INTRODUCTION

Currently, there is considerable confusion as far as the practice of profiling is concerned. The varied practitioners of profiling fail to concur on the subject of what it involves, and on who is qualified to practice it. This means that there is no scientific consensus regarding the meaning of the term *profiling* (Turvey 1999:xxviii). Different experts representing various behavioural and human-science fields attach different meanings to the concept of *profiling*. The confusion about profiling is actually exacerbated by crime fiction, because it makes serial killers look mystical, in order to capture the imagination and heighten the entertainment value.

According to researchers several dimensions of the perpetrator’s life is of fundamental importance for profiling criminal behaviour (Ellis & Sowers 2001:56). And as criminology is the scientific study of crime where in which the assessment of criminal behaviour is a key function in that identifying risk factors are identified and criminality is explained, criminologists should examine the practice of profiling, remove any confusion in that regard, and determine its merit.

THE NEED FOR A SOUTH AFRICAN DEFINITION OF “PROFILING”

There are voluminous definitions of the term “profiling”, as the term refers to many areas of forensics (Hickey 2002:310). As far as “profiling” in a South African context is concerned, Superintendent André Neethling, Provincial Co-ordinator of the Family Violence, Child Abuse and Sexual Offences Unit of the South African Police Services (Personal interview, 26 March 2003) is of the opinion that there is a need to redefine the term in the light of the customs, beliefs and unique circumstances found in this country. This means that a South African definition of profiling should include cultural differences, unique crime patterns, causes of criminal behaviour, precursors and triggers of crime, and socioeconomic and political influences and circumstances. According to Neethling, a profile should give the police an idea of “whom” (biographic details of the perpetrator) and “what” (causes, motives, triggers and offender characteristics) they are looking for. In other words, a profile should serve as a guide to police officials. For the purpose of this article, we shall distinguish between “soft-evidence” and “hard-evidence” profiling.

Soft-evidence profiling

A definition of “soft-evidence” profiling in a South African context can include the following: assessment of criminal behaviour (including an assessment of the victim’s credibility); motives, causes of crime, modus operandi; characteristics unique to the South African offender; relevance of a specific culture; customs and personal beliefs to a perpetrator; personal and family background; personality outlay (eg, intelligence, emotional functioning, fantasies, cognitive distortions); post-offence behaviour and appearances (Canter & Alison 1999:24; Earl-Taylor 2000:30; Prinsloo 1996:52; Schlesinger 2000: 121).

From the above, it is clear that “soft-evidence” profiling should be used to exclude, rather than include, suspects;
it should narrow down suspects where the perpetrator is unknown, and help make connections between cases in order to assist in police investigations.

**Hard-evidence profiling**

A definition of “hard-evidence” profiling can include the following: biographic details of the perpetrator (eg, age, gender, race, occupation, residential area); crime-scene analysis (photographs, analysis of the area); forensic evidence (eg, DNA samples, blood, semen, hair, clothes, weapons); strategies for apprehension and determining where evidence may be located; officers’ reports, statements and autopsy reports (Cantor & Alison 1999:24; Ellis & Sower 2001:61; Petherick 2001:8; Prinsloo 1996:52; Schlesinger 2000:121-122; Toch & Adams 1994:52).

The meaning and outcome of the above definitions may be illustrated in the proposed diagram (suggested by the researchers) vide figure 1.

**ORIGINS OF (CRIMINAL) PROFILING**

Throughout the ages, police investigators, psychologists and forensic psychiatrists have tried to analyse cases with a view to determining the “profile” of the unknown offender, a process called, among other things, applied criminology, psychological profiling, crime-scene assessment, criminal-personality profiling, crime-scene profiling and investigative psychology (Hickey 2002:4; Schlesinger 2000:121).

