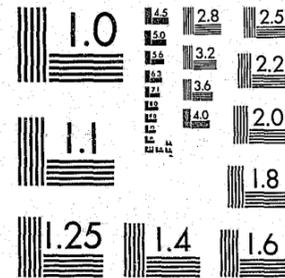


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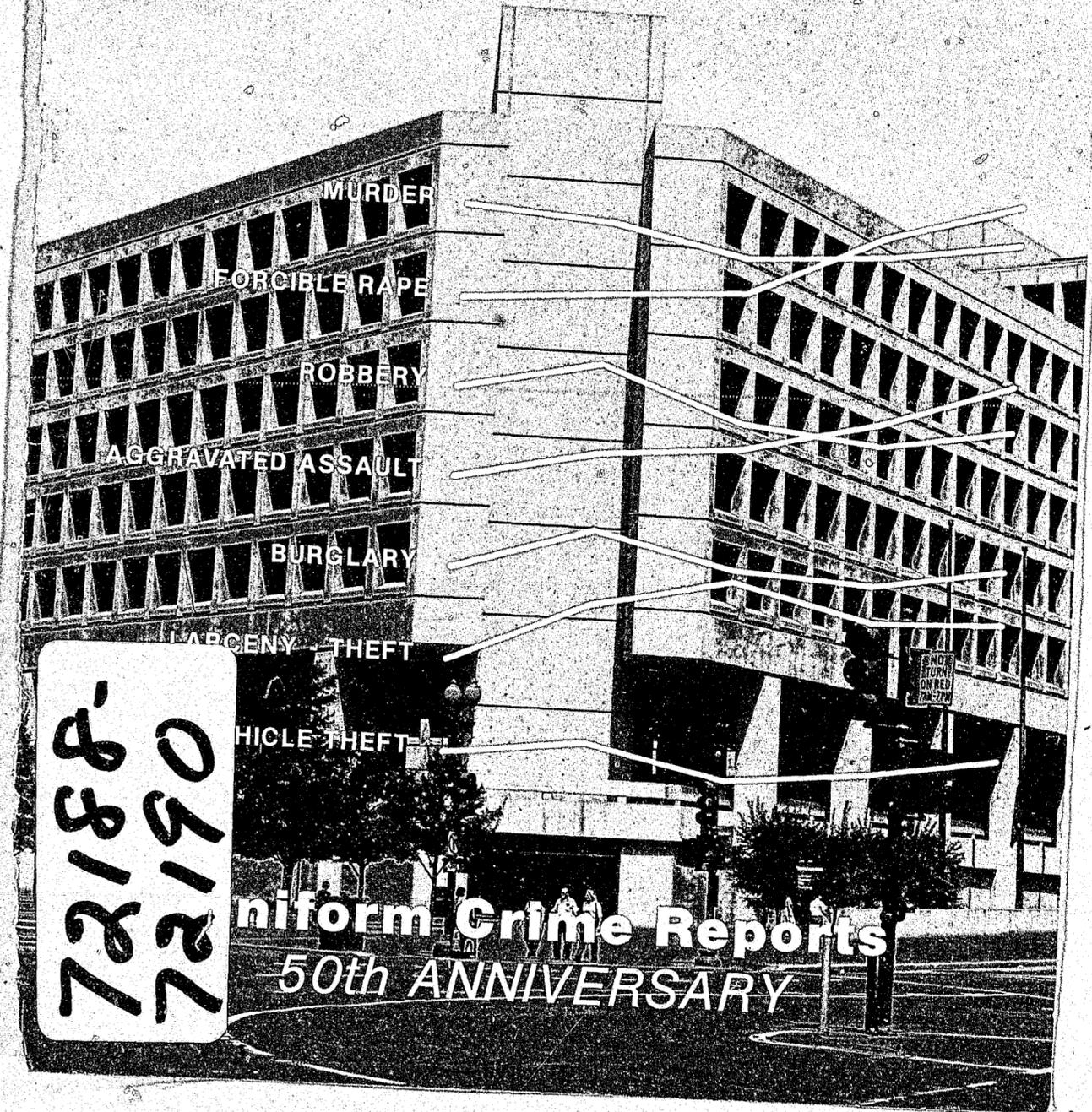
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THE COVER: This month, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program completes 50 years of service to the law enforcement community. See story p. 2.

