactions affect human behavior. Later researchers would expand on Freud's theories to explain crime causation.

One of the earliest researchers to undertake this work was Dr. Benjamin Karpman. A psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and professor of psychiatry, he published numerous texts on the psychodynamics of the criminal mind. Dr. Karpman was fascinated by the psychological motivations that influenced and controlled criminals. He based his studies on research conducted with the aid and cooperation of convicted criminals. In one of his earlier books, The Individual Criminal (1935), Dr. Karpman explains his research techniques:

The approach in this study is essentially empirical . . . We try to understand a social situation through the study of its individual components. We

take here the life history of each individual criminal as it presents itself to us, attempting to trace it to its early beginnings, noting the stages of its development, the influences that shaped its progress, points of arrested development, deviations, and retrogressions. We further attempt not only to describe the phenomena presented, but to find reasons for their appearance and existence; that is, we search for the underlying mechanisms and processes. It is a study in criminal psychogenetics.<sup>18</sup>

Using the Freudian approach, Dr. Karpman focused on the childhood of the criminals he studied. He painstakingly recreated the entire history of the criminal, and then made an in-depth diagnosis of the psychological breakdowns in the person's life. By offering such a detailed analysis of the dynamics of the human criminal mind, he started a database on dysfunctional behavior that has been expanded and improved upon by later generations.<sup>19</sup>

Benjamin Karpman has made significant contributions to the field of criminal psychology. In 1982, Dr. Donald Rossi, then head of the Michigan State Police Behavioral Science Section, referred to Dr. Karpman in a speech:

His exhaustive inquires into the unconscious processes of perverse behavior may be considered the beginnings of criminal psychological profiling . . . Karpman's studies of murder, rape, and sexual perversion may be the most exhaustive dynamic inquires so far attempted in these areas of behavior.<sup>20</sup>

The work on theories for criminal behavior would

continue in research centers and universities across the world. However, the use of psychological profiling as an operational technique would soon be utilized in the most unlikely of places: the wartime headquarters of the United States Office of Strategic Services.

#### EARLY USES OF PROFILING

In 1941, Dr. Walter Langer was a psychoanalyst practicing in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He became interested in the way that the Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner of the CIA) was planning to use propaganda in the upcoming war. After contacting Colonel William Donovan, head of the OSS, Dr. Langer began working as a psycho-analytical consultant to the unit.<sup>21</sup>

In the spring of 1943, Donovan approached Dr. Langer with the idea of creating a psychological profile of Adolf Hitler. Donovan explained that the decision-makers lacked a clear view of Hitler. They were curious about the relationship between Hitler and the German people, how he had come to power, and how he operated behind the scenes. Most importantly, Donovan explained, Allied leaders wanted estimations of how Hitler would react when the war began to go against him. What would he do when faced with ultimate defeat?<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Langer's methodology was in three phases. First, Langer and his research associates spent several months gathering as much data as possible on Hitler. They reviewed

all his writings and speeches, as well as every photograph in which Hitler had appeared. Hundreds of witnesses, former friends or acquaintances of Hitler, were interviewed in the United States and Britain. In the end, myriad data and records were amassed.<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, Langer and three other respected psychoanalysts began to examine the data and subject it to the rigorous psychoanalytical process. Hitler's childhood, his prison years, and his rise to power were all examined for significant indicators of neurotic or psychotic behavior. Each reviewer would examine one aspect of the data and formulate a preliminary assessment, which would then be reviewed by the other researchers. In this way a case history of Hitler was formulated.<sup>24</sup>

The third stage involved the prediction of Hitler's future behavior. To do this, Langer and his associates had to rely on their own clinical experience with patients that manifested the same abnormalities as Hitler. By making this comparison, Langer was able to make several predictions, ranked by probability, of Hitler's behavior when faced with a no-win situation:

- 1) Hitler could die of natural causes  
(very low probability)
- 2) Hitler could flee Germany  
(very low possibility)
- 3) Hitler could die in battle  
(good possibility)
- 4) Hitler could be assassinated  
(medium possibility)

- 5) Hitler could go insane  
(medium possibility)
- 6) Hitler could be overthrown  
(low possibility)
- 7) Hitler could be captured  
(low possibility)
- 8) Hitler will commit suicide  
(best possibility)<sup>25</sup>

As history has shown, Langer was remarkably accurate in predicting Hitler's eventual suicide. His report was kept secret until many years after the war, and it was not until Dr. Langer published his own book, The Mind of Adolf Hitler (1972), that this landmark report became known to the general population.

Dr. Langer's profile broke new ground. While the practice of psychoanalysis was not new, this marked the first time that an official agency used the technique of psychological profiling in a directed capacity. And it would not be the last time. In a few years, the law enforcement community would turn to profiling, not out of desire, but out of frustration.

#### BEGINNING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFILING

In 1956, Dr. James A. Brussel was a practicing psychiatrist in New York City. A doctor since the early 1930s, he had considerable psychiatric experience from his time in the army, and in civilian practice. Due to his extensive knowledge of psychologically disturbed criminals, he was approached by the New York Police Department with an unusual request. Would he look at the files of a case that

had baffled the police for six years, and offer any insights or advice on the case, from a psychological perspective?<sup>26</sup>

As outlined in Dr. Brussel's book, Case Book of a Crime Psychiatrist, the "Mad Bomber", as he was known to the newspapers, had been terrorizing the city of New York for fourteen years. Starting in 1940, this criminal had been leaving skillfully constructed pipe bombs at different locations throughout the city. The first two bombs, left at Consolidated Edison Power Company buildings, were duds. Notes left with the bombs stated that the "dastardly deeds" of the company were being punished. In 1941, the bomber wrote to the newspapers, claiming that due to his patriotic convictions, the bombing would cease for the duration of the war.<sup>27</sup>

The "Mad Bomber" was true to his word, and no more bombs were discovered until 1950. However, the pace of the bombing picked-up, and several bombs exploded each year between 1950 - 1956. The bomber set his bombs in department stores, phone booths, and movie theaters. A continual stream of notes were sent from the bomber to the newspapers, threatening severe destruction, and complaining about the Con Edison Company. A large blast in Dec., 1956, that wounded several people, finally drove the police, in desperation, to seek the services of Dr. Brussel.<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Brussel was able to study the entire case file on the bomber. In just a few hours, he put together a profile

of the bomber:

Single man, between 40-50 years old, introvert. Unsocial but not anti-social. Skilled mechanic. Cunning. Neat with tools. Ego-tistical of mechanical skill. Contemptuous of other people. Resentful of criticism of work but conceals resentment. Moral. Honest. Not interested in women. High school graduate. Expert in civil or military ordnance. Religious. Might flare up violently at work when criticized. Possible motive: discharge or reprimand. Feels superior to critics. Resentment keeps growing. Present or former Consolidated Edison worker. Probably case of progressive paranoia.<sup>29</sup>

Dr. Brussel also made two predictions that seemed to be flights of fancy. First, based on the fact that the bomber used both explosives and a knife (to slash theater seats), he stated that the suspect was a Slav from Central Europe. Secondly, due to the suspect's propensity for excessive tidiness (as reflected in the notes to newspapers), Dr. Brussel predicted that when captured, the suspect would be wearing a double-breasted suit, buttoned.<sup>30</sup>

Using this profile as a basis, the police and Con Edison reviewed the records of former employees that had left the company under unfavorable circumstances. This led them to George Metesky, a former employee that had been denied a disability pension from the company for a supposed work-related illness.<sup>31</sup>

When contacted for questioning by the police, Metesky

broke down and admitted that he was in fact the bomber. Angered by his failure to secure disability pay, he had launched the bombings in an effort to bring attention to this perceived injustice. Metesky was quickly found guilty of the bombings, and sent to Matteawan State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.<sup>32</sup>

Dr. Brussel had performed a feat that was unprecedented in law enforcement. He had created a criminal psychological profile that would serve as a prototype for all future profiles. While not directly pointing to the perpetrator, the profile was detailed enough to give the police a narrower field to work in; one in which they were able to eventually locate their suspect. In his book, Dr. Brussel very nonchalantly described the process of constructing psychological profiles:

Generally, a psychiatrist can study a man and make a few reasonable predictions about what the man may do in the future-how he will react to such-and-such a stimulus, how he will behave in such-and-such a situation. What I have done is reverse the terms of the prophecy. By studying a man's deeds, I have deduced what kind of man he might be. . . . The technique has no magic in it, as I hope I can show. It was simply my own way of applying what I had learned about people in years of studying and wondering; and my way of taking a step on the road toward unraveling the great mystery of human behavior.<sup>33</sup>

Understandably, this success made Dr. Brussel quite

famous, and he became a regular consultant to the New York Police. The popular media portrayed him as "The Sherlock Holmes of the couch." He created many more profiles for police over the years, with varying degrees of success. Later, in 1964, he accurately profiled the Boston Strangler as a member of a committee formed for that purpose.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. Brussel's work stands out as a milestone in criminal investigation. He had proven that a psychological profile, when compiled by an expert in the right type of case, could be a valuable investigative tool. Despite this success, it would still be many years before profiling would find a role of its own in police work. It would take the work of zealous agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation to create that niche.

#### GROWTH OF LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFILING

There is a dearth of writing concerning the subject of criminal psychological profiling before 1980. Aside from Brussel (1968), and Langer (1972), criminal profiling is barely mentioned at all in academic or law enforcement literature. Fortunately, in his recently published book, Whoever Fights Monsters, FBI Special Agent Robert K. Ressler fills in some of the gaps of how profiling underwent a resurgence in popularity as an investigative technique.

