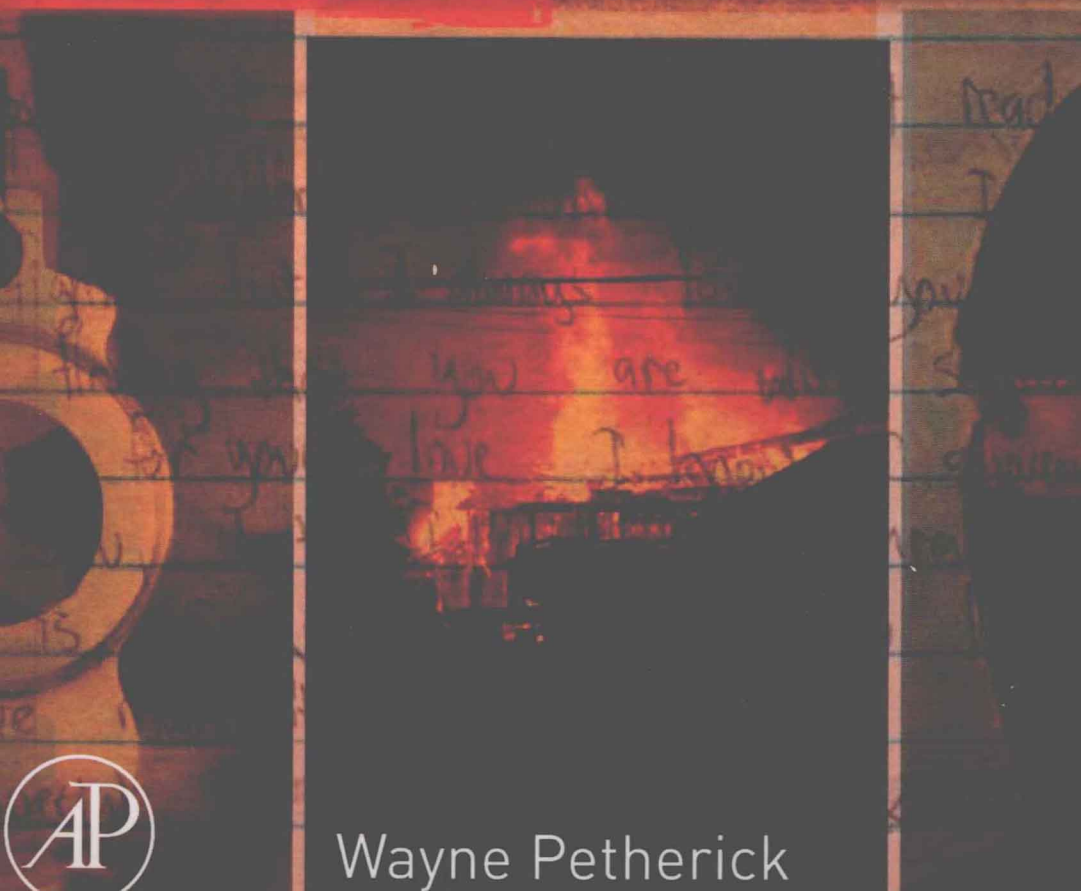


SERIAL CRIME

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES
IN BEHAVIORAL PROFILING



Wayne Petherick

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Academic Press is an imprint of Elsevier



Acquisitions Editors: Mark Listewnik and Jennifer Soucy
Editorial Assistant: Kelly Weaver
Marketing Manager: Christian Nolin
Cover Designer: Cate Barr

Academic Press is an imprint of Elsevier
30 Corporate Drive, Suite 400, Burlington, MA 01803, USA
525 B Street, Suite 1900, San Diego, California 92101-4495, USA
84 Theobald's Road, London WC1X 8RR, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-0-12-088512-1

ISBN-10: 0-12-088512-3

For information on all Academic Press publications visit our web site at http://books.elsevier.com

Printed and bound in Great Britain

05 06 07 08 09 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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SERIAL CRIME

To my family, friends, and colleagues for their support and for playing a part in shaping who I am today.

To my wife, Emma, and my children, Millie and Halle, who make the long nights and effort worthwhile.

