RANDOM HOUSE eBOOKS

Journey into Darkness

John Douglas and Mark Olshaker

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About the Book

The world’s top pioneer and expert on criminal profiling, author of the international bestseller, *Mindhunter*, delves further into the criminal mind in a range of chilling new cases – involving rape, arson, child molestation and murder – as well as profiling suspects from OJ Simpson to the Unabomber, and investigating the assassination of John Lennon and the tragedy at Waco, Texas.

The inspiration for Special Agent Jack Crawford in *The Silence of the Lambs* and a continually sought-after consultant on headline-making cases, Douglas reveals the fascinating circumstances of each crime in detail as he explores the larger issues, from crime prevention and rehabilitation to what violence is doing to society.

About the Authors

John Douglas and Mark Olshaker, critically acclaimed novelist and producer of the Emmy-nominated *The Mind of a Serial Killer*, both live in the Washington D.C. area.

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Journey into Darkness

Follow the FBI’s Premier Investigative Profiler as he penetrates the minds and motives of the most terrifying serial killers

John Douglas and Mark Olshaker

arrow books

To Karla Brown, Suzanne Collins, Kristen French, Ron Goldman, Amber Hagerman, Cassandra Hansen, Tammy Homolka, Christine Jessop, Megan Kanka, Polly Klaas, Leslie Mahaffy, Shawn Moore, Angie, Melissa, and Nancy Newman, Alison Parrott, Nicole Brown Simpson, Shari Faye Smith, and all the other innocents, their families, friends, and loved ones, and the dedicated law enforcement officers who worked tirelessly seeking justice for them, this book is dedicated with respect, with humility, and with love.

AUTHORS' NOTE

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Mardigian, Gregg McCrary, Jud Ray, and Jim Wright. They will always be valued pioneers, explorers, and esteemed fellow travelers on the journey into darkness and back out again.

—John Douglas and Mark Olshaker,
October 1996

Either man's freedom of decision for or against God, as well as for or against man, must be recognized, or else religion is a delusion, and education is an illusion. Freedom is presupposed by both; otherwise they are misconceived.

Freedom, however, is not the last word. Freedom is only part of the story and half of the truth. Freedom is but the negative aspect of the whole phenomenon whose positive aspect is responsibleness. In fact, freedom is in danger of degenerating into mere arbitrariness unless it is lived in terms of responsibleness.

—Viktor E. Frankl,
Man's Search for Meaning

Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid.

—Raymond Chandler,
"The Simple Art of Murder"

PROLOGUE

IN THE MIND OF A KILLER

THIS ISN'T THE Hollywood version. It isn't sanitized or prettied up or rendered into "art." This is the way it really happens. If anything, it's worse than the way I describe it.

As I had so many times before, I put myself in the mind of the killer.

I don't know who she's gonna be, but I'm ready to kill someone. Right now.

My wife's left me alone for the whole evening, gone out to a Tupperware party with her girlfriends rather than spending the time with me. It probably doesn't matter all that much; we've been fighting all the time anyway and we'd been fighting all day. Still, it's depressing and I'm sick and tired of being treated that way. Maybe she's really out seeing other men like my first wife'd done. She got hers, though—ended up face-down in the bathtub gagging on her own puke. Served her right for the way she treated me. Our two kids ended up with my folks; that's another thing pisses me off—like I wasn't good enough to take care of them anymore.

I sit around watching TV for a while by myself, drinking beer, a couple of six-packs, then a fifth of wine. But I still feel bad. I keep sinking lower. I need more beer or something else to drink. What's it now—9:00, 9:30 maybe—I get up and drive to the mini-mart near the commissary and get another six-pack of Moose Head. Then I drive down to

Armour Road and just sit there drinking the beer, trying to sort things out in my own mind.

The longer I'm sitting here, the more depressed I'm getting. I'm here alone, living on the base as a dependent to my own wife, they're all her friends, no friends of my own, don't even have my kids. I was in the Navy myself, you know, and thought it was gonna work out, but it didn't. Now it's just one dead-end job after another. I don't know what I'm gonna do. Maybe I should just go on home and wait, then have it out with her when she comes back, get some things settled. It's all running through my head at the same time. I'd really like to have someone to talk to right now, but there isn't anyone around. Hell, I don't know anyone to tell my problems to, anyhow.