For many years, the work of individual psychologists and psychiatrists could be described as profiling, in that they often advised police agencies on the type of perpetrator they were pursuing, including his/her viable motivations for the crime. The earliest reference to profiling, in the contemporary sense of the word, was a suggestion made by Dr Thomas Bond, a police surgeon, who performed the autopsy on Mary Kelly, the last of Jack the Ripper’s victims. Bond originally became involved with the investigation when asked to make an assessment of the surgical knowledge of the perpetrator. He also engaged in a reconstruction of many aspects of the crime, possibly in an attempt to understand what had happened. The explications made by Bond in the late 1880s were largely his interpretations of the Ripper’s behaviour at the crime scene, including the wound patterns inflicted upon the victim. Bond suggested that investigators look for a quiet, inoffensive-looking man, probably middle-aged, and neatly dressed. Bond also concluded the offender to be a man of “great coolness and daring”, and stated that “in each case the mutilation was inflicted by a person who had no scientific nor anatomical knowledge. In my opinion he does not even possess the technical knowledge of a butcher or horse slaughterer or any person accustomed to cut up dead animals” (Crime Library, Internet site).

One of the best-known profiles ever was the one done by James Brussels, a New York psychiatrist, on “The Mad Bomber of New York”. Brussels was invited to assist police in their investigation of the bomber, who had left 32 explosive packages across the city over a period of approximately eight years. After reviewing the case file, the photographs, and a number of letters sent by the suspect over a period of 16 years, Brussels proposed that the police were after “... a heavy man, middle aged, foreign born, Roman Catholic, single, lives with a brother or a sister”. Brussels also said, “When you find him, chances are he will be wearing a double-breasted suit, buttoned.” He also ascertained that the man responsible for the crimes was paranoid, hated his father, was obsessively loved by his mother, and lived in the state of Connecticut. Brussels was very close in his assessment of the correlations - even down to the double-breasted, buttoned suit (Crime Library, Internet site).

After Brussels’s accurate assessment, and during the 1960s and 1970s, when serial killing was on the increase, giving rise to the development of a profiling unit at the
Figure 1

CLARIFYING PROFILING

ASSESSMENT AS KEY FUNCTION

(Identify, analyse, examine, explain and evaluate human behaviour: individual needs)

OUTCOMES OF ASSESSMENT

Prediction of recidivism and dangerousness of offender

Profiling

Development treatment and rehabilitation of offender

DIMENSIONS OF PROFILING

Profiling as an investigative tool/guideline (SAIPS):
Focus on hard evidence (e.g. cartridges, clothing, body fluids)

Profiling as scientific support (psychiatrists, psychologists, criminologists, social workers)
Focus on soft evidence (motives, modus operandi, personality characteristics, crime causation and behavioural tendencies)

MULTIDISCIPLINARY (HOLISTIC APPROACH)
assessment of the “whole” person
FBI Academy at Quantico in Virginia, criminal profiling became a very popular skill indeed. Today, criminal profiling is a tool that is widely used in criminal investigations.

ASSESSMENT AS THE CORE FUNCTION OF PROFILING

Assessment is a component of profiling: practitioners assess (identify, analyse, examine, explain and evaluate) human behaviour, from which a profile can be derived. Indeed, assessment can be perceived as the core function of profiling, because practitioners assemble a profile of an individual from information concluded from the assessment (Ellis & Sowers 2001:56; Canter & Alison 1999:8, 12, 14, 39; Hickey 2002: 317). Other components of assessment are as follows: prediction of reoffending and dangerousness; expert evidence in court; and the treatment, development and rehabilitation of offenders.

For those who have to deal with offenders (eg, profiling, investigating, and treating offenders), making assessments forms part of the work routine. Also, according to Bonta (2002:355), any intervention with an offender demands an assessment of how the characteristics of the offender and the circumstance may be related to a relevant consequence (eg, the profile of a perpetrator). Failure to correctly assess the offender’s reactions and problem behaviour can be perilous to society. Therefore, reputable assessment is the key to effective prediction, profiling and treatment (Myer 2001:22).

