

Disordering Personality:  
Algorithmic Power, Criminal Profiling, and Diagnosis in Psychiatry and Forensic Investigation

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**Abstract**

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This dissertation is about the relationship between shifting mechanisms of psychiatric diagnosis and tactics of criminal(izing) profiling deployed by national and local law enforcement agencies in the U.S., from the 1970s to today. In particular, the co-emergence of the Behavioral Science Unit (now the Behavioral Analysis Unit) of the FBI in 1972 and *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 3 (DSM-III)* in 1980 forms the framing constellation for this project. The central argument of this dissertation is that psychiatric diagnosis and criminal profiling are not mutually exclusive, but rather are intersecting and diverging discourses and state-or-discipline sanctioned tactics for containment, risk management, and bio-necropolitical intervention that, when read side-by-side, can shed light on important networks of power.

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## Introduction

*We are frequently asked why true crime is so compelling to readers and viewers, given its often grisly subject matter and tragic endings. The answer, we believe, is that by its very nature, true crime deals with the essentials and fundamentals of what we loftily call 'the human condition.'*

--John Douglas and Mark Olshaker, "Twenty Years Later," foreword to *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit*

*Fantasy forms the bridge between the social and the textual, the material body and the discourses that constrain and enable that body's intelligibility.*

--Ellen Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification: Disability, Gender, Race*

Research for the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)* began in 1974, in tandem with the *International Classification of Diseases'* ninth edition (*ICD-9*). Ultimately published in 1980, with a revision in 1987, *DSM-III* was and is widely hailed as a crucial and groundbreaking marker of the progress of psychiatry as a field of medicine--a pivot from the apparently inconsistent and qualitative criteria of *DSM* and *DSM-II*, to a set of strategies that function to mark/create, quantify, and pathologize behavior and personality in supposedly new ways. According to the *American Psychiatric Association*:

*DSM-III* introduced a number of important innovations, including explicit diagnostic criteria, a multiaxial diagnostic assessment system, and an approach that attempted to be neutral with respect to the causes of mental disorders. This effort was aided by extensive work on constructing and validating the diagnostic criteria and developing psychiatric interviews for research and clinical uses. ("*DSM History*")

Part of the work of the *DSM* revisions (from one edition to the next, as well as corrections within editions) is to produce a narrative of scientific mastery and progress that is supposedly responsive to, and aligned with, shifts in the social landscape and/or political norms. For example, *DSM-III* sees to the "depathologization" of homosexuality (formally speaking) against the backdrop of the AIDS crisis in the 1980's, following what is still overwhelmingly narrated as

the “Civil Rights era”). This historicization of *DSM-III* as an innovative and *neutral* manual for diagnosing mental “disorders,” as well as marking a type of “new psychiatry,” has not been missed by science studies scholars like Bradley Lewis, who argues that this comprises a narrative of “scientific revolution”:

According to the “scientific revolution” narrative of the new psychiatry, *DSM-III*’s theory neutrality finally allowed psychiatry to rid itself of prejudice and superstition and thus take its rightful place among the objective sciences. The new psychiatry sees the move to an atheoretical, scientific DSM-III as a move from psychiatric myth to psychiatric Truth. (5)

This notion that “explicit diagnostic criteria,” “a multi-axial diagnostic assessment system,” and a “neutral approach” to identifying the origins of mental disorder are a) objective tools of measurement, b) useful strategies for the risk management of populations of people for whom mental health care has been foreclosed or largely diminished--if ever it were accessible to begin with--under the rubric of neoliberalism and its attendant health (insurance) crises, and c) that these are in fact processes cohesive enough to describe as things-in-and-of-themselves, together reflect a shift from the *supposedly* formally narrative and qualitative approach to the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses and disorders crystallized in psychoanalysis to more neurobiologically-centered discourses of psychiatric-scientific objectivity. Further, the notion that these shifts mark psychiatry’s progress from myth to Truth is reflected in popular narrations of the development of the Behavioral Analysis Unit--which according to the FBI’s official website--quite simply--“is evolving” (“The BAU”).

This narrative that paints psychoanalysis as qualitative and subjective, and what Lewis calls the “new psychiatry” as quantitative and objective (extending even to Lewis’ analysis, which in places is given to similar follies) tends to ignore the ways that psychoanalysis did very much operate with the force of medical authority at its peak, and is not to be mistaken for a

purely literary and *actually* qualitative discipline. Moreover, psychoanalysis is still very much in practice, though it is no longer the dominant praxis in its field, shrinking in the shadow of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for instance, both belonging to the discipline of Psychology as opposed to Psychiatry. I've yet to figure out what to do with this fake (but somehow real) division between these two scientific disciplines supposedly devoted to the human head--the former popularly narrated as the domain of "the mind" and the latter of "the brain." Figuring out how to historicize and situate different narrations of these fields shapes the contours of my argument.

I argue that we might best think of the historical shifts within the fields of psychology/psychiatry in juxtaposition with formalistic shifts in the nature of policing and state surveillance in the U.S.--in particular, the consolidation of corporate and law enforcement powers evidenced in the widespread use of PredPol (the corporation and software) and other forms of algorithmic power/policing that narrate "preventative" policing through abstracted statistical models of probability that are narrated as objective and neutral (i.e. colorblind and unbiased) (Wang). What historical constraints do these shifting justifications for a grossly expanding prison industrial complex, and the shifts in diagnostic practices and treatment seen around this time respond to?

This project is invested in asking when and how this shift from the supposedly qualitative to supposedly quantitative, in both APA diagnostic standards and cultural reception, occurs in different ways in relation to different *DSM* editions--with special attention to *DSM-III* --and cultural responses to, or reworkings of them. Specifically, I ask what reading these histories in conversation with the history of criminal profiling (as canonized by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and popularized by syndicated TV series, True Crime documentaries, and the like),

might allow us to think that otherwise might not surface if they are read separately? How do different modes of thinking/narrating personality--especially from the 1970's onward--bang against each other in these inseparable arenas?

Webbed as they are, how might we read the snaking histories of contemporary “criminal personality profiling” (criminal profiling for short) and what Lewis calls “the new psychiatry”? Emerging around the same time that research began for *DSM-III*, the FBI's famed Behavioral Analysis Unit (formerly known as the Behavioral Science Unit) developed the practice of criminal profiling that was solidified from a project launched in the 1970s that gathered qualitative research (long-form interviews) of *serial murderers*--a new category of “psychopathic” personality this project gave birth to (Douglas and Olshaker). While formally, these interviews might have more in common with psychoanalysis than contemporary psychiatry and/or neurobiology, the “findings” were consolidated and instituted through part of the FBI's “teaching program,” and marked according to emerging techniques for measuring personality that rhyme with shifts seen in the field of psychiatry around the same time. Strikingly, both fields are often narrated (if incoherently) as evolving from “illegitimate” and “unscientific” --even mythical--origins, the rejects of their respective institutions (the BAU marginalized within the FBI, and psychiatry within the larger field of medicine), to a Truth increasingly accepted by these fields as scientific in their own unique ways.

On one hand is the image--circulated through exceptionally self-referential mythology--of the FBI profiler as the well-intentioned rebel within the Bureau hypnotized by the magical thinking of “the profile” (which becomes a character of its own). Within this genre, first-hand accounts from agents with a formative role in the construction of the BAU become nearly indistinguishable from popular culture narrations of the same. While researching for this project,

I was struck by the ways that formal mythologies of criminal profiling (like John Douglas and Mark Olshaker's *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit*, and Robert Kessler's *The Bureau: The Secret History of the FBI*) are repeated almost verbatim in popular narrations of the BAU. Among the most striking examples is the following story, repeated in a number of books and television shows: In 1957 New York City police drafted a psychiatrist from Greenwich Village to assist them in finding and capturing the "Mad Bomber," who was thought to be responsible for over thirty bombings. Famously, "Brussel instructed the police, 'Look for a heavy man. Middle-aged. Foreign born. Roman Catholic. Single. Lives with a brother or sister. When you find him, chances are he'll be wearing a double-breasted suit. Buttoned'" (Douglas and Olshaker 23). FBI agents deduced from this profile, and some of Metesky's letters, that the UNSUB (Unknown Subject) was probably a former or current employee of the city's power company, Consolidated Edison. As the story goes:

Matching up the profile to this target population, police came up with the name of George Metesky [...] When they went up to Waterbury, Connecticut, one evening to arrest the heavy, single, middle-aged, foreign-born Roman Catholic, the only variation in the profile was that he lived not with one brother or sister but two maiden sisters. After a police officer directed him to get dressed for the trip to the station, he emerged from his bedroom several minutes later wearing a double-breasted suit--Buttoned. (Douglas and Olshaker 23)

Brussel then went on to explain his method for constructing the profile as a reversal of psychiatry's dominant praxis of examining a person to draw conclusions about how they might react to a certain situation. Instead, Brussels attempted to "predict an individual from the evidence of his deeds" (Douglas and Olshaker 24). This notion is also re-narrated--almost down to the exact detail, in an episode of *Criminal Minds* ("A Real Rain"). This narrative and its circulation point to the importance of reading the historicizations of psychiatry's "scientific revolution" and the development of the criminalizing investigative practice referred to as

“criminal profiling” together. Are they mere inversions of each other? How might we make sense of their co-articulations? While both have seemingly psychoanalytic origins, they ultimately give rise to a specifically contemporary phenomenon of measuring and diagnosing affective assemblages. As I and others have suggested, these shifts are most pronounced from the 1970’s onward, as explicit research for *DSM-III* began in 1974, with its publication in 1980, while the FBI Academy that now houses the BAU opened in Quantico, Virginia in 1972, at the same time that the BAU (then the BSU) was founded. Part of the work I intend to do in this project is better trace the historicizations of the work leading up to, and establishing, the BAU. For all of the narratives that exist, simple dates are a bit hard to come by, as they’re often embedded within more wide-sprawling narrations of profiling as a type of magical interpretive framework *proved scientific*. Part of what I want to ask, then, is how emerging strategies for measuring and “hunting” *types of minds* in psychiatry and criminal(izing) profiling come to be through rhyming with, and/or inverting, each other. Further, what is the relationship between the practice formally known as criminal profiling and the racializing logics that we call “racial profiling”?

This project is animated by questions surrounding the relationship between mechanisms of psychiatric diagnosis and the tactics of criminal(izing) profiling deployed by national and local law enforcement agencies in the U.S., as embodied by the discourse and discipline of forensic psychology and its articulation with/in the prison industrial complex. The two (psychiatric diagnosis and criminal profiling) are not mutually exclusive, but rather are intersecting and diverging discourses that convene most obviously at the points of *forensic psychology*. Forensic psychology, as a state-legitimized discipline, formalizes strategies of taxonomization and risk management designed preempt violent acts--but perhaps more

profoundly, to locate *violent people/personalities* or *criminal minds*. In the “new psychiatry,” metrics for diagnosing mental disorders--and also, *for the first time, personality disorders* -- take on an aesthetic of measured “fact,” and are narrated as having more purely biological origins. One of the questions I ask, is how theories of personality, as they circulate across cultural realms, relate to larger ideas about selfhood, health, and criminality. In measuring personality, how do these fields, as well as popular-critical reception of them, narrate personality in relationship to forms of attachment, and significantly, to anatomical notions of the body-mind? What type of “order” is instituted through the pathologization and disavowal of “criminal,” “deviant,” “mad” or “toxic” personalities?

For this reason, I see this project as, partially, an extension of the work done by disability scholar Ellen Samuels on fantasies of identification, which she defines as “a range of fantastical solutions [to the problems...of the modern crisis of identification that began to circulate in midcentury, eventually becoming solidified into our twenty-first century about bodies and identity” (2). Further:

These *fantasies of identification* seek to definitively identify bodies, to place them in categories delineated by race, gender, or ability status, and then to validate that placement through a verifiable, biological mark of identity. Fantasies of identification share certain signifying features: they claim a scientific, often medical framework and function to consolidate the authority of medicine, yet in practice often exceed or contradict any actual scientific basis [...] Fantasies of identification operate on the level of the ‘obvious’ or ‘common sense,’ yet simultaneously claim that only the expert can fully discern their meanings [...] Finally, fantasies of identification are haunted by disability even when disabled bodies are not their immediate focus, for disability functions as the trope and embodiment of true physical difference. (2-3, italics in original)

Constitutive and indicative of these cultural relays, are narratives of sexual monstrosity within purportedly objective and neutral mechanisms for predicting and preventing crime, or specific types of “criminal personalities.” True Crime docu-series *Inside the Criminal Mind* (2018) blends reenactment-fantasies of “violent crimes” with “expert opinion” to narrate the question “is

the criminal mind attributable to ‘nature’ or ‘nurture’?” as a claim to a biological basis for criminality. In these conceptions, nurture is understood in relation to the supposed health and non/normative relations of the nuclear family with an emphasis on “toxic parenting,” and notably--toxic motherhood. The first in a series of four episodes, each focusing on a *different type of criminal mind*, “Serial Killers” draws a vivid link between “dominating mothers” and misogynistic impulses to play out a type of matricidal retribution in reaction to these breaches of prescribed gender roles (see also the portrayals of “serial killers” Brunos and Kemper in the Netflix series *Mindhunters*). Interpretations of the ways larger sociohistoric power relations functionally contribute to serial violence are typically effaced by these narrations of dysfunctional familial relations, focusing on the relationship between “mother” and “son” (for a fictionalized example, see *We Need to Talk about Kevin*). A 2011 textbook in forensic behavioral analysis, *Analyzing the Criminal Mind: Forensic Investigative Sciences for the Twenty-first Century* includes both a chapter on “Trapdoor Spiders” that functionally dehumanizes-while-constructing the “serial killer” in relationship to “nature” (which here is alluded to through the reference to spiders—it is all very ridiculous and exaggerated, almost to the point of camp), *and* a chapter on “Toxic Parenting,” which blurs the lines between violence (abuse) and gendered/sexual deviations from normative hetero-nuclear family formations. Making wild claims that appeal to popular understandings of “scientific accuracy,” but factually contradict “true” scientific basis--per the nature of fantasies of identification--Jacobs constructs a chilling archetype of the sexual sadist from a Frankensteined suturing of anal sex to sexual perversion to sexual sadism to spectrum “psychopathy.” According to the textbook, “Criminal sexual sadists prefer anal intercourse, a sex act that dominates and controls another from behind to further dehumanize victims; this is directly opposite the preferred sexuality of normal adults, where

face-to-face intimacy stimulates emotional exchange” (Jacobs 169). It is this construction of “deviant” versus “normal” sexuality that I want to consider in relation to the *DSM*’s shifting criteria for personality disorders--reading these categories of dis-order (and strategies for marking/measuring it) as archetypes of a contagious sexual monstrosity that both threatens to (in)toxicate and dehumanize/kill. Clearly, not all anal sex occurs from behind, anal sex is not always dehumanizing, face-to-face sex is not necessarily humanizing, and dehumanization is sometimes the preferred mode through which sexuality is performed.

Both criminal profiling and the “new psychiatry” operate, on some level, via the disavowal of the other that is, paradoxically, mutually productive of the knowledge instituted in each field. Many of the writings within fields directly defy each other while still drawing significant insights, not only developed in reaction to, but in tandem with, each other. Both fields self-narrate and are narrated by “outsiders” as evolving from the status of devalued mythology to “experts” of the mind and personality that are ever-more begrudgingly accepted by their respective fields.

In Chapter 1 I research and analyze the historical formations that set the “scene” for narratives of (r)evolutionary progress in the fields of psychiatry and criminal profiling. I focus my research for this chapter in response to the question: What forms of attachment, sexuality, and *personality* become normalized and idealized as healthy at the same time others are pathologized by emerging technologies of “prediction” and “narration” as deployed by the interlocking fields of psychiatry and criminal profiling? I start by comparing the work of criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso (the father of criminal anthropology, and some say, of criminology itself) and neurocriminologist Adrian Raine (who founded the field of neurocriminology). I then focus specifically on the production of personality disorders, and

“criminal personality types”--beginning with Menas S. Gregory’s study of “criminal personalities” in the 1930s, then the construction of personality disorders in *DSM-III*, through new strategies of multi-axial diagnosis that are supposedly proof of the field’s progression to scientific Truth, and finally through 1980s and 1990s narrations of criminal personality types as told by former members of the BSU. Part of this means looking to Samuels’ *Fantasies of Identification* and Wang’s *Carceral Capitalism* in order to think through the imbrication of biological “markers” of identity and the algorithmic powers that seek to taxonomize them. Because of reasons I have explored in depth above, I argue that central to understanding this history (and its many narratives) is an investigation into its intertwined relation to emerging technologies for reading and diagnosing personality dis-order(s) evidenced by the construction of the “criminal mind.”

With this investment in the production of *personality* types (dis-order) and their attendant, in many cases constitutive, forms of attachment, I examine the figure of the “serial killer,” and the strategies of forensic profiling mutually constitutive of this “new” personality type. I am interested in how these interlocking discourses materialize in the U.S. from the 1930’s to the present day, but are set into motion with the work of late-nineteenth criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso. Might thinking of these historical formations in relation to Samuels’ conception of fantasies of identification--specifically the way these materialize in the twenty-first century as fantasies that identity can be scientifically *measured*--help us to understand about the production of personality dis-order(s)? I pay special attention to the FBI’s refutation of the APA and *DSM*, except when the psychologists’/psychiatrists’ work favors the existence of a “criminal mind,” as is the case with Walter Bromberg’s book *Crime and the Mind*, and Stanton Samenow’s book *Inside the Criminal Mind*. It is clear that both of these

institutions—the APA and the BAU—are deeply imbricated with each other and must be read as two parts of the same project of dis/ordering personality.

In Chapter 2 I continue the project begun in the first chapter, but this time with special attention to the way these fields are narrated in popular culture today—specifically television criminal investigative procedurals *Criminal Minds* and *Unbelievable*. I look to the ways that *Criminal Minds* episode “Fear and Loathing” rationalizes criminal personality profiling as supposedly distinct from racial profiling. In the logic of the show, members of the BAU develop a profile that insists they are looking for a Black UNSUB. When confronted by the mayor of the town they are working in, and accused of racial profiling, the chief of the BAU tells they mayor, “It’s not racial profiling. Racial profiling is targeting suspects because of their race. We gave you a complete profile which includes race.” According to the logic the show, racial profiling is reading for race politically, whereas criminal personality profiling reads for race statistically and “scientifically.” The episode argues that not including race in personality profiles is irresponsible and can actually endanger Black people rather than protect them.

In the second half of the chapter, I analyze the Netflix series *Unbelievable* for the ways that it rationalizes the prison industrial complex by naturalizing the sentiment that all rapists belong in prison. While the show does a commendable job of calling attention to the violence of rape and the violence that survivors of sexual violence undergo at the hands of the state when reporting such atrocities (a joint medicalization and criminalization that requires the use of biometric information technologies along with interrogation-like interviews which refuse to believe survivors when they come forward about their experiences), the show seems to “resolve” this injustice by juxtaposing it with twinned experiences of medicalization and criminalization undergone by incarcerated people (framed as “justice”). The show calls for greater reliance on

programs meant to facilitate communication across police jurisdictions, like ViCAP and CODIS, and argues that women police officers or detectives are somehow less violent than their male counterparts.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, Chapter 3, I juxtapose FBI manual *Making Prevention a Reality* with popular psychology self-help books about living people with Borderline Personality Disorder, *I Hate You—Don't Leave Me*, and *Stop Walking on Eggshells*. Though written from two seemingly disparate institutional perspectives, all three texts participate in the medicalization-criminalization of personality disorders and those diagnosed with or suspected of having them. I ask how each of these texts train readers to participate in the process of lay diagnosis, as articulated by Samuels. *Making Prevention a Reality*, a manual written for threat assessment and management teams trying to prevent acts of targeted violence, insists that specific diagnoses should not be the main factor for assessing an individual's risk of engaging in acts of targeted violence, yet in the same breath argues that personality disorders are distinct from "serious mental illness" and that those with personality disorders (whom the authors call "personality-disordered individuals") are more likely to turn to violence than others, and are supposedly more "connected to reality" than people with "serious mental illnesses," which thus makes them allegedly more capable of following through with threats of targeted violence. The manual insists that the mental health care system is too overburdened to engage in the task of threat assessment and management, and that traditional mental health care professionals are not trained to accurately assess the risk of targeted violence. *Making Prevention a Reality* argues that threat assessment and management teams, and forensic mental health care professionals, are the only entities that can be trusted with the task of threat assessment and management. These moves effectively criminalize personality disorders and place them outside the scope of non-forensic

mental health treatment. In contrast to the “brittle people” supposedly most at risk of engaging in targeted violence (whom the manual correlates with personality disorders), the manual produces the “positive” personality of the “upstander,” a bystander in the life of a “brittle person” who reports “suspicious behavior,” much of which corresponds with mental disability and/or neurodivergence.

*I Hate You—Don’t Leave Me* and *Stop Walking on Eggshells* do not necessarily argue that personality disorders do not qualify as “serious mental illnesses,” but *I Hate You* does perpetuate the argument that borderlines are almost universally hated by therapists—more so than people with any other mental health diagnosis. Both books construct the figure of the borderline and construct all loved ones of those with BPD as non-borderlines (as if borderline people do not also love each other). *Eggshells* offers diagnostic criteria “checklists” for BPD to help its readers determine whether their loved ones have the disorder, and though its authors ask readers not to “get stuck on a diagnosis,” they actually encourage the lay diagnosis (to borrow from Samuels) of anyone suspected of having “borderline traits,” whether or not they have received an official diagnosis. Both books depict borderlines as manipulative, volatile, and violent—even belonging to “alien” worlds they call “the Borderline World” or “the Borderline Zone.” Non-borderlines are encouraged to call the police when conflicts with a borderline escalate, and to hire lawyers with experience “successfully handling” cases involving borderlines when separating from or fighting for child custody with a borderline. Thus, both *I Hate You* and *Eggshells* perpetuate depictions of borderlines as violent and participate in their criminalization.

This dissertation tells the story of the disordering of personality as it occurs in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, criminal profiling, and in popular culture. The medicalization-criminalization of certain constructed “personality types” emerges in the U.S. in the 1930s, but

crystallizes in the early 1970s and onward, with the formation of the BSU of the FBI and the *DSM-III* Task Force, and the invention of criminal personality profiling. While these stories are overwhelmingly and perhaps exclusively narrated separately, I argue that reading these histories together is essential to understand the project of disordering personality.

## CHAPTER 1

### *The Criminal Mind: On the Origin Stories of DSM-III and Criminal Personality Profiling*

*Behavior is a product of thinking, and so it is incumbent upon anyone formulating policy or working with offenders to understand how criminals think.*

--Stanton E. Samenow, *Inside the Criminal Mind*

*In the animal kingdom, the rule is, eat or be eaten; in the human kingdom, define or be defined.*

--Thomas Szasz, *Words to the Wise: A Medical-Philosophical Dictionary*

### **Introduction**

The Behavioral Science Unit of the FBI, now known as the Behavioral Analysis Unit, was founded in 1972, a mere two years before the *DSM-III* Task Force began working on the edition of the manual which has been purported to have revolutionized the fields of psychology and psychiatry. *DSM-III* was the first edition of *DSM* to include personality disorder diagnoses, while the BSU arguably transformed the field of criminal investigation by developing and introducing the practice of criminal personality profiling. These stories and histories are typically narrated separately, but this chapter and dissertation project as a whole argues that the advent of *DSM-III* must be understood in relation to the larger history of criminal profiling. Two intersecting taxonomies of personality emerged at the same moment in the early 1970s, and I argue that in order to make sense of these histories, they must be read/articulated together.

In the first section of this chapter I trace the late nineteenth century emergence of both criminal anthropology, as established by Lombroso, who is widely referred to as the “father of criminology,” and the practice of fingerprinting, as framed by the “father of eugenics,” Sir Francis Galton. I look to the ways that criminal anthropology established a kind of biology of

“criminality,” arguing that one’s facial features and skull, and even the shape and size of one’s feet, might make one more likely to engage in “crime.”<sup>1</sup> I then turn to the contemporary work of Adrian Raine, who has been credited with establishing the emerging field of neurocriminology, and point to similarities between the fields of neurocriminology and criminal anthropology. Ultimately, I argue that both fields peddle a sort of junk science that is eugenicist in nature and effect.

In the second section, “*DSM-III: The Disease Model of Personality and the New Psychiatry*,” I analyze the advent of *DSM-III*, from the creation of the *DSM-III* Task Force that made virtually all decisions regarding the new manual and the disorders it established, revamped, or upheld, to the reception of the manual. *DSM-III* was the first edition of *DSM* to introduce a multi-axial system of diagnosis, the first to introduce personality disorders to its diagnostic categories, and the first to displace the primacy of psychoanalysis in favor of a descriptive psychology developed after Emil Kraepelin. *DSM-III* was widely heralded as ushering in a new era of psychiatry, called by some The New Psychiatry. I also look to some of the ways that *DSM-III* (and subsequent editions of *DSM*) have been taken up for the project of criminalizing BIPOC and/or mentally disabled communities.

In the third section of this chapter, titled “The Formation of the BSU, The Origins of Criminal Profiling/Behavioral Analysis, and The *Crime Classification Manual*,” I trace popular narrations of the origins of the Behavioral Science Unit of the FBI, now known as the Behavioral Analysis Unit, and the technique of criminal personality profiling developed by special agents in

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this chapter, and dissertation as a whole, I put scare quotes around terms like “criminal,” “criminality,” and “crime” not to cast doubt on whether or not some of the actions deemed crimes are truly unethical (while some “crimes” like theft are, to my mind, excusable, others like rape and homicide are not), but to call attention to the constructedness of these categories, and the apriori association of Blackness and brownness with crime and criminality (here I am citing Jackie Wang’s book *Carceral Capitalism*).

this unit. The BSU even created and published its own version of *DSM*, called the *Crime Classification Manual*, which establishes a taxonomy of types of “crime”/”criminal behavior.” I argue that this history of criminal profiling and the publication of *CCM* must be read in relation to the development of *DSM-III*, and vice versa, as reading these two histories separately occludes important connections between these fields and manuals.

