

THE 16 PF® NEWSLETTER

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS
TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

It is not often that there is such a short gap between the acquisition of knowledge and a real-life opportunity to test what you have learned. In October, forensic psychologist Dr Julian Boon described some of the characteristics that compel serial killers to strike. The Suffolk Strangler epitomises much of what Dr Boon told us.

As a User Group member you will be used to assessing those who aspire to better jobs, or who are interested in their own self-development. What you are unused to are people who are criminally insane, who are addicted to violence of the most sadistic kind, and who are murderers.

Or cannibals.

Although this isn't a family newsletter, I'll spare you details of some of the more horrendous crimes that were described to us by Dr Julian Boon (if you don't want to be spared, see me at the next meeting.) Dr Boon is a chartered forensic psychologist and senior lecturer

in psychology at Leicester University, whose special areas of interest lie in offender profiling and criminal conduct.

We may feel that we are familiar with this sort of thing through programmes such as *Cracker* or *Silent Witness*. The reality, Julian Boon assured us, is somewhat different. He works very closely with the police, sometimes on a daunting number of possible suspects. And it is not unusual for a police officer in London to be working on 25 murder cases at any one time. In a rape case, there might be as many as 60 suspects.

EARLY WORK

The earliest attempts at trying to identify physical characteristics thought to be typical of 'criminal man' were made by Cesare Lambroso (1835 – 1909). Nobody would support these theories today, but his work paved the way for a multifaceted approach that also included social factors. The study of crime as a human and social phenomenon was presented for the first time.

The 'police investigation' approach to solving crime was developed at the FBI Behavioral Science Unit based at

Quantico, Virginia. It aims to develop and provide programmes of training in the behavioral and social sciences in support of law enforcement. In the UK the National Crime and Operations Faculty at Bramhill, Hants, has opened more recently.

The first major advances in modern times were made in the 1950s. Dr James Brussel was a Freudian psychiatrist, and worked on the case of the Mad Bomber of New York. More than three- dozen explosions had occurred in cinemas and other public places, and the perpetrator had sent angry letters to newspapers, politicians and utility companies. Brussel studied all the available evidence and provided details about the man's ethnicity, motivation, age, religion, employment, and even his dress – a double-breasted suit. He said that the man was a skilled mechanic and contemptuous of others; that he once worked for Con Edison (a utility company to which some of the letters had been sent); that his resentment had grown over time, and that he probably lived with a maiden sister or aunt in New England. Armed with this information, the police tracked down George Metesky within two weeks in 1957. He was living in Connecticut with two unmarried sisters and was of the age, ethnicity and religion that Brussel had predicted. He came to the door in a dressing gown, but when the police told him to get dressed, he returned buttoning up a double-breasted suit!

THE BOSTON STRANGLER

In the early 60s Brussel profiled the man known as the Boston Strangler, but many others did likewise and it became clear that criminal profiling had a long way to go. Nobody has ever been on trial as the Boston Strangler, but the public believed that Albert DeSalvo, who

confessed in detail to each of the eleven "official" Strangler murders, as well as two others, was the murderer. However, at the time that DeSalvo confessed, most people who knew him personally did not believe him capable of such vicious crimes. Psychiatrists, psychologists, criminologists and lawyers realize that these decisions are extremely difficult to make.

There was never any physical evidence connecting DeSalvo to the murders and he did not match witnesses descriptions of possible suspects. He was eventually jailed for other rapes and sexual offences but was murdered in prison by another inmate in 1973.

Julian Boon strongly believes that inconsistencies in the first 5-6 years of a child's life are a very important factor in the development of the criminal mind, and are under-rated. If a child doesn't know what to expect e.g. of a parent because of his/her erratic behaviour, it leads to a deep distrust of others and individuals tend to isolate themselves.

He quoted the case of another murderer, Ted Bundy, the son of an unwed mother, who never knew his biological father. He was led to believe that his grandparents were his parents and that his mother was his older sister, in order to protect the mother from criticism and prejudice. When the mother re-married, he was unable to develop a good relationship with his stepfather and remained emotionally detached. He preferred to be alone and became shy, self-doubting and uncomfortable in social situations.

BEAUTIFUL GIRL

At school he was teased and was the butt of pranks, but in spite of this he obtained reasonable grades. He worked his way through college diligently, but

employers regarded him as unreliable. His relationship with a beautiful girl from a wealthy family, who eventually rejected him, signalled a change in his personality. He never recovered. Later, he learned of his true parentage, which had a serious impact on him. He became more dominant; he enrolled at university, and studied psychology at which he excelled, and became an honours student. Although he had a steady girlfriend, he remade contact with his earlier love, and then dumped her. Revenge! This led to a series of horrific murders of young women.

Julian said that offenders are categorised as organized and disorganized. The latter made sudden, unplanned attacks and only minimal attempts to hide the body. (From press reports, it seems clear that the Suffolk Strangler is highly organised.)

EXPECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Expected characteristics of serious offenders were sexual inadequacy; a deficiency of social skills; prior knowledge of their victim, and prior knowledge of the location. The need for control - of events and of people - was a factor that cropped up repeatedly.