Assessment refers to a comprehensive process that empowers the practitioner to evaluate, identify, verify, classify, analyse and examine certain behavioural aspects, individual needs and risks in order to gain insight into, and an overall picture of, the offender/perpetrator (Ellis & Sowers 2001:56-57; Hesselink-Louw & Schoeman 2003:159). The practice of assessment entails in-depth interviews with the offender and/or victim, examination of documentation such as school records, police reports and statements, psychological tests and court and police documents (Ellis & Sowers 2001:57). Assessment can therefore be used for several purposes. It can be implemented for the planning of prevention, intervention or treatment activities by identifying the needs and strengths of the offender and the social systems which influence him/her. Myer (2001:22) also considers creditable assessment to be the solution to effective prediction, profiling and treatment.

CRIMINAL PROFILING

Criminal profiling has always been known by various names, such as offender profiling, behavioural profiling, criminal-personality profiling, crime-scene profiling and psychological profiling (Godwin 2001: iv; Turvey 1999:1). In South Africa, psychological profiling is mostly initiated by a police forensic psychologist working alongside criminal investigators with a view to assembling profiles. According to Godwin (2001:323), criminal profiling is a forensic technique which seeks to provide investigative agencies with specific information which will help point to individuals with personality traits similar to those of other perpetrators who committed correlative crimes. Criminal profiling can therefore be defined as a process of identifying personality traits, behavioural tendencies and demographic variables of an offender founded on characteristics of the crime.

Criminal profiling is an investigative medium whereby the investigator will focus, among other things, on police investigation, crime-scene analysis and geographical profiling. It should confine the parameters of a suspect rummage, and provide guidelines for specific treatment targets for the development/rehabilitation of offenders (Canter & Alison 1999:23; Douglas & Olshaker 1998:27). The aim is to investigate the crime and to successfully apprehend the perpetrators. Criminal profiling deals mainly with “hard” evidence such as bullets, cartridges, weapons, ligature, clothing, blood and
semen (Byleveld, personal interview, 26 March 2003).

Canter and Alison (1999:6) advise against the notion of an expert profiler who is able to triumph where the police have failed. “Experts” are frequently accredited by the press with almost mythical abilities of analysis, and there appears to be a solid relationship between the supposed powers of the expert and the bizarre nature of the offence. Scant attention is paid to the process by which these analyses are made, or to the limitations of such offerings. Assumptions about an individual based on personal opinion, intuition, gut feeling and lack of empirical support can be highly destructive.

According to Turvey (1999:xxix), the following are major points of contention in the criminal profile community:

- the educational requirements for criminal profilers
- the appropriate use of profiling terms and definitions
- what basic information makes up a profile
- practical descriptions of applied methodology
- how profiling may be used in the investigation and treatment/rehabilitation of offenders, and at a trial
- standards of competency
- what constitutes ethical, and what constitutes unethical, conduct
- whether or not the profiling process should be reviewed by peers

Failure to address these basic considerations has generated confusion in the profiling community and in public perception.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILING**

According to Marsh (1999:18), psychological profiling should involve behaviour that reflects personality. A psychological profile is defined as a description of a certain type of offender, which includes information and deductions derived from a knowledge of human sciences such as psychology and criminology. According to Geberth (in Prinsloo 1996:52) it is an “educated attempt to provide investigative agencies with specific information as to the type of individual who committed a certain crime”. A psychological profile (also referred to as “crime-scene analysis”) also provides the psychological motive for the crime.

Forensic psychologists concentrate on the identification of offenders by extrapolating their personal attributes from both physical and nonphysical information detectable at the scene of a crime. Information of this nature involves, among other things, the crime scene in general, and more specifically the presence or absence of significant items, clues regarding what was done to the victim, the sequence of events and the offender’s behaviour before and after the crime.

