Criminal Profiling: Is There a Role for the Forensic Psychiatrist?

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Criminal profiling is a field that has gained notoriety in the mainstream consciousness, yet few people realize what it is that criminal profilers actually do and who is doing it. Suffering from a limited applied scientific literature that seems overshadowed by memoir trade books and journalistic style research, the field lacks a consensus regarding required expertise, ethics, methods of profiling, and research needs. This would seem to beg the question, why would anyone turn to a criminal profiler? After all, what would a profiler have to offer to a police investigator? This article will examine criminal profiling from the viewpoint of what it is, what it should be, and whether or not the forensic psychiatrist has a role to play in this field. The author will also argue that, of the available profiling methods, the deductive method is best suited to the training and expertise of the forensic psychiatrist.

The popular image of the criminal profiler is that of a retired FBI agent who has written several books highlighting past profiling efforts,[1–5] characters from the novel turned film *The Silence of the Lambs*, or television series such as *Millennium, Profiler,* or *Cracker* (which sports both a British and an American version). The release of the novel *Hannibal,* the sequel to *Silence of the Lambs,* will no doubt renew any flagging interest in the subject.

Individual practitioners or academics may well define criminal profiling differently. For the purpose of this article, criminal profiling, also referred to as offender profiling, is a consultative service designed to assist investigative and adjudicative efforts. An individual with knowledge and expertise in some or all of the areas of criminal investigation, the forensic sciences, victimology, and human behavior, reviews available evidence and offers an opinion to the client as to possible characteristics of an unidentified offender. Depending on the situation, the profiler may offer investigative advice, sometimes including pro-active tactics and interviewing strategies in the event the offender is apprehended. Also, there is room for a profiler to offer strategy at the trial level,[6] as many attorneys are ill equipped to assess probable crime scene behavior. Prosecutors often view a crime scene one way and defense attorneys another, with the truth lying somewhere in between.[7] A profiler may be able to offer guidance as to which direction is more in keeping with the evidence.

The ultimate utility of such profiling would, obviously, be in its ability to help police apprehend an unidentified offender. Merely correctly predicting offender traits, while an interesting phenomenon, would lack utility if the investigators could not translate the profiling input to adjust, focus, or redirect an ongoing investigation. Profiling can be useful in a case where there are numerous suspects as well as in a case where there is none. When a strong suspect has been identified, there may be some question as to whether a profile should be attempted.[8] Offender profiling can also be helpful in so-called "cold" cases, providing, at the least, a fresh look at the case file.

Basis of Criminal Profiling

While there is literature targeted at professionals in general regarding criminal profiling, much of it is

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descriptive and lacking a validated theoretical focus.[9, 10] American studies, of any discipline, dealing with utility, validity, and reliability of profiling are few and far between. What research is available tends to suffer from sampling biases, lack of adequate control groups, and other methodological limitations. To date, there does not appear to be any attempt to assess the validity of criminal profiling under "real life" conditions,[11] although there has been at least one study that attempted to simulate profiling, but with questionable validity.[12]

Pinizzotto and Finkel's 1990 study[12] pitted six undergraduate students, six psychologists, six detectives without profiling experience, six detectives trained in profiling, and four Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) profiling experts against each other. The subjects profiled a homicide and a sex offense, both previously solved. While the profilers were more accurate on the sex offense, their advantage disappeared on the homicide case. As reviewed by Homant and Kennedy,[11] this study did not include the FBI expert profilers in all stages of the study; the FBI-trained profilers (not the FBI expert profilers) had the worst scores on the homicide profile; and not all results for all parts of the study were reported. Also, these were not serial crimes, the presumed *forte* of criminal profiling. It is not unreasonable to assume there is little, if any, validity to the findings of the study. Validity in this area is important as investigations can spend resources and time, with potential further victim loss, when relying on profiles developed under faulty methodology.

