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FROM GOALS TO THEORY

The analysis of the nonscientific and scientific models of profiling presented in the first section of this book reveals that there is currently no single model of profiling that can be considered to be comprehensive or accurate. Although these models have components that might be used to supplement a science of profiling, no single model is adequate for use as a template. In addition, despite assertions made by the existing profiling models, there is currently little reliable and valid evidence to demonstrate that any piece or combination of pieces of crime scene evidence predicts any offender characteristic or provides any other important insight about the crime in question. Rather, current nonscientific profilers have built a practice around anecdotal evidence, based on the supposition that their subjective investigative experiences reflect reality.

By building and testing a scientific model of profiling, the profiling field will eventually have the information required to lend credence to whatever current profiling inferences and practices find support in empirical testing; eliminate inferences and practices that are not supported by testing and provide no benefit to investigators; and be able to seek out new, fruitful directions for improving profiling science and practice. Part II of this book is therefore devoted to discussing the development of a science of profiling from its most basic elements and describing how this science can enhance profiling practice.

GOALS OF CRIMINAL PROFILING

A model of profiling should be designed to achieve clear goals. Regrettably, as discussed in Part I, the identification of clear goals for profiling has, thus far, been impeded by the lack of consensus among existing models as to what the appropriate goals for profiling are. This difficulty is due in part to the fact that some profiling models have not explicitly stated goals for profiling and in part to the fact that where profiling goals have been stated, they differ from model to model. Nonetheless, if one examines the history of profiling and considers each of the current profiling models from the perspective of ascertaining what, in its most general sense, each model is designed to accomplish, several goals for profiling are identifiable. These goals involve the use of profiling techniques throughout various stages of the criminal justice process, including narrowing down the suspect pool (Douglas, Ressler, Burgess, & Hartman, 1986) and helping to shape strategies to provoke offenders to come forward to facilitate interrogation (Douglas & Olshaker, 1995) and prosecution (Turvey, 1999).

There is one overarching goal, however, derived from the current profiling literature, that should guide research and practice: gathering and analyzing crime scene information to assist law enforcement in identifying unknown perpetrators. From the early fictional detective tales (e.g., Doyle, 1892–1927/1992; Poe, 1814/1982), the professional and popular works of John Douglas (e.g., Douglas & Olshaker, 1995; Douglas et al., 1986), and the scientifically based Canter model (Canter, 2000), profiling is consistently described as a process whereby information is gathered from the scene of a crime and inferences are made in an effort to apprehend the unknown perpetrator. For example, Doyle's (1892–1927/1992) Sherlock Holmes is described as having said that "it is difficult for a man to have any object in daily use without leaving the impress of his individuality upon it in such a way that the trained observer might read it" (p. 92). This sentiment is echoed in Douglas et al.'s (1986) corollary assertion that "Investigative profilers analyze information gathered from the crime scene for what it may reveal about the type of person who committed the crime" (p. 404). Canter (2000) put it in a more scientific framework, discussing the creation of "measures of those aspects of criminal activity available to police investigators and of those characteristics of the offender that are useful to help identify and prosecute those offenders" (p. 26). These descriptions reveal that although individual approaches to the practice of profiling may vary, each of the extant profiling models aspires to a similar goal: using crime information to assist in identifying an unknown offender. This is the common point of agreement from which a science of profiling can begin to be built.

IDENTIFYING A *TYPE* OF OFFENDER, OR *THE* OFFENDER?

Given this primary goal, the next question is how specific the identification must be. Some of the nonscientific profiling models assert that profiling should be used to identify the type of individual responsible for perpetrating a given crime, rather than a specific individual. For example, Douglas et al. (1986) stated, "Profiling does *not* provide the specific identity of the offender. Rather, it indicates the kind of person most likely to have committed a crime" (p. 402, italics in original). Likewise, Turvey (1999) wrote that profiling does not uniquely identify one perpetrator. Instead, according to descriptions in the previously reviewed models, crime scene evidence is to be analyzed through some unspecified process, and the profiler is to generate a set of offender characteristics that range from interpersonal narratives (Canter, 1994); to offender habits (Douglas et al., 1986); to grooming, employment history, and self-esteem (Turvey, 1999). These characteristics are purported to describe the type of offender who would be responsible for the crime in question, rather than implicating a particular individual.

