
Role of Criminal Profilers in Crisis Situations

Željko Đ. Bjelajac and Aleksandar M. Filipović

University of Business Academy in Novi Sad,
Faculty of Law for Commerce and Judiciary in Novi Sad, Serbia

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Author Note

Željko Đ. Bjelajac  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4953-8779>

Aleksandar M. Filipović  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1097-2079>

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Correspondence with the author: Željko Bjelajac

E-mail: zdjbjelajac@gmail.com

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Abstract

Although the first true criminal psychological profile was created less than 70 years ago, and the first unit whose task was to help solve challenging and complicated crimes by analyzing psychological aspects was created about 50 years ago, today we cannot imagine the work of any law enforcement service without the significant contribution of psychological profilers. On the other hand, the number and type of security threats have grown exponentially in the same period, and although it is not possible to react to one part of those threats on time and prevent them, for the other part of those threats there is enough space and time that by engaging profilers, and in certain crisis situations, such as hostage crises, be it terrorist attacks, bank robberies, or other situations in which the perpetrators of such acts take hostages, by engaging a specific subtype of profilers – the negotiators, increase the chances for a peaceful resolution of the crisis situation and prevention of loss of human lives, which is of paramount interest in humane societies. The aim of this paper is to investigate the role of profiler-negotiator in crisis situations with a criminal background, using a hypothetical-deductive model and methods of analysis of primary and secondary sources, as well as qualitative, quantitative, comparative analysis, with the starting hypothesis that using techniques and methods of psychological profiling and negotiations in crisis situations with a criminal basis and background, the probability of a positive outcome, peaceful resolution of the crisis situation and damage control drastically increases.

Keywords: psychological profiling, investigators, negotiators, crisis situations, crime, terrorism

Role of Criminal Profilers in Crisis Situations

Knowledge of psychology, psychological mechanisms, and the ability to draw conclusions based on existing evidence has always been an essential part of criminal investigations, even before that science and its methods, especially their use, were defined and systematized. In cases where the perpetrator of the crime was unknown, and direct evidence did not help to find the perpetrator without a doubt, attempts were made to determine the motive for the commission of that criminal offense, and based on the motive, the suspects were determined, thus narrowing the circle of possible perpetrators, at the same time analyzing details from the victim's life that helped to create a picture of the victim's interactions in everyday life, as well as important events that could potentially be linked to a specific crime. There we already have elements of psychological analysis, because motivation is one of the most important parts of the human psyche. Logically, in the past, crimes were less complex, and the perpetrators' motives were more straightforward, but law enforcement services, in whatever form they existed throughout history, functioned in a significantly more rudimentary form than is the case in modern times. However, even in the past, investigators occasionally encountered crimes that were very difficult to solve, some of which remained unsolved, occupying the imagination and thoughts of crime professionals and enthusiasts alike, such as the case of Jack the Ripper, a serial killer of prostitutes in the Victorian London in the late 19th century, which is still a mystery today and the subject of retroactive investigations and profiling using methods that were adopted much later in law enforcement and criminal investigation services.

Modern criminal investigations are unthinkable without the use of psychological profiling techniques, as well as without investigators who are psychological profilers by vocation. Criminal science and practice have long ignored the methods of psychological forensics and criminal profiling, and therefore the first recorded case of using psychological profiling methods occurred in the mid-1950s (see more: Bjelajac & Filipović, 2022a). However, the diabolical string of serial murders in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which left investigators completely perplexed in which direction to investigate, led to more innovative thinking, and there we note the beginnings of the use of psychological forensic methods and profiling, systematized by the establishment and work of the Behavioral Science Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the USA. The unit was established in 1972 and initially employed 10 agents (see

DeNevi & Campbell, 2004). Those initial efforts led to results that objectively would not have been achieved without an effort to understand the criminal minds through a series of conversations with already caught and convicted criminals and thereby gaining insight into all aspects of their crimes – from motivation, preparation, execution, and removal of evidence. Since such an approach brought results, psychological forensics, and profiling finally got a place in the process of criminal investigations and today are an inseparable part of the required skills of criminal investigators.