It's dark all around. It's starting to feel . . . kind of inviting. I feel one with the night. The dark makes me anonymous. The dark makes me omnipotent.

I'm over on the north side of the base, parked on the side of the road, still drinking beer, just past the buffalo pens when I see her. Shit, those buffaloes get better treatment than I do.

She's just crossed from one side of the road to the other. She's jogging on the side of the road, all by herself, even though it's already dark out. She's tall and really good-looking, about twenty, I'd say, with long brownish blond hair hanging in a braid. Her forehead glistens with sweat in the moonlight. Yep, very pretty. She has on a red T-shirt with the Marine emblem in gold on the front and little red shorts that show off her ass real nice and make her legs look like they go on forever. Not an ounce of fat on her. Those Marine women keep themselves in real great shape. All that exercise and drilling. Not like the ones in the Navy. They could whip an ordinary man's ass if given half the chance.

I watch her for a few moments, her boobs bouncing up and down with the rhythm of her run. I'm thinking about getting out to run with her, maybe strike up a conversation.

But I know I’m not near in the shape she’s in. Besides, I’m dead fucking drunk. So maybe I pull up in the car, offer her a ride back to her barracks or something, get her to talk to me that way.

But then I’m thinking to myself, what’s she gonna go with someone like me for when she’s probably doing those hotshot Marines? Girl like that thinks she’s too good to give my type the time of day. No matter what I say, she’s gonna blow me off. And I been blown off enough for one day already. I been blown off enough for one lifetime.

Well, I’m not putting up with any of that bullshit anymore—not tonight, anyway. Whatever I want, I’m just gonna take; that’s the only way you get anything in this world. Bitch is gonna have to deal with me whether she likes it or not.

I start up the car and pull alongside her. I lean across to the passenger window and call out, “’Scuse me! Do you know how far it is back to the other side of the base?”

She doesn’t seem scared or nothing—I guess ’cause of the base sticker on the car, plus the fact that she probably thinks she can take care of herself, being a Marine and all.

She stops, comes over to the car real trusting like, breathing a little heavy. She leans in the passenger side and points back and says it’s about three miles. Then she smiles real pretty and turns back to jog some more.

I know this is my only chance with her—another second and she’ll be gone. So I open the door, jump out, and run up behind her. I whack her real hard from behind and she goes sprawling. Then I grab her. She kinda gasps as she realizes what’s happening and tries to get away from me. But even though she’s tall and strong for a girl, I’m nearly a foot taller than her and have to have more than a hundred pounds on her. I hold on to her and whack her on the side of the head as hard as I can, which must make her see stars. Even so, she still puts up one hell of a fight, tries to beat the shit out of me to get away. She’s gonna pay for that, all right; no bitch is gonna treat me that way.

“Don’t touch me! Get away!” she’s screaming. I have to practically smother her to get her over close to the car. I whack her again, which makes her wobbly on her feet, then I grab her and put her in the car on the passenger side.

Just then, I see two men who’ve been jogging run up toward the car and they’re shouting. So I gun the engine and get the hell out of Dodge.

I know I have to get off the base; that is the first thing. So I head down the road toward the gate near the base theater; that’s the only one that’s open this time of night. I know because it was the one I came in. I prop her up in the seat next to me to look like she’s my date. Her head’s resting on my shoulder, real romantic like. In the darkness it must be working because the guard doesn’t even react, just passes us through.

We’re out on Navy Road when she starts coming to and begins screaming again; she threatens to call the cops if I don’t let her go.

No one talks to me that way. It’s not about what she wants anymore; it’s about what I want. I’m fucking in control, not her. So I take a hand off the wheel and backhand her hard across the face. That quiets her down.

I know I can’t bring her home. My old lady could be back by now. What am I gonna do—explain that this is what I really should be doing to her? I need somewhere me and this new bitch can be alone; that we won’t be disturbed. I need to go somewhere I feel comfortable. Somewhere I know. Somewhere I know I can do what I have to, where no one’ll interrupt us. I got an idea.

I drive down to the end of the road and turn right into the park—Edmund Orgill Park, it’s called. I think she might be starting to wake up again, so I whack her good across the side of the head. I drive past the basketball courts, past the rest rooms and stuff toward the other end of the park, near the lake. I stop the car near the bank and turn off the motor. Now we’re all alone.

