Chapter 15

Criminal Profiling
Introduction—Objectives

1. List key contributors to and their work in the field of criminal profiling.
2. Explain the stages of the criminal profiling process.
3. Assess the importance of victimology in the criminal profiling process.
4. Differentiate between the roles of the investigator and the profiler.
5. Explain the value of developing a victim’s timeline.
Introduction—Vocabulary

- **Criminal profiler**—a person who infers the personality and characteristics of a suspect based on information gathered from a crime scene

- **Modus operandi (MO)**—also referred to as the *method of operation*, a recognized pattern of behavior in the commission of a crime
Introduction—Vocabulary

- **Signature**—something unusual or specific left at the crime scene by the perpetrator
- **Victim**—person who has experienced harm, injuries, loss, or death
- **Victimology**—the study of victims affected by crime, accidents, or natural disasters
Victimology (Obj 15.4, 15.5, 15.6)

- A **victim** is a person who has experienced harm, injuries, loss, or death.
- **Victimology** is the study of victims who have been affected by crime, accidents, or natural disasters.

*Figure 15.15.* Generally, a victim who exhibits a low level of risk is likely to know the perpetrator of the crime. On the other hand, if the victim exhibits a high level of risk, he or she is more likely to be a victim of opportunity.
Victimology

- Victim is as much a part of the crime as the crime scene, weapons, and eyewitnesses.
- Victim's background may provide us with important information about past activities or lifestyle, possibly leading directly to the generation of a suspect.
Important Info about the Victim

- Physical traits
- Marital status
- Personal lifestyle
- Occupation
- Education
- Medical history
- Criminal justice system history
- Family background
- Employment history
- Last known activities, including a timeline of events
- Personal diaries (if known and available)
- Map of travel prior to offence
- Drug and alcohol history
- Friends and enemies
Method Of Approach

- **Con** - an offender who deceives a victim into believing an imaginary situation exists, with the intention of luring the victim into a more favorable position for the offender, or lowering the victim's guard to make the attack easier.

- **Buffalo Bill** in the movie *The Silence of the Lambs*
Method of Approach

- **Surprise** - characterized by an offender laying in wait for his victim, then quickly subduing that person.

- **Blitz** - an approach where an offender rapidly and excessively uses force to quickly overcome the victim's defenses to get control of the situation.
Method of Attack

- the offender's mechanisms for initially overpowering a victim once he has made his approach
- may range from mild (such as verbal threats) to severe (overwhelming physical assault with the excessive use of a weapon)
- vital to understand what an offender is capable of and what he is comfortable with in a given environment, with a given victim
Victim Risk

- Assessment is very subjective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-risk victim</td>
<td>The lifestyle and social environment of the individual does not predispose him or her to being a victim of a crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-risk victim</td>
<td>The lifestyle and social environment of the individual can increase his or her risk of being a victim of a crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-risk victim</td>
<td>The lifestyle and social environment of the individual often puts him or her at risk of becoming the victim of a crime.</td>
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</table>

*Figure 15-16.* Victim risk assessment.
Victim Risk

All risks are considered from the perspective of the victim’s age, job, and criminal background.

- Aggressive nature
- Impulsive
- Anxious
- Passive
- Thrives on attention
- Self-inflicted injuries
- Poor self-image
- Negative
- Exhibits addictive behaviors
Victimology Assessment

- At the crime scene
  - Did the victim know the perpetrator?
  - Does the victim suspect anyone in particular and why?
  - Has the victim reported similar or other crimes in which he or she was the victim?
  - Is the victim carrying a weapon? Does the victim own a weapon?
  - Has the victim been in any other police reports in the past?
Victimology Assessment

- Forensics and profiling working together:
  - What are some of the victim’s general physical characteristics, including eye color, hair color, weight, and ethnicity?
  - Where does the victim work and what is his or her work schedule?
  - Does the victim have a criminal history? If so, investigators will ask the victim to explain.
  - What is the victim’s daily routine?
Victimology Assessment

- Working together (cont’d):
  - What is the contact information of the victim’s family members, friends, and coworkers?
  - What is the victim’s medical history, including mental health records?
  - What medications is the victim taking?
  - What is the victim’s education level?
  - Where does the victim live and with whom?
- Create a timeline of events
In 1989, police in Rochester, New York, realized they had a serial killer on their hands. Over the course of that year, bodies of several murdered women were found near the Genesee River. All of the women had been strangled and beaten. Several of them had been mutilated as well.

The river had washed away most of the evidence, and police had few leads as to the identity of the killer. Meanwhile, the body count continued to rise. The Rochester police contacted the FBI for assistance, and FBI profiler Gregg McCrary was assigned to the case. After analyzing the killer's modus operandi, McCrary predicted that the killer had some sort of sexual dysfunction and that murdering the women excited him. McCrary thought that the killer would be likely to revisit the bodies he dumped in order to prolong the pleasure he took from his crime. Because of McCrary's profile, when the next murder victim was discovered floating in the Genesee River on January 3, 1990, the police decided not to remove it immediately. Instead, they set up surveillance around the body to see if the killer would actually return. The police did not have to wait long. A man named Arthur Shawcross turned up on the bridge near where the body had been dumped.