FOREWORD

**Professor Paul Wilson, Chair of Criminology,
Bond University**

One of the few advantages of becoming older is that one is better placed to put not only one's personal life but also professional techniques and approaches into perspective. I find this is particularly so with criminal profiling.

As a young Australian criminologist on a Fulbright scholarship, I visited the United States in 1974 and talked to senior officials within the FBI about the new and exciting technique which would become known as criminal profiling that the agency was just developing at Quantico. Later, when back in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s, I completed two short courses given by the FBI for law enforcement officials, criminologists, and others working in the criminal justice system. Robert Ressler was the main instructor and with his customary flair and enthusiasm for the subject matter gave a compelling and passionate account of both the theory and practice of profiling.

What struck me then was that although Ressler's lectures were convincing, it seemed that the nascent science of profiling lacked a proper theoretical perspective and was based more on experiential rather than solidly scientific methodologies. Given the fact that the emergence of profiling had arisen from the experiences of those working for a major law enforcement agency rather than from within university laboratories or research institutes, this was understandable. It was, after all, meant to be a practical method for assisting law enforcement officials.

Nevertheless it was clear to me that if profiling was to become more than just an investigative technique it would have to underpin its methods with a more sophisticated theoretical and scientific approach. Fortunately this began to occur with the work of Professor David Canter in Great Britain and then Brent Turvey in the United States, as well as with the geographical profiling work of the RCMP in Canada. Most of these approaches differed from each other in both theoretical perspectives and in the methodologies they employed but at least they advanced the debate on offender profiling even if it appeared to fragment and diversify the field to an extent that some saw as bordering on intellectual anarchy.

Of course it was not really anarchy but the development of a field that, like so many others in the behavioural and social sciences, needed an injection of new ideas and fresh perspectives. However, what was anarchical was the fierceness of both the public and private debate about what profiling approach was acceptable, which individual or personality was fraudulently deceiving the public (or the courts), and what person or perspective had either God or Science (or both) on their side. Clearly egos were involved here as well as blustering ideological ethnocentrism centered on the certainty that there was only one true path to a profiling nirvana that some heretics were maliciously ignoring.

And that is exactly why this book is such a refreshing addition to the literature on the subject. In a number of places the authors call for a more scientific approach toward profiling and a willingness to test competing methodologies rigorously using scientific evaluation techniques. Though, for a variety of practical reasons, such evaluations are not always possible, the need to at least acknowledge the importance of obtaining evidence about the utility and validity of the technique is admirable.

So too is the concern with the ethical issues relating to profiling and an equal concern with the professionalization of a field that at times does not appear to have much concern about these matters. As Petherick notes in his chapter, the lack of professionalization is one of the greatest obstacles to the advance of profiling, especially as anyone can and does claim the title of criminal profiler without fear of contradiction.

This book also reaches well beyond issues relating to theory, methodology, and the way in which the profession (or is it still a trade?) conducts itself. There are some compelling chapters on the nature of serial crime generally and of serial rape and murder specifically. I especially liked the chapter by Homant and Kennedy that provides an overview of serial murder and presents a provocative case study.

There is still, then, fire in the belly of the beast, and by that I mean there is a continuing passion and energy in the writings of those who engage in profiling, much as there was when I first encountered the work of Ressler and his colleagues thirty years ago.

But there is also, as this book demonstrates, a new sense of responsibility about what it means to work as a profiler or a researcher in this area, and a determination to take both the science and the practice of profiling to a new and higher level. Both the publisher and the editor are to be congratulated for raising the level of discussion and debate in this stimulating collection of readings.

PREFACE

Even though serial crime has been a problem plaguing societies for generations, it has become in vogue in the entertainment industry, with true crime genres being among the most popular and most profitable. Serial killers are big business and movie networks and authors alike are cashing in on the public's fascination with what are often portrayed as cunning and elusive criminals. The rift between popular portrayals and reality couldn't be greater in most cases.