Julian believes there is no convincing evidence that a sadistic personality can be treated or eradicated.

We speculated briefly on the 'mystery' as to why some people overcome disadvantages of their early lives and become at least balanced if not successful. Others take a different path. This was rather like reflecting on 'the meaning of life' and similar intractable questions.

My personal hope is that the mystery of personality and its development will always remain just that. A mystery.

THE LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE PLUMBER

We know that, at least to some extent, there is such a thing as an occupational personality. Otherwise we would not have normative data for accountants, marketing people, and so on.

But can there be such a thing as a set of occupational personality characteristics for a group of tradesmen as diverse as joiners, plumbers, plasterers, odd-job men, builders, and electricians? I have employed all of these – indeed some of them might almost be on the staff, they have been here so often. One day I expect they will quiz me about their pension rights, or ask for a Christmas bonus.

My point is: why are they so garrulous? And is this a defining personality trait for self-employed tradesmen? The condition is known as logorrhoea. (Yes, I had to look it up as well.)

JOINER

The joiner is the worst. He reminds me of the little girl who said that she knew how to spell 'banana' but she didn't know when to stop. An excellent joiner, but my policy is to have as little contact with him as possible whilst he is working. Otherwise he will lay down his tools and tell me about every imaginable (and unimaginable) detail of his convoluted domestic life, who said what to whom, who was misunderstood and why. But I know that he's storing it up for me, because at some point I have to pay him, and then I get both barrels. On his last visit he did not leave until more than one hour after the job was finished. To hurry him along, dinner was brought forward, and he did not finally take the hint until I was carving the joint, and asking him if he liked mint sauce.

ELECTRICIAN

The electrician comes a very close second to the joiner. On every visit he relates to me - in mind-blowing detail – the stringency of The Electrical Regulations (2004) that he has to abide by. And how they have come about. And why they have come about. And how they should be amended. It's surprising that he doesn't tell me the life-story of Michael Faraday. Perhaps he's saving that for his next visit. Whilst I'm reassured by his professionalism, I don't honestly want to know. I don't regale my clients with endless detail about how the 16PF came into being or chapter and verse of The Data Protection Act or of Ray Cattell's biography.

I recall that electricians have low E according to the 16PF4 handbook, but I can't check it because I have given the handbook away. (No doubt dozens of you will get in touch, if I'm wrong, and inundate me with your personal anecdotes of garrulous electricians in time for the next newsletter.)

ODD-JOB

The odd-job man is another candidate for Verbose Man Of The Year. Last time he was here, he needed to bring another man (who appeared very taciturn in contrast), and so I was spared the excruciating detail of his Labrador's flees, his last operation – scars on his chest are like a map of the Underground – and his wife's travails at a Tupperware party.

PLUMBER

The long distance plumber vies with the joiner for verbosity. But it's compounded by almost impenetrable gloom. Let me put it this way: as a consultant, when a client gives you a job, do you bore him for 30 minutes about how you are so

busy you can't possibly do it before next Easter? I bet you don't. You grab the opportunity, smile, and say "Of course," and work out any problems later. Are tradesmen the only people who ever grumble about having lots of work coming in? Bet they are. I have to have the doom and gloom scenario from my plumber before he reaches for his tools. Then of course there is the almost mandatory sharp intake of breath as he examines the job, shakes his head, and muses on, "Who the bloody hell did this?" I long to tell him, one day, that it was him, actually.

On a more serious note: In an earlier edition, I mentioned a plasterer of my acquaintance who was promoted to representative (company car, staff status, bonus, etc.) He resigned from the job because he was so lonely. He had no one to talk to. He couldn't stand long car journeys, with just a 30-minute discussion and then a long drive back home on his own. It was more than he could bear.

Last week I heard he had taken his life.

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DATES FOR 2007

Wednesday 7th February

Wednesday 25th April

Tuesday 19th June

Wednesday 3rd October

Thursday 29th November

MANAGEMENT FADS AND MANAGEMENT THINKERS

If you can think back as far as the August Edition of the newsletter, you may recall a piece on 'management fads'.

These were various 'initiatives' from about 1960 onwards, that purported to save your

organization from extinction. They probably did no such thing, but they may have lined the pockets of some consultants (certainly not the present readership of course.) User Group members are routinely involved with managers and management, and that gave rise to some thoughts on original management thinkers, many of whom are now totally forgotten but whose influence lives on. We cited Fayol and Weber, and ended with a promise to deal with Henry Ford. Here it is.

Henry Ford (1863 – 1947) is routinely lauded as the man who brought the world mass production lines. His idiosyncratic career (from boy racer to multi-millionaire anti-war campaigner), as well as his many barbed observations, tends to be forgotten. There was, however, more to Ford than flow lines, workers doing mindlessly repetitive tasks, and the ubiquitous Model T.

It has been argued that Ford's genius actually lay in marketing, and not in manufacturing. Ford first decided that the world was ready for an affordable car; and then that mass production techniques were the only way of providing it. Instead of controlling costs to produce lower prices, Ford set the price and challenged the organisation to ensure costs were low enough to meet the figure.

