Criminal Profiling

PROFILING BASICS

The profiler...

...analyzes all of the crime scene and forensic evidence influencing category reports, crime scene photos, and other forensic data.

...does not review the suspect list, which could unwittingly influence his opinion.

...focuses on several specific areas which are important in constructing a psychological profile of the unidentified offender...

TIME & LOCATION FACTORS

Various base elements in criminal modus operandi involving the unidentified offender’s lifestyle or occupation.

How long the offender spent with the victim encountered.

Additional insights into the crime and the offender. The length of victim-offender overlap with the victim's past and other circumstances involved.

FACTORS: How the offender approached the victim.

How the offender got the victim to go with him.

Where the victim was killed.

Body disposition.

Was a vehicle used.

ESCALATION

Most individuals who commit crimes begin with lesser offenses; but, over the years, their level of criminality increases.

As an offender may begin with vandalism, progresses to burglary, then assault, rape, and murder.

PROFILING BASICS (cont’d)

(1) impression-making: assess some information
(2) decision process: arranging the input from the previous stage and analyzing victim and offender data
(3) crime assessment: reconstructing the crime and the offender activation
(4) pre-offense planning: developing these specific descriptions of the offender
(5) investigation: assess the possibility as an aid to
adjuncts to investigation
(6) apprehension: checking the accuracy and the
description against new data that emerges as the investigation and changes the profile accordingly.
**MODUS OPERANDI (M.O.)**

- The method or technique used by the offender to commit the crime.
- The offender's M.O. can change over time.

As an individual gains more experience, they often adapt their criminal techniques to improve their efficiency.

Since the offender's M.O. can change, it is often not a useful method for linking one incident to the same offender.

Instead, examination of the offender's environment in conjunction with criminal behavior at the crime scene is more important in linking crimes to the same offender.

**SIGNATURE**

- A unique set of data an offender employs in each incident.

Many serial offenders engage in conspiratorial behavior at the crime scene after the offender itself is insufficient in providing enough psychosocial gratification.

Thus, an offender has a signature or profile.

- Sex Positioner (auditory hallucinations)
- Psychopathological
- Psychotic features
- Written statements left behind

**CRIME SCENE PATTERNS**

- The crime scenes of violent, sex offenders, and sexual murderers can be divided into two general subgroups.
  - Organized: Behavior is planned at the scene, leaving little evidence behind.
  - Disorganized: Behavior is unplanned, leaving significant evidence behind.

- Individuals who have high-organized crime scenes seem to have distinctly different personality characteristics and behavioral patterns than those who leave more disorganized crime scenes.

**PERSONALITY INFERENCE**

- Organized crime scenes reflect a high level of control.
- Homogeneity is seen and the body is disposed of in a thorough and neat manner, often transported to another location from where the murder took place.

**PERSONALITY INFERENCE (mark'd)**

- Disorganized crime scenes reflect a lack of planning, the victim is often known to the offender and bodies are left in plain sight. A weapon of opportunity is used.
- Disorganization of the victim's environment:
  - poor work history
  - lives alone near the crime scene
  - may have background in medical/health care
  - does not choose lifestyle following rape
  - changes habitually over time
  - lacks self-awareness
  - physically uncontrolled
  - little evidence with members of opposite sex

**PERSONALITY AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE**

- **Organized Crime:**
  - Offenders who commit planned offenses typically have:
  - Personality disorders that do not disrupt their thinking.
  - They are manipulative and deceptive by psychopathological symptoms like hallucinations and delusions.

- **Disorganized Crime:**
  - Offenders who commit unplanned, impulsive offenses have more obvious psychopathological disturbances. Their disorganized personalities can prohibit thoughtfulness planning. They may lack the control and discipline needed to control their behavior. If their fantasies come to the point of completion, they may act out in a thoughtless manner likely to get them caught.
PERSONALITY AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE (cont'd)

DISCREPANCY TO THE GENERAL NOTION THAT SEVERE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY LEADS TO UNCLASSED CRIMES.

Paranoid personality disorder and paranoid form of schizophrenia do not disorient one's thoughts. Behavior of individuals with these types of disorders is organized, organized, and thoughtful.

Also, individuals with intact personalities can act impulsively when intoxicated.

Note: Most crime scenes are neither highly organized or disorganized, but rather fall on a normal distribution with highly organized/disorganized at the extremes.

INDUCTIVE VS. DEDUCTIVE PROFILING

Note: Assume that the crime and crime scene provide information about the offender.

Profilers using the inductive approach examine research based on identified offenders of a particular type of crime. They use other research on similar types of convicted crimes to determine possible characteristics of the offender.

Profilers using the deductive approach incorporate each piece of evidence in a case to create the offender profile. They use education, experience, and logic to analyze the crime scene and create a unique offender profile for each crime.

CHALLENGES TO PROFILING RESEARCH

- Profiling situations – information from controlled conditions are not what people actually do in their daily lives.
- Difficulty in obtaining information about what actually happened in crimes.
- Police databases are notoriously inaccurate, patchy, and unreliable.