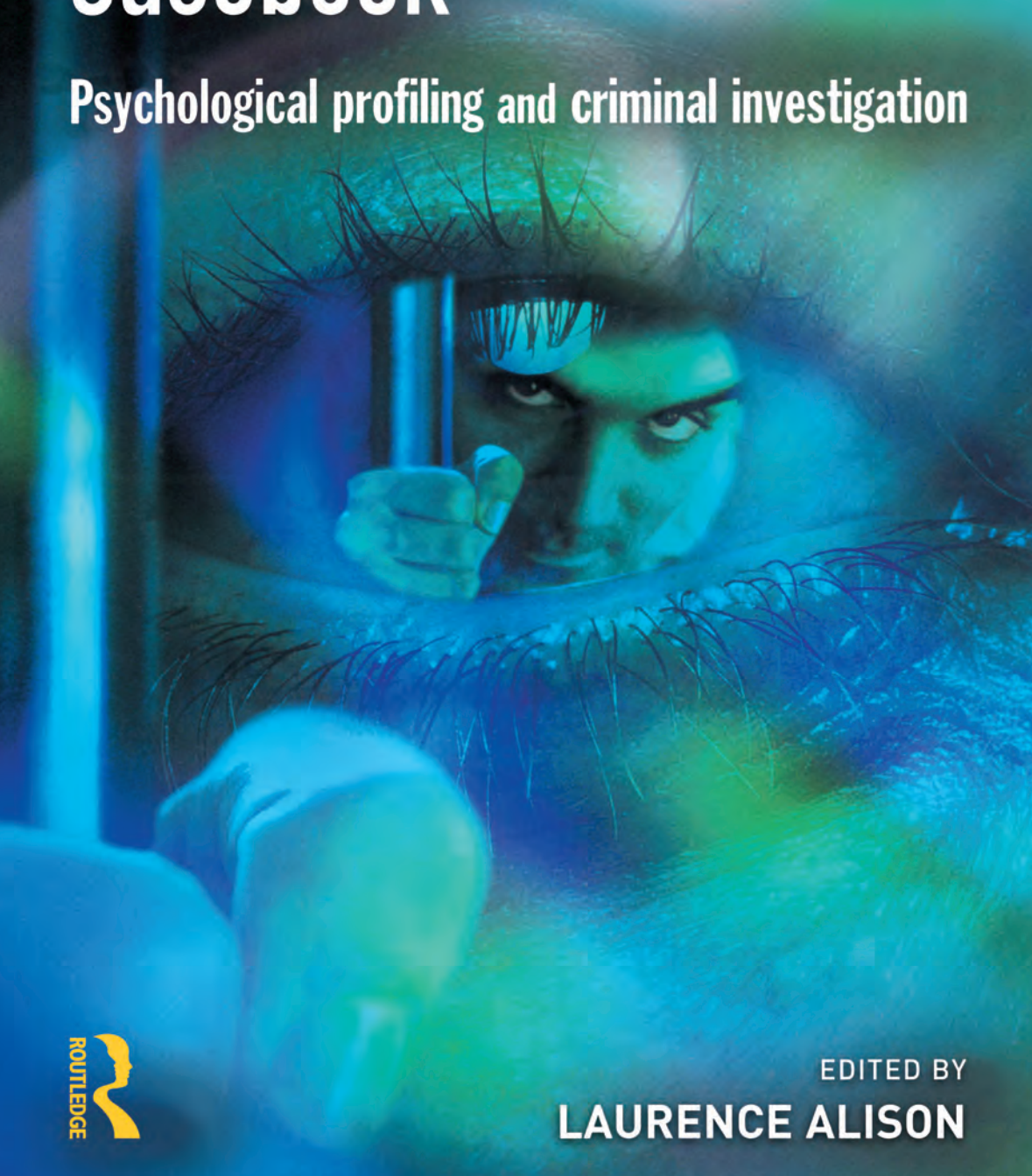


The Forensic Psychologist's Casebook

Psychological profiling and criminal investigation



EDITED BY
LAURENCE ALISON

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**Psychological profiling and criminal
investigation**

edited by

Laurence Alison

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Emily has a BSc in Behavioural Science and Criminal Justice awarded by the University of Madison, Wisconsin, and an MSc in Investigative Psychology, awarded by the University of Liverpool. Her Masters degree thesis examined the relationship between crime scene behaviours and offender characteristics in homicide. She has worked as a practitioner in both the American and British correctional services and was employed as a Correctional Case Manager and outpatient therapist with Attic Correctional Services in Madison, Wisconsin, where she worked with a wide range of high-risk offenders, including the treatment of domestic violence perpetrators in a structured group work programme. She previously worked as a Treatment Manager with the National Probation Service for England and Wales (Cheshire Area) and was responsible for the Domestic Violence Prevention Programme, a 39-week community group work programme for domestic violence perpetrators. She has worked with over 200 perpetrators of domestic violence, interviewing them in great detail about their abusive and violent behaviour toward their partners. She now acts as an independent consultant, providing advice to the courts and various law enforcement agencies.

Laurence Alison

Professor Alison has worked closely alongside a number of police officers on research projects for the last ten years. He is Academic Director of the Centre for Critical Incident Research at The School of Psychology, University of Liverpool. The Centre focuses on psychological contributions to managing a variety of high-profile cases. Alongside Professor Crego (Practitioner Director) he has provided reports that have informed many debriefing sessions. He has an international track record of publishing on the subject of policing and investigation in many leading internationally recognized journals and has lectured nationally and internationally about this subject. He is on the accredited list of behavioural advisors for the National Crime and Operations Faculty and has contributed advice and training to many police forces in the UK and abroad, including the Metropolitan Police Service, Kent Police Advanced Detective Training programme, Strathclyde Police crime analysis section, the Forensic Science Institute in Krakow, and The Bundeskriminalamt in Wiesbaden.

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Emma Barrett has worked for over a decade with UK law enforcement agencies and government departments, and is currently employed as a Behavioural Science Advisor with the UK government. She holds a BSc in Anthropology, a Conversion Diploma in Psychology (awarded with distinction) and an MSc in Investigative Psychology (also awarded with distinction). In addition to various work-related projects, Emma is currently carrying out research on the development of investigator expertise, in conjunction with several UK police forces, as part of a PhD at the University of Birmingham, UK. The focus of this research is the cognitive mechanisms underlying investigative situation assessment, the process by which investigators make sense of information available during complex criminal investigations. Her other research interests include interview strategies for informants and suspects, interpersonal persuasion and deception, and issues relating to the psychology of terrorism.

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in learned professional journals, and lectured around the world on various aspects of scientific psychology. His book, *Criminal Shadows*, won the Golden Dagger Award for crime non-fiction and its US equivalent, an Anthony Award.

He has given evidence to a number of major government enquiries and to a House of Commons select committee, including unchallenged evidence to the enquiry into the Kings Cross Underground fire concerning whether the fire was accidental or malicious, and given evidence to the Appeal Courts in Belfast and in a murder trial at the Old Bailey. He has also given advice in response to requests from over 150 police investigations worldwide. He has recently been elected an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences; this recognizes his important and seminal contributions to the social sciences.

Nina Cope

Nina Cope is currently employed as a criminologist by the Metropolitan Police Service where she is responsible for developing the profession of analysis, along with enhancing the use of criminological research in police practice. She previously worked as a lecturer and researcher at the Universities of Warwick, Cambridge and Surrey, where she contributed to the Diploma and MSc for police officers, which was delivered as part of the Strategic Command Course and conducted research on intelligence-led policing. She has a broad range of research interests in policing and crime, including analysis, intelligence-led policing, youth offending and drugs. She has also undertaken consultancy training with police forces in the UK.