Based on the following elements, the profiler provides the investigator with a character portrayal of the most probable offender (Prinsloo 1996:52):

- age
- gender
- population group (race)
- marital status
- occupation
- level of education
- military history
- socioeconomic status
- hobbies
- transport used
- record of previous arrests
- appearance
- residence
- relationship to the victim
- intelligence
- emotional adaptation
• pathological behaviour
• sexual behaviour
• family background

According to Prinsloo (1996:53), not all crimes lend themselves to psychological profiling, the best scenario being one where there is a hidden psychological motive - probably sexually oriented, and possibly forming part of a series, such as serial killings, serial rape, sadistic-lust killings, child molesting, assassinations, occult-related crimes, pathological arson, child kidnapping, sexual transgressions and hostage taking. Prinsloo (1996:56) also emphasises that psychological profiling supplements the work of the investigator, rather than replaces thorough professional investigation.

THE ROLE OF THE CRIMINOLOGIST IN PROFILING CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Criminology is the scientific approach to studying criminal behaviour. It is an interdisciplinary science and pertains to social and individual antecedents of crime. Its disciplinary resources come mainly from sociology, social theory, psychology, history, criminal law, psychiatry, and economic, political and social issues (Hickey 2002: 88-89, 312; Maguire, Moran & Reiner 1997: 259-260, 438-439, 443-448, 452-453; Siegel 2001: 4).

Criminology deals with some of the most incorrigible problems encountered in society (Canter & Alison 1999:85). From its earliest days, criminology has recognised that no one discipline holds the answer to the problems of crime, victimisation and criminal justice. Law, forensic science, social and behavioural sciences have all contributed to the stock of knowledge (Canter & Alison 1999:85). Modern criminal profiling has a diverse history stemming from criminology (the study of criminal behaviour), the study of mental illness (psychology and psychiatry) and the examination of physical evidence (the forensic sciences) (Turvey 1999:2).

Profiling as an investigation instrument is only one dimension. A second dimension encapsulates behavioural and human science. Here, the practitioner (profiler, academic or scientist) concentrates on, among other things, the offender’s motives, modus operandi, personality characteristics, causes or risk factors of crime and behavioural tendencies. The focus here is to assist in police investigation by compiling a profile of a suspect/an offender that will direct and guide the investigation and/or the rehabilitation process of the individual. This dimension is the “scientific support” that ultimately explains, analyses and evaluates criminal behaviour from either a psychiatric, psychological, criminological or social-work perspective. The focus here is on “soft” evidence such as behavioural characteristics of the offender, motives for and causes of crime, and an evaluation of the social environment of the victim/offender.

Integral to criminal profiling, has been both understanding the origins of criminal behaviour, and classifying criminal behaviour. This pursuit falls under criminology (Turvey 1999:3). Criminology is predominantly the study of crime, criminals and criminal behaviour; it involves the scientific explanation (theories) of criminal conduct. The first criminologist to try to classify and profile criminals, was Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) (Hickey 2002:54; Turvey 1999:3). The better we understand offenders, the better we become at apprehending and effectively treating them. Understanding the patterns of, motives for and causes of criminal behaviour exhibited by the perpetrator are of vital importance (Lane & Gregg 1996:1, 5).

According to Hickey (2002:1; 312), an understanding of criminal behaviour is central to research within the fields of criminology, psychology and sociology. Criminologists (amongst other professionals) evaluate, analyse, describe and explain criminal behaviour (Hickey 2002:88-89). The criminologist studies the "who", the "what", the "why" and the "where" regarding criminal
behaviour, and its origin, nature and impact on society (Hickey 2002:2). According to Canter and Alison (1999:83), criminology is, by long-established practice, multidisciplinary in nature, and as such attends to areas of overlapping interest between disciplines.

THE NEED FOR A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Many people are very sceptical towards “expert profilers”. According to one commentator, psychiatrists or psychologists have no business pretending to be experts in profiling criminal suspects (Canter & Alison 1999:223). Profiling is a multidisciplinary forensic practice, and profiles are most eminent when derived from an interdisciplinary cooperation (Hickey 2002:318; Turvey 1999:xxvii). According to Canter and Alison (1999:49), contributions to profiling are inapplicable when the individuals concerned cannot illustrate clearly that their area of expertise is relevant to the area under investigation.

