

About the Book

For twenty-five years forensic psychologist Paul Britton has interviewed, assessed and treated people with damaged or broken minds. Some were responsible for terrible crimes, others were stopped before it was too late. He can 'walk through the minds' of those who murder, rape, torture, extort and kidnap. For him, the answers aren't just hidden at bloody crime scenes or in the post-mortem photographs - instead, they are often locked away within someone's subconscious or deep in their past. That is why the police have called on him to help with many high-profile criminal investigations and catch those responsible.

How does he do it? *Picking Up the Pieces* traces Britton's remarkable journey into the darkest recesses of human experience. From top security prisons and mental hospitals to ordinary outpatients' clinics, he reveals the psychological and forensic foundations upon which he has based his expertise. It is a compelling and revealing book that provides important insights into the complex organism we call the human mind.

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Also by Paul Britton

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Picking up the Pieces

Paul Britton

DEDICATION

Every day children are grievously damaged by those who are supposed to protect and love them. Even if we can find these children, the harm can rarely be fully undone.

It is always emotionally painful for me to reconstruct, psychologically, the ordeal endured by the victims of crime. However, my discomfort is trivial when compared to the true terror and pain they have suffered, and which their loved ones will suffer always, inescapably.

Front-line clinical staff spend whole careers treating 'forensic' patients. They constantly risk physical injury and emotional burn-out in getting close to some of the most dangerous men and women in our society.

I have worked with these people as patients and colleagues; I'm sure they have affected who I have become. I dedicate *Picking Up the Pieces* to them, and also to Marilyn who, happily for me, is still there, picking up my pieces.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Through many criminal and other difficult, sensitive cases I have worked with the most able and far-seeing investigators of our day. They have each contributed to changing the ways in which information is gathered, analysed and acted upon. Here I pay particular tribute to:

Detective Superintendent David Cox, Detective Superintendent Michael Short, Detective Inspector John Bradley, Detective Chief Superintendent Ken John, Detective Superintendent Jon Dawson, and Detective Superintendent Gary Copson, who was prepared to direct a light into some particularly ugly corners, just because it seemed right.

My own development as a psychologist was nurtured by men and women who gave more than they realized:

At Warwick, Tom Watson, John Annett, George Kiss, Ian Morley, Richard Skemp, Elizabeth Hitchfield, Christine Hewitt, Keith Hoskin, and Steve Van Toller, who agreed to be my personal tutor even though there were more students than chairs for them to sit on.

At Sheffield, Paul Jackson and Michael West transformed students into researchers and sought-after practitioners.

The National Health Service continues to function because the administrative, clerical, clinical and managerial staff do so much more than should fairly be asked of them. If honours were given on this basis, then Dr James Earp, consultant forensic psychiatrist, would be a worthy recipient, as would Bill Carpenter and Diane Purvis, my NHS secretary.

It is a long, sometimes bumpy journey. My most valued companions have been Mal and Emma and Rufus, and Ian and Katherine; they have taken the load if ever the axle looked as if it might begin to bend.

As before, I acknowledge those men and women who cannot be named for reasons of confidentiality or security. I am glad to have helped, and have learned much from working with you. I hope someone is preparing your successors.

'Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
While night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill:
So, prithee, go with me . . .'

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act III scene ii

A NOTE TO THE READER

In order for us to understand how one person's experiences and personality may lead them to abduct, maim or obliterate others, while other people are made inert and empty by what seem to be similar circumstances, we must be given sufficient detail of what it was in their lives that led them to behave as they did. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the secrets and histories of individuals I have met in the consulting room are not set out in a manner that would enable people to recognize them. To be true to both requirements, I have, with the exception of names that are in the public domain, protected the identities of the people I write about by changing names and altering a number of details when describing case histories.

However, every case is real; no dramatic strands have been added or embellished for effect. Of course those cases which are a matter of public record and criminal investigation are reported in their original detail, in the accepted manner.

I have withheld some aspects of methods of offending and injuries or defilement of victims, where full description would either show how to get away with crime or be more graphic than was necessary to explain the significance of particular behaviour. Nevertheless this book inevitably has sections that will be uncomfortable or distressing to read. I cannot apologize for this, as my intention is not to alarm but to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological processes that underpin some of the most serious and otherwise inexplicable crimes facing us today. I hope that a

growing insight into these factors will lead to increasingly early recognition of potential dangers, and the referral of those affected to the clinicians. Where it is too late for this, and a crime has already been committed, I hope that *Picking Up the Pieces* will continue my work of making available to the police and other investigators a more profound knowledge of the psychological functioning of the offender, helping them to direct their scarce resources more effectively and make detection more likely, and prevent even more people from being hurt or killed. I ask you to ride through your discomfort and give your compassion to those who have suffered so terribly.