Ford's masterly piece of marketing lay in his intuitive realisation that the middle class car market existed - it just remained for him to provide the products the market wanted.

AFFORDABLE

Model Ts were black, straightforward and affordable. The trouble was that later, when other manufacturers added extras, Ford kept it simple and dramatically lost ground. The man with a genius for marketing lost touch with the aspirations of customers. (*Sounds familiar?*) Ford's great gift, the secret that was to make him successful, was his ability to make complex things simple. He distrusted higher education, had little time for managers and management theory, but had a remarkable knack of surrounding himself with talented people.

Before the age of 40, Ford had done very little. He was fired from two jobs, and frequently moonlighted by filching time from his employers to work on his own ideas. By the age of 50, however, he was successful and egocentric; his love of publicity, and subsequent legal battles, his purchase of the local newspaper, his proclamation of paying five dollars a day (a level never actually reached by any of his workers) all signified a man who revelled in the power he had acquired in the new age of the motor car. He tried to stop the Great War in 1915 by hiring a ship packed with leading figures of the day, and sailing to Norway. It was a failure.

A CAR A MINUTE

Paradoxes abound: he made anti-Semitic statements yet claimed to have Jewish friends and neighbours; he was accused of destroying rural America, yet opened the world's first theme park; he set up schools to teach his immigrant workforce English, yet set ethnic minorities against each other. But even so, Ford's achievements remain impressive. He built his first car in 1896; started his own company in 1903; and between 1908 and 1927 produced 15m Model Ts. In 1920 Ford was making a

car a minute. Production was based around strict functional divides - demarcations. Ford believed in people getting on with their jobs. He did not want engineers talking to sales people or people making decisions without his say-so. Management and managers he dismissed as largely unnecessary.

MOVING ASSEMBLY LINE

Ford did not invent the production line - he was inspired by the 'moving assembly line' of carcasses he had seen in the slaughterhouses of Chicago. Others - such as musket-maker Eli Whitney in the 19th century - had also made tentative steps towards the production line. But it was Ford who transformed it into a means of previously unimagined mass production.

At the centre of Ford's thinking was the aim of standardisation - something continually emphasised by the carmakers of today although they talk in terms of quality, and Ford in quantity. While Ford will never be celebrated for his people management skills, he had an international perspective that was ahead of his time. He was also acutely aware that time was an important competitive weapon. "Time waste differs from material waste in that there can be no salvage."

But Henry Ford was a good role model in some respects. He was an improviser and innovator, he borrowed ideas and then adapted and synthesised them. He developed flow lines that involved people; now, we have flow lines without people, but no one questions their relevance or importance. Although he is seen as having dehumanised work, it shouldn't be forgotten that he provided a level of wealth for workers that was previously unimaginable.

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JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING YOU WERE CERTAIN OF...

Is there anything left of which we *can* be certain? It seems that day by day, many of the things that we took as a 'given' are being turned on their heads. Beer is good for you; beer is bad for you; wine likewise; exercise likewise; being busy is good, then bad; even a level of stress can be good – then bad.

I thought that one thing we could have been sure of is that although our personalities – the stock-in-trade of our membership - can be mercurial, at least we know where they are seated.

They are somewhere in our head aren't they?

Apparently not. According to a recent press report (oh, do keep up) they can be in other organs as well.

A man who for 31 years had behaved just like a man – loved rugby, liked beer, hated shopping, cooking, and gardening – has now developed some of his wife's personality traits following a kidney transplant of which his wife was the donor.

Now he is happy to bake a tray of scones, wander around shops, and tackle the flowerbeds. Whereas he now claims to be intuitive, he previously made decisions based on facts and statistics.

Rubbish? Well, his wife noticed his change of attitude a few months after his kidney transplant. And although some scientists are sceptical that transplant patients can inherit personality traits, there are others who believe in the theory of 'cellular memory'. This is the notion that living cells can 'memorise' and recall characteristics of the previous body.

I just hope I never have to assess someone who has had an organ transplant and inherited a partner's characteristics. After all, what norms should I use?

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REMINDER

DATES FOR 2007

Wednesday 7th February

Morning: Rob Bailey of OPP will highlight differences between 16PF Edition 4 and Edition 5

Followed by the AGM

Afternoon: Dr Steve Woods on Personality Meta Perspectives

Wednesday 25th April

Morning: Dr Lynsey Gozna on Assessment in Forensic Psychology

Afternoon: Professor Egan on The Big Five and Psychopathologies

Other dates:

Tuesday 19th June

Wednesday 3rd October

Thursday 29th November

CONSULTING EDITOR

Penny Moyle

OPP Ltd Tel 01865 404500

penny.moyle@opp.eu.com

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR

Caro Leitzell Tel 01962 880920

admin@leitzell.clara.co.uk

EDITOR

David Roberts Tel 01509 852870

david@evanroberts.fsbusiness.co.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Ann Rodrigues Tel 07947 159848

ann@acer-hr.co.uk

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