As to utility, the only known American utility study was performed by the FBI in 1981. This study was never published in a peer-reviewed journal but was referred to in a 1984 paper by Pinizzotto.[13] It was reported[14] (p. 5) that profiling ". . . helped focus the investigation in 77 percent of those cases where the perpetrator was identified and actually identified the subject in 15 instances. Even in cases where the suspect was not identified, psychological profiling was helpful." Pinizzotto[13] reports (p. 38) that of 192 total requests for profiling, 88 (or 46% of the cases) resulted in identification of the suspect(s). No operational description of "identification" was offered, nor the context. If close to 50 percent of offenders could be identified through profiling, it would be expected that the law enforcement and criminological communities would be aware of this. European studies[15] dealing with utility, validity, and reliability

tend to suffer from a lack of applied knowledge and also have significant problems in gathering data,[16] as most information is secured from police reports which vary in thoroughness and reliability. Some efforts in Great Britain[14] have been ambitious, but follow-up has been hard to come by.

It is not clear how any findings in Europe will translate to the profiling community in North America. In the United States, as in Europe, there is no clear consensus as to who should profile and how they should do it. Some claim only law enforcement officers should profile; others would suggest restricting it to only those who are FBI-trained.[17, 18] To confuse issues further, or perhaps to highlight them, a European law enforcement agency recently asked psychologists with no case experience in criminal profiling to write a text on the subject for their field agents.[19]

The psychiatric and psychological literature related to criminal profiling deals mostly with clinical descriptions of known offenders or theorizing on underlying fantasy issues[20] and motivations, with little, if any, work specifically related to the role of mental health professionals in the actual process of criminal profiling. At a minimum, it would appear reasonable for police investigators to consult with mental health professionals to help explain psychological aspects of offender behavior, especially by serial killers.[21] One survey of "in-house" law enforcement psychologists showed a small, but more than expected, amount of time engaged in criminal profiling.[22]

The basis upon which profiling ultimately rests is that the crime scene will reflect the personality of the offender.[23] Douglas *et al.*[24] state: "The way a person thinks (i.e., his or her pattern of thinking) directs the person's behavior. Thus, when the investigative profiler analyzes a crime scene and notes certain critical factors, he or she may be able to determine the motive and type of person who committed the crime" (p. 405). Ault and Reese,[25] early FBI profilers, suggested that a crime may reflect personality characteristics of an offender similar to how our homes reflect something about our personality.

Many feel profiling is more productive in crimes where psychopathology is evident at the crime scene.[25, 26] The meaning of the term "psychopathology," as used by most police investigators, is not always clear, but it seems to infer what behavioral health clinicians would term "severe mental illness,"

or "significant psychopathy." Others suggest profiling can be of benefit in a broad array of criminal activity, including arsons[27] and burglaries.[28]

History of Criminal Profiling

"Profiling" has no doubt been done since man realized that knowing what was in the mind of a competitor (or an ally) and anticipating how he or she might react was an advantage. It could be argued that one of the earliest texts on profiling was the *Malleus Maleficarum*[29] (The Witch Hammer), a guide to identifying and punishing witches, believed to have been published first in 1487 (p. VII).[29] More recently, in the 1930s Freud collaborated with a former U.S. diplomat and developed a psychological profile of Woodrow Wilson which was published after Freud's death.[30]

Attempting to understand or predict behavior of a known person might offer utility to some parties. During World War II the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) employed a psychiatrist to profile Adolph Hitler.[31] The profile accurately predicted the dictator's suicide (p. 268),[31] among other things. It can safely be assumed that the U.S. government (and other governments) has psychological profiles on major world leaders to help guide international decision making.

Profiling in the sense of profiling an unknown individual first gained wide notoriety in 1956 when a psychiatrist, Dr. James Brussel, profiled George Metesky, known as the "Mad Bomber," in New York City. The profile was accurate down to the clothes the bomber would be wearing when apprehended: a double-breasted suit, buttoned.[32] Dr. Brussel also profiled the Boston Strangler, Albert DeSalvo. DeSalvo fit Brussel's profile, but controversy remains as to whether DeSalvo actually was the strangler, or at least not the only one.[33] If he was the Boston Strangler, then he would fall into a serial killer niche: a serial killer who advances from rape to murder, then reverts to rape without killing. DeSalvo was arrested and convicted for a series of rapes, not murders. He was never tried or convicted of the Boston stranglings.