### **Biological Criminality: Criminal Anthropology, Fingerprinting, and Neurocriminology**

When I began research for this project, I thought it would focus primarily on the time period from the 1970s to today. However, it soon became apparent that in order to properly analyze the twinned formations of the Behavioral Science Unit and the *DSM-III* Task Force, I would need to first visit the late nineteenth century, when work on the identification of individuals labeled “criminal” took shape in particular ways. In 1876, an Italian anthropologist named Cesare Lombroso, the founder of the field of criminal anthropology, and some say of criminology itself (Raine), published the first edition of his book *Criminal Man*, which would go through five editions over the course of Lombroso’s life. In *Criminal Man*, Lombroso introduced a “medical model of crime” (Gibson and Rafter 2) which argued for the idea that “criminals” were marked by physical and psychological “abnormalities” that were determined by an individual’s biology (Gibson and Rafter 1). This “biological determinism” fated some individuals to be “born criminals,” a type of “criminal” marked in Lombroso’s estimation by their evolutionary atavism (Lombroso was indebted here to the work of Charles Darwin, who published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859). Lombroso argued in the third edition of *Criminal Man*, that “Disease and atavism are two main causes of criminality” (221). “Atavism remains one of the most constant characteristics of the criminal in spite of, or rather together with,

pathology,” Lombroso wrote (222). In their introduction to the new translation of *Criminal Man*, editors Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter explain that “Lombroso promised to turn the study of criminality into an empirical science” (1). As I began to establish in the introduction, almost a

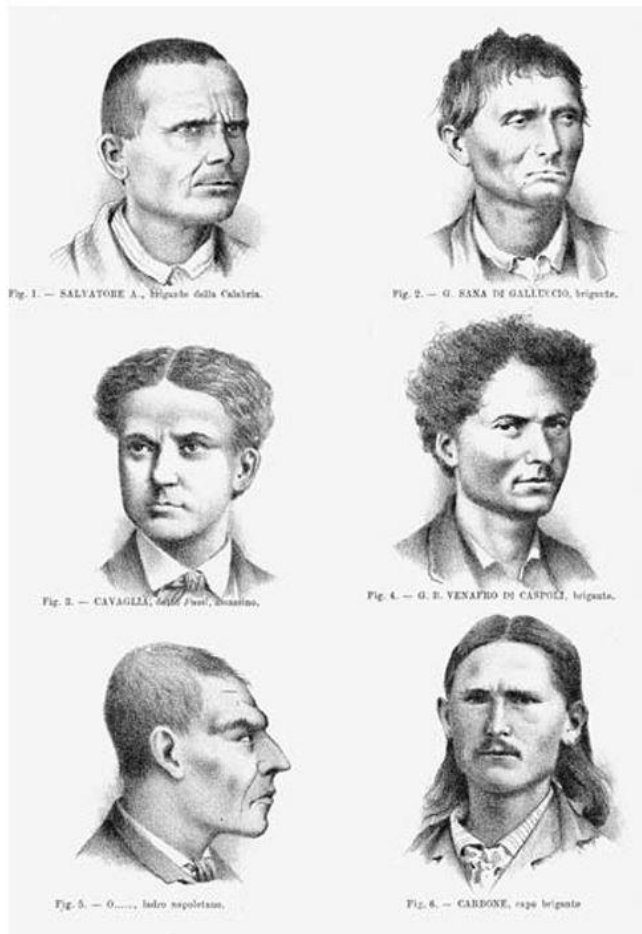


Figure 1- “Physiognomy of Criminals” from Lombroso’s *Criminal Man*

hundred years later, criminal profiling (or behavioral analysis) promised the same thing, that this new investigational technique which was initially regarded as ascientific (“considered one step removed from witchcraft” [Douglas and Olshaker 4]), was truly scientific in basis, and provable through its purportedly uncanny ability to catch violent “criminals” in the act of law-breaking. Part of Lombroso’s scientific “technique” included

measuring the skulls, height (50, 307), arm span (307), jaws (303), and

feet (308) of criminalized people. Lombroso believed that one could identify a “born criminal” by studying their facial features (part of the tradition of physiognomy [see Figure 1]), writing, “Nearly all criminals have jug ears, thick hair, thin beards, pronounced sinuses, protruding chins,

and broad cheekbones” (53).<sup>2</sup> Lombroso also believed in phrenology, the idea developed by Franz Josef Gall that behavior can be explained by the development of an individual’s brain, and is evidenced in the shape of their skull (Bromberg 54). In Lombroso’s arguments about “born criminals” (who, in the 3rd edition of *Criminal Man* Lombroso argued comprised about forty percent of all “criminals” [224]) the question of whether “violent criminals” are born or made, which is still hotly debated today, surfaced for Lombroso.

There was an inherent racism to much of the argumentation in *Criminal Man*, which analyzed the relationship between, race, sex, class, age, and criminality. According to Gibson and Rafter, “Lombroso considered race a biological determinant of atavistic behavior and, in the case of crime, of violence and cruelty as well” (19). Lombroso also studied the relationship between immigration and crime rates, and argued, “Immigrants belong to the human category with the greatest incentives and fewest barriers to committing crime” (317). He cited the statistic from Brace’s *The Dangerous Classes* (1872) that “Out of 49,000 arrests in New York, 32,000 were immigrants” (Lombroso 317), and one of the many tables in *Criminal Man* paralleled immigration rates with rates of crime by U.S. state. In addition to physiognomy, phrenology, and racist anthropological argumentation, Lombroso believed that diseases of the brain, including “moral insanity,” “brain malnutrition and poor nerve conductivity” (221) were some of the other

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<sup>2</sup> Another means of identifying “criminal” suspects, the police artist composite drawing, which is based on the descriptions of eyewitnesses to crimes, reminds me of Lombroso’s images of the faces of criminalized people. The *FBI Facial Identification Catalogue* is comprised of photographs of people with parts of their faces blacked out to further accentuate different facial features (for instance, “hooked noses”). When we account for the fact that many eyewitness accounts of crimes have been proven inaccurate, and then reckon with the racialized nature of crime more generally, it follows that the FBI Facial Identification Catalogue likely reinforces racist imaginaries about what “criminals” “look like.” See Horace J. Hefner’s chapter in *Sexual Homicide* titled “The Police Artist and Composite Drawings” for images from the catalogue and the “FBI Facial Identification Fact Sheet” used to aid in the creation of these drawings.

main contributors to “criminality,” aside from the atavism that Lombroso’s evolutionary psychology (Gibson and Rafter 31-2) argued for.

Lombroso’s influence on the field of criminology, to this day, cannot be overstated. Though very few U.S. criminologists today would explicitly mark their indebtedness to Lombroso’s crude criminal anthropology, Lombroso’s work nonetheless preempted current genetic theories of crime. Though genes were not discovered until the year of Lombroso’s death, in Gibson and Rafter’s estimation, “On a fundamental level, criminal anthropology’s emphasis on heredity anticipated current genetic explanations of rule-breaking behavior” (32). One criminologist who explicitly nods to Lombroso’s influence on his work is the British neurocriminologist Adrain Raine, who currently works at the University of Pennsylvania. In his book *The Anatomy of Violence* (2013) Raine writes,

Lombroso had believed when he peered into the skull of Villella that he had the answer to the cause of crime--a physical, structural abnormality in the brain. Was Lombroso entirely out of his mind? Or might he have been right? Did he have a mind to crime and why the autonomic- and central-nervous-system processes that we have just seen are not working properly? Might violent offenders have broken brains? (133).

*The Anatomy of Violence* argues just that--that “violent offenders have broken brains.” For Raine, purely sociological understandings of crime are woefully insufficient for explaining violent “antisocial” behavior (8). Raine queries, “Is there a ‘killer gene’? Or if not one, then multiple genes that, either on their own or in an intricate conspiracy with the environment, shape killers...?” (38). Together with a colleague named Laura Baker, who worked with Raine at the University of Southern California, Raine organized a “twin study” to analyze antisocial behavior in pairs of twins in order to study the heritability of antisocial behavior. They “found”

“Heritabilities that ranged from .40 to .50. That means that 40 to 50 percent of the variability among us in antisocial behavior is explained by genetics” (41). I put “found” into scare quotes to belabor Michel Foucault’s point about scientific truths never simply being “discovered,” but always produced through disciplinary and ideological conventions. Raine does just this by alluding endlessly to various twin studies, and positron-emission tomography (PET) scans of the brains of convicted “murderers” compared with the brains of “healthy,” “noncriminal” controls (see Figure 2). The studies cited and the images of brain scans embedded in *Anatomy of Violence* betray Raine’s indebtedness both to Lombroso’s work and the nineteenth-century study of phrenology. Interestingly, when Raine performed a PET scan of his own brain, he discovered that it closely resembled the scans of “serial killer” Randy Kraft (“Serial Killers” 23:15). I argue that neurocriminology’s use of PET scans is merely a contemporary iteration of criminal

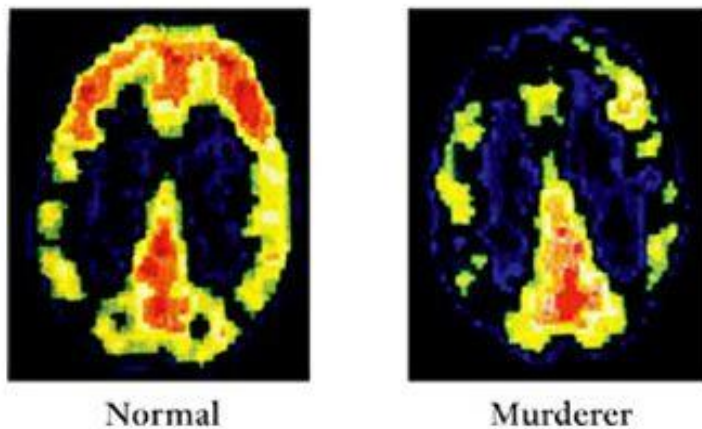


Figure 2- “Positron-emission tomography (PET) scans showing a bird’s-eye view of reduced prefrontal functioning in murderers (top of scan) compared with controls. Red and yellow indicate higher brain functioning” from *The Anatomy of Violence*

anthropology, and we should read this with the same skepticism many now bring to Lombroso’s work. Neurocriminology’s turn to PET scans is a type of junk science that can tell us little about one’s relationship to

“crime,” or anyone’s relationship to the social more generally, whatever Raine and his

colleagues may argue.

Raine also makes racist and sexist arguments about proclivity to violence. Though Raine refutes the idea that XYY chromosomes (what he calls an additional “male” chromosome) predispose one to violence, he argues that they do predispose one to “crime” in general (47-9).<sup>3</sup> He continues along a similar line of argumentation when he explains, “we soon gave up trying to recruit female felons. You women out there are the wonderful angels that make the world go round. It’s we men that maketh mayhem” (151). Raine attributes this not only to varied socialization between men and women, but also to “fundamental brain differences between men and women” (151-2).

In the late 1970s, Hans Brunner, a doctor in the Netherlands, began researching the genetic basis for aggression in the family of a woman who came to him asking him for help in identifying the causes of aggressive behavior in the male offspring of women in her family. Brunner discovered that “All the affected members had [a] mutant form of the MAOA gene” which resulted in “no functional MAOA at all” (51). Brunner concluded that this low-MAOA gene (colloquially called the “warrior gene”) was at least partially responsible for increased aggression in this family and in human beings generally. Research suggests that the Maori have “twice the level of the genotype conferring low levels of MAOA compared with Caucasians in New Zealand” (54). This led to some seriously racist argumentation, and while Raine acknowledges this controversy, he ultimately reinforces the argument that the low-MAOA gene is partially responsible for increases in “hot-blooded” types of aggression and antisocial behavior

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<sup>3</sup> The idea that XXY chromosomes contribute to one’s probability to become a “serial killer” is explored in *Criminal Minds* S4:E8, “Masterpiece.” In this episode a man claims to be driven to serial killing by his XXY chromosomes, and also through his genetic relation to his brother, who also had a history of serial killing. This is ultimately dismissed by SSA Rossi as “junk science.”

more generally (53-6).

Raine is well aware of the critiques brought against neurocriminology, but this does not dissuade him from pursuing biological causes of crime and the genetics of aggression as his life's work. In the preface to *The Anatomy of Violence* Raine writes, "Biological research on violence was vilified in the 1970s and 1980s, during my formative years as a scientist. Amid interdisciplinary rivalries the perception was that researchers like me were at best biological determinants who ignored social processes--and at worst racist eugenicists" (xii). Raine argues, however, that there has been a "sea of change" between the 1970s and 1980s and today. He continues, "On the tails of the genome project, societies across the world have begun to realize the importance of genetic and biological factors in a whole host of processes--and not just medical conditions" (xiii). Neurocriminology has indeed been rising in popularity and this speaks to the continued relevance of Lombroso's work to criminology today. However, we should remain wary of appeals to the biology of criminality. As R.C. Lewtonin argues, science *is* ideology, and cannot be read as mere logical and objective fact. Lewtonin writes:

....[S]cience, like other productive activities, like the state, the family, sport, is a social institution completely integrated into and influenced by the structure of all our other social institutions. The problem that science deals with, the ideas that it uses in investigating those problems, even the so-called scientific results that come out of scientific investigation, are all deeply influenced by predispositions that derive from the society in which we live. Scientists do not begin life as scientists, after all, but as social beings immersed in a family, a state, a productive structure, and they view nature through a lens that has been molded by their social experience. (5)

Pure objectivity is impossible to obtain, and I believe that we should be wary of truth-claims

made about the biology of criminality. Raine even begins his book by recounting a night on vacation when he was attacked by a man wielding a broken knife. Raine, like everyone, has been influenced profoundly by his social experience, and it would be detrimental to read his studies as pure, unadulterated truth.

Sixteen years after the publication of the first edition of *Criminal Man*, another anthropologist and the founder of the modern eugenics movement, Sir Francis Galton, published his famous book *Finger Prints* (1892). In the introduction to *Finger Prints* Galton argues that the papillary ridges of human fingers “afford [...] an incomparably surer criterion of identity than any other bodily feature” (2). The idea that individuals can be positively identified by their fingerprints was pioneered by Galton, who is also widely regarded as the “father of eugenics.” In her seminal book *Fantasies of Identification*, Ellen Samuels argues that “the power of fingerprinting to realize the fantasy of identification stemmed largely from its imagined power to mark and control racial and disability identities” (98). Samuels marks the incongruencies in Galton’s work on race, class and fingerprinting, where he both declares that one cannot identify an individual’s race by their fingerprints (Galton 195), and also, “Still, whether it be from pure fancy on my part...or from some real peculiarity, the general aspect of the Negro print strikes me as characteristic. The width of the ridges seems more uniform, their intervals more regular, and their courses more parallel than with us. In short, they give an idea of greater simplicity” (Galton 196; Samuels 112).<sup>4</sup> Galton “also collected fingerprints from the ‘lowest’ and ‘worst’ ‘idiots’ in London (*Finger Prints* 19, 197)” (Samuels 111). The racist, ableist, and eugenicist work of Galton not only forms the legacy and basis of fingerprinting in the past but appears explicitly as

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<sup>4</sup> I am quoting from Samuels in this passage, despite having read *Finger Prints* myself, because in my mind, she has selected the most apropos quotations from Galton’s book for our purposes.

recently as 1987 in the article by FBI fingerprinting specialists Donald F. McBride, “Disease Inheritance and Race Determination by Fingerprints,” published in the journal *Identification News* (Samuels 112). Clearly in dialogue with Lombroso, both Galton and Lombroso were foundational to the work of personality typification via race and disability, which lingers today in the practices of forensic DNA phenotyping (Sankar; Kahn) and criminal personality profiling. Lombroso’s work also fueled Galton’s eugenics practices, as evidenced in the sterilization movement. Walter Bromberg explains:

The fields of criminal anthropology and heredity were now interlocked in the minds of many who were more idealistically inspired than scientifically critical. Jurists, ministers, and figures in social life united in pointing to hereditary degeneracy as precursive to a social catastrophe that could only be prevented by sterilizing its progenitors, the feeble-minded, criminal, mentally defective, and antisocial. The sterilization movement gained such support that in America by 1915 thirteen states had enacted laws for compulsory sterilization of major criminals. (56-7)

The legacy of criminal anthropology and forced or coerced sterilization haunts the present. Imprisoned people are still sometimes offered the “opportunity” to reduce their sentences by agreeing to sterilization (Rosenblatt), countless undocumented immigrants with uteruses (who are heavily criminalized) are still being forcibly sterilized in ICE custody (ACLU).<sup>5</sup>

In 1913 Charles Goring disproved Lombroso’s theory of criminality and degeneration, but Lombroso’s influence lived on in the new concept of the “psychopathic personality”

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<sup>5</sup> See Jay Dolage’s article “Disabled Upon Arrival: The Rhetorical Construction of Disability and Race at Ellis Island” for a thorough account of the relationship between eugenics and U.S. immigration, including the encouragement of lay diagnosis among immigrants, and the “six second inspections” performed by line inspectors upon immigrants’ arrival at Ellis Island.

(Bromberg 57). Bromberg describes this influence in the following passage, which I believe is worth quoting at length:

The degeneration theory exerted an influence on psychiatric diagnosis that is still noticeable. The “criminal man” faded from view, but the keystone of the psychiatric explanation of the chronic wrongdoer remained in the “psychopathic personality” concept. Although Lombroso’s ideas, eagerly put to the test by prominent neurologists and alienists on both sides of the Atlantic, were relinquished as the century advanced, the conviction persisted that a form of moral disease, or degeneracy, represented by a psychic morbidity, existed among capital criminals (the “moral insanity” of Prichard, Ray, Esquirol, and other psychiatric leaders of the 1820-1870 period). The notion, that the criminal, the ne-er-do-well, and the misfit were afflicted with a constitutional inadequacy--in their mental patterns if not in their physical structure--betrayed the subtle heritage of Lombrosian thinking. When in 1891 Koch introduced the diagnostic term “psychopathic inferiority” to describe morbid characters prone to social nonconformance, and Adolf Meyer amended it to “constitutional psychopathic inferiority” in 1905, the shadow of the degeneration theory lay across their psychiatric analyses. (58)

The figure of the “psychopathic criminal” remains today in the fields of law enforcement, criminology, and forensic psychology, and is certainly also a fixture in popular media renditions of criminal profiling and serial homicide. However, the term “psychopath” is now a purely legal designation; psychopathy is not recognized as a legitimate mental/personality disorder in the larger field of psychology or psychiatry.<sup>6</sup> The figure of the “psychopath” was eventually

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<sup>6</sup> See Edwin H. Sutherland’s 1950 article “The Sexual Psychopath Laws” for more on the origins of this legal designation. The article is highly resistant to the construction of the “sexual psychopath,” but

displaced by the figure of the “sociopath,” but the effect of both designations is essentially identical (Bromberg 59-60). Even now, the closest legitimate diagnosis to psychopathy is antisocial personality disorder (APD). Those diagnosed with APD used to be known colloquially as “sociopaths,” and the figure of the “sociopath” remains a close fraternal twin to the figure of the “psychopath” in popular media, both heavily criminalized and pathologized. APD remains a highly stigmatized diagnosis; in fact, even in its inception, Theodore Millon, one of the members of the *DSM-III* Task Force, contested *DSM-III*'s description of APD, taking issue with its criminalization of the personality disorder in the manual which was the first to represent personality disorders. Personality disorders populated a separate “axis” (Axis II), entirely set-aside for personality disorders and what is now known as Autism Spectrum Disorder. I will discuss this more in-depth in the section on *DSM-III* and the *DSM-III* Task Force.

In the 1930s interest in the psychology of crime shifted from the domain of “insanity” to “disordered personality organization” (Bromberg 83). According to the Crime Classification Manual (3rd Edition):

*As studies progressed, it became obvious that a disordered personality organization (including psychoses, neuroses, and personality problems) was a more significant factor in crime than feeble-mindedness. With increasing rapidity, from the late 1930s to the World War II years to the present, interest has shifted away from insanity and mental defectiveness to personality disturbances in analyzing the genesis of crime. (5-6, emphasis mine)*

In 1932 Dr. Menas S. Gregory, the Director at the Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital, began a

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generally for flawed reasons (such as the misogynistic idea that forcible rape is very uncommon and nearly impossible to commit unless the woman is physically incapacitated in some way).

research project on the personality of “criminals” that would last at least until the late 1960s (Bromberg 85). What resulted from this study was a series of “personality evaluations” that were later known as personality diagnoses. In 1932, the list of “Predominant Personality Characteristics of Criminal Offenders” appears as follows:

- Aggressive Type--antisocial
- Aggressive Type--aggression released by alcohol
- Aggressive Type--aggression in reaction to inferiority
- Emotionally Unstable type
- Unethical (Criminal) type
- Maladjusted Adolescent type
- Adult Immature type
- Egocentric type
- Inadequate, Shiftless type
- Suggestible type
- Adynamic, Dull type
- Nomadic type
- Primitive type
- Adjusted to Low Cultural Level
- Adjusted Personality (Bromberg 85)

This was only the first iteration of this personality-typification. Later would come the framework of “crime as behavior,” a position from which it was posited that all crime is foremost human behavior and studying a “criminal’s” behavior is the best way to understand their personality (Bromberg 89-90). This is arguably one of the first instantiations of criminal profiling, which

makes sense when we consider that the first person to develop the “art” of criminal profiling was a psychiatrist named James Brussels (see the dissertation’s introduction), who flipped the typical, standard psychological process of getting to know a person’s actions by way of studying their personality, and in the Mad Bomber case, instead studied the suspect’s actions as a means of divining his personality/identity (Douglas and Olshaker 23-4). I argue that this study of “criminal” personality types paved the way for the *DSM-III* Task Force’s research into personality disorders beginning in 1974. Criminology and forensic psychology began the pathologization of personality “types” we now know as personality disorders. In the following section I will describe and analyze the formation of the *DSM-III* Task Force and the manual that resulted from their research, *DSM-III*.

### ***DSM-III: The Disease Model of Personality and the New Psychiatry***

Research for the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* began in 1974 with the formation of the *DSM-III* Task Force, two years after the establishment of the Behavioral Science Unit. The task force, headed by Robert Spitzer, was comprised of white, middle-class psychologists and psychiatrists who believed in the primacy of scientific empiricism, even, on occasion, more than Spitzer himself (Davies). It was Spitzer’s hope for *DSM-III* that this manual would “reverse the psychoanalytic tendency (dominating *DSM-I* and *DSM-II*) to demote diagnostic classification in favour of studying intra-psychic conflicts; it should be non-committal on aetiology, be avowedly descriptive and should create criteria sets for each disorder in service of securing higher diagnostic reliability” (Davies; Decker xx). The APA’s council on Research and Development intimated to Spitzer close to the inception of the task force their concern of the lack of diversity (and the lack of “minority members”) of/on

the task force, a complaint which was also lodged by the Committee of Black Psychiatrists (Decker 148). These concerns went largely ignored by Spitzer, whose main interest was in the task force members' avowed dedication to scientific empiricism, which he hoped would secure the displacement of psychoanalysis (which reigned over American psychiatry in 1974 [Decker xv]) from the *DSM* from that point forward and resolve what Davies has called the "problem of poor reliability" of *DSM-I* and *DSM-II*. The reliability problem referred to the issue of psychiatrists using *DSM-I* and *DSM-II* regularly coming to differing diagnoses for the same patient, meaning different things by the same diagnosis, or changing diagnoses in follow-up interviews with the patient (Decker 129). This was purportedly resolved in *DSM-III* through the manual's inclusion of descriptive criteria (in the manner of Kraepelin's descriptive approach to psychiatry) for each mental disorder, which resulted in a vastly longer *DSM* than its predecessors (*DSM-III* 8). In the 1960s and the 1970s U.S. psychiatry was under fire from the antipsychiatry movement, and Spitzer and like-minded members of the American Psychiatric Association hoped that the reputation of the fields of psychiatry and psychology could be vindicated by a radical revision of the existing classification of mental disorders (Lewis "A Mad Fight"; Ben-Moshe; Decker xvi). Thus, followers of Freud were overtaken by followers of Emil Kraepelin--the *DSM-III* Task Force was populated exclusively by the latter--despite the fact that Freudians made up the majority of the APA members at the time (Decker xvi; Davies).<sup>7</sup> According to Decker, "one of the reasons the APA wanted to produce a revised manual was to counteract this antipsychiatry movement and show that psychiatry was a truly scientific discipline worthy of wide respect" (xvi). This shift was and has been described by many as a "milestone" in U.S.

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<sup>7</sup> Decker's book provides phenomenal background of Emil Kraepelin's work, and the neo-Kraepelinians who staked their claim on the *DSM* from the 1970s onward.

psychiatry, a scientific “revolution” (Kirk and Kutchens 6-7; Lewis, *Moving Beyond Prozac* 4-6) and a “watershed moment” (Lewis, *Moving Beyond Prozac* 97). Another reason that the APA sought to replace *DSM-II* was that its pathologization of homosexuality as a mental illness made the fields of psychiatry and psychology appear obtuse, violent, and generally out of sorts with public opinion on queerness in the 1970s (Kirk and Kutchens 78). Spitzer had played an important role in delcassifying homosexuality as a mental disorder, which is partly what made his appointment as the Chair of the *DSM-III* Task Force seemingly intuitive (Davies). Generally, it was hoped that *DSM-III* would vindicate these fields in the minds of the public and the broader medical community. In his book *Moving Beyond Prozac, DSM, and the New Psychiatry: The Birth of Postpsychiatry*, Bradley Lewis describes this shift to a descriptive, avowedly atheoretical<sup>8</sup> framework and the reasoning behind it:

According to the ‘scientific revolution’ narrative of the new psychiatry, *DSM-III*’s theory neutrality finally allowed psychiatry to rid itself of prejudice and superstition and thus take its rightful place among the objective sciences. The new psychiatry sees the move to an atheoretical, scientific *DSM-III* as a move from psychiatric Myth to psychiatric Truth. (*Moving Beyond Prozac* 5)

If this language sounds familiar to you it should. In the introduction and earlier in this chapter I touched on the ways that John Douglas, a former special agent and one of the founding members of the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit, described criminal profiling’s plight in a very similar manner. Douglas explains that at its inception, “many Bureau officials still considered [it] one step removed from witchcraft” (Douglas and Olshaker 4). Douglas writes, “...back in the ‘just the facts, ma’am’ Hoover days, no one in any position of authority considered what became known

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<sup>8</sup> See *DSM-III* 7 for the manual’s engagement with this idea of atheoreticity.

as profiling to be a valid crime-solving tool. In fact, the very phrase behavioral science would have been considered an oxymoron and its proponents might as well have been advocating witchcraft or psychic visions” (Douglas and Olshaker 100).<sup>9</sup> I argued in the introduction that in its early days, criminal profiling had to prove itself as “scientific” in order to overcome the idea that dealing in “opinions” rather than “just the facts” could prove a valuable tool in catching people suspected of violent crime. Clearly, the field of psychology and the practice of criminal profiling undertook the same battle at very nearly the same time. As I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this is also the work that Cesare Lombroso took upon himself, aiming to transform the study of “criminality” into an empirical science that could be seen as valid by both outsiders and members of medical and anthropological fields, and as peddling unadulterated Truth. Jackie Wang argues that proponents of algorithmic power and statistical models of policing currently seek the same thing: to transform the highly contestable work of police (undergoing what Wang calls a “crisis of legitimacy”) at every level into something seen as purely scientific and thus, because science is thought to operate as the epitome of objectivity, beyond bias (Wang 247-252). Here I would like to return to Lewtonin’s theory that science is also always ideological, despite what scientists may argue about its presumed objectivity, and Foucault’s argument that scientific truths are always claims, rather than mere “discoveries” of natural truths. So too are algorithmic power and statistical models of policing ideology dressed up as neutral and scientific. In fact, Wang argues that appealing to the objectivity of statistical models of policing ignores the apriori racialization of crime (Wang 248). I discuss algorithmic power further in Chapter 2. Clearly, the 1960s and 1970s also saw their own version of the crisis

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<sup>9</sup> For what it’s worth, I very much disagree with Douglas’ denigration of the religious and spiritual traditions associated with witchcraft.

of legitimacy, with psychology and psychiatry receiving fire from the antipsychiatry movement, and criminal profiling receiving criticism from law enforcement officials.