With the advent of the Internet, serial killer junkies have found a new forum from which to tout the prowess of these often adept and often inept offenders with innumerable web sites dedicated to the subject. These spring up on an almost daily basis. A casual Google search reveals that the number of these sites are simply staggering and as Brent Turvey has noted in his foundational work on criminal profiling:

Though many books have been written on the subject, and the Internet has made armchair experts of us all, not just everyone truly knows the actual nature and behavior of criminals.

I couldn't agree more.

As a matter of concern, there seems to be little regard for the truth in some material posted to this medium, but of more concern is the way serial offenders are often portrayed. Serial killers are lauded for their number of victims, the gruesome methods they employ in torturing or disposing of them, or the length of time they manage to evade capture. These representations are sickening to anyone who has ever stood in a homicide victim's bedroom, comforted a victim of crime, or seen and heard the hope and prayers of parents of a missing person that their loved one will turn up alive and well.

The academic literature on this topic has become almost as voluminous as its true crime counterpart. Here, a number of practitioners, academics and

researchers turn to serial offenders and their crimes in an attempt to glean a better understanding of what makes them tick. Others try to provide “risk assessments”, often in the form of checklists whereby an offender who displays a certain number of features poses a risk. Perhaps the best known of these is the so-called “homicidal triad”, originally identified by McDonald in the mid 1900’s. Many such attempts have failed, with the dynamics of the offenders and their offences foiling even the most advanced attempts. There is a definite need to explore this topic in a more systematic way.

Other works have focused on investigators, looking at placing tools in the hands of those who are charged with the resolution of murder, rape and arson, among other crimes. Unfortunately, many of these works also miss the mark, adding further burden instead of streamlining the process and creating more work for already taxed criminal justice personnel. The amount of literature published on profiling is a testament to this.

Not all the answers to these dilemmas are contained herein, but we hope to provide some fundamental understanding, not only to investigators, but also students, academics and researchers. Some of the material presented in this book focuses on process, as is the case with the chapter by Goldsworthy on rape. Other work (see Petherick on serial stalking) is less about a process and more about generating thought and discussion on specific crime types on which there is little information available. Furthermore, as the discussion of investigative tools in stalking and other crimes is lacking, this work will also provide commentary on how criminal profiling can assist in case resolution.

With these considerations in mind, this volume has the following chapter construction and rationale.

Norris opens with a discussion on the history of profiling. This history begins with the early work of anthropologists like Lombroso, through to the first example of a contemporary profile provided by police surgeons in Jack the Ripper. Following the work of Langer and Brussels, the early work of the FBI is examined, leading into discussions of the latest profiling methods of Canter and Turvey. This chapter terminates with a “snapshot of the current position and its likely future directions.”

In Chapter 2, Petherick provides an in depth discussion of induction and deduction and the place of reasoning and logic within the profiling process. This will include not only the theory, but also how induction and deduction appear when presented in a profile followed by a hypothetical case study showing the application of the logic.

Chapter 3 delves into the range of profiling methods and the genesis of each. Beginning with definitions of criminal profiling and the criteria for being

called a profiler, it then leads into the individual methods (including the FBI's Criminal Investigative Analysis, Canter's Investigative Psychology and Turvey's Behavioral Evidence Analysis among others). It also provides some critique of each method and explains the processes and outcomes they offer.

While profiling has been the focus of much research and attention, there is still some debate about the best way to gauge its success. Should we claim success when an offender is simply caught, or should we wait and only claim success when an offender's characteristics can be matched to those offered in the assessment? What does it mean when a profile is accurate, and how may we best measure accuracy? These and a number of other questions are addressed in Chapter 4: *The Fallacy of Accuracy in Criminal Profiling*. This critical overview looks at the host of utility studies that have been done and suggests that the current yardsticks employed in determining a profile's utility are flawed, further suggesting a more suitable approach to determining not only success, but also best practice when profilers become involved in an investigation.

As our awareness and receptiveness to profiling increases, it stands to reason that it may become a form of expert evidence adopted by the courts to assist the judiciary in complex matters involving the interpretation of behavior and behavioral evidence. This has already occurred in a number of western jurisdictions, and this chapter will examine the rules relating to expert testimony, how profiling may meet the threshold of expert testimony and a selection of cases in which profiling evidence has been given.

