

PREFACE

How many books claim to get inside the mind of serial killers? Too many fail to do just that. This book is different, because it's not all about the grisly crimes those people have committed, it's more about them as people, their innermost thoughts from childhood through to incarceration, or in some cases, death. It's about their feelings, emotions, recollections and memories. It truly is about getting inside their heads and into their mindset.

This work isn't a gushing testimony about how wonderful global policing or the academic and scientific studies of serial killers is. None of those fields are supremely flawless, and let's get this straight from the outset - there exists an abundance of misrepresentation relating to the serial killer phenomenon from all sides. Despite claims to the contrary, we don't really understand them or their actions. In fact, after decades of working in this field and studying, researching and interacting with killers and those operating in the forensic aspect of this field, there exists a huge amount of inaccurate data on the subject, including the very origin of the term 'serial killer'.

I would suggest that few people reading this book will have heard of the German, Ernst August Ferdinand Gennat (1880 - 1939). He was, for a time, the Director of the Berlin Criminal Police. It was Gennat who first mentioned the term 'serienmörder' (translated into 'serial murderer') when referring to murderer Peter Kurten, in an article he penned titled 'Die Düsseldorfer Sexualverbrechen' in 1930.

The phrase 'serial killings' was used by concentration camp survivor and biblical scholar, Robert Eisler, in his 1951 book 'Man Into Wolf', during which he referred to serial killings portrayed in the Punch and Judy plays for children.

Thereafter, in 1961, German critic, Siegfried Kracauer (1889 - 1966) used the same phrase when writing a review of the classic German thriller titled 'M'. He referred to the character Hans Beckert (a pervert who preyed on vulnerable young girls in Berlin), played by actor Peter Lorre, as a serial murderer. The term was also used much later by author John Brophy in his 1966 book 'The Meaning of Murder' (Ronald Whiting & Wheaton).

The phrase is also mentioned by the Washington DC newspaper, Evening Star, in a 1967 review of the same Brophy book:

“There is a mass murderer - or what he (Brophy) calls the ‘serial killer’- who may be actuated by greed, such as insurance, or retention of growth of power, like the Medicis of Renaissance Italy, or Landru, the ‘bluebeard’ of the World War I period, who murdered numerous wives after taking their money.”

Thus, we have countless printed sources predating the term 'serial killer' - as associated to the late great FBI profiler, Robert Ressler - by five decades. To be fair to Ressler, one of the founders of the legendary FBI Behavioral Science Unit, he never claimed to be the sole creator of the term. That blame can be put down to writers across all fields, including scientific and academic, many of whom have incorrectly bestowed that honour on him. It's fair to say that it was Ressler who adapted its use into everyday crime writing language when, during a visit to Bramshill Police College, Hampshire, England in 1974, he made use of it as a description of killers who kill multiple times. It says something of the phenomenon that today there are few people across the world who do not understand its meaning or the FBI criteria for earning the title.

The first recorded use of profiling in more modern times was that of psychiatrist Walter Langer and some associates who were commissioned by the Official Secret Service, during WWII, to construct a psychodynamic profile of Adolf Hitler. The group carefully studied the German leader, resulting in them being able to correctly identify various predictors, including:

- As the war turns against him, his private emotions will intensify and there will follow more frequent outbursts.
- His public appearances will become less and less, as he is unable to confront a critical audience and he will become paranoid.
- An assassination attempt on him is likely, potentially by the German

aristocracy, the Wehrmacht officers or Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, because of his superhuman self-confidence in his military judgment.

- There will be no surrender, capitulation, or peace negotiations. The course he will follow will almost certainly be the road to ideological immortality, resulting in the greatest vengeance on a world he despises.
- He would likely commit suicide rather than face humiliation at losing the war, essentially having all power and control removed from him.

Langer and his associates proved that profiling does work if the correct methods of analysis are used including every available detail and fact being checked for accuracy.