Criminal profiling of unknown offenders by law enforcement agencies began with Howard Teten, an FBI agent, who taught a course in Applied Criminology for the FBI Academy.[34] After consulting with Dr. Brussel he began to unofficially profile cases. In 1978 official approval was given to Behavioral Science Unit instructors to offer psychological profiling services.[3] From this unit came Robert Ressler and John Douglas, arguably the most well known criminal profilers in the world. On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, profiling in Great Britain was being done in the 1980s by Britton[35] and Canter.[36]

Criminal profiling through the FBI is currently done from within the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC). FBI profilers work from within the NCAVC's Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG).[37] The FBI profiling unit's reputation initially benefitted from a lack of competition, but it has not been able to maintain the status it once held. While the CIRG is presumed by many to be the epitome of criminal profiling, others[38-44] have questioned its expertise and the utility and validity of its methods. Although law enforcement agencies have been the main motivation behind profiling, it has never been fully established just where it belongs: in law enforcement, the behavioral sciences, or somewhere in the middle.[45]

Methodology of Profiling

It might seem that something like criminal profiling can only be done one way, but this is not true. There are those (the current FBI model) who use a combination of inductive and deductive strategies and those who rely mostly only on the evidence in a particular case (Deductive model).[46] Some, like Canter (Investigative Psychology model), work only from statistical analyses of an empirical database,[47] whereas Rossmo[48, 49] and others rely on geographic extrapolations. There are those who avoid committing profiles to paper and those who feel it would be remiss not to. Data sharing seems to be problematic as the information in databases is often treated as if it were proprietary information[10] unavailable to others for study. The author will briefly present the major models of criminal profiling. It is beyond the scope of this article to provide an in-depth critical comparison of the methods presented. Interested readers are referred to Ressler et al.,[50] Canter and Alison,[51] and Turvey[46] for further information regarding the profiling methods. Although this author does not see geographic profiling as a method unto itself, interested readers can review Rossmo's[52] recently published work on the subject.

Inductive Versus Deductive Criminal Profiling

Before delving into the models of offender profiling, it is necessary to clarify how the terms inductive and deductive are being used in this article. An inductive profile is one that has been obtained through experiential, statistical, and/or correlational analysis.[53] Although inductive arguments come in many forms, two tend to appear in the discussion of criminal profiling[53]: inductive generalization, which argues from the specific to the general, and the statistical argument. An inductive generalization is the extrapolation of a premise (or premises) from a group or collection of individuals to a larger group.[54] The validity of this type of inference is affected by sample bias, among other things.

As an example, to assess the age and weight of murderers, a hypothetical researcher went to a prison to poll murderers on their age and weight. The researcher happened to arrive during the lunch hour and only those murderers who ate quickly were available to be polled. Those who ate seconds (and could be expected to weigh more) did not participate. From the sample, the researcher underestimated the average age and weight of murderers. Even if done correctly, while such a study may give the average age and weight, as well as possibly other statistics, it can usually tell us little about a specific murderer. The researcher would be unable to predict the age and weight of a specific murderer using only the statistics generated from the age and weight study. An *inductive generalization* is a working assumption, requiring validation.[55] Also, once the results of the age and weight study were determined, they would need to be validated by other studies.

A statistical argument is an inductive argument whose validity is a matter of probability.[54] This type of argument will include terms such as "most," "many," "nearly all." Its weakness is in its impreciseness. It is important to understand that inductive generalization and statistical arguments are not mutually exclusive and can reside within the same argument.[53]

In deductive arguments, if the premise is true, then the conclusion must be true.[54] This is a stricter standard for argumentation than that of induction. A deduction proceeds from a generalization to a specific case.[55] The danger of deduction is in the possibility that the initial premise is wrong. For example,

in attempting to ascertain the age and weight of a specific murderer, the researcher asks the inmate his age and has him get on a scale. The researcher is making two assumptions (underlying premises) that may not, in fact, be true: that the inmate will tell the truth and that the scale is accurate.

All profiling carries the inherent risk of causing an investigation to target an innocent individual, but profiles produced using inductive reasoning may enhance this risk. The Richard Jewel situation[56] was the result of an inductive profile.

FBI Model

The FBI model is intricately connected to the organized-disorganized dichotomy of crime scene presentation. The terms organized and disorganized, as referring to crime scene classification, were first published by Hazelwood and Douglas[57] in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (LEB) in 1980. An expanded organized-disorganized dichotomy appeared in the LEB in 1985.[58] Later articles presented and discussed the organized-disorganized model of crime scene interpretation.[59, 60]

Based on interviews with 36 convicted sexual killers, review of related crime scene information, and review of other available information, a database was developed from which the organized-disorganized[58, 59] crime scene dichotomy was formulated. There are questions regarding these data that color subsequent findings, including the fact that the sample cannot be assumed to be representative of murderers in general or sexual killers,[39] specifically.

