Chapter 15

The Image of Profiling

Media Treatment and General Impressions

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Summary

Criminal profiling, or simply profiling, is considered in terms of the manner in which it has been presented in the various public media outlets. Comments are offered about the messages being conveyed to the consumer of media material. The conclusion posited is that the perception one would derive of the nature and value of profiling seems to be dependent on the source of their impressions.

INTRODUCTION

Criminal profiling probably would not be receiving the attention it is today by the scientific community were it not for the attention it has been given by the media, in its various forms (movies, TV, novels, press, etc.). Public impressions are greatly influenced by the media, not always in positive ways. The hype and spin associated with criminal profiling is such that an informal survey of college students (criminal justice and psychology majors, in particular) would reveal a large percent stating that they intend to become profilers. The reality of profiling has been lost in the continual sensationalization of the practice by those who like to titillate others. This chapter will consider the various ways that profiling has been presented by the media. What is not covered are the scholarly journal articles and textbooks published in scientific venues.
People love going to the movies. Films heavy in crime and violence top the list of moneymakers. The saying is, crime sells. Since the early 1990s, there has been a steady stream of movies featuring criminal profiling in one form or another. Some contend that it all started with the movie *The Silence of the Lambs* (4). Few crime enthusiasts and/or those individuals wishing to pursue careers in the profiling of crimes have not seen the film at least once. The image of a young FBI agent-in-training collaborating with an incarcerated psychopathic psychiatrist to develop a profile of an at-large serial killer excites the imagination, while stretching the believability of the practice. Critics would argue that the film distorts the way the FBI conducts its business. Nevertheless, Clarice Starling has become a role model for many young women who see themselves someday as profilers.

When interest in profiling was awakened by *The Silence of the Lambs*, it was not long before the public realized that there was a prequel to the movie that was released 4 years earlier: *Manhunter* (3). The taste for Hannibal Lecter (no pun intended) sent moviegoers to video rental stores searching for the earlier film that portrayed the brilliant, though bizarre, psychiatrist who taunted and toyed with Clarice. The audience was hooked. And, Hollywood noticed.

Keeping the fascination at a fever pitch, the sequel (3) to *The Silence of the Lambs* was released in 2001: *Hannibal*. In this film, the adventures of Dr. Lecter are further explored as a new Clarice hunts him down before he escapes into oblivion. Linking profiling with the likes of Lecter certainly suggests that the practice requires mental prowess. The hunger for Lecter resulted in a remake of *Manhunter* in 2003, this time called *Red Dragon* because it was billed as being more faithful to the book on which the screenplay was based (2,4). These four films, then, probably did more than anything to bring the practice of criminal profiling to the attention of the world (at least that portion of the world that goes to the movie theater or rents videos).

Several other films were released that fed the moviegoers’ fascination with profiling. In 2000, *The Bone Collector* hit the theaters, with fictional detective Lincoln Rhyme (Denzel Washington) struggling from a paralyzed condition to identify a deranged cab driver who was killing passengers, all the while being targeted by the killer himself (5). Drama and excitement notwithstanding, the power of profiling could not be missed by the audience. Then, in 2001, Johnny Depp portrayed an investigator on the trail of “Jack the Ripper” in *From Hell* (6). In this case, however, the protagonist’s flaws were chemical addictions rather than physical paralysis. A year later, Clint Eastwood played a retired FBI profiler in *Blood Work* (7). The familiar theme
was evident: profiler with medical and/or emotional problems plays cat and mouse game with serial killer who enjoys toying with mind hunters.

Adding still to the fascination, but with seemingly less acceptance by the viewing audience, was the most recent film highlighting profiling and profilers: *Mindhunters* presented a group of FBI profilers-in-training secluded on an island for the purpose of a simulation exercise; all the while they were being systematically killed by another profiler who was targeting them (8). The task: profile the profiler or be killed. Judging from its brief run in US theaters and its quick release in DVD format, the film did not appear to capture the enthusiasm of profiler aficionados.

In addition to the foregoing, there are other films worth mentioning that added to the image (correct or otherwise) of criminal profiling. The year 1998 saw the release of *Copycat*, starring Sigourney Weaver as a criminal psychologist who becomes the target of a serial killer’s protégé. She must team up with a detective (Holly Hunter) to profile the predator (9).

No discussion of movie portrayal of profiling would be complete without mentioning the films that featured Morgan Freeman as Dr. Alex Cross. In *Kiss the Girls*, Dr. Cross was on the trail of bicoastal serial killers as his niece had fallen victim to the east coast predator (10). And, in *Along Came a Spider*, the victim is a senator’s daughter (11). This time, Dr. Cross comes out of retirement to help solve the kidnapping case and unwittingly falls into the trap of aiding the kidnapper document the “crime of the century.”

