THE PROFILE OF A CYBERCRIMINAL

FADI ABU ZUHRI

Profiling is a technique or approach for solving crime. Some scientists define it as a forensic technique used by forensic investigators and law enforcement agencies to understand why criminals are committing crime, to classify criminal behavior and to solve crimes that have already been committed (Saroha, 2014). Others view it as a tool used by forensic experts to identify the offender’s behavioral tendencies, personality traits, demographic variables, and geographical variables based on the information and characteristics of the crime (Lickiewicz, 2011). However, the general consensus is that criminal profiling involves collecting inferences about the traits of the individual responsible for the series of crime or for a particular crime. It involves understanding what a particular crime says about the perpetrator (Kirwan, & Power, 2013). It is used by forensic investigators and law enforcement agencies to understand and apprehend criminal offenders. As a forensic technique, criminal profiling enables investigative agencies to use the specific information to focus their attention on people with personality traits that parallel those of other offenders who have committed other similar offences (Kirwan, & Power, 2013). Integrating the sciences and the arts, criminal profiling allows investigators to analyze victims and crime scene and comparing them to similar crimes committed by known offenders’ personalities and traits. From this, the criminal profiler can predict the unknown offender’s characteristics including sex, age, and level of mental stability, geographical location and motivation (Lickiewicz, 2011). The investigators can also link other offences committed by the offender from the offender’s signature and modus operandi identified from the physical evidence collected at the setting where the crime occurred and scene of crime (Saroha, 2014). As such, criminal profiling contains information about the perpetrators (Kirwan, 2011):

- Likely demographics (i.e., gender and age)
- Legal history including history of prior criminal convictions/offenses and any antecedence
- Vocational backgrounds that is the work the perpetrator is likely to be involved in, if any
- Social interests and habits (hobbies, sports, and other interests in which the perpetrator may have)
- Family characteristics including the offender’s family background
- Various personality characteristics including the offender’s appearance, demeanor etc
- Mode of transport (i.e., type of vehicle that they offender may have)

In essence, criminal profiling is primarily based on the assertion that the format in which the offender committed the offence reflects his or her behavior and personality.

Modern criminal profiling takes two forms: the deductive and inductive approaches. He former is evidence-based involving analyzing the evidence found from the case in order to construct the offender’s behavioral profile. This way, the offender’s profile is constructed based on the evidences and information found at the crime scene (Kirwan, 2011). Professionals use this approach to get into the mind of the criminal. They try to think in the same way the offender may have thought while committing the crime. This type of criminal profiling is largely based on human intelligence rather than on statistical data. The later type of profiling uses the statistical analysis of the previous offender’s characteristics to generate a generalized behavioral pattern of the perpetrator. Comparative and statistical analyses are used to create the profile of the criminal. Information comes from results of studies of previously convicted criminals, their interviews, observation, data from official databases, and the usage of clinical methods. The profiler analyzes all these information and constructs a possible profile of the likely offender of the type of crime basing on the traits of criminals that committed similar types of crimes. The inductive technique is basically based on the inductive logic, which forms the basis of narrowing down and predicting who will commit specific types of crimes (Halder, & Jaishankar, 2011).

In addition to the offender’s biological information; it is worth noting that criminal profiles include information about the perpetrator’s residence and approximate location. This information is the product of geographic profiling. Regardless of the type of criminal profiling approach employed, criminal profiling alone can never solve crimes alone (Long, 2012).

Discerning the motivations for committing a particular cyber-crime is important as it helps the forensic expert to build a useful profile for the offender. It is suggested that people may be motivated by different factors to break the law. Based on the perpetrator’s motives, criminals can be categorized into two: criminals whose act of using the internet to commit crime is incidental; and criminals who intentionally and knowingly use the internet to commit crime. Criminals who knowingly use the internet to commit crime include white-collar criminals, hackers, computer con artists, network attackers and crackers (Long, 2012). The second type of criminals use the
computer to keep record, use the network to identify and find victims, and those who use e-mail and other services to communicate with their accomplices. The motivations offered by cyber-criminal for their activity seems to be largely influenced by their sensitivity towards agendas raised by various groups to oppose hacking. For example, the computer security industry has been accused of over-emphasizing the pathological aspect of hacking and vandal-oriented motivations. The motivation behind the hacker participation in hacking can be categorized into six: peer recognition, enjoying feelings of power, the urge of curiosity, the feelings of addiction, boredom with education system, and political acts (Long, 2012). For some criminals, they are motivated to do the forbidden act while for others, crime offers them the opportunity to manipulate and control others. Most criminals committing crime in the cyber space are strongly motivated with their motivation ranging from simply want to have fun to the desire or need for emotional or sexual impulse, money, political motives, or compulsions caused by psychiatric conditions of mental illness (Long, 2012). On the other hand, some cybercriminals are driven by less noble motives such as lust, desperation, anger, or plain boredom. It is important to discern motives and motivations for committing a particular crime as forms an important part of creating a useful profile (Schinder, 2010).

Because of the influence of Hollywood and the untypical nature of crime today; there are many stereotypes on how cybercriminals appear. Some of the stereotypes include that all cybercriminals (1) are socially inept but bright; (2) have a great technical skills and knowledge and very high IQs; (3) are males and usually boys; (4) teenage boys with computers and dangerous criminals, and (5) all cybercriminals are never violent. According to Lickiewicz (2011) when creating a profile for cybercriminals, a law enforcement official should always begin with generalities that are identified and typical of cybercriminals. According to Lickiewicz (2011) for an individual to commit a cyber-crime, he or she should have the ability to perform basic tasks on the internet. Some crimes also require greater computer skill and knowledge. These types of criminals are same as those who commit crime in the physical world. They do not believe and respect the law. They believe that some laws should be broken because they are unreasonable. Many of these criminals use the internet to fulfill their fantasies. They use it to build new identities and to play other people’s role. Cybercriminals often use more energy than they get in return (Kirwan, 2011).
Understanding the motives of the criminals is also important because in many jurisdictions, one of the elements of providing that an accused individual is guilty is by showing that he or she posses each of the crime triangle: motive, the opportunity, and the means. The motive is the perpetrator’s reason for committing a crime (Atkinson, & Walker, 2015). The means is the perpetrator’s way of committing a crime. The opportunity is the offender being at the scene at the right time to enable him commits a crime. Therefore, understating the motive of the criminal in an investigation is useful for two reasons: (1) when creating the offender’s profile to help in the identification of the correct perpetrator; and (2) when presenting a case against the suspect. Common motives for criminals committing cybercrimes include: sexual impulses, political motives, monetary profit, just for fun, revenge, anger, and other emotional needs, and serious psychiatric illness (Atkinson, & Walker, 2015). These characteristics should be used when profiling cybercriminals. Every message, every word and every trace is important when creating criminal profile.

**CONCLUSION**

It is clear from this paper, that criminal profiling means a lot to the investigators. It allows investigators to link motive, character, act and behavior of the offender. Although it primarily focuses on serial violent offenses such as sexual assaults and murders, the changes in technology has increased the emphasis and interest on applying it to cybercrime. Most cybercrimes are by nature serial in that the offender habituates their behavior and commit multiple offenses. From this, signature and modus operandi can be drawn. For example, analysis of indicators of the attack’s “digital crime scene” can determine the computer hacker’s intrusion activity and provide them with an insight. As such, it is an important method when it comes to classifying criminal investigations.

When an investigator uses profiling as the method to solve a criminal case; it is always important to see the scene of crime, find traces, and evidence that a criminal leaves at the crime scene. This way, the profiler can make good profiler of the offender.

**REFERENCES**