The police arrested Shawcross and soon discovered that he had already been arrested and convicted for molesting and murdering two children almost 20 years before. He had been given only a 25-year sentence for that double homicide. He had served 15 years of the sentence and had been released on parole in 1987 (against the advice of his parole officer, who thought he was a danger to society). Shawcross was convicted of murdering a total of 11 women. He was given a sentence of 250 years for the crimes.
Profiling a Serial Killer

- Rochester, NY—1989, multiple murders
- Police ask for FBI profiler, Gregg McCrary
- McCrary studied the murder’s MO, and
- Concluded that the murderer probably would return to scene of the crime
- Police delayed collecting the next victim
- Arthur Shawcross returned to the crime scene and was arrested for the murder of 11 women
Introduction to Profiling

- Criminal profilers study evidence collected and analyzed by crime-scene investigators to formulate a hypothesis about a perpetrator’s:
  - Age
  - Personality
  - Lifestyle
  - Social environment
Behavioral Evidence

- Any physical, documentary, or testimonial evidence that helps establish whether, when, or how an action has taken place
History (Obj 15.1, 15.2)

- Cesare Lombroso, *The Criminal Man*, 1876
  - Suggested that criminals shared certain characteristics
  - Three general types
  - Science has since disproved that physical attributes can predict behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abnormal head size and shape in relation to the ethnicity of the criminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely large jaw and cheekbones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, pouty, pronounced lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely long arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A diminished chin or one that is extremely long, short, or flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abnormal size, shape of ears</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 15-3.* Lombroso thought that certain characteristics, such as those listed above, indicated that a person is more likely to commit crimes.
History

- Gerald Fosbroke, *Character Reading Through Analysis of the Features*, 1914 (later disproved)
- Erich Wulffen, *Woman as A Sexual Criminal*, 1935
- John O’Connell and Harry Soderman, *Modern Criminal Investigation*, 1930s
- Paul Kirk, *Criminal Investigation*, 1953
Modern Day Profiling

- Forensic psychiatrist
  - Interviews criminals and suspects
  - Evaluates personal history
  - Administers personality tests
  - Presents an opinion as testimony in court
- James Brussel, 1950s, viewed profiling as a diagnostic tool, bridging the gap between criminal investigators and forensic psychiatrists
Modern Day Profiling

- Howard Teten—created a criminal profiling division in 1970 for the FBI
- Jack Kirsh, an FBI agent, opened the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit (BSU)
- BSU is now directed by the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC)
The logic is that the way a person thinks guides his or her behavior.
1 – Input

A. Collecting evidence (for example)
   i. Placement of the victim and weapon(s)
   ii. Body position
   iii. Blood splatter
   iv. Condition of surroundings

B. History of the victim
   i. Employment and reputation
   ii. Social habits
   iii. Hobbies and interests

C. Autopsy report
2 – Decision Process Models

A. Classifying the crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Victims</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Cooling-Off Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single homicide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>does not apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double homicide</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>does not apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple homicide</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>does not apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass murder</td>
<td>4 or more</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>does not apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing spree</td>
<td>2 or more</td>
<td>2 or more</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial murders</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>may be days, weeks, months, or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 15-9. Classification of homicides based on the number of victims and the time between each event.*

B. Determining motives

C. Risk level of the victim
3 – Crime Assessment

A. Motivation behind the crime
   i. Premeditated and planned?
   ii. Impulsive and no plan?

B. **Modus Operandi**—the method of operation

C. **Signature**—repeating a habit at each crime scene

*Figure 15-13.* Often serial killers will leave behind a signature after committing the crime.
A typical profile includes estimates of:

i. Race
ii. Sex
iii. Physical characteristics
iv. Habits
v. Values and beliefs

B. Compare the profile with the decision process models (stage 2) and reconstruction of the crime scene
5 – Investigation

A. Begins after profiler submits written report
B. Seek and evaluate suspects that match the profile
6 – Apprehension

A. Apprehend
B. Interview
C. Interrogate
D. Arrest
Chapter Summary

- Criminal profilers estimate the characteristics and traits of a perpetrator to narrow the field of suspects.
- Criminal profiling dates back to the 1800s when Cesare Lombroso concluded that there were three types of criminals.
- In 1972, Jack Kirsh opened the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit and helped law enforcement solve cases by developing criminal profiles of unknown suspects.
The criminal profiling process has 6 stages:
- input,
- decision process models,
- crime assessment,
- criminal profile,
- investigation, and
- apprehension
Chapter Summary

- A **victim** is a person who has experienced harm, injuries, loss, or death.
- **Victimology** is the study victims who have been affected by crime, accidents, or natural disasters.
- By assessing a victim’s lifestyle, preferences, family, relationships, and routines, investigators may gather clues about potential suspects who had access to the victim.
Chapter Summary

- The investigator collects and analyzes physical evidence, and
- The profiler makes inferences about the personality and characteristics of a suspect based on the evidence gathered.
- A timeline of the victim’s events helps investigators determine who had access to the victim. The 24 hours leading up to the crime yields the most helpful information.