Despite their claims to objectivity and supposed improvements made to the “reliability problem” present in the first two editions of *DSM*, the *DSM-III* Task Force decided on the criteria for their new nosology of mental disorders largely through voting among themselves (Davies). Other members and factions of the APA were consulted in the years between the formation of the Task Force and the publication of *DSM-III* (between 1974 and 1980), but the Task Force essentially had veto power over opinions offered by any professionals not on the Task Force. As Davies explains, “Task Force consensus could [...] overrule that attained by any advisory committee, lobbying faction or group, a privilege extensively exercised since the demands of different groups would so often be at variance, and since the research guiding Task Force decisions was on most matters inconclusive, minimal and/or contradictory...” (Davies). Spitzer himself, in an interview with Davies in 2012, asserted that the criticism that the Task Force, which was not representative of the fields of psychiatry and/or psychology at the time, was able to take over these fields and change them in profound ways, was ultimately a true charge. In the same interview Spitzer said, “What did I think of that charge? - Well, it was absolutely true. It was a revolution, that's what it was. We took over because we had the power” (Davies).

In addition to the descriptive and supposedly atheoretical approach to etiology taken up by *DSM-III*, the manual was considered revolutionary because it “reflect[ed] an increased commitment in our field to reliance on data as the basis for understanding mental disorders” (*DSM-III* 1). Unlike *DSM-I* and *DSM-II*, *DSM-III* departed from the *International Classification of Diseases* (at the time in its 9th edition), as there was some critique of *ICD-9* by

sub-specialities in medicine, and there was concern that *ICD-9* would not be suitable for use in the United States (*DSM-III* 2). However, the Task Force aimed to maintain compatibility with *ICD-9* whenever possible. One of the biggest differences between *DSM-III* and its predecessors was the new, five-part multiaxial diagnostic system it introduced. Axis I and II included all mental disorders, with Axis II housing all personality disorders and Specific Developmental Disorders, and Axis I housing all other mental disorders (*DSM-III* 8). Importantly for our purposes, *DSM-III* was the first edition of *DSM* to include personality disorders. Axis III listed physical disorders and conditions, Axis IV described Severity of Psychosocial Stressors, and Axis V described Highest Level of Adaptive Functioning Past Year (*DSM-III* 8). Axis IV and V were meant for “use in special clinical or research settings and provide information additional to the official DSM-III diagnoses” (*DSM-III* 8). This new nosology was much more useful in establishing comorbidities than that offered by previous editions of *DSM* (*DSM-III* 6), and in enabling the pinpointing of pathological traits even in persons with no diagnosable mental disorder. This was especially true for personality disorder traits, of which *DSM-III* states:

Axis II can be used to indicate specific personality traits when no Personality Disorder exists. For example, compulsive traits can be recorded on Axis II for an individual for whom Major Depression is noted on Axis I. Even when a Personality Disorder is noted on Axis II, the clinician may wish to indicate other personality characteristics—e.g., paranoid traits can be noted on Axis II for an individual who is also described as having Compulsive Personality Disorder on this same axis. (*DSM-III* 24)

In other words, not only was *DSM-III* the first edition of this manual to include personality disorders, but it also expanded the potential of these diagnostic categories to be applied to people with Axis I disorders, other Axis II disorders, or no diagnosable disorder at all. Though *DSM-III*

claims that the separation of Axis I and Axis II disorders does not mean that personality disorders or Specific Developmental Disorders are not also mental disorders (*DSM-III* 8), I argue that this separation did effectively enable the pathologization and the criminalization of personality disorders by the FBI and in popular culture in ways that are unique to these disorders. I will discuss this at more length in Chapter 3.

As the first edition of *DSM* to name and provide diagnostic criteria for personality disorders, *DSM-III* played a prominent role in what I call the disordering of personality, or the normalization/idealization of certain personality traits at the expense of other, pathologized and medicalized personality traits. *DSM-III* defines personality traits as follows:

Personality traits are enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself, and are exhibited in a wide range of important social and personal contexts. It is only when personality traits are inflexible and maladaptive and cause either significant impairment in social or occupational functioning or subjective distress that they constitute Personality Disorders. (305)

Here pathologization is distributed to “enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself” that are significantly out of line with “social or occupational functioning,” and/or that cause “subjective distress,” rather than on the social conditions that may make social or occupational functioning difficult to maintain or achieve. And as I have already demonstrated, one need not meet the criteria for a full-blown personality disorder to have different personality traits that are pathologized according to the diagnostic criteria of various personality disorders according to *DSM-III*. I argue that evaluating the feedback loops between the larger fields of psychology and psychiatry, and the FBI’s own work (via the BSU) on the pathologization and criminalization of personality, is essential to understanding the ways both

entities (the APA and the BSU) functionally dis-order various personality traits in the 1970s and 1980s. I believe that two of the especially pathologized and criminalized personality disorders, Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD) and Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) in particular are useful to trace in order to understand the ways in which some personality traits and types were disordered--pathologized and criminalized--while others were normalized, idealized, and held up as indicative of healthy psychological functioning and citizenship.<sup>10</sup>

One of the members of the original *DSM-III* Task Force, U.S. psychologist Theodore Millon, published his book *Disorders of Personality: DSM-III: Axis II* in 1981, one year after the publication of *DSM-III*. In this book, Millon claims that one of the most important aspects of the multi-axial diagnostic system for the nosology of personality disorders was its ability to “combine several clinical features or personality traits into a single *profile*” (15, emphasis mine). I want to draw special attention to Millon’s use of the language of personality profile, which I do not believe was only happenstance. In 1981 the BSU had been active for nine years, and in that time had already begun offering their criminal/personality profiling services to law enforcement agencies, mostly local police stations, across the U.S. I want to highlight the fact that *DSM-III* was the first of its kind to lend itself to the consolidation of various, pathologized personality traits into distinct profiles, and that work on *DSM-III* began with the formation of the *DSM-III* Task Force two years after the creation of the BSU, which pioneered work on criminal/personality profiling. It is of course also true, as I established at the beginning of this chapter, that the work of criminalizing personality traits was already happening in the larger fields of psychology and psychiatry, of which the landmark study of Dr. Menas S. Gregory from

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A for the full diagnostic criteria for APD, and Appendix B for the full diagnostic criteria for BPD, both pulled from *DSM-III*.

the 1930s to the 1960s, and Walter Bromberg's book *Crime and the Mind* (1965) are proof. I insist that it is necessary to read *DSM-III* and criminal personality profiling together, as two stars of the same constellation, in order to make sense of either, and of the broader project of disordering personality which, though set in motion decades prior, began to solidify in the early 1970s.

Though Task Force consensus had ultimate veto power over the material presented in *DSM-III*, members of the Task Force did not always agree. Theodore Millon is an excellent example of this, and in *Disorders of Personality* Millon explains his aversion to some of the names and criteria for personality disorders in *DSM-III*, even at times including excerpts from letters he had written the Task Force detailing these disagreements. Namely, Millon felt that the description of APD was too focused on the disorder's relationship to crime, and that the name "Borderline Personality Disorder" was too vague and did not accurately reflect the essence of the disorder. In the case of the APD, Millon argues:

...undue prominence is given the delinquent or criminal expression of the personality by designating it as "antisocial." This formulation fails to recognize that the same fundamental personality structure, with its characteristic pattern of ruthless and vindictive behavior, is often displayed in ways that are not socially disreputable, irresponsible, or illegal. Using personal repugnance and conventional morals as a basis for diagnostic syndromes runs contrary to contemporary efforts to expunge social judgments as clinical entities (e.g., the reevaluation of the concept of homosexuality as a syndrome). The label "antisocial" reflects a return toward earlier value-laden concepts... (185)

Without a close look at this passage, it might be easy to credit Millon with a critique of

criminalizing personalities more generally. However, it is clear that Millon is really contesting the ways that criminality is emphasized when expression of these same personality traits is sometimes socially sanctioned, rewarded, and does not involve the breaking of laws. A look at the description of APD in *DSM-III* does indeed betray a heavy emphasis on criminality:

Lying, stealing, fighting, truancy, and resisting authority are typical early childhood signs. In adolescence, unusually early or aggressive sexual behavior, excessive drinking, and use of illicit drugs are frequent. In adulthood, these kinds of behaviors continue, with the addition of inability to sustain consistent work performance or to function as a responsible parent and failure to accept social norms with respect to lawful behavior.  
(317-8)

As I argued earlier is the case with personality disorders generally in *DSM-III* and subsequent *DSM* editions, in the description of APD above it is the individual's inability to adapt to what are often unrealistic social expectations or norms that is pathologized ("inability to sustain consistent work performance or to function as a responsible parent and failure to accept social norms with respect to lawful behavior"), rather than these social expectations or norms themselves.

Antisocial Personality Disorder has its roots in the notion of "moral insanity," a concept developed by psychiatrists in the late eighteenth century who debated whether certain individuals who "committed crimes" were capable of understanding the consequences of their actions (Millon 187). Philippe Pinel argued in 1806 that it was possible to be "insane" "without a confusion of the mind," an idea which was redubbed "moral insanity" by Benjamin Rush and J.C. Prichard (Millon 186-7). This concept lingers today in personality disorder diagnoses which, on some level, *DSM-III*, *DSM-III-TR*, *DSM-IV*, and *DSM-IV-TR* separate from other mental disorders, with the exception of developmental/intellectual disabilities. The term psychopathic

was a generic term that referred to all personality disorders more generally from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries (Millon 188). J.L. Koch introduced the term “psychopathic inferiority” in 1891, which he argued should replace the designation of “moral insanity” (Millon 188). However, Millon explains:

for the first three decades of [the twentieth] century the label psychopathic conveyed nothing more than Koch’s contention that the individual’s personality was physically rooted or constitutional. Further, the term inferiority implied nothing more, insofar as specific clinical characteristics were concerned, than the observation that these personalities deviated unfavorably from the norm” (189).

Psychopathy was largely misconstrued in the following years, and to add insult to injury, was ultimately replaced with the designation of sociopathy (Millon 189), though the construct of the unfeeling, criminal psychopath remains a constant fixture in popular media and in the legal realm today.<sup>11</sup> Though the term “sociopath” is now outdated, “sociopath” and “sociopathy,” along with “psychopath” and “psychopathy,” are still widely used in popular culture to describe APD and those diagnosed with or suspected of having the disorder. Interestingly for our purposes, Millon goes so far as to argue that Lombroso’s theory of cerebral deficits that cause “criminal” behavior is reflected in the work of *DSM-III*: “what is striking about Lombroso’s exposition is how closely it corresponds to the thinking of current DSM criteria. Lombroso was explicit in proposing the idea of a ‘born delinquent’ whereas DSM-III only implies a similar notion” (188).

Though white men are often portrayed as psychopaths or sociopaths in popular culture, the idea of BIPOC “super-predators” surfaced in the 1990s, and betrays a racialized, pseudo-

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<sup>11</sup> See Edwin H. Sutherland’s 1950 article “The Sexual Psychopath Laws” for more information on the legal history of the term “psychopath.” and the figure it represents,

Lombrosian idea of the “born criminal.” The term “super-predator” was coined in 1995 by John DiLulio in his article “The Coming of the Super-Predators” published in the Washington Examiner, a year after former President Clinton’s omnibus crime bill (“The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994”) was passed. In this article DiLulio writes: “We're not just talking about teenagers, [Lynn Abraham] stressed. We're talking about boys whose voices have yet to change. We're talking about elementary school youngsters who pack guns instead of lunches. We're talking about kids who have absolutely no respect for human life and no sense of the future” (DiLulio). The term was used to criminalize BIPOC, and especially Black, children (as young as elementary-school age!), and the descriptions DiLulio provides of “super-predators” sounds much like Prichard’s concept of “moral insanity.” Consider the language of “moral poverty” that DiLulio uses when he explains that “super-predators” grow up in conditions of “moral poverty”: “In the extreme, moral poverty is the poverty of growing up surrounded by deviant, delinquent, and criminal adults in abusive, violence-ridden, fatherless, Godless, and jobless settings” (DiLulio).

Though DiLulio coined the term “super-predator,” the phrase was arguably made famous by Hillary Clinton in a 1996 campaign speech for her husband, Bill Clinton. In an oft-cited excerpt from this speech, Hillary Clinton says:

We [...] have to have an organized effort against gangs, just as, in a previous generation, we had an organized effort against the mob. We need to take these people on. They are often connected to big drug cartels--they are not just gangs of kids anymore. They are often the kinds of kids that are called super-predators--no conscience, no empathy. We can talk about why they ended up that way, but first we have to bring them to heel, and the President has asked the FBI to launch a very concerted effort against gangs

everywhere.

Clearly in this speech BIPOC, especially Black, children are pathologized as violent offenders, “gang” members with “no conscience, no empathy” who must be brought “to heel” (language reminiscent of dog training and meaning subjugated or forced to obey). This white supremacist rhetoric, not limited to referring to BIPOC children as “these people,” is highly reminiscent of both the diagnostic criteria for APD, and Lombroso’s theory of the “born criminal.” Clinton also uses war-time rhetoric to highlight the role of the FBI in targeting young Black children and all those suspected of being involved in “gangs” (a highly racialized term, much the way the idea of “the mob” was and continues to be racialized). This is only one of the instances in which the notion of the “psychopath” or the “sociopath” becomes racialized in white supremacist ways. The myth of the “super-predator,” married as it was to The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (providing rationale and fuel for this piece of legislation), devastated Black and BIPOC communities more generally, and was responsible for the exponential growth of the prison industrial complex and the phenomenon of mass incarceration that still devastates BIPOC communities in the U.S. today.

For Millon, it is the diagnostic criteria for APD which most implies Lombroso’s theory of the “born criminal,” but I argue that Borderline Personality Disorder is also criminalized in *DSM-III* and in popular culture.<sup>12</sup> Countless episodes of the popular television series *Criminal Minds* represent BPD as intensely pathological and criminal, and its depictions of the disorder are enough to instill visceral fear of the disorder in its viewers. Two of the more vivid of these episodes that come to mind follow a father who uses his son to lure women to his home where he

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<sup>12</sup> I go into more depth about the criminalization of BPD in the third chapter of this dissertation, in which I evaluate the FBI manual “Making Prevention a Reality” in relation to popular psychology texts about BPD.

uses a chisel to extract their hearts (while they are still alive), which he keeps in glass boxes that he crafts himself (S3:E2 “In Name and Blood”), and an episode that follows the son of a movie star, now in his late 40s, who kidnaps women and forces them to rehearse scenes from his late mother’s film before he suffocates them and removes their lips (S6:E8 “Reflection of Desire”). In the latter episode the man appears to be working with his movie star mother, but at the end of the episode viewers see him clutching her decayed corpse as he surrenders himself to the FBI and police, in what seems to be an homage to Hitchcock’s film *Psycho*. In both episodes the UNSUBs are explicitly marked as having BPD by profilers before they are even apprehended. The profilers’ reading of the crime scene is supposedly enough to diagnose them with BPD. Though the inclination to murder women and remove their hearts or lips is hardly one of the diagnostic criteria of BPD in *DSM-III*, this manual does describe BPD in ways that could easily lend themselves to the genres of psychological thriller and horror. For instance, a short excerpt from the description of BPD in the manual states, “Interpersonal relations are often intense and unstable, with marked shifts of attitude over time. Frequently there is impulsive and unpredictable behavior that is potentially physically self-damaging. Mood is often unstable, with marked shifts from a normal mood to a dysphoric mood or with inappropriate, intense anger or lack of control of anger” (321). *DSM-III* also indicates that a “profound identity disturbance,” sometimes with regard to gender identity, is often present in those with BPD, which enabled the mutual pathologization of both transness and Borderline Personality Disorder. BPD is characterized by Millon as one of the three most severe personality disorders, along with Paranoid Personality Disorder and Schizotypal Personality Disorder (Millon 327). For years women were diagnosed with BPD at much higher rates than men, which some have suggested was caused by misogyny that likened BPD to “hysteria” (Gunn and Potter 10), and others have

suggested is a result of the tendency to criminalize similar behavior or emotional expression in men (Kreisman and Straus 17).

*DSM-III* paved the way for a new psychiatry, ushering in psychiatry's adherence to the disease model (*Moving Beyond Prozac* 98), that remains highly influential on the fields of psychiatry and psychology today (Davies). Though the multi-axial diagnostic system was done away with in *DSM-V*, very little has changed since the first edition of *DSM-III*. Davies argues:

since DSM-III broadly established the modern diagnostic system under which users of subsequent editions still largely operate—e.g. the majority of its diagnostic categories and criteria sets have lived on through and so have significantly influenced DSM-IV and DSM-5—each edition builds cumulatively on the last, thus making analysis of previous editions integral to understanding the current project” (Davies)

In this section I have aimed to describe the ways that *DSM-III* “revolutionized” the fields of psychiatry and psychology, while lending itself to be taken up in ways that criminalizes certain populations of BIPOC and/or mentally disabled people, and pull at some of the threads the manual has woven into present-day conceptions of APD, BPD, and personality disorders more generally. In the following section I will examine the formation of the Behavioral Science Unit of the FBI, now known as the Behavioral Analysis Unit, analyze the ways in which the BSU/BAU is historicized by former FBI agents like John Douglas, and evaluate the *Crime Classification Manual*.

### **The Formation of the BSU, The Origins of Criminal Profiling/Behavioral Analysis, and The *Crime Classification Manual***

In 1972, Agents Patrick Mullany and Howard Teten formed the Behavioral Science Unit of the FBI in response to a purported increase in sexual violence and homicide in the early

1970s. By 1972, Teten had flown up to New York to meet with Dr. James Brussel, the psychiatrist who developed the psychological/personality profile that led to the capture of George Metesky in the Mad Bomber case in the 1950s (*Mindhunter* 86). Brussel agreed to teach Teten his profiling technique, which Teten brought back with him to the BSU. According to John Douglas' account of the formation of the BSU in his bestselling book (now a Netflix series) *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit*, "the big breakthrough of Teten's approach was how much you could learn about criminal behavior and motives by focusing on the evidence of the crime scene. In some ways, everything we've done in behavioral science and criminal investigative analysis since has been based on this" (86). One of the main tenets of profiling is the idea that "[b]ehavior reflects personality" (xxviii), and therefore, one must study behavior (as evidenced in crime scenes) to be able to come to conclusions about the personality of the person in question. When Teten and Mullany first started offering personality profiles to interested police departments, they did so "verbally, nothing on paper" (*Mindhunter* 100). Teten and Mullany feared what would happen if the FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover, found out about their development of criminal personality profiling, and thought they were embarrassing the Bureau. Douglas explains that at that time "the very phrase behavioral science would have been considered an oxymoron [...] So anyone 'dabbling' in it would have had to do so very informally with no records kept" (100). Much of the work of the BSU was developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Douglas and nine other special agents, including Robert Ressler, joined the BSU in 1977 (*Mindhunter* 99). The major course offered to students at the FBI's National Academy in Quantico, Virginia and to FBI personnel more generally, developed by Teten in 1972, was Applied Criminal Psychology (*Mindhunter* 99). This course focused mainly on "criminal" motive, and was critiqued as being too academic in nature, without substantial material

development from experience “in the field” (*Mindhunter* 99). By the late 1970s, members of the BSU began teaching “road schools” --where they would teach an abbreviated version of Applied Criminal Psychology and other various courses to interested police departments and academics, compressing what was usually taught in approximately eleven weeks and forty hours into week-long mini-courses. Much of this teaching was performed by members of the BSU, and it was “the most efficient way of breaking in a new guy [new BSU agent]” (*Mindhunter* 102).

In early 1978, during one of their “road school” trips, Douglas and Ressler came up with the idea to begin what would become their seminal “serial killer study” (*Mindhunter* 104).

Douglas historicizes this as follows:

Now there comes a point on the road--at least there did for me--when you realize there are only so many songs you can listen to, so many margaritas you can drink, so much time you can hang around the room staring at the television. That point came for me in a hotel cocktail lounge in California early in 1978. Bob Ressler and I were doing a school in Sacramento. The next day, driving away, I commented that most of these guys we’re teaching about are still around, and most of them are going to be on ice for the rest of their lives. Let’s see if we can talk to them; ask them why they did it, find out what it was like through *their* eyes. All we can do is try. If it doesn’t work out, it doesn’t work out. I’d long had a reputation as a blue flamer,<sup>13</sup> and this didn’t do much to diminish it in Bob’s eyes. But he did agree to go along with my crazy idea. Bob’s motto had always been “It’s better to ask for forgiveness than permission,” and that certainly seemed to apply here. We knew if we asked for sanction from headquarters, we wouldn’t get it. Not

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<sup>13</sup> Douglas explains that “blue flamer” was a term applied to young, idealistic FBI agents, who were thought to be so eager to prove themselves that they had blue flames coming out of their asses.

only that, anything we tried to do from then on would be scrutinized. In any bureaucracy, you have to watch blue flammers carefully. (*Mindhunter* 104)

In this passage and in the book more generally, criminal profiling is described as marginalized within the larger organization of the FBI in the 1970s and early 1980s, and both profiling and the more targeted work of what is colloquially referred to as the serial killer study are framed as being championed by a set of pseudo-roguish agents daring and idealistic enough to continue their “pioneering” work in clandestine, potential-approbation from higher-ups in the Bureau be damned. The serial killer study turned into a full-scale, state-funded research project when Ann Burgess, a published author and psychiatric nurse practitioner, who worked mostly as a forensic nurse and professor (Tobin), was enlisted by Douglas and Ressler, with the help of Roy Hazelwood, to join the study (*Mindhunter* 124). Burgess traveled to Quantico and met with Douglas and Ressler. Impressed with the work they had already completed on the serial killer study, Burgess “told [Douglas and Ressler] she thought [they] had an opportunity to do research of a kind that had never been done before in this field. She thought [they] could contribute toward understanding criminal behavior in the same way *DSM* [...] had toward the understanding and organization of types of mental illness” (*Mindhunter* 124). They funded this study, formally called the Criminal Personality Research Project, with a 400,000 dollar grant from the National Institute of Justice, and the research project officially began in 1979 (*Mindhunter* 125; Ressler et al. 104). Burgess designed a fifty-seven page research instrument full of questions to be asked and answered for every interview with the people they came to call “serial killers.” According to Douglas, it was with this research project that “criminal-investigative analysis came into the modern age” (*Mindhunter* 125).

The “findings” of the Criminal Personality Research Project were consolidated into the

book *Sexual Homicide: Patterns and Motives*, authored by Ressler, Burgess, and Douglas, and first published in 1988 (*Mindhunter* 153). This book describes the process of crime scene analysis that would come to be known as criminal profiling (Ressler et al. 121-162), which is described as the “cutting edge of modern law enforcement” (Ressler et al. 162). Profiling is described as an emergent technology and weapon (*Mindhunter* 14) that, though seemingly relatively new, is timeless, and will remain constant because “the basics of the human mind and motivation remain the same and likely always will” (*Mindhunter* xv). *Sexual Homicide* describes criminal profiling as a multidisciplinary technique that is “successful,” and defines criminal profiling and criminal personality assessment in the following ways:

“Criminal profiling and criminal personality assessment are ways in which law enforcement has sought to combine the results of studies in other disciplines with more traditional investigative techniques in an effort to combat violent criminal behavior. Criminal profiling has been used by law enforcement with success in many areas and is viewed as a way in which the investigating officer can narrow the field of investigation. This assessment does not provide the identity of the offender. Instead, it indicates the kind of person most likely to have committed a crime having certain characteristics.” (9)

Here, Ressler et al. not only vindicate criminal profiling as a valuable criminal investigative technique and tool, they claim that it can help law enforcement to discern the “kind of person” “most likely” to have committed specific crimes that manifest crime scenes that look a particular way. I want to emphasize this idea that there are different “kinds of people” --so categorized by differences in personality which manifest in different behaviors and thus in crimes scenes organized in different or similar ways. In this way, criminal profiling is first and foremost about developing an archive of personality, a new nosology of personality, which is different, yet akin

to the project undertaken in *DSM-III* of pathologizing and categorizing different personality characteristics, and grouping them into different personality “types” or “disorders.”