Ressler describes how profiling fell into disfavor in the 1960s. Following the accurate profiles created by Dr. Brussel for the New York Police, profiling done by

practicing clinicians became popular. However, the medical group put together in 1964 to profile the Boston Strangler, of which Dr. Brussel was a member, produced an inaccurate profile which detracted from the police investigation.<sup>35</sup> Dr. Brussel was alone in accurately profiling the actual perpetrator.

After that incident, profiling seemed to go into hibernation. However, during the 1960s and 1970s the number of stranger/stranger homicides had continued to grow. These homicides were markedly different from the usual homicide case. These "normal" homicides usually had an easily understood motive, such as greed, anger, or revenge. Stranger/stranger homicides differ due to the fact that there is not an easily understood motive. Often, the victim has no connection at all to the perpetrator. The police, lacking a familiar motive, lack a recognizable suspect. There are few facts in which to begin a criminal investigation.<sup>36</sup>

In the early 1970s, two instructors at the FBI National Academy began taking an active interest in profiling. Special Agents Howard Teten and Pat Mullany were members of the new Behavioral Sciences Unit (BSU) at the academy. In addition to their regular teaching duties, the pair would often assist students who brought them unusual cases to examine. The two agents, in their spare time, would develop psychological and behavioral sketches of the unknown

perpetrator.<sup>37</sup>

In March, 1980, an article appeared in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. Titled "A Psychological Assessment of Crime Profiling," this was one of the first articles of a scholarly nature to appear on the subject. It was written by two agents assigned to the BSU, Richard L. Ault and James T. Reese. In their article, along with a general discussion of profiling, Ault and Reese also provide some background on the FBI's involvement in profiling.

As mentioned by Ressler, profiles were initially provided only to students attending the National Academy. However, as word spread throughout the law enforcement community, other agencies began requesting profiles for unsolved crimes. By 1980, the BSU had received over 100 requests for profiles.<sup>38</sup>

Due to the great interest in the technique, the FBI had established profiling as one of the official duties of the BSU. In order to control the requests received by the BSU, the FBI also established a screening process for cases. Profile requests were to be submitted to the local FBI office, where a trained agent would make a determination on the susceptibility of the case to be accurately profiled. Only then would a case be forwarded to the BSU for action.<sup>39</sup>

Ault and Reese went on to explain the technique of profiling as it had been developed by the FBI. They explain a profile as:

The purpose of the psychological assessment of a crime scene is to produce a profile; that is, to identify and interpret certain items of evidence at the crime scene which would be indicative of the personality type of the individual or individuals committing the crime. . . . The goal of the profiler is to provide enough information to investigators to enable them to limit or better direct their investigations.<sup>40</sup>

They explain that the medical sciences have attempted to explain and classify human behavior, such as hate, love, fear, and rage, as well as abnormal characteristics , for many years. They state:

However, these attempts are usually oriented toward therapy rather than forensic applications. Nonetheless, the results may be applied to teach police officers to recognize the existence of these emotions and other personality traits in a crime scene. Once recognized, police may then construct a profile of the type of person who might possess these emotions and/or personality traits.<sup>41</sup>

The authors continue on by explaining what exactly an agency can expect from the BSU when a profile is accomplished:

The perpetrator's:

- 1) race
- 2) sex
- 3) age range
- 4) marital status
- 5) general employment
- 6) reaction to questioning by police
- 7) degree of sexual maturity
- 8) whether the individual might strike again

- 9) the possibility that he/she has committed a similar offense in the past
- 10) possible police record<sup>42</sup>

Ault and Reese stress that a good crime scene investigation, along with detailed information concerning the victim, is essential for an accurate profile. When this information is present, a trained profiler, proficient in investigation, conversant with the behavioral sciences, and knowledgeable of criminals who have committed similar crimes, can successfully complete a profile.<sup>43</sup>

They conclude the article by describing the type of case in which profiling is most useful:

It is most important that this investigative technique be confined chiefly to crimes against the person where the motive is lacking and where there is sufficient data to recognize the presence of psychopathology at the crime scene. . . . This technique is usually confined to homicides, rapes, etc., in which available evidence indicates possible mental deficiency or aberration on the part of the perpetrator.<sup>44</sup>

This article highlighted a significant shift in the way that profiling was now viewed by the law enforcement community. In the past, most notably with Dr. Brussel, the police had taken their problems to mental health professionals. These professionals then provided psychological insights, *based on the clinical or the academic point of view.*

The FBI was now constructing profiles based on an experienced investigator's point of view. This profiler

would have an excellent grounding in the behavioral sciences, but he/she would be first and foremost an investigator. The profiler would also have extensive knowledge of the types of crimes that were being profiled, as well as first-hand exposure to the same type of criminal. Chapter 3 will examine this difference in greater detail.

The FBI based their profiling technique on the classification of crimes. The idea of classification is best explained in an article by Special Agent Robert R. Hazelwood and John E. Douglas, who are both currently members of the BSU. Their article, "The Lust Murderer", appeared in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin in 1980.

Hazelwood and Douglas reported the conclusions of the BSU concerning lust (or serial) murderers. These criminals kill repetitively, and seemingly without reason or motive. After careful study of these crimes and criminals, the BSU had divided these killers into two groups: the *Organized Nonsocial*, and the *Disorganized Asocial*.<sup>45</sup>

The authors go on to describe each classification:

The organized nonsocial lust murderer exhibits complete indifference to the interests and welfare of society and displays an irresponsible and self-centered attitude. While disliking people in general, he does not avoid them. Instead, he is capable of displaying an amiable facade for as long as it takes to manipulate people toward his own personal goal. He is a methodical and cunning individual, as demonstrated in the perpetration of his crime. He is fully cognizant

of the criminality of his act and its impact on society, and it is for this reason that he commits the crime. He generally lives some distance from the crime scene and will cruise, seeking a victim.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, the next type of killer is very different:

The disorganized asocial lust murderer exhibits primary characteristics of societal aversion. This individual prefers his own company to that of others and would be typified as a loner. He experiences difficulty in negotiating interpersonal relationships and consequently feels rejected and lonely. He lacks the cunning of the nonsocial type and commits the crime in a more frenzied and less methodical manner. The crime is likely to be committed in close proximity to his residence or place of employment, where he feels secure and more at ease.<sup>47</sup>

According to the authors, both types of criminals eschew firearms, preferring the sexual gratification that comes with using blunt instruments, knives, or their teeth and bare hands. Also, both killers are living in a fantasy world in which the abuse, mutilation, and murder become the fulfillment of the fantasy.<sup>48</sup>

Based on this classification, it is easy to see how a profile for serial murder starts to come together. Just by classifying a crime scene as organized or disorganized, the profiler can begin making deductions as to the type of person who committed the crime. It must be stressed that this classification arose from studying similar crimes

and murderers, and not from psychological theory.

The Bureau's renewed interest in profiling sparked the interest of others. In 1984, Dr. Ronald M. Holmes and Dr. James E. DeBurger published an article which further classified serial murder into four categories. At the time of publication, Dr. Holmes was a professor of justice administration, and Dr. DeBurger was a professor of sociology, both at the University of Louisville.

Their article, "Profiles in Terror: The Serial Murderer", appeared in Federal Probation. Based on their own research, they broke serial killers down into four categories: the *visionary*, the *mission-oriented*, the *hedonist*, and the *power/control*.<sup>49</sup>

The visionary sees visions or hears voices; he is operating under what he feels to be outside control. The mission-oriented type feels the need to rid the world of a certain class or type of individual. The hedonist is a killer who enjoys killing for the pleasure it brings him. The lust murderer would fall into this category, because he derives his sexual pleasure from the kill. The power/control fanatic gains his satisfaction from having a victim in his power, and making them obey his every command. He gets a sense of self-importance and control over his relationships that he doesn't have in real life.<sup>50</sup>

When certain types of behaviors are added to each category, it becomes of great use to a profiler, by enabling

more accurate construction of the profile. Currently, Dr. Holmes has become one of the best known profilers' outside of the FBI, and has even written two books on the subject, which will be discussed further on in the chapter.

#### THE FBI SEXUAL MURDER STUDY

In an effort to improve their crime and criminal classifications, the FBI undertook a study in 1980 designed to accomplish this. The study had originally started in the late 1970s as a hobby of Special Agent Ressler.<sup>51</sup> During his FBI travels, Ressler would take the opportunity to visit murderers in prison and interview them. The project grew, and in 1980 became a funded FBI program, and was named the Criminal Personality Research Project. The project also received funding from the Department of Justice.<sup>52</sup>

In August, 1985, the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin devoted an entire issue to reporting the results of the research project. The first section, "The Men Who Murdered", described the how the study was accomplished. To obtain information, BSU agents conducted prison interviews with 36 convicted serial and sexual murderers. These killers were asked about their family backgrounds, childhood, school history, work employment, and relationships. The agents also questioned them about their crimes; why they did things a certain way, what they were thinking about, etc. In the interviews, the agents attempted to learn everything they could about the criminal

and his crimes.<sup>53</sup>

The next section, "Crime Scene and Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murderers," further expanded on the information published by Hazelwood and Douglas in 1980. The study authors were able to do this based on the data provided by the 36 criminals.

