

A Century Apart: Profiles of Jack the Ripper

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Author: The Complete History of Criminal Profiling

Coming soon(ish!) from Blue Lamp Books/Mango Books

“It is the brain, the little grey cells on which one must rely. One must seek the truth within - not without.”

– Hercule Poirot



What is criminal profiling?

“The analysis of behaviour and circumstances associated with serious crimes in an effort to identify the probable characteristics of the perpetrator.”

—Oxford Dictionary of Psychology

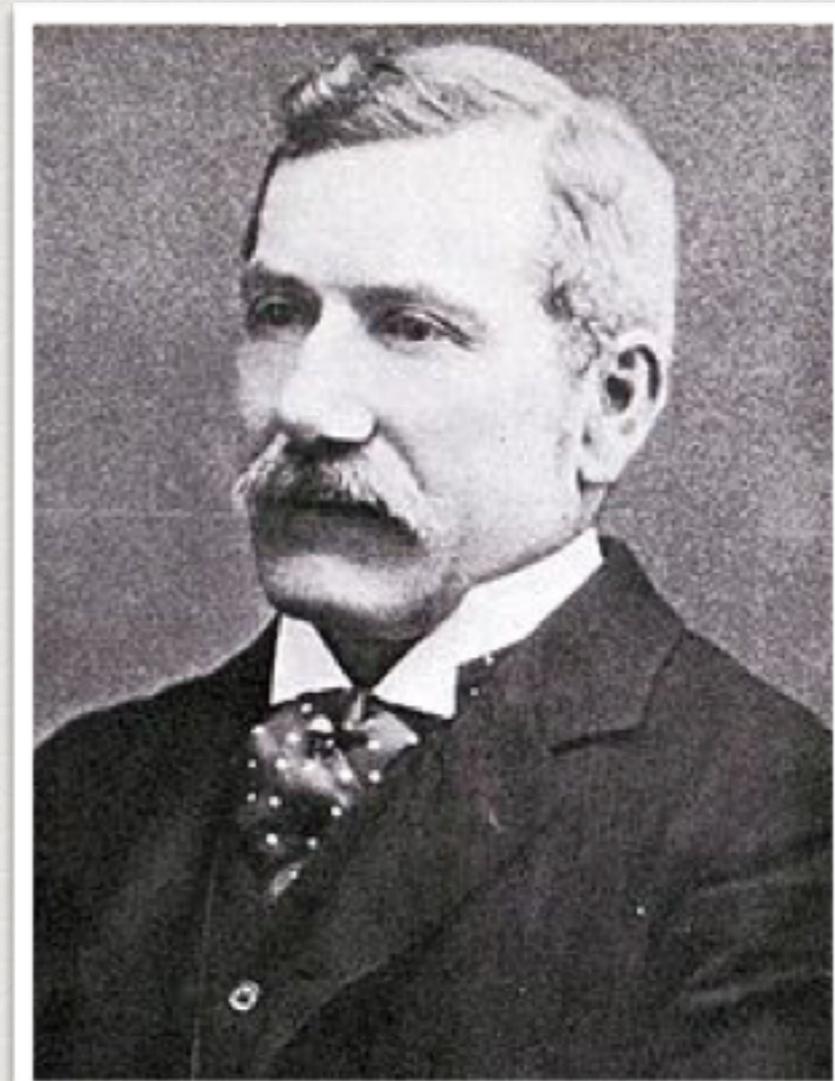


Part 1:

London Metropolitan Police 1888

Dr Thomas Bond

- *Surgeon Westminster Hospital*
- *Police Surgeon - A Division
(Westminster)*
- *Lecturer Forensic Medicine -
Westminster Hospital Medical
School*
- *Expert prosecution witness*
- *Notable publications on venereal
disease*



Extracts from Bond's report to Robert Anderson - 10th November 1888

- *7. The mutilations in each case excepting the Berner's Street one were all of the same character and shewed clearly that in all the murders, the object was mutilation.*
- *8. In each case the mutilation was inflicted by a person who had no scientific nor anatomical knowledge. In my opinion he does not even possess the technical knowledge of a butcher or horse slaughterer or any person accustomed to cut up dead animals.*