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
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William H. Webster, Director

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Investigative Aids

Offender Profiles A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

EDITOR'S NOTE: In recent months, the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin has featured several articles on the application of psychological profiles as an investigative technique in selected criminal cases. The use of psychological criminal analysis is the product of a pilot project initiated by the FBI in 1978. This initial project, aimed at formulating criminal offender profiles through investigative interviews with incarcerated felons, led to the development of an ongoing systematic study—The Criminal Personality Interview Program. This program is designed to identify the salient characteristics, motivations, attitudes, and behaviors of offenders involved in specific types of crime.

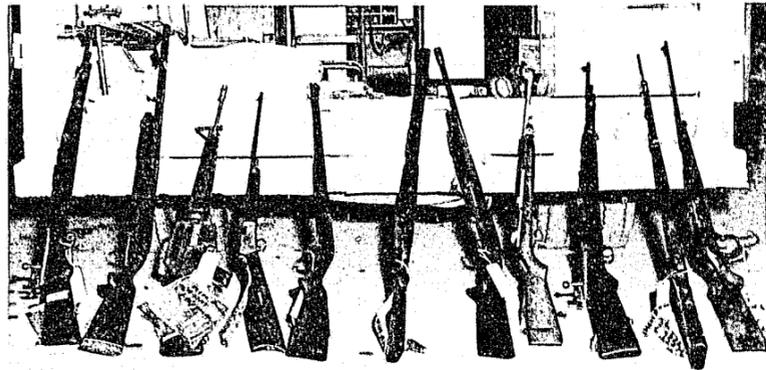
Two members of the FBI Academy's Behavioral Science Unit, Special Agents Robert K. Ressler and John E. Douglas, and two internationally recognized authorities in the field of sexual assault, Dr. A. Nicholas Groth and Dr. Ann Wolbert Burgess, comprise the research team for this project. Dr. Groth is Director of the Sex Offender Program for the Connecticut Department of Correction and is a clinical psychologist who has worked extensively with convicted sexual offenders. Dr. Burgess is Professor and Director of Nursing Research at Boston University School of Nursing and is a clinical specialist in psychiatric mental health nursing who has worked extensively with victims of sexual assault. This article is a joint effort of members of this research team.

The psychology of criminal behavior, its patterns, dynamics, and characteristics, is an inadequately addressed area of research. It is difficult to enlist the cooperation of an offender prior to trial, since open disclosure could serve to incriminate him. Following conviction, the offender's participation in a psychological evaluation is geared toward the desired outcome of his disposition hearing or pending appeals. After his incarceration, the offender generally becomes inaccessible to behavioral scientists. For the most part, attempts to research criminal behavior have been confined to individual case reporting, which is subject to an inability to differentiate the relevant from the irrelevant, and to a large-scale statistical analysis of offense data retrieved from police records, in which individual differences are treated as error. Therefore, it was believed that a systematic study of incarcerated offenders whose appeals had been exhausted, combined with a review of all relevant documents and pertinent case records, direct observations, and firsthand investigative-clinical interviews with the subject, might yield important insights into the psychological nature of criminal behavior.



The question remained as to whether incarcerated offenders would cooperate in such research. In order to determine the feasibility of the intended study, a pilot project was undertaken. Crimes in which the FBI either has primary jurisdiction or has traditionally assisted local agencies by providing technical assistance and special expertise, such as hostage/terrorism, skyjacking, extortion/kidnaping, assassination, and mass/multiple murder, were targeted for study. Guidelines were formulated in conjunction with the Legal Instruction Unit of the FBI Academy.