Meanwhile, the world has become much more dangerous, with diversified threats and challenges. The growth and spread of global terrorism have made almost every individual a potential victim, depending on where and when they happen to be, and thus the potential for committing criminal acts with a huge number of victims has increased manifold. On the other hand, the alienation of man from man and the direction in which global society is developing has led to new insecurities in individuals and accumulated anger and frustration that are often vented on those closest to them, whether it is domestic violence or mass shootings in schools or other public places. For some of these crimes, there is simply no time for law enforcement to respond, such as the crime committed by Anders Breivik or the frequent shootings or detonations of explosive devices in schools or other public places or events that we have been witnessing for decades. But, on the other hand, there is a whole range of crisis situations with elements of crime where there is enough time for a timely reaction of law enforcement agencies, and precisely such crisis situations, as well as the role of criminal profilers – most often of specific specialization – negotiators in the positive resolution of such situations, are the subject of this paper. The initial hypothesis is that psychological profiling methods and negotiation techniques significantly increase the chances of peaceful resolution of crisis situations. The aim of this paper is to investigate the role of criminal profilers – negotiators in the peaceful resolution of crisis situations with elements of crime and the possibility of a loss of human life, using the methods of analysis of primary and secondary sources, qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, and comparative analysis, within a hypothetical-deductive model.

Development of Criminal Profiling as a Method in Criminal Investigations

Historically speaking, criminal profiling, in the sense of creating the first psychological profile to prevent crimes, has its real beginnings in 1956 during

the efforts of the New York police to discover and arrest a domestic terrorist who was known only as the “Mad Bomber” at the time, and who since 1940, has placed over 30 explosive devices, of which more than 20 exploded, injuring more than ten people. The New York police were confused and frustrated and eventually hired James A. Brussel, a criminologist, and psychiatrist. Based on the data from his professional practice in which he met with different types of criminally insane persons, which he compared with the evidence collected at different crime scenes, Brussel compiled a psychological profile of the perpetrator of those crimes, presenting a large number of theories, and with the help of the media which the police encouraged to release the profile, and after several weeks of criminal processing and cooperation from citizens, the “Mad Bomber” was identified as George Metesky and soon arrested. In this case, the psychological profile created by Dr. Brussel played a key role, because based on the theories he presented in it, the police had more potential operational data, while the citizens received a practical reminder and instruction on what things they should pay attention to and inform the police about it. James Brussel himself later published a book in which he described in detail that case, as well as other cases from his extensive practice (see Brussel, 1968). This case, which marked a turning point in criminal investigations, opened space for a more serious and systematic implementation of psychological profiling methods and indicated the need for criminal investigators to train themselves in psychological profiling instead of constantly relying on the external help of criminal psychiatrists and psychologists.

The next milestone in implementing criminal profiling as a crucial part of criminal investigations coincides with the formation of the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit in 1972. The immediate reason for the establishment of this unit was a massive wave of unsolved serial murders and crimes of a sexual nature. The initial successes of this unit are related to the work of two agents, John Douglas, and Robert Ressler. The two embarked on extensive research intending to collect as much data as possible on the most diverse aspects and details of the most serious crimes, and the primary method was in-depth interviewing of already arrested serial offenders. Their goal was to compile a centralized database linking serial offenders' motives with data collected at crime scenes. Between 1976 and 1979, Douglas, Ressler, and their colleagues interviewed 36 serial predators and collected a vast amount of data (Bonn, 2015). The next step was to create a database that could be used by all law enforcement agencies in the USA. The solution to this was the VICAP (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program) computer system, which allowed the search of solved cases according