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Katarina Fritzon is a Chartered Forensic Psychologist and Course Director of the MSc in Forensic Psychology at the University of Surrey. She is an accredited behavioural investigative advisor for the National Crime and Operations Faculty, and provides regular assistance nationally and internationally to police investigations of arson. She has also provided legal consultancy on assessing interviews with psychologically vulnerable witnesses. Her research interests include developing models of criminal interactions and transactions with their victims and the environment, in particular in relation to arson and subgroups of homicide. She is also developing treatment models for fire setters and is working with NHS and privately funded hospitals in delivering interventions.

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Alasdair Goodwill recently completed a PhD under the direction of Prof. Alison on offender profiling and suspect prioritisation. He has conducted empirical work on geographic profiling, linking and prioritising suspects,

as well as having contributed to several high profile rape and murder enquiries in the UK. He has presented much of this work at national and international conferences and has published several articles in leading journals. Currently, he is a lecturer at the Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology at the University of Birmingham.

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Joanne Howard has a first degree in Politics from the University of Adelaide, South Australia, a Masters in Investigative Psychology from the University of Liverpool and she is a Rotary Foundation Academic Ambassadorial Scholar. Joanne is a Sergeant of Police with ten years of service in the South Australia Police Department. Her dissertation was titled 'Interviewing Suspects: to obtain a confession or a search for the truth?'. The majority of her service has been within the Criminal Investigation Branch investigating serious and series crimes. She is a qualified conversation management trainer and conducts interviews for recruit selection and detective training. Joanne has managed criminal investigation process projects at the corporate level and she is currently responsible for developing crime-reduction strategies for the South Australia Police. Joanne has a keen interest in 'offender debriefing' practices and is conducting further research with an aim of developing offender-based crime-reduction strategies.

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Jon completed his BSc (Hons) in Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University in 1998. The focus was on a multivariate analysis of homicide and the utility of motive in the investigation of homicide. His MSc in Criminal Justice Studies was taken at the Institute for Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth in 2000. The dissertation was on repeat victim characteristics in the sexual abuse of people with learning disabilities in Manchester. He has worked with adults with learning disabilities in Stockport and Manchester for over 12 years and is building on the MSc findings to explore victim and offender interactions and the possibility of using Smallest Space Analysis in the verification of sexual abuse allegations. This is the basis for a part-time MPhil/PhD at the Centre of Investigative Psychology, University of Liverpool. Jon also has an interest in the role of victimology in the investigation of interpersonal crimes.

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David Ormerod is Professor of Criminal Law at the University of Leeds, and a Barrister at the chambers of Peter Rook QC, 18 Red Lion Court,

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Louise Porter

Louise is a lecturer at the School of Psychology, University of Liverpool, and member of the Centre for Critical Incident Research. Her work focuses on leadership in small criminal groups by examining the roles of decision-making, order giving and initial action in generating and perpetuating aggressive group behaviour. Her work has implications for managing criminally violent gangs, crime-reduction initiatives, educational programmes, interviewing tactics and therapeutic interventions with perpetrators and victims of such events. She has worked as the principal research assistant on two separate, externally funded projects on desistance from crime (funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) and heroin rehabilitation (funded by local government agencies) and was involved in work with NACRO.

Jim Sturman QC

Jim Sturman QC is a criminal defence practitioner at the chambers of William Clegg QC, 2, Bedford Row, London WC1R 4BU. Called to the Bar in 1982 and appointed Queen's Counsel in 2002, he practises throughout England and internationally. He acted as junior counsel in *Stagg* and in the *Dallagher* appeal, and he was leading counsel in the *Dallagher* retrial. He has also appeared in several of the London City Bond 'non-disclosure' appeals having acted for Villiers at trial, on appeal and at the abuse of process hearing.

Adrian West

Adrian West qualified as a clinical psychologist in 1989. For the past 15 years he has worked in special hospitals and regional secure units in the UK. For the past ten years he has also worked as the Clinical Psychologist advisor to the National Crime and Operations Faculty. This is a specialist unit providing operational support to police forces within the UK in major crime enquiries.

Georgia Wilson

Georgia Wilson completed her Masters degree in Investigative Psychology in September 2002, for which she was awarded a distinction. Her dissertation, entitled 'Suspect prioritisation: improving decision making in the investigation of sex offences', used a diagnostic decision-making approach in its analysis of the likelihood of specified offender characteristics (distance of residence from crime, previous convictions, sentences served, age) occurring in a sample of 63 stranger sexual offences committed within Hampshire in the UK. Georgia has also contributed to police-related studies commissioned by the Home Office. She currently works as an investigator with the Independent Police Complaints Commission, which has overall responsibility for the system of complaints against the police in England and Wales. In particular, Georgia is a member of the team responsible for conducting independent investigations into the most serious categories of complaints.

Acknowledgements

I was delighted that contributors to this volume recognized the academic merits of a book on offender profiling and criminal behavioural analyses. It was clear to me that they saw the need to reach out beyond the sometimes narrow confines of journal publications to a public that is interested in our work. Despite the obvious academic benefits of journal publications and the recognition that this outlet affords, I do feel strongly that such work should not reside exclusively within a source that, to the wider community, is arcane, costly and unreachable. We have an obligation to ensure the public, practitioners and students have access to an accurate, balanced and realistic view of what really happens in a field normally surrounded by hyperbole and myth.

Many of the students and colleagues whom I have had the pleasure to work with have contributed to this volume. I should also like to note the very happy symmetry of an equal balance of male and female contributors. Most of these academics and practitioners continue to contribute directly to policy decisions in their respective professional arenas and they have all been instrumental in developing forensic psychology within their particular fields of interest. So, it has been a great privilege and honour to work with Emma Barrett, Alasdair Goodwill and Jon Ogan. In particular, Dr Louise Porter has been critical in the development of this book and, more generally, to the work of the Centre for Critical Incident Research. She has also proved an invaluable friend whom I have had the great pleasure of working alongside for the past four years.

I was fortunate enough last year to have worked with Professors Kevin Browne and Thomas-Peter and Drs Beech, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Dixon and Garrett, as well as Sue Hanson, our course administrator, during my time at the University of Birmingham. This proved a very positive experience for me and I shall miss the very friendly and collegiate atmosphere at the Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology.

At the School of Psychology, University of Liverpool, Professor Ian Donald has also been pivotal at an academic and personal level and I owe a significant debt of gratitude to him for his advice, support and friendship. In the early stages of my career, Professors Canter (Liverpool) and Furnham (University College London) provided much of the enthusiasm for investigative psychology and psychology generally and both were critical in steering me in the right direction at the right time. Professor Canter has, of course, been the leading figure in generating empirical approaches in psychological contributions to the investigation of crime. Without his initial impetus in this arena, progress would not have been so rapid nor would it have spread so far across the globe.

A number of practitioner colleagues have helped form the thinking behind this collection of readings and, indeed, my work generally. My association with the National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies and Professor Jonathan Crego in particular has been critical in recent years. As well as providing the impetus and shape to a host of issues in policing and law enforcement, he has proved a very warm friend. It has been such a pleasure to engage with Jono's boundless enthusiasm and intellectual creativity.

Stretching farther back into my association with the police service, the following have been instrumental in providing help and support: Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts, Detective Chief Inspector Scott Chilton, Detective Superintendent Phillip Williams, Mark Devenish Meares, Chief Superintendent Simon Merry and Detective Sergeant Ross Leonard. I am grateful for their ability to gently rubbish some of the more arcane and ignorant ideas I have held about policing as well as to contribute significantly to the ideas that have worked well. If anyone has ever held the view that the police are all cast from the same mould then they should meet this collection of officers, who represent every variation in personality and approach.