*Sexual Homicide* claims that the majority of serial murders are sexual in nature (3), and thus coins the phrase “sexual homicide” to describe “the killing of a person in the context of power, sexuality, and brutality” (1), which Ressler et al. argue is indicative of most serial homicides. One of the most significant contributions of the Criminal Personality Research Project to the practice of criminal personality profiling is the bifurcation of “serial offenders” into two basic categories: organized versus disorganized (*Sexual Homicide* 121-133). *Sexual Homicide* describes both “profile characteristics” (see Figure 3) of organized and disorganized “murderers,” and “crime scene differences between organized and disorganized murders,”

**Table 8–1**  
**Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murderers**

<i>Organized</i>	<i>Disorganized</i>
Good intelligence	Average intelligence
Socially competent	Socially immature
Skilled work preferred	Poor work history
Sexually competent	Sexually incompetent
High birth order status	Minimal birth order status
Father’s work stable	Father’s work unstable
Inconsistent childhood discipline	Harsh discipline in childhood
Controlled mood during crime	Anxious mood during crime
Use of alcohol with crime	Minimal use of alcohol
Precipitating situational stress	Minimal situational stress
Living with partner	Living alone
Mobility, with car in good condition	Lives/works near crime scene
Follows crime in news media	Minimal interest in news media
May change jobs or leave town	Minimal change in life-style

Figure 3- “Profile Characteristics of Organized and Disorganized Murderers” (*Sexual Homicide* 122)

broken into two neat tables to clearly demarcate these distinctions. This table (Figure 3) delineates “violent offenders” into these two basic categories, organized and disorganized, in

such a way that naturalizes this division and these typographies, and authorizes them for the use of generating personality profiles used for criminal investigative purposes. It develops a personality archive of the category of “murderer,” itself a personality construct developed to

describe a type of deviant or “disordered” personality that is somehow inherently pathological, monstrous, and the stuff of horror. I argue that, with some major differences, this table and others like it in this book indicate a deep indebtedness to Lombrosian theories of crime and deviance, though perhaps without reflecting Lombroso’s fixation on “criminal deviance” as evidenced by differences in physiognomy. This chapter in *Sexual Homicide* also provides two case studies: one meant to typify the “organized offender” (124-130), and one meant to typify the “disorganized offender” (132-133). These case studies further entrench the notion that these categories are both natural and scientific and form the basis of the process of developing personality profiles, and the larger archetype of the “criminal.” My argument here, and in this chapter and dissertation project more generally, is that profiling is essentially about generating a nosology of personality types and deviance, and *criminalizing* different “kinds of” personalities, personality characteristics, and the people imagined to embody them. Though it may be tempting to think of personality profiling as somehow distinct from racial profiling, I direct your attention to Ressler et al.’s matter-of-fact statement that “Airport antihijacking measures and drug courier apprehension have been aided through law enforcement’s use of basic profile characteristics. Screening techniques apply groups of characteristics to differentiate between the flying public and potential hijackers and drug traffickers” (9). The use of racial profiling by the TSA and other law enforcement agencies responsible for enforcing anti-hijacking and anti-drug policies in airports has been well established, as has the apriori racialization of crime and criminality (Wang) and so it follows that criminal profiling cannot be easily parsed from racial profiling.<sup>14</sup>

In 1992, four years after the publication of *Sexual Homicide*, Burgess, Ressler, and

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<sup>14</sup> In Chapter 2 I trace the ways that popular television series *Criminal Minds* attempts to differentiate racial profiling from criminal profiling. I argue that this distinction is much more malleable and porous than writers of the show would like their audience to believe.

Douglas published the first edition of the *Crime Classification Manual (CCM)*, which realized Burgess' ambition of "contribut[ing] toward understanding criminal behavior in the same way *DSM* [...] had toward the understanding and organization of types of mental illness" (*Mindhunter* 124). Douglas explains that law enforcement agents had tried to use *DSM* "for guidance and definition about what constituted a serious mental disorder and what did not," but did not find much use in the manual, hence the creation of *CCM* (*Mindhunter* 376-377). There are many similarities between *CCM* and *DSM*, including but not limited to the establishment of a nosology that dis-orders personality, and classification codes which resemble the multi-axial diagnostic system introduced to *DSM* in its third edition. For instance, while the classification codes for APD and BPD in *DSM-III* are 301.70 and 301.83 respectively, *CCM*<sup>15</sup> classifies Sexual Homicide using code 130 (131 for Organized and 132 for Disorganized) (205). *CCM* also utilizes the decimal classification for "crimes" like Individual Extremist Homicide: Political (127.01) and Individual Extremist Homicide Religious (127.02) (237). According to Douglas et al., "[t]he purpose of this manual is fourfold: 1. To standardize terminology within the criminal justice field; 2. To facilitate communication within the criminal justice field and between criminal justice and mental health; 3. To educate the criminal justice system and the public at large to the types of crimes being committed; and 4. To develop a database for investigative research" (viii). By the authors' own admission, *CCM* was developed with the intention of "standardizing" classifications of different behaviors as types of crimes, to aid in communication within the criminal justice system *and between the criminal justice system and mental health sector*, to educate publics about this new system of classification (and arguably, to scare people

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<sup>15</sup> Here I am citing the 3rd Edition of *CCM*, published in 2013, because I was unable to find a copy of the first edition, published in 1992.

into accepting the injustices perpetrated by law enforcement agencies, laws, and the courts that oversee the criminalization of people convicted of committing crimes), and finally to build an archive of crimes that might aid in “investigative research.” If even some of these intentions for *CCM* have manifested, the significance of the manual cannot be overstated. I especially want to emphasize the importance of the manual’s potential to increase communication between the criminal injustice system and the mental health sector, which shows that *CCM* has done more than simply act as the equivalent of *DSM* for law enforcement; in some ways it twins *DSM*, and facilitates greater cooperation between mental health professionals and law enforcement agencies, clearing the way for greater criminalization of mental health issues.

In this light, it is especially significant that criminal personality profiling is often equated with diagnosis, and profilers with doctors, in FBI lore (including but not limited to *Mindhunter* and *CCM*). In *Mindhunter* Douglas and Olshaker frame this supposed similarity as follows: “Just like practicing medicine, profiling remains somewhere in the nether region between science and art. And, like physicians, some profilers are better and more experienced than others”

(*Mindhunter* xiii). *CCM* goes into more detail on this likeness when Douglas et al. write:

By studying crimes and talking to perpetrators who have committed violent crimes, investigators can learn to apply and solve the equation of Why + How = Who. During this process, investigators attempt to interpret clues left by the UNSUB<sup>16</sup> at the scene, similar to a doctor who evaluates symptoms to diagnose a particular disease or condition. As a doctor begins forming a diagnosis and treatment plan based on his or her experience, an investigator correspondingly conducts crime analysis when he or she sees patterns emerge. Based on the analysis, leads and tactics can be developed to help investigators

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<sup>16</sup> UNSUB is police jargon for “unknown subject.”

identify the UNSUB. (CCM 22)

The equation of profiling with diagnosis makes some sense considering the role that physicians and mental health professionals have played in determining whether someone on trial meets the legal criteria for the insanity defense, and the fact that profiling itself was first developed by psychiatrist James A. Brussel.<sup>17</sup> However, generally, the FBI sees little value in traditional (nonforensic) mental health professionals.<sup>18</sup> Douglas explains that the fact that much of traditional mental health care relies on self-reporting makes the larger fields of psychology and psychiatry ill-equipped to assess, for instance, whether someone convicted of a violent crime should be paroled (*Mindhunter* 365). Douglas writes:

A patient coming to a therapist under normal circumstances has a vested interest in revealing his true thoughts and feelings. A convict desiring of early release, on the other hand, has a vested interest in telling the therapist what he wants to hear. And to the extent that the therapist takes the report at face value without correlating it with other information about the subject, that can be a real failing of the system. (*Mindhunter* 365)

While for Douglas these assumptions operate at the level of the commonsense, to my mind the issue is murkier. Douglas assumes, for instance, that therapeutic patients outside of carceral settings have no need or desire to lie to their therapists, and that therapists are not trained to detect or expect lies and are thus too easily manipulable. Neither of these things are inherently

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<sup>17</sup> According to *Mindhunter*, Brussel was the first person to implement modern-day profiling, but others have suggested that profiling can be traced back to the work of alienists in the 19th century who tried to aid police in the capture of Jack the Ripper. The television series *The Alienist* and the novel by the same title also uses the language of the psychological “profile,” though this could be purely anachronistic. In either case, psychiatrists (known as alienists in the 19th century) played a formative role in contemporary practices of criminal profiling.

<sup>18</sup> I go into more detail about this in my discussion of FBI manual “Making Prevention a Reality” in Chapter 3.

true. Patients in all sorts of settings have different reasons to lie, or at least peddle half-truths, to their therapists, and therapists are trained to expect such behavior from their patients.

In instances in which psychiatrists or psychologists adhere to beliefs similar to his own, however, Douglas is happy to cite their studies and ideas in his books. One such person is psychologist Stanton E. Samenow, who published the first edition of his book *Inside the Criminal Mind* in 1984 (*Mindhunter* 366; Samenow). This book has seen three editions, the most recent of which was published in 2014. Douglas delights in Samenow's argument that people who commit "crimes" "think differently from responsible people," and that "criminal behavior" is brought about from "character defects" rather than mental illness (*Mindhunter* 366).<sup>19</sup> As its title suggests, Samenow's book hinges on the argument that there is an objective class of people we might call "criminals," and that their minds function differently from the minds of other, "non-criminal" people. As Douglas puts it however, for Samenow these differences are not due to mental illness, but to character defects. Samenow argues that "Having a mental illness does not mean that a person loses the ability to make choices, or that he loses the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong" (247)<sup>20</sup>. He even goes on to argue that "criminals" should not have access to psychiatric hospitalization, lest the record appear in their favor and potentially lesson time sentenced to prison:

Psychiatric hospitalization can give a criminal an excuse for more crimes. Each time he is treated at a psychiatric facility, there is additional documentation of instability. Whenever he is arrested, he will be regarded as an offender with a psychiatric condition.

Consequently, for a new offense he may wind up again in a hospital rather than a prison.

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<sup>19</sup> Samenow's research is also cited in *Sexual Homicide* (7).

<sup>20</sup> When citing *Inside the Criminal Mind*, I am citing from the third edition, published in 2014.

If he thinks that he can get a better deal, perhaps a softer life, in a hospital than in a prison, he will continue trying to outfox the ‘shrinks.’ (254)

Samenow’s argument here about “criminals” trying to “outfox” mental health professionals is eerily similar to Douglas’ claim that self-reporting cannot be trusted in the case of the people they both call “criminals.” They both also cast doubt on whether mental health treatment can have any positive effect on people who commit crimes, Samenow going as far as to argue, “There is no pill and no traditional form of treatment that will effectively address the core of the criminal personality” (235). Samenow believes a non-conventional form of treatment that seeks to completely eradicate anger in the individual, rather than teaching the person to *manage* their anger (172-4), and that tries to correct “errors in thinking” (235) through a berating, no-empathy approach, is the only form of acceptable treatment. This type of treatment was devised by Samenow’s partner in research, Samuel Yochelson, and proscribes a type of unsympathetic, group-based treatment that seeks to correct rather than validate the individuals’ emotions and thoughts.

*Inside the Criminal Mind* is replete with truisms about “criminals” like: “The criminal expects to prevail in every situation” (111); “The criminal craves power for its own sake, and he will do almost anything to acquire it [...] To him the world is a chessboard, with other people serving as his pawns. He is constantly sizing up his prospects for exploiting people and situations” (111); “Criminals find little that is satisfying in a consenting sexual relationship” (135); “The criminal has a thin skin. He will dish it out, but he won’t take it” (161); “Criminals expect others to behave as they want them to behave. Since many times each day this does not happen, they are perpetually angry” (159); “Criminals have no concept of obligation” (131); and “The criminal’s desire to constantly fortify a sense of uniqueness is a driving force of his

personality” (130). These are only a few examples of these quip-like, factualized truth-claims that Samenow makes about a group of people he uncritically calls “criminals.” For Samenow, one needn’t even commit a crime to be considered a “criminal” who has a “criminal mind” -- merely thinking in similar ways to those described in his book is enough to be deemed a “criminal.” Samenow calls these people “non-arrestable criminals” (5). Through the repetition of these truisms Samenow actually constructs the figure he comes to call “the criminal,” who, according to his work, has a pathologically deviant personality and character. In this way, Samenow, like Douglas, disorders the personality of an entire imaginary grouping of people, which has tangible, material effects on criminalized individuals (for example, making mental health treatment less accessible, and deeming the “insanity defense” laughable in the overwhelming majority of cases). Samenow attempts to dispel allegations that he is “against the insanity defense” by citing two cases in which he offered his “expert” opinion that the insanity defense be upheld, but these two instances were clearly an exception to his rule that generally, the “insanity defense” is merely a means for “criminals” to escape harsher sentencing (250-1). Samenow and Douglas seem to be in agreement on this matter, which is part of the reason Douglas is so quick to cite Samenow’s book in his own. For that matter, neither of them seem to put much or any stock into the social construction of “crime,” Samenow (like Raine) going as far as to argue that “[e]fforts to change the criminal by changing the environment remain doomed to fail” (17).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter tells the story of the intersecting taxonomies of personality that emerged in the U.S. in the early 1970s, but were put into motion in the 1930s, with roots reaching back to the late nineteenth century with the inception of criminal anthropology. While origin stories of

*DSM-III* and criminal personality profiling are typically articulated separately, I have argued that doing so presents us with a disjointed historical account that is incomplete at best, and misinformed at worst. The emergence of *DSM-III* must be read as part of the historical context of the FBI's development of criminal personality profiling, also known as behavioral analysis. The FBI and APA are linked through their overlapping yet divergent taxonomizing projects of disordering some personality traits and characteristics--pathologizing and criminalizing them--while "ordering" and idealizing others as "healthy" and/or "noncriminal"--as the personality traits/"types" of the quintessential citizen.

The publication of *DSM-III* marked a watershed moment in U.S. psychiatry and psychology, as the first *DSM* edition to consolidate disparate personality traits into distinct personality "profiles"--language that echoes that used in the development of criminal personality profiling. Criminal personality profiling likewise revolutionized criminal investigation. Though the special agents of the BSU/BAU who narrate the origin story of criminal profiling in the texts analyzed in this chapter formally disavow the work of non-forensic psychologists and psychiatrists, arguably the first criminal personality profile was developed by a psychiatrist named James Brussel. The fact that the BSU was formed a mere two years before the *DSM-III* Task Force was established cannot and should not be read as merely incidental. It is essential to understand the BSU and the APA as two points in a feedback loop--they are deeply invested in and indebted to each other and to the project of medicalizing and criminalizing different personality traits, consolidated into distinct personality profiles. Members of the BAU, then still called the BSU, even compiled their own version of *DSM* called the *Crime Classification Manual*, which taxonomizes "criminal" acts and behaviors, codifying them in ways that closely resemble the multi-axial diagnostic system introduced in *DSM-III*. One of the explicit aims of

*CCM* is to increase communication between mental health professionals and the law enforcement sector--a move which could only serve to further criminalize mental health disorders and those diagnosed with or suspected of living with them. Meanwhile, profilers like Douglas and psychologists like Samenow balk at the idea of mental health treatment for criminalized people, which they argue would be ineffective, or even dangerous, as it could lead to people accused of crimes pleading insanity, getting reduced sentences, or serving their time in mental health hospitals instead of jail or prison.

The “nature versus nurture” debate has haunted discussions of “crime” and “criminality” for centuries. Work in the burgeoning field of neurocriminology argues that “nature,” or biology, plays the greatest role in determining whether or not someone will engage in “criminal” behavior, but does so in harsh contradiction to decades of sociological work on the social construction of crime and the criminalization of Black and brown people. Criminal profilers in the FBI have thus far not published any definitive opinions on whether “nature” or “nurture” plays the largest role in determining an individual’s propensity to engage in “criminal behavior,” but tends to argue that both play a role (though for them, “nurture” typically refers to mothering, where “domineering mothers” drive their sons to commit serial homicide---according to them, social construction plays no role in who becomes criminalized and in what ways). However, the myth of the “criminal mind” looms large in work in both fields, in some sectors of psychology and psychiatry, and in U.S. popular culture more generally. This myth plays into the creation of a nosology of personality traits, a disease model of personality, that results in the medicalization-criminalization of different “kinds of” personalities.

Appendix A: *DSM-III* Diagnostic Criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder**Diagnostic criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder**

A. Current age at least 18.

B. Onset before age 15 as indicated by a history of three or more of the following before that age:

- (1) truancy (positive if it amounted to at least five days per year for at least two years, not including the last year of school)
- (2) expulsion or suspension from school for misbehavior
- (3) delinquency (arrested or referred to juvenile court because of behavior)
- (4) running away from home overnight at least twice while living in parental or parental surrogate home
- (5) persistent lying
- (6) repeated sexual intercourse in a casual relationship
- (7) repeated drunkenness or substance abuse
- (8) thefts
- (9) vandalism
- (10) school grades markedly below expectations in relation to estimated or known IQ (may have resulted in repeating a year)
- (11) chronic violations of rules at home and/or at school (other than truancy)
- (12) initiation of fights

C. At least four of the following manifestations of the disorder since age 18:

- (1) inability to sustain consistent work behavior, as indicated by any of the following: (a) too frequent job changes (e.g., three or more jobs in five years not accounted for by nature of job or economic or seasonal fluctuation), (b) significant unemployment (e.g., six months or more in five years when expected to work), (c) serious absenteeism from work (e.g., average three days or more of lateness or absence per month), (d) walking off several jobs without other jobs in sight (Note: similar behavior in an academic setting during the last few years of school may substitute for this criterion in individuals who by reason of their age or circumstances have not had an opportunity to demonstrate occupational adjustment)
- (2) lack of ability to function as a responsible parent as evidenced by one or more of the following: (a) child's malnutrition, (b) child's illness resulting from lack of minimal hygiene standards, (c) failure to obtain medical care for a seriously ill child, (d) child's dependence on neighbors or nonresident relatives for food or shelter, (e) failure to arrange for a caretaker for a child under six when parent

is away from home, (f) repeated squandering, on personal items, of money required for household necessities

(3) failure to accept social norms with respect to lawful behavior, as indicated by any of the following: repeated thefts, illegal occupation (pimping, prostitution, fencing, selling drugs), multiple arrests, a felony conviction

(4) inability to maintain enduring attachment to a sexual partner as indicated by two or more divorces and/or separations (whether legally married or not), desertion of spouse, promiscuity (ten or more sexual partners within one year)

(5) irritability and aggressiveness as indicated by repeated physical fights or assault (not required by one's job or to defend someone or oneself), including spouse or child beating

(6) failure to honor financial obligations, as indicated by repeated defaulting on debts, failure to provide child support, failure to support other dependents on a regular basis

(7) failure to plan ahead, or impulsivity, as indicated by traveling from place to place without a prearranged job or clear goal for the period of travel or clear idea about when the travel would terminate, or lack of a fixed address for a month or more

(8) disregard for the truth as indicated by repeated lying, use of aliases, "conning" others for personal profit

(9) recklessness, as indicated by driving while intoxicated or recurrent speeding

D. A pattern of continuous antisocial behavior in which the rights of others are violated, with no intervening period of at least five years without antisocial behavior between age 15 and the present time (except when the individual was bedridden or confined in a hospital or penal institution).

E. Antisocial behavior is not due to either Severe Mental Retardation, Schizophrenia or manic episodes.

## Appendix B: *DSM-III* Diagnostic Criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder

### **Diagnostic criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder**

The following are characteristic of the individual's current and long-term functioning, are not limited to episodes of illness, and cause either significant impairment in social or occupational functioning or subjective distress.

A. At least five of the following are required:

(1) impulsivity or unpredictability in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging, e.g., spending, sex, gambling, substance use, shoplifting, overeating, physically self-damaging acts

(2) a pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships, e.g., marked shifts of attitude, idealization, devaluation, manipulation (consistently using others for one's own ends)

(3) inappropriate, intense anger or lack of control of anger, e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger

- (4) identity disturbance manifested by uncertainty about several issues relating to identity, such as self-image, gender identity, long-term goals or career choice, friendship patterns, values, and loyalties, e.g., "Who am I?", "I feel like I am my sister when I am good"
- (5) affective instability: marked shifts from normal mood to depression, irritability, or anxiety, usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days, with a return to normal mood
- (6) intolerance of being alone, e.g., frantic efforts to avoid being alone, depressed when alone
- (7) physically self-damaging acts, e.g., suicidal gestures, self-mutilation, recurrent accidents or physical fights
- (8) chronic feelings of emptiness or boredom

B. If under 18, does not meet the criteria for Identity Disorder.

## CHAPTER 2

### Popular Justifications for the Prison Industrial Complex, Criminal Profiling, and Biometric Information Technologies in *Criminal Minds* and *Unbelievable*

*Understanding how biometric information technologies are rationalized through industry specification and popular entertainment provides a means to falsify the idea that certain surveillance technologies and their application are always neutral regarding race, gender, disability, and other categories of determination and their intersections. Examining biometric practices and surveillance in this way is instructive. It invites us to understand the histories and the social relations that form part of the very conditions that enable these technologies.*

--Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*

Marie: [crying] *It's just really important to lock your doors. You've gotta lock them. And your windows. You have to. You just have to keep yourself safe.*

--*Unbelievable*, S1:E1

#### Introduction

In a 2012 interview with *New York Magazine*, Mandy Patinkin opened up about his reasons for leaving criminal investigative procedural *Criminal Minds* in 2007. “The biggest public mistake I ever made was that I chose to do *Criminal Minds* in the first place,” he tells *NY Magazine's* Willa Paskin. “I thought it was something very different. I never thought they were going to kill and rape all these women every night, every day, week after week, year after year. It was very destructive to my soul and my personality” (Paskin). Patinkin took a four-year hiatus from working in television after leaving the show, allegedly to recuperate from the mental toll the show took on him (Witchel). *Criminal Minds* premiered in September of 2005, and until the series ended it was regularly touted as one of network CBS’ top-rated television shows. It has also been widely critiqued for its graphic depictions of oftentimes misogynistic violence, and one might also argue that these depictions are partly what make the show so popular. I begin this chapter with Patinkin’s comments about *Criminal Minds*, which perhaps tellingly, as this chapter

seeks to demonstrate, condemn depictions of violence against women while implicitly sanctioning the types of violence depicted in the Showtime series *Homeland*, the procedural that Patinkin currently co-stars in. This quotation is in keeping with the tradition of using the idea of violence against women, especially but not only white women, to justify the expansion of the U.S. military industrial complex, which targets BIPOC communities globally.

In the first half of this chapter, I argue that *Criminal Minds* and other popular culture texts are and have been central to certain conceptions of criminal personality profiling (also known as behavioral analysis) and popular justifications for them. One might even argue that these texts are *instructive*, and invite their audiences to engage in what Ellen Samuels calls “lay diagnosis”--the diagnosis of disability by nonprofessionals (though they intersect with professional, authorial forms of knowledge)-- in this instance, embodied by actual and representative FBI agents or law enforcement officers, doctors, or therapists. Indeed, one of the very first scenes of *Criminal Minds* pilot shows Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) Jason Gideon’s final lecture at the Behavioral Analysis Unit Training program in Quantico, Virginia, before returning to the unit for active duty after his medical leave for what SSA Dereck Morgan calls a “nervous breakdown” and Dr. Reid (SSA) clarifies is a “major depressive episode.”

This first episode serves as a crash course to criminal profiling or behavioral analysis for the series’ viewers, transporting the audience to a classroom before escorting the team to the crime scene(s). Gideon’s own experience with mental disability, as explored in this episode, perhaps serves to distinguish between abnormal psychology and *really abnormal* psychology. In the seventh season there is even an episode named “Profiling 101,” which marking a middle-point in the series, brings viewers of later seasons into, or its more voracious viewers *back* into, the metaphorical BAU classroom, also aptly called a training room. That is to say, the

instructiveness or disciplinary aspects of *Criminal Minds* as a (series of) narrative(s) continues far beyond the first season of the show, circling back to these *overt* introductions to criminal profiling at different points in the series as though to address new viewers tuning into the show even years after it had been on air. If this show and other criminal investigation television procedurals are, in fact, instructive, we must attend to *what* they teach, and *how* their rationalizations of the criminal (in)justice system manage to take hold in a moment that thinker Jackie Wang says has ushered in the crisis of legitimacy (of law enforcement agencies), and the crisis of uncertainty (of everything). The ongoing violence of criminal profiling and policing more generally is rationalized in *Criminal Minds* as the cost of public safety--a proclamation that is not unique to the show and is also central to *Unbelievable*'s message.

In this chapter, I am interested in asking what "fantasies of measurement," to quote Samuels again, and especially fantasies of measuring "criminal" minds or personalities, are popularized by *Criminal Minds* and *Unbelievable*. This chapter explores how criminal investigation procedurals rationalize the fact of state violence by appealing to the vulnerability of women (often white), the supposed infallibility of DNA evidence and forensic genetic analysis, and the need for the expansion of state power and surveillance through collaboration across legal jurisdictions, especially pertaining to rationalizations for the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP) and the Combined Index DNA System (CODIS). I also want to think through the intersections of medicalization and criminalization in these representations, as these are processes that are at times complementary (co-constitutive but contrary) and at times overlapping, but always deeply invested in one another. I am inspired by Simone Browne's insistence that we look at the ways that various industries, especially entertainment industries, rationalize surveillance technologies in order to dismantle these rationalizations.

The concept of a prison industrial complex asks us to attend to “the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems” (Critical Resistance). As its name indicates, the media plays a central role in *mediating* (please forgive me) the relationship between public perceptions of “serial violence,” “criminality,” and “criminal justice”--often exploiting and producing deep fear that is, in some sense, ameliorated by the moral arm of justice embodied by the reliably trustworthy, often haunted, law enforcement officials wont to visit our screens (and their real-world counterparts whose jobs these procedurals help to secure, as well as people who are criminalized and incarcerated). *Criminal Minds* and *Unbelievable*, two of these popular television series, appear to superficially tackle the unjust, subjective, and biased nature of the U.S. criminal justice system while re-valORIZING its potential for disseminating justice through reform. Racial profiling and misogynistic practices of misbelieving and/or criminalizing survivors of sexual violence are dismissed by these series as bad police practice -- though many scholars and activists argue that violence always rests at the center of police work and the prison industrial complex. This chapter is divided into three sections: In this, the first section, I map out my framework for the close readings to come in the following sections. In the second section, I attend to the relays between racial profiling and criminal profiling, as they are distinguished by *Criminal Minds*, and in the third (and final) section of this chapter I look to the ways that feminist rhetoric and causes are appropriated in these realistic fictional TV series to justify the expansion of the prison industrial complex, increased reliance on programs facilitating increased communication between law enforcement agencies in different jurisdictions, and the use of biometric information technologies.