HBO released *Citizen X* in 2000, a film about Russia’s most prolific serial killer, Andrei Chikatilo, who was eventually charged with 52 homicides (12). *Citizen X* spotlighted Max Von Sydow as psychiatrist Dr. Aleksandr Bukhanovsky, who wrote a psychological portrait of the killer that was essential to his confession.

The actors Ashley Judd, Samuel L. Jackson, and Andy Garcia starred in the 2003 movie *Twisted* (13). The plot involves a serial killer who targets men who once were involved with police inspector Jessica Sheppard (Judd), making her the prime suspect. The challenge: figure out whodunit by using good detective work and profiling.

Angelina Jolie starred in the 2004 movie *Taking Lives*, in which Jolie plays FBI profiler Illeana Scott (14). She is assigned a case involving a killer who for 20 years has been assuming the identities of his victims. Her task is to find him by figuring out “what makes him tick.” This phrase seems to be popular among profiling fans.

Lastly, Ben Kingsley starred in the 2004 film *Suspect Zero*, a movie about an FBI-trained profiler who had the ability to telepathically get into the minds of killers. Trouble is, other profilers suspect that Kingsley (Benjamin O’Ryan in the film) may have become a serial killer dubbed suspect zero (15).
These movies are, no doubt, not all the films that have featured profiling in one form or another. However, they do represent the most popular and/or well-known silver screen presentations on the subject matter. Taken together, the discussed movies paint a picture of criminal profiling as a practiced art that pits the mind of the detective/investigator/psychologist against the mind of the serial predator. One might get the impression that profiling attracts troubled people (if not troubled to begin with, they soon become so) who investigate the worst of humanity. The expression “it takes one to know one” may be apropos.

**PROFILING IN NOVELS**

Several of the movies previously discussed were originally novels. Still, there are other novels that feature profiling that have not yet made it to the movies. First, those that have inspired screenplays.

Thomas Harris published *The Silence of the Lambs* in 1988 (16). Although the movie by the same name captured the essence of the book, there were differences in the plot details. Other Thomas Harris novels spawned movies: *Red Dragon*, published in 1981, introduced the world to Dr. Hannibal Lecter and Special Agent Will Graham (17). Together, they profiled the killer known as the Tooth Fairy. This novel formed the basis for two movies: *Manhunter* (1986) and *Red Dragon* (2003). Harris’ third book, *Hannibal*, published in 1999, was the basis for the movie by the same title, released in 2001 (18). In general, Thomas Harris has been responsible for the great interest in profiling generated by his novels. Though fictional, these works were partly based on research conducted on site at the FBI Academy and interviews with several profilers.

The books of James Patterson inspired two movies. Patterson published *Kiss the Girls* in 1995 (19), and the movie by the same name was released 2 years later. He previously wrote *Along Came a Spider* in 1993 (20); the movie came out in 2001. Profiling was central to the story in these two novels. Moreover, the character of Dr. Alex Cross seems to embody the skills of a seasoned detective and the insight of a forensic psychologist.

Jeffery Deaver published *The Bone Collector* in 1997 (21), and the movie by that name was released in 2000. Michael Connelly published *Blood Work* in 1998 (22), and its movie namesake was released in 2002. Based on the success of these novels and the skill of these writers, more novels-turned-movies about profiling can be expected.

Now, for novels not yet in movie form. Michael Connelly has published two follow-on novels featuring retired FBI Agent/profiler Terry McCaleb that would provide grist for movie scripts: *A Darkness More Than Night* (23) and
The Image of Profiling

The Narrows (24). An earlier book by Connelly (1996), The Poet, introduced the FBI Behavioral Science Unit (BSU) and called on profilers to help solve the serial killing of homicide detectives (25).

Indeed, retired FBI agent John Douglas has written two novels about profiling (as well as numerous non-fictional works). Released in 1999 and co-authored by Mark Olshaker, Broken Wings is a novel about a forced-out-of-the-Bureau agent and profiler who is called on to solve the murder of the FBI Director (26). Together with other “broken wings,” fictional agent Jake Donovan takes on a case of major proportions, demonstrating his superior skills. A sequel authored solely by Douglas, Man Down (27), finds Donovan and his broken wings team investigating the death of a government scientist in North Carolina. The cost of profiling to the profiler becomes evidently clear, as Donovan’s life takes many turns for the worse. The theme that profiling has a cost to the profiler emerges in novels.

