Are Criminals Born or are they Formed?
The Study of Criminal Behavior

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I have neither given nor received help on this work, nor am I aware of any infraction of the Honor Code.

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#  Behavior is something that everyone has, and in society people behave a certain way to avoid embarrassment either for ourselves or others. The first sign of this will start at a young age and that’s when people start to pick up on social ques and begin to notice weird social behavior patterns in others. Having the basic ability to see if people are off or acting weird lets the importance of criminal profiling come into the light. With criminal profiling the local police, FBI, State police, etc. have the chance to catch a high stake case like with serial killers a lot faster before any more damage could be done. That is why the study of criminal behavior and serial killers is so important.

# The Reality of Criminal Profiling

Criminal profiling is the process of identifying behavioral tendencies, personality traits, geographic location, and demographic or biographic descriptors of an offender based on the characteristics of a particular crime. When looking at the reality or the difficulty of criminal profiling you have to look at who is doing it and the education they have had on it. The police do not have the extensive training on being accurate on knowing a criminal’s behavior on what they could do in a situation. When knowing what a criminal profiling is you have to know what they are profiling and that is serial killers. A serial killer has three common characteristics defining their murderers they involve victims, incidents, and time. Specifically, there must be three or more victims; three or more incidents; and an emotional ‘cooling off’ period of time in between the murders. This is why there is a section in Law enforcement for professionals in criminal profiling. Richard Kocsis said, “With respect to the fundamental question of accuracy in criminal profiling, there is now empirical evidence, albeit modest, indicating that suitably qualified professionals collectively operating under the colloquial mantle of profiler can decisively surpass the predictions of other compared skill-based groups” (Kocsis 2013, p. 86). There is always something that can be improved on with criminal profiling but when done it could potentially save a lot of lives. So as any field of science Kocsis and a team had experiments based on if criminal profiling was accurate in their predictions on criminals. This experiment had a large range of groups from actual profilers, psychologist, science students, specialist detectives, general police, psychics, and stereotype controls to try to find the range of accuracy in profiling. In the conclusion Kocsis said, “The results from these early experiments produced some empirical, albeit tentative, findings demonstrating proficiency among the profilers in comparison to various other groups of participants” (Kocsis 2013, p. 88). This makes sense that profilers were more proficient at predicting someone’s profile or behavior. When having the ability to understand someone’s behavior and be able to predict what they might do next can be a very useful tool in any line of business. When using criminal profiling, behavior analysis is used in some sort of fashion to aid the situation in any way. And it is as important to understanding the reasons of criminal acts just as much as criminal profiling is.

## Behavior Analysis

Behavior analysis is used to catch the worst of the worst but it can also be used to help map out serial killers life histories. The question that everyone wants to know is whether a serial killer is born or are they formed, and with the use of behavioral analysis you can look into their childhood traumas, life stressors, and mental health issues in their life. There have been many cases studied for what goes on with serial killers and why they do what they do. The possibilities of what happens to these criminals before they commit their crimes. David A. Keatley said,

 “For example, in his review of nearly 100 full-length biographies of serial murderers, Stone (2001) found parental brutality (i.e., excessive mistreatment of a child) to be present in 54% (n = 49) of cases. In another study, Ressler, Burgess, and Douglas (1988) found evidence of Keatley et al. 3 frequent moving during childhood in one third of serial killers. Ressler et al. (1988) also observed that more than 40% of serial killers lived outside of their familial homes by the age of 18. In terms of biological mediators, head injury is believed to be present in upward of 10% of serial killers, as, too, is Autism Spectrum Disorder” (David A. Keatley, Hayley Golightly, Rebecca Shephard, Enzo Yaksic, and Sasha Reid 2) There is always the mental health reason of why a serial killer commits his crime but on the other side these people could’ve been pushed into these horrible mindsets. These mindsets could be caused by the lack of parent-child relationship, issues with being social, any violent history, etc. However no matter what kind of insight they get on the minds of these people doesn’t matter unless the biological, social, and psychological features are addressed and learned. Keatley said, “Large volumes of research have outlined the role of childhood experiences as they relate to the serial killer. This has provided researchers with an important foundation for understanding the early childhoods of serial killers and has subsequently provided researchers and investigators with some foundation of the types of behaviors and events to focus on when conducting their own analyses” The history and the depth of behavioral science goes a lot farther than the surface, there are many layers that go from the psychotic to physically all the way down to just method.