In reference to the work on offender profiling I should like to thank Lee Rainbow and Adrian West, both of whom have been open to challenge and debate views as well as to co-operate on work that seeks to professionalize the service that academics and practitioners provide. I am grateful for their insight, vision, integrity and extensive and unparalleled personal experience in this challenging area. Adrian has also provided much needed professional support and friendship.

I should also like to make special reference to the fact that my wife, Emily, has contributed significantly to this volume, though even the fact that she is named on several chapters belies the reality that she has been so instrumental to all my thinking around this book and other projects. To have such a loving and supportive wife is a rarity but to have one that is an invaluable friend, ally and professional colleague must be nothing short of a minor miracle.

Finally, I should like to thank Brian Willan for proving to be such a flexible, open and responsive publisher.

Dedications

My wife and I recently nearly lost our son. It is with great pleasure and gratitude that this book is dedicated to the individuals who saved his life at Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool. In particular, Drs Baines and Selby, the consultant paediatricians and Swapna and Eileen, the nursing staff who took 24-hour care of him in the intensive care unit, were so supportive and caring. The ICU, for me, demonstrated the clearest example of the essential qualities that all critical services should strive for: professionalism, vision, integrity, honesty and, above all, humanity. Further, the Ronald McDonald house, a charitable organization that accommodates the parents of sick children, and which has been built within a stone's throw of the hospital, provided a safe haven for us that made that harrowing week all the more bearable. All personal profits from this volume are donated with the deepest debt of gratitude to the Alder Hey Ronald McDonald House, Liverpool.

A final word: for all those who thought there may be a grain of truth or insight into recent comments in the *Spectator* about the supposedly morbid preoccupation that exemplifies a Liverpudlian attitude to grief: my experience is that Liverpudlians genuinely care when someone is suffering and I can't imagine a more comforting or reassuring place to be when the chips are down. For all international readers and those UK readers who have not paid Liverpool a visit – please make the effort to tour this wonderful city and judge for yourselves.

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**For Mum and Dad
For Emily and (most of all) for Heath**

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Preface

The casebook approach

The key issue that attracted me to editing a book on offender profiling and criminal behavioural analysis was the recognition that a number of practitioners with whom I had worked were keen to understand the science behind the advice received. I think there has been a marked difference in the last ten years in the way in which law enforcement agencies (and police officers in particular) have been keen to understand, challenge and contribute to this emerging area of forensic psychology. My early experiences with the field of profiling were almost exclusively negative, from the initial shock I experienced at the ambiguous, contradictory and seemingly entirely subjective reports that I was asked to evaluate to the very destructive self-promotion of certain 'profilers'. It is hard to underestimate the legacy that a few key cases have had on the field and it is only in very recent years that this negativity has begun to subside and be gradually replaced with greater open-mindedness as well as healthy scepticism.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the identification of key issues has arisen from the experience of practitioners who have dealt with particularly difficult, critical cases. For this reason, I felt it was important to expand on a paper that I had written with Adrian West and Alasdair Goodwill for a special issue of *Psychology, Public Policy and Law* in which we set out the importance of examining single cases and presenting material that was informed both by scientific rigour and due consideration of the specific idiosyncratic details

of the case. This 'pragmatic' approach (Fishman, 2004) has informed much of the construction of this volume and its objectives. Within the pragmatic paradigm, experienced individuals are viewed as key contributors who, in clearly explicating critical cases that they have been involved with, help contribute to an archive that serves as a starting point for deriving general principles. Fishman (1999) has promoted the idea of building a large corpus of individual case studies across fields such as therapeutic intervention, educational reform programmes (Fishman, 1999) and, in the special issue, his intention was to extend this to forensic psychology (Fishman, 2004). One potential outcome of such an approach is databases that contain rich, detailed and contextually bound resources. Archiving such information enables practitioners and academics to draw upon this corpus in the face of subsequent problems. With increasing numbers of case studies, greater confidence can be placed in extracting general trends and advocating a particular course of action without the attendant sacrifice of losing details contextually relevant to any given case. Further, experienced practitioners can use their own experience to evaluate the relevance of the archive to their own particular concerns and can decide on the extent to which their case conforms to previous cases. Additionally, researchers can use the cumulative body of evidence to extract trends in the information. This book is a first, humble effort to collect some key cases to serve as such a starting point for an archive.

The pragmatic perspective has much in common with quasi-judicial approaches to research and case-based reasoning. In the quasi-judicial method rules and interpretations emerge from comparisons and contrasts between successive cases. Similarities and differences between cases are outlined and decisions are justified by reference to these critical cases by means of coherent arguments. Unique features of critical cases provide a basis for reformulating rules and laws, while the points of similarity between the new case and previous cases preserve the extant points of law. In case-based reasoning previously successful solutions are adapted, reused and tested for success and each new revision produces a new case. This volume sets out some example cases that serve to illustrate what forensic/investigative psychologists do when preparing material for investigative purposes. During the explanation of theory and casework, I hope that the reader will appreciate the difficulties and pitfalls of working in this challenging but exciting area.

Profiling 'types' and investigating crimes

Common to all the work in this volume is the recognition that particular cases cannot easily be assigned to 'types', 'traits' or discrete, non-

overlapping entities. Instead, each case needs to be considered as possessing certain potentially unique features that must be considered within a particular context. Nowhere has this (in my view) naïve ideology of ‘types’ been more fervently promoted within the media and popular accounts of forensic psychology as in profiling and behavioural analysis. As my opening chapter suggests, offenders cannot be easily classified in terms of labels from which lists of background characteristics can be derived. I argue that there is little evidence in support of the utility of trait-based models of profiling. In Chapter 1 I outline the reasons why, based on an examination of the history of trait-based research, traditional profiling methods are inherently flawed. The chapter explains the dangers of too heavy a reliance on simple classifications such as ‘organized’ vs ‘disorganized’ or ‘power reassurance’ vs ‘power assertive’ rapists. Further, the chapter describes a small-scale, exploratory study of the apprehension methods involved in capturing serial killers and explains, by reference to this descriptive study, how the remit of psychological profiling can be usefully employed to develop more productive areas of research, such as assisting in detective decision-making, investigative interviewing, statement analysis and informant handling. This collection of diverse contributions from psychologists can be considered ‘investigative profiling’ or ‘behavioural analysis’ and represents an increasing corpus of studies that have been conducted by many of the individuals that have contributed to this volume, as well as an increasing number of other academics and practitioners in Europe, the United States and Canada. Alongside my intention of developing a critically evaluative stance on previous traditional contributions, the chapter hints at the complexity of major police enquiries and the pressures that they exert on senior investigating officers.

Ogan and Alison extend this idea in Chapter 2, where, by reference to the Jack the Ripper murders, they outline the range of management issues that emerge again and again in high-profile ‘critical’ investigations. Specifically, they highlight how many of the concerns in the 1880s that were relevant to Detective Inspectors Frederick Abberline and Edmund Reid (important investigators in the Whitechapel Murders) are still relevant in contemporary detection. With reference to archival records of this case study, alongside more contemporary comments from critical incident managers collected from a variety of focus-group studies, Ogan and Alison illustrate how critical incidents have always required not only management of the incident (in terms of detection) but also management of a large team operating within a particular culture and requiring knowledge of the perceptions of the local community, the public more generally and the voracious appetite of the media.

Barrett’s very helpful chapter outlines how students may benefit from greater awareness of these issues. In Chapter 3 she sets out how students

with no law enforcement background can contribute in a very direct way to policing by conducting rigorous, meaningful research that is relevant to the needs of law enforcement practitioners. She refers to two specific areas where individuals might make very significant contributions: investigative decision-making and deception, and she offers some personal observations on how students and other academic researchers might improve their understanding of the problems that matter to law enforcement professionals, and of the contribution that academic research could make in these areas. The central issue in this chapter involves the suggestion that, in order to make a strong contribution to police practice, psychologists must be prepared to devote some effort to understanding the policy and practice of law enforcement, monitor developments in policing and the criminal justice system more generally, and take advantage of opportunities to engage with law enforcement agencies.