I grab her by the shirt and yank her out of the car. She's sort of half-conscious, moaning. There's a cut around her eye and blood coming from her nose and mouth. I get her away from the car and sling her onto the ground, but she starts to get up. The bitch is still trying to resist me. So I jump on top of her—kind of straddling like—and smack her around some more.

There's this tall tree with spreading branches nearby. It's kind of cozy and romantic. She's mine now. I'm in control. I can do anything to her I want. I tear off her clothes—Nike running shoes, then her fancy Marine T-shirt and her little shorts and the blue sweat belt around her waist. There's not much fight left in her. She isn't so tough anymore. I rip everything off her—even her socks. She's trying to escape or get away, but she can't do much. I am in control. I can decide whether this bitch lives or dies and how she's gonna die. It's all up to me. For the first time tonight, I feel like somebody.

While I press my forearm down on her neck to keep her quiet, I start going for her breast—the left one. But that's just for starters. I'm gonna give it to this bitch like she's never had it before.

I look around. I stand up for a moment, reach up above me and grab a limb from the tree, snap it off—about two and a half, three feet's worth. It's hard because that sucker's almost two inches thick. The end is sharp where it broke off, like an arrowhead or a spear.

She seemed like she was out cold just before, but she screams loud again. Her eyes are wild with pain. God, with all that blood, I'll bet she's a virgin. The bitch just screams in agony.

Here's for all the women who ever shit on me, I'm saying to myself. Here's for all the people who gave me a raw deal. Here's to life—let someone else get shafted for a change! By now she's stopped struggling.

After the frenzy is over and the wildness is done, I start feeling calmer. I lean back and look down at her.

She's completely quiet and still. Her body is pale and empty-looking, like something's gone. I know she's finally dead and for the first time in a hell of a long time, I feel completely alive.

This is what it means to walk in the shoes, to know both victim and subject—how each interacts with the other. This is what you get from spending hours in the prisons and penitentiaries, sitting across the table, listening to the actual stories. After you've heard from them, you begin to put the pieces together. The crime itself begins to talk to you. As horrible as it sounds, this is what you have to do to be effective.

I described this technique to a reporter interviewing me not long ago and she said, "I can't even think about this kind of thing!"

I replied, "Well, we'd better all think about this if we ever want to have fewer of them to think about."

If you understand—not in some academic, intellectual way, but in a visceral, experiential way—then maybe we can begin to make a difference.

What I've just described was my idea of what had happened late on the night of July 11, 1985, and in the early morning of July 12—the day U.S. Marine Lance Corporal Suzanne Marie Collins—an accomplished, well-loved, exuberant, and beautiful young woman of nineteen—had died in a public park near the Memphis Naval Air Station, just northeast of Millington, Tennessee. The five-foot-seven, 118-pound Lance Corporal Collins had left her barracks for a run shortly after 10:00 P.M. and never came back. Her nude and beaten body had been discovered in the park after she missed morning muster. The causes of death were reported as prolonged manual strangulation, blunt-force trauma to the head, and massive internal hemorrhage from a sharply

beveled tree limb being thrust so far into her body that it tore through her abdominal organs, liver, diaphragm, and right lung. She had been scheduled to graduate on the twelfth from a four-month avionics school in pursuit of her goal of becoming one of the first female Marine aviators.

It was always a searing and gut-wrenching experience to go through this exercise, but that's what I had to do if I were going to be able to see the crime through the offender's eyes. I'd already put myself through it from the victim's point of view, and that was almost unbearable. But it was also my job, a job I'd created for myself as the first full-time criminal profiler at the Behavioral Science division of the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia.

Normally when my group—the Investigative Support Unit—was called in, it was to provide a behavioral profile and investigative strategy to help police hunt down an UNSUB: an unknown subject. By this time, I'd already worked on more than 1,100 such cases since I came to Quantico. But this time the authorities already had a suspect in custody when they called. His name was Sedley Alley—a bearded, twenty-nine-year-old white male from Ashland, Kentucky, six feet four inches tall, 220 pounds, a laborer for an air conditioning company who lived on base as a dependent to his wife, Lynne, who was enlisted in the Navy. They already had a confession from him; in fact, they'd gotten it the next morning. But his version of events was somewhat different from mine.

Agents of the Naval Investigative Service had picked him up from the car description of two male joggers and the base gate guard. Alley told them that he'd been depressed after his wife, Lynne, had gone out to her Tupperware party, that he'd finished off three six-packs of beer and a bottle of wine in the house, then gone out in his old and dying green Mercury station wagon to the mini-mart near the post commissary to buy some more beer.

