

A Study of the Science of Face Reading and Criminal Profiling.

By Lyle Miller

Introduction:

Criminal profiling has become a standard weapon for law enforcement today and has evolved into a special science inside of law enforcement. The FBI has a unit called the “National Center for The Analysis of Violent Crime” which works kidnappings, extortions, hijackings as well as other violent crimes. The NCAVC has three behavioral analysis units (BAU) - BAU 1 which deals with counter-terrorism and threat assessment, BAU 2 which deals with crimes against adults and BAU 3 which deals with crimes against children. An agent selected for one of the BAU’s enters a 16-week course involving such subjects as:

- Basic psychology
- Criminal psychology
- Forensic science
- Body recovery
- Criminal Investigative Analysis
- Death investigation
- Threat assessment
- Statement/document analysis
- Crimes against children
- Child abduction and homicide
- Sexual victimization of children / Internet issues
- Interview and interrogation procedures
- Serial murder

Notice that none of the coursework could be considered a study of the physical characteristics of the face looking for behavior. Witnesses are used to explore the characteristics of the face of a perpetrator for identification, but face reading could help explore behavior as well as explore the face characteristics.

Police sketch artists are a necessary link between the descriptions by a witness and a sketch. Police sketch artists primarily use a technique called composite drawing. Composite drawing is used because the FBI standardized the technique which made it possible to teach it to a variety of artists and non-artists, but the lack of support for sketches in most police departments and the lack of schooling available have resulted in very few composite artists that are full time professional police artists. In fact, in the entire U. S. there are only 19 artists working full time for police departments. There is only one school in the country (Scottsdale Arizona Art School) that offers a course in

composite drawing. This is an amazing fact given that the FBI made it their benchmark technique. Further, this fact underscores the lack of commitment to criminal sketching by police departments around the country.

History of Profiling:

Criminal profiling is generally considered to have begun in London in 1888 with the case of the infamous Jack the Ripper. It was the first documented case of police work using crime scene analysis in a systematic manner to build a pattern of behavior. In the early 1900's psychiatrists interviewed criminals in prison and published the motives and backgrounds of these criminals, but these studies were more explorations to understand the crimes rather than to develop behavioral profiles.

The next significant step forward in profiling happened during World War II. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was a United States intelligence agency formed during World War II. In 1942 the OSS commissioned a psychoanalyst to evaluate Adolf Hitler and present a behavioral profile so as to give the U.S. Government some basis for planning Hitler's war moves.

“The profile noted that Hitler was meticulous, conventional, and prudish about his body. He was robust and viewed himself as a standards-bearer and trendsetter. He had manic phases, yet took little exercise. He was in good health, so it was unlikely he would die from natural causes, but he was deteriorating mentally. He would not try to escape to some neutral country.

Hitler always walked diagonally from one corner to another when crossing a room and he whistled a marching tune. He feared syphilis, germs and moonlight, and loved severed heads. He detested the learned and the privileged, but enjoyed classical music, vaudeville, and Richard Wagner's opera. He also liked the circus acts that endangered people. He showed strong streaks of narcissism and sadism, and he tended to speak in long monologues rather than have conversations. He had difficulty establishing close relationships with anyone. Since he appeared to be delusional, it was possible that his psychological structures would collapse in the face of imminent defeat. The most likely scenario was that he would end his own life, because he'd threatened it before, although he might get one of his henchmen to do it for him.”

(CourtTV Crime Library - Criminal Profiling)



But let's look at Hitler. A face reader could add:

- that he wasn't the brightest bulb in the box, (small area from hairline to brows)
- was quick to communicate his ideas verbally, (low set brows)
- had feelings of inferiority, (white below iris)
- believed his was separate and apart from other human beings, (upper eyelid fold)
- had strong personal boundaries, (very thin eyelids)
- publicly he was wary of others but privately he was very open, (lower eyelid curve)
- had little tolerance for the ethics of others, (high cheekbones)
- leadership style, (wide cheeks)
- was quick to be overloaded with information, (small ears)
- was convinced that his personal truth was also the truth for others, (low border between inner ear circle and outer ear circle)
- had a habit of creating his own rules and boundaries, (out-angled ears)
- once committed to a course of action he was very tenacious and competitive, (wide jaw with prominent chin thrust)

Imagine what the OSS could have done with this added information.