to the parameters of the cases on which investigators are currently working, but it took several years, and the formation of the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) within FBI to make profiling as an investigative method, as well as the use of the VICAP system, an official part of criminal investigations (see Bonn, 2015). The profiling issue in criminal investigations is quite complex and not easy to define, which is why it contains many ambiguities and underestimations (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2022b). Starting from theories that most often initially arise based on a small set of known data, investigators must make enormous efforts, compare their theories with practice and new discoveries in the investigation, expand and improve the psychological profiles of the perpetrators, and their efforts become visible only when the perpetrator is arrested or otherwise prevented from continuing to commit criminal acts. With techniques such as extensive knowledge of behavior and statistical probabilities, profilers carry out their activities in cooperation with forensic teams and other members of law enforcement authorities (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2022c). Nevertheless, despite all the difficulties and challenges, criminal psychological profiling of perpetrators of criminal acts has become an inseparable part of the investigation of complex and serious crimes, and the necessity of profiling and profilers is also reflected in the fact that their work and good results also work preventively, with a drastically increased number of solved cases of serial crimes, and shortening the investigation time, and thus reducing the number of victims of predators of various kinds.

Specific Characteristics of Criminal Profilers

The development of criminal profiling and the expansion of its application in the investigations of various law enforcement agencies has created a need for a new type of investigator, that is, for the adoption of new skills and approaches by existing investigators. Generally speaking,

a profiler is a person, part of an investigative police team, trained and authorized to use specialized techniques to identify suspects, predict the actions a suspect might take, and influence the suspect's consciousness. Profilers, also known as criminal investigation analysts, study the nature of crimes, analyze the clues people leave behind, and collect and compare data on similar crimes and offenders to create a suspect profile. They form

logical hypotheses based on witness accounts, victim testimony, and crime scene evidence. To develop psychological profiles of a suspect based on available information and forensic evidence, profilers must have extensive investigative knowledge and the ability to review and analyze evidence. Profilers work closely with law enforcement, visit crime scenes, and perform extensive analysis to identify patterns or consistencies in criminal behavior (What is a criminal profiler, n.d).

In terms of formal education, most law enforcement organizations require at least a bachelor's degree when employing criminal investigators.

Education and the acquisition and development of certain psychological, criminological, sociological and other skills are the basis and framework in which investigators use their intellect to analyze information and clues, which, as a rule, are very scarce in cases of serious and complicated crimes. The entire intellectual apparatus of those individuals must be used to find new clues and information based on scant clues, obscure motives, and numerous unknowns, with the help of which working theories are formed about the motives or identity of the perpetrator or any other element that can narrow, direct, or open the investigation (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2022a).

There is a very large number of works in the literature about the characteristics and activities of criminal profilers, so here we will give a short list of the main skills and characteristics of criminal profilers. These are:

the ability to notice details, the ability to use seemingly insignificant details to build a bigger picture, critical thinking skills, inductive and deductive thinking skills, inductive versus deductive reasoning, the ability to work in a team, interpersonal skills, including effective written and oral communication, the ability and knowledge in the study of human traits, behavior, and motivation, the ability to extrapolate available evidence and

data to create an accurate working profile of a suspect, skills in researching new data and literature on psychology, criminal behavior, and other related topics, as well as the ability to educate other officers on law enforcement on criminal behavior, crime scene analysis, investigation and other important and relevant areas of expertise (Keep Sane, 2020).

Here we see the wide range of characteristics an individual must possess to be an effective profiler. In other words:

Skilled criminal profilers are living analog lie detectors. As part of law enforcement teams, they use their knowledge, intuition, and experience to reconstruct a crime from start to finish and create psychological profiles of potential suspects. Through analyzing the behavior and physical evidence surrounding the crime, they come up with information that points them to the most realistic scenario. Thus, law enforcement agencies significantly narrow the search and direct their efforts exclusively towards those persons who meet the conditions for the signaled criteria (Bjelajac, 2022).

All the above applies to criminal profilers – negotiators, along with several additional features necessary to de-escalate crisis situations and minimize the loss of human life.