However, the belief that profiling should be used only to describe types of offenders is contradicted in published accounts of profiling success stories by these same authors in two ways (e.g., Canter, 1988; Douglas & Olshaker, 1995; Holmes & Holmes, 1996). First, in published accounts by Canter (1994), Douglas and Olshaker (1995), Ressler and Shachtman (1992), and Holmes and Holmes (1996), the set of offender characteristics that is produced by the profiler is consistently portrayed as narrowing the suspect pool sufficiently that only one individual, the true perpetrator, remains. This individual is then apprehended and compared with the law enforcement profile to demonstrate the accuracy of the profile's predictions and to assert that the individual charged is in fact the guilty party by virtue of his similarity to the profile. For example, in describing his work on the John Duffy case, also known as the Railway Rapist case, Canter (1988) wrote as follows:

> Using a combination of psychological theories and procedures we were able to create a description of the offender that turned out to resemble John Duffy remarkably closely . . . the whole profile was found to fit only one of the suspects and helped to focus police attention on that man to the extent that they were eventually able to charge him. (Canter, 1988, p. 14)

Following Duffy's conviction, Canter (1988) wrote, "A year and a half is a long time for a psychologist to wait to see if he has described the right person" (p. 15). Likewise, Douglas and Olshaker (1995) described a suspect as fitting "the profile to a T," even though they noted that this individual

was "a suspect in another crime" rather than the crime at hand (p. 189). Holmes and Holmes (1996) discussed a profile produced by Ronald Holmes, writing that "This profile proved to be remarkably accurate" (p. 24). (Unfortunately, the authors later noted that the profile did not actually lead to the apprehension of the offender; instead, one of the victims recognized him at a shopping center and called the police.)

Second, profiling is discussed by at least two models (Douglas et al., 1986; Turvey, 1999) in the context of strategies for interrogation. According to Douglas et al. (1986) and Turvey (1999), a profile of offender characteristics can inform investigators as to how the true perpetrator might react to certain interrogation tactics. For example, Douglas and Olshaker (1995) discussed a case in which a bloodstained rock, believed to be the murder weapon, was recovered from a crime scene. The police had a suspect in mind and were preparing to question him. Douglas and Olshaker (1995) offered a suggestion for how the officers should interrogate their suspect:

> Without saying anything about it, place the bloody rock on a low table at a forty-five-degree angle to his line of sight so that he'll have to turn his head to look at it. Closely observe all his nonverbal cues—his behavior, respiration, perspiration, carotid pulse. If he is the killer, he will not be able to ignore that rock, even though you haven't mentioned it or explained its significance. (p. 190)

Again, these strategies are presumed to be effective only with the true perpetrator of a crime, extending beyond the scope of describing types of offenders. It appears, then, that despite the disclaimer that profiling is used only to describe types of offenders, the authors of the reviewed profiling models also apply the profiling process to single alleged offenders in their own practices.

The ambivalence evident in the differing descriptions previously listed most likely occurs because the validity of criminal profiling has not yet been established. It seems that the identification of a single individual is perhaps the ideal goal of profiling. It certainly would provide an immense benefit to law enforcement if the profiling field could develop behavioral techniques that consistently identified unknown offenders and led to the solution of difficult cases. However, as shown in Part I, the science of profiling has not yet sufficiently developed to be able to identify individual offenders. How such a science should develop is considered in the next section.

OPERATIONALIZING THE GOAL OF PROFILING

Adapting this general goal of profiling to a scientific model is a somewhat different process from that which has been attempted in nonscientific

profiling. In the latter, the effort to identify the specific offender responsible for a particular offense or series of offenses has historically involved viewing criminal profilers as uniquely talented individuals who examine crime scene evidence and produce uncannily accurate descriptions of the unidentified offender.

Rather than relying on some unspecified inherited or learned skill set, a scientific approach to profiling would involve three major steps, which are discussed in the following sections.

Step 1: Evaluating Crime Scene Evidence

Considering that the goal of profiling is to identify an unknown offender, and given that the only information available in a profiling scenario is likely to be the crime scene evidence, a scientific approach to profiling must begin with a discussion of crime scene evidence and a plan for relating it to characteristics of the unknown offender. Chapter 7 addresses this in the following manner: First, the concept of crime scene evidence will be defined. This definition will encompass not only physical evidence, such as blood, fibers, and weapons, but also witness descriptions (when available), victim information, and other pieces of information that can be derived from the crime events themselves. Second, the types of crime scene evidence that are likely to be available for use in generating predictions about offender characteristics will be identified, and their potential utility will be described. For example, the description of firearms in chapter 7 includes a list of firearm components that can be tested by forensic scientists, the types of analyses that can be conducted, and the information that can be gleaned from those analyses. Third, crime reconstruction will be discussed as a strategy for relating crime scene evidence to offender behaviors. This procedure involves using logic and findings from forensic science to identify the timeline and sequence of crime events and offender actions. The process of extracting offender behaviors from pieces and patterns of crime scene evidence through crime reconstruction is an element that is essential to making predictions about unknown offenders. Although pieces of crime scene evidence alone (e.g., glass fragments on the outside windowsill of a burglarized home) may not be directly valuable to understanding an offender, translating that crime scene evidence into information about the unknown offender's behavior (e.g., the window was broken from the inside) is the first step toward making predictions that may lead to his apprehension (e.g., the burglar was someone who was already inside the house rather than someone who gained entry through force). The strategy of crime reconstruction will be evaluated with regard to its ability to generate reliable and valid predictions about behaviors on the basis of crime scene evidence.