In the Introduction I discussed Ellen Samuels' theories of fantasies of measurement and the "lay diagnostic gaze" engendered by such fantasies. According to Samuels, fantasies of measurement "rely on a merging of expert and lay assessment of bodies," in which "identifications based on measurement produce vast bureaucracies and systems of biocertification" (141). Fantasies of measurement are one contemporary iteration of and response to fantasies of identification, which Samuels defines as "a range of fantastical solutions [to the problems...of the modern crisis of identification] that began to circulate in midcentury, eventually becoming solidified into our twenty-first century discourses about bodies and identity" (2). Further:

These *fantasies of identification* seek to definitively identify bodies, to place them in categories delineated by race, gender, or ability status, and then to validate that placement through a verifiable, biological mark of identity. Fantasies of identification share certain signifying features: they claim a scientific, often medical framework and function to consolidate the authority of medicine, yet in practice often exceed or contradict any actual scientific basis [...] Fantasies of identification operate on the level of the 'obvious' or 'common sense,' yet simultaneously claim that only the expert can fully discern their meanings [...] Finally, fantasies of identification are haunted by disability even when disabled bodies are not their immediate focus, for disability functions as the trope and embodiment of true physical difference. (2-3, emphasis in original)

I quote this passage at length because I believe that this framework for thinking fantasies of identification as they emerge in the twenty-first century is profoundly useful, and perhaps necessary, for exploring the questions I have posed thus far about emerging metrics for measuring and diagnosing personality in the fields of psychiatry and criminal profiling from the

1970's onward in the U.S. Fantasies of identification are "driven by a desire for incontrovertible physical evidence so intense that it produces its own realization at the same time as it reinterprets that realization as natural and inevitable" (Samuels 3). For our purposes, this crystallizes in technologies of surveillance and risk management such as the corporate profiling program PredPol and the national database ViCAP, which is available to all law enforcement agencies in the U.S., and functionally holds and consolidates facts, statistics, and specific details of "violent crimes" to enable law enforcement agencies to identify patterns in "violent crimes" across county and state lines.

Part of my argument in this chapter is that criminal investigation TV shows generally, and *Criminal Minds* and *Unbelievable* more specifically, participate in the production of fantasies of identification and fantasies of measurement that point to biological bases for, or markings of, "criminality" or "the criminal mind." Criminalization as a concept is central to my project--it reminds us that neither "crime" nor "criminal" are natural categories (Davis, Browne, Wang). However, "real-world" emerging forensic and surveillance technologies court corporations with a financial investment in mass incarceration including CODIS, ViCAP, and PredPol. Brain fingerprinting and structural brain imaging are increasingly narrated by criminalizing investigative TV series as infallible forms of evidence. This derives, in part, from the ways different sciences and technologies have been rationalized in public discourses as impartial and objective--mere statements of material fact. However, as Foucault argues in his *Psychiatric Power* lectures, scientific truth is always "production rather than apophantic," and is "not a relationship of knowledge but of power" (237). We must attend to the ways that professional and lay forms of psychiatric knowledge converge in popular representations of, and rationalizations for, criminal profiling, and criminal investigation (especially of violent crime).

Positioned as self-evident and neutral, *Criminal Minds* and similar series participate in a larger culture of criminalization that justifies the blatant violence of the prison industrial complex with appeals to biometric and predictive policing technologies.

More recently, Simone Brown, Jackie Wang, Dorothy Roberts, Ruha Benjamin, and Cheney-Lippold have attended to the myriad ways in which DNA samples, fingerprinting (of fingers and brain), models of predictive policing specifically, and algorithms generally, are rationalized as neutral with regards to race, gender, and sexuality, all the while reproducing problematic assertions about the relations between these categories and “biology.” I am deeply indebted to these thinkers, and in this chapter, I use their crucial ideas as frameworks through which to make sense of the arguments put forth by *Criminal Minds* and *Unbelievable*, specifically. It is especially these thinkers’ attendance to the ways that different forensic/surveillance/criminalizing technologies are increasingly cast as self-evident, neutral, and purely scientific (by which it is often meant “purely true”), that I wrestle with here. I also ask how these (criminal profiling) strategies for reading personality--to the end of managing risk--incorporate existing strategies for reading race, sexuality, gender, and disability, through a performative disavowal of discriminatory practices (in the abstract) that materialize on bodies unevenly as they are measured across these categories of identification. While neoliberalism has seen to the disavowal of many discriminatory practices under formalistic rubrics of equality, it has also structurally reproduced these power relations in ways that abstract the deeply racialized, gendered, and ableist logics underpinning them. Wang’s important historicization of the way this process takes shape is worth noting at length here:

In 2011, Harvard’s John F Kennedy School of Justice published a paper titled ‘Police Science: Toward a New Paradigm,’ the ideas of which were developed at the Executive

Session on Policing and Public Safety hosted at Harvard University. The paper calls for a “radical reformation of the role of science in policing” that prioritizes evidence-based policies and emphasizes the need for closer collaboration between universities and police departments. In the opening paragraph, the authors, David Weisburd and Peter Neyroud, assert that “the advancement of science in policing is essential if police are to retain public support and legitimacy.” Given that critics of the police associate law enforcement with the arbitrary use of force, racial domination, and the discretionary power to make decisions about who will live and who will die, the rebranding of policing in a way that foregrounds *statistical impersonality* and symbolically removes the agency of individual officers is a clever way to cast police activity as neutral, unbiased, and rational. This glosses over the fact that using crime data gathered by the police to determine where officers should go simply sends police to patrol the poor neighborhoods they have historically patrolled when they were guided by their intuitions and biases. This “new paradigm” is not merely a reworking of the models and practices used by law enforcement, but a revision of the police’s public image through the deployment of science’s claims to objectivity. As Zach Friend, the man behind PredPol’s media strategy, noted in an interview, “it kind of sounds like fiction, but it’s really more like science fact.” By appealing to “fact” and recasting policing as a neutral science, algorithmic policing attempts to solve the police’s crisis of legitimacy. (Wang 235-7)

In this way, Wang claims that the “rebranding” of predictive policing as objective, neutral, and rational is offered up as a solution to the “crisis of legitimacy” and “crisis of uncertainty” raised about these policing practices. Violence, and especially serial violence, is framed as inevitably, even naturally, authorizing a state of exception, which in turn authorizes predictive surveillance

and policing. I will now turn to the popular television series, *Criminal Minds*, to analyze the ways that the series rationalizes criminalizing, racializing surveillance and reading praxes.

**“It’s Not Racial Profiling”: Predictive Policing and Racializing Reading Praxes in *Criminal Minds***

In my view, one of the best places to begin picking at the threads I have drawn out above is in the distinction *Criminal Minds* makes between criminal profiling and racial profiling. “Fear and Loathing” (S2:E16) opens with the murder of an interracial couple in Groten, an affluent suburb of New York. The Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) of the FBI learn that these murders are believed to be linked to the murders of three other Black women in the area. Each of these women are found shot to death with swastikas painted on their faces, and on the car of the white ex-boyfriend from the most recent crime scene.

Initially the team suspects that the murders are hate crimes motivated by racism, specifically anti-Blackness. After the team is briefed on these murders, and directly following the images of their dead bodies, faces marked with swastikas, Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) Aaron Hotchner adds, “And it doesn’t end there. Yesterday an African American community member, a Reverend Williams, decided to take this on as a *political* issue. Racial hate in the suburbs” (emphasis mine). The screen jumps to a shot of Reverend Williams on the briefing room television, who passionately appeals to an unhappy crowd, “What we are seeing here is pure apathy. Black kids are being killed and the police are doing nothing to stop it. When will these racists be confronted?” The BAU’s media liaison, Jennifer Jareau, explains that a young Black man has already died as a result of Reverend Williams’ “muckraking,” which Connecticut Neo-Nazi group The White Stallions claims responsibility for. Agent Emily Prentiss chimes in with a disbelieving, “There are Neo-Nazi groups in Connecticut?!” J.J. continues, “The mayor

called me this morning, frantic. He's desperate to solve these crimes before things escalate even more." Jason Gideon, the unit chief, asks about the racial makeup of Groton. He is told that the community is populated by 42,000 people, eight percent of whom are Black. Gideon replies, "I'd say the mayor has reason to be worried. If it doesn't stop soon, it could flare up into a full-scale race riot." The screen cuts to a succession of zoom shots that feature, again, graphic crime scene photos before cutting to the opening credits.

I am especially interested in tracing the various arguments about the impartiality (even apoliticality) of law enforcement agencies, the practice of criminal profiling (or behavioral analysis) and predictive policing being made in this scene and episode, and what racializing logics they (re)deploy. Prentiss' shocked disbelief at the idea that there are Neo-Nazi groups ("in Connecticut?!") works to place the moral compass of the team as a whole beyond racist practices or ideology (in the logic of this show), while Hotchner, and later Gideon, chide Reverend Williams for critiquing the negligence of law enforcement agencies, a juxtaposition meant to cast the terrain of "the political" as biased interest which, even if well-intentioned, can have devastating consequences. Gideon's remark maps an explicit connection between Groton's Black population and the "potential" for a "full-scale race riot." The overt anti-Blackness here is refuted by the repetitive screening of crime scene photos that show the bodies of the murdered Black girls (ages 15-17) with swastikas on their faces, positioning the BAU as their protectors, the swastikas' nemesis.

In an interesting twist the team's profile anticipates that the UNSUB is, in fact, a Black man using swastikas to distract from his true motive--serial sexual homicide. "Hate crimes are political," Gideon tells the team and episode's viewers. "If we're right...this was personal." "Fear and Loathing" posits two binary oppositions--the personal versus the political, and serial sexual

homicide versus (a series of) hate crimes. In this logic, the personal cannot be political any more than serial sexual homicide can be conceived of as a (series of) hate crime(s). With similarly paper-thin logic, the BAU draws the conclusion that the UNSUB is a Black man “statistically between the ages of 20 and 35.” Hotchner tells the police force, “We know the suspect is Black because sexually motivated killers almost always kill within their own race.” This spatializing language serves to reify the idea that race and racial identification are always clearly demarcated, singular (or binary) categories, and that sexuality more or less follows along these lines. This is an idea that is alluded to repeatedly throughout *Criminal Minds*--the team even jokingly calls serial killers who kill “outside” of their “own race” *equal opportunity offenders*.

The stressed out and angry Mayor Hughes (of Groton) asks his police force to hold off on using the BAU’s profile to find the UNSUB and tells the team “I would have to be crazy to release this profile to the public.”:

Morgan: What are you talking about?

Mayor Hughes: Reverend Williams has already stirred up enough trouble by choosing to make this town his soapbox for his anti-racism campaign. What do you think is going to happen if I go to the press and tell them the killer is Black?

Morgan: Hey, the best way to stop all this is to find the killer. We just gave you a way to do that.

Mayor Hughes: By telling everybody to look for an anonymous Black man? They're gonna say that's racial profiling.

Gideon: It's not racial profiling. Racial profiling is targeting suspects because of their race. We gave you a complete profile which includes race.

Mayor Hughes: Look, the point is I've never even heard of a Black serial killer, and

neither will the African Americans in this community already upset by what's been happening here.

Hotchner: You can believe in Black serial killers or not, but the fact is they do exist, and it's only a matter of time before he kills *another girl*.

(“Fear and Loathing”)

Spoiler alert--the UNSUB is, in fact, a Black man between the ages of 20 and 35, because the profile is almost always true in the logic of the show, although occasionally the storyline diverges from this strict allegiance when it makes for good ratings (perhaps most notably when Agents Morgan and Reid come under suspicion of murder at two different points in the series). The profile itself is a central character in the show, and while at several points in the series different members of the BAU acknowledge that the profile can be wrong, it is proven to be consistently infallible. However, the dialogue here and the rest of the episode (even the series) attempts to rationalize the racial and racializing dimensions of criminal profiling by casting it as apolitical (as opposed to the political domains of both racism and anti-racism). This is part of a larger trend that representations of statistical models of policing follow, where the suspect is caught in the act by law enforcement officers who are simply following the statistics (Wang 244). The rather overt insinuation here is that to abolish racial profiling in all of its forms would be the truly racist act--that reading for race (statistically, scientifically) is a necessary part of generating a profile, which is a necessary part of capturing the UNSUB, which is a necessary part of saving at least one “[j]other girl” who implies a whole population at risk. One argument this scene in *Criminal Minds* produces is that criminal profiling reads race in terms of statistical models of probability, which is scientific and apolitical, whereas hate crimes and racial profiling are political, biased, and outside the praxes of the BAU.

My argument in this section has been that “Fear and Loathing” negotiates the crisis of legitimacy and the crisis of uncertainty that Wang argues predictive models of policing are often narrated as “surpassing.” Notably and predictably in this episode, the Blackness of Groton Detective Ware and BAU Agent Morgan are served up as vindications for the “science” of criminal profiling and its supposed divestment from politics. This also speaks to *Criminal Minds*’ manipulation of racialized reading praxes, as Morgan is repeatedly forced to speak for both the FBI and Black communities (though he is mixed race, with a Black father and a white mother, he is never asked to speak on behalf of whiteness). In “Fear and Loathing,” during a private conversation taking place on a stake-out, Detective Ware asks Morgan, “Don’t you ever wish it didn’t matter?”

Morgan: It?

Ware: Color.

Morgan: [smiles] “Judge me by the content of my character.”

Ware: I mean, why does it even have to be part of the equation? People are dying. We need to get the bad guy. That should be it. [Morgan sighs in agreement, shaking his head]

No half-cocked Reverends getting people mad about the wrong thing. No mayors so afraid of offending Black folks, he doesn’t even want to tell the community what to look out for. [Exhales, hisses] It’s exhausting sometimes.

Morgan: [chuckles] It’s the way it’s always been, man. Politicians, community leaders-- they do what they do. You and me--we do what we do. We’re the foot soldiers in these streets getting the job done.

Ware: Foot soldiers, right [smiles].

Morgan: The only ones who ever really get results, you know what I'm sayin?

(“Fear and Loathing”)

As though manifested, the car they profiled zooms past them, and the detective and agent follow. The pair approaches the house this car parks in front of. Within seconds, Detective Ware is shot. But Ware is not shot by the UNSUB, he is shot instead by a white man who mistakes Ware for a Black civilian and home intruder, and excitedly yells “I got him, honey!” after Ware is on the ground. Morgan and the man face off with their guns pointed at each other until Morgan convinces the man to lower his weapon after showing him his FBI credentials. Some seconds later, Ware dies in Morgan’s arms. “Fear and Loathing” specifically, and *Criminal Minds* generally, disavows the practice of racial profiling while simultaneously rationalizing racialized reading/investigative practices. Ware’s murder is served up as evidence of the problematics of reading for race *politically*. Though it indoctrinates its viewers in the ideology of the profile specifically, and statistical models of policing generally, *Criminal Minds* nonetheless seems to argue that only law enforcement officers are authorized to use both violence and racialized reading praxes.

The method *Criminal Minds* claims characterizes criminal profiling--generating a “complete profile which *includes* races”--while distinguishing it (rhetorically) from racial profiling, is valorized as ultimately race-neutral, and honed in an objectivity Dorothy Roberts claims many laypeople who consider themselves progressive are afraid to question (Roberts 293). *Criminal Minds* is part of the U.S.’ long tradition, in media and in “reality,” of serving up serial violence as a “national security threat” which authorizes a state of exception (Agamben, Wang). Beyond this, the scene directly preceding Ware’s murder serves to set the shows’

viewers at ease. If these two Black detectives can agree on the necessity and accuracy of criminal profiling, “Fear and Loathing” implicitly argues, going as far as quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. out of context to imply one of the leaders of the Civil Rights Era would also give his nod of approval to criminal profiling (even though he was surveilled and his confidants infiltrated by the FBI’s Counter Intelligence Program)--then its viewers should similarly offer their approval of criminal profiling’s supposedly “neutral,” (with regards to race, gender, sexuality, and disability), purely statistical methodology, or at least get out of its way.

*Criminal Minds* is one of the many texts circulating in U.S. popular culture as part of the media arm of the prison industrial complex, and as such it works to rationalize the illegal (and legal!) government surveillance of those suspected of possessing a “criminal mind,” as well as providing legitimations for mass incarceration in general. Inter-state databases like ViCAP and CODIS, including the corporate iterations of these technologies like PredPol (Predictive Policing), as well as increasing law enforcement reliance on biometric information technologies (like the analysis of DNA evidence, fingerprinting and brain fingerprinting or brain scanning technologies) are rationalized as necessary to ensure the safety of the U.S. public generally, and women specifically. That the victims in “Fear and Loathing” are mostly comprised of Black women serves as justification for the negatively racializing practice of predictive policing--or “predicting personality” that the BAU, and law enforcement agencies more generally, practice. On the other side of this, *Criminal Minds* often deploys whiteness, not only of some (for most of the series, the majority) of the agents working for the BAU, but also of suspects, as a means of addressing the crisis of legitimacy and crisis of unknowability Wang argues are facing law enforcement agencies and agents today. If you let your cursor hover over the *Criminal Minds*

thumbnail on the *Netflix* website, a sound bite of Gideon's voice plays over a moving image of him lecturing to BAU agents in training. A transcript of the entirety of the sound bite reads:

The Unidentified Subject is white and in his late-20s. He's someone you wouldn't notice at first. He's someone who'd blend into any crowd. The violent nature of the crime suggests a previous criminal record--petty crimes, maybe auto theft. We've classified him as an organized killer, careful, psychopathic as opposed to psychotic. He follows the news, has good hygiene, he's smart. 'Cause he's smart the only physical evidence you'll find is what he wants you to find. ("Extreme Aggressor" S1:E1)

Gideon lectures to the BAU training room, directly addressing the camera while he lectures. A short clip of a white man in a baseball cap walking through a crowded street plays behind Gideon as he says "he's someone who'd blend into any crowd." The whiteness of the UNSUB in this profile and clip responds to the FBI's crisis of legitimacy by implying that criminal profiling is apolitical, neutral, and distinct from racial profiling (which is political) and the continuing white supremacist legacy of the prison industrial complex in the US.

This profile also attacks the crisis of unknowability by suggesting that even those most able to blend into a crowd or go unnoticed (by which Gideon is referring to white men, whom it is worth noting *do not* blend into every crowd...) can be anticipated and stopped by criminal profiling--that is, it argues that the "criminal mind" both exists and is knowable or discernible to the trained eye. *Criminal Minds* and similar series offer instruction on how to identify "criminal minds," but also reinforce the presumed necessity for professional "mindhunters." Look out for the criminal mind next door, they beseech us, but do not step on the toes of the FBI or other law enforcement agencies, who have legitimate means of reading for race, and are framed as the legitimate wielders of force.

***UNBELIEVABLE: The Medicalization-Criminalization of Survivors of Sexual Violence, and the Right to Feel Safe***

*Detective Rasmussen: If at any point in the near or distant future, Mr McCarthy is a free man, these [women survivors] will not feel safe...ever. And these women deserve to feel safe.*

(“Episode 8,” *Unbelievable*)

*Netflix* released its long-form, limited series *Unbelievable* in 2019, which was nominated for Breakaway Series Long Form at the Gotham Film Awards that year. According to an official tweet from the internet television conglomerate on October 16, 2019, “*Unbelievable* has been watched by 32 million member households in its first 28 days.” Released in the midst of the Me Too movement, *Unbelievable* tells the story of a young woman the narrative calls Marie Adler, based on a real person who wishes to remain anonymous, who is coerced by Lynwood, Washington Detective Parker into recanting the rape she comes forward to report. She receives nothing from the city but additional trauma, a five-hundred dollar fine for “false reporting,” and a newly-minted reputation for being a liar and manipulator which costs her nearly all of her friendships and her place in the Rise Up program that was helping her to transition out of the foster care system. Marie’s case is dismissed by Lynwood detectives and opened again when two women detectives in Colorado--Grace Rasmussen and Karen Duvall, played by Toni Collette and Merritt Weaver respectively--begin hunting down Adler’s rapist when following their own connected investigations.

*Unbelievable* begins with a “ride-along.” The ride is implicit--what plays on the screen are actually panning shots that place the viewer zooming alongside a montage of sidewalks, as apartment complexes and various neighborhood scenes meant to signify Lynwood, Washington flit by, as though through a car window. This ride ends with a final tableau: a police SUV pulling into a concrete apartment complex labeled on-screen as “Oakdale Apartments for At-Risk

Youth” –a visual designation that also sets this final image aside from the rest of “the ride.” It is worth considering the way this point-of-view aligns viewers, before anything else, with the police vehicle, even if it is unclear whether the perspective is from the front passenger’s seat or the back seat—that is, whether viewers are positioned with or against the police. I suggest that this opening scene has much to say about the ride-along as genre, where the police or law enforcement vehicle operates as a liminal space, but this opening film sequence also marks the space between the police station or another crime scene, and Marie Adler in her home-turned-crime-scene.

Shortly after the official ride-along ends, we see Marie sitting in the small apartment afforded to her by Project Ladder, the pilot program designed to help foster children (here deemed “at risk youth”[ARY]) to transition out of the system, with a blanket around her shoulders and her former foster mother, Judith, worrying over her. As the chatter of a police radio and footsteps approach, Judith looks imploringly at Marie and says, “Here they come. Here comes help” (“Episode 1”). The first thing the officer says upon approaching Marie is, “Marie, I’m officer Curran. I’m here to help you. Can you tell me what happened?” Ironically, in the following scene Marie is forced to recount for the first time in the narrative of the film, and with excruciating detail, the trauma of her rape, while the mostly nonplussed, awkward uniformed officer sits taking notes and controlling the tempo and content of the interview. Marie’s traumatic flashbacks start and stop again with the interview as Curran repeatedly and abruptly interrupts and resumes the interview with a temporality and demeanor that are both wildly out-of-odds with Marie’s. Many things hint at Marie’s criminalization from the beginning of the season, and the preconditions which set the stage for it--the ride-along, the complex for “at risk” foster kids transitioning out of the system where she lives, and this, the first of a series of

interviews that double as interrogations structured around the “unbelievability” of Adler specifically, and survivors of sexual violence generally. I call these interviews interrogations because of the invasive and violent nature of the interviews as well as their structure--Marie is questioned about the same things repeatedly, as though she cannot be believed or trusted. Curran asks her questions like: Can you tell me everything that happened? Everything you remember? Do you know what time this was? So you were up late, were you out? Connor, is that a friend or a boyfriend? How long did you talk? Then you fell asleep, what happened then? Did he also penetrate you anally? Was the penetration with his penis or his fingers?” (“Episode 1”). Flashbacks to Marie’s point of view during the assault punctuate her interrogation, as she, clearly uncomfortable with the invasiveness of the questions she is being asked, does her best to answer them without repeating the brashness of the questions: “Um, not his fingers...” (“Episode 1”). This terrible scene only foreshadows the rest of Marie’s interrogation, no doubt meant to strike viewers with the invasive and violent practices survivors of sexual assault who choose to report to law enforcement are subject to.

Detective Parker then shows up to interview Adler, in just as invasive of a manner, before informing her that she needs to go to the hospital for an official examination. The process begins over again at the hospital, where we see Marie’s joint medicalization and criminalization, this time accompanied by a harrowing shot of a stripped Marie undergoing physical, then verbal, examinations. Photos are also taken of Adlers’s naked body, shown shot behind a large blue medical drape held to shield (most of) her from the *Unbelievable* (television) cameras filming the scene. In one scene during this medicalizing examination Marie is seen clutching her shoulders and wiping herself down violently. Marie meets with Detective Parker once again following her medical examination to go over the details of her attack. Again, her flashbacks are triggered, then

interrupted by her interrogator. Interspersed with flashbacks from her rape are flashbacks to a moment when a previously carefree Marie smiles for the camera at the beach as she splashes into the ocean water; this photo was in her view during the attack, and she seemed to look at it repeatedly throughout the violent ordeal. More on this photograph and memory later. She is too exhausted to fill out her written witness statement, so she agrees to return it within a couple of days. When she finishes with her second interview with Parker, she returns home to her apartment complex, where she is greeted by her friends and counselors in Project Ladder who take turns hugging her and offering her comforting remarks to show her their support. They all gather in a common area and listen to Marie process everything that has happened to her in the last twenty-four hours, where she tells them through tears, “It’s just really important to lock your doors. You’ve got to lock them. And your windows. You have to. You just have to keep yourself safe” (“Episode 1”).

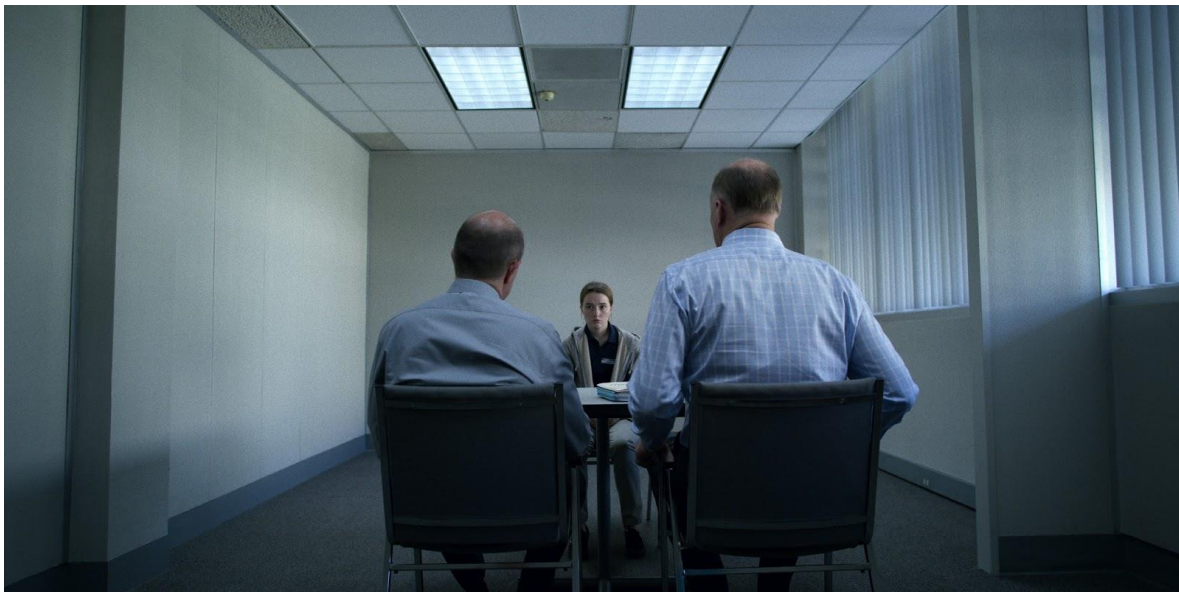


Figure 4- Still from “Episode 1,” in which Marie’s final meeting with Detective Parker and his partner is visually framed as an interrogation.