Profiling as decision-making

In Chapter 4, Wilson and Alison illustrate some preliminary empirical work that may begin to offer a contribution to investigating stranger sex offences. They note the difficulties of such enquiries and highlight how, in such cases, there may be little or no information available about the offender and limited information about the offence itself. Further, increasingly stretched police forces have limited time and resources with which to investigate the offence. During the past half century, a number of systems have been developed to classify sex offenders: from early clinical classification systems to typologies developed specifically for criminal profiling, and most recently, to classifications based on a pragmatic approach to suspect prioritization. Wilson and Alison's chapter describes and evaluates these various classification systems and addresses how the findings of previous research can be best applied to suspect prioritization in the future.

Cope's work in Chapter 5 extends the remit of this empirical basis for contributions and notes how, increasingly, the analysis of information and intelligence has become routine in the police, influenced by a number of reform agendas, policing styles and strategic interventions that require crime problems to be identified so that resources can be allocated effectively. She notes how, in order to meet this demand, the role of the crime analyst has developed, somewhat inconsistently, across police forces and law enforcement agencies. She describes three functions of police crime analysis: to assess the nature and distribution of crime in order to efficiently allocate resources and personnel; to identify crime-suspect correlations to assist investigations; and to identify the conditions that

facilitate crime and incivility so that policy-makers may make informed decisions about prevention approaches. This highlights the extent to which crime analysis supports both reactive and proactive policing.

Pitfalls

The volume then goes on to cover a range of other psychological/behavioural contributions and reminds us of the very significant corpus of work that has been developed on police interviewing. In Chapter 6 Howard and Alison draw upon three evaluation studies that connect both with the now very large body of research on the cognitive interview and the relatively smaller body of research on interviews with suspects. The former studies involve child victim/witness interviews conducted in Norway and adult victim/witness interviews in Canada, while the latter consider interviews with suspects in Adelaide, Australia. All the studies were developed with the purpose of feeding back performance to the relevant police service involved. Further, all the studies were descriptive in nature. Broadly, their chapter illustrates how various aspects of cognitive interviewing were being adopted, though an examination of the development of the interviews over time indicates that timing of questions and progression of interviewing style must also be considered in evaluating interviews. Howard and Alison reveal how the evolution of the interview over time may reflect more of the interviewer's perspective than the interviewee's, with the third study demonstrating that interviewers' perception of the extent to which various 'truth' or 'confession' tactics were used was discrepant from the actual use, with officers overestimating the extent to which they used coercive strategies. Both studies highlight that many issues about the impact of interviews on officers, suspects and witnesses remain unanswered and that providing feedback to the police involves more than simply going through a 'checklist' of strategies. The authors conclude that, despite the plethora of studies on police interviewing, relatively little attention is given to the idea of the process being an intensely interpersonal, emotional event. This chapter concludes with the suggestion that the line between appropriate conversation, persuasion and coercion is blurred and that officers (and academics) may still be confused about the acceptability of particular interviewing styles.

The issue of 'blurred lines' of acceptable behaviour is extended in Porter's chapter on police corruption (Chapter 7). Given the sensitivity of the subject and the potential for serious repercussions of highlighting incidents of corrupt behaviour, there is often disagreement in the literature regarding what constitutes corruption, what causes it and how such behaviour can be investigated sensitively with a view to future

prevention. Porter offers insight into the potential expertise of psychologists in addressing these key areas. While many elements have been linked with both the causes and prevention of corruption, there are recurring themes in the literature that reflect how the organizational culture of the police service and social pressures placed upon those involved may influence the emergence of corrupt behaviour. Her chapter assimilates the existing literature in light of organizational and social psychological dimensions, which she uses to suggest how psychologists might produce theoretical models, rooted in pragmatic evidence and informed by psychological theory, to describe the various forms of corrupt behaviour that are evident within the police and why they occur.

Guidelines

In Chapter 8 Ormerod and Sturman illustrate how the study of the inter-relationship between law and psychology is becoming increasingly common. They assert that this interest may represent an increased willingness on the part of the law to learn from psychology or, more cynically, it may represent lawyers' increased wariness about psychology, which they perceive to be trespassing into ever more sacrosanct territory, both in terms of psychology's acceptance in the courtroom and its potential to challenge hallowed precepts of the common law tradition, especially those relating to the quality of evidence, the manner of its presentation and the manner of decision-making. Ormerod and Sturman assert that psychologists would do well to bear in mind this underlying anxiety of many legal practitioners that is shared by the judiciary. In their chapter, they examine controversial uses of offender profile evidence. In doing so, they demonstrate the difficulties that prevent parties in criminal cases relying upon profiles as evidence and highlight the obstacles facing a psychologist seeking to assist the police or give evidence at trial. Their chapter is followed and developed in reference to what has now become a key case in the use and abuse of profiling work – namely *R v Stagg*. Alison and Canter's chapter (Chapter 9) describes the combination of strategies employed by the undercover officer (codename 'Lizzie James') in the Rachel Nickell murder enquiry. Specifically, in explaining how these rhetorical strategies were adapted by orators and developed for the specific purpose of encouraging attitude change, the authors challenged the claim (made by the clinical psychologist employed during the investigation to facilitate this pseudo-relationship) that the undercover officer did not shape the information gleaned from the suspect. They argue that, although undercover officers rely on persuasive tactics (with many probably akin to forms of interpersonal manipulation in conventional,

intimate relationships), they have more sinister implications where an investigative team has the power to manipulate the suspect through the promise of a sexual relationship or the threat of the withdrawal of such 'rewards'. The singular set of material considered in this chapter, made available to the authors (who served the defence) some ten years ago, comes from a set of interactions between the female undercover officer and the suspect. As such, it presents a unique insight into the world of interpersonal manipulation, the formation and dissolution of relationships and the use of subtle rhetorical devices and manipulative stratagems. The case still represents a wealth of information about the sensitivities of working with experts, police decision-making, undercover work and the management of serious crime.

Chapter 10 extends these themes and outlines a proposed framework for articulating and assessing offender profiles and behavioural investigative advice. Alison, Goodwill and Alison go on to provide guidelines for the format of the report (caveat, competence, investigative recommendations, etc.) and set the chapter within the context of a 'profile' provided for a rape-murder case in Eastern Europe. The framework relies on a philosophy of argument developed by Stephen Toulmin in which the elements of a claim are broken down into their constituent parts. They illustrate a number of factors relevant to the provision, development and dissemination of such advice. The reports that follow in subsequent chapters represent a variety of cases and styles of working that have evolved in the past ten years, ranging from contributions to allegations of abuse to reports for the management of stalking.

The analysis of statements

Chapter 11 by Fritzon and Chapter 12 by Alison outline many of the problems alluded to in previous chapters. However, the specific focus of their work centres on a common request from investigators to experts, namely to help establish whether a particular statement is credible or not. These include the difficulty of unequivocally stating whether statements are true or false, developing clear justifications for claims made about the nature of statements and the need to examine multiple aspects of a narrative account. They present two case studies in which statements made by suspects or witnesses were proving controversial and in which the courts required some expert assessment of the way in which memory operates in such cases. In Alison's report, the case involved the defendant's controversial assertion that, subsequent to stealing and crashing a car (resulting in the death of a passenger) he retained no memory for the event. The report details the case study notes, the

background literature on memory for accidents and the literature on malingering. Throughout, Alison outlines how further research in malingering and statement validation is required, and both this chapter and Fritzon's indicate how difficult it is for experts to rely on statement-validation procedures.