C.J. Koehler wrote Profile, which was published in 1994 (28). This is the story of psychiatrist Dr. Lisa Robbins, who is being stalked by her own patient—a man who may be responsible for a rash of murders. But, the plot deepens as other suspects emerge and professional ethics prohibit disclosing patient information. Psychiatrist and detective collaborate to profile the killer.

A complex historical novel by Caleb Carr (1994), The Alienist, features Dr. Laszlo Kreizler, eminent physician and alienist (psychiatrist), who is called on to assist in solving serial child murders in 1896 New York City (29). More recently, Kay Hooper published Hunting Fear in 2004 (30). The plot to this novel not only calls on FBI profilers to solve a serial murder but also enlists the talents of psychics. While entertaining, mixing profiling and psychic skills is a line crossed by one particular TV show in the 1990s. However, the credibility of the former is not enhanced by the lack of credibility of the latter.

There are, doubtless, many more novels that allude to profiling or make it a major focus to the plot development. One cannot be aware of all novels in print that bear on the subject. However, one can conclude that most novels will tend to depart somewhat from reality, if not in specifics, then in generalities. Profiling sells books because readers are fascinated by the concept of getting inside a criminal’s mind.

**Profiling in Non-Fictional/Biographical Books**

Novels are not the only books that have capitalized on the strong public interest in profiling. Perhaps as pervasive as movies and novels, but aimed at a different audience, are non-fictional-autobiographical books on the subject.
Indeed, there appears to be no shortage of such books. A list of many such books is presented in Table 1. Arguably, the most prolific of biographical writers on profiling is retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent John Douglas. Together with co-author Mark Olshaker, he has published five works that chronicle his life and experiences as a profiler in the FBI BSU over a 25-year period.

The first by Douglas and Olshaker was entitled *Mindhunter* and provides an account of how Douglas became a profiler and the claimed successes he has achieved, despite personal difficulties. Douglas and Olshaker’s second book entitled *Journey Into Darkness* was published in 1997 and continues the odyssey of Douglas’s personal accounts in profiling, but more pointedly focuses on the “minds and motives of the most terrifying serial killers.” The third book produced by Douglas and Olshaker entitled *Obsession* focuses on not only murderers but also rapists, stalkers, and their victims. The evident popularity of Douglas and Olshaker’s first three books can be gauged by their additional release in audio formats.

The fourth book by Douglas and Olshaker entitled *The Anatomy of Motive* has the authors attempting to explain the motives behind serial crimes and thus concurrently explore the common building blocks contributing to the violent antisocial personality. The fifth contribution by Douglas and Olshaker entitled *The Cases That Haunt Us* presents an examination of seven notorious unsolved and/or controversial murder cases such as Jack the Ripper (the Whitechapel Murders), the Zodiac killer, and the murder of JonBenet Ramsey. Finally, John Douglas has recently collaborated with Stephen Singular in 2003 to publish *Anyone You Want Me to Be*, which explores the realm of computer crime, such as cyber-stalking.


*Lest one assume that Douglas and Olshaker were the first to present an account of the FBI BSU to the general public in book form, we need only point to Jeffers’ book *Who Killed Precious?* As the subtitle indicates, Jeffers examines “how FBI special agents combine psychology and high technology to identify violent criminals”.*
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>Mapping Murder</td>
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<td>Profile of a Criminal Mind</td>
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<td>Into the Minds of Madmen</td>
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<td>Between Good and Evil</td>
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DeNivį) subsequently produced *Profilers* in 2004, which presents a compilation of previously published journal articles predominantly from authors associated with the FBI BSU. Roger Depue, with Susan Schindehette, published *Between Good and Evil* in 2005. Thus, from 1992 to 2005, there has been
a steady stream of non-fictional biographical accounts chronicling the careers of retired profilers. The interest created by fictional films and novels may have generated a wider readership than might otherwise have been expected.

However, these retired FBI profilers were not alone in their desire/need to tell their stories. In other parts of the world, a different breed of profiler was busy gaining experiences that would lead to published accounts of profiling. In Canada, the work of Inspector Ron McKay, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, was presented in *Dark Paths, Cold Trails* by Doug Clark (47). In the United Kingdom, psychologist Paul Britton published *The Jigsaw Man* in 1997 (48) and *Picking Up the Pieces* in 2000 (49). Britton’s clinical approach to criminal profiling can be contrasted with the geographic approach favored by David Canter, who wrote *Criminal Shadows* (50) and *Mapping Murder* (51). Whereas Britton dubs himself “Britain’s foremost criminal psychologist,” Canter refers to himself as “Britain’s pioneering expert in psychological profiling.” Even so, author Robin Cook in *The Real Cracker: Investigating the Criminal Mind* (52) presents the case for two other Englishmen to receive top billing as UK profilers. Cook tells the true life stories of Dr. Richard Badcock, a forensic psychiatrist, and Dr. Julian Boon, an academic psychologist. He maintains that it is their contributions to criminal profiling that inspired the fictional character “Dr. Eddy Fitzgerald” in the popular British TV series *Cracker*.