He said he was becoming increasingly intoxicated as he drove aimlessly, until he had seen an attractive white female in a Marine T-shirt and running shorts cross the street as she was jogging. He said he got out of his car and started jogging with her, exchanging small talk, until after a few minutes he became winded from his drinking and smoking. He wanted to tell her his problems, but didn't feel she would care about them since she didn't know him, so he said goodbye and drove off.

In his drunken state, he reported, he was drifting and weaving back and forth across the road. He knew he shouldn't be driving. Then he heard a thump and felt a jolt in his car. He realized he'd struck her.

He put her in his car, telling her he was going to take her to the hospital, but he said she kept resisting him, threatening to have him arrested for DWI. He drove off the base and headed for Edmund Orgill Park, where he stopped the car and hoped to calm her down and talk her out of turning him in.

But in the park she continued berating him, he claimed, telling him how much trouble he was in. He yelled at her to shut up and when she tried to open the door, he grabbed her by the shirt, opened his door, got out, and pulled her out with him. She was still yelling about how she was going to have him arrested, then tried to break away. So he jumped on top of her and straddled her on the ground, just to keep her from running off Alley just wanted to talk to her.

She kept trying to get away; he described it as "wiggling." At that point, he "lost it for a second" and hit her across the face—first once, then once or twice more—with his open hand.

He was scared and knew he was in trouble if she turned him in. He says he got off her, trying to figure out what to do, and went back to the Mercury for the yellow-handled screwdriver he needed to hot-start the car and when he came back, he heard someone running in the dark.

Panicked, he wheeled around and flung up his arm, which happened to be holding the screwdriver. It turned out to be the girl he struck, and the screwdriver must have hit her and penetrated the side of the head, because she collapsed onto the ground.

At this point he didn't know what to do. Should he just run away, maybe go back to Kentucky? He didn't know. He decided he'd have to make the death look like something else, like she was attacked and raped. But, of course, he hadn't had sex with her—her injury and death had all been a horrible accident—so how was he going to make it look like a sexual attack?

He removed her clothes from her body—that was a start—then dragged her by the ankles away from the car, over to the lake bank, and placed her under a tree. He was grasping at straws, desperate to think of something, when he stretched his hand out and came in contact with a tree limb, and without even consciously thinking about it, he broke it off. Then he rolled her over onto her stomach and pushed the stick into her, just once, he claimed, just enough to make it look like she'd been attacked by a sex maniac. He ran back to his car, hurriedly left the scene, and left the park at the opposite end from where he'd driven in.

Henry "Hank" Williams, assistant district attorney for Shelby County, Tennessee, was trying to sort the whole thing out. Williams was one of the best in the business—an imposing-looking former FBI agent in his early forties with strong, chiseled features, kindly, sensitive eyes, and prematurely white hair. He'd never seen such a gruesome case.

"As soon as I looked at the file, I thought this was definitely a death penalty case," Williams commented. "I wasn't going to plea-bargain this one."

The problem as he saw it, though, would be to come up with a motive for such a savage murder that a jury could

understand. After all, who in his right mind could do such a horrible thing?

That was the angle the defense was playing. Aside from Alley's account of the "accidental" death, they were raising the specter of insanity. It seemed that psychiatrists examining the subject at the instruction of the defense had proposed that Alley suffered from multiple personality disorder. He had neglected to inform the Naval Investigative Service agents who'd interviewed him that first day that apparently he had been split into three personalities on the night Suzanne Collins died: himself; Billie, a female personality; and Death, who had ridden a horse next to the car in which Sedley and Billie had been riding.

Williams contacted Special Agent Harold Hayes, the profile coordinator in the FBI's Memphis office. He described to Williams the concept of lust murder and referred him to an article my colleague Roy Hazelwood and I had written five years earlier for the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, entitled "The Lust Murderer." Though "lust," in such cases, is something of a misnomer, the article described what our research into serial killers had shown us about these loathsome, sexually based crimes of manipulation, domination, and control. The killing of Suzanne Collins seemed to be a classic lust murder—a premeditated act willfully committed by a sane individual with a character disorder such that, while he knew the difference between right and wrong, he wasn't going to let that moral distinction get in his way.