In Chapter 13 Canter's report on the Eddie Gilfoyle case provides a very personal insight into the working method employed to construct psychological advice. What is so interesting is how his account explains the difficulties of struggling with an area where the stakes are extremely high and there is a dearth of sufficient research. Canter explains how his involvement with the case led to re-examination of his previous conclusions in light of developing further research in the area. The notion of a particular case leading to further exploration and development of an area of research is typical of pragmatism. Part of the importance of casework is the way in which it helps inform academics of many issues in law enforcement that have barely been examined within the scientific literature.

Chapters 11 to 13 illustrate how an exclusive reliance on any of the current procedures for validating statements is too unreliable to form the basis of a prosecution or defence case. These chapters also demonstrate the need for clarity in report writing as well as the benefit of experience and knowledge of how the court is likely to respond to expert evidence. It is clear from these chapters, as well as the recommendations set out by Ormerod and Sturman in Chapter 8, that authors of such reports need to adopt a style of communication that is sympathetic with the requirements of the courts, though in practice this is always difficult, not least because psychology is an imprecise science based on probable rather than definite explanations.

The issue of presentational style and effective communication emerges in Chapter 14 and subsequent chapters. In Alison and Alison's chapter on the provision of a management programme developed for security firms, the authors indicate how their report was prepared specifically with non-psychologists in mind. The recommended responses in the report are based on principles of operant reinforcement and the authors illustrate how such concepts can be clearly expressed and can be designed to be user-friendly for clients.

The academic and the practitioner

In Chapter 15 Alison and Alison present a report prepared on behalf of a fictional police constabulary in relation to an allegation of GBH and rape within a domestic relationship. The case is based on hybridized actual

cases presented to Alison and Alison in their capacity as a treatment manager for domestic violence cases and a research psychologist respectively. The case demonstrates how practitioners and academics can work effectively alongside one another in attempting to inform the courts of the research literature and in terms of the tacit knowledge of these types of scenario. This chapter brings us back to the themes set out in the early chapters, as well as in the 'Academic and Practitioner' paper by Alison *et al.* (2004), namely the benefits of practical, case-based analysis and rigorous, scientific investigation.

Chapter 16 extends these themes and presents a more personal set of reflections from two different but sympathetic perspectives, namely Alison's experience with research and West's extensive practitioner focus. This concluding chapter presents an introspective examination of the initial developments and subsequent progression of behavioural profiling and indicates that there is real reason for optimism in this most compelling of areas. As the conclusions indicate, this volume is written in the hope that familiarity with the logic of scientific enquiry and a willingness to apply the findings of investigative psychology will enhance the application of a more rational and systematic method to police investigative efforts. The purpose is to demonstrate how investigative support and advice, linked to the theoretical basis of behavioural science, can be applied effectively to the investigation of serious crime.

Having said this, the volume as a whole is clearly not designed as a definitive working method. Indeed, I would hope that many of these chapters indicate the real difficulties and pitfalls of such work. However, a central aim is to stimulate further discussion and development within an area that hitherto has failed to make publicly available what it is that forensic psychologists do when they contribute to the investigation of crime from a 'profiling' perspective.

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Part One

**The Context of Criminal
Investigation**

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Chapter I

From trait-based profiling to psychological contributions to apprehension methods

Laurence Alison¹

Traditional 'trait-based' profiling

Traditionally, profiling has involved the process of predicting the likely socio-demographic characteristics of an offender based on information available at the crime scene. For example, the *Crime Classification Manual*, a handbook for offender profiling issued by the FBI, explains that, 'The crime scene is presumed to reflect the murderer's behavior and personality in much the same way as furnishings reveal the homeowner's character' (Douglas *et al.*, 1992: 21). The idea of inferring one set of characteristics from one set of crime-scene actions relies on two major assumptions. Firstly, there is the issue of behavioural consistency: the variance in the crimes of serial offenders must be smaller than the variance occurring in a random comparison of different offenders. Research findings indicate that this appears to be the case for rapists (Bennell, 1998; Grubin *et al.*, 1997). Criminologists, in adopting a 'molar' approach, define behavioural consistency as the probability that an individual will repeatedly commit similar types of offences (Farrington, 1997). In contrast, psychologists have emphasized a 'molecular' analysis of criminal behaviour, where behavioural consistency is defined as the repetition of particular aspects of behaviour if the same offender engages in the same type of offence again (Canter, 1995). A number of studies have provided support for the notion of offender consistency. For example, Green *et al.* (1976) studied the consistency of burglary behaviour. Based on 14

behavioural 'markers', Green and his colleagues were able to accurately assign 14 out of 15 cases of burglary to the relevant three burglars. Similarly, Craik and Patrick (1994), Wilson *et al.* (1997), and Grubin *et al.* (1997) all concluded that behavioural consistency exists in the crime-scene behaviours of serial rapists, though only to a limited degree.

However, the second assumption, referred to as the 'homology problem' (Mokros and Alison, 2002), presents a significant hurdle for traditional profiling methods. This assumption relies on the hypothesis that the degree of similarity in the offence behaviour of any two perpetrators from a given category of crime will match the degree of similarity in their characteristics. Thus, the more similar two offenders are, the higher the resemblance in their behavioural style in the offence. The idea that the manner in which an offence is committed corresponds with a particular configuration of background characteristics differs from the more humble findings of bivariate measures of association, such as the findings of Davies *et al.* (1998) that offenders who display awareness of forensic procedures by destroying or removing semen are four times more likely to have had a previous conviction for a sexual offence than those offenders who do not take such precautions.

Traditional profiling methods make far more ambitious claims than these likelihood predictions. For example, Douglas *et al.* (1986) all refer to proposed relationships between clusters of background features from crime-scene actions in order to develop a psychological 'portrait' of the offender. When these relationships are tested, however, the results are not very promising. In the study by Davies *et al.* (1998) the integration of a range of crime-scene actions as predictors within logistic regression models failed to show a substantial improvement over the information obtained through simple base rates in the majority of instances. Similarly, in the study by House (1997), the 50 rapists in the sample appeared relatively homogeneous with respect to their criminal histories, regardless of whether they acted in a primarily aggressive, pseudo-intimate, instrumental/criminal or sadistic manner during the sexual assault. Mokros and Alison (2002) examined 100 male stranger rapes, using information on the crime-scene behaviour of 28 dichotomous variables taken directly from a police database. This represented a random sample from a total of more than 500 victim statements stored in the database. They were unable to find any clear links between sets of crime-scene behaviours and sets of background characteristics.

Traditional profiling as naïve trait psychology

Alison *et al.* (2002) state that the assumptions underlying many profiling

methods are similar to assumptions inherent in naïve trait theories of personality. In the naïve trait view primary traits are seen as stable and general in that they determine a person's inclination to act consistently (stable) in a particular way across a variety of situations (general). As the notion of behavioural dispositions implies, traits are not directly observable but are inferred from behaviour (Mischel, 1999). Traditional trait-based (TTB) profiling tends to attribute behaviours to underlying, relatively context-free dispositional constructs. Thus, both TTB profiling methods and traditional trait theories are *nomothetic* in that both try to make general predictions about offenders; *deterministic* in that both make the assumption that all offenders are subject to the same set of processes that affect their behaviour in predictable ways; and finally, both are *non-situationist* in the belief that behaviour is thought to be consistent in the face of environmental influences.

Based on the evidence concerning the traditional trait approach, one would not expect a task such as offender profiling, in which global traits are derived from specific actions (or vice versa), to be possible. Moreover, the profiler's task is even more ambitious than this in that inferences are made about characteristics that are not appropriate for a psychological definition of traits (including features such as the offender's age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, degree of sexual maturity and likely reaction to police questioning (Annon, 1995; Ault and Reese, 1980; Grubin, 1995; Homant and Kennedy, 1998).