After World War II there was spotty use of psychology by law enforcement until, in 1972, the FBI opened the Behavioral Science Unit that eventually evolved into the Behavioral Analysis Units mentioned earlier.

Today:

Professional criminal profilers are, first, criminal psychologists. Criminal psychologists study the behaviors of criminals in an attempt to understand why criminals operate the

way they do and, from that, develop the ability to predict patterns of behavior. Professional criminal psychologists almost always have advanced degrees in psychology, criminology or law enforcement.

Criminal profilers are criminal psychologists who study facts and information about specific crimes and the criminals involved. From this they attempt to discover specific behavioral traits and patterns and develop a reasonable guess as to how the criminal is likely to act, the personality and past experiences.

From CourtTV Crime Library:

At this stage, criminal or behavioral profiling is considered more an art than a science, based in a combination of analyzed data and extensive law enforcement experience. The method certainly has its critics, but it also can claim some success. Because profiling is based on patterns derived from knowledge about past cases, assuming that human behavior tends to show commonalities, it can seem to be uncannily accurate. But it can also go wrong and sometimes this type of analysis is no help at all. It is just one tool among many in police work. It's a guide, but profilers are quick to point out that the totality of details are not intended, and should not be taken, as gospel.

To devise a multi-dimensional profile, psychological investigators examine such aspects of the crime and crime scene (usually murder but other types of crime as well) as the weapon used, the type of killing site (and dump site, if different), details about the victim, method of transportation, time of day the crime was committed, and the relative position of items at the scene. "I use a formula," says former profiler John Douglas, "How plus why equals who. If we can answer the how's and why's in a crime, we generally can come up with the solution."

(CourtTV Crime Library - Criminal Profiling)

Face readers would probably say "How plus why equals face characteristics."

When a profiler summarizes a profile there are several steps involved:

- An evaluation of the criminal act
- An evaluation of the crime scene
- An analysis of the victim
- An examination of police reports
- An evaluation of the autopsy reports
- Development of a profile with UNSUB's (unknown subject) traits
- Suggestions based on the research and profile

(Criminal Psychology and Personality Profiling by Jan Esherick)

Notice that none of the above involves an attempt to describe facial characteristics yet face readers know that subjects with certain face structure will most likely exhibit certain behavior. For instance, the shape of the eyebrow is a powerful clue as to how someone deals with information. Curved indicate someone who deals with, or is sensitive to, the feelings of others. Straight eyebrow show someone with an inclination toward ideas and logic. Angled eyebrows show a person that exhibits some degree of social detachment and deeply angled brows can show someone who won't hesitate to get involved in a confrontation. If the witness and the artists can get it right, (admittedly not easy), this is good information for the police.

The FBI has polled many crimes and found that witnesses primarily notice four items about a face. They notice the eyes, nose, hair and ears - in that order. There's plenty of behavior information in those items to add an enormous amount of information to any **profiler's** profile.

With that in mind I did a survey of some 200 mug shots of murderers on Mugshots.com, (<http://www.mugshots.com/Criminal/Killers/>). I broke the survey into several categories. Here are the categories as well as the percent of mug shots exhibiting the trait in that category. The percentages don't necessarily add up to 100 percent because some of the features in some mug shots weren't visible or were graded as neutral.

Eyes:	up angled 25%	down angled 70%	
Upper eye lid	double lid with fold 94%	single lid 6%	
Lower eye lid	straight or nearly so 77%	curved 22%	
Eye brow	angled 30%	straight 60%	curved 9%
Nose padding	small 74%	big 25%	
Ears	out angled 56%	in angled 38%	
Lips proportions	full lower lip 48%	full upper lip 62%	(Some had both but I forgot to break it out.)