Williams asked me onto the case to advise him on prosecutive strategy and figure out how to convince a jury of twelve good men and women who probably had little direct contact with raw evil in their lives that my version of events made more sense than the defendant's.

The first thing I had to do was explain to the prosecution team some of what my people and I had learned during our

years of fighting crime from a behavioral perspective . . . as well as the particular price we'd paid to learn it.

I had to take them along on my own journey into darkness.

CHAPTER ONE

JOURNEY INTO DARKNESS

IN EARLY DECEMBER of 1983, at thirty-eight years of age, I collapsed in a hotel room in Seattle while working on the Green River murders case. The two agents I'd brought with me from Quantico had to break down the door to get to me. For five days I hovered in a coma between life and death in the intensive care unit of Swedish Hospital, suffering from viral encephalitis brought on by the acute stress of handling more than 150 cases at a time, all of which I knew were depending on me for answers.

I wasn't expected to live, but miraculously I did, nurtured by first-rate medical care, the love of my family, and the support of my fellow agents. I returned home, almost a month later, in a wheelchair and couldn't go back to work until May. All during that time, I was afraid the neurological damage the disease left me with would prevent me from shooting at FBI standards and therefore prematurely end my career as an agent. To this day, I still have some impairment on my left side.

Unfortunately, my situation isn't unique in this business. Most of the other agents who've worked with me as profilers and criminal investigative analysts in the Investigative Support Unit have suffered some severe, work-related stress or illness which kept them off the job for some period of time. The range of problems runs the gamut—neurological disease like mine, chest pain and cardiac scares, ulcers and

GI disorders, anxieties and depression. Law enforcement is a notoriously high-stress environment to begin with. While I was home recuperating, I did a lot of thinking about what it is in our job that causes the particular kind of stress that's at least different and may even be greater than that of some other FBI agents, detectives, and police line officers—people who face immediate physical danger far more often than we do.

Part of the answer, I think, lies in the service we offer. In an agency long famous for its "Just the facts, ma'am" orientation, we're probably the only group routinely asked for an *opinion.* Even so, we essentially had to wait for J. Edgar Hoover to die before profiling could even be considered a legitimate crime-fighting tool. For years after the criminal personality program was set up at Quantico, most others within and outside the Bureau considered this witchcraft or black magic practiced by a small group of shamans sixty feet below ground where the light of day never penetrated.

The fact of the matter, though, is that life and death decisions can be made based on our advice, yet we don't have the luxury of hard facts to back them up; we don't have the comfort of black and white. If a police officer is wrong, it means the case might not be solved, but things are no worse off than they were before. When we are called in, it's often as a last resort, and if we're wrong, we can send the investigation off in a completely nonproductive direction. So we try to be very sure about what we say. But our stock-in-trade is human behavior, and human behavior, as the psychiatrists are so fond of telling us, is not an exact science.

One of the reasons police and law enforcement agencies throughout the United States and many parts of the world come to us is because we have experience that they don't. Like the medical specialist who has seen many more cases of a rare disease than any primary-care physician, we have

the advantage of a national and international perspective and can therefore pick up on variations and nuances that might escape a local investigator who has only his own jurisdiction as a reference point.

We work on the principle that behavior reflects personality and generally divide the profiling process into seven steps:

1. Evaluation of the criminal act itself.
2. Comprehensive evaluation of the specifics of the crime scene or scenes.
3. Comprehensive analysis of the victim or victims.
4. Evaluation of preliminary police reports.
5. Evaluation of the medical examiner's autopsy protocol.
6. Development of a profile with critical offender characteristics.
7. Investigative suggestions predicated on construction of the profile.

As the final step indicates, offering a profile of an offender is often only the beginning of the service we offer. The next level is to consult with local investigators and suggest proactive strategies they might use to force the UNSUB's hand—to get him to make a move. In cases of this nature we try to stand off at a distance and detach ourselves, but we still may be thrust right into the middle of the investigation. This may involve meeting with the family of a murdered child, coaching family members how to handle taunting phone calls from the killer describing how the child died, even trying to use a sibling as bait in an effort to lure the killer to a particular place.

This was what I suggested after the murder of seventeen-year-old Shari Faye Smith in Columbia, South Carolina, since the killer gave indications of being fixated on Shari's beautiful sister, Dawn. Every moment until we had the killer in custody, I sweated out the advice I'd given the sheriff's department and the family, knowing that if my judgment

was flawed, the Smiths could be facing another unendurable tragedy.