There are of course many studies of sexual offenders that support an aggregate level of research on traits. For example, Proulx *et al.* (1994) demonstrated that rapists display significantly diverse facets of personality disorder depending on their level of physical violence as demonstrated in their crime-scene behaviour. Among their findings was the observation that more violent offenders score significantly higher on the histrionic, narcissistic, antisocial and paranoid sub-scales than the less violent offenders. Langevin *et al.* (1985) report similar results for another sample of rapists.

Proulx *et al.* (1999) identified a sample of rapists according to their respective *modus operandi* into three groups: sadistic, opportunistic and anger rapists. They found substantial differences between the sadistic and the opportunistic types with respect to personality disorders. The sadistic offenders were more likely to have avoidant, schizoid and dependent tendencies, whereas the opportunistic offenders were characterized as narcissistic, paranoid and antisocial.

The study by Proulx *et al.* (1999) indicates that it may be possible to discriminate between rapists based on their crime-scene actions and that such differentiation may be reflected in personality. Such a procedure could properly be referred to as a *psychological* profile, since it refers

exclusively to particular psychological constructs. In contrast, the traditionalists' use of the term 'psychological profiling' relies on the generation of demographic characteristics of offenders and is, therefore, something of a misnomer.

Thus, the evidence for a nomothetic, deterministic and non-situationist model of TTB offender profiling is not compelling. Despite this and despite the admission by many profilers that their work is little more than educated guesswork, the utility of profiling seems to be generally accepted as valid. For example, Witkin (1996) reported that the FBI had 12 full-time profilers who, collectively, were involved in about 1,000 cases per year.

Interpretation of the advice

Beyond the issue of the feasibility of the process lie potential problems associated with the interpretation of the reports. To date, there has been little systematic research of such reports, and few suggestions as to how such advice might be deconstructed and evaluated. One exception is a small-scale study recently conducted on a sample of European and American offender profiles from the last decade (Alison *et al.*, 2003a). Alison *et al.* established that nearly half of the opinions expressed within these reports contained advice that could not be verified post-conviction (e.g. 'the offender has a rich fantasy life'), while over a fifth were vague or open to interpretation (e.g. 'the offender has poor social skills'). In addition, in over 80 per cent, the profiler failed to provide any justification for the advice proposed (i.e. they did not clarify what their opinion was based on).

The coding framework developed to evaluate profiles was based on Toulmin's work in the 1950s. Toulmin's work (1958), originally based on the analysis of philosophical and legal rhetoric, proposed that arguments could be broken down into various component parts to enable researchers to scrutinize the strengths and weaknesses of various aspects of any given claim. He suggested that arguments contain six interrelated components: (1) the claim, (2) the strength of the claim, (3) the grounds supporting the claim, (4) the warrant, (5) the backing, and (6) the rebuttal. Figure 1.1 illustrates how this format can be applied to the investigative domain with reference to the linking of offences. The *claim*, in this example, involves the statement that two offences are linked. In order to substantiate this claim certain components must be present. The first involves the strength, or *modality* of the claim. This may come in modal terms such as, 'probably', 'possibly', 'certainly', but in our hypothetical case this is presented as a statistical probability (i.e. 'a 99.7 per cent chance that ...'). The modality component indicates the extent to which we should rely on the claim being

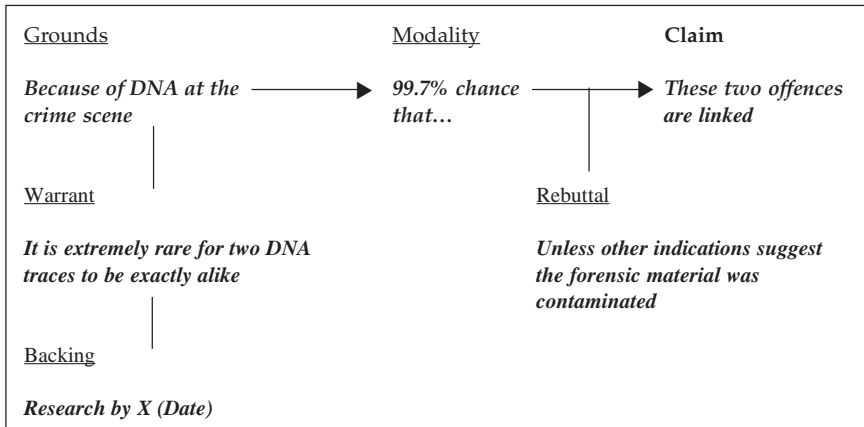


Figure 1.1 Toulmin’s structure of argument using a hypothetical ‘DNA’ example

true, in this case the analyst is suggesting we take the claims very seriously. The *grounds* are the support for the claim. In this case, the reasoning relates to the presence of a DNA trace at the crime scene. The *warrant* authorizes the grounds because ‘it is rare for two DNA traces to be exactly alike’. The *backing*, or formal support for the warrant, comes in the form of a citation to a specific example(s) of research. Finally, the *rebuttal* allows us to consider the conditions under which the claim ceases to be likely. Thus, if further evidence becomes known (for example, contamination), the claim may have to be adjusted accordingly.

There are several reasons why Toulmin’s philosophy of argument is a useful method of exploring the construction of reports. Firstly, there are few clear bases upon which such advice is given. There exist few formal models of how profiling works, why it works or, indeed, if it works. Thus a framework, in which we can evaluate the justification for any given claim, allows us to identify weaknesses in those claims. It allows us to establish the certainty of the claim (modality), the conditions where the claim must be re-evaluated (rebuttal), the grounds upon which the claim is made and the warrant and backing for those grounds. In this way investigators can measure the weight and significance that can be attached to any inference or conclusion. Secondly, there is increasing pressure on investigating officers and profilers to carefully consider the potential legal ramifications of employing such advice in their inquiries (Ormerod, 1999). Profilers must approach each report with strict standards of evidentiary reliability and relevancy afforded to court procedures. Finally, by applying this framework to their own reports, profilers may gain insight into the processes that they themselves engage in when preparing material for the police.

The danger of not making the justifications of such statements clear (especially in the case of ambiguous statements) includes the potential increase in erroneous interpretation of the material. Alison *et al.* (2003b) have argued that the lack of clarity in such reports could lead to problems with the interpretation of the material in similar ways in which so-called 'Barnum effects' operate in social psychology. For example, it has long been established that people tend to accept vague and ambiguous personality descriptions as uniquely applicable to themselves without realizing that the same description could be applied to just about anyone (Forer, 1949). This has been given the name 'Forer' or 'Barnum' effect in deference to P. T. Barnum's claim that his circus included 'a little something for everyone' (Meehl, 1956). It is possible then that a contributory factor in the perception of usefulness, despite outcome measures, can be explained by the readiness to selectively fit ambiguous, unverifiable information from the profile to the offender. Therefore, after a suspect is apprehended, or if the investigating officer has a 'type' of offender in mind, it is possible that the enquiry team engage in an inferential process 'invited' by the ambiguity of the profile. As Hyman states in reference to readings from psychics, 'once the client is actively engaged in trying to make sense of the series of sometimes contradictory statements issuing from the reader, he becomes a creative problem solver trying to find coherence and meaning in the total set of statements' (Hyman, 1987: 415). To test the hypothesis that individuals engage in such processes we devised two studies in which we examined the willingness of individuals to fit the same ambiguous information to two sets of contradictory statements (profiles). In two exploratory studies with police officers and other forensic professionals as participants, Alison *et al.* (2003b) split individuals into two groups (A and B). Each group was given a questionnaire regarding a sequence of events taken from real murder cases. In part one of the exercise participants were required to read the details of this case and imagine that it was a case that they, as an investigating officer, had to deal with.