Recently, fiction writer Patricia Cornwell tried her hand at non-fiction when she wrote and published *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper Case Closed* (53). Cornwell relies on her considerable forensic and technical skills to examine case materials to present evidence that the perpetrator was the famous artist Walter Sickert. Although professional profilers may not agree with her conclusion, her approach and thoroughness are noteworthy.

The experiences gained by investigators in Russia in the Chikatilo case presented in *Citizen X* by HBO are more fully explained in *The Killer Department* by Robert Cullen (54). Further south, a continent away in Africa, Micki Pistorius, a psychologist with the South African Police Service, recounts what she terms “a profiler’s true story” in *Catch Me a Killer* (55).

Returning to America, Godwin and Rosen (56) have published *Tracker*. Maurice Godwin was a student of David Canter at the University of Liverpool and on his graduation has returned to the United States and has engaged in consultative profiling work for law enforcement agencies in North Carolina and other states. He is highly critical of the profiling methods advocated by the FBI and claims a far greater success rate using geographic profiling.

A review of non-fictional books on profiling would not be complete without mentioning *Casebook of a Crime Psychiatrist* written by James Brussel in 1968 (57). His work and this book are often cited as the inspiration for the
beginnings of the profiling program at Quantico (FBI Academy) in the early 1970s. More recently, other psychiatrists claim special expertise getting inside the minds of the world’s most notorious murderers. One example is Helen Morrison, who wrote *My Life Among the Serial Killers* along with Harold Goldberg.

Dan Korem has written a book about profiling that departs from the biographical/testimonial approach taken by many profilers. In *The Art of Profiling: Reading People Right the First Time*, Korem provides the reader a tool for assessing a person’s profile, which he claims identifies how a person prefers to communicate, perform their job, and make decisions. In the foreword, written by James Reese (one of the original FBI BSU “mindhunters”), the Korem profiling system is lauded as a method that can be taught and passed on to others and thus, unlike profiling used by others, seems to be based on seasoned experience and gut instincts.

There are two other non-fictional books worthy of mention. Though not autobiographical and/or testimonial in nature, they both present a general view of profiling in terms understandable for the general reading audience. In 2003, Brian Innes published *Profile of a Criminal Mind*. Using many photographs and colorful graphics, this book presents a layman’s overview of profiling. Similarly, in 2004, David Owen published *Criminal Minds*, which offers an equally colorful pictorial overview of profiling.

As with the discussion of movies and novels, this presentation of non-fictional and/or biographical books on the subject of criminal profiling is not necessarily exhaustive in its coverage. From the list in Table 1, it can be seen that there has been a steady release of books on the subject, and in some cases, several per year. This is suggestive of a hungry market for information about criminal profiling, and no doubt new books are currently in production slated to appear in the future.

**Profiling on TV—Fictional**

Many fans of profiling have become so by watching television depictions. The late 1990s were perhaps the prime years for TV series about criminal profiling. Then, there was an apparent hiatus, during which the prime time profiling series were relegated to other non-sponsoring channels as re-runs as well as appearing in video (VHS/DVD) release.

Perhaps the best-known TV series on profiling (in North America) was *The Profiler*, which aired on NBC from 1996 to 1999. The show featured the actor Ally Walker playing the character of Dr. Samantha Walker, who was said to be an FBI forensic psychologist/profiler. The series mixed crime
drama with personal issues in the life of the profiler to create a weekly dose of thrills and excitement for the viewer. The biggest weakness from a scholarly perspective was the manner in which profiling skills were portrayed as somehow linked with psychic abilities. Rather than following some rational approach to profiling, Dr. Waters used her talents of seeing through the eyes of a perpetrator as to what occurred at a crime scene. Good theatrics, but unreal. *The Profiler* lasted four full seasons; however, when the final season saw a switch from “Dr. Waters” to a lawyer/profiler, the end was in sight.

Possibly unknown to most American TV viewers who were fans of the profiler genre was a series from England that aired on A&E from 1993 to 1995 *Cracker* starred Robbie Coltrane as “Dr. Eddie Fitzgerald,” an alcoholic, chain-smoking, compulsive-gambling, womanizing, irascible, criminal psychologist who consulted with the Manchester police on difficult cases that might lend themselves to profiling. Though apparently good at cracking cases (hence, the name), “Dr. Fitzgerald” was clearly portrayed as a flawed and troubled individual. So, what was the message? Profilers are talented, but eccentric (or in need of treatment).