Mastery of assorted scientific fields is required for a thorough understanding of the social significance of criminal behaviour, as the problems are multiple and interrelated (Hickey 2002:xii, 1). Practitioners often fail to assess the "whole" person. This means that an interdisciplinary approach should assess all relevant aspects (social, medical, psychiatric, psychological and criminological) of the offender (Hickey 2002:105; Myer 2001:9). Therefore, for profiling to reach its potential, a multiskilled approach consisting of all the relevant areas (psychiatry, psychology, social work, criminology and sociology) is required (Hickey 2002:310, 312).

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

According to Godwin (2001:307) and Myer (2001:8), practitioners should be aware of their limitations and not overstep their scientific boundaries, and should avoid systems which they did not devise, do not fully understand and in which they can exercise limited power (Canter & Alison 1999:17). This means that practitioners should endeavour to work within their professional limits, and to identify factors which restrict it - in particular, recognising the boundaries of their competence (Canter & Alison 1999:47, 49). Outlining more carefully the parameters within which profilers and experts should work to help avoid over-involvement, bias and distortions is one way to help avoid subsequent profiling disasters (Canter & Alison 1999:18).

The main purposes of profiling given below should help define the different types of profiling and the professional boundaries that exist. Research (Crime Library, Internet site; Godwin 2001:324) has shown that profilers should:

- produce a detailed template of the probable offender that will assist in solving the crime by focusing investigative resources in a particular direction
- reduce the visible suspect pool in a criminal investigation
- assist in the linkage of potentially related crimes by identifying unique crime- scene indicators and behaviour patterns
- assist in assessing the potential for criminal behaviour developing into more serious or more violent crime
- provide investigators with investigatively relevant leads and strategies
- help the overall investigation stay on track
- help gain insight into the state of mind of the offender before, during and after the commission of a crime (cognitive distortions, levels of planning, evidence of remorse)
- ascertain the relevant motives, modus operandi, and causes of criminal behaviour
- scientifically explain (based on recent research findings and empirical literature) and predict criminal behaviour
- help identify crime-scene linkage with offender characteristics and modus operandi
Hickey (2002:312) believes that many profilers today adopt an attitude of informed speculation - such profilers are enwrapped in ambiguity, and therefore can rotate their explanations to compliment the situation.

There is no evidence to support that one field of expertise (or a specific skill) in profiling is more competent or successful than another (Canter & Alison 1999:47). This confirms that there is no formally agreed discipline or profession exclusively for profilers. Competency can really be estimated only with reference to other professionally recognised disciplines.

Apart from all the concerns mentioned, a meaningful question to ask is, “What is an offender profiler's field of expertise?” In other words, what special credential does an offender profiler claim to have over, for example, a police officer in the interpretation of criminal actions? (Canter & Alison 1999:38, 47). There are no guidelines as far as qualifications or experience necessary to become a profiler are concerned (Godwin 2001:327). According to research, there is no evidence to suggest that clinicians or experienced detectives have any special skills in constructing offender profiles (Canter & Alison 1999:38). The investigator should seriously consider exactly where he/she needs to employ the services of an "expert", and if so, in what ways he/she can justifiably, professionally and ethically be employed and positively contribute to a better understanding of criminal behaviour (Canter & Alison 1999:40).

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROFILE

The practice of profiling is diverse, as illustrated by the following types of profiling:

Profiling for the South African Police Service

Practitioners can compile profiles of all types of offenders: violent, aggressive, sexual perpetrators; serial offenders; and economic offenders. This profile may help the SAPS with crime investigation, the profiling of wanted offenders, the identification of types of offence and offender, the correlation between problem behaviours and societal forces, the understanding of crime, the identification of characteristics and how they contribute to deviant behaviour, the identification of social characteristics, and court assessments to help prosecutors and the court make decisions regarding the processing of the offender (Ellis & Sowers 2001:56-58; Toch & Adams 1994:52).