First, the researchers determined the differences in the characteristics of organized and disorganized crime scenes:

#### ORGANIZED

Planned offense  
Victim a targeted stranger  
Personalizes victim  
Controlled conversation  
Crime scene reflects overall control  
Demands submissive victim  
Restraints used  
Aggressive acts prior to death  
Body hidden  
Weapon/evidence absent  
  
Transports victim or body

#### DISORGANIZED

Spontaneous offense  
Victim/location known  
Depersonalizes victim  
Minimal conversation  
Crime scene random and sloppy  
Sudden violence to victim  
Minimal use of restraints  
Sexual acts after death  
  
Body left in view  
Evidence/weapon often present  
  
Body left at death scene<sup>54</sup>

Secondly, the researchers classified the personality characteristics of the killers:

#### ORGANIZED

Average intelligence  
Socially competent  
Skilled work preferred  
Sexually competent  
High birth order status  
Father's work stable  
Inconsistent childhood discipline  
Controlled mood during crime

#### DISORGANIZED

Below-average intelligence  
Socially inadequate  
Unskilled work  
Sexually incompetent  
Low birth order status  
Father's work unstable  
Harsh childhood discipline  
  
Anxious mood during crime

|                                     |                                                                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use of alcohol with crime           | Minimal use of alcohol                                         |
| Precipitating situational stress    | Minimal situational stress                                     |
| Living with partner                 | Living alone                                                   |
| Mobility with car in good condition | Lives/works near crime scene                                   |
| Follows crime in media              | Minimal interest in media                                      |
| May change jobs or leave town       | Significant behavior change (drug/alcohol abuse) <sup>55</sup> |

This refined classification system is the basis on which the BSU agents construct a profile for a serial or sexual murder. However, the agents realize that these characteristics are not always present. On the very first page of the study report, the authors state:

Here, we present what we have learned about these 36 men. It is important to recognize that we are making general statements about these offenders. Not all statements are true for all offenders, although they may be true for *most* of the 36 men . . .<sup>56</sup>

The third section of the report deals with a study that assessed the accuracy of FBI profilers. This report will be dealt with at the end of the chapter.

The 1985 study marked a watershed event for the technique of criminal psychological profiling. The original classifications used by the BSU, based on investigator knowledge and experience, had been validated in an empirical study. Publication of the study also sparked an increase in literature written about profiling. Unfortunately, this consisted of little actual research, or definitive pieces of work. The surge of literature focused mainly on critiques of the process, written by criminal justice practitioners

and academicians. These critiques will be analyzed later in this chapter.

The FBI, however, continued to research and refine their profiling system. An article published in 1986 reflects the continued interest and active operation that BSU agents put into the technique. The article, "Criminal Profiling: A Viable Investigative Tool Against Violent Crime", was written by Special Agents John E. Douglas and Alan E. Burgess. At the time, both gentlemen were members of the BSU and active profilers.

Douglas and Burgess report other areas in which a psychological profile has proven useful to law enforcement officers. They cite hostage negotiations as one situation in which the police need to know as much as possible about the perpetrator in order to deal most effectively. Profile information can predict the hostage-taker's probable course of action, and the reactions to various forms of stimuli.<sup>57</sup>

Other crimes in which profiling can make a difference are: anonymous letter writers, persons who make written or verbal threats, arson, and rape. The crime of rape lends itself well to profiling, due to the fact that many of the characteristics found in rapists fall into the same classifications as those of serial murderers. The authors stress that profiling is most effective when used in cases where an apparent motive is lacking.<sup>58</sup>

Included in the article is the information that the BSU

received over 600 requests from agencies for profiling assistance in 1985. Also, the total number of requests was expected to double in the coming years. The article concluded with this summation of the current state of profiling:

Criminal profiling will never take the place of a thorough and well-planned investigation nor will it ever eliminate the seasoned, highly-trained, and skilled detective. Criminal profiling has, however, developed itself to a level where the detective has another investigative weapon available to him in solving a violent crime. The offender, on the other hand, has an added worry that in time he will be identified, indicted, successfully prosecuted, and sentenced for his crime.<sup>59</sup>

This positive assessment of profiling was further echoed by BSU agents in the book Sexual Homicide, which appeared in 1988. This book was the culmination of the Criminal Personality Research Project, which had begun back in 1980. The book was co-authored by Robert Ressler, John E. Douglas, and Ann W. Burgess, a Doctor of Nursing Science assigned to the project.

Sexual Homicide reported the methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the project committee. Also included was information on the development and motivation of serial killers, classifications of serial killers and crime scenes, and criminal profiling techniques. The chapter on profiling is of special interest, due to the fact that it is the first ever in-depth review of how the

BSU constructs a profile.

According to the authors, constructing a profile is a five stage process. The first step is the receiving profiling inputs stage. In this stage, the profiler receives the case information from the requesting agency. Included in this information is: a complete synopsis of the case, description of the crime scene, and any situational factors, such as weather conditions at the time of death. Information concerning the victim is necessary as well. Employment history, domestic life, physical condition, hobbies, and social life are an example of the type of information needed on the victim. Also, all forensic data, such as autopsy reports and photographs, results of medical tests, and the medical examiner's conclusion should be included as well.<sup>60</sup>

The second stage is the decision process. In this stage, which consists of seven phases, the information is divided into meaningful patterns. In phase one, the homicide type and style are determined. In phase two, the primary intent of the murderer is determined. In phase three, victim risk is examined. This is determined using several factors that relate to the vulnerability of the victim. In phase four, offender risk is calculated. This refers to the amount of risk the perpetrator undertook in order to get the victim. Phase five is the escalation phase. Here, the profiler determines the potential for the

offender to repeat, or escalate his crimes. In phase six, time factors are considered, such as time to kill the victim, and time to dispose of the body. In phase seven, locations are examined, such as differences between the death site and the dump site.<sup>61</sup>

Stage three is the crime assessment stage. In this stage, the entire crime and the sequence of events leading up to it are re-constructed. Assessments are made concerning the classification of the crime, its organized or disorganized aspects, the selection of the victim, the offender's motivation for the crime, and the crime scene dynamics. This stage calls for extensive investigator experience, as well as exposure to the data base compiled by the BSU.<sup>62</sup>

The fourth stage is the criminal profile stage. In this stage, the profile is actually constructed. Reviewing data from the previous three stages, the profiler combines the information into a functional profile that is easily understood by law enforcement personnel. The profile will include suspect information and interrogation and apprehension recommendations.<sup>63</sup>

The fifth stage is the investigation. The written profile is provided to the requesting agency, which then applies the profile to the investigation. Agents from the BSU are readily available to assist the agency with any follow-up questions, and to update or re-assess the profile

if any new evidence or information is received.<sup>64</sup>

This short summary of the profiling process represents almost twenty years of FBI work on the subject. The FBI, borrowing the psycho-analytical technique from psychiatry, had turned it around, put a law enforcement spin on it, and used it effectively to help catch criminals. While the FBI has dominated the field, other proponents of profiling, with their own ideas on the subject, had begun cropping up in the literature in the late 1980s. Some of these writers, and their ideas, will be reviewed in the next section.

#### PROFILING IN NON-FBI LITERATURE

Dr. John A. Liebert, a psychiatrist with an interest in serial murder, addressed the subject of profiling in his 1985 article, "Contributions of Psychiatric Consultation in the Investigation of Serial Murder." His article appeared in the International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology.

In his article, Dr. Liebert took the position that serial murder had not been adequately defined, and as a result, was hard to identify. He states that police detectives are not trained or experienced enough to recognize the psychological underpinnings of a true sexual murder case. He argues that in order to identify and investigate serial murder, the police should rely on the expertise of a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist to interpret the crime.<sup>65</sup>

The reason for this, according to Dr. Liebert, is that the sexual murderer's predilection for aggressive sexual violence is rooted in childhood tension and trauma that caused early developmental conflicts. The murderer deals with these internal conflicts through the act of aggression. Dr. Leibert labels these individuals as suffering from Borderline and Narcissistic Personality Disorders.<sup>66</sup>

Dr. Leibert contrasts his method of classification with that used by the FBI, which is based on observed behavior of convicted murders:

Superficial behavioral scientific profiling that rigidly reduces serial murder to a few observable parameters can lead an investigation astray. It is better to search for what distinguishes any given serial murder in its uniqueness, then build a profile of a potential suspect against the psychopathology of the Narcissistic or Borderline Personality disorders, particularly the severe ones.<sup>67</sup>

This classification system, Leibert continues, has a solid psychoanalytical framework that is based on observable events in childhood, and supported by tested developmental theories, as opposed to other types of profiling:

Behavioral science profiling can be superficial, phenomenological, and perhaps, even worse, distracting. There is no evidence that we know enough about lust murderers to make very many phenomenological generalizations.<sup>68</sup>

Leibert's preferred method of profiling serial crimes is to examine each crime in detail, looking for what sets it

apart from other types of crimes, and then build a profile, using the guidelines of the Narcissistic and Borderline disorders. Investigators can then screen the biographies of potential suspects, and compare them against the profile. This process, to quote Dr. Liebert, "can reduce wasteful diversions and rigidity within the investigation."<sup>69</sup>

Other criticism of behavioral-based profiling was recorded in 1987. Deborah Cameron, an English Lecturer at the Roehampton Institute of Higher Learning, and Elizabeth Frazer, a student at Oxford University, were the authors of the book, The Lust to Kill: A Feminist Investigation of Sexual Murder, which examined cultural and scientific explanations for crimes of violence against females.