A myth that for decades has been perpetuated, relates to how the formation of the FBI Behavioral Science Unit and the use of profiling came into being. As can be seen, it wasn't an FBI invention at all. That said, the story goes that in the 1950s, and more specifically in the world of Police investigations, the New York crimes of the 'Mad Bomber' (George Metesky), who, during a 16-year reign of terror planted bombs in movie theatres, train stations, subway stops and public buildings, caused panic throughout the city. No one was killed by any of the explosions, more by good luck than judgment, though Metesky later claimed it was the 'hand of God' that prevented loss of human life. However, much architectural devastation was caused via the explosions. At the time the Police, despite their best efforts, were at a loss about the identity of the mad bomber, and were mercilessly taunted by the offender, with missives and communications sent to them and signed with the initials 'F.P.'

In December 1956, Police Captain Howard Finney took the unprecedented step of approaching criminologist and psychologist, James Brussel, to carry out an assessment of the crimes, based mainly on crime scene photographs. Brussel had a theory that he could identify an unknown offender by their criminal behaviour. This, he determined, was a result of his work with deviants, who, he claimed, had their own logic. By entering their mindset, walking in their shoes, he claimed he could somehow decode patterns of behaviour and understand the personality of the offender.

Two full cases of evidence were handed to him for his professional assessment, from which he created an offender profile that ultimately led to an arrest and conviction of the bomber. If that all sounds rather too good to be true, you'd be right. The profile Brussel created, rather than providing a clear vision of the offender, was altogether murkier and extremely generic in its description.

The block capital handwriting in the missives held further clues to the offender's mindset he claimed. The letter 'W' was different, misshaped to look like two joined letter U's; and to his trained eye, looked not dissimilar to a pair of female breasts. The guess work didn't stop there as he went on to suggest the writer was a Slav. Two cases of evidence were deposited at his office for assessment from which he created a profile that ultimately led to an arrest. This is the profile he later claimed was the official one (it is very much different to the official profile submitted to the Police):

“Male. Knowledge of metalworking, pipefitting, and electricity who had suffered some grave injustice by Con Ed (Con Edison, being the company who he often maligned in communications with Police and the media) which had rendered him chronically ill. In addition, he suffered from paranoia with insidious development of his disorder. He would have a chronic disorder and suffered from persistent delusions which were unalterable, systematized and logically constructed. He was pathologically self-centered. Had a symmetric ‘athletic’ body type due to his paranoia, was middle-aged, due to onset of mental illness and duration of bombings. He had achieved a good level of education, not college but most if not all of high school. Unmarried and possibly a virgin, who lived alone or with a female, mother-like relative. Slavic Roman Catholic and he lived in Connecticut and was fond of wearing a buttoned, double-breasted suit.”

He then alleges that he told the case detectives:

“One more thing. I closed my eyes because I didn't want to see their reaction. I saw the Bomber; impeccably neat, absolutely proper. A man who would avoid the newer style of clothing until long custom had made them more conservative. I saw him clearly - much more clearly than the facts really warranted. I knew I was letting my imagination get the better of me, but I couldn't help it. ‘When you catch him - and I have no doubt you will, he'll be wearing a double-breasted suit, and it will be buttoned’.”

A month later, George Metesky was arrested and charged with the 'mad bomber' crimes. On arrest at his home, which he shared with his two older sisters, he was dressed in his nightclothes, a pair of pyjamas. He asked detectives if he could go and get changed before being taken to the Police station; they agreed. A few minutes later, he returned and was wearing a double-breasted suit, just as Brussel had suggested.

In his memoir 'Casebook of a Crime Psychiatrist' (Mayflower Press 1970) Brussel alludes to his profile being altogether more refined and focused. He becomes a legend with his unique set of skills which are almost mystical. He fails to mention the copious anomalies in the generalised profile he produced not only in this case, but in many others too.