Profiling for the SAPS can reflect both “hard”-evidence profiling, particularly in terms of crime investigation, and “soft”-evidence profiling. An example of the latter is the profiling of “cop killers” in South Africa by Minnaar (2003:29-54).

Profiling organised crime

Most profiling involves sexual and violent perpetrators of unsolved crimes. Crime entrepreneurs or perpetrators of organised crime have received less analytical dedication (Canter & Alison 1999:63, 66). Little attention is paid to the "who" (offender/ syndicate characteristics), the "what" (type of crime, vulnerable victims/targets), the "why" (causes and motives) and the "how" (modus operandi) of organised criminals and syndicates.

It is hypothesised that everyday police insight into the character of the suspects is underestimated, and insufficiently applied. Insight into the leadership style, the psychological, social and criminal status of the suspects and the emotional relations with the inner circle of accomplices and aids and the intellectual level of the prime suspect(s) are of the utmost importance to investigating officers (Canter & Alison 1999:68-70). Also, scant attention is paid to the prediction of offending, and to empirical and scientific supported explanations of organised criminals.

Eminent organised criminals owe their success not only
to marketing skills, but, also to criminal “human engineering”, including “human-risk assessment”. Interpreted into lay terms, this means, “I trade only with someone I know I can trust.” It is therefore possible for an analyst to map the social environment of focal figures of an organised crime network. Additional information for an in-depth analysis of the criminal players in the field is very important, because it provides the real proportions of the landscape in which they function (Canter & Alison 1999:66-67).

Organised crime investigations are commonly based on suspicions yielded by criminal informants, whose information is mostly incomplete and partly correct, providing bits of a social-criminal puzzle (Canter & Alison 1999:63). These “investigative hunches” supported by “police intuition” are united, and translated into a plan. According to Canter and Alison (1999:63), often there is no analysis and hypothesis building based on “investigative hunches”. This process presupposes the portraying of a profile of the individual target, but also contains the social profile of the entrepreneurial landscape.

An important question to ask is, "What can the behavioural scientist offer in organised-crime investigations”? Canter and Alison (1999:62) suggest that behavioural scientists have an important background responsibility in which they should navigate the investigation process from their expert disciplines. This background chore could incorporate target profiling (a reactive approach); recruitment (screening of applicants), education and training (sufficient training regarding organised criminals and developments in society, such as trading opportunities). One outcome of behavioural-scientist participation is a higher measure of effectiveness as far as preparation for and approach to the criminal targets are concerned.

Profiling for the Department of Correctional Services

Within a correctional context, offender assessment yields various outcomes of interest, such as profiling of offenders for treatment purposes, determining offender risks and needs, responsivity and evaluation of developmental programmes. A correctional officer, for example, may need to determine whether a young-looking inmate is vulnerable to bullying or rape. Parole-board members may evaluate the likelihood of an inmate to reoffend, or to adjust in the community (Bonta 2002:355).

Practitioners can assist the Department of Correctional Services in profiling offenders for the purposes of effective treatment. The profiler can focus, among other things, on (Ellis & Sowers 2001:56-84; Hesselink-Louw & Schoeman 2003:166-171) causes of criminal behaviour, motives for crime and modus operandi, biographic characteristics, criminal history, gang involvement, cultural diversity (cultural beliefs and customs), education, family of origin, interpersonal relationships, aggressive and violent tendencies, and prosocial attitudes.

Profiling in court

Many of the disagreements about the process, policy and practice of profiling do not come to the fore until during the legal process. When they crop up in the courtroom, much of the damage has already been done. Many of the techniques advocated by profilers are atheoretical, relatively untested, and therefore highly debatable (Canter & Alison 1999:16).

Profiling in court has the following shortcomings (Canter & Alison 1999:42): definitional dilemmas regarding a profile; lack of evidence to suggest expertise; the question whether profiling is in fact a systematic discipline and a lack of consensus among a variety of professionals regarding its lack of usefulness for identifying an individual (as opposed to the idea that from evidently sparse clues it is possible to formulate a
complete picture of the offender). Expert witnesses are always at a disadvantage, because they do not have equal partnership with the lawyers (the court system has its own ethos and rigorous rules, and experts are visitors to this system which they did not devise, do not fully comprehend, and in which they exert limited power). Also, reports can be misapplied and parts deliberately misinterpreted, and witnesses may feel humiliated (Canter & Alison 1999:203, 210).