Cameron and Frazer explain serial murder from a cultural perspective. They accept that crimes of violence against women have a long history. While these crimes are condemned and punished, they have also become a societal norm that is sub-consciously nurtured through the entertainment media. It is something that has become rooted in the collective American psyche.<sup>70</sup>

With this in mind, the authors examine the technique of psychological profiling as done by the FBI, which they cite as "especially interesting as a shining example of the utter vacuity of so-called scientific descriptions in this field."<sup>71</sup> They focus on a 1984 conference, sponsored by the FBI, in which profiling specialist Robert K. Ressler offered

his opinions on a case in which a woman was murdered and mutilated:

Ressler begins by 'pinpointing the sort of person they are looking for. A person who might have animosity against women in some way.' Unfortunately, his further remarks are singularly unhelpful.<sup>72</sup>

The authors continue:

Under the guise of telling us something scientific, 'These psychological profiles which often prove to be right on target' this FBI case conference merely restates the cliches with which it began, namely that serial murderers could be anyone at all and are quite indistinguishable from ordinary people.<sup>73</sup>

Cameron and Frazer conclude that in one aspect the FBI profiles are very accurate, due to the fact that they are very generalized and could include almost any male member of the population. The authors feel that since any man is capable of sex crimes (sexual terrorism) against women, a profile of the suspect could fit all men.<sup>74</sup>

Cameron and Frazer have clearly examined the problem from a non-traditional point of view. While their specific proofs remain to be determined, they have presented a different idea that bears to be scrutinized.

Other authors have not been quite so adamant in their criticisms of profiling. In 1988, a book appeared by Dr. Ronald M. Holmes and Dr. James E. DeBurger with the title of Serial Murder. As mentioned earlier, Holmes and DeBurger

had published an article in 1984 describing their four classifications of serial murderers, as opposed to the FBI's two classifications. Along with Sexual Homicide, Serial Murder was one of the first books to take an in-depth look at the crime, the victims, and the perpetrators.

Holmes and DeBurger had conducted their own study of serial murder, complete with extensive interviews of convicted serial killers from across the country. Their book includes chapters on the violent society of America, the classifications of serial murderers, background, behavior, and motivations of the killers, and the use of psychological profiles in investigating serial crimes.

The authors define profiling as:

. . . a submitted report utilizing information and approaches from various social and behavioral sciences and focusing on a specific type of violent crime. It provides a detailed list of relevant and salient items of information intended to aid law enforcement personnel in their investigation and solution of a particular crime.<sup>75</sup>

Holmes and DeBurger also list a few requirements that are needed in a good profiler:

. . . they are aided by knowledge gained from the profiler's experience in the criminal justice system and from his or her familiarity with relevant concepts in criminology, sociology, psychology, and psychiatry. In addition to this, the profiler can be aided by an intuitive sense in the profiling process. That is, he must develop a 'feel' for the crime. This

is the art dimension. Nonprofessional sources of information seldom have the mixture of competencies essential for effective profiling of probable killers.<sup>76</sup>

Throughout the rest of the chapter, the authors' description of profiling is very similar to that espoused by the FBI. However, the authors have a different opinion concerning the effectiveness of profiles done at the national level:

There is a trend in law enforcement to contact federal agencies to assist them in developing such profiles. But it must be recognized that many federal agencies have little experience in such cases as murder, rape, arson, and so forth. On the other hand, police departments themselves deal with these crimes on a daily basis. . . Perhaps what is needed is not the assistance of a 'specialist,' but the education and training of the professional police officer in recognizing the psychological motives and other perpetrator characteristics that can be inferred from evidence at the crime scene.<sup>77</sup>

As debatable as these assertions might be, they represent opinions from experts in their respective fields. Dr. Holmes, in particular, has extensive experience in the criminal justice field and with profiling. A professor of justice administration at the University of Louisville, Dr. Holmes began profiling cases in 1986, and has since completed over 350 profiles, all done at the request of police and investigative agencies.<sup>78</sup> In 1990, he published the book, Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool.

Dr. Holmes's book was a continuation and expansion of the ideas that he began in the profiling chapter of Serial Murder. He is able to give more of the history of profiling and explain some of the rationales behind the use of this tool:

The crime scene reflects the pathology in his (the perpetrator) personality, and the personality is part of the crime scene. . . . Because the personalities of individuals, either noncriminal or criminal, remain relatively inflexible, the criminal personality will continue to commit the same or similar crimes utilizing the same or similar M.O. . . . Inflexibility of personality and perpetration of crimes aid the profiler in the task of developing a character sketch. . . . It is no easier for the violent personality to suddenly and completely change patterns of behavior than it is for the law abiding citizen.<sup>79</sup>

Along with describing serial murder profiling, Dr. Holmes provides valuable additional data on the profiling of rape cases and satanic murder cases. In the satanic chapter, he classifies the different types of satanic worshippers, and provides detailed information on the different crime scenes and paraphernalia that occurs in each classification.<sup>80</sup> Dr. Holmes does not provide any information on the number of these crimes that are committed each year; nonetheless, it makes for interesting reading, and offers a new spin on the profiling process.

1990 also produced one more interesting article concerning profiling. In September of that year the article

"Psychological Profiling" appeared in the International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology.

The author, Dr. Ronald N. Turco, is a psychiatrist and homicide detective with the Newberg, Oregon, police department.

In his article, Dr. Turco explains the FBI profiling process. He writes that the FBI bases their profiles on demographic material collected through perpetrator interviews. The author supports this type of data-gathering research, because it provides a strong structural basis for constructing profiles.<sup>81</sup> However, he has two specific criticisms of the FBI profiling process.

First, Dr. Turco states that the FBI process does not provide adequate prediction prior to the arrest of the subject. He agrees with Cameron and Frazer that the average profile is much too vague and generalized. Dr. Turco claims that many people fit the demographic characteristics of the profile, especially the mental patients that are seen in public and private clinics.<sup>82</sup>

The second criticism, as explained by Dr. Turco, is:

There is no real theoretical basis for these descriptions, therefore no scientific basis for building future information, integrating theories from various disciplines consistent with observable data in the scientific approach and allowing a higher degree of predictive value.<sup>83</sup>

Dr. Turco prefers the style of profiling described by

Dr. Leibert in his article in 1985. By classifying serial murderers by using the Narcissistic and Borderline Personality disorders, a system is utilized that has a strong psychoanalytical background. This enables the integration of other theories and disciplines. Also, this type of profile offers stronger predictive value, due to the fact that the characteristics of the Narcissistic-Borderline disorders have been studied for many years, and there is a wealth of accumulated clinical data concerning these disorders.<sup>84</sup>

Dr. Turco goes on to further depreciate the process of profiling based on demographic data:

In considering psychological profiles in an exclusively demographic perspective, one must bear in mind that this material changes rapidly. While this, to some extent, implies sophistication on the part of the criminal; not only is this sophistication present but behaviors also change with various living styles.<sup>85</sup>

Dr. Turco stresses that knowledge of the demographic studies of perpetrators is important in preparing a profile. However, he accepts the premise that only by focusing on the Narcissistic-Borderline disorder characteristics of each individual crime can a true profile be prepared. These characteristics, recognizable to a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist, are formed early in life and will not change.<sup>86</sup>

One other book, published in 1992, offers a fascinating

account on the recent history of profiling, and a behind the scenes account of the workings of the Behavioral Sciences Unit. Whoever Fights Monsters, written by retired FBI Special Agent Robert K. Ressler, is a must read for any serious student of profiling, or for any criminal justice academician or practitioner.

Mr. Ressler's informative autobiography chronicles his twenty year career with the Bureau. He details his early training, his time as an Academy instructor, and his early interest in criminal psychology and profiling. Mr. Ressler recounts several of his interviews with convicted murderers, and describes many of the cases he worked on. While the book is not a scholarly work, it is an important part of the literature of criminal psychological profiling.

Throughout this section, various points of view have been examined regarding profiling. Some authors are strongly in favor of it, others are not, while some disagree on the method of implementing the procedure. Unfortunately, there is very little empirical data that supports or refutes any of the above opinions. The final section of the literature review will examine two empirical studies that have been conducted in an effort to gauge the reliability and validity of psychological profiles.

#### RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF PROFILING

In 1985, the FBI released the results of a study that had been conducted in-house at the Behavioral Science Unit

(BSU), located in the FBI Academy at Quantico, Virginia. The study dealt with the subject of inter-rater reliability, which refers to the ability of BSU profilers to reproduce independently each other's classifications of crimes and crime scenes.<sup>87</sup>

As previously described, classifying a homicide as sexual or non-sexual, and the crime scene as Organized, Disorganized, or Mixed are two of the most important steps in the FBI system of profiling. If the initial classification is wrong, the entire profile will be rendered useless. Also, since several agents might work together on one case, it was important that they be able to reproduce the same type of classifications.<sup>88</sup>

The study methodology was uncomplicated. Six agents from the BSU, each with a different level of profiling experience, were selected to participate in the study. Sixty-four disparate murder cases were selected, and presented to the study participants. Each case was presented with a short summary of the conditions, and was accompanied by crime scene photographs. The agents were given ten minutes with each case, and then asked to classify it by type (sexual, non-sexual, unknown), and to classify the crime scene (organized, disorganized, mixed, unknown). The study participants classifications would then be compared to the original classification made of the case.<sup>89</sup>

The study results were mixed. In the first

classification (the actual crime), the agreement rate between the agents and the original classification was 81.4 percent. Agreement among the agents, when compared with any other agent, ranged from 77 percent to 100 percent. In the second classification (crime scene), the agreement rate between the agents and the original classification was lower, 74.1 percent. Agreement among the agents, when compared to any other agent, ranged from 45 to 89 percent.<sup>90</sup>

The study report is quick to defend the lower ratings of the agents on the second classification exercise. First, the report states that due to the more complex factors involved with a crime scene classification, it is understandable for agreement rates to be lower. Also, due to the disparities in training and experience among the agents, a wide margin of agreement is expected. Overall, the report was satisfied with the results.<sup>91</sup>

Another report, released in 1990, undertook a more comprehensive and thorough review of profiling. The study was conducted by Anthony J. Pinizzotto and Norman J. Finkel, both of Georgetown University. The study appeared in the journal Law and Human Behavior under the title, "Criminal Personality Profiling: An Outcome and Process Study." The authors, moved by the increase in the use of profiles, were eager to test both the outcome and process of profiling. In other words, would professional profilers complete more accurate profiles than the control groups of

police detectives, clinical psychologists, and college students? Also, the process of profiling would be examined: how would the experts differ in the way that they recalled and organized the information available to them?<sup>92</sup>

To conduct the study, the authors arranged the participants into six groups. Study group A was made up of four expert profilers who had taught profiling at the FBI Academy. Study group B was composed of six profilers who had been trained in a special profiling course at the FBI. Control group C was made up six experienced police detectives with no previous training in profiling. Control group D included six clinical psychologists with no previous exposure to profiling or criminal investigation. Control group E was made up of six college students unfamiliar with profiling or criminal investigation.<sup>93</sup>

The subjects were then presented with two cases, a homicide and a sexual offense case. The subjects then followed a six-step process for each case:

- 1) review of the information from the case
- 2) record all recalled information
- 3) identify all necessary and important information from step #2 and explain why it is important
- 4) review the case material again and write a profile based on the case
- 5) answer a 20 question form that asked multiple-choice questions about the suspect
- 6) choose, from 5 written descriptions of suspects, the description that seems most like the suspect for the particular crime<sup>94</sup>

In the outcome category, the results showed that the

profilers from group A and group B produced significantly lengthier and more detailed profiles than the other three groups. Groups A and B both had higher numbers of accurate predictions in their profiles than in the other groups. On the suspect questionnaire, group A scored higher than any other group, but only for the sex offense case. In the homicide case, the results were mixed with group C (police detectives). In examining the written descriptions of potential suspects for the sex offense, group A was right 100 percent of the time, followed by each respective group in descending order. However, for the homicide case, while group A had the highest level of accuracy, the overall totals of correct responses were significantly lower than in the sex offense case.<sup>95</sup>

In the process category, the results were similar. In the recall of data, there was no significant difference in the amount of data recalled for all groups. However, in the sex offense case, group A had a significantly higher recall rate than the other groups. Also, when it came to citing details as important and necessary, groups A and B consistently cited more information as important than the other three groups.<sup>96</sup>

The authors, in their summary, concluded that the the expert profilers do in fact produce better developed and more accurate profiles than untrained police officers and clinicians unfamiliar with the technique of profiling.

Along with this conclusion, they offer four suggestions for increasing the accuracy of profiling.

First, increase the number of details available concerning offenders. Increasing the information that profilers can draw upon relating to these individuals should have positive results in profiles. Second, design matrices for specific details at crime scenes that would allow a profiler to focus in on one type of individual. Third, directed research into studying offender motivations, in an effort to improve the crime and crime scene classification process. Lastly, the study showed that individual profilers show greater aptitude with certain facets of the data. If this is the case, then "group" profiling could possibly produce even more accurate profiles than one produced by a single profiler.<sup>97</sup>

These two studies represent the entire collection of profiling research accomplished to date. The FBI study, while admirable, should be taken with caution, based on the fact that it was an in-house study, conducted by agents on agent subjects. Also, the study does not further the cause of profile accuracy as well as it demonstrates the fact that the BSU agents are all trained the same way. However, the study shows that the FBI were concerned with the subject of profile accuracy, and had taken some beginning steps to examine the issue. It was a good first effort.

The Pinizzotto/Finkel study is much more reliable and

empirically sound. Unfortunately, as the authors acknowledge, their study and control groups were very small, and may not be representative of the collective group. Despite this drawback, the study is the one true empirical research project that has been accomplished on profiling. The results are grounds for cautious optimism in regards to psychological profiling.

#### SUMMARY

This brief literature review has attempted to provide the reader with an overview of the pertinent literature concerning the field of criminal psychological profiling. The history of profiling has been traced, from references in the entertainment media, to its use in World War II against Adolph Hitler, and up till the 1950s, when profiling was first used in an actual law enforcement case.

This review then detailed the resurgence of profiling in the 1970s as the Federal Bureau of Investigation embraced the technique as an investigative tool. This sparked an interest in and increase in the use of profiles among the law enforcement and academic communities during the 1980s. However, there has been a great deal of criticism, documented here, that challenges the way that the FBI processes profiles. Two studies, both of which were beginning efforts, attempted to refute some of this criticism. Hopefully, further studies and research into this field will produce more detailed information on the

reliability and validity of profiles.

The next chapter will examine several cases in-depth in which a profile was constructed. The reader will be able to observe the profile construction, and then judge the accuracy of the finished product.

## Notes

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- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 16.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., 51.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., 52.
- <sup>6</sup> Thomas Harris, The Red Dragon (New York: Putnam, 1981), 10.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., 56.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 240.
- <sup>9</sup> Thomas Harris, The Silence of the Lambs (New York: St. Martins Press, 1988), 4.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 347.
- <sup>11</sup> Robert K. Ressler, Whoever Fights Monsters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 239.
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- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 122.
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- <sup>15</sup> Samuel Walker, Popular Justice: A History of American Criminal Justice (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 204.

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### CHAPTER 3

#### CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Reviewing the literature on psychological profiling can often raise more questions than are answered. Examining the process, whether it is based on demographics (FBI) or on psychiatric study (Leibert), does not adequately explain the formulation of a profile. Further study, based on the profiler's view of a crime, is required if true understanding of this process is to be gained.

In order to reach this goal, several case studies of actual crimes will be presented in this chapter. For each case, all available data will be related in-depth. After presentation of the facts, each piece of pertinent data will be described by the profiler of the case as it relates to the construction of the profile. At the end of each case study, the profile will be compared to the perpetrator that was apprehended for the crime.

The cases presented here are all actual cases. The information is taken from profiling literature and from the files of the California Department of Justice. By examining these cases, the reader will gain new insight into the profiling process that can only be perceived by taking part in the process.

At the conclusion of the case studies, personal viewpoints from two respected profilers will be discussed. Dr. Ronald M. Holmes, from the University of Louisville, and

Special Agent Michael Prodan, from the California Department of Justice, will each present unique viewpoints on psychological profiles. These comments will provide additional information and enlightenment on this topic.

#### CASE STUDY #1

This case is excerpted from the book, Whoever Fights Monsters, by retired FBI Special Agent Robert K. Ressler.

**Crime Scene:** The body of a murdered 22 year-old white female was discovered in her house by her husband. The victim was found in the bedroom, brutally slashed with a knife. There were signs of a struggle, originating at the front door and leading into the bedroom. The victim's bra and panties had been pulled away from her body. There were no signs that indicated a robbery.

The knife wounds were especially brutal: the chest had been slashed from the neck to the abdomen. Internal organs had been removed from the body and slashed. There were also several other assorted slash wounds on the victim's breasts. Animal feces had been placed in the victim's mouth. Also, a yogurt cup, containing some of the victim's blood, was found at the scene.<sup>1</sup>

**Profile Construction:** In this case, the profiler first classified the crime as a sexual homicide. Even though there was no evidence of sexual assault, the brutal mutilation of the body and use of a knife was indicative of a lust murder. The crime scene was classified as

disorganized, based on the crime location (victim's home), and on the sudden, vicious attack that occurred.

Based on these classifications, the profiler can now make certain assumptions based on demographic study. Sexual homicide is usually committed by males. Also, this type of crime is usually intraracial. Since the victim was white, the suspect was probably also white.<sup>2</sup>

The disorganized classification, along with the seemingly senseless mutilation, indicated clearly to the profiler that the suspect was suffering from a mental disorder, probably paranoid schizophrenia. Based on psychiatric studies, paranoid schizophrenia is first apparent in the teenage years, with an eight-to-ten year average incubation period before it exerts itself in this type of brutal murder. This led the profiler to place the suspect's age in the mid-twenties.<sup>3</sup>

The assumption of schizophrenia also leads to other predictions. First, additional psychiatric studies have shown that the average paranoid schizophrenic has an ectomorphic body shape (lean and straight). Also, the profiler knew, from his own experience, that paranoid schizophrenics tend to be thin and scrawny, due to the fact that they disregard meals, don't eat well, and don't think about proper nutrition.<sup>4</sup>

The profiler's experience also pointed to the fact that paranoid schizophrenics are substandard in appearance and

personal hygiene. They disregard any forms of neatness and cleanliness. Due to this, the profiler postulated that the suspect would live alone in a residence that was filthy and unkempt. Additionally, due to this, the suspect would not have been in the military. If he had a job, it would be a menial job that limited his contact with people.<sup>5</sup>

Armed with these assumptions, the profiler was now prepared to write a profile for police use.