One person who was convinced by the grandiose claims of Brussel was FBI agent Howard Teten. A serving Police officer in the USA, he seized the opportunity to develop the potential advantages of psychological profiling of criminal behaviour. When he joined the FBI in July 1969 he was to become the forefather of all things relating to the science of criminal behavioural and the formation of the legendary FBI Behavioural Science Unit in 1974. Teten was the mastermind behind it all and he can be forgiven for mistakenly believing the overinflated claims of psychologist Brussel.

The reality of this tale, and it is very much a tall tale, is very different to what genuinely happened. The story was sensationalised and produced by Brussel himself and he alone embellished the truth to portray himself in a better light in his own book. In the official profile not once did he mention Slavic descent to detectives; he advised them to look for someone born and educated in Germany. His claim that the bomber was someone between the age of forty and fifty was close; Metesky was over fifty. The official profile claimed he would live alone at home with his mother. He did not. He lived instead with his two older sisters - close but not accurate. The mad bomber was eventually caught not by the profile produced by Brussel, but as a result of a woman going through the personnel files of Con Edison employees past and present. The author of the taunting communications received by the Police clearly had issues with the company and felt he had been treated badly by them. It didn't take much working out that the killer may have been a disgruntled ex-employee, and so it made sense to conduct a thorough search of the personnel files for persons matching that criterion. Ultimately, it was a woman called Alice Kelly who initially identified George Metesky as a person of interest, and so passed his details to the Police. Based on her evidence alone, the Police were able to identify him as the person they had been looking for.

Mind Games is about conversations with and the psyche of serial killers, I've taken a very special and unique journey in my life, and I've undoubtedly encountered the worst of the world's most violent and extreme offenders. When I set out on this exploration of killers who repeatedly snuffed out human lives, they were more commonly referred to as multiple murderers. So much has changed



since those early times, not least the modus operandi and cleverness of the killers themselves. This book isn't meant to be a scientific study or an academic thesis on serial killers or deviants, it's about complex human emotions, human behaviour that is out of control, broken minds, and broken people. It's about understanding one another, listening and using our 'sixth sense' to read situations and our fellow human beings. I stand by the reasoning and philosophy of Occam's Razor - for its absolute simplicity it has never failed me yet.

Suppose there exists two explanations for an occurrence. In this case the simpler one is usually better. Another way of putting it is that the more assumptions you have to make, the more unlikely an explanation.

Without doubt, the most important people in any crime are the victims. Where serial killers and deviants are concerned, it's the families and friends of lost loved ones who matter most. I'm not one for sensationalising serial killers or murderers of any description, nor do I agree with such behaviour. However, there is, I believe, an overarching need for us to try to understand what drives these people to commit some of the vilest crimes imaginable and a need for us to interact with and study them.



This is where my focus has been for most of the last fifty years of my life. I'm not obsessive, nor am I fixated by killers. My original aim as a child was to keep myself safe from paedophiles whose abhorrent behaviour I had to suffer on an almost daily basis. I wanted to learn what makes that sort of person behave like they do, selecting and grooming vulnerable children before selfishly defiling them. That knowledge, I believed, would allow me to help save other children from a similar fate. If I could identify and establish the fundamental causes for paedophilia, in my mind I would be able to educate criminal investigators into the behavioural signs, and in the longer term, families and society could and would feel safer. I make no bones about the fact that I hold no sympathy towards anyone who commits abusive acts upon children or vulnerable persons of all ages. Such behaviour is unacceptable in any form and deserves the most severe punishment.



I achieved much more than I ever believed possible. After such a horrific start in life, I learned to cope with trauma, creating my own survival strategy that really worked. I developed my profiling skills through studying my own father, his peer group and countless others thereafter. I learned that paedophilia isn't an illness that can be treated, it's a life choice. Like serial killers, these people develop more acute behaviour as the desire for greater excitement takes control of their sexual emotions. What may begin with (what they claim to be) 'innocently' viewing pornographic

images of children online, grows into more physical deviant behaviour. The paedophile tries at every avenue to disguise his or her behaviour, living a life of lies and deceiving all who encounter them. They understand and know that what they are doing is wrong which is why they mask their actions. Many take on child-like personalities in online chat rooms, lying from the outset about their age and every aspect of their lives. When caught out by the Police, they continue with the deception, claiming it to be an accidental click that led them to the sinister website. Or if caught out by a 'paedophile hunter' sting, it's a case of mistaken identity. Later, when the Criminal Justice system clicks into gear, it escalates to become a mental health affliction, they didn't know what they were doing, were out of control or are seeking help from some support agency. They rarely confess to their crimes being premeditated, that they are in full control of their actions and that they know what they are doing is immoral, illegal and viewed by most members of the public as sick or vile.