### Disorders in Serial Killers

Mental Health is one of the stressor’s in a criminal’s life. This could be RAD (reactive attachment disorder) or it could be a split-personality disorder, but it can also be as simple as having sociopath tendencies or being narcissistic. When it comes to these individuals, they are not working class, they do not give anything to society. Duff and Kinderman said, “individuals usually have disorganized, deviant, and socially insignificant family backgrounds, which do not implement proper socialization or values. They tend to have ‘numerous incarcerations [and] unstable marital histories’ but there are few reports of previous psychological disturbances” (Duff, Kinderman 2008 p. 230). Criminals have to go through a lot of things mentally so the fact that they have a lot of mental health issues is no surprise. The most common disorders in serial killers is anti-personality disorder and split personality disorders. Duff and Kinderman said,

“Canter (2000) has identified four areas where investigative psychology may impact upon police investigations: (i) identifying the perpetrator, based on the salience of the behavioral features of the crime; (ii) differentiating between crimes and offenders; (iii) inferring other characteristics of a perpetrator that might assist in identifying that person; and (iv) identifying what, if any, crimes are likely to have been carried out by the same individual.” (Duff, Kinderman, 2008 p. 2)

When your using behavioral profiling it can be difficult to create a profile when the unsub has more than one personality, this can mess with the profile of the case. A persons personality is a complex system, it is inside the person, and it is the psychophysical systems that make a person’s characteristic patterns of behavior, thoughts, and feelings. You have to look at these unsubs as people and not just violent criminals because there is plenty of people who battle with mental disorders who live normal lives, it is just based on if these people are given the chance to be treated properly. Duff and Kinderman, wrote a very good idea of understanding the line between criminal profiling and mental disorders, “If we are going to consider the value of personality disorder within an investigative framework, we need some sense that there is evidence for psychiatric diagnoses having some kind of relationship with behavioral biases that is, that there are recognized behavioral sequelae of diagnostic categories.” (Duff, Kinderman 2008 p. 4) With only 1% of women and 3% of men have anti- personality disorder and 1 in 5 people have a personality disorder you have to be careful on diagnosing people with the right thing. With personality disorder you have to at least have to be showing the symptoms for 5 years and it has to be before the age of 25. That is why when people go into get diagnosed doctors do a lot of test and that’s where you can see brain abnormalities and the brain structure.

#### Brain Structure

The brain is a wonderful thing that helps people think and function as a human being but when a person’s mind plays tricks on them it can cause them to do things that thy normally wouldn’t. As technology is moving forward scientist are able to diagnose people more accurately because of machines like MRI. Pera-Guardiola, V., Contreras-Rodríguez, O., Batalla, I., Kosson, D., Menchón, J., Pifarré, J., Soriano-Mas, C. wrote, “In this study, we used structural Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Voxel Based Morphometry (VBM)[27] to evaluate, in comparison with male healthy controls, the relationship between regional gray matter (GM) brain volumes and facial emotion recognition deficits in male offenders with psychopathic traits.” (.Guardiola, Contreras-Rodríguez, Batalla, Kosson, Menchón, Pifarré, Soriano-Mas, 2016 p. 1). Emotions are a very important thing and that’s one of the first things that people look at when they look at serial killers and the question is if they have emotions, what are they feeling? Weber, S., Habel, U., Amunts, K., & Schneider wrote, “Lombroso popularized the concept of a ‘‘born criminal’’. He believed that certain individuals with a ‘‘criminal mind’’ can be identified by ‘‘deformations of their skulls’’ and also other parts of their body” (Weber, S., Habel, U., Amunts, K., & Schneider, F 2008, p.3). This was about Franz Joseph Gall and his thought based on if criminals are born but his experiments/theories were discredited. Scientist can use these machines to see if someone has brain abnormalities or if one part is bigger than usual, but there isn’t really anything that gives a straight answer on if criminals are born or if they formed from the brain structure.

##### **Criminals being made or formed**

Criminal profiling and behavioral analysis has become a big part of catching criminals but also a bigger impact on the research of what goes on inside their heads, what made them who they are. There is going to have to be more insight of the serial killers childhood home life and their adult life, any kind of life stressor. Behavior is something that everyone else has and with people trying to go against the grain, to be the ones to stand out, people who stand out in a negative way or at least to their social scene can cause many issues. So instead of thinking if these criminals are born or are they formed, people need to start to notice the signs of mental health disorders and not ignore it. Because if you treat it early and give them a solid trust net it could solve a lot of future issues. That is why Criminal Profiling is a complex but a very useful tool in todays world.

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