An offender is classified depending on the level of organization or disorganization felt to be evident at the crime scene(s). From that classification multiple conclusions are drawn regarding characteristics of the offender (level of intelligence, employment, social adjustment, etc.). Aside from the fact that the dichotomy has limited usefulness (as most offenders do not fit easily into either category), there is the possibility that this schema was the result of circular reasoning,[11, 39] and the data on which the dichotomy is based have never been subjected to any rigorous scientific analysis.[39] The FBI model does not necessarily limit one from drawing inferences outside of the organized-disorganized dichotomy.

The FBI model is probably best described as a blend of the organized-disorganized paradigm, intuition, and experience profiling similar crimes.[38, 59] Ressler *et al.*[50] offer six stages for criminal profiling:

(1) Input: crime scene evidence, including aerial photographs; victimology; forensic reports (e.g., autopsy, laboratory); police reports (exclusive of items related to identified suspects); neighborhood socioeconomic status; and crime rate; (2) Seven Decision Points: homicide type and style, primary intent, victim risk, offender risk, escalation, time for crime, and location factors; (3) Crime Assessment: including organized/disorganized aspects, victim selection, offender motivation, and crime scene dynamics; (4) The Criminal Profile; (5) The Investigation; and (6) The Apprehension. Feedback is provided for at several stages as more evidence comes to light during an investigation. A strength of the FBI model, as practiced, is in the weekly meeting that is held where profilers present cases to each other for discussion and review.

Investigative Psychology Model

This style of profiling was developed by Canter in Great Britain, who compares new crimes to an expanding database of known crimes to render expected offender characteristics.[47] It is an inductive model, dependent on the quality and the amount of data accumulated. Canter's approach[36] assumes that there are rules (inner narrative) that the offender will tend to follow. These rules are both geographic and behavioral; therefore, it is heavily influenced by geographic profiling,[61-63] and this aspect is based on his circle hypothesis,[61] a derivative of environmental psychology.[10] This hypothesis suggests that if one takes all the crime scenes in a series and draws a line between the two furthest points, this line will be the diameter of a circle that will enclose the offender's residence, with an assumption made that there is a good chance the offender will live near the middle of the circle.

The behavioral aspect of Canter's work[64] centers on a five-factor model, linking five offender behaviors: (1) interpersonal intimacy, (2) sexuality, (3) impersonal, sexual gratification, (4) violence and aggression, and (5) criminality. These behavioral contexts are collated under what is called smallest space analysis (SSA).[61,64] SSA treats the behaviors as if they are distances and attempts to correlate behaviors in groups with the smallest "distance" between them. It sorts items by rank order, rather than absolute values.[64] There are significant potential weaknesses to Canter's theories,[10] not the least of which is that SSA places a behavior (such as sexual intercourse

into the intimacy category) regardless of the actual motivation.[65] The main weakness of an inductive model such as this is that the predictions of offender characteristics or behaviors will often not be applicable to a specific case.

Geographic Profiling

Building upon earlier theories of environmental and spatial theories of criminal activity,[66] Rossmo[48, 49, 67] developed a computer program that attempts to geographically profile an offender by analyzing the location of crime sites. Difficulties would include cases with a small number of known linked crimes and cases where linked crime scenes have not been identified or even discovered. Also, the underlying theories are mostly drawn from databases related to burglaries and other crimes that may not translate well to the serial murderer or rapist, and these theories relate to overall crime patterns, not individual crimes or crime series. Research on the connection between spatial coordinates and offender and victim variables continues,[28, 63, 68] but at present, geographic profiling is probably best viewed as an adjunct to criminal profiling and not as a profiling process in and of itself. Problems with relying exclusively on such an approach include the fact that one rarely knows all the crimes committed by an offender, and there are many other variables (such as the offender's mode of transportation, local conditions) that the software program does not, or is unable to, take into account. This style of profiling, as well as SSA, takes an aspect of offender behavior out of context and then draws inferences from it. Although it has limited utility in individual cases, geographic crime mapping does have significant utility for analyzing broader crime patterns and guiding allocation of police resources.