Many of the deviant serial killers contained within the pages of this book and across the globe are paedophiles, so my progression to study, analyse and get to know such offenders was to my own mind at least, a natural one. The one thing I have learned, (and I continue to learn each day) during the past fifty years is that we are all human. That includes sexual deviants, serial killers, mass murderers, spree killers, et al. As sentient beings, we all act differently and possess different drivers, yet each of us displays a similar basic need. We want to be liked. None of us likes to think we are hated, despised or disliked by anyone, whether it be a stranger on a train, or a bus, or a neighbour or online.

The deviants I speak about are no different, they didn't set out to be reviled or demonised, it was their abhorrent behaviour that caused such emotional harm. Add to that the global media, that salaciously reports intimate details of crimes and go on to create devil like statuses along with a creative pseudonym for the offenders. So, the public's animosity and hatred towards this entity grows, until they are universally feared and disliked. It is fair to say that the 'monster' serial killer is a media invention, a tag commonly used to describe this kind of individual. The term monster helps us rationalise these people as being extraordinarily different. As monsters, they have been given a tag that allows us to demonise them, as the need to make them visibly odd and strange separates them from most of humankind, allowing us some feeling of being in control and safe in our own world.

To say this book has taken fifty years to write would be wrong, yet the experiences I have had during this period have been integral to its completion. I could probably say I wouldn't want to change any of them. Fair enough, my childhood isn't

something I could ever regard as acceptable, the positive thing emanating from that is not only my survival but learning from every moment of those dark times.

The MacDonald Triad was first printed in the American Journal of Psychiatry under the heading 'The Threat To Kill' in 1963. It is also known as the triad of sociopathy and the homicide triad psychiatrist John. M. MacDonald claimed that if two, or all, of the following symptoms existed in a child then this would be predictive of later violent episodes, particularly with relation to repeat offending. Bed wetting (Enuresis) is one such trait, yet we all wet the bed as infants and children. I used to until I was close to ten years old because I was terrified my father (abuser) would enter the room at night and attack me. I lived in constant fear of that threat. The second trait was fire starting, or arson. Again, the number of serial killers who have committed such actions is limited to say the least. Another part of the triad is deliberately harming animals. There exists a wealth of evidence that shows the vast amount of serial killers do not harm animals, nor did they as children, or adolescents. On the contrary, they love animals because they don't answer them back, or call them names. They give unrequited love and enjoy being close and stroked. To add to the triad, we now have a final aspect - child sex abuse or other physical or mental abuse being suffered. Let me say at this point, never in my life have I ever considered committing murder or killing someone. Not even my abuser. The same train of thought is often incorrectly cited when discussing paedophilia, that the abused becomes the abuser. Indeed, I know of very few survivors of child sex abuse (and I've met several hundred) who have gone on to become abusers themselves. Nor have they become serial killers. Needless to say, I possess two of the traits MacDonald states are definite predictors of violence. I'm the least dangerous or violent person imaginable. To add substance to my contestation of this outdated guidance, I went on to follow a career in law enforcement and in the field of criminal justice. Actually, I'm not a serial anything. The MacDonald triad, whilst well-meaning, is now part of the past and should remain there as testimony to how science is sometimes misguided and does in my opinion occasionally get important things quite wrong. My own view is that the presence of two of those indicators might indicate evidence of childhood abuse, but taken alone they are not a predictor of someone being violent or dangerous.

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