The role of profilers-negotiators in crisis situations

In contrast to the positions in the previous chapters, we now encounter a new aspect of using profiling to combat criminal offenses. We wrote about profiling as a method for discovering perpetrators of already committed criminal acts. However, profiling can and must be used for the prevention of crimes that could happen, whether they have been announced, or by analyzing the situation in a society burdened by conflicts, large-scale criminal activity with possibly severe consequences for the lives of many people or severe material damages can be expected. When we talk about crisis situations, their definition and occurrence are very broad and diverse, like when we talk about negotiations. Therefore, at this point, we precisely emphasize that in the context of this work, we consider

crisis situations to be those crisis situations that have a criminal background, and/or that carry the potential for the loss of human life, regardless of the number of potential victims, which will be seen in the remainder of the paper. By negotiation, we consider the techniques of analysis, profiling, and communication with the generators of those crisis situations to de-escalate the crisis situation, prevent the loss of human lives, and resolve the crisis peacefully. Further measures are not part of the profiler-negotiator's job description but are undertaken by appropriate specialized services within law enforcement organizations.

Generally speaking, the world has become significantly more dangerous than it was a few hundred years ago. The greatest threat to the security of states, today in the modern world, is not a war against another subject of the international community, but a war with an "invisible enemy" – terrorism (Bjelajac & Jovanović, 2012). Terrorism has become a global threat, and even though there have been crimes with political motivation and background before, and as such can be characterized as terrorist acts, the danger to the general population was immeasurably lower. There were terrorist acts such as assassinations of the rulers or attacks against institutions of the system with political motivation since ancient times (such as the assassination of Julius Caesar), through the Middle Ages (the attempt to cause the explosion of the Houses of Parliament by Guy Fawkes), until of the modern era (assassinations of American presidents, such as Abraham Lincoln or John Kennedy, to name a few, or assassinations of Prince Mihailo Obrenović, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, King Aleksandar Karađorđević in our region), but in the second half of the twentieth century they escalated dramatically both in terms of the number of terrorist acts, but also the number of terrorist organizations. The watershed event that brought international terrorism into the social mainstream was the kidnapping and murder of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics. That massacre was carried out by the terrorist organization Black September, a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The aim of the kidnapping of Israeli athletes carried out by terrorists who infiltrated the Olympic village was to secure the release of several hundred Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons. However, after one day of missing the deadlines that the terrorists presented, they requested air transport to Cairo, which the German authorities promised them, but secretly organized a rescue operation for the hostages (see more: Reeve, 2006). Seeing the intention of the German authorities, the terrorists entered an armed conflict that resulted in the death of 11 Israelis, five Palestinians, and one German policeman. The world realized that terrorist attacks are no longer limited to specific regions, but that they can

happen anywhere and anytime, and this means that no one is safe anymore. Terrorist attacks practically became a legitimate and public way of political struggle in the eyes of the perpetrators, and the methods became diverse and very difficult to prevent. During the past decades, terrorists have committed extremely violent acts due to alleged political and religious reasons (Bjelajac, 2017, p. 372). The methods are highly variable, from airplane hijackings (the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, the Lockerbie case), raids on public places such as theaters (Dubrovka in Moscow), nightclubs (the Bataclan in Paris), schools (Beslan in Russia), sports events (Boston Marathon) and all the way to deliberately running over pedestrians by driving a truck through pedestrian zones (in the recent past in London and Marseille, to name a few). Some of these crimes could not be prevented because the perpetrators did not intend to talk and did not leave a channel of communication or make demands, as their only intention was to cause massive loss of human life, but in most cases, the possibility of negotiation existed. In many cases, the position of a particular country on negotiating with terrorists also plays a decisive role, and many countries have a doctrine that there is no negotiation with terrorists. Such an approach, although not without grounds, leads to massive loss of human life, so in the terrorist attack on the Dubrovka theater in Moscow in 2002, in the action of Russian special units, at least 170 people lost their lives, although the terrorists, in a certain way, showed the will to negotiate, having previously released between 150 and 200 people, mostly children and pregnant women. In the terrorist attack on the school in Beslan, terrorists kidnapped around 1,100 people. After a three-day siege, Russian special forces carried out an attack that killed 333 people, including 186 children, and 31 terrorists.