Because *Cracker* received critical acclaim (no doubt due in part to Coltrane’s acting talents), an American version was filmed starring Robert Pastorelli as “Dr. Gerry ‘Fitz’ Fitzgerald,” police psychologist in Los Angeles, CA. Aired in 1997, Season 1 consisted of 16 1-hour episodes. The American “Fitz” was portrayed with the same flaws as the British “Eddie.” The program description states that “Fitz is a deeply troubled individual who can be insulting, nosy, a drunken excuse for a husband, a lousy father, and a gambling washout.” However, his one redeeming quality—“an uncanny ability to see the evil in people, bring them to confess, and walk away unscathed.” The series lasted one season. The series tried to replicate a British success at a time when the American audience interest may have been waning. In 2005, out on DVD for posterity, it is sad to note that the star, Robert Pastorelli, died last year due to an apparent drug overdose.

Fox TV produced a series called *Millennium* that aired from 1996 to 1999. The plot premise was as follows: A former FBI profiler (Frank Black) moves his family from Washington, DC, to Seattle, WA, where he joins the Millennium Group, a mysterious organization of former law enforcement officers, committed to battling a crime wave that grows as the turn of the millennium approaches. The allusion to the real Academy Group does not go

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† As of this writing, a recently discovered series about a fictional psychologist/profiler, *Wire in the Blood*, is now entering its fourth season on BBC.

‡ The “Academy Group” being a private forensic consultancy business.
unnoticed. *Millennium* is a dark series with an eerie quality reminiscent of *The X-Files* (same creator—Chris Carter). “Frank Black” is described as having “an uncanny and often unsettling ability to see into the twisted minds of serial killers.” His so-called gift causes him much inner turmoil. Yet, he knows he can use his ability to help others, so he persists.

It appeared that the profiler TV shows had run their course when *The Profiler*, British *Cracker*, American *Cracker*, and *Millennium* all disappeared from the airwaves by 2000. Was this just the end of viewer interest or the end of producer interest or perhaps both? Whatever caused the discontinuance of these series seems to be a past concern as a new series (66) aired on CBS in the fall of 2005—*Criminal Minds*—starring Mandy Patinkin as “Jason Gideon.” So far, only the first season’s episodes have aired, and the essence of the show seems clear. FBI profiler “Gideon” and his team approach crimes in a manner that appears right out of the pages of a John Douglas book. However, there is a hint of Robert Ressler in “Gideon.” Each episode has at least one quote from a philosopher or sage about the human tragedy, making one think about the abyss metaphor often cited when looking into the minds of evil men. Platitudes are plentiful (e.g., all arsonists have problems with authority) to a degree not found in real knowledge of human behavior. The uncertainties of human psychology come across as black and white. The series is billed as one that focuses on profilers who “get inside the minds” of serial criminals. Trailers for the show remind viewers that “to understand a criminal, you have to think like one.”

It appears that all the major US networks have now produced a television series based around profilers with varying degrees of success. From British to American, psychic to dark, the series do not appear to last more than one to four seasons.

**TV—DOCUMENTARY**

The fleeting success of fictional TV series about criminal profiling could be indicative of an audience desiring more serious treatment of the subject. With that as a premise, several documentary programs have aired on TV and/or in classrooms across the country that, perhaps, do a better job of presenting an objective analysis of profiling. *Mind of a Serial Killer* aired on NOVA in 1992. Narrated by Patrick Stewart, this program went behind the scenes of the FBI Investigative Support Unit “where psychological detectives race against time to penetrate the minds and emotions of the most elusive murderers” (67). This documentary was produced by Mark Olshaker and featured some of the prominent personnel associated with the work of the FBI BSU (e.g., John Douglas and Robert
Ressler) and showcased such cases as the Atlanta child murderer Wayne Williams and Arthur J. Shawcross, among others. It does not seem surprising that favorable comments were offered about profiling.

American Justice on A&E produced a somewhat similar documentary called simply Profilers (68). Featuring some of the same cases as the NOVA program, this documentary spotlighted FBI profiler John Douglas, lauding his skills and insight into the mind of a criminal. An updated version of this program appeared on DVD as part of a series entitled Serial Killers: Profiling the Criminal Mind (69). The program was a positive and favorable presentation of FBI criminal profiling, with highlights on John Douglas and Roy Hazelwood.