Extracts from Bond's report to Robert Anderson - 10th November 1888

- 10. *The murderer must have been a man of physical strength and of great coolness and daring. There is no evidence that he had an accomplice. He must in my opinion be a man subject to periodical attacks of Homicidal and erotic mania. The character of the mutilations indicate that the man may be in a condition sexually, that may be called satyriasis. It is of course possible that the Homicidal impulse may have developed from a revengeful or brooding condition of the mind, or that Religious Mania may have been the original disease, but I do not think either hypothesis is likely. The murderer in external appearance is quite likely to be a quiet inoffensive looking man probably middleaged and neatly and respectably dressed. I think he must be in the habit of wearing a cloak or overcoat or he could hardly have escaped notice in the streets if the blood on his hands or clothes were visible.*

Extracts from Bond's report to Robert Anderson - 10th November 1888

- *II. Assuming the murderer to be such a person as I have just described he would probably be solitary and eccentric in his habits, also he is most likely to be a man without regular occupation, but with some small income or pension. He is possibly living among respectable persons who have some knowledge of his character and habits and who may have grounds for suspicion that he is not quite right in his mind at times. Such persons would probably be unwilling to communicate suspicions to the Police for fear of trouble or notoriety, whereas if there were a prospect of reward it might overcome their scruples.*

Satyriasis

- *Sometimes known as “Don Juanism”*
- *From the Greek word “satyr” - a mythological creature, but also a lecher.*
- *Colloquially we are more familiar with the female term “nymphomania”.*
- *Hypersexuality - “A psychological condition of men characterised by uncontrollable sexual desire and an inability to to have lasting sexual relationships.”*



The Victorian Double Standard

*Keep men civilised and prevent
corruption.*



Extracts from Bond's report to Robert Anderson - 10th November 1888

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- *In each case the mutilation was inflicted by a person who had no scientific nor anatomical knowledge.*
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- *The murderer in external appearance is quite likely to be a quiet inoffensive looking man probably middleaged and neatly and respectably dressed.*

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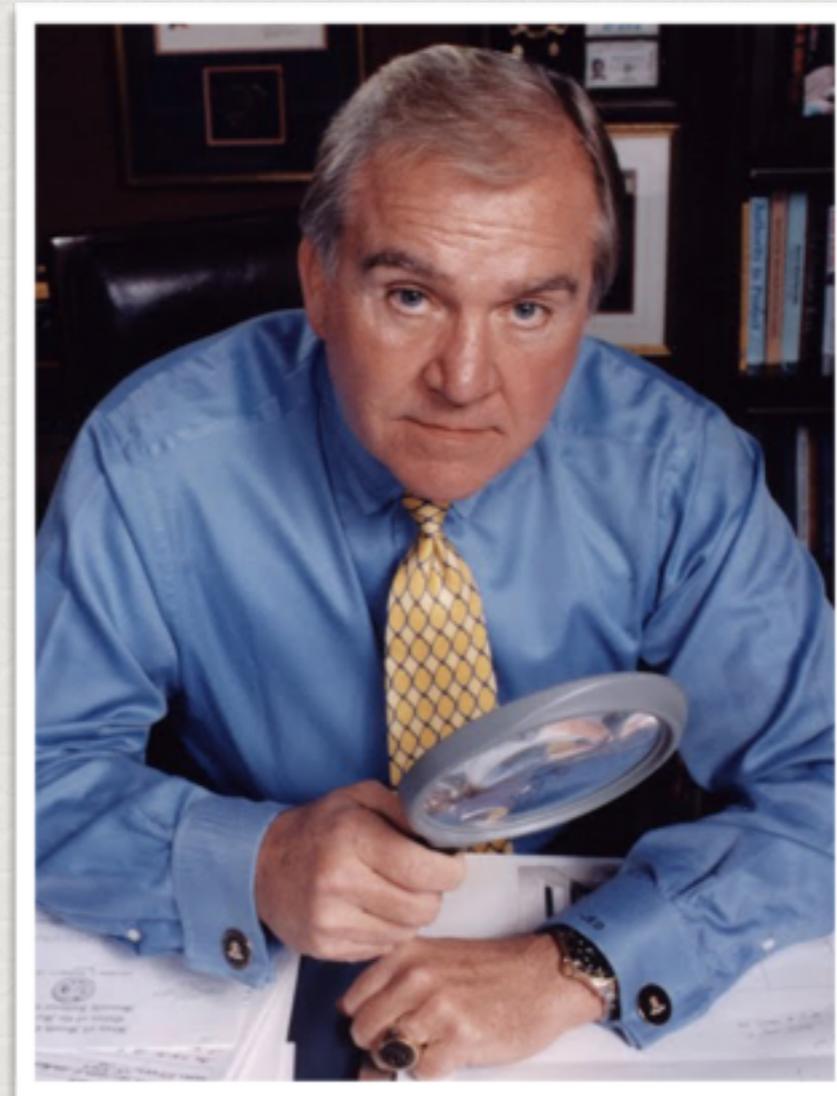