Eight convicted offenders were then approached and asked if they would be willing to be interviewed about their crimes. They were long-term incarcerated felons lodged in various State and Federal penitentiaries and were selected for the gravity of their violent crimes. The results were very encouraging. Based on this response, plans were developed for an



During the 1979 Fiesta Parade in San Antonio, Tex., a sniper, who was a former mental patient, killed 2 persons and injured 51 others, including 13 children and 6 policemen. Photos depict shooting scene and arsenal used by the sniper. Insight into the psychological behavior of persons involved in such crimes is the overall goal of this research program.



Dr. Burgess



Dr. Groth



Special Agent Fessler

extended, ongoing systematic study of convicted offenders in order to better understand the patterns and dynamics of criminal behavior. Sexual homicide was selected as the initial area of primary focus and concentration because it is a lethal type of crime that attracts a great deal of public attention.

Background of FBI Profiling

For the past few years, efforts at developing psychological profiles of suspects for individual cases of sexual assault/homicide have been undertaken by members of the Behavioral Science Unit.¹ These cases were referred to the unit by local police departments. From the available evidence and information, unit members developed a psychological composite of the suspect. The approach is one of brainstorming, intuition, and educated guesswork. The product was the result of years of accumulated investigative experience in the field and familiarity

with a large number of cases. No formal data bank, however, has been developed against which new cases can systematically be compared. Also, there is little or no followup once an offender has been successfully apprehended and convicted. Consequently, there is very little subsequent input of information which would serve to sharpen and refine the existing body of knowledge.

Given the opportunity to interview identified offenders and realizing the need to develop a protocol to insure systematic retrieval of pertinent data, the Training Division engaged the services of Dr. A. Nicholas Groth and Dr. Ann Wolbert Burgess, two experts in the field of sexual assault who had been conducting specialized police schools on rape and child molestation for law enforcement agents at the FBI Academy. This professional affiliation provided a multidisciplinary approach to the study of the sex murderer, combining contributions from both law enforcement and the behavioral sciences.

From a review of the pertinent literature and from the direct, firsthand field experience and prior work of the researchers, this team proceeded to develop a data schedule for investigative inquiry and offender assessment.

This instrument provided not only guidelines for interviewing subjects but also a system of recording and coding relevant data to permit computer analysis and retrieval. This protocol (which continues to undergo revision and refinement) is divided into five sections: (1) Physical characteristics of the offender, (2) background development, (3) offense data, (4) victim data, and (5) crime scene data. It encompasses the offender's physical description, medical/psychiatric history, early home life and upbringing, schooling, military service, occupation/vocational history, sexual development and marital history, recreational interests, criminal history, the characteristics of his offense, modus operandi, victim selection, and the scene of his crime.

Once the assessment schedule had been designed, it was administered to three groups of sexual offenders—sex murderers, rapists and child molesters, and sex offenders confined to a mental health facility. During the first year (1979) of the study, interviews with 26 men who were convicted of a



Special Agent Douglas



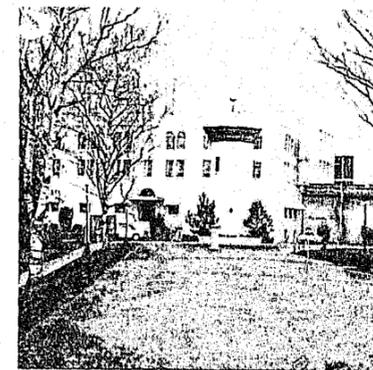
Edmund E. Kemper, a mass murderer, is interviewed by SA Douglas.

sex-related homicide and were incarcerated in various institutions across the country were completed. The second group—rapists and child molesters incarcerated in a maximum security prison—consisted of approximately 125 adult male offenders who were administered the interview schedule. These subjects were equally divided between those who had sexually assaulted adults and those who had sexually assaulted children. Sex offenders committed to a security treatment (mental health) facility following conviction but prior to disposition comprised the third group. Approximately 100 men were interviewed, again equally divided between rapists and child molesters.