Less than six weeks after the killer called Dawn with elaborate instructions on how to find Shari Faye Smith's body in a field in neighboring Saluda County, Lance Corporal Suzanne Collins was murdered in a public park in Tennessee.

There are just so many of them out there for us.

And what we do see, as my colleague Jim Wright characterized them, are the worst of the worst. We live every day with the certain knowledge of people's capacity for evil.

"It almost defies description what one person can do to another," Jim notes. "What a person can do to an infant; to a child less than a year old; the evisceration of women, the dehumanization process that they go through. There's no way you can be involved in the type of work we're doing or be involved as a law enforcement officer or in the investigation of violent crime and not be personally affected. We very often receive telephone calls from surviving victims, or from the loved ones of victims. We even have some of the serial killers and serial rapists calling us. So we're dealing with the personal side of these crimes, and we do personally get involved and take them to heart. All of us in the unit, I think, have our pet cases that we refuse to let go of."

I know what some of Jim's are. One of mine is Green River, which was never solved. Another is the murder of Suzanne Collins, which haunts me to this day.

While I was home recuperating from my illness, I also visited the military cemetery in Quantico and stared at the plot where I would have been buried had I died that first week. And I did a lot of thinking about what I would have to do if I were going to survive to retirement age. I'd considered myself as good at what I did as anyone, but I realized I'd become a one-dimensional person. Everything—my wife, my kids, my parents, friends, house, and

neighborhood—had all come in second behind my job, a very distant second. It got to the point that every time my wife or one of my kids got hurt, or had a problem, I'd compare it to the victims in my horrific cases, and it didn't seem like such a big deal. Or, I'd analyze their cuts and scrapes in terms of blood patterns I'd observed at crime scenes. I tried to work off my constant tension through a combination of drinking and a feverish exercise regimen. I could only relax when I was completely exhausted.

I decided while walking through that military cemetery that I had to find a way to ground myself, to set a greater store in the love and support I got from Pam and my daughters, Erika and Lauren (our son, Jed, would come along several years later), to begin relying on religious faith, to try to take some time off, to explore the other aspects of life. I knew this was the only way I was going to make it. And when I moved from managing the profiling program and became unit chief in 1990, I tried to provide ways that everyone working for me could maintain his or her mental health and emotional equilibrium. I'd seen firsthand what can happen, how sapping our work can be.

To do what we do, it's very important to get into the mind of not only the killer or UNSUB, but into the mind of the victim at the time the crime occurred. That's the only way you're going to be able to understand the dynamics of the crime—what was going on between the victim and the offender. For example, you may learn that the victim was a very passive person, and if so, why did she receive so many blows to the face? Why was this victim tortured the way she was even though we know from analyzing her that she would have given in, done anything her attacker said? Knowing how the victim would have reacted tells us something important about the offender. In this case, he must be into hurting his victims. The rape isn't enough for him, it's punishing them that's important to him, that represents what we refer to as the "signature" aspect of the

crime. We can begin to fill in much of the rest of his personality and predict his recognizable post-offense behavior from this one insight.

It’s important for us to know this about each case and each victim, but it’s also among the most devastating emotional exercises imaginable.

Police officers and detectives deal with the effects of violence, which is disturbing enough, but if you’re in this business long enough, you do grow somewhat used to it. In fact, many of us in law enforcement are concerned that violence is so much around us that it’s taken for granted even by the public.

But the kind of criminals we deal with don’t kill as a means to an end, such as an armed robber would; they kill or rape or torture because they enjoy it, because it gives them satisfaction and a feeling of domination and control so lacking from every other aspect of their shabby, inadequate, and cowardly lives. So much do many of them enjoy what they do that they want nothing more than to experience it again at every opportunity. In California, Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris made audiotapes so they could relive the sexual torture and murder of teenaged girls in the back of their specially equipped van, nicknamed Murder Mac. Also in California, Leonard Lake and his partner, Charles Ng, produced videos of young women they’d captured being stripped and psychologically brutalized in captivity—offering voice-over commentary along the way.

I’d like to tell you these are isolated practices, or just limited to the exotic perversions of California. But I’ve seen too much of this, and my people have seen too much of this, to be able to tell you that. And hearing or seeing violence as it happens in “real time” is about as unbearable as anything we deal with.