Part 2:

Federal Bureau Investigation 1988

FBI & Profiling: A (very!) Brief History

- *1974 - FBI founds the Behavioural Science Unit, a 10 agent team in response to a rise in sexual assault and homicide. The term "Serial Killer" coined by Robert Ressler.*
- *1976 - FBI Supervisory Special Agents John Douglas and Robert Ressler of the BSU begin working on a database of serial offenders. They begin to travel the USA interviewing offenders.*
- *1979 - Interviews with 36 serial offenders completed and database completed. FBI Profilers begin fieldwork and consulting on active cases.*



FBI & Profiling: A (very!) Brief History

- *1984 - BSU splits into two units - BSU remains as responsible for training, Behavioral Science Investigative Support Unit (BSISU) takes over in field investigations and consultations.*
- *1985 - BSISU becomes National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC). Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) established, a system of records containing the Douglas and Ressler study as well as information on present or unsolved cases. Includes:*
 - *Crime scene descriptions*
 - *Victim and offender descriptive data (e.g. names and identifying features)*
 - *Laboratory reports*
 - *Criminal history records*
 - *Court records*
 - *News media references*
 - *Crime scene photographs and statements.*

FBI & Profiling: A (very!) Brief History

- *1988 - John Douglas asked by the Cosgrove-Meurer Production Company to prepare a criminal profile of Jack the Ripper, who were producing a documentary entitled "The Secret Identity of Jack the Ripper" for the centenary anniversary of the crimes. Douglas also appeared as an expert on the program.*

Why?

- *1. Might be a useful intellectual exercise in training new agents*
- *2. It's difficult to resist matching wits with the most famous killer in history*
- *3. No negative consequences - other than possible embarrassment on television. No one may die, or get hurt if wrong.*

FBI Profiling: Criminal Investigative Analysis

- *Often described as more “art” than science...*
- *Six steps:*
 - *Profiling inputs*
 - *Decision process models*
 - *Crime assessment*
 - *Criminal profiling*
 - *Investigation*
 - *Apprehension*

But what on earth does all
that actually mean in English?

FBI Profiling: Criminal Investigative Analysis

- *In plain English:*
 - *Profiling inputs - Gathering together all information for study (including synopsis of crime, details of crime scene, background info on victim, forensic evidence, crime scene photographs, aerial photographs, crime scene sketches, etc.). NO SUSPECT INFORMATION!*
 - *Decision process models - Organise and arrange these materials into meaningful patterns*
 - *Crime assessment - Reconstruct a sequence of events and behaviour of victim and offender*
 - *Criminal profiling - Generate a profile of the type of person the offender is and the behavioural organisation related to the crime. Will typically include demographic info, physical characteristics, habits, beliefs and values, pre and post offence behaviour. Recommendations for investigating, apprehending and interviewing suspect.*
 - *Investigation - Written report, investigative suggestions applied, suspects evaluated.*
 - *Apprehension - If a suspect admits guilt. a detailed interview needed to check the profiling process for validity.*

How accurate is FBI Profiling?