Whereas NOVA and A&E had praise for the FBI profilers, Films for the Humanities & Sciences produced a documentary video titled Inside the Mind of Criminal Profilers in 2001 (70) that focused on a different collection of profilers: David Caldwell (South Carolina Law Enforcement Division), Gus Gary (ATF), Dayle Hinman (Florida Department of Law Enforcement), and Mike Prodan (Riverside County, CA). Cases included various types of murder (sexual, child, and prostitute) and serial arson. These profilers were interviewed and highlighted in terms of their manner of applying profiling techniques. The narrator cited the “amazing accuracy of these profiles” as being the key to solving crimes. Profiling was again shown in a very favorable light.

From praise and unquestioning acceptance of profiling and profilers, a shift occurred with the production of the next documentary by Films for the Humanities & Sciences. To Catch a Killer: The Use and Abuse of Criminal Profiling (71) takes a more critical look at profiling in practice. It begins with a consideration of the development and use of criminal profiling (featuring Robert Ressler, FBI and Kris Mohandie, LAPD), then discusses the use of profiling as applied to serial rape and murder cases in England. Profiling was utilized to link the crimes based on similarity of signature aspects of the so-called Railway Rapist. Although profiling “doesn’t provide evidence,” it was used to solve this crime. However, in another case, the use of profiling was considered misguided. In the Rachel Nickell murder case, psychologist Paul Britton constructed a “somewhat vague” profile. On the basis of this profile, a scheme emerged to lure suspect Colin Stagg into admitting guilt by arranging a liaison with an undercover female officer. Using profiling to entrap a suspect was deemed inappropriate by the British court, and psychologist Britton faced sanction. The suspect was released and the Rachel Nickell case remains unsolved. Critics state that “profiling should never hijack an investigation.” It merely serves as an investigative aid.

Court TV, as part of The System series, released a documentary (72) titled The New Profilers in 2003 that focused on some different individuals, perhaps a
second generation of profilers. Featured individuals included Dr. Eric Hickey, a California academic who teaches criminal psychology and consults with police on cases and Kate Lines, a profiler with the Ontario Provincial Police and trained by the FBI. Also featured is Leslie D’Ambrosia, a profiler with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and Brad Moore, a Canadian geographic profiler who interestingly claims to be one of four in the world qualified to do this. The uses of profiling included identifying murder suspects where crime scene staging was evident, threat assessment in a romantic stalking case, and offender identification based on geographic behavior patterns. Amazingly, there was even a segment featuring Robert Ressler demonstrating “reverse profiling.” Profiling used to prove that a convicted man was innocent is certainly a new application of a technique intended to narrow the suspect pool. However, York County (SC) Sheriff Bruce Bryant disagreed with Ressler’s application of profiling. The scientific validity of profiling was questioned.

Dayle Hinman received special recognition in a 2004 Court TV release of Body of Evidence: From the Case Files of Dayle Hinman (73). Now retired from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), she recounts in this DVD series that aired on Court TV in the preceding years her cases and how she applied the techniques of profiling. It is not altogether clear in these cases where criminal investigation ends and criminal profiling begins.

MSNBC aired a documentary on profiling (74) on July 23, 2005 in its program Dark Heart, Iron Hand that featured John Yarbrough [a profiler with the Los Angeles (CA) Sheriff’s Office], Kris Mohandie (former LAPD psychologist), Leslie D’Ambrosia (FDLE), and Helen Morrison (forensic psychiatrist). Though focused on serial killers and what may lead someone to become one, the interviewed experts offered opinions and viewpoints, including the mixed outcome of research to date on profiling effectiveness. One point of view expressed that “seldom does profiling catch a criminal,” whereas an opposite opinion claimed that the “tool of profiling is very effective.” Host John Seigenthaler summed it up by saying “profiling is merely one tool” in crime investigation.

Considering the eight documentaries that have been discussed, the image of profiling appears to be more of a skill/technique that has to be taught and practiced by dedicated individuals to be effective. Unlike the fictional TV series, documentaries do not push the psychic side of profiling, nor do they suggest that profilers are somehow flawed individuals obsessed with the dark side of human nature. A distinct shift in theory was noticed in the documentaries that contrasts with the original dictum of profiling. For years, it has been repeated as a truism among profilers that “behavior reflects personality.” Whatever that really means from a scientific psychology perspective is arguable. Now,
however, new profilers are saying “personality directs behavior.” One statement seems retrospective, the other prospective. It seems from these documentaries that profilers are looking both ways.