The next chapter, "Where to from Here?" considers not only the current state of affairs in profiling but also its future. Professionalization, the application of rigorous scientific processes, research, ethics, accountability, and education are all canvassed and some future direction is proposed.

In Chapter 7, Turvey and McGrath discuss the greatest recent exposure of criminal profiling in the media involving the Washington Snipers. What makes this case all the more interesting is that this happened in real time in countries around the globe. Here, the authors explore the role and responsibilities of profilers, the public's reaction to them, and the aftermath of their commentaries. Readers will find it to be one of the most insightful pieces on this aspect of profiling.

Chapter 8 focuses on serial stalking and looks at the behaviors constituting the offence of stalking, its incidence and prevalence, and what features of a crime make it a serial offence. This chapter will also briefly examine the application of profiling to the crime of stalking and close with two case studies of serial stalkers; those stalkers who pursue more than one victim. Both cases involve a large number of victims over an extended period of time and the cases

highlight several aspects of the serial stalker's behavior including types of pursuit, victim selection, perceptions of their offending, and remorse.

Following this, Terry Goldsworthy examines rape, with a specific discussion of the serial variant of this interpersonal crime. Included are demographics and dynamics of the offence, followed by an investigative model arising out of research conducted for his Master of Criminology award, as well as a discussion of other investigative concerns such as linkage blindness.

The penultimate chapter by Dan Kennedy and Robert Homant details the variety of factors involved in serial murder from its definition and classification to developmental factors and risk. Drs. Kennedy and Homant also include a comprehensive case study encompassing those facets covered throughout their piece.

Last, Ross Brogan, an arson investigator in the state of New South Wales, discusses both the theoretical and practical aspects of serial arson. This last chapter focuses on arson as a behavior and relevant investigative considerations, and is interspersed with a number of important case studies showing a variety of different types of serial arsonists.

It has been a pleasure to work with these authors to produce this important collection of works on profiling and serial crime to produce both an academic and practical approach. The knowledge they possess in their respective areas is both considerable and impressive, and collectively they represent a formidable intellectual group.

Wayne Petherick

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work has truly been a labor of love, and sometimes equally a labor of hate. It has consumed days and nights, thoughts and emotions. It has been the source of joy and consternation, excitement and trepidation. It has marked a significant passage of time and made time stand still; often concurrently. I have read many books, more than I care to count, but I have never truly appreciated the time, effort, and heartache that goes into one—until now.

In recounting my debt of gratitude, I am reminded of the Emmy-award-winning actor who thanks just about everyone he has ever met, and I think how canned and contrived these acknowledgments sound—again, until now. Although falling short of a cast of thousands, there are significant acknowledgments that need to be made, not just to the contributors for their thoughts and inputs but also to those who operated more on the periphery whose importance was just as significant.

First and foremost I thank my wife Emma for her editorial and structural assistance. When my own eyes failed me, Emma was available with red pen and keen eye, pointing out those things I had missed. Thank you for your companionship, support, and understanding. Thanks to my children, for whom this book forms part of my legacy to them.

I simply could not do the contributors justice by just saying “and thanks to those contributors”; this wouldn’t do. I feel that I can only do them justice by individually acknowledging their contributions to my development. The following are in no particular order.

To Brent Turvey, for his guidance and friendship. He has taught me so much, but is always willing to listen and learn. To Michael McGrath, for his level-headedness in just about everything and to his knowledge and humor. I have a lot to learn from the critical thinking skills and professionalism of both. Their friendship has made these last many years less like work.

Thanks also to Dr. Dan Kennedy and Dr. Robert Homant, both excellent practitioners in their respective fields. They picked up the baton, ran their best race,

and won by an easy length. Their passion and commitment to producing good work product gives us all something to aspire to.

Thanks to Terry Goldsworthy, the most educated police officer I know, for his collegiality and dedication to his job. Terry has taught me much about professionalism, dedication, and commitment. To another colleague and friend, Gareth Norris. He has since left our fair shores, but for his friendship during his too brief stay in the Antipodes and our often heated but always friendly debates about methodology, I would like to thank him also.