Chin shape	angled 17%	straight 82%	curved 0% (That's right - zero!)
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So - if 85 % of people have up-angled eyes, (Rose Rosetree - The Power of Face Reading) should we ignore that fact that only 25 % of killers have up-angled eyes? If down-angled eyes imply a talent for finding problems and 70 % of killers have down-angled eyes we can see the beginning of a behavioral profile. Now - if we couple that with the fact that 94 % of killers have a double eyelid with a fold, meaning viewing themselves as separate and apart from others, we can see further development of a behavioral profile. Add in the fact that 77 % of killers have straight or nearly straight lower eyelids and consider that these people have a talent for quickly judging people and a talent for rejecting **other** without worrying about it, we have a more complete behavioral profile.

Let's consider that 60 % of killers have straight eyebrows. That a talent for dealing with ideas and logic. Small nose padding is an indication of the desire to act alone and not to not be watched or judged and 74 % of killers have it. Out-angled ears is an indication that the person will do what he or she wants and think outside the box and 56% of killers have it. Also, fully 62 % of killers are willing and capable of talking about themselves - in fact, they want to talk about themselves. Then there are the killers with straight chins, (82 %), who need to deal with ideas as opposed to the 17 % of angled chins who need to stay in control when dealing with others.

Face reading can be much more detailed than this, but maybe not from witness accounts. If we just had the four traits that the FBI says are the first things noticed by victims and witnesses we could still build an impressive behavior profile that when added to profile developed by a professional criminal profiler could enhance the criminal investigation.

Again, the FBI the four traits first noticed by a victim or witness **is** eyes, nose, hair and ears. Let's leave out hair and use just use the other three.

Down-angled eyes are exhibited on 70 % of killers - a talent for finding problems.

Upper eyelid, 94 % - feeling separate from others
Lower eyelid straight or nearly so, 77 % - quickly judging people.

Straight eyebrows, 60 % - deals with ideas and logic.

Small nose padding is exhibited on 74% of killers - a desire to act alone and not be watched or judged.

Out-angled ears are exhibited on 56% of killers - an indication that the person will do what he or she wants and have a talent to think outside the box.

So right away we can say that many killers have a talent for finding problems, are loners and feel that they can do what they want.

With this information we could tell the profiler that a person with these traits is a person that has a talent for finding problems, keeps to him or herself, is quick to judge others, deals with ideas rather than feelings, wants to act alone and not be watched or judged and will do what he or she wants. This may or may not be much help to the profiler, depending on the nature of the crime, but what if the crime scene produced evidence that the UNSUB (unknown subject) had a need to dominate? Now we could infer an angled chin, which in turn could enhance the sketch.

There are many combinations that could be produced from not only the victim and witness accounts, but from analysis of the crime scene and statistics of the type of crime involved. Now the information for the sketch would come from two places, namely from people who have seen the UNSUB and a behavioral analysis of the crime scene - something that the profiler will do anyway. By applying face reading to the behavioral analysis the particular face characteristic can be inferred thereby greatly enhancing the sketch.

Profilers make four assumptions:

1. Crime scenes reflect their criminals' personalities.
2. A criminal will tend to use the same of similar modus operandi.
3. A criminal's "signature" remains the same. (A signature looks at actions taken during the crime that are unnecessary for the completions of the crime but that satisfy the criminal's emotional needs.)
4. The criminal's personality will not change.

(Criminal Psychology and Personality Profiling by Jan Esherick)

Assumptions 1 and 3 open the door for an effective use of face reading by criminal profilers.

Face reading could greatly enhance criminal profiling, but giving the lack of support of sketching and even profiling for minor crimes, the chances are quite small that face reading will find a home in law enforcement soon.

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