To remedy the above capriccios, Canter and Alison (1999:17) advocate that profilers should exercise considerable caution in creating and verifying their hypotheses, because the less professional inquiry teams may be depending on “profiling” evidence in lieu of more robust evidential material. Because of many legal barriers that present themselves to the profiler, opinions given should be of considerable empirical resilience to rebut these criticisms in court. Canter and Alison (1999:43) profess that there are legal obstacles regarding the admissibility of profiles, both because legally they would be regarded as founded on generalities and inadmissible hearsay, and because they would introduce prejudice into the evidence.

Profiling of victims

For some time, criminologists have recognised the need to comprehend the victim and his/her involvement with the offender (Hickey 2002:239). According to Turvey (1999:105), the most demanding part of the profiling process is conducting a thorough victimology. If conducted competently, victimology compels the profiler to get to know the victim better (Godwin 2001:231, 251; Turvey 1999:106).

It is proposed that a skilled profiler should spend at least as much time examining victim history as perpetrator history. Victim profiles can help provide context, associations and investigative direction for police and investigative officials. An important question to ask is, "What are the offender needs that victim selection satisfies?" If one can understand how and why an offender has chosen known victims, one should be able to verify a link between the victim(s) and that offender (Godwin 2001:231, 251; Hickey 2002:248). These connections may be geographical, work-related, schedule-oriented, school-related, hobby-related - or the victim(s) and that offender may just know each other, somehow. The possibilities are unlimited (Godwin 2000:64; Turvey 1999:106).

Also, if scientists can conclude how and why an offender has selected his/her previous victims, there would be a refined chance of predicting the type of victim that he/she may select in the future - this gives the investigation direction (Godwin 2000:64-65; Turvey 1999:107). Therefore, an understanding of the relationship of a victim to his/her lifestyle and environment, and subsequently of the offender and the victim, can provide insight into a profile (Hickey 2002:248; Turvey 1999:113). Also of relevance is the establishing of victim risk (the amount of exposure to harm or loss) and victim lifestyle risk (the individual's personality, professional and social environment, habits and activities (Turvey 1999:115-116).

CONCLUSION

The process of profiling is a complex one and should be embarked upon with professional responsibility. The nebulous function of profiling is equivocal, and replete with confusion. To compile a profile of an unknown, wanted perpetrator without grounded knowledge of putative variables and characteristics associated with the offender abates the scientific importance of this function. To this end, profiling is nothing more than a prediction of criminal behaviour. Scant attention is paid to the process by means of which these “deductions” are made, or to the limitations of such offerings (Canter & Alison 1999:3). In this regard, Kocsis (2003:37) cites that little is known about the technique, how detectives make sense of a
Bonta (2000:24) posits that to certify prediction it should be based on scientific evidence, current research findings and empirical explanations of criminal behaviour (theories). Here, criminologists can play an important role to support the investigation with scientific and empirical tenets regarding the profiling of perpetrators. In this regard, Bonta (2000:28) propounds that experts in human and social sciences should concede to the fact that prediction of criminal behaviour will never be perfect, and that the complexity of human behaviour and the inherent errors associated with measurement is liberating. Therefore, therapists and practitioners should no longer be “chained to false hopes and unrealistic expectations” as far as profiling and prediction are concerned (Bonta 2000:28).

A subjective, intuitive, biased or gut feeling is inadequate, unprofessional and unethical as far as profiling methods and techniques are concerned. Assumptions about an unknown offender based on personal opinion, intuition, gut feeling and lack of empirical support can be catastrophic to the process of profiling. A substandard assessment and profile may lead to an ineffective contribution to a useful profile and may steer investigators and researchers in wrong directions.

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