When Marie returns to hand her witness statement over to Parker she is met with another,

final interrogation, where Parker and his partner intensely question a traumatized Marie (see Figure 4), finally intimidating her into recanting her report after several small details from her various verbal reports and written witness statement are inconsistent across interrogations (a common phenomenon after surviving a traumatic event). She receives a fine from the city shortly after this for “false reporting,” and is kicked out of Project Ladder after her friends in the program take turns harshly attacking her for “lying” about her rape during a house meeting. In contrast to the support shown to her by her friends only a day before, when Marie calls her friend for a ride after she nearly suicides, her friend tells Marie, “Next time find your own ride home. I was in my pajamas.”

I began this section with the opening interrogations of Marie Adler in the first episode of the series because I believe that it is central to understanding *Unbelievable*'s rationalizations of the prison industrial complex. The series ends with Adler's rapist brought to justice--an especially poetic justice—which in some ways is presented as complementary to Adler's own medicalization-criminalization. In an emotional scene that rhymes with the humiliating examinations and interviews Adler must undergo to report her rape, only to be forced to recant, the season and series ends with the man convicted of raping Adler and dozens of other women, Chris McCarthy's, booking into jail. Like the opening scene featuring Adler's examinations, McCarthy is stripped naked and photographed. He is also subjected to various biometric information technologies, including fingerprinting, DNA swabs and hair samples extracted for the same purpose. Not only does this montage seem to clearly indicate justice for McCarthy and the women who survived his sexual violence, offering a neat resolution for viewers, it also speaks to supposed necessity for increased communication across legal jurisdictions and the expansion of federal databases that compile and share everything from material evidence from

open and closed cases to different biometric information patterns amassed by CODIS. Indeed, Detective Duvall speaks almost directly to viewers when she attributes McCarthy's forensic sophistication, partially, to the lack of communication across jurisdictions. Standing in the kitchen discussing the case with her husband, she asks, "What if he [the UNSUB] knows that-- that stations don't talk to each other? That as long as he only hits once in each district no one will ever know they're chasing a serial rapist?" ("Episode 3"). Increase said communication while also expanding surveillance technologies and biometric information databases, the logic goes, and serial sexual violence could be prevented. McCarthy himself speaks to this after he consents to speak with male FBI agent Taggart (requested only because of his gender). "Well, the problem is you're always a step behind. You're reacting. You wanna catch guys like me, you have to get ahead of us. Anticipate, because we think about this a lot. And we're smart [...] Careful with prints, careful with DNA," McCarthy tells Taggart ("Episode 8"). He continues:

McCarthy: That first one, up in Washington? I left...all kinds of stuff behind. Hair, fluids. All I could think about was all that DNA, you know, all over the place. All they had to do was compare it to my military records. I was dead sure they were gonna knock on my door the next day and take me away. But nothing happened. And so you think... "Ok, cool. I guess I can do this." ("Episode 8")

In this scene, McCarthy's words and actions are framed as authorizing predictive/statistical models of policing, and programs like the FBI's CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) which amass biometric information technologies as part of a database accessible to law enforcement agencies across jurisdictions. Afterall, this warning came straight from the devil's mouth.

McCarthy is also implicitly referencing the *Rape Forensics Guide*, which Duvall and Rasmussen discover is used by many rapists, including McCarthy, who use it for instruction on how to be

“smart...Careful with prints, careful with DNA.” A precursory Google search shows that this book, too, has a real-world counterpart: the *Rape Investigation Handbook*. This is undoubtedly only one of many similar criminal investigation training manuals or textbooks that are easily available to anyone with internet access and a desire to peruse them. While researching for this chapter I accidentally stumbled on a training manual from the BAU itself titled “Making Prevention a Reality,” which I analyze in Chapter 3.

Forbes Magazine’s Dana Feldman hones in on something important in her synopsis of *Unbelievable*. Her piece, titled “Netflix’s ‘*Unbelievable*’ is the Story of Good People Making Terrible Mistakes” discusses one of the real-life Colorado detectives’ discussions of the male detective who was primarily responsible for forcing “real-world” Marie to recant her police report, even charging her for Falsifying Police Documents, for which she was fined five-hundred dollars. Detective Grant tells Feldman, “At the time, he felt he was doing the right thing. He made a disastrous mistake,” (Feldman, “Good People Making Terrible”). Detective Timberman weighs in, saying, “We felt the portrayal of him as a villainous detective would not be accurate or compelling. He found out the magnitude of what was the biggest mistake of his life and was utterly devastated and questioned whether or not he deserved to be a detective after this. This is a story of good people making terrible mistakes.” Indeed, the Detective Parker from the series reflects dejectedly in the final episode to Rasmussen, “You know, you hear about bad cops. You know, guys who make bad calls or end up hurting the people they’re supposed to protect and I always think, like, who the hell let him on the force, right? Just get rid of him. Maybe we should get rid of me” (“Episode 8”).

These types of individualizing narratives that recast structural state violence enacted at the hands of law enforcement agencies as either the doing of individual bad actors or “good

people making terrible mistakes” have been critiqued by many Black feminist scholars, critical race theorists, and/or scholars of the carceral state. Moreover, neoliberalism asks us to substitute liberation for equality in representation. By this logic, the mere inclusion of underrepresented people in oppressive and violent institutions, for instance transgender people in the U.S. military, makes those institutions “progressive” in every good sense of the word, and goes a long way toward fixing those institutions and establishing material equality for those included (Conrad). The presence of women detectives in *Unbelievable* is offered as an implicit solution to institutionalized violence against women. Contributors to the 2015 anthology *Queer Criminology*, part of the *New Directions in Criminology* series, invite us to consider that similar approaches to institutional equality that simply “add women and stir” or “add queers and stir,” are not sufficient for dismantling violence against women or queer people within these institutions, or for ameliorating the violence of those institutions as a whole (Buist and Lenning 59-64).

Rasmussen and Duvall are indeed presented as the ethical counterparts to Parker and his partner. “Episode 2” shows Duvall responding to another rape case in Colorado. Immediately following the brutal depictions of Marie’s joint medicalization and criminalization, Duvall is represented as indisputably more professional than either Curran or Parker was with Marie. Duvall is soft-spoken, compassionate, and gentle when talking to the sexual violence survivor, Chloe, whose case she was assigned. She allows the interview to unfold at Chloe’s pace, and does not ask Chloe to unnecessarily repeat herself or answer explicit and invasive questions. Often shown clutching her cross necklace or at church with her family, Duvall is positioned as a savior of sorts--a detective who can “get the job done,” to quote the infamous line from *Criminal Minds*’ “Fear and Loathing.” Duvall is the person to initiate contact with Rasmussen, after her

(Duvall's) husband tells her that the details of Duvall's case closely match those of a case he worked with Rasmussen on.

Notably, both women detectives and most of the depicted survivors of McCarthy's sexual violence, are white. Their whiteness cannot be read as incidental to the narrative--it is foundational to the story as whole. This can be read as an evolution of a long tradition of rhetorically constructing white women as subjects especially vulnerable to sexual violence by men of color, specifically Black men. McCarthy's character and real-world counterpart is white, but his whiteness is not incidental to the narrative either. Within this fictional representation of the case, McCarthy's whiteness is a testament to the power of predictive policing, and an increase in communication across districts and counties, to capture even those whose whiteness has virtually protected them from criminalization. Moreover, the safety of women more generally (though the women implied by such legislation are typically white) is routinely appealed to as justification for "tough on crime" legislation and in the U.S., as applause for a prison system that incarcerates more people than all other countries combined. In *Fatal Invention* Dorothy Roberts discusses the legislation hidden within the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization bill. Roberts explains:

Buried in the pages of the popular Violence Against Women Act reauthorization bill, the DNA Fingerprint Act of 1995 authorizes U.S. agents to take and store DNA from anyone they arrest or detain and permits CODIS to retain profiles from arrestees submitted by the states that collected their DNA. This includes citizens who have not been convicted or charged with any crime and immigrants detained on suspicion of Immigration and Naturalization Services. (Roberts 266)

The DNA Fingerprint Act of 1995 is only one example of the ways that the safety of women is held up as justification for the rolling-back of various civil liberties in the name of security. That is to say, this is not only a rhetorical phenomenon, but in some instances, this is even written into law, and in every instance, has material consequences for millions of people, whether they know it or not.

In some sense we have come full circle, as I would like to return to this section's epigraph, Detective Rasmussen addressing the court at McCarthy's hearing, saying, "If at any point in the near or distant future, Mr. McCarthy is a free man, these [women survivors] will not feel safe...ever. And these women deserve to feel safe." It is difficult to resist this appeal, the idea that survivors "deserve to feel safe." On one hand this statement is undoubtedly true, but on the other hand, a historical consideration of this appeal shows that it is reminiscent of the "first civil right." This phrase was first coined by then-President Truman, who was referring to the right to be free from violence, specifically Black freedom from white supremacist violence. However, Naomi Murakawa argues that Nixon reappropriated the term to imply white freedom from implicitly Black violence, which Murakawa argues is at least partially responsible for the expansion of the prison industrial complex in the U.S. during the era of mass incarceration. In his Acceptance of the Republican Nomination for President in August 1968 speech, Nixon made this famous address:

The first civil right of every American is to be free from domestic violence. . . . We shall re-establish freedom from fear in America so that America can take the lead of re-establishing freedom from fear in the world. And to those who say that law-and-order is the code word for racism, here is a reply: Our goal is justice—justice for every American.  
(Nixon)

Murakawa explains that Nixon's speech certainly helped to usher in, or mark the growth of the prison industrial complex, or what she calls "Prison America":

the rise of mass incarceration appears to fulfill Richard Nixon's 1968 campaign pledge to restore "the first civil right of every American," which Nixon alternatively characterized as freedom from domestic violence, the right to be safe, and freedom from fear. Of course, Nixon's "first civil right" was striking precisely because it was not the first civil right of its time, following as it did the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Warren Court's expansion of rights of the accused. As a co-optation of civil rights discourse, Nixon's messages established a rank order: the implicitly white right to safety was paramount, not to be threatened by special "minority" and "criminal" rights. As if following Nixon's 1968 call to fight "narcotics peddlers" and "merchants of crime," lawmakers have over time enacted mandatory penalties and funded prison construction, facilitating the septupling of the incarcerated population from 1968 to 2010. When witnessed through a Nixonian lens of law-and-order as racism-free "justice for every American," occupants of the White House and the Big House simply confirm each other's legitimacy. Taken together, the president's successes and the prisoners' failures authenticate meritocracy, untainted by venomous white hatred and sentimental white lenience. As African American prisoners catapult the U.S. incarceration rate to the highest in the world, it seems that Nixon's "first civil right" was promise and prophecy of what was to come. (Murakawa 2)

Despite McCarthy's whiteness, can we read *Unbelievable* as trekking in another instantiation of Nixon's right to "freedom from fear," one that disproportionately affects BIPOC communities as mass incarceration still rages in the U.S. Is "deserv[ing] to *feel* safe" (emphasis mine) the same

as deserving to *be* safe? What might noncarceral, transformative justice (TJ) feminist responses to sexual violence look like? What might a world where everyone to deserves to *be safe*--safe from racist violence at the hands of the state or mob, safe from rape *and* safe from incarceration--look like?

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that criminal investigative procedurals like *Criminal Minds* and *Unbelievable* provide popular justification for the U.S. prison industrial complex. *Criminal Minds* valorizes criminal personality profiling (and by association the BAU and the FBI) by asserting that it reads for race neutrally--statistically and scientifically—which is presumably distinct from both the racism of racial profiling and the politics of anti-racism. When Black girls and interracial couples from the affluent Groten, Connecticut, are murdered, with swastikas painted on their faces and crime scenes, a Black reverend local to Groten is accused by the BAU of “muckraking” by calling attention to the white supremacist nature of these murders and is said to be stoking the flames of a race riot. When the mayor of Groten meets with the BAU, he condemns their profile, which maintains that the murders are actually cases of serial sexual homicide, most likely committed by a Black man, and insists that he cannot release the profile to the public without being condemned for racial profiling. BAU chief Gideon responds with, “It's not racial profiling. Racial profiling is targeting suspects because of their race. We gave you a complete profile which includes race” (“Fear and Loathing”). I argue that this recasting of criminal personality profile as somehow beyond the realm of racial profiling, makes the argument that there are ethical ways for “predicting race,” and that criminal profiling reads for race according to the “objectivity” of statistical probability. This argument occludes the reality

that the BAU, like all law enforcement entities, participate in racial profiling. The logic of the show further argues that criminal personality profiling is somehow “scientific,” by which the show means objective, as if all models of statistical probability and data are not inherently made up of human biases (Wang, Cheyney-Lippold).

*Unbelievable* rationalizes the prison industrial complex in different ways from *Criminal Minds*. While I admire the work *Unbelievable* does to bring awareness to the prevalence of sexual assault and the unjust treatment sexual assault survivors experience at the hands of law enforcement agencies and officials, the show makes the implicit argument that women police officers are somehow better equipped to work with survivors of sexual assault, as if they are not part of the same racist and misogynistic system as their male counterparts. The whiteness of the two women detectives, Rasmussen and Duvall, and the whiteness of most of the women survivors of McCarthy’s rapes, serves to reinforce the idea that it is the job of police officers to protect white women from sexual violence, supposedly mostly from BIPOC men. The fact that the rapist, McCarthy, is white is not incidental, but rather functions to demonstrate the power of criminal investigation techniques and increased communication across jurisdictions. In a type of poetic justice, upon his arrest McCarthy is forced to undergo a process of medicalization-criminalization that twins Adler’s at the beginning of the series, in which he is subjected to biometric information technologies as one of the entrypoints to his incarceration. *Unbelievable* posits that systems like CODIS and ViCAP, which facilitate greater information-sharing among law enforcement agencies across jurisdictions, are both necessary and are not nearly relied upon as much as would be supposedly necessary to arrest and incarcerate all active rapists. The show never questions whether incarceration is a humane response to even those who have perpetuated the most inhumane acts of violence against others, and thus perpetuates the argument that there is

a population referred to as “the terrible few” who must be incarcerated, one of the common arguments against prison abolition (Ben-Moshe).

## CHAPTER 3

### “Brittle People” and Borderlines:

#### **Lay Diagnosis and the Criminalization/Pathologization of Personality Disorders in *I Hate You—Don’t Leave Me, Stop Walking on Eggshells, and Making Prevention a Reality***

*I know a predator when I see one.*

--Kamala Harris, August 19 2020, Acceptance of VP Nomination Speech,  
Democratic National Convention

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I turn to two complementary archives of personality that produce the “disordered” personality types of “brittle people,” who are purportedly most at risk of engaging in targeted violence, and the borderline personality, who is characterized as toxic, violent, and manipulative. I argue that these two types of personalities are characterized as “disordered” in eerily similar ways. The first of these “disordered personalities,” the “brittle” person, is generated by the FBI’s manual for risk assessment and management, titled *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks*. This manual is aimed at predicting and preventing acts of targeted violence by generating descriptions of the personalities most at risk of engaging in targeted violence, who the authors call “exceptionally brittle people.” Interestingly for our purposes, the authors of the manual, Amman et al., vilify and criminalize personality disorders and those who live with them (whom they call “personality-disordered individuals”), and insist that personality disorders are distinct from “serious mental illnesses.” In so doing, Amman et al. make the argument that the “personality-disordered individual” is more capable of engaging in violence and is more likely to come to the conclusion that violence is an acceptable answer to their problems. Additionally, personality

disorders are represented as beyond the purview of traditional mental health care. The authors of this manual provide descriptions of “warning signs” or “reportable behaviors” to help their readers more easily identify the “brittle person” or “personality-disordered individual,” who I argue are meant to be read as one-in-the-same.

The second of these “disordered personalities,” which again, I argue is consistent with the first, is the borderline personality, or the person who lives with borderline personality disorder. I turn to two of the most well-known self-help books written about living with and/or loving borderlines, titled *Stop Walking on Eggshells: Taking Your Life Back When Someone You Care About Has Borderline Personality Disorder*, and *I Hate You--Don't Leave Me: Understanding the Borderline Personality*. Both of these texts produce a subject called the “borderline,” and provide crude diagnostic tools for recognizing BPD in others. The blurb from the back of *Eggshells* reads:

Do you feel manipulated, controlled, or lied to by someone close to you? Are you the focus of their intense, violent, and irrational rages? Do you feel criticized and blamed all the time? If the answer is “yes,” someone you care about may have borderline personality disorder (BPD)--a personality disorder that causes negative self-image, emotional volatility, and difficulties with interpersonal relationships. The good news is you can bring peace and stability back into your life. This newly revised and updated self-help classic will show you how, one confident step at a time.

Here the borderline is characterized as a chaotic force that causes instability and violence, to be ameliorated only with the knowledge imparted by this book. Moreover, in both *Eggshells* and *I Hate You*, the borderline personality is characterized as exceptionally toxic, manipulative, violent, and even “brittle,” to borrow from Amman et al.’s phrasing. They are characterized as

living in their own worlds, ruled by their own (lack of) logic. The purpose of these books is supposedly to help the able-minded, or at least the non-borderline, identify BPD in those around them, make sense of the alternate universes they inhabit (referred to as the “Borderline Zone”), and to protect themselves and others from the borderline.

In *Fantasies of Identification: Disability, Gender, Race*, Ellen Samuels describes the ways that official medical knowledge is extended by the diagnostic gaze, which permits “lay diagnosticians” like “the DMV worker, county clerk, and police officer” to substitute medical certification for the “condition of obviousness” (that is, the condition of severe and supposedly “obvious” disability) in the case of disabled parking permits, and other realms of biocertification. Samuels explains that “far from bypassing medical authority, this process functions to extend and solidify that authority” (132). Though in a distinctly different way, I argue that *Making Prevention a Reality*, *Eggshells*, and *I Hate You* all “extend and solidify” the medical and/or policing authority of doctors, psychologists, and criminal profilers by imbuing their readers with a type of “diagnostic gaze” which refutes its capacity for official diagnosis while encouraging a certain type of lay diagnosis. Thus, in these instances, the diagnostic gaze is extended to those who are not doctors, psychologists or profilers, but are simply concerned bystanders, or loved ones of “highly challenging people” (Mason and Kreger 12, 23). In this way, these texts hone particular reading practices designed to root out personalities that are rendered “disordered” in different yet incredibly similar ways, authorizing a type of “disability surveillance,”<sup>21</sup> to borrow

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<sup>21</sup> I am using the phrase “disability surveillance” in a different way than Samuels, who is specifically referring to the surveillance directed at people with non-visible disabilities who use disabled parking passes. For my purpose, disability surveillance refers also to the ways that the mentally disabled are viewed with a concerned suspicion by those in their orbit, who do not seek to discern whether or not this person’s disability is valid, instead fixating on specific mental health diagnoses (or traits) that they believe this person may or may not have (such as borderline personality disorder).

again from Samuels, that lacks the official authority of the clinical diagnostic gaze, but retains some of its properties.

In addition to assembling a personality archive of “disordered personalities,” these three texts also conjure their opposites, those personality types that are presented as the desirable foils to the “brittle” targeted violence “offender,” and the “borderline personality,” who they call the “upstander” or produce as simply non-borderline. The upstander and non-borderline are both the intended audience of these texts and are produced through their reading. All three texts are involved in the process of “disordering” some personalities, or pathologizing and criminalizing them, while “ordering” others, or codifying them and granting them a clean bill of health. In what follows I “get close” to these three cultural objects, unpacking these texts and their implications for mentally disabled individuals.

### **“Exceptionally Brittle People”: Producing the Targeted Violence Offender and the Personality-Disordered Individual**

*Virtually everyone in society can be an upstander. They should be viewed as such, and, more importantly, encouraged to view themselves as such.*

--FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit, *Making Prevention a Reality*

In July of 2015, the Behavioral Analysis Unit and the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) of the FBI held a symposium on the “active shooter phenomenon” and strategies for preventing these tragedies. The symposium was participated in by “academic researchers, mental health experts, and law enforcement practitioners of threat assessment” (ix) including members of the NCAVC and BTAC<sup>22</sup> and consisted of a host of presentations and

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<sup>22</sup> The Behavioral Threat Assessment Center, or the NCAVC’s “center of expertise” for threat assessment and management.

workshops addressing the active shooter phenomenon. This symposium culminated in the 2017 publication of a manual geared toward preventing acts of targeted violence generally, titled *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks*. A full pdf of the manual is posted to the FBI's website, and can also be summoned by a basic google search, though the manual has thus far escaped basic library cataloguing. According to the authors Amman et al, "[t]his guide is about threat assessment and management, or stated another way, *how law enforcement officers and others may identify, assess, and manage the risk of future, planned violence*" (1, emphasis in original). I am interested in a couple of things here. First is the insistence that this is a guide for "law enforcement officers *and others*" (emphasis mine). "Others" is left open-ended, and in its vagueness, could refer to any individual or group of people with an interest in threat assessment and management--safety stakeholders or not. Since one of the cornerstones of this dissertation project is a concern about the ways that "lay diagnosis" is leveraged to identify and construct deviant or "disordered" personality types as a form of threat assessment, the fact that this manual is so readily available gives me pause. That said, I am not arguing that simply making this manual more inaccessible will solve this problem, but I am remarking that the potential reach of this manual is expansive and has major implications for this project.

A second point of interest for me in this quote is the way in which the framing of the issue of threat assessment and management takes on a strange temporal valence in this manual specifically and in the field of threat assessment and management generally. Every detail of a "person of concern's" personality is made to signify deviance in a retroactive way. In a seemingly self-conscious afterthought on this note, and to repel accusations against the validity of threat assessment and management, the authors write, "Threat managers are not psychics and

they cannot predict the future. Just as a targeted violence event cannot be predicted, the perfect threat management solution cannot be foreseen” (53). This temporal management, which here shows up as a disavowal of “psychics,” “foresight,” and of even “prediction” --saturates the manual, despite the fact that these disavowals are purely performative, though without manifesting the truths they proclaim. I am inclined to wonder how *Making Prevention a Reality* is *not* about prediction, if its entire purpose is to assess and manage threats of *future* violence. I am interested in looking at the ways in which this manual airs out theories about deviant or “violent” personalities while constructing a strange temporal frame for assessing these personalities--an almost future-anterior “this [quality] *will have been* important.” More importantly for this chapter’s investments, I also zoom in on the authors’ musings on personality disorders as distinct from serious mental illness, and the supposed ineptitude of the mental health system to mitigate the threat of future, targeted violence more generally. By separating personality disorders from other mental health diagnoses, Amman et al. effectively bring them under suspicion, even criminalizing those with traits of personality disorders by suggesting that they are more likely to be “exceptionally brittle people” who more readily turn to violence than others.

If *Making Prevention a Reality* is producing and training others to filter for/recognize the “deviant” personalities of targeted violence offenders, it is also producing the positive personality type of the bystander/upstander. Bystanders are the “extra eyes and ears for threat management teams, school administrators, human resource managers, police officers, and others responsible for the safety of others. *The value of bystanders in prevention efforts cannot be overstated*” (11, emphasis mine). The manual not only teaches prevention strategies for targeted violence, but also encourages bystanders to become “upstanders” by actively reporting

“suspicious” behavior to law enforcement agencies and risk assessment teams. Upstanders are so important, according to the manual, that their value “cannot be overstated.” Indeed, Amman et al. seem to imply that threat assessment and management could not get very far at all without the efforts of the valiant upstander. The authors argue that “[r]eporting is an essential part of prevention” (14), and that “[e]ach bystander in a person of concern’s sphere represents an opportunity to identify potential warning behaviors” (13). Since bystanders rarely have a complete view of persons of concern, the authors explain that it may take the reports of many different bystanders in a person of concern’s life in order to develop a holistic picture of the person of concern. Amman et al. insist that “a culture of shared responsibility will further the goal of prevention” (14) and invite readers to become upstanders by reporting what the manual calls “warning” or “reportable” behavior. However, as though to expand the purview of reportable behavior (of which the authors already provide a hefty list; more on this to come), the manual entreats its readers to report anyone and anything that triggers “uncomfortable gut feelings” in the bystander (15). At that point, “someone trained to understand targeted violence can evaluate the information” (Ibid). The potential reach of this manual is expansive, and one might gather from its insistence that “virtually everyone in society can be an upstander,” and that “ideally all community members will be upstanders” (13) that the intended audience of the manual spans “ideally” *everyone*, however little trained or nonprofessional. And if “uncomfortable gut feelings” are thought warranted for reporting, it follows that no behavior, however small or inconsequential, is too abstract or insignificant to report. In this way the manual encourages “lay diagnosis” and a culture of shared responsibility that encompasses everyone, from the layperson to the forensically trained mental health professional and law enforcement officials, even if each role has a very specific part to play in threat assessment and

management (the upstander as the “eyes and ears” of threat assessment teams whose reports are then interpreted and analyzed by forensically trained mental health professionals, law enforcement officers, and other professionals on threat assessment and management teams). According to Amman et al., when someone hears or sees something concerning from children, family, friends, neighbors, or co-workers, they might ideally ask questions or at least think about whether there is a concern that should be brought to the attention of authorities. I will return to the list of “reportable behavior” later.

In the section titled “Mental health is not ‘the’ answer--threat management is the key,” the author(s) reflect on the limited capacity for the mental health care system to treat all who “need” treatment, especially for mentally ill persons of concern<sup>23</sup>:

The mental health system is no longer able to be the primary response mechanism in dealing with a mentally ill person of concern. It is overrun and lacks the necessary beds to effectively treat all actively psychotic, suicidal, and homicidal individuals [...]

The mental health system is simply not in a position to be responsible for long-term threat management. Beds are limited and will continue to be scarce. Mental health professionals are overwhelmed, often having time only to conduct cursory checks for suicidal and homicidal ideation and intent. Providing treatment to improve psychological well-being is their primary function, rather than organizing a long-term management plan in place of key stakeholders (e.g. police, schools, or employers). Limits on information sharing make for a cumbersome process to openly discuss symptoms and treatment with others. It would be convenient if an already-in-place, well-established apparatus was

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<sup>23</sup> The manual uses the term “person of concern” to refer to people who come under suspicion of committing an act, or multiple acts, of targeted violence.

positioned to take on this role, but the mental health care system is not that apparatus” (65-66).