Deductive Profiling Model

The Deductive Profiling model[46] is the deducing of offender characteristics from available crime scene evidence, forensic science, and victimology. While the inferences drawn will tend to be more limited than those offered in inductive profiles (in this author's opinion), they offer the opportunity of being more reliable and more investigatively relevant. For example, most FBI-style profiles offer age, race, and sex of offenders based on statistically derived generalizations. In a deductive profile, race, sex, and age

would not be offered unless there was evidence available from that specific crime (or crimes) to support that inference. The weakness of a deductive approach is that if an initial premise is wrong, or is based on a misinterpretation of crime scene evidence, subsequent inferences will be wrong. Also, the investment of time in the deductive model is significantly more than that required from the FBI model. While a deductive model would not rely on geographic profiling *per se*, spatial considerations would be taken into account.

Profiling Example

To illustrate basic differences in the various profiling methods, an example* of a crime and possible profiling inferences is offered. A murder victim is found dead in a second floor bedroom, disemboweled, with blood spatter on the walls, bed, and floor. A knife from the kitchen is found on the carpet by an open window. Outside the window is a ladder against the house. It does not appear that anything was brought to or taken away from the crime scene. An FBI-style profile might interpret this as a disorganized crime scene due to an apparent lack of planning (weapon was not brought to the scene), the weapon being left at the scene, the crime scene being apparently random and sloppy, and the body disemboweled and left in view, among other things. A list of characteristics that are consistent with a disorganized offender could be presented.

An Investigative Psychology approach would assess the crime scene to place it into the five categories of SSA and see if it "fit" any other similar known crime scenes. A further inductive refinement might be to review the statistics for crimes in the area. Since 70 percent of the burglars in that area enter homes using ladders, a profiler draws an inference that the offender entered the house using the ladder.

A geographic profile would assess whether our murder victim is one of a series of murders that are believed to be linked. The locations are entered into a software program and a map emerges suggesting probabilities of where the offender might live or work or have some other significant tie to an area.

In a deductive approach the profiler examines the ground by the ladder and notices that the ground is not significantly indented by the legs of the ladder, as

would be expected if the offender had climbed up or down the ladder. The profiler infers that the ladder was not the means of entry, and, further, the ladder was placed against the house to mislead investigators.

Role of Forensic Psychiatrist in Offender Profiling

While no current method of offender profiling has been proven to be reliable, this author believes that the deductive model offers the most investigatively relevant method of profiling and further suggests this approach is more in keeping with a forensic psychiatrist's training and expertise. Those interested in offender profiling are encouraged to educate themselves in the aspects of the main models (FBI, Deductive, Investigative Psychology) to make an educated choice of which method to pursue, or which combination of methods one might utilize.

As a profiler, the forensic psychiatrist's role would be to infer offender characteristics from crime scene behavior, as interpreted from crime scene evidence, and victimology. This role would obviously not be treatment oriented; but, then, neither are other forensic examinations performed by a forensic psychiatrist. As physicians, forensic psychiatrists are trained to think critically, and their background in the behavioral sciences and experience with psychopathy and severe psychopathology place them in an enviable position when it comes to deducing personality characteristics from crime scene evidence.

Dr. James Brussel was the prototype of the psychiatric criminal profiler. He approached a case by making psychodynamic inferences from crime scene evidence, inferences related to body *habitus* (derived from generalizations related to presumed diagnosis) and an awareness of spatial considerations. His most celebrated case, the so-called Mad Bomber, appears to have been a combination of critical thinking and guesswork. He freely admitted[32] (p. 80) using intuition or hunches, ". . . as long as they are consistent with other data I have on hand." Aside from the crime scene evidence, Dr. Brussel was aided by access to letters the bomber had written. He was reported to have correctly described the bomber, down to his clothes. (p. 46): "When you catch him. . . he will be wearing a double breasted suit. . . Buttoned."[32] †
This author, while cognizant of Dr. Brussel's place in

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* The examples used are simplistic and meant to highlight an issue, not to accurately portray each style of profiling.

† In point of fact, George Metesky was wearing pajamas when police called on him at midnight. He did, however, change into a double-breasted suit, buttoned, to go to the police station.

the lore of profiling, would caution others from taking this approach by rote, as there was much room for potential error. His diagnoses (not the actual purpose of a profile) of offenders were not always supportable, in this author's opinion, by the evidence available at the time of his rendering the profiles.