Part two of the questionnaire included an offender profile and part three incorporated the characteristics of either offender A or offender B (with group A getting offender A and group B getting offender B). In condition A the characteristics of the offender (offender A) were the genuine characteristics of the offender. In contrast, offender B was a fabricated account and was designed to be quite different from A in terms of age, preconvictions and associated knowledge (or lack thereof) of the victim. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt that the profile fitted the offender. They were also asked to give a brief account of the reasons for their response.

The majority of participants in both studies rated the profile as 'generally very accurate', with no participants in either group rating the profile as either generally or very inaccurate and with no differences in the ratings of either the bogus or genuine suspect, despite the different characteristics of each. Further, in study two, in which similar results were found, investigating officers stated that the profile would assist in narrowing the range of possible suspects. In both cases, individuals appeared to have selectively attended to 'hits' in the profile with relatively less attention to misses or the fact that the profile was sufficiently ambiguous to potentially refer to quite different individuals.

Although Alison *et al.* concede that there are many limitations to this study (not least the problem of drawing conclusions from a non-significant difference and the fact that our subsequent research is beginning to establish that there are more varied responses in such studies contingent on the sophistication of the design of the study), this pen-and-paper test may underestimate the full influence of such effects in real cases. In genuine enquiries the individual providing the profile is likely to be presented to the team as an expert in his or her field, thereby increasing the credibility of the advice irrespective of content. Secondly, profilers may not always write down the information, resulting in officers relying on their memory of the advice. Finally, there may exist considerable pressure on an enquiry team to yield results, thereby resulting in a more favourable view of the advice. If a suspect does arise during the investigation, officers may wish to actively ignore the information that does not fit the suspect and, perhaps, unwittingly, exaggerate the merits of the information. They may fail to appreciate the extent to which the information could fit a wide range of individuals, a process reflecting the widely known 'confirmation bias effect' (Baron, 1988)

A bleak picture?

Much of the discussion thus far presents a rather bleak picture of profiling. However, the beliefs surrounding profiling appear to be so ingrained that many of the keenest and, indeed, brightest students have been so embroiled in the media portrayal of this field that they are often the most difficult students to encourage in developing a critical stance on such methods. In particular, many students interested in forensic and investigative psychology appear to hold the view that offender profiling is particularly useful in apprehending serial murderers. It is important to appreciate that the ways in which psychologists can contribute extends well beyond the process of profiling offenders. Indeed, the apprehension of the offender would be assisted by enhancing police decision-making

and leadership skills, improving methods for interviewing witnesses and victims, developing accurate methods of recording, collating and analysing data on preconvictions of offenders, developing suspect prioritization systems based on empirical research and enhancing intelligence-led policing and the use of informants.

In order to demonstrate the many ways in which psychologists and behavioural advisors can assist in policing, this chapter now turns to an exploratory study of apprehension methods of serial killers. The study, conducted by Carrie Whyte, relates to an area of research known as 'solvability' studies.

Apprehension of serial killers: Whyte's study of solvability factors

Keppel (1989), the most vocal proponent of work in solvability studies, notes that very little has been written with regard to investigative procedures beyond those undertaken at the original crime-scene. He points to several solvability factors in homicide investigation that stretch beyond the traditional information collection process carried out at the murder/body disposal site. These include the quality of police interviews of eyewitnesses, the circumstances that led to the initial stop and arrest of the murderer, the circumstances that established probable cause to search and seize physical evidence from person/property of suspect, the quality of the investigation at the crime-scene, the quality of the scientific analysis of the physical evidence seized from the suspect and its comparison to physical evidence recovered from victims and murder scenes.

However, other than Keppel's work, most of the literature has generally been critical of the police role in apprehending offenders and has frequently concluded that the police force has little to do with solving crime. Even certain FBI officers (Ressler *et al.*, 1984) have admitted that many of the most notorious serial murderers in the US have been caught either through some fortuitous event or during some unrelated police procedure, while others have expressed the belief that serial murderers are usually discovered purely by coincidence and not by any established investigative process or through psychological assistance such as profiling (Sears, 1991).

However, Keppel (1989) is dismissive of the role of serendipity in such investigations. Although he admits that 'what usually occurs is that some patrol officer on routine duty comes across the killer' he goes on to remark that 'it then takes alert and intelligent investigators to turn this opportunity into a final resolution of the case' (p. 68). In the following study, Carrie Whyte, then a Masters student in Investigative Psychology at the University of Liverpool, sought to investigate the variety of methods of

apprehension, consider types that most frequently lead to resolution of the case and establish whether particular combinations of apprehension methods are more common than others. Additionally, she wanted to establish whether the way in which an offender carries out a crime is associated with the way in which he is eventually caught.

The basic information that an investigator has to work with includes the details of the crime: the where, when, and how it occurred and identification of the victims. This information is derived through various methods, but perhaps the two prime types of evidence that may be gathered during a typical murder investigation are forensic and corroborative. Canter and Alison (1997) point out that the most controlled information is that gathered from the actual crime-scene. Evidence of this nature tends to be physical, such as DNA testing, ballistics and fingerprinting (Evans, 1996). Forensic evidence is highly impressive in the courtroom although, in its absence, eyewitness testimony is occasionally regarded as a factor that may sway a judge and/or jury to establish the guilt or innocence of the defendant (Loftus, 1979). However, eyewitness reports more regularly play a crucial role at the investigative stage. Police often use eyewitness reports to aid in the investigative process, whether through the identification of a suspect at a police identity parade, a 'mug shot' or publicized composite photograph or simply through the notification of the police of sightings, e.g. of a vehicle or suspicious-looking individual at or around the area where the crime took place. Additionally, police may receive information through informants or sources that are themselves often part of a potentially criminal context (Canter and Alison, 1997). Police may, for example, receive a tip-off from an accomplice of the offender due to that same individual's growing anxiety for their own safety.

In relation to investigative approaches in linking crime, a number of computerized decision support systems have been developed, such as the Violent Criminal Apprehension Programme (VICAP) (cited in Egger, 1998) and the Homicide Investigation and Tracking System (HITS) in the US (Keppel and Weis, 1993). These systems contain information not only on known offenders in the area, evidence retrieved, victimology and other factors that may help solve a particular case, they also include incidents with similar characteristics involving murder or sexual assault. In this way, such systems can be used to determine if crimes of a similar nature with a similar method of operation have been committed in a recent time period.

The sample for our study comprised a total of 101 American serial murder cases. Although it has been previously noted in the literature that serial murderers sometimes operate in pairs (Hickey (1991) found that 37 per cent of serial murders were conducted by more than one offender), we

chose to focus on single perpetrators in studying apprehension methods. Although the issue of co-offending may be of some interest in relation to apprehension since it may relate to the degree to which accomplice informants contribute to bringing about apprehension, we wanted to focus, at least in this study, on single offenders in the first instance. We also focused specifically on male perpetrators. Since Hickey (1991) found that 12 per cent to 17 per cent of his sample were women, the present sample may be representative, in terms of gender, of the most general characteristics of a serial murderer population.

The age at the time of the last offence was recorded as this information was the nearest available to the offender's age at time of apprehension. The mean age for this sample of offenders was 29.6 years, with a range of 17–52 years. This conforms to previous studies that suggest that serial murderers tend to be in their late twenties to thirties. Hickey (1991), for example, found that offenders tend to be approximately 30 years of age.

Collectively, the offenders killed a total of 617 victims. Within each series between three and 23 people were murdered. The data include only those murders which the offenders were known to have conducted and for which they were convicted. The mean number of victims for each series is 8. The mean offending period was 3.75 years. However, a significant percentage were actually only killing for one year (36.4 per cent). The maximum offending period was 17 years, and 7.8 per cent of offenders managed to avoid capture for a period of ten years or more. Thus, this sample *generally* reflects the predominant characteristics of a serial murderer population in terms of a male single offender, at an average age of 30 years, with at least three victims. Data were collated from a content analysis of archival material. This took the form of published magazine articles written by investigative journalists. In all cases the journalists themselves obtained the details from the police reports and court transcripts of the cases in question.