In contrast to the appearance of the profiler *post festum*, that is, when the criminal offense has already been committed and when there are more or less numerous traces, in the situations we describe, the profiler appears *ante festum*, that is, before the criminal event and acts with the intention of preventing the planned crime. Such an action is extremely complicated and uncertain, because the investigative authorities, of which the profiler is only a small part, have almost nothing in their hands at the beginning of the investigation. But that's just the first impression. As the profiler begins his work, new, tiny clues emerge, that seem disjointed, without cause-or-effect connections between them. The crime scene, set up by the criminal minds in a profound conspiratorial manner, begins to become visible and soon it is established who is, or what is the goal of the planned criminal activity. The size and scope of the social crisis

that could be caused if the criminal activity succeeds also becomes visible. Once the goal is determined, the race against time begins. According to the research methodology, the first task is to discover the identity of one or more future perpetrators. Profilers get that tough job. However, the personality of a criminal who commits crimes of a terrorist nature is characterized by a complex structure and many different types and subtypes. That is why profilers are the first to appear, using the method of profiling as a set of techniques based on the theory of the connection between a person's internal mood, desires, and motives and his outwardly expressed mimic and other external behavior. In this case, we are talking about movements, gestures, facial changes, smiles, laughter, and other, even the smallest aspects of human behavior.

Terrorist attacks with hostage-taking are not the only crisis situations in which profilers-negotiators play a crucial role. We often have situations where family relations escalate into the unlawful deprivation of liberty of other family members by one member, which practically represents a hostage crisis on a small scale, but with potentially catastrophic consequences. The most common perpetrator of such crimes is an adult man who holds his wife and children hostage, and the most common motive for such an act is personal and related to emotional relationships in the family. In such situations, the profiler-negotiator must also play the role of a mediator in family relations, by profiling the perpetrator before entering negotiations, and determining his motives and his goal, which, due to the specificity of each of these situations, is often not possible to do in advance, but must be done through negotiations with the perpetrator. Of course, knowledge and experience play a crucial role here as well, but communication skills are probably of the greatest importance due to the volatility of the situation.

Another of the crisis situations in which profilers-negotiators are engaged, which is the least massive in terms of magnitude, is a situation in which individuals intend to commit suicide. Of course, the nature of suicide is such that although people rarely commit it without prior ideation and planning, it is usually almost impossible to prevent it from happening, and suicide prevention is primarily the job of psychiatrists and other experts on the human psyche or social relations, but there are situations when a person intends to commit suicide in a public place. Whether that act can endanger the lives and health of other people, or whether it is a threat to the life of only the person who intends to commit suicide, the job of a profiler-negotiator is similar to negotiation in domestic violence cases. The negotiator must determine the background of the idea, the motives, and the problems that the person intending to commit suicide

is facing and approach the conversation with this person exceptionally delicately. Some public suicide attempts ultimately turn out to be mere attention-seeking acts, but any suicide threat must be taken extremely seriously and approached carefully, with the ultimate goal of saving lives, and with the idea that every human life is priceless.

Discussion

The second half of the twentieth century brought enormous changes in the domain and scope of police investigations by introducing new and innovative techniques into the investigative process. These techniques gave rise to new specific professions or specialties without which we cannot imagine modern law enforcement organizations. Psychological forensics joined the forensics of material evidence and crime scene processing, as an essential part of the criminal profiling process. Such an approach brought about the improvement of the profiling process itself, and the adoption of new techniques, such as forensic habitoscopy, which is based on the study of the external physical appearance of individuals and has a particular application in the identification of potential terrorists (see more: Drapkin & Karagodin, 2014). At the same time, the second half of the twentieth century brought a huge expansion of violent crimes of various kinds, from serial murders and sexual crimes to terrorist attacks motivated by various goals. Behind the first group of crimes are individuals such as Ted Bundy, the Zodiac Killer, Jeffrey Dahmer, John Wayne Gacy, Gary Ridgeway, and many others, while behind others are numerous terrorist organizations, such as various factions of Islamist militant movements, such as Black September, Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, then radical left-wing movements in Europe such as the Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF) in Germany led by Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof, then the Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse) in Italy, which are most notorious for the murder of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro, and many others. If we add mass cults gathered around a charismatic leader to these threats, such as the People's Temple led by Jim Jones, whose existence ended with the mass suicide of more than 900 people, which is the largest loss of American lives in one day until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, it is clear that the need for profilers-negotiators is greater than ever. Negotiators sometimes fail – as in the case of another cult, the Branch Davidians led by David Koresh, when during the siege of the cult's compound in the city of Waco, Texas, after more than 50 days of siege and negotiations a