**Profile:** The initial profile in the case was as follows: White male, age 25-27, with a thin and under-nourished appearance. Residence will be extremely slovenly and unkempt, and evidence of the crime will be found at the residence. Suspect will have a history of mental illness, and will have been involved with the use of drugs. Suspect will be a loner, who does not associate with either males or females, and will probably spend a great deal of time in his own home, where he lives alone. Suspect will be unemployed, and could probably receive some form of disability money. If residing with anyone, it will be with his parents: however, this is unlikely. Suspect has no prior military record: he is a high school or college dropout. Suspect is probably suffering from one or more forms of paranoid psychosis.<sup>6</sup>

**Perpetrator:** Based on this profile, the police undertook a search in the area for a suspect matching this description. One woman, when questioned, reported that an

old high-school acquaintance whom she had recently met fit the description. The police staked out the suspect's house, and apprehended him when he attempted to flee. On the suspect's person, and in his apartment, was direct evidence linking him to the crime in question, and other crimes that had occurred in the area.

The suspect was a white male, 28 years old, and lived by himself in an apartment that was extremely filthy and slovenly. He was a high-school graduate, but had begun exhibiting signs of mental illness in his second year of school. After school, unable to keep a job, he drifted in and out of mental institutions until he was finally released to the custody of his mother, who obtained and paid for his apartment. The perpetrator was also receiving a small government disability check. After his capture, he was examined by psychiatrists and diagnosed as suffering from severe schizophrenia.<sup>7</sup>

**Summary:** In this case, the profile was remarkably accurate. Although the profile was limited, it allowed the police to narrow their search parameters, with resulting success. To construct the profile, the profiler relied on several avenues of information: the demographic data obtained from convicted sexual murderers; basic psychological knowledge combined with psychiatric studies; and his own experience gained from years of criminal investigation. The absence of any one of these sources of

information would have limited the scope of the profile.

#### CASE STUDY #2

This case is taken from the article, "Crime Scene and Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murderers," which appeared in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (1985).

**Crime Scene:** This case is based on the murders of five women.

Victim #1 was a white female in her late 20's. She was found in a stream in a wooded area near her apartment complex. She had been raped, strangled, and drowned. The body showed signs of severe beating, but there was not any mutilation. The victim was found partially clothed, and a ring of small value had been taken.<sup>8</sup>

Victim #2 was a white female in her mid-20's. She was found fully clothed in the same wooded area, less than a mile from Victim #1. She had been raped and repeatedly stabbed in the chest, but there was not any mutilation to the body.<sup>9</sup>

Victim #3 was a white female, similar in age and appearance to the first two victims. She had been raped and then stabbed to death. The fact that her underclothing was in disarray indicated to the investigators that the victim had been redressed after death.<sup>10</sup>

Victim #4 was a black female in her early 30's. She was found in the same wooded area, but further way than the

other three victims. She had been raped, strangled and drowned.<sup>11</sup>

Victim #5 was a white female in her mid-20's. Unlike the other four victims, she did not live in the apartment complex, but had attended a party there on the night she disappeared. The body was located in the same wooded area. She had been raped, and stabbed several times in the chest. An attempt had been made by the perpetrator to partially bury the body.<sup>12</sup>

**Profile Construction:** First, based on the evidence of sexual assault, the profiler classified all five crimes as sexual homicides. Also, based on several factors, the crime scenes were classified as organized. These factors include: sexual assault prior to death, sudden death with minimal mutilation, and the absence of any signs of struggle. These lead the profiler to believe that the killer initially approached the victims and persuaded or coerced them into entering the wooded area. Based on demographic data, these factors are indicative of an organized killer.<sup>13</sup>

Again, based on demographic data, the profiler can make assumptions about the killer once he is classified as organized. He is probably a white male, youthful, aggressive, with a history of anti-social traits and behaviors. He is probably articulate and persuasive, and uses these abilities to lure his victims to the killing area.

The killer used the same M.O. in each attack, and operated in the same general area. This indicates to the profiler that he lives in the area, probably for a long time, and is intimately familiar with the entire area around the apartment complex.<sup>14</sup>

Further study of the demographic data reveals that organized offenders often have prior histories of sexual crimes before they turn to murder. In this case, the profiler assumed that the perpetrator would in fact have a past record of sexual assault, but an emotional trauma sparked the murder of victim #1.<sup>15</sup>

**Profile:** Based on this analysis, the profiler prepared the following report for the police:

The assailant in the five homicides is an organized, anti-social personality. He is a youthful white male, has good intelligence, is articulate and manipulative. He fits into the community and has lived there for many years. He lives in close proximity to all the victims. He precipitates his crimes with alcohol and/or drugs, possibly is first born in the family, and is sexually competent. He probably has a girlfriend; yet had a recent problem with her prior to the first killing. Considering his age, he probably would live with a single parent, and would have no car since he selects his victims on foot, sometimes using their cars in the assault. He probably would follow the media reports of the crime and may be in a crowd of onlookers when the police locate the bodies.<sup>16</sup>

**Perpetrator:** The police investigation in this case led to the apprehension of a 17 year old white male. He lived

within a one mile radius to all the victims. He was characterized by his friends and family as a bright individual who did poorly in school, and described as a "macho man" and "con artist". He lived with his mother, and did not own a car. He was a frequent user of beer and marijuana. The perpetrator did have a girlfriend, but she had jilted him a short time before the first murder. He had followed the investigation in the media, and admitted watching the investigators work in the neighborhood. He had a long police record, with charges including sexual assault and rape.<sup>17</sup>

**Summary:** In this case, the profiler was once again able to construct a remarkably accurate profile utilizing demographic data and criminal investigation experience. These case studies emphasize the importance of the initial crime and crime scene classification. Each classification of organized or disorganized leads the profiler to two separate and distinct pools of demographic and psychological data. An inaccurate classification can lead a profiler, and the police investigation, in the opposite direction from the true perpetrator. Fortunately, in these two cases the profiler chose correctly, and the profile was able to assist in the investigations.

The next two case studies deal with a category of crime that has not received the same amount of attention in the profiling literature as serial murder. However, this

category, non-homicidal sex crimes, can often result in a crime scene that is very suitable for profiling. The next two case studies will deal with the crimes of sexual assault and child molestation. These two cases will highlight how the profiling process, originally developed in response to serial murder, is applicable to a wide range of crimes.

### CASE STUDY #3

This case was taken from the records of the Bureau of Investigation, California Department of Justice.

**Crime Scene:** The victim was a 71 year-old white female who lived alone in her house, located in a racially mixed neighborhood. She was awoken early one morning in her bedroom by a man who demanded her money. The man said several things to her, such as "Do what I say and I won't hurt you." At no time did the perpetrator use or threaten to use a weapon. The victim complied with the demands, at which time the man told her, "Do what I say or I will rape you." The assailant then began asking sexually-oriented questions, such as "How long has it been since you had sex," and "Are you ready to have sex now?"

The assailant then ordered the victim to remove her top and walk around the house topless while he watched. He then ordered her to lie face down on the bed. He then pulled down her lower garments and then fondled and masturbated on her bare buttocks. The attacker then cleaned the victim's body with a small wash cloth and departed the scene, taking

the washcloth with him.

**Profile Construction:** As in the case of serial murder, the sex crime profiler bases his or her profile on the study of sexual criminals, psychological knowledge, and criminal investigation experience. In this case, the profiler was aware, through demographic research, that elderly white females were sexually attacked predominately by black males. The fact that the attack occurred in a racially mixed neighborhood also lends credence to the idea that the attacker was black. Also, the demographic research points to the fact that the majority of these types of criminal are young.<sup>18</sup>

The profiler also knew that the personality of the attacker was indicated by the type of attack. The time of attack, the drawn-out charade leading up to the attack, and the attack itself, without any vaginal or anal penetration, suggested that the perpetrator would be a "wimpy" type of individual. He would be cowardly and unsure of himself; a social loser. The profiler also extrapolated that the man would have poor social skills, would not interact well with females, and would have a poor employment record. If employed, his job would be blue-collar or menial.<sup>19</sup>

Based on the time of attack, and the knowledge that someone was in the house, the profiler decided that the attacker lived in the local area. Also, the fact that the attacker kept his face hidden, and removed the dirty rag

from the scene, suggests that he was familiar with police investigative techniques. Therefore, it was logical to assume that he would have a police record for sexual assault.<sup>20</sup>

**Profile:** The profile, given to the local police, was as follows: Suspect is a young black male who lives in the local area. Suspect will present an image of an introverted, socially stunted individual who has little or no contact with females. Suspect will have a poor employment history, predominately in menial or unskilled labor. He probably has a police record, with crimes ranging from voyeurism and sexual battery to sexual assault.<sup>21</sup>

**Perpetrator:** When the local officials received the profile, they used it to focus their investigation on the registered sex crimes offenders in the area. One of these offenders seemed to match the profile particularly well, and was brought in for questioning. During questioning the suspect admitted to committing the assault. The suspect was a 25 year-old black man who lived in the same neighborhood as the victim. He was a parolee, with a previous conviction for a sexual offense.<sup>22</sup>

**Summary:** In this case, the police were initially confused on how to conduct the investigation. Was the case a robbery, with an opportunistic sexual assault, or was it a straight sexual assault? Determining the type of crime is extremely important, due to the fact that there is a

separate suspect pool for each type of crime. The profiler was able, through training and experience, to see past the "smokescreen" of the robbery and concentrate on the sexual aspects of the crime. As demonstrated, the profile pointed the police in the right direction, and good police work did the rest.<sup>23</sup>

#### CASE STUDY #4

The following case was taken from the records of the Bureau of Investigation, California Department of Justice.