**PROFILING IN MAGAZINES/PERIODICALS**

The scope and magnitude of coverage of criminal profiling in popular magazines and periodicals is almost impossible to calculate. Hundreds (if not thousands) of articles have appeared in magazines of all kinds and in periodicals (e.g., newsletters) ever since the word “profiling” was first uttered in the early 1970s. An Internet search using Google yields 169,000 hits for the key words “criminal personality profiling.” Add the word “articles” and the count goes to 9,950,000. Modify the search with the word “magazine” and the hits reduce to 2,690,000. Clearly, it is a daunting task to survey all that has been written about profiling. Rather than presume that capability, this section will consider what will be termed two “bookend” articles that have appeared in general readership publications.

The first bookend article that piqued interest in profiling appeared in *Psychology Today* magazine in the early 1980s and exposed the general public to the existence of the FBI profilers and their practices. Bruce Porter (75) wrote an intriguing article “Mind Hunters” that carried the subtitle “Tracking down serial killers with the FBI’s psychological profiling team.” If not the first, it certainly was one of the initial articles published outside of law enforcement or academic circles on the subject of profiling. This article discussed, through the use of case examples, “the latest weapon in the FBI arsenal: psychological profiling.” Cases cited included the Mad Bomber of New York City (George Metesky) and the Son of Sam killer (David Berkowitz) to name a few. Compared with criminal sleuths of the past, these FBI profilers were identified as the first generation: Richard Ault, Roger Depue, Robert Ressler, John Douglas, Roy Hazelwood, Jim Reese, Swanson Carter, Robert Schaefer, and Ken Lanning. Through pictures and text, this article introduced FBI profiling to the public and arguably inspired a new generation of profilers in the process.

Moving forward 21 years from this *Psychology Today* article (published in 2004) and the second notable ‘bookend’ article attempts to provide a succinct and contemporary summary of the state of profiling. Thus, in 2004, *Monitor on Psychology* published the article by Lea Winerman (76) entitled “Criminal profiling: the reality behind the myth” and examined the practice from the vantage point of nearly 30 years of trial and error. Citing the various major approaches that have now evolved (e.g., criminal investigative analysis, investigative psychology, crime action profiling), Winerman highlights that
practitioners do not always agree on methodology. Nevertheless, their common goal is to “help investigators examine evidence from crime scenes and victim and witness reports to develop offender descriptions” (76). Imbedded within this article is a sidebar that discusses whether profiling really works. Mentioned therein is the work of Anthony Pinizzotto and Richard Kocsis, who have made noteworthy contributions to the understanding of profiling validity. Sharing the limits of profiling effectiveness is something that we do not find too often in other forms of media presentation, certainly not in movies, TV series, and novels.

**Profiling in Newsmagazines**

Like other magazines, newsmagazines have covered the topic of profiling in a scope that is hard to measure with certainty. There have been, however, a few noteworthy examples where profiling received extensive coverage in a newsmagazine (e.g., *Time, Newsweek*). The following examples should suffice.

In 1986, Michaud wrote an article (77) for the *New York Times Magazine* titled “The FBI’s psyche squad.” Similar to the article by Porter (75), this essay was an overview of the FBI BSU and its profilers. The July 23, 1990 issue of *Newsweek* featured a cover story about “The mind of the rapist” that offered insight into the kinds and motivations of rapist (78). Though no FBI profilers were specifically mentioned, the Groth typology often relied on by profilers was elaborated on. *Newsweek* concluded in this article that “no single profile fits all rapists.”

The April 1, 1991 issue of *Newsweek* focused on the mainstreaming of violence. In the article titled “Violence in our culture,” there is reference to Hannibal Lecter and *The Silence of the Lambs* that is used to develop an argument about the effects of violence in the media (79). It should be remembered that it was the fictional Dr. Lecter who, arguably, stimulated much public fascination with serial killers and profilers. On the same day (April 1, 1991), *People* magazine featured an article called “Cops, killers & cannibals” that spotlighted the cast and crew of Jonathan Demme’s movie and how they spent time at the FBI BSU in preparation for their roles (80).

*Newsweek*, February 3, 1992, had a cover story about “The Secret Life of Jeffrey Dahmer.” The article “Secrets of a Serial Killer” (81) stated that Jeffrey Dahmer is a “case study of a criminal soul in torment, languid one moment, frantic the next—always deadly.” Eric Hickey was quoted regarding the typical profile of a serial killer. John Douglas points out that serial killers are obsessed with domination and control. Henry Lee Lucas, in an accompanying article about imprisoning notorious killers, prophetically says “prison isn’t kind to killers of young people. Dahmer will be ‘lucky’ to stay alive.”
“The Mind of the Unabomber” was the story on the cover of Newsweek, April 15, 1996. Two articles provided extensive analysis of Theodore Kaczynski and his crimes: “Probing the mind of a killer” (82) and “The end of the road” (83). The first article examined Kaczynski’s life with a view toward reconciling it with the FBI profile (that did not lead to his capture). The second article describes the capture of the Unabomber and how his brother was responsible for turning him in to authorities.