In serial crime, one of the most important roles any member of an investigative team can play is that of identifying crimes that were committed by the same person(s). Such a task is not always easy. Traditionally, crimes were linked by *modus operandi* behaviors, or acts necessary to commit the crime. It came to be realized that evidence of other behaviors, referred to currently as "signature" behaviors,[69] could be noted at a crime scene. For example, while it might take one or two stab wounds to kill a person, it is safe to assume that 45 stab wounds reflect a psychological need within the offender. These signature behaviors were important in crime scene linkage.[69–71] Failure to appreciate the connection between crimes in a series was termed linkage blindness.[72] The forensic psychiatrist (or forensic psychologist) would be in a position (due to training and experience) to infer meaning from signature behaviors. Instead, psychological interpretations of crime scenes are routinely made by those with little or no education or training related to the behavioral sciences.

Those with behavioral science backgrounds may have expertise to contribute in areas not seen so far to be in their domain. The definitions of serial criminals and/or serial crimes are not universally agreed upon and the numbers of crimes or victims chosen (usually between two and four offenses) depends on the investigator or researcher involved,[73] with no clear rationale for why a particular number is chosen. The difference between an offender who murders one and an offender who murders many may be more due to luck in evading the police than a basic difference between the two offenders.[74] A case could be made that the number of crimes an individual commits in a series may be influenced by factors other than the offender's predilection to reoffend. If the difference between an offender who kills two and is caught, and his/her counterpart who is not apprehended and goes on to kill 25 is questionable, does it make sense to classify serial criminals based on the number of crimes they have committed or are believed to have committed? It may be more relevant to classify offender behavior as to whether it fits a "serial style" of

offense, rather than getting sidetracked by the actual number of crimes known to be committed.[73] Here, as in other areas, those trained in the behavioral sciences may have something to offer in exploring criminal typologies.

The author is not attempting to make a case that psychiatrists would make the best criminal profilers, but is instead suggesting that forensic psychiatrists are in a good position to channel their training into a new field. An interim argument is offered: some forensic psychiatrists (and forensic psychologists) might profile, some FBI-trained individuals might profile, some police officers and some investigators might profile, and some forensic scientists might profile. Many, lacking sufficient exposure to the knowledge of the other fields, should not.

Profiling currently is, at best, an art and some may show proficiency in this area, while others will not. The "scientific" basis of profiling is clearly less well established than in a field such as medicine, but the practice of medicine (based on the underlying scientific principles) remains an art. And, while much of medicine has been inductively derived, it is a foolish physician who ignores the specifics of the individual patient.

It is sometimes assumed that police investigators have little to learn from a profiler, but it must be kept in mind that murder, and specifically sexual homicide, is a low base rate crime and many police departments have little or no expertise in conducting a competent homicide investigation. Sexual fatalities with an equivocal cause of death, especially, would benefit from profiling.[75]

Early efforts at creating a scientific base for criminal profiling revolved around attempts to classify criminal behaviors, with the most ambitious work yet, the *Crime Classification Manual*,[76] attempting to do for crime what the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* attempted to do for mental illness; that is, to describe and categorize crime so that different people using the same terms would be talking about the same thing. Ongoing attempts to form a scientific base for profiling could only benefit from the involvement of forensic psychiatrists and other behavioral health professionals.

What Would It Take for a Psychiatrist to Profile Competently?

In the author's opinion this question needs to be approached from the assumption that the profiler is

one member of an interdisciplinary team. The team would be made up of the investigators (usually a law enforcement agency) requesting the profile, the specialists who have scientifically tested or evaluated the available physical evidence, and other forensic professionals as needed in a particular case. For example, if the profiler believed that a mark in a photograph was a missed bite mark (as actually happened in one case[77]) he/she would recommend the evidence be presented to a qualified forensic odontologist. There is no expectation that the profiler be expert in the myriad specialties that might potentially be involved in a homicide investigation. The analogy that would be offered is, just as the goal of a general medical education is not to make one a specialist in all areas, but to provide sufficient education to know when to ask for a consultation, the goal of a profiler's education should be to learn enough to know when to ask that evidence be examined or reexamined by an expert in a specific field. While the profiler will not continually uncover missed information or physical evidence, it does happen.