**Crime Scene:** Two young girls, both seven years-old, were walking home in the afternoon in their racially-mixed neighborhood. They were approached from the street by a young Hispanic man who was driving a very racy sports car. The suspect offered the girls a ride home, and they accepted and willingly got in the car. He then proceeded to take them to a secluded area, despite their pleas to go home.

Once they were in a private area, the suspect intimidated the girls into taking off their clothes. He then had intercourse with both girls, sodomized them, and then forced the girls to interact sexually with each other. The suspect never used a weapon, never bound the girls, and made no effort to conceal his identity.

By this time one of the girls was bleeding from genital lacerations. The suspect drove both girls to the general vicinity of a police station and told them that they could get help there.

**Profile Construction:** From the girls' description, the profiler knew that the suspect was a young Hispanic male that drove a nice car. However, the profiler was faced with a problem in clarifying the perpetrator. There are two types of offenders which use small children. A pedophile is an offender that is sexually stimulated by children. A molester usually prefers normal sex, but is incapable of sustaining a natural relationship with a member of the opposite sex. He/she uses children as substitutes for adult sex.<sup>24</sup>

Based on the fact that the offender forced the girls to perform lesbian sex, usually associated with adults, the profiler classified the suspect as a molester. This enables the profiler to extrapolate on further offender characteristics. As in case #3, demographic research has shown that molesters tend to be socially stunted, "wimpy" individuals. They will have few friends, and any relationships with members of the opposite sex will be dysfunctional.

Also, based on research, the profiler knew that the offender would have a poor employment history, and would work at unskilled or menial labor jobs. He would either have a police record for sex crimes, or would have committed similar crimes in the past. Additionally, the research has shown that if not caught, these offenders will continue committing crimes.<sup>25</sup>

In this case, there was one fact that did not fit the basic profile. The racy sports car did not seem to fit with the personality of the offender in the basic profile. Due to the fact that the car did not appear to be stolen (use of keys), the profiler concluded that the car had been borrowed, perhaps from parents or a friend.

**Profile:** The following is the profile that was presented to the police investigating the case:

Suspect is a Hispanic male in his early-to-mid 20s. He is single, but if with a companion, she will be socially and mentally inferior to the suspect. He will have few friends, and would be classified as an "under-achiever." The suspect will probably live alone, and if employed, it will be a menial or unskilled job.

The vehicle used in the assault will have been a borrowed vehicle. The suspect is familiar with the local area, but probably is not a resident of the area. He will be a user of pornography. The suspect will have had a prior arrest for a sex crime. If not arrested, he will continue to commit sexual crimes. Investigation should focus on registered sexual offenders and on any similar crimes that have or might occur.<sup>26</sup>

**Perpetrator:** The police used the profile to focus their investigation, but did not have any immediate leads. Approximately one month after the assault on the two girls, the police in a neighboring jurisdiction arrested a suspect

who had pick-up a hitchhiker and then tried to assault her. Recognizing the M. O., the investigators showed pictures of the suspect to the two girls, who immediately identified him as their assailant. After further investigation, the girls were able to identify the suspect in an actual line-up. He was subsequently convicted for that crime.<sup>27</sup>

The perpetrator was a 23 year-old Hispanic male. He was divorced, and currently engaged to a 20 year-old female who was described as unattractive and socially stunted. He claimed that she was his one and only friend in the entire world. He was a high school graduate, and was employed as a hod-carrier at a construction site. He lived in an area near the crime scene, with his fiance and her parents. The car used in the assault had been borrowed from his fiance. He had been arrested previously for a sexual assault.<sup>28</sup>

**Summary:** The profile process used for sex crimes is fundamentally the same as that used for murder cases. The major difference is that the profiler uses a different data base of demographic research in order to ascertain the personality characteristics of each type of criminal. Also, the profiler must be familiar with the unique psychological information that pertains to sex offenders. There are different typologies for sex offenders, just like there are for murderers. This knowledge is intrinsic for the compilation of an accurate profile.

This section has attempted to give the reader a very

basic idea of how a profiler arrives at his determinations. The actual profile process is an elaborate, complicated procedure that can take weeks to accomplish. In the next section, two respected profilers, each with a unique understanding and perspective, will present their views on profiling.

#### INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL PRODAN

Special Agent Supervisor (SAS) Michael Prodan is a criminal investigator/criminal investigative profiler with the Bureau of Investigation, California Department of Justice. SAS Prodan is one of only 34 graduates worldwide from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's 10-month profiling and criminal investigation course. This course, conducted by the Bureau's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC), instructs selected law enforcement officers in crime scene investigation, advanced criminology, and profile formulation.

SAS Prodan was already an experienced criminal investigator prior to his attendance at the NCAVC course. A graduate of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Academy, he began his law enforcement career as a patrolman in Southern California. He worked his way up to investigator, where he specialized in child abuse, burglary, narcotics, and assault cases. In 1985 he moved over to the Department of Justice, where he worked on a wide variety of criminal cases, including the Leonard Lake/Charles Eng serial murder case.

In 1989, SAS Prodan volunteered to attend the NCAVC course, and graduated in 1990. Presently, he is one of only three FBI-certified criminal profilers in California. His current duties include case analysis (profiling), case consultation, testifying in court as an expert witness, and lecturing on advanced crime scene investigation.

With his specialized training and extensive criminal investigative experience, SAS Prodan ranks as an expert in a field that remains a mystery to many practitioners. However, he is quick to dispel the myths and popular misconceptions that surround profiling. "Criminal investigative analysis [profiling] is not a magic technique," he stated. "It is merely focusing on the totality of the crime scene, without ignoring any of the details. This picture of the crime, combined with knowledge of the existing research, and of criminal psychodynamics, produces the profile."<sup>29</sup>

Special Agent Prodan went on to describe his particular format for constructing a profile. Initially, he begins by looking at victim information, otherwise called victimology. "The importance of victimology in criminal investigation and profiling can never be underestimated. Work, family, friends, hobbies, habits, and daily routine are all vital pieces of information in order to gain some understanding of the victim. By knowing the victim, it gives insight into the mind of the perpetrator. We can begin to answer

questions, such as: how much risk did the suspect assume by targeting this particular victim? Knowing this gives us clues to the personality and M.O. of the suspect."<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, Mr. Prodan undertakes a step-by-step reconstruction of the events at the crime scene. "For me, visiting the crime scene, at the same time of day, and under the same conditions that were present during the actual event, is very important. I try to follow each phase of the crime, and try to understand why certain events happened the way they did. Again, this gives me clues into the personality and mind of the perpetrator, which results in a more accurate profile."<sup>31</sup>

During the reconstruction of the crime scene, Mr. Prodan gives a critical eye to the evidence. "Usually, when a case comes to me, it has already been investigated and the investigators have hit a brick wall. When I look at a case, I am not primarily searching for new evidence. Instead, I am looking for the relationship between each piece of evidence. Not only am I looking for what fits, I am looking for what doesn't fit. It has been my experience that the odd piece of evidence, the one that doesn't fit in, can often be the key between an accurate or inaccurate profile."

"As well as examining the available evidence, the profiler must look for the missing piece which should be there. Often, a perpetrator will undertake the *staging* of a crime scene. This means an attempt by the perpetrator to

make the crime scene appear to be different from what it really is. Obviously, taking a crime scene at face value can result in an inaccurate profile, with disastrous repercussions for the investigation. The successful profiler (unsuccessful ones don't last long) must be adept at reading the correct story of the crime scene, and determining what really happened. Every piece of evidence speaks to the crime, and it is up to the profiler to figure it out."<sup>32</sup>

To Special Agent Prodan, "A profile is comparable to the frame for a picture. A frame is not unique; however, only a certain size of picture will fit in that frame. A psychological profile is not a unique description of an individual; instead, it is the 'frame' that the police use to narrow their suspect pool, and focus the investigation. A profile never has nor ever will put a person in jail. It is merely one more tool for an investigator in the war on crime."<sup>33</sup>

Special Agent Prodan's observations on profiling are representative of the ideas espoused in FBI writings and instruction about the subject. Despite the FBI's dominance of the field, a group of profilers, independent of the FBI system, have expressed themselves in recent years. Primarily academicians and clinicians, this group, with ideas and opinions of their own, are responsible for many profiles done for law enforcement today. One of the most

visible members of this community is Dr. Ronald M. Holmes.

INTERVIEW WITH DR. RONALD M. HOLMES

Currently, Dr. Holmes is a Professor of Criminal Justice at the school of Justice Administration at the University of Louisville. He has been published widely in a number of scholarly and journals and magazines, such as Federal Probation, Police Chief, and the New England Journal of Civil and Criminal Confinement. Dr. Holmes is also the author of several books, including Serial Murder (with James DeBurger), The Sex Offender and the Criminal Justice System, Sexual Behavior: Prostitution, Homosexuality, and Swinging, and Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool.