- *Most evidence in favour comes from the FBI themselves based on case studies - highly unscientific, anecdotal and based on “failed” serial killers in captivity.*
- *Trager and Brewster (2001) found police officers who used profiles found them to be a useful tool in guiding the investigation and helping interrogate suspects, but they did not find them useful for actually identifying the suspects.*
- *Research by Kocsis, Irwin, Hayes and Nunn (2000) found that those trained in profiling techniques made the most accurate profiles when compared with psychologists, police officers and “psychics”.*
- *However, a later study by Kocsis, Hayes, and Irwin (2002) also found that chemistry students with no profiling or psychological knowledge or experience also outperformed a sample group of various categories of experienced law enforcement officials.*
- *Heavily criticised by forensic psychologists - main argument being it uses vague, “common sense” inferences - similar to statement by psychics (Dowden, Bennell and Bloomfield (2007) - performing a literature review of 30 years of research into profiling).*

FBI Profile of Jack the Ripper

- *Lust murders*
- *White male. Approx 28-36 years of age*
- *Ordinary looking - clothing worn not “everyday dress” (Douglas later reconsidered this in “The Cases That Haunt Us”)*
- *Family - Domineering mother, weak/passive/absent father*
- *Profession - would work alone and be able to experience destructive fantasies. Keeps regular hours for work.*
- *Carries a knife for defence*
- *Some type of physical abnormality - speech, scarring, illness or injury*
- *Below average height and/or weight*

FBI Profile of Jack the Ripper

- *Unmarried*
- *Socially inept*
- *Possibly infected with venereal disease*
- *Quiet, a loner, shy, slightly withdrawn, obedient.*
- *Neat and orderly in appearance*
- *Drinks and relaxes in local pubs - easier to engage after drink*
- *Local to Whitechapel area - the first murder would be near his home or workplace*
- *Likely to have been interviewed during investigation (possibly on several occasions) and overlooked due to not fitting the stereotype of being odd/ghoulish in appearance.*



1888 v. 1988

How do they compare?

Douglas	Bond	✓ or X
Lust Murders	Homicidal or Erotic Mania	✓
Male, 28-36*	Male, Middleaged - no mention of race	X
Ordinary looking, not wearing "Everyday dress"	Neatly and respectably dressed. I think he must be in the habit of wearing a cloak or overcoat	✓
Profession - would work alone and be able to experience destructive fantasies. Keeps regular hours for work.	He is most likely to be a man without regular occupation. Does not even possess the technical knowledge of a butcher or horse slaughterer or any person accustomed to cut up dead animals.	X
Below average height and weight	A man of physical strength	X
Unmarried	N/A but... "possibly living among respectable persons who have some knowledge of his character and habits and who may have grounds for suspicion that he is not quite right in his mind at times. Such persons would probably be unwilling to communicate suspicions to the Police for fear of trouble or notoriety, whereas if there were a prospect of reward it might overcome their scruples." Suggests unmarried?	✓
Socially inept	Solitary and eccentric in his habits	✓
Possibly infected with venereal disease	It is of course possible that the Homicidal impulse may have developed from a revengeful or brooding condition of the mind... but I do not think either hypothesis is likely.	X
Quiet, a loner, shy, slightly withdrawn, obedient.	Solitary and eccentric in his habits	✓
Neat and orderly in appearance	The murderer in external appearance is quite likely to be a quiet inoffensive looking man probably middleaged and neatly and respectably dressed.	✓

** Douglas accepts this may be incorrect - as he does with many of his conclusions when read alongside "The Cases That Haunt Us"*

Douglas claims police in 1888 would not have even considered a sexual motive - which clearly Bond and others did!



Conclusions

Would this have caught Jack the Ripper?

Who knows!

Conclusions

- *Personally, I think both Bond and Douglas are resorting to “common sense” statements as to the physical and personality characteristics of the Ripper rather than scientific evidence, so would have had little practical benefit.*
- *As Douglas himself describes the profile characteristics most used in Ripper suspect research “There are the superficial characteristics true of a lot of people. They’re almost boilerplate for certain type of offender.” (The Cases That Haunt Us).*

But what do you think?