Figure 1.2 outlines the frequency distribution for the methods by which the present sample of serial murderers were apprehended (apprehension variables). We should note that in many cases multiple apprehension methods contributed to the eventual resolution of the case. Thus eyewitness testimony may have been used in combination with, for example, a police sting or forensic evidence.

Figure 1.2 illustrates that the most frequent factor that contributed to securing the apprehension of a suspect is knowledge that an individual has been involved in previous crime (71 per cent) while the least common incident is that the offender kills himself during the commission of the crime (1 per cent). Forensic evidence was a relatively uncommon factor (12 per cent) in this study. In contrast, in 37 per cent of cases apprehension was

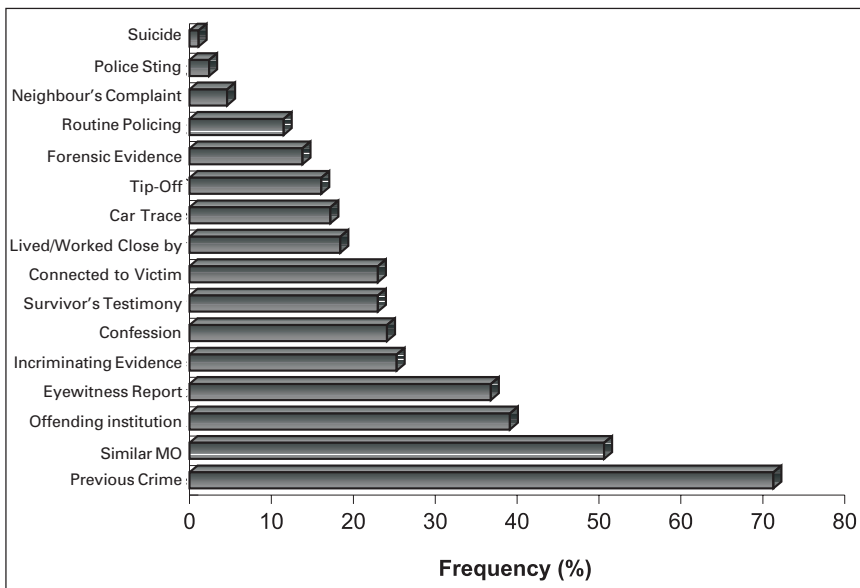


Figure 1.2 Frequency distribution for methods of apprehension in a sample of 87 serial murderers.

facilitated on the basis of eyewitness testimony. In 11.5 per cent of cases a suspect was apprehended on the basis of events unrelated to the investigation.

Apprehension roles: detective, offender, victim, informant

As stated, it was rarely the case that an offender was apprehended through a single avenue but, rather, apprehension variables tended to co-occur in varying degrees in various combinations. In order to explore, in depth, the role of differing methods of apprehension in capturing serial murderers, it is useful to consider the relationship that every apprehension variable has to every other. Based on the joint co-occurrence of apprehension variables, we found a core region surrounded by four themes. We have labelled these themes as apprehension ‘roles’ that relate to different emphases on the part of different ‘participants’ in the overall picture of serial murder apprehension. Of course, these are labels of convenience that greatly simplify the interactions of the different individuals involved in the investigation, but we would argue that they do represent thematic emphases of particular aspects of the system. We have labelled these as apprehension facilitated by *detective*, *offender*, *victim* and *informant*, where the core is

represented by features essentially related to the offender's *previous history of offending*. This core represents the most frequent apprehension variable and suggests that apprehension is greatly facilitated by similarities in *modus operandi* (MO) as well as the knowledge of offenders' pre-convictions. Thus, in many cases, the offender's past, literally, catches up with him.

The sum of the frequencies for the variables incorporated within each of the four other regions is as follows: Detective = 79%, Offender = 67%, Victim = 48%, Informant = 23%.

This demonstrates that apprehension, directly through the work of the detective, represents the most frequent method of securing apprehension, while the least frequent method involves apprehension by informant. The summed frequencies also demonstrate that apprehension facilitated by the offender's own intervention/errors plays a substantial role in apprehension, while apprehension facilitated by issues associated directly with a victim help solve nearly half of all cases in the present sample. These regions are considered in more detail below, and are summarised in Figure 1.3.

Detective

This cluster of apprehension elements contains variables that involve police procedures, including the examination of forensic or eyewitness reports received by police (from an individual having witnessed the scene, a related incident or having viewed a mugshot or police composite photograph), car traces on a vehicle abandoned near the scene or one noted by an eyewitness and routine policing. This last variable is significant in that it is (a) relatively rare – thereby contradicting the belief

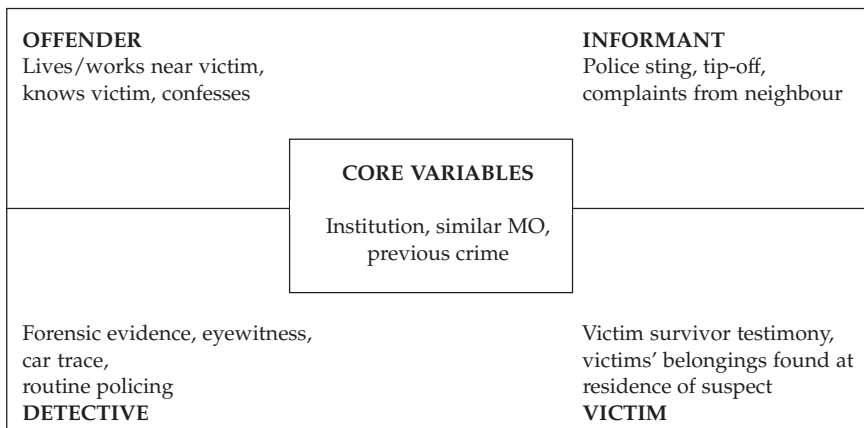


Figure 1.3 Schematic representation of co-occurrences

that this is a very frequent method and, more importantly, (b) that when it does occur in combination with other factors it is associated with overtly detective-oriented features of the case. This finding echoes Keppel's comment that it takes alert and intelligent detectives to turn the opportunity of a traffic cop arrest into a solved murder case and suggests that routine policing can be seen as another branch of detective work, rounding the actions of the police as a whole in solving crime, regardless of rank (Keppel, 1989). Thus, a central area in which psychologists may invest their research energy involves an evaluation of how this process of linking information from many disparate sources and utilizing and interpreting such patterns may be what discriminates efficient from lacklustre investigative decision-makers.²

Offender

This region contains variables that emphasize the offender's own part in raising his profile as a conspicuous suspect. For instance, he may have come under suspicion simply because he lives or works close by to one or more of the victims, or he has some acquaintance with the victim. Although it entails detective procedures to uncover such details, the offender fails to consider (or is not worried after having considered) the possibility that such associations increase his risk of becoming a suspect. Perhaps significantly then, also incorporated in this region is the offender's confession. This cluster, therefore, may represent actions that reflect a relatively lower degree (compared to other clusters) of concern to avoid detection and may represent actions that are suggestive of drawing attention to oneself, whether this is intentional or not.

Victim

This cluster contains only two variables, both of which are associated with evidence from a victim. Within this group the offender hoards incriminating material, such as items belonging to his victims, keeping these items as souvenirs of the murder victim in his house or on his person. The second variable involves the role of a surviving victim's testimony. Investigative and forensic psychologists have increasingly come to appreciate the influence of the role of the victim on the actions that occur during the offence, and work on suspect prioritization (see Chapter 4) has been forced to recognize victimology as a crucial component of informing decisions associated with 'profiling' offences.

Informant

Three apprehension variables relate to the receipt of information by police from a variety of potential sources or 'informants'. Police may receive