Dr. Holmes related that he got his start in criminal profiling in 1980, while he was a guest lecturer speaking about sex crimes at the Southern Crime Institute. His students, law enforcement officers, brought him a few sex crime cases that had remained unsolved and asked for his perspective as an expert in sex crimes and sexual criminals. According to Dr. Holmes, his first few profiling attempts were fairly accurate, and this encouraged him to expand his efforts in the field.<sup>34</sup>

As his reputation grew in law enforcement circles, he began receiving more and more requests for profiling assistance. Presently, he receives 1-2 requests for profiles a month from around the country. Dr. Holmes estimated that he has accomplished over 350 profiles since

1980, the majority of which dealt with serial/lust murder.<sup>35</sup>

Dr. Holmes described the steps that go into formulating a profile. First, he receives the request from the agency needing assistance, and instructs them as to what type of information he needs. "Basically," Dr. Holmes said, "I tell them to send me every piece of information connected with the case. And I usually have to call them back and ask for further details." Dr. Holmes stressed the fact that there can never be too much information about the victim.

Once he has received and reviewed the case data, Dr. Holmes tries to visit the scene of the crime. "Visiting the crime scene is probably one of the most important parts of the profiling process. Unfortunately, I can't get to the crime scenes in other parts of the country. I rely on the investigating officers to send complete pictures, maps, sketches, and environmental data with the case information."<sup>36</sup>

Dr. Holmes elaborated on the importance of visiting the crime scene. "In my profiling activities, I have experienced what I feel to be an intangible element that remains behind after a crime of violence has occurred. This element helps me to get into the mind of the criminal, and try to get a feeling for the fantasy which is driving the killer." This element is sometimes referred to as the "shadow of the crime", and Dr. Holmes freely admits that it is viewed with skepticism by professionals in the law

enforcement community.<sup>37</sup>

Dr. Holmes feels that the criminal justice field has become more accepting of the profiling technique in recent years. "First, the police are becoming better educated. As the education level rises, they become aware that profiling is based on sound scholarly principles and extensive demographic and psychological research. Secondly, profiles are better and more accurate. The data base on serial murderers is continually growing, and this improves our knowledge correspondingly." Despite these advances, Dr. Holmes still sees the need for increased police acceptance. "I'm usually the third person called," he joked, "after the psychic and the astrologer."<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned early, in his book Serial Murder, Dr. Holmes called for less involvement in profiling on the federal level, and for an increase in trained profilers on the local level. He still feels that way today. "For a homicide or sex crime that has serial characteristics, a profiler should be part of the initial investigation. The fresher the crime scene and evidence, the more elaborate and accurate the profile. Investigators should not wait until the investigation is stymied to request a profile. It should be a standard part of the procedure, just like the forensic support that would automatically be available."<sup>39</sup>

At the conclusion of the interview, Dr. Holmes spelled out three ways in which criminal psychological profiling

could be improved. "First, university level profiling classes could be offered. This increased education will demystify the process, and introduce a new generation to the technique. Secondly, there needs to be more cooperation between academicians and public agencies. Sharing information and resources will always be needed. Academicians need data from the public agencies, and these agencies need academic research. Thirdly, there needs to be less competition and more cooperation between academicians and profilers. Too often these parties are more interested in disparaging the "competition" than in working together. I am not an advocate for a single style of profiling; each crime is unique, and a variety of styles are needed to respond to crime. However, cooperation to improve the process, share data, and impose minimum standards would be welcome. Even though profiling is an art and not a science, we should continuously work together, practitioners, academicians, and profilers, to make the technique as accurate and reliable as possible."<sup>40</sup>

#### SUMMARY

The focus of this chapter has been to further clarify the process of completing a psychological profile. By examining four diverse cases, the reader was exposed to the profiler's viewpoint and reasoning. These cases highlighted the importance in making the correct classification of the crime and the crime scene. In each case, it was shown how

the profiler was able to extrapolate the personality and characteristics of the perpetrator, due to psychological principles, demographic research, and investigative experience.

Included in the chapter were interviews with two experienced profilers. These gentlemen, from different backgrounds and experiences, each presented a unique viewpoint of profiling. The feelings and opinions each person offered gives valuable insights into this topic.

The next section, chapter 4, will offer a summary of the material, conclusions, and recommendations.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Robert K. Ressler, Whoever Fights Monsters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992): 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>8</sup> Robert K. Ressler et al., "Crime Scene and Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murderers," FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 54, no. 8 (Aug. 1985): 20.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Prodan, interview with author, 11 Aug. 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Michael Prodan, interview with author, 6 July 1993.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Dr. Ronald M. Holmes, telephone interview with  
author, 3 Aug. 1993.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.

## CHAPTER 4

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### SUMMARY

The purpose of this study has been to provide the reader with a better understanding of the art of criminal psychological profiling. This has been accomplished in three phases: a detailed literature review, analysis of case studies, and interviews with profiling experts.

The literature review undertook a detailed study of profiling as it appears in scholarly and academic publications. Additionally, profiling was studied as it has been portrayed in the popular media. Federal Bureau of Investigation writings, which constitute the majority of material on profiling, were closely examined. The literature review concluded with a variety of additional publications, presenting both pro and con positions on the subject.

The analysis of case studies was provided in an effort to demonstrate the way a profile is constructed. Even though each case study was an abbreviation of the actual procedure, they presented an accurate portrayal of the process. Hopefully, these case studies help refute the myth that profiling is something that can be done by anyone. Experience, knowledge, and training are all essential tools of the professional profiler.

Lastly, interviews were presented that were conducted

with experts in the field of profiling. Both of these gentlemen reached their positions in different ways, and each had an unique viewpoint to express concerning the subject. Their insights help illuminate the field of profiling in its current form.

In summary, an effort has been made to present the reader with as much information as possible about the subject of profiling. However, it is recognized that no new ground has been broken, nor any new answers provided. Hopefully, this study might spur some future student or researcher to seek for the missing answers. If that occurs, then this study will have proven useful.

#### CONCLUSIONS

It is the author's conclusion that criminal psychological profiling can be an effective criminal investigative technique. However, the effectiveness will be determined by the conditions under which it is used.

To increase effectiveness, the profile must be prepared by a professional profiler. He or she must be knowledgeable of criminal psychodynamics, well-versed in the available statistical and demographic data, and experienced in criminal investigation. The study by Pinizzotto and Finkel demonstrated the superior profiling skills of these individuals over other groups of profilers. The astute investigator will ensure that a profiler possessing these qualities will be selected to assist in the investigation.

Additionally, to increase effectiveness, the investigator must not over-emphasize the importance of a psychological profile. First, one must bear in mind that a profile is only effective for certain crimes. Heinous sex or serial crimes, that lack any apparent motivation, are the ideal crimes to be profiled. A trained profiler will recognize this basic fact, and respond accordingly. SAS Prodan, in his interview, recalled several times when he informed investigators that he could not profile their cases, due to the fact that they did not fit this category.

Secondly, the investigator must realize that a profile should only focus the investigation, and not limit it. While the profile can suggest a potential suspect pool, the investigator should not abandon all other sources or techniques to pursue this group. He or she needs to keep an open mind, and remember that clues and leads can come from any source.

Lastly, the investigator should realize that current profiles are still primarily educated guesses and assumptions. Deciding how far to trust the profile is a hard call for the investigator to make; the decision must be tempered with the investigator's own experience and intuition.

Ideally, a professional, well-trained profiler will prepare a profile for an investigator who is open-minded, and knowledgeable about profiling uses and limitations.

When these conditions exist, the profile will make an excellent addition to the investigator's inventory of weapons. Failure to maintain these conditions can result in a side-tracked investigation, or at worst, failure to find the perpetrator.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Rarely does one encounter a topic in the social sciences that has been the subject of so little research than that of criminal psychological profiling. The efforts by the FBI (1985) and Pinizzotto and Finkel (1990) represent the first tenuous steps in building a research base. These beginning efforts require prompt follow-up, if the findings are to be utilized to their fullest potential.

The accuracy of psychological profiles needs to be determined. Due to differences in training and experiences, each source of profiling would need to be individually assessed for accuracy and reliability. Initially, the FBI possesses the largest data base of profiles used in actual investigations. Using this information, each profile could be compared against the convicted perpetrator and rated for accuracy.

While this study would only be applicable to FBI prepared profiles (or whatever data source that is used), it would become the standard by which to measure all other profile sources. This type of study, leading to a numerical description of the process, is needed if profiling is ever

to gain widespread acceptance in law enforcement.

Further research also needs to be directed toward improving data bases. As the data base cataloging sex and serial offenders grow, it provides additional statistical and demographic information that is essential to profilers. The FBI is leading the way through the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC).<sup>1</sup>

One of the duties of the NCAVC is to maintain a large computer based system that is available to law enforcement officials across the country. Ideally, every violent crime committed in the USA should be entered into the system, serving a two-fold purpose. First, data on serial offenders would be gathered to aid in empirical studies. Secondly, police officers could cross-check their unsolved cases with cases in the computer. Hopefully, similar crimes and M.O.s could be linked together, possibly providing useful leads. Unfortunately, inputting case information to the NCAVC is voluntary, and the data base represents only those cases that conscientious officials have submitted.<sup>2</sup>

These two areas of research only represent a small part of what needs to be done. To reach an adequate level of respectability and acceptance, a solid research base that takes a critical look at profiling needs to be established. As this research base grows, the idea of profiling as a solid, respectable investigative tool will grow as well.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Joseph T. McCann, "Criminal Personality Profiling in the Investigation of Violent Crime: Recent Advances and Future Directions," Behavioral Sciences and the Law 10, no. 4 (Autumn, 1992): 480.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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