This passage groups together experiences of psychosis, suicidal ideation or tendencies and homicidal ideation or tendencies, and effectively elides important differences across these experiences. Amman et al. go so far as to argue that there is a strong correlation between suicidal and homicidal ideation or action, indicating that suicidal feelings can easily become homicidal (29). They base this on the fact that “[t]he ‘Safe Schools Initiative’ research project revealed that 78% of targeted mass attacks exhibited a history of suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts at some point prior to the attack” (26). Amman et al. belabor this point by addressing the phenomenon of “suicide by cop” --a manipulative and violent phrase that addresses the murder of people who behave in a “threatening manner” toward police or other armed law enforcement officers, presumably with the hope of being met with lethal force by the officer(s) involved. The argument intrinsic to the idea of “suicide by cop” is that a person who behaves in a “threatening manner” (which could mean any number of things) in the presence of police does so as a method of suicide. “Suicide by cop” is thus used as a crude justification of lethal force disproportionately taken against Black and brown individuals, signaling that lethal force is *desired* by the person acted against, even in cases where there are no other indicators of suicidal ideation. Indeed, the phrase “suicide by cop” puts agency in the hands of the person murdered, rather than on the police who act with deadly force. Even if police officers (broadly imagined) believe a person to be suicidal, bypassing non-lethal intervention measures by shooting to kill is a gross abuse of power.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “Suicide by cop” was the justification given by police officers Steven McNew and Jason Anderson, who shot Charleena Lyles seven times in her home in Seattle when responding to a call she placed to report a burglary. Though Lyles had called upon SPD for help in the past, and

To return briefly to the blurred lines between suicidality and homicidality in *Making Prevention a Reality*, I want to note that my aim here is not to vilify homicidal ideation, singling this experience out for punishment rather than treatment. I believe there are recovery-focused methods of treatment for such individuals outside of the damning waters of criminalization. However, I do find that this argument is built on a slippery slope fallacy, and I am wary of the myriad, damaging ways that this idea could be applied by threat assessment and management teams across the country (and perhaps even the world), not to mention the lay people who stumble upon or search for this manual. In this future anterior tensing, suicidal ideation and action become suspect or “of concern,” especially *after* an act of targeted violence transpires.

Patients’ rights to privacy also come under blast in this passage. “Limits on information sharing” between mental health care providers and law enforcement officers and agencies, including forensic psychologists (who are often employed by law enforcement agencies and prisons), is lamented as just another reason why the mental health care system is not, and cannot be, set up to assess and manage threats of targeted violence. Later in the manual, the authors insist that “[s]triking a balance between privacy and public safety is essential. However, a level of intrusiveness may sometimes be necessary in order to be thorough, accurate, and fair” (44). In another passage, Amman et al argue that “social media review” should begin when a case is opened and continue until all concerns are ameliorated (50). It seems that both privacy rights and freedom of speech come under blast here, and both are eschewed in the name of public safety.

*Making Prevention a Reality* continues its argument about the ineptitude of the mental

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despite the fact that the police at this station knew Lyles struggled with mental health issues, the officers still failed to plan for non-lethal intervention in what a lawyer called “some sort of an involuntary mental-illness outburst” (Miletich).

health care system and mental health professionals, this time by calling into question the ability of mental health professionals to correctly identify threats of violence:

Mental health professionals have not been very successful at violence prediction, which explains why forensic psychologists moved away from unstructured clinic assessments to more actuarial or structured assessment approaches to assess risk for violence. Forensic mental health professionals receive much more training on violence risk assessment than other providers. (27)

Here, a distinction is drawn between forensic mental health professionals and all other mental health professionals. It would seem that to properly execute threat assessment and management, one must be connected to the (criminalizing) field of criminology, to law enforcement, and to the prison industrial complex. I am not suggesting that mental health care providers operate completely outside of the realm of criminalization, but I believe there are important differences between the ways forensic psychologists and the like function, as opposed to traditional, or non-forensic, psychologists.

I write this on the heels of the Defund the Police movement, which gained mainstream attention and traction in the summer of 2020, in the wake of the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and countless other Black and brown people. One of the simple, but powerful ideas behind the Defund the Police movement is that the immense spending budgets of law enforcement agencies could be better redistributed to social and health services like free universal health care, public schools, universal basic income, child care, food access and justice, housing justice, and more, to attack the root of social problems rather than criminalizing them. *Making Prevention a Reality* seems to make the reverse argument: more resources need to be invested in threat assessment and management teams (outside of traditional mental health care),

in order to manage the risk of potential acts of targeted violence. You might say that this manual makes implicit arguments for defunding mental health care by calling into question the competency of mental health professionals and of the mental health care system generally.

While Amman et al. argue for the profiling of “behavior, not diagnosis” (9), and for “direct[ing] [one’s] attention to psychiatric symptoms and associated behaviors, rather than formal diagnoses” (26), they also make specific and damning arguments about the culpability of people diagnosed with personality disorders. According to the authors, personality disorders are diagnoses that are distinct from serious mental illness, and those who live with them are suspect:

A personality disorder [...] is not the same sort of disorder as a serious mental illness. It is an enduring, pervasive, and inflexible pattern of internal experience and behavior which is not in harmony with cultural expectations. Personality disorders typically onset in adolescence or early adulthood, and are stable over time. They feature certain attitudes, behaviors, and thought patterns that are maladaptive. As a result, a personality-disordered individual may be able to conclude that violence is an acceptable or even necessary response to a problem. Because he is not, however, disengaged from reality, he is capable of engaging in logistical and rational processes necessary to violently offend. Any observed behavior that demonstrates the person of concern’s thoughts, thinking, planning, and organization is important to consider for understanding his trajectory towards violence, if any. (26-7)

In this passage, the “personality-disordered individual” is painted as both a pariah and a threat. They have an “inflexible pattern of internal experience and behavior which is not in harmony with cultural expectations” that is “maladaptive” and are considered here to be more dangerous than those with serious mental illness because they “are not disengaged from reality.” Once

again, agency is spun in a strange way. Since those with personality disorders are not thought to be disengaged from reality, they are presumed to be organized enough to freely plan and choose to engage in targeted acts of violence. Moreover, the fact that personality disorders are constructed here as separate from serious mental illness implicitly criminalizes them, eschewing them from the terrain of traditional mental health care and treatment methods which are presumably better fitted for the “seriously” mentally ill. It is important to consider the way these arguments can be, and are, deployed by threat assessment and management teams, and the interested lay person. To borrow from Samuels’ theory on fantasies of identification, the fantasy at play here is the fantasy that personality disorders a) exist in some observable, or even measurable, way, and b) are distinct from serious mental illness, and are thus more in the realm of criminality than mental illness. This strikes me as a continuation of the argument for “the criminal mind,” which I touched on in Chapter 1.

Adjacent to these concerns are the fantasies of identification at play in the manual geared toward instructing readers on how to identify persons of concern *most at risk* of engaging in targeted violence before an act of targeted violence takes place. *Making Prevention a Reality* refers to such people as “exceptionally brittle” and “unable to withstand slights, rejections, or offenses both minor and otherwise” (28). The authors continue, “Targeted violence offenders have claimed to be persecuted and alienated from their peers, family, and the world at large, viewing themselves as outsiders [...] To a brittle person lacking adequate resources to help him appropriately process and cope, even a minor loss can be absolutely devastating” (29). I argue that these references to “brittle people” can be read as veiled references to those with personality disorders, which I will discuss in more depth in the second half of this chapter. But because the concept of “brittleness” alone gives very little on which to base a profile, the manual also goes

into explicit detail in its third chapter on warning signs and behaviors to be on the lookout for. In the remainder of this section, I will analyze this third chapter in relation to the University of Washington's SafeCampus threat assessment team, and some of the cultural objects produced and dispersed by SafeCampus.

Before getting into the details of what *Making Prevention a Reality* terms "risk factors" and "warning behaviors" for targeted violence, I think it important to dig deeper into the ways the manual authorizes its own expertise as somehow beyond bias (of a very specific kind). Amman et al argue that "There are no usual suspects" and "there is no demographic profile of a targeted violence offender" (21). Instead, a "360 assessment" or "whole person assessment" is needed in matters of risk assessment and management. Since the authors position this manual beyond the scope of profiling, it might be easy to look past the ways that *Making Prevention a Reality* is instructive of a very particular kind of profiling and makes this accessible to all readers of the manual, and the instruction of risk assessment and management team leaders that might literally teach the contents of this manual to their teams. They also extend the power of the diagnostic gaze to all readers of the manual, while disavowing the importance of diagnosis in favor of teaching their audience how to screen for particular types of behavior and psychiatric symptoms. More on this later.

Amman et al. urge that "unintended bias by assessors must be understood and avoided" (22). However, it is clear from the manual that only particular types of bias are disavowed by this manual, including "confirmation bias, availability bias, hindsight bias and foresight bias" (22). There is no mention of racist bias, of which racial profiling is one instantiation. Nor is there mention of other types of bias organized around social location or identity (like gender, ability status, language, religion, nationality etc). *Making Prevention a Reality* does not mention biases

that correlate race or religion with higher threat levels or potential for targeted violence. The manual both positions itself (and the field of threat assessment and management more generally) as beyond bias, but fails to account for the types of profiling most engaged by the fact of policing. With regards to gender, the authors of the manual insist that “[v]iolence is gender-neutral,” (3) and that care must be taken not to dismiss women persons of concern as somehow less violent than their male counterparts. However, the manual only uses “male” (he/him/his) pronouns in reference to individual persons of concern, “for ease of reading” (3), and erases the existence of nonbinary people in this gender statement.

*Making Prevention a Reality* assembles a personality archive and attempts temporal management of the risk of future violence. One of the ways this manual does this is to include a list of “general motives” for targeted violence. The list includes “[r]evenge for a perceived injury or grievance; [q]uest for justice (as defined by the offender); [d]esire for notoriety or recognition; [d]esire to solve a problem perceived to be unbearable; [d]esire to kill or be killed” (24-5). In this last one we see a return to the blurring of lines between suicidality and homicidality. I also find it interesting that “desire” plays such an important role in violence risk assessments (VRAs), here pathologizing and criminalizing certain types of desire, while implicitly condoning their opposites. The use of the word “grievance” is also noteworthy, since this is a term also used by unions and individuals who enter an official process to protest unjust (or “unbearable”) working conditions.

Returning to the idea of reportable or warning behaviors that I began to unpack earlier, beyond teaching its audience about potential motives for violence, *Making Prevention a Reality* teaches its readers (the potential bystander/upstander, as well as trained threat assessment and management teams) what behaviors to look out for, or what constitutes “suspicious” or

“reportable” behavior. An inexhaustive list of reportable behaviors appears in the manual as follows:

Any physical violence toward a person or property[;] Direct or indirect threats of violence[;] Any act, gesture or statement that would be interpreted by a reasonable person as threatening or intimidating, such as overt physical or verbal intimidation, throwing objects or other gestures intended to cause fear, or making contextually inappropriate statements about harming others[;] Unusual or bizarre behavior that would cause a reasonable person to fear injury or harm due to its nature and severity, such as: stalking; erratic or bizarre behavior suggestive of mental disturbance or substance abuse; fixation with mass murder, weapons, or violence generally; or fixation with hate group, terrorist, or extremist material[;] Any statements or behaviors indicating suicidality. (14)

This list of behaviors ranges from overt and covert behaviors that could be considered threatening “by a *reasonable* person”, to suicidal ideation, and “erratic or bizarre behavior suggestive of mental disturbance or substance abuse.” It is an expansive list, especially considering that many of the items on the above list can be open to a variety of interpretations. Consider, for instance, the idea that “fixation with [...] extremist material” could encompass anything considered by another to be “extreme” in ideology. There is no doubt that any number of leftist texts, from *The Communist Manifesto* to writings by prison and police abolitionists, could be implied here by the authors of the manual. Likewise, “fixation with mass murder” could easily be applied to those with an academic interest in such matters, making even the act of researching and writing about mass murder suspicious.<sup>25</sup> The University of Washington’s threat

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<sup>25</sup> For more on this, see the chapter “Assaults on the Ivory Tower” from Margaret Price’s brilliant book *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life*.

assessment team,<sup>26</sup> SafeCampus, includes a similar list of reportable behavior under the header, “Reasons to reach out to us: Concerning behaviors in another person.” The list appears as follows:

- Dramatic changes in personality, mood or behavior
- Withdrawing from friends, the workplace or academics
- Unusual irritability, outbursts of anger or violence
- Making comments or online posts about harming themselves or others
- Crossing boundaries (for instance, excessive phone calls, emails and/or visits)
- Inappropriate, confusing or disjointed conversations
- Making references to school shootings and/or identifying with mass shooters

(SafeCampus)

Changes in personal hygiene also used to be featured on this list, but for whatever reason is not reflected on SafeCampus’ website at the time that I am writing this. This list also contains a wide range of behaviors that are drastically open to interpretation. Consider, for instance, the appearance here of “[i]nappropriate, confusing or disjointed conversations” which could signify any number of things. What counts as a “confusing” and/or “disjointed” conversation is entirely subjective; what is confusing or disjointing to one person might be read as entirely coherent and commonplace to another person. *Making Prevention a Reality* and SafeCampus both provide vague descriptions of “reportable” or “concerning” behavior, inviting readers to panic about, be suspicious of, and report to authorities any behavior, language, or conversations that strike the

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<sup>26</sup> There is no overt use of the language of threat assessment and/or management by SafeCampus’ website, but judging by the description of SafeCampus on their website, I believe this term applies here.

reader/bystander/upstander as nonnormative. They both teach specific reading practices, disciplining professionals and lay people to first filter for behaviors that appear to defy social norms, and then to report these behaviors to professionals, who are trained more extensively on how to read and interpret these behaviors in the context of threat assessment and risk management, and whose authority they must ultimately defer to. In this way, readers/lay profilers are taught to screen for neurodivergence and mental disability--anything that might be perceived as outside of the norms of acceptable/desirable behavior or thought. While Amman et al. insist that diagnoses in and of themselves cannot be the ultimate authority on someone's risk for potential, targeted violence, they hone particular reading praxes that take diagnosis into account, alongside other, less concrete categories such as behavior, interests, and thought processes or cognition.

In the wake of targeted violence events there is often discussion about how to prevent such tragedies in the future, usually focused on increasing surveillance of mentally disabled people, both through legislation and through public education campaigns that teach lay people how to scour their peers for signs of mental disability (of which SafeCampus is one instantiation). As a result of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute shooting, the Virginia legislature:

modified criteria for involuntary commitment [and] tightened procedures for mandatory outpatient treatment, increased state funding for community mental health services, requirements for better collaboration between the courts and services system, and the establishment of data systems for monitoring and oversight of the commitment process.

(Amman et al. 5)

Such reactions only serve to further stigmatize mentally disabled people, traumatizing them through an increase in involuntary commitment and mandatory, state-ordered outpatient

treatment. Such measures may even exacerbate already-existing grievances held by the mentally disabled, perhaps increasing the risk of targeted violence, rather than decreasing it.

In conclusion, *Making Prevention a Reality* assembles a disordered personality archive of the “targeted violence offender,” also referred to as “exceptionally brittle people” and “personality-disordered” individuals. The manual also generates the “normal,” positive personality of the “upstander,” who is trained, through reading, to identify “problem personalities” indicative of neurodivergence and mental disability/illness, and acts as the “eyes and ears” of threat assessment and management teams, to report such behavior and people to the authorities. Amman et al. insist on distinguishing personality disorders from “serious mental illnesses,” bemoaning the “personality-disordered individual’s” predisposition to violence. In other places in the manual, the authors contend that violence risk assessment is not, and cannot be, within the purview of the mental health care system. In this way, *Making Prevention a Reality* authorizes threat assessment and management teams, which often include forensic psychologists, as the only viable avenue for preventing acts of targeted violence.

### **Toxic People: Producing the Borderline Personality and the Non-Borderline Personality**

*Hell hath no rage like a borderline scorned*

--epigraph to “Lies, Rumors, and Accusations: Distortion Campaigns” from *Stop Walking on Eggshells*, taken from the Welcome to Oz family member support community, [www.BPDCentral.com](http://www.BPDCentral.com)

Shifting to a seemingly distinct and separate terrain of personality theory, in this section I turn to popular psychology self-help books on borderline personality disorder to examine the ways that the FBI and popular psychology learn from and rhyme with each other. In both realms we see stigmatizing/pathologizing representations of personality disorders, especially BPD, tips on how best to “handle” people with personality disorders, who are also referred to as “toxic” or

“brittle,” as well as education on the appropriate “levels of concern” corresponding to different behaviors exhibited by those with personality disorders. In particular, I look at two of these self-help books, both written for those with someone diagnosed with BPD or with “borderline traits” in their lives: *Stop Walking on Eggshells: Taking Your Life Back When Someone You Care About Has Borderline Personality Disorder* by Paul T. Mason and Randi Kreger, and *I Hate You--Don't Leave Me: Understanding the Borderline Personality* by Jerold J. Kreisman and Hal Straus. I chose these two books because they are among the most well-known and consulted self-help books on BPD on the market. *Stop Walking on Eggshells* was first published in 1998 and was revised and updated in 2020. *I Hate You--Don't Leave Me* was first published in 1989 and was edited and revised in 2010. As I hope will be evident by the end of this chapter, both the FBI and the field of psychology are in the throes of a feedback loop; each learning from the other about personality theory and the “disordered personality.”

*Stop Walking on Eggshells* and *I Hate You--Don't Leave Me* both represent the borderline personality as “exceptionally brittle,” without using this exact language, in ways that are highly reminiscent of *Making Prevention a Reality*'s discussion of the “brittle” person at risk of targeted violence. Before moving on to an analysis of these self-help books, I think it prudent to revisit Amman et al.'s description of the brittle personality, which I feel is useful to engage with at length:

So who are those individuals most at risk for targeted violence? They are exceptionally brittle, unable to withstand slights, rejections, or offenses both minor and otherwise. Time and again, targeted violence offenders have claimed to be persecuted and alienated from their peers, family, and the world at large, viewing themselves as outsiders and not part of a larger social network. They seem unable to process the slights, rejections, teasing, and

bullying that everyone experiences at some point in their lives. Most people learn to deal with these experiences as a normal, if unfortunate, part of life. Well-adjusted people develop emotional armor and learn to stand up to, ignore, or just ride out such behavior. To a brittle person lacking adequate resources to help him appropriately process and cope, even a minor loss can be absolutely devastating. Brittle targeted violence offenders, moreover, cannot seem to muster a healthy response. They continue to brood and obsess over every injustice, whether real or imagined, that has ever been inflicted upon them. Suicidal feelings are not uncommon. However, it is important to recognize that brittle people who are suicidal can also become homicidal toward others. (Amman et al. 28-9)

I argue that the “brittle people” referred to here by Amman et al. are a thinly veiled reference to people diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (but keep in mind that an actual diagnosis by a mental health professional does not seem to be needed to recognize one’s loved one as having “borderline traits,” or to become an “upstander” by reporting such behavior to a law enforcement agency). The idea that “brittle people” are “unable to withstand slights, rejections, or offenses both minor and otherwise” is echoed in *Eggshells*’ and *I Hate You*’s descriptions of the borderline personality. Here, the “well-adjusted person” comes to stand in as the non-BPD/upstander, who is able to “develop emotional armor and learn to stand up to, ignore, or just ride out [triggering] behavior.” As you will see, borderlines are often represented as perceiving themselves to be “persecuted and alienated from their peers, family, and the world at large.”

The first section of Mason and Kreger’s book is titled “Is This Book for You?” They write, “You picked up this book because you’re always tense in a relationship; you never know what to expect from a loved one; and being around them feels like walking on eggshells. Even when the relationship is going well, you are anxiously waiting for things to take a painful turn”

(Mason and Kreger 7). This reference to walking on eggshells, from which the title of the book is taken, seems to refer to the “brittleness” of those diagnosed with BPD or NPD. The idea here is that the loved ones of those with BPD or NPD must always tread lightly because they do not know what will set off their brittle loved one. This same idea is revisited later in the book, but this time through the heavy-handed use of war and battle metaphors. According to Mason and Kreger, “[BPD] also commonly results in the people around them becoming hypervigilant, as if land mines had been planted around them, constantly hoping that they don’t say or do something that will light the person’s very short fuse” (28). The violence alluded to in this language represents the relationship with a borderline as akin to the relationship between warring nations, but in this instance, the violence is one-sided. It originates from the borderline, and the borderline alone. The borderline is represented as exceptionally “brittle,” “taking meaningless little things and turning them into mountains of criticism, interrogation, and pain” (Mason and Kreger 9). In the words of Kreisman and Straus, “Prick the delicate skin of a borderline and she will emotionally bleed to death” (12).

Mason and Kreger then launch into a series of bullet-points that are meant to represent traits associated with borderline personality disorder and/or narcissistic personality disorder. Some of these bulleted questions include: “Does your loved one never show a trace of empathy for what you go through?”; “Do they talk in confusing circles, or twist what you say and use your own words against you?”; “Does what they say often make no logical sense?”; “Are you the focus of their intense, violent, or irrational rages that grow way out of proportion to what instigated them?”; “Do you feel manipulated and lied to, as if they’ll say anything to get what they want?”; “Do they have meltdowns when things don’t go as planned, or they don’t get their way?”; “Do you feel like you’re dealing with someone whose emotional maturity is like a

toddler's--even if they are very educated or have a high position at work?" (Mason and Kreger 8). Much of this should sound familiar from Amman et al.'s descriptions of persons of concern in the first half of this chapter. The first question, geared at the suspect person's lack of empathy, is ostensibly aimed at the lay diagnosis of people with NPD. Twinned with the question about feeling manipulated and lied to, these connotations seem consistent with popular understandings of sociopathy. The questions about "talk[ing] in confusing circles" or in ways that "often make no logical sense" are highly reminiscent of the FBI and SafeCampus' descriptions of incoherence, and "illogical" conversations or trains of thought that are concerning and warranted for reporting. As I mentioned in the first section of this chapter, such questions are highly contestable and open for debate, inviting suspicion of and here, the pathologization of, neurodivergent/mentally disabled people. The questions about "intense, violent and irrational rages" and "meltdowns" seem indicative of the FBI's descriptions of "brittleness" more generally and suggest that "even a minor loss can be absolutely devastating" (Amman et al. 29). The inability to "muster a healthy response" features strongly in both *Making Prevention a Reality*'s descriptions of those at risk for targeted violence and *Stop Walking on Eggshells*' descriptions of people with BPD or NPD traits (Amman et al. 29). The final question from the above checklist, "Do you feel like you're dealing with someone whose emotional maturity is like a toddler's..." is one of the ways that this infantilization of the person suspected of having BPD or NPD takes place in *Stop Walking on Eggshells*.

The infantilization of the borderline personality is part of the way that the borderline personality is assembled/constructed in *Eggshells*. Mason and Kreger remind their audience that "in some ways, people with BPD are emotionally and developmentally similar to children" (174). In another passage they write, "At times, your loved one's view of the world can seem

very childlike [...] Many experts say that, in terms of emotional development, people with BPD are two years old” (Mason and Kreger 41). According to the personality archive assembled here, the borderline is painted as “childlike,” and “emotionally and developmentally similar to [a] child...” In one of the many anecdotes provided in the book, Mason and Kreger tell the story of a borderline named Jessie: “Jessie looks like a young adult. She sounds like a young adult. But emotionally, Jessie is a small, vulnerable child [...] You may make things harder for yourself if you expect adultlike behavior from someone who is currently incapable of it or if you censor your negative feelings and scold yourself for having them” (137). Infantilizing those suspected of having BPD is one way that the borderline is constructed as having constricted agency, which as I will show later, they are still expected to “overcome” (173). Moreover, when the phrase “borderline behavior” is used, it is always in reference to undesirable behavior which borderlines are expected to overcome, regardless of the fact that they are framed as incapable of doing so (Ibid).

Before teasing out these threads further, I think it useful to look at the way these self-help books define personality disorders generally, and BPD specifically. Mason and Kreger first start by reiterating the Mayo Clinic’s definition of personality disorders. They write:

The Mayo Clinic describes a personality disorder as a type of mental disorder in which someone has a rigid and unhealthy pattern of thinking, functioning, and behaving. A person with a personality disorder looks at the world *in a distinctly different way than you do*--a way that causes significant problems and limitations in their relationships, their social activities, and their work or studies. (Mason and Kreger 14, emphasis mine)

This is similar to the definition of personality disorders provided by Amman et al., who define a personality disorder as, “an enduring, pervasive, and inflexible pattern of internal experience and

behavior which is not in harmony with cultural expectations [...] They feature certain attitudes, behaviors, and thought patterns that are maladaptive” (26). The major difference between these two accounts manifests in the distinction the FBI draws between serious mental illnesses and personality disorders. Though Mason and Kreger and Kreisman and Straus do seem to differentiate between personality disorders, especially BPD, and other serious mental illnesses, they do not go as far as to suggest that personality disorders cannot be, in and of themselves, serious mental illnesses. I will return to this point later, when I examine the ways BPD is represented in these texts in comparison to other mental disabilities. The “us” versus “them” language used by Mason and Kreger is also noteworthy here. Not only does it serve as a reminder that *Stop Walking on Eggshells* was written specifically for non-BPDs and non-NPDs, this language also reinforces the creation of the “positive” personality traits associated with the able-minded, or at the very least, of those without traits associated with either personality disorder. In a way, the loved one of the person with BPD and/or NPD is produced as a type of “upstander,” who, upon finishing reading this text, will be armed with a wealth of knowledge about how to cope with, or “tak[e] [their] life back” from the borderline or narcissistic personality. These upstanders are encouraged to call the police to intervene, even in the case of a minor with BPD (Mason and Kreger 152, 170-1, 212).

Mason and Kreger refer to borderlines and narcissists as “dysfunctional personalities,” “high-conflict personalities” (HCPs) (13), and “highly challenging people” (12, 23). The text of *Eggshells* and *I Hate You* is interspersed with case studies told from the perspective of someone who loves someone diagnosed (or not) with BPD or sometimes NPD (and occasionally with narratives written or voiced by people with BPD), which together help to flesh out their definitions of these disorders. These case studies, in various ways, rhyme with the case studies

presented about persons of concern in *Making Prevention a Reality*. Case studies across these three texts are meant to drive home and individualize pathological personality deviance, assembling personality archives of the “targeted violence offender” and the borderline or narcissist. Of these accounts, Mason and Kreger write:

When relating one on one, people like Gina, Rich, Kendra’s mother, Sarah, and millions of others seem to have individual quirks, triggers, and timebombs as part of their dysfunctional personalities. But these personalities (as you will see) are dysfunctional in the exact same ways, regardless of the person’s heritage, upbringing, or level of professional success. They all have what’s called a *personality disorder*. (13-14, emphasis in original).