Over the years, as it became my responsibility to evaluate and hire new people for my unit, I developed a profile of what I wanted in a profiler.

At first, I went for strong academic credentials, figuring an understanding of psychology and organized criminology was most important. But I came to realize degrees and academic knowledge weren't nearly as important as experience and certain subjective qualities. We have the facilities to fill in any educational gaps through fine programs at the University of Virginia and the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.

What I started looking for was "right-brained," creative-type thinkers. There are many positions within the FBI and law enforcement in general where engineering or accounting types do the best, but in profiling and investigative analysis, that kind of thinker would probably have some difficulty.

Contrary to the impression given in such stories as *The Silence of the Lambs,* we don't pluck candidates for the Investigative Support Unit right out of the Academy. Since our first book, *Mindhunter,* was published, I've had many letters from young men and women who say they want to go into behavioral science in the FBI and join the profiling team at Quantico. It doesn't work quite that way. First you get accepted by the Bureau, then you prove yourself in the field as a first-rate, creative investigator, then we recruit you for Quantico. And then you're ready for two years of intensive, specialized training before you become a full-fledged member of the unit.

A good profiler must first and foremost show imagination and creativity in investigation. He or she must be willing to take risks while still maintaining the respect and confidence of fellow agents and law enforcement officers. Our preferred candidates will show leadership, won't wait for a consensus before offering an opinion, will be persuasive in a group setting but tactful in helping to put a flawed investigation back on track. For these reasons, they must be able to work both alone and in groups.

Once we choose a person, he or she will work with experienced members of the unit almost the way a young associate in a law firm works with a senior partner. If they're at all lacking in street experience, we send them to the New York Police Department to ride along with their best homicide detectives. If they need more death investigation, we have nationally recognized consultants such as Dr. James Luke, the esteemed former medical examiner of Washington, D.C. And before they get to Quantico, many, if not most, of our people will have been profile coordinators in the field offices, where they develop a strong rapport with state and local departments and sheriff's offices.

The key attribute necessary to be a good profiler is judgment—a judgment based not primarily on the analysis of facts and figures, but on instinct. It's difficult to define, but like Justice Potter Stewart said of pornography, we know it when we see it.

In San Diego in 1993, Larry Ankrom and I testified in the trial of Cleophus Prince, accused of murdering six young women over a nine-month period. We'll get into more of the details of that case in the next chapter. During the preliminary hearing to rule on the admissibility of our testimony on linkage based on "unique" aspects of each crime, one of the defense attorneys asked me if there was an objective numerical scale I used for measuring uniqueness. In other words, could I assign a number value to everything we did. The answer, of course, is no. Many, many factors come together in our evaluations, and ultimately, it comes down to the individual analyst's judgment rather than any objective scale or test.

Likewise, after the tragedy at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, there was much soul-searching, breast-beating, and attempt at self-critique within the federal law enforcement agencies about what could and should have been done differently. After one such meeting at the Justice Department in Washington, Attorney General

Janet Reno asked me to have my unit compile a list of scenarios for standoff situations and assign each one a percentage success rating.

Ms. Reno is an extremely bright and sensitive individual and I lauded her desire to prepare herself in advance for the next unknown crisis rather than having to respond from a purely reactive mode. But while it might be considered insubordination, I told her how reluctant I was to do anything of the sort.

“If I tell you that a certain tactic worked eighty-five percent of the time in a particular type of hostage situation and any other response has only been effective twenty-five or thirty percent of the time,” I explained, “then there’s going to be tremendous pressure on you to go for the highest percentage. But I or another analyst may see something in that situation which indicates to us that the lower percentage option is the one to go with. We can’t justify it in statistical terms, but our judgment tells us it has the best chance of working. If you’re going to go with the numbers, you might as well let a machine make the decision.”

That, actually, is an issue which comes up with some regularity in our business—can’t a machine do what we do? It would seem that after you have enough cases and enough experience, an expert programmer ought to be able to come up with a computer model that could, say, duplicate my thought processes as a profiler. It’s not as if they haven’t tried, but so far, at least, machines can’t do what we can do, any more than a computer could write this book even if we gave it all the words in the dictionary, their relative usage in speech, all the rules of grammar and parameters of style and models of all the best stories. There are just too many independent judgments to be made, too many gut feelings based on training and experience, too many subtleties of the human character. We certainly can and do use computer databases to quantify material and retrieve it efficiently. But