U.S. News & World Report had an article in its April 22, 1996 issue titled “How the FBI paints portraits of the nation’s most wanted” (84). It focused on the work of criminal profilers and how they profile criminals, citing the Unabomber case as a good example. [In a subsequent U.S. News & World Report issue (November 17, 1997), the same writer was critical of the FBI’s approach to profiling the Unabomber (85).] The April 22 article considered the research into criminal motives, methods, and thinking conducted by Ressler and Douglas that forms an important part of the profiling program. The article also discussed the relationship between the Investigative Support Unit and other FBI executives, and how profilers are viewed by some as little more than “crystal-ball gazers.”

The year 2002 saw a flurry of news articles about the D.C. snipers. Newsweek, October 21, reported on the manhunt for the then-termed “Tarot Card Killer” and stated that “profilers believe that the sniper was carefully watching—and thoroughly enjoying—the round-the-clock press attention to his exploits” (86). Likewise, Time, October 21, featured a geographic profiler (Kim Rossmo) in a story called “Inside the sniper manhunt” (87). Rossmo’s thesis that crimes are not random in a mathematical sense was put to the test. He was convinced that there was a geographic pattern to the crimes that would aid in catching the sniper. Lastly, Newsweek, November 4, presented a comprehensive summary of the crimes of 41-year-old John Allen (Williams) Muhammad and his protégé, 17-year-old John Lee Malvo. In “Descent into Evil,” Thomas (88) presented a complete profile of the killers.

There have been other articles about highly visible crimes and criminals before and after those mentioned in this section, in Newsweek, Time, U.S. News & World Report, and others. Those selected for consideration have some direct relevance to criminal profiling and reflect the manner of coverage by news magazines.

Profiling—on Balance

Criminal profiling has been considered through its presentation in the media—movies, novels, non-fiction books, TV series and documentaries, etc. It was found that no fewer than 15 movies have focused on profiling or profilers
over the past 15 years. Similarly, 15 novels were identified that had profiling or profilers as an integral part of their plot development. Amazingly, 31 non-fiction books were identified on the subject, reflecting the extent of self-promotion among profilers. Five TV series were cited as examples of prime-time profiling, and eight documentary-type videos were examined. Two “bookend” articles were highlighted and 12 examples of newsmagazine coverage were presented.

Based on this array of material, what can be said about the image of criminal profiling? Clearly, it is a topic that draws considerable public media attention. In the fictional media (movies, TV series, and novels), profiling is dramatized, glamorized, and even distorted for the effect of entertainment value. Profilers are portrayed as flawed individuals, in some ways not unlike the criminals they seek to identify: obsessed, driven, and troubled. In the non-fictional/biographical books, profiling is touted as truly remarkable in its effectiveness; profilers sell themselves and their claimed skills. And, in documentaries, general readership articles, and newsmagazines, there is more likely to be found a balanced presentation of profiling and profilers—the good and the bad. The impression one gets (or has) of profiling might be a function of the source of the knowledge about the art/technique as it is presented. As with any new tool or technique, those with a vested interest will point out the plusses, whereas those with competing interests will point out the flaws and limitations. A reasonable evaluation might lie somewhere in between these two positions.

The intent of this chapter has been to review and consider the various forms of media presentations of criminal profiling. It is often said that perception is reality. How does the general public perceive criminal profiling? If one believes the movies, novels, and TV shows on the subject, then the perception of profiling cannot square with the reality shared by some profilers. If one believes the self-promoting books, then profiling is nothing short of incredible.

We cannot take the media treatment of profiling too lightly. The public does realize that movies and novels are fictional portrayals and that there is a certain amount of flair and excitement added to the truth. Nevertheless, young minds are impressionable and the image of profiling in the media can influence expectations of actual real-world applications. Even seasoned investigators newly introduced to criminal profiling may have the wrong impression, thanks to fiction, and overcoming such erroneous beliefs may make training in the correct techniques of profiling that much more difficult. Kocsis et al. highlights concerns that “media portrayals of profiling that serve to promulgate a favorable reputation of the technique may be misleading and not reflective of the state of the art, especially when scientific validity
data are considered \([91, 92]\). The disparity between media portrayal of criminal profiling and reality needs to be pointed out so that those in law enforcement can make informed judgments about the effectiveness of the technique, and separate claims of promoters from scientific evidence.

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