

Book Review of *Criminal Profiling: An Introduction to Behavior Evidence*

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***Criminal Profiling: An Introduction to Behavior
Evidence Analysis (2nd Edition)*** by Brent Turvey.

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The serial killer or the sexual predator, whether truly mad or simply bad, does not plan or accomplish his evil in an empty void, but on a stage where characteristics of the criminal, may be inferred from things done, from things touched, from things taken, and from things left behind.

With this forward by John I. Thorton to Turvey's second edition of *Criminal Profiling*, the reader discovers early on that the object of criminal profiling, also referred to as investigative analysis, psychological profiling, and behavioral evidence analysis, is an attempt to categorize the personality characteristics of offenders by their behavior at crime scenes. The author explains that profiles are subjective and contain varying amounts of accuracy. This is inevitable because they are (1) based upon an interpretation of what occurred at the crime scene from the evidence present and (2) are inferences of the offender's psychological and demographical characteristics premised by this first set of interpretations. Thus, it is profoundly clear to the reader, and Turvey makes the apology, that criminal profiling is an art and not a science. Nonetheless, he makes an earnest attempt at elucidating the process, competing theories, and constraints of criminal profiling. His goal in presenting this book is not merely to educate, but also an attempt to validate the practice of criminal profiling through discussion and professionalization.

The first chapter is a presentation of the history of criminal profiling. Turvey explains its

earliest origins that include attempts by Cesare Lombroso in his book *The Criminal Man* to predict criminal motivation by offenders that share similar characteristics of race, age, sex, physical characteristics, education, and geographic origin. He covers the major contributors in the field and ends with lessons learned by the FBI in the 1970's to initiate the first criminal profiling program, which continues to this day.

A significant part of the FBI's process of criminal profiling is the inclusion of inferences based upon their prior studies of serial killers and rapists. As explained in chapter 2, these studies correlate the personality and demographic characteristics of known offenders with identified behavior at their crime scenes. This style of inductive profiling is dichotomous with the deductive profiling explained in chapter 3. Deductive profiles, according to Turvey, are based upon the totality of evidence that is observed and the behavior identified at a particular crime scene or series. Turvey maintains that deductive profiling is not constrained by inferences brought about by the often small-scale scientific studies by the FBI and others.

Chapter 4 is a warning on the pitfalls of arriving at an inaccurate profile due to failing to have all available case information, not questioning or finding proof for all assumptions and conclusions, and not working closely with other forensic scientists in using their knowledgebase in an interpretation of the offender's behavior at the crime scene.

Chapter 5 on crime reconstruction, chapter 6 on evidence dynamics, and chapter 7 on wound pattern analysis, are introductions to forensics. Stab wounds can identify an offender as being right or left handed, associate a sexual aspect to the crime when directed at certain parts of the

anatomy, or may be indicative of extreme anger when exhibiting evidence of “overkill”. Identifying antemortem, pre-death, from postmortem, and after-death wounds are critical because of what they often indicate to the profiler regarding motivation and personality. For this reason, Turvey makes his point clear that an analysis of the crime scene, one that is often burdened with inaccuracies, is essential to an accurate profile.

Victimology is the subject of chapters 8 and 9 and is, according to Turvey, the most important part of the profiling process. It seeks to answer why the victim was chosen over others, whether there was a prior relationship to the offender, and what activities in the victim’s lifestyle contributed to their demise. Risk levels are categorized into high, medium, and low, based upon an individual’s personal, professional, and social lives. This examination of the victim’s risk logically leads to an interpretation of the risk the offender took to commit the crime. This *offender incident risk* tells the profiler much about what the offender desires and how bad he wants it.

Chapter 10 covers false reports of victimization and the motivations behind them. *Crime scene characteristics*, the chapter title and term used by the author in chapter 11, describes the evidence at a crime scene that defines the offender’s behavioral decisions regarding the victim and the offense location. Moving a victim from the location first approached (point of contact) to another location to commit the attack (primary scene) and then to a third location to dispose of the body (disposal site) may tell much about the offender and his daily activities, though Turvey deliberately omits any reference to the developing science of geographical profiling (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). Identifying methods of approach (surprise, con, and blitz) and control (threats, restraints, use of weapon) may reveal more personality traits. Evidence of preplanning and precautionary acts, i.e. behaviors intended to confuse or hamper the investigation may suggest intelligence level, self-control, or familiarity with police investigation techniques and are important to the profiler to recognize.

Chapter 12 describes the organized/disorganized typologies of crime scenes and their correlation with psychopathic and psychotic offenders. Although used extensively in the criminal profiler community, especially by the FBI whose research resulted in this dichotomy of understanding serial sexual killers, (Ressler et al. 1986). Turvey opposes it. Similar to his opinion of inductive/deductive profiles, he feels it

unnecessarily confines the profiler to an either/or evaluation that does not account for all the variables that a less systemized approach would offer.

The next few chapters delve further into connecting crime scenes with an offender’s personality characteristics and demographics. The modus operandi (chapter 13) may indicate educational and technical training, as well as experience levels with crime and the criminal justice system. Signature behaviors, as defined by the author in chapter 15, are “those acts committed by an offender that are not necessary to commit the crime but that suggest the psychological or emotional needs of that offender” (p. 278). The positioning after death of a nude female homicide victim, carving messages on victim’s bodies, and the covering of a rape victim’s face with a towel during the assault, are all examples of signature behavior. Chapter 17 explains how offender characteristics can be deduced from the crime scene. Chapters 19 through 27 describe behaviors and motivations commonly associated with numerous crimes including arson and explosives, sadistic behavior, domestic homicide, stalking, cybercrime, serial homicide, and rape. These chapters assist the student in profiling by suggesting places to begin in their attempts to understand offenders that commit these particular crimes. Numerous examples are given to aid the development of this thought process.

Although the book by most measures is very comprehensive in the presentation of its subject matter, one glaring deficiency is in the omission of any reference to geographic profiling. Holmes and Holmes (2002) report that in their analysis of serial offenders, rapists, and murders, that offender mobility and crime site geography are not only important in understanding the offender, but often assist the investigator in identifying his place of residence, work, and recreation.

Criminal Profiling offers the undergraduate and masters level student a paradigm of understanding crime through offenders’ behavior and personality characteristics. Turvey is, at times, less than objective in his presentation of some of the material, which may unjustifiably prejudice students on other profiling experts’ opinions. For this reason, a secondary book on profiling, such as Holmes and Holmes *Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool*, is recommended for classroom reading.

REFERENCES

Holmes, Ronald M. and Holmes, Stephen, T. 2002. *Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool*. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publications.

Ressler, Robert K., Burgess, Ann W., Douglas, John E., Hartman, Carol, R. and D'Agostino, Ralph B. 1986. "Serial Killers and Their Victims: Identifying Patterns Through Crime Scene Analysis." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 1:288-308.