David Field, legal scholar, whose passion for the law inspired me to look toward profiling as a form of evidence, and also for making the law of evidence interesting. To those students, both current and former—Andrew and Biz—who have given of their time and thoughts. It would remiss of me to leave you out of the equation. Indeed today's students are tomorrow's colleagues, and this has consistently proven to be the case. Thank you also for teaching me, as Brent constantly reminds me, that the master is always the student.

Thanks too to Ross Brogan for forming an interesting and informative nexus between his academic and practical experience. His effort was commendable, his chapter insightful, and his speedy delivery invaluable. Ross has proven to be the consummate professional all round.

To those various authors, researchers, academics, and practitioners who have all had a role in my development, directly or indirectly, I extend heart-felt thanks. Whether I have profited by your experience, knowledge, or mistakes, you have all played a part in what I know, thereby arming me with knowledge about how I can make myself better.

Any acknowledgment for this work would not be complete without the recognition duly afforded the staff at Academic Press and their associates, most notably Mark Listewnik. He has given of his time, thoughts, and knowledge about publishing and taught me valuable lessons about textbook production. He has made this not only an educational but an enjoyable experience, which represents as significant growth for a criminologist and practitioner as anything else. Mark was always ready with advice and comment, and this work would not have been complete or possible without his input or his willingness to extend a deadline or five.

Thank you all. In one way, shape, or form, you have made me and by extension this work better and more complete—if not by your contributions, then by your friendship. My only regret is that we have but one lifetime with which to aspire, prosper and grow. To students and prospective colleagues, seek to know what you can, for there is no limit what you can achieve if you are affiliated with the right people. Settle not for mediocrity, for so much more is within reach with

the right combination of motivation and guidance. Align yourself with the good and competent, and distance yourself from the poor and inept. You will only profit from it.

Wayne Petherick

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Wayne is a Senior Teaching Fellow in Criminology at Bond University, is on the Board of the Academy of Behavioural Profiling, and is currently completing his Ph.D. He teaches in the areas of Criminal Profiling, Behavioural Evidence Analysis, Forensic Criminology, Forensic Victimology, Criminal Motivations, and Crime Prevention, among others. Wayne has consulted on many cases for both state law enforcement and the private sector in cases of stalking, sexual assault and murder. He has lectured at the Australian Federal Police Academy and for various other state police organizations in Australia and the United States.

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Andrew is a police officer with the Queensland Police Service. He holds a Bachelor of Social Science (Criminology) qualification, and has published in the area of stalking. His interests include stalking, criminal profiling, and forensic sci-

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ELIZABETH FRY

Elizabeth completed a Joint Honours degree in Criminology and Sociology, including a thesis on Education in a Young Offender Institute in the United Kingdom. She has also completed a Master of Criminology, which included a thesis on Consistencies in Crime Scene Characteristics and Offender Behavior in Intimate Partner Homicide in Queensland, Australia. Elizabeth's current interests include criminal profiling, forensic criminology and juvenile homicide and she is actively continuing research into these areas.

TERRY GOLDSWORTHY

Terry is a Detective Senior Sergeant with the Queensland Police Service, Australia, and has 20 years' experience in law enforcement. Terry has performed duties as both an investigator and a manager in the Criminal Investigation Branch, Juvenile Aid Bureau and Child Sexual Assault Investigation areas. He has extensive experience both in the investigation and management of homicide and sexual related offenses. Terry has completed a Master of Criminology, Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Commerce, Advanced Diploma of Investigative Practice, and a Diploma of Policing. He is a qualified barrister in Queensland and the Federal Courts of Australia. He is currently undertaking a Ph.D. on the concept of evil, focusing on the situational, dispositional, and interactional factors that contribute to evil acts.

ROSS BROGAN

Ross joined the New South Wales (NSW) Fire Brigades in Australia in 1970 and has worked throughout the state. He has completed an Arson Awareness course as part of the NSW Detective Training Course and holds a Graduate Certificate in Fire Investigation and a Graduate Diploma in Fire Investigation. In 2002 he