shooting and fire occurred, in which 86 people, including children, lost their lives. There are many such cases, but this is where we see the thankless nature of the negotiator's work – successfully resolved crises do not receive such media attention nor remain etched in people's memories as tragedies and failures do.

Conclusion

Criminal profiling has become an inseparable part of the process of solving various crimes, but at the same time, it is also a kind of preventive factor by its very existence. In fifty years of active application of this approach in crime-solving, there has been massive progress in the techniques and methods used by profilers. Technological development greatly contributes to the development of criminal profiling. Starting with complete networking and interconnectivity, the development of powerful computers, and fast data exchange networks, investigators today have access to a vast amount of data in real-time, as well as the ability to cross-reference data, which makes their work easier and faster. Also, the surveillance systems that exist in almost all large cities, and at the largest number of facilities such as gas stations or supermarkets, but also on a large number of roads, allow for easier monitoring of suspects and better insight into their habits, which is extremely important in the investigation phase after the psychological profile of the suspect is compiled, and sometimes even in the profile development phase, because more data usually means a better and more precise psychological profile. The latest wave of industrial development, which we call Industrial Revolution 4.0, brings new opportunities, especially in implementing artificial intelligence in analytical processes in criminal investigations. Nevertheless, technology is there to speed up, facilitate and even make some processes possible, but the central place in solving both serious crimes and dangerous crisis situations still belongs to people, especially if we constantly adhere to the thesis that human life, even the life of a criminal is of the most significant value, and that non-violent resolution of crisis situations is how human society will become more humane in this century, and consequently, the world will become a better place to live.

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Uloga kriminalističkih profajlera u kriznim situacijama

Željko Đ. Bjelajac i Aleksandar M. Filipović
Univerzitet Privredna akademija u Novom Sadu
Pravni fakultet za privredu i pravosuđe u Novom Sadu, Srbija

Sažetak

Iako je prvi pravi kriminalistički psihološki profil napravljen tek pre nepunih 70 godina, a prva jedinica čiji je zadatak bio da analizirajući psihološke aspekte pomogne u rešavanju teških i komplikovanih zločina nastala pre oko 50 godina, danas ne možemo da zamislimo rad nijedne službe za sprovođenje zakona bez velikog doprinosa psiholoških profajlera. Sa druge strane, broj i vrsta pretnji bezbednosti je u tom istom periodu eksponencijalno porastao, i iako za jedan deo tih pretnji nije moguće reagovati pravovremeno i sprečiti ih, za drugi deo tih pretnji postoji i dovoljno prostora i vremena da se angažovanjem profajlera, i u određenim kriznim situacijama, kao što su talačke krize, bilo da se radi o terorističkim napadima, pljačkama banaka, ili drugim situacijama u kojima učinioci tih dela uzimaju taoce, angažovanjem specifične podvrste profajlera – pregovarača, povećaju šanse za mirno rešavanje krizne situacije i spasavanje života ljudi, što je najveći interes u humanim društvima. Cilj ovog rada je da istraži ulogu profajlera-pregovarača u kriznim situacijama sa kriminalnom pozadinom, koristeći hipotetičko-deduktivni model i metode analize primarnih i sekundarnih izvora, kao i kvalitativne, kvantitativne, komparativne analize, sa polaznom hipotezom da se upotrebom tehnika i metoda psihološkog profilisanja i pregovaranja u kriznim situacijama sa kriminalnom osnovom i pozadinom verovatnoća pozitivnog ishoda, mirnog razrešenja krizne situacije i kontrole štete drastično povećava.

Ključne reči: psihološko profilisanje, istražitelji, pregovarači, krizne situacije, kriminal, terorizam