Here, differences across these accounts are elided in the name of standardizing a personality archive of people with personality disorders (“these personalities...are dysfunctional in the exact same ways”). The italicization of “personality disorder” reads almost ominously, as though it should be read to a sinister soundtrack meant to horrify the audience of the book, who by all accounts, recognize a loved one in this text. The authors continue, “So, what exactly is the difference between an odd, forceful, or conflicting personality and a personality disorder? There’s no perfect way to distinguish this, but someone very likely has a personality disorder if they are continuously disruptive, *toxic*, or out of line. Everybody--except perhaps the person with the disorder--recognizes that something’s wrong” (14, emphasis mine). As we see here and in U.S. popular culture broadly, the language of toxicity, used to describe either types of personalities or types of relationships, becomes almost interchangeable with personality disorders, and is reinforced by popular psychology self-help books who aim to educate the able-minded about their mentally disabled loved ones. This quotation does not define the idea of

“toxicity” any more than it expounds on what it means to be “continually disruptive [...] or out of line” (disruptive to what? out of line with what?). Readers are meant to understand that what follows in the book--long, belabored descriptions of the borderline, and occasionally, the narcissist--is elaboration of this idea of the toxic personality and/or of toxic relationship dynamics. Mason and Kreger return to the language of toxicity at least one more time in *Eggshells* when they write, “BPD is not infectious, like measles or COVID-19. But, over time, people who are exposed to BPD behaviors can unwittingly become part of the disorder’s dynamics. Friends, partners, and family members can feel trapped in a *toxic* cycle of guilt, self-blame, depression, rage, denial, isolation, and confusion” (45, emphasis mine). Toxicity/BPD may not be “infectious,” but here it is represented as a powerful force that threatens to engulf, subsume and “trap” all who are intimately connected to it. This personality deviance is so profound that “*everybody*...recognizes that something is wrong” (emphasis mine). In another crude metaphor, the borderline is characterized as “lightning,” and the loved ones of BPDs as “lightning rods” that incur BPD rage and wrath (Mason and Kreger 87). Borderlines are also called “emotional blackmailers” (Mason and Kreger 106, 148-9).

The beginning of *Eggshells* contains a lay diagnostic tool in the form of a quiz “to help you better understand exactly whom you’re dealing with” (17). In much the same way that *Making Prevention a Reality* encourages its readers not to get too hung up on diagnosis, while simultaneously providing damning definitions of personality disorder diagnoses, Mason and Kreger encourage their audience of supposedly non-BPDs and non-NPDs to take this quiz, while refuting its capacity for conjuring an objective diagnosis. They write, “This quiz is not a diagnostic tool. It is based on a simple list of common, real-world ways in which spouses, siblings, parents, children, and friends describe their difficult loved ones” (17). After taking the

quiz, readers are met with criteria for assessing appropriate levels of concern about their loved one: “Add the total number of *all statements* that you checked. If this total is 12 or higher, you are right to be concerned--and you would be wise to spend a good deal of time with this book. If your total is 16 or more, you should be *very concerned*” (20, emphasis in original). The language of concern used here brings to mind the language of concern and risk assessment encountered in *Making Prevention a Reality* and SafeCampus’ website. Likewise, the subsection titled “Don’t Get Stuck on a Diagnosis” (Mason and Kreger 23) is reminiscent of Amman et al.’s insistence that patterns in behavior and psychiatric symptoms are more useful indicators of risk of violence than specific diagnoses. Both texts pretend to operate beyond diagnosis but get “stuck on” the pathologization of personality disorders, especially BPD, and both provide tools to train their audience as lay clinicians well-versed in the lay diagnosis of personality disorders. Another way that the loved ones of people with BPD or NPD traits are encouraged to act as lay profilers and lay clinicians is to closely watch and keep record of the suspected borderline’s “patterns of behavior.” This daily log supposedly “helps [family members] understand and depersonalize the person’s actions. Parents of borderline children, especially, find records useful in helping obtain proper diagnosis and treatment for their child” (Mason and Kreger 104).

Borderline personality disorder is regularly represented as other-worldly, and nearly inconceivable for the non-BPDs unfortunate enough to encounter borderline or narcissistic traits in a loved one. Mason and Kreger write, “It’s common to struggle to understand borderline thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, because we assume that people with BPD think and feel the way *we* do. But they simply don’t. Nevertheless, it can be an understandable mistake, because sometimes people with BPD seem completely *normal*” (27, emphasis mine). Here, BPD is represented as abnormal, as “other” to the sane world and minds of the intended readers of the

book. Borderlines are painted as exceptionally dangerous and inconceivable, because much the way Amman et al, describe personality disorders, they are not *entirely* disengaged from reality, and may even present as “normal.” Mason and Kreger explain that borderlines put their loved ones through irrational tests that create “no-win” scenarios: “It doesn’t make any sense to someone without BPD. But it makes perfect sense in *the borderline world*” (40, emphasis mine). When the borderlines do cross over into the terrain of the irrational and abnormal, however, it makes for the stuff of horror. In a quotation from a non-BPD the book calls Phil, he explains that the impulsive aggression displayed by his wife, someone with “borderline traits,” is baffling, otherworldly, and even alien. He says, “At first everything looks and sounds normal. Then, unexpectedly, strange twists and reversals of reality occur; off-kilter shifts in the time-space continuum hurl me onto the floor as my wife suddenly roars at me for something I can’t begin to understand. Suddenly, I realize I’ve crossed into the Borderline Zone!” (68). The “Borderline Zone” exists in a space where reversals of reality occur, where “off-kilter shifts in the time-space continuum” flatten, flabbergast, and dismay the able-minded, “hurl[ing] [them] onto the floor.” This eerily ethereal zone is supposedly especially shocking due to the borderline’s ability to pass, at times, as sane, able-minded, and non-borderline, which is precisely what Amman et al. see as the danger of the people they refer to as “personality-disordered.” Kreisman and Straus take up this same idea in their section titled “Recognizing BPD in Friends and Relations,” in which they write:

On the surface a borderline personality can be very difficult to identify, despite the underlying volcanic turbulence. Unlike many people afflicted with other mental disorders--such as schizophrenia, bipolar (manic-depressive) disease, alcoholism, or eating disorders--the borderline can usually function extremely well in work and social

situations without appearing overtly pathological. Indeed, some of the hallmarks of borderline behavior are the sudden, unpredictable, eruptions of anger, extreme suspiciousness, or suicidal depression from someone who has appeared so “normal.” (124-5)

Again, it is the borderline personality’s ability to “function extremely well” and “without appearing overtly pathological” that makes “borderline behavior” (a phrase which is always used to signify problematic behaviors characterized as negative) especially jarring and surprising to those in their vortex. In this description, it is precisely the borderline’s ability to pass as “normal” that makes their symptoms so shocking. As the title of this section indicates, both *I Hate You* and *Eggshells* seek to educate their readers on how to identify BPD in their loved ones.

In *I Hate You--Don't Leave Me*, Kreisman and Straus take a different approach to introducing and defining BPD to their audience. They choose to represent BPD from the “typical,” “experienced” clinician’s perspective, which is emotionally charged, volatile, stigmatizing and even racist. They write that if you were to ask an “average man” on the street about BPD “he would probably give you a blank stare.” They continue:

Ask an experienced mental health clinician about the disorder, on the other hand, and you will get a much different response. She will sigh deeply and exclaim that of all the psychiatric patients, borderlines are the most difficult, the most dreaded, and the most to be avoided--more than schizophrenics, more than alcoholics, more than any other patient. For more than a decade, BPD has been lurking as a kind of “Third World” of mental illness--indistinct, massive, and vaguely threatening. (Kreisman and Straus 5)

Here, while the “average man” may not be familiar with BPD as a concept or a diagnosis, the “experienced mental health clinician” is armed with the knowledge that borderlines are “the most

difficult, the most dreaded, and the most to be avoided.” Kreisman and Straus write that “Most therapists will, whenever possible, try to limit the number of borderline patients they treat” (52). BPD is juxtaposed with, and differentiated from, all other mental health diagnoses, and the mental health expert is represented as rightfully disgusted and repulsed by those with borderline traits. Employing problematic and racially charged rhetoric, Kreisman and Straus write that “BPD has been lurking as a kind of ‘Third World’ of mental illness,” and go on to express, in no uncertain terms, why BPD and the Global South are apt sites of horror to the authors and should be to their audience. Mason and Kreger urge their readers to “[r]emember that you and your loved one may be speaking two different languages” (141). In *Eggshells* and *I Hate You* BPD is represented in racially and linguistically “otherized” ways, as belonging to the disconcerting and frightening “borderline world” or “borderline zone,” which makes no sense to upstanders/non-borderlines.

Also significant is the way that borderlines are distinguished from “all other patients” by this imagined mental health clinician meant to stand in for all mental health professionals. This harkens back to Amman et al.’s distinctions between personality disorders and serious mental illnesses. There is something pathologically different, even repugnant and loathsome about personality disorders that separate them from all other mental health diagnoses. Here Kreisman and Straus compare BPD with schizophrenia, returning to the idea that borderlines are less impaired, and thus more capable of manipulating others, than the also-stigmatized schizophrenic (a logic that we also see manifest in *Making Prevention a Reality*):

Schizophrenic patients are usually much more severely impaired than borderlines and *less capable of manipulating and relating to others*. Both kinds of patients may experience agitated, psychotic episodes, but these are usually less consistent and less

pervasive over time for borderlines. Schizophrenics are much more likely to grow accustomed to their hallucinations and delusions and are often less disturbed by them. Additionally, both may be destructive and self-mutilating, but whereas the borderline usually can function appropriately, the schizophrenic is much more severely impaired socially. (28, emphasis mine)

For Amman et al., it is these differences between BPD and other mental health diagnoses that make people with traits of personality disorders more likely “to conclude that violence is an acceptable or even necessary response to a problem,” and more adept at engaging in violence because they are “not [...] disengaged from reality,” and are thus “capable of engaging in logistical and rational processes necessary to violently offend” (Amman et al. 26-7). It is also significant that schizophrenia is deployed by these authors in ways that effectively both stigmatize schizophrenia and those diagnosed with it, and simultaneously further pathologize personality disorders by insisting on their greater propensity for violence via their ability to pass as able-minded, and in some ways, their greater capacity for agency.

The question of agency rears its head in very specific ways in *Eggshells* and *I Hate You*. Borderlines are both at the mercy of their symptoms, which are likened to “a big, muscled bully pounding the logical centers of [their] brain into submission” (Mason and Kreger 32), with mood changes and “temper tantrums” likened to “Jekyll-and-Hyde” (Mason and Kreger 32), and simultaneously acutely responsible for their emotions and “borderline behaviors.” From a testimonial from the Welcome to Oz internet support community, a group designed specifically for the loved ones of people with borderline traits, someone writes, “Trying to fill the emotional black hole inside a person with BPD is like trying to fill the Grand Canyon with a water pistol--except the Grand Canyon has a bottom” (Mason and Kreger 131). Mason and Kreger go on to

argue that “the emptiness belongs to the person with BPD, and the only person who can fill it is themselves” (132). They advise family members of borderlines to “let the person with BPD know that you support them, but ultimately they are the only person who can make themselves feel better” (Mason and Kreger 140). In these passages, borderlines are framed as having bottomless “emotional black holes” that are both unfillable and are only capable of being filled through the rugged determination and agency of the recovering borderline. The authors of *I Hate You* explain, “The borderline lacks the boots, much less the bootstraps, to pick himself up with. However, the borderline must accept responsibility for their own illness, the way a person in a wheelchair is responsible for finding accessible places to go and keeping their car in working condition to drive them there” (Kreisman and Straus 127). Here, those with BPD traits are positioned as concomitantly out of control and as the only people who can “make themselves feel better,” or get their symptoms *under* control. The agency for change and fulfillment is both beyond borderlines and belongs only to them. The language of personal responsibility as evidenced in Kreisman and Straus’ linking of borderlines with wheelchair users eschews the possibility of social responsibility for the creation of accessible spaces, placing the responsibility for accessibility and treatment onto the wheelchair user and borderline respectively. The borderline is expected to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, whether or not they have boots.

This seemingly contradictory logic is intrinsic to the ways that both *Eggshells* and *I Hate You* discuss borderline “rages” and propensity for violence. Speaking of another book that Kreger is the author of, Mason and Kreger quip that “Kreger’s colloquial term for impulsive aggression is ‘border-lion,’” (69) while Kreisman and Straus liken it to a “raging bull” (51). This language both dehumanizes those with borderline traits and insists that impulsive aggression is intrinsic to BPD. Reminiscent of Amman et al.’s description of “brittle people” driven to

violence, Kreisman and Straus write, “The borderline’s outbursts of rage are as unpredictable as they are frightening. Violent scenes are disproportionate to the frustrations that trigger them. Domestic fracasas that may involve chases with butcher knives and thrown dishes are typical of borderline rage” (51). The idea that “violent scenes are disproportionate to the frustrations that trigger them” is suggestive of the type of “brittleness” applied to those who engage in targeted violence by *Making Prevention a Reality*. When paired with the insistence that borderlines are both manipulative and “[t]hough very sensitive to others [...] lack true empathy” (Kreisman and Straus 38), a vilifying portrait of the borderline emerges.

It is these allusions to violence and manipulateness that set the stage for incredibly problematic, victim-blaming accounts of people with traits of borderline personality disorder inviting violence against themselves. *I Hate You*, in particular, has a lot to say about the ways that borderlines put themselves in the line of abuse to victimize themselves. According to Kreisman and Straus:

The borderline frequently involves himself in predicaments in which he becomes a victim [...] The borderline is frequently unaware that his behavior is provocative or dangerous, or that it may in some way invite persecution. The woman who continually chooses men who abuse her is typically unaware of the patterns she is repeating. The borderline’s split view of himself includes a special, entitled part and an angry, unworthy part that masochistically deserves punishment, although he may not be consciously aware of one side or the other. In fact, a pattern of this type of “invited” victimization is often a solid indication of BPD pathology. (112-3)

Though those with BPD are, according to this account, often unaware of the fact that they “in some way invite persecution,” the presence of this kind of repeated abuse, here called

“victimization,” is taken as proof of BPD. Kreisman and Straus even use the example of a woman who finds herself in a series of abusive relationships as an illustration of this type of borderline-esque behavior, as if survivors of repeated abuse somehow, knowingly or not, invite the abuse upon themselves. In another passage, Kreisman and Straus give an anecdote of a woman named Ann, who would allegedly drive her husband to drink, despite knowing that he had a problem with abusing alcohol, and that he became violent when drunk (87). They write, “Following a beating, Ann would wear her bruises like battle ribbons, reminding Larry of his violence, and insisting they go out in public, where Ann would explain away her marks as ‘accidents’” (Ibid). Explaining Larry’s subsequent remorse following these moments, Kreisman and Straus say that Ann would “present herself as a long-suffering martyr.” The authors write, “In this way Ann used her beatings to exact punishment from Larry. The identification of the real victim in this relationship becomes increasingly vague” (87). Here, Ann is presented as the orchestrator of her own abuse, inviting violence against herself in an almost sinister, manipulative way that is meant to denigrate her abusive husband. For the authors, the distinction between victim/survivor and abuser becomes murky, even though there is no account of Ann ever acting out in violence against her husband. Still, Ann is presented as provoking her husband, “asking for” abuse, and then humiliating Larry in the aftermath. There are other instances yet in *I Hate You* where a similar type of logic rears its head. In one of these moments, a woman with BPD named “Pat” is characterized as provoking physical conflict with her husband, Jake. Mason and Kreger write that “Pat may actually want Jake to physically overpower her,” but if he physically harms her, this “will likely later be used to criticize him more” (120). Again, it is the person with BPD, notably a woman in these examples, who is presented as provoking and “asking for” abuse. The non-borderline husbands in these scenarios are framed as a type of

“upstander” who is either sucked into violence through the borderline’s supposed manipulation, or is ethically sound enough to resist the “temptation” to exact physical harm on their wives.

Mason and Kreger go as far as to dedicate an entire chapter of *Eggshells* to coach non-borderlines on how to successfully refute “distortion campaigns,” or “false claims” of abuse made by “scorned” borderlines. There is also an entire book dedicated to this task, titled *Splitting: Protecting Yourself While Divorcing Someone with Borderline or Narcissistic Personality Disorder* (2011), coauthored by Kreger. For the sake of space, I have chosen not to analyze *Splitting*, and to instead focus on the chapter from *Eggshells*. In *Eggshells*, Mason and Kreger couch this chapter in a disclaimer:

Not all people with BPD distort the truth. Many would never do such a thing. We are not invalidating the experiences of people with BPD who have been victimized; we are merely validating the experiences of those who have been falsely accused. All types of people, both those with and without mental disorders, may make false claims. (Mason and Kreger 214)

Though the authors acknowledge that “all types of people, both those with and without mental disorders” (as if these are the only “types of people” that exist in the world) “may make false claims,” this entire chapter, and indeed the book as a whole, are focused on teaching the loved ones of people with traits of BPD how to protect themselves from borderlines. Simply writing that they (the authors) are not “invalidating the experiences of people with BPD who have been victimized” does not discount the very real possibility that this chapter/book will be used to invalidate real claims of abuse made by borderlines against their non-borderline family members. Mason and Kreger urge those divorcing a borderline to find an attorney “who is familiar with personality disorders [...] and *has dealt with [these types of situations] successfully*” (153,

emphasis mine). The authors seem to be working from the idea that all claims of abuse made by borderlines against non-borderline loved ones are false, regardless of whether they acknowledge this directly. *Eggshells* encourages non-borderlines to find lawyers who have consistently won cases against people with personality disorders, and in the process, has likely successfully aided abusive non-borderlines in winning cases against their borderline family members.

In *I Hate You--Don't Leave Me*, Kreisman and Straus present a unique system of communication they designed to be used on those with traits of borderline personality disorder, called the SET-UP triangle. This specific system of communication can purportedly “be easily understood and adopted by family, friends, and therapists for use on a daily basis” (101) and can ward off the verbal attacks and manipulation that are allegedly commonplace from borderlines. Like the chapter on “distortion campaigns” in *Eggshells*, this chapter provides tools for invalidating the lived reality of those with traits of BPD, though through the language of validation (or “support, empathy, and truth”) (Kreisman and Straus 102). This communication style “disorders” and constructs the personality type of the borderline by infantilizing the person with traits of BPD, and giving tools to those around them (therapists, psychiatrists, family members and friends) to “win” conversations with borderlines.

In one such example, Kreisman and Straus present their readers with the “case study” of Annette, a Black woman diagnosed with BPD (113-5). Angry about her married lover’s detachment, and a history of abandonment and abuse, Annette’s anger surfaced in her work life, where her supervisors passed her over for promotions due to her supposedly bereft academic qualifications and her “abrasiveness.” Annette furiously “attributed the rejections to racial discrimination” and entered the hospital due to her increasing depression. Kreisman and Straus write:

In the hospital, Annette's racial sensitivities exploded. Most of the doctors were white, as were most of the nurses and most of the other patients. The hospital decor was "white" and the meals were "white." All of the anger built up over the years was now focused on society's discrimination against blacks. By concentrating exclusively on this global issue, Annette avoided her own personal demons. (114)

In this case study, Annette's very real and valid anger at anti-Blackness in the U.S. generally, and in her workplace and the hospital specifically, is framed as an irrational distraction from her "own personal demons." Annette is represented as overly sensitive and "angry" in ways that recall the stereotype of the "angry Black woman." Rather than find ways of validating Annette's lived experience of racial discrimination, the SET-UP communication triangle is presented as one way to defuse her anger and invalidate her experience.

For Annette, the music therapist at the hospital, a white man named Harry, embodied all of the whiteness and anti-Blackness that Annette (rightly) found so upsetting. In the words of Kreisman and Straus, Harry became Annette's "most challenging target" (114). Annette often "vented her anger" at Harry and was prone to walking out of music therapy sessions. Kreisman and Straus explain that Harry used the SET-UP communication model to engage Annette, and eventually get her to divert her attention away from anti-Blackness and onto her own "role" in remaining a "victim":

...Harry attempted to confront the *Truth*, or reality, issues in Annette's life, pointing out that railing against racial discrimination was useless without a commitment to work toward changing it. Annette's need to remain a victim, Harry said, shielded her from assuming any responsibility for what happened in her life. She could feel justified in cursing the fates rather than bravely investigating her own role in continuing to be used

by others. By wrapping herself in a veil of righteous anger, Annette was avoiding any kind of frightening self-examination or confrontation that might induce change, and thereby was perpetuating her impotency and helplessness. This left her incapable of making changes “*for her sake.*” (115, emphasis in original)

In this passage, Annette’s claims of racial discrimination are dispelled by the SET-UP communication model, which requires Annette to claim personal responsibility over her experiences with anti-Blackness. Annette is accused of playing the part of the “victim,” and “wrapping herself in a veil of righteous anger,” and is encouraged to take charge and triumph over her experiences of racial discrimination, to “work toward changing it.” This rhetorically imbues Annette with a type of agency that should rouse suspicion in the critical reader and is reminiscent of the type of agency borderlines are encouraged to manifest but are potentially unable to conjure up. This model of personal responsibility supplants the social responsibility of those around Annette (her supervisors at work, the hospital staff and doctors, and culture more broadly) to confront and eliminate their personal and social investment in anti-Black racial discrimination. Annette’s diagnosis of BPD is used to invalidate her legitimate anger and pain, pathologizing and diminishing it until all that is left is an impetus to take personal responsibility for changing a system she did not create. The compromise that was reached between Annette and Harry was to include some 1960’s protest songs in music therapy, a purely aesthetic solution that hardly addresses the full extent of anti-Blackness that Annette faced in her daily life.

*Stop Walking on Eggshells* and *I Hate You--Don’t Leave Me* both functionally assemble a personality archive of both the pathologized borderline personality and the idealized non-borderline personality. They each provide diagnostic tools meant to help their intended audiences (non-borderlines) identify borderlines in their lives, authorizing what Ellen Samuels calls a type

of “disability surveillance,” that in this instance is not geared toward assessing the validity of disability claims, but instead functionally allows non-professionals to (socially) diagnose people who may be resistant to entering treatment themselves. Once identified and slapped with a lay diagnosis of BPD, these books provide education on how to communicate with the borderline in ways that invalidate their lived experiences, and how to defeat borderlines in family court cases or personal disputes. These texts also distinguish BPD from other mental health diagnoses, echoing many of the claims made about personality disorders and “personality disordered individuals” by *Making Prevention a Reality*.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter details the ways that two seemingly distinct institutions and discourses, threat assessment and management versus self-help books written for the loved ones of those diagnosed with or suspected of having BPD or sometimes NPD, actually echo and inform each other in their twinned projects of dis-ordering personality. FBI manual *Making Prevention a Reality* constructs the figure of the “exceptionally brittle person,” who is supposedly more likely to engage in targeted violence than others. “Brittle people” are allegedly unable to withstand slights great or minor and are more likely than others to resort to violence as an answer to their problems. Bystanders in the lives of these “brittle people” are encouraged to become “upstanders” by reporting “suspicious” behavior or conversations to law enforcement agencies and officials. I have argued that the figures of the “brittle person” and “upstander” correspond in significant ways to the figures of the “borderline” and “non-borderline” respectively, as constructed by self-help books *I Hate You—Don’t Leave Me* and *Stop Walking on Eggshells*.

*Making Prevention a Reality* argues that specific psychiatric diagnoses should not be the primary basis for identifying someone as potentially violent, but it also presents a damning image of personality disorders, asserts that personality disorders are distinct from “serious mental illnesses,” and that “personality-disordered individuals” are more at risk of engaging in targeted violence. In this way, *Making Prevention a Reality* encourages and trains its readers to engage in a process of lay diagnosis that involves screening individuals for behaviors and conversations that are deemed “suspicious,” where these “suspicious” behaviors and conversations often correspond to neurodivergence or mental disability. Meanwhile, Amman et al. insist that the mental health care system is too overburdened to effectively perform violence risk assessments (VRAs). Rather than arguing that the mental health care system in the U.S. needs more funding and support, *Making Prevention a Reality* flips Defund the Police demands on their heads and claims that threat assessment and management teams are the only entities equipped to perform VRAs. Amman et al. contend that non-forensic mental health professionals are not trained to be able to accurately assess individuals for threat of potential violence and maintain that only forensic mental health professionals should be trusted with the task of threat assessment and management. I have argued that these moves effectively criminalize personality disorders and those who live with them, whom the manual constructs as especially suspicious and inclined toward violence.

*I Hate You* and *Eggshells*---two pop-psychology self-help books written for the loved ones of those with BPD (and to a lesser extent NPD)—both construct the figure of the borderline personality. According to these books, borderlines are manipulative, volatile, and reactive, devastating the lives of those in their vortex. Loved ones of “high conflict personalities” are encouraged to diagnose their loved ones with BPD through the use of definitions and diagnostic

checklists provided by these books, while at the same time they are encouraged not to “get stuck” on a diagnosis. In places these books construct borderlines as racially and linguistically other, belonging to irrational worlds (dubbed the “Borderline Zone”) that make little to no sense to the non-borderlines around them. Borderlines are represented as racially and linguistically other; they are compared to countries in the Global South and said to speak a “different language” than non-borderlines. Special methods of communicating with borderlines and invalidating their experiences are introduced in *I Hate You*, and case studies are provided to depict “successful” interactions guided by the SET-UP communication triangle. One of these involves forcing a Black woman named Annette to take “personal responsibility” for dismantling the anti-Black oppression she encounters in the workplace and hospital. Both books infantilize borderlines, and maintain that borderlines are responsible for “pulling themselves up by their bootstraps,” whether or not they “have boots.” Non-borderlines are encouraged to call the police when conflicts with borderlines escalate—even when the borderline is a child. *I Hate You* and *Eggshells* both belabor the idea that mental health professionals are more wary of borderlines than those with any other mental health diagnosis—which further propagates the notion that borderlines are alienated even from those who are supposedly most equipped to treat them.

*I Hate You—Don’t Leave Me, Stop Walking on Eggshells*, and FBI manual *Making Prevention a Reality* all engage in the project of dis-ordering personality—marking personality disorders out for pathologization and criminalization—while simultaneously constructing the idealized, “healthy” personality of the “upstander” or “non-borderline.” Though pop-psychology self-help books are part of a different genre than FBI training manuals, I have aimed to show that they are part of the same larger project of dis-ordering personality, and that putting them into conversation with each other brings more to the surface than reading them in isolation.

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