Computer programs were then written to process the data. It is anticipated that as this body of data accumulates, it will provide information about a number of issues pertaining to the sexual offender.

Interestingly, institution officials have been supportive of the research investigation efforts, and the offenders themselves have been very receptive to our solicitation for their help and participation in this study. Although a few have denied or minimized their culpability, the majority have provided information consistent with the known facts of the case.

What prompts convicted offenders to cooperate with law enforcement agents? A variety of reasons exist. For those troubled by what they have done, cooperation may be an effort to gain some perspective and understanding of their behavior or an effort to compensate and make some type of restitution. Others, especially if they feel forgotten or ignored, may respond to the fact that someone is paying attention and showing some interest in them. A selected number of multiple murderers appear to be fascinated with law enforcement, as evidenced by their attempts to become identified with the profession, i.e., posing as law enforcement officers, holding positions such as security guards or auxiliary police, etc. These offenders welcome an opportunity to again associate themselves with investigative efforts. Some may expect that cooperation will result in favors or benefits; others may feel



Selected inmates of the Oregon State Penitentiary participated in the research program.

they have nothing to lose, since all their appeals have been exhausted and no realistic hope for parole or pardon exists. Finally, others may participate in the study because it provides an opportunity to dwell on and recapture the fantasies, memories, and accompanying feelings of the original offense. Whatever their reasons, noble or selfish, healthy or pathological, each in his own way contributes something toward understanding the variety and complexity of this category of crime.

Statistical Procedure

The reliability and the validity of the data retrieved from the study of these offenders will ultimately be tested by the accuracy with which predoc-trines (offender profiles) derived from this data pool are fulfilled. It is from these data that various types of offender profiles are beginning to emerge. Although no two offenders are exactly alike, and there is a wide range of individual differences found among offenders who commit similar offenses, they also share some similarities or common traits. It will be both these important differences and the important similarities that serve to differentiate and identify different kinds or specific types of offenders within the same offense category.

Goals and Purposes of Program

This criminal personality research program is designed to contribute to advances in the study of sexual homicide—a subject about which little dependable information is currently available—by establishing a national data bank from which reliable information can be retrieved. From the data derived from this research, offender

profiles will be developed based on identifiable behaviors, traits, and characteristics. The profiles, in turn, will aid local law enforcement agencies in the investigation of the crime and the identification and apprehension of offenders. In addition, such profiles and related information will serve to improve interrogation techniques and interviewing skills and to identify those techniques which will be most productive with each type of offender.

Knowledge gleaned from this research will have important implications

“ . . . an extended, ongoing systematic study of convicted offenders [was initiated] in order to better understand the patterns and dynamics of criminal behavior”

for crime prevention by identifying important biopsychosocial factors of an offender. It will assist by attempting to provide answers to such questions as:

- 1) What leads a person to become a sexual offender and what are the early warning signals?
- 2) What serves to encourage or to inhibit the commission of his offense?
- 3) What types of response or coping strategies by an intended victim are successful with what type of sexual offender in avoiding victimization?
- 4) What are the implications for his dangerousness, prognosis, disposition, and mode of treatment?

Current emphasis is on the rapemurderer, since the Training Division receives annually close to 100 unsolved, sex-related homicides for review and analysis. This research program is envisioned as ultimately expanding to encompass a broader variety of felony crimes to include hostagetaking and techniques to improve hostage negotiation. A further benefit will be the improvement of techniques of interviewing, interrogation, and informant targeting in criminal and espionage matters. The present

study, which addresses sexual assault, is unique in that it represents the combined approaches of law enforcement/criminal justice and behavioral science/mental health professionals, as well as active participation and direct contribution from convicted felons, to combat this major type of serious crime.

FBI

Footnote

¹Richard L. Ault, Jr. and James T. Reese. "A Psychological Assessment of Crime: Profiling." *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, vol. 49, No. 3, March 1980, pp. 22-25.

END