Step 2: Relating Information From Crime Reconstruction to the Motives, Personality Characteristics, and Behaviors of Known Offenders

To attempt to identify *unknown* offenders on the basis of crime scene evidence, one must first describe the relationships that link crime scene evidence to characteristics of *known* offenders. Aside from using the direct links that can be found between certain types of crime scene evidence (e.g., DNA) and offenders, scientists must begin to empirically examine potential relationships between the types of crime scene evidence and offender actions derived from crime reconstruction and other offender characteristics that may assist in identifying an unknown perpetrator. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 discuss this process in the following manner. First, in chapter 8, the three main groups of offender characteristics believed to be valuable to law enforcement investigations are identified and defined. These three groups of offender characteristics are motives, personality, and behavior. As discussed in the following sections, motives and personality are latent, unobservable constructs that demonstrate their value to investigation through their expression as behaviors. In turn, behavior encompasses both the crime-related behaviors derived from crime reconstruction and the more general life behaviors of an offender that may be predicted from motive, personality, and crime-related behaviors. Second, chapters 9 and 10 discuss in greater detail the offender characteristics of motive and personality, respectively, and their relationship to the offender characteristic of behavior. Studies from the offender literature will be reviewed for each offender characteristic, to provide information about the nature of that characteristic and its potential utility in a criminal investigation. This literature is also selectively reviewed to exemplify the few links that have already been demonstrated between offender behavior and motive and personality.

Step 3: Testing Profiling Predictions

To advance the profiling field, it is essential that the proposed relationships between the components of a model be validated. To accomplish this, chapter 11 presents a model of the structure of relationships between crime scene evidence and offender characteristics, based on the offender literature and the evaluation of chapters 8, 9, and 10. Next, chapter 12 discusses the steps involved in testing the predictive power of relationships among crime scene evidence, motive, personality, and offender behaviors. First, the types of data sets to be used for testing predictions are suggested, and potential variables to be extracted from those data sets for testing are discussed. Second, hypothesis testing is discussed to establish links between crime scene evidence and important offender characteristics. This discussion will

address the differences in testing both direct and indirect relationships between variables in the model. Although there may certainly be direct relationships between crime scene evidence and offender characteristics, there are also likely to be more complex interrelationships between these two sets of variables. For example, in a relatively direct relationship between crime scene evidence and offender characteristics, a witness might describe to an investigator that she defended herself from an attacker by dousing him in the face with boiling water. In this example, the crime scene evidence might lead to the prediction that the perpetrator will seek medical treatment for burns on his face. In a more complex example, a timid offender might be inclined to flee if his victim begins to approach him with a pot of boiling water, whereas an offender more inclined to be a risk-taker might not flee. In this example, the timidity or boldness evidenced in an offender's personality might moderate his response to the unexpected event of being approached with a pot of boiling water, such that one might predict that only the bold offender would sustain burns on his face. In turn, other personality characteristics, such as the offender's ability to cope with pain, might lead to further differential predictions about whether he would seek medical attention. Hypotheses designed to address the links between crime scene evidence and offender characteristics must take both of these processes into account to comprehensively explain the profiling process.

Taken together, the processes described in chapters 7 through 12 will arm investigators with the science to test predictions that have long been adhered to in profiling practice as well as novel predictions that are sure to develop as the field matures. Although building this science of profiling involves a great deal of starting over, the overarching goals of a science of profiling are actually quite consistent with the aspirations of the extant profiling models and with the tradition that began with profiling's early beginnings in literature and the work of John Douglas and Robert Ressler. The hope of a profiling science is that it will become a tool for law enforcement investigators to use when traditional investigative methods fail to identify an offender from the available information. However, the lesson learned from the existing approaches to profiling is that, without science, the field will be unable to determine whether profiling works and, if it does work, how. Professionals in the field of profiling must not only begin to answer questions about its efficacy and effectiveness to be respected as a science but also ensure that the practice of profiling provides an incremental benefit beyond traditional investigative methods and contributes to increasing the accuracy of criminal investigations.

As noted earlier, at this stage in the development of profiling techniques the goal of a science of profiling should not be to replace the law enforcement officer. Any application of science to individual crimes will necessarily involve the discretion of law enforcement investigators, and although a

science of profiling may not be able to supplant the role of the law enforcement officer, by using scientific principles, and by relying on the scientific psychological literature, it may be possible to increase investigative accuracy and efficiency. Therefore, chapter 13 discusses heuristics for current profiling practice, given the state of the science and the importance of law enforcement investigative practice.