How a forensic psychiatrist would go about gaining the requisite knowledge and/or experience to profile is a good, but difficult to answer, question. In the United States there are currently no professional standards regarding ethics, education, or experience for offender profiling, other than what in-house requirements might exist in the FBI or other law enforcement agencies that support a profiler or profiling unit. It would be problematic if one attempted to extrapolate these qualifications, as not all of those engaged in offender profiling recognize the FBI model as an appropriate approach to offender profiling. This state of affairs is not confined to the United States, and issues related to ethics and professionalization have been raised elsewhere.[78]

The author would suggest that if a forensic psychiatrist is interested in pursuing expertise in offender profiling, he/she should explore the area thoroughly. Courses are available through the Internet and in some university settings. For example, Bond University in Australia offers a course in offender profiling (available via the Internet) and Portland State University in Oregon, and Laurentian University in Ontario, Canada, offer courses that feature profiling to some degree. As if to highlight the interdisciplinary basis of the field, the courses at these schools are offered through different departments: criminology

at one, administration of justice at the second, and psychology at the third.

Texts in the forensic sciences in general are available for use either in self-education or as part of formal course work. While initial offerings in texts related to profiling leave much to be desired, that is changing. Also, some excellent forensic courses are offered periodically; for example, the Basic Forensic Pathology Course, offered by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP), and other courses related to death investigation, such as a medicolegal death investigator training course offered at the St. Louis University School of Medicine division of Forensic and Environmental Pathology. There are crime scene reconstruction courses given by various individuals or groups on a regular basis under the auspices of professional organizations related to the various fields. Ideally, once one has acquired the necessary basic, broad forensic science knowledge, an internship with an active criminal profiler would be ideal, but outside of the FBI, or a limited number of other law enforcement agencies, this is not generally available.

The number of individuals in the profiling community working full time is small, and there is a lack of consensus as to what model is best and who should be profiling. It would be important for the psychiatrist/profiler to make clear his/her expertise to clients before engaging in profiling. This is no different from what is expected of an expert already.

There may be a question as to whether or not forensic psychiatrists should be involved in criminal profiling. The response would be that most should not, but some who have gained additional knowledge in appropriate areas could. Another question is whether or not it is ethical for a psychiatrist to be offering opinions about someone they have not examined. The author's response would be that the psychiatrist-profiler would not be making a diagnosis, but rather informed inferences regarding characteristics of an unknown individual for the purposes of assisting (usually, but not always) a law enforcement agency in conducting a criminal investigation. It is important to keep in mind that the profiler is profiling the crime(s), not a known person. Also, there are exceptions to offering even diagnostic opinions of known individuals who refuse to allow an interview with the forensic psychiatrist or when an interview is not possible.[‡] Another aspect of ethical

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‡ See ethical guidelines of AAPL, commentary to IV.

practice requiring attention is what role, if any, a forensic psychiatrist should play as a forensic psychiatry expert in a case that he or she has profiled. If a forensic psychiatrist profiles a case and a suspect is apprehended, it would be this author's opinion that the psychiatrist involved in the investigatory phase of the crime should decline to become involved in issues related to competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility, and disposition because it would seem to be difficult, if not impossible, to approach the case in a neutral manner.

Conclusion

Offender profiling is a field offering an opportunity to those forensic psychiatrists willing to educate themselves in the forensic sciences and investigative areas. It is best viewed as a multidisciplinary specialty where each member of the investigative team has something to offer. Forensic psychiatrists, by virtue of their psychiatric education and training, with further education in the forensic sciences, are in an excellent position to direct their efforts toward gaining expertise in offender profiling. It is possible that few forensic psychiatrists will have the motivation and necessary knowledge base to enter the area of offender profiling. But this should not keep the few so inclined from exploring the possibility. The behavioral sciences have contributed to the history of offender profiling, have had influence on several models of profiling, and clearly have a place in informing the process of offender profiling in the future. As clinicians utilizing the behavioral sciences, forensic psychiatrists could have much to offer the field of profiling, both as practitioners and as future researchers. Always to be kept in mind, however, is the fact that profiles do not apprehend criminals, policemen do. The profile, when competently rendered, is but one of many investigative tools.

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