PROLOGUE

A RING-BOUND SET of photographs slid across the desk towards me. The colour prints began with a sequence of wide-angle shots of a country lane. The trees were bare and etched starkly against the grey skies.

The body was barely visible, showing up only as a splash of white against the hedge. It could have been a discarded shopping bag or an abandoned 'For Sale' sign.

Finally the lens moved closer, zeroing in. There could be no dignity or privacy about the process. The body of a lifeless and naked woman was exposed from every conceivable angle.

The marble coldness accentuated the dull whiteness of her skin. It seemed almost too white - as though somebody had dumped a naked shop-window mannequin, having dragged it backwards across the ground by its armpits.

I had to fight the urge to look away. I knew from experience that such photographs are not easily forgotten. They burn themselves inexorably into the mind and choose unexpected moments to return.

The body had been photographed through each stage of examination and post mortem. I knew the procedure. Every square inch would be photographed, scraped, swabbed or cut open. Body fluids, fingernail dirt and pubic hair would be sealed in plastic or glass and then passed hand-to-hand along the evidential chain; from the pathologist to the laboratory, to the prosecution, to the court and to the jury.

Violent death becomes a very public event. And no matter how much is done later to restore a victim's dignity, for

those few days or weeks she (or he) becomes the most important piece of evidence in a murder investigation.

I opened a new folder of photographs of the post mortem. The difference between a person lying at a scene of crime and then washed, weighed and cleaned for the pathologist is quite startling.

Almost unconsciously, I began asking myself questions. Had she been conscious when he strangled her? How quickly did she die? Where was she killed? How did he incapacitate her?

The answers were important because they influenced the much larger issue of motivation. What did the killer seek to achieve when he murdered this poor woman? What went through his mind?

Detective Superintendent David Cox had called me the previous day in the middle of lunch. I closed the doors to the lounge so I could take the call in private.

'I'm sorry to bother you at home, Paul, but I'd like you to look at something.'

My heart sank. I knew where such a statement normally led me.

'We've found a body, but we don't have any ID at all. She's been murdered.'

I made a few notes on a foolscap pad and checked my diary for the following day. I had an outpatient clinic that couldn't be moved. It would have to be the evening. I arranged for David to meet me at home.

Normally, I tried to keep people connected with my work away from home, for obvious reasons. However, I knew the Leicestershire force well. If David Cox said it was urgent, then I knew it was.

At the dining table, Marilyn had started clearing the plates and I helped her pack the dishwasher. She knew without asking that the telephone call had come from the police.

After nearly thirty years of marriage I would swear she is almost telepathic.

It had been a difficult few weeks. Ten days earlier I'd travelled to Gloucester, where police had found three bodies in the garden of 25 Cromwell Street. Frederick West was in custody and his wife Rosemary was helping police with their inquiries. The man heading the investigation, Detective Superintendent John Bennett, asked me if I could give them some insight into what they were dealing with.

The Wests had lived at the house for twenty-two years and came across as a cheerful couple who were outwardly friendly and good neighbours. At the same time, three bodies had been dug out of their garden - all of them dismembered.

Bennett gave me a complete briefing on the case, including statements, pathology reports and the details of a previous offence that dated back to December 1972.

Ultimately, I had to tell him and the interviewing teams that they were looking at evidence of predatory and sadistic sexual psychopathy. I had seen it before and dealt with it clinically, but this case had a particularly dreadful feature - a combined depravity where husband and wife had drawn energy from each other. They hadn't just killed for the sake of taking a life; their victims were playthings who were tortured and abused.

'You are dealing with prolific murderers. You have found only three of their victims.'

'But where are the others?' asked Detective Inspector Terry Moore.

'Everywhere he's lived. Everywhere he's worked. Sometimes sexual psychopathic murderers get comfortable with disposing of bodies in a particular way - some leave them in ditches, some put them in rivers, some bury them. Mr and Mrs West looked after them - they kept them close.'

'So that's why they used the back garden?'

‘Not exactly,’ I told them. ‘They used the garden because the house is full.’

In the ten days since that conversation, four more bodies had been uncovered in the basement of 25 Cromwell Street. Every few days John Bennett had sent me the transcripts of police interviews with Mr and Mrs West. After dinner each evening, I sat down and studied the questions and answers, looking for anything I might have missed.

Now, on top of all this, I had a new case to deal with. Murderers rarely wait in line.

As I finished looking through the last of the albums, I slid them back across the desk. David Cox sat opposite, shuffling several folders to one side as if clearing space between us.

Although not a tall man he was solid and would have been an asset to any rugby team. He had fair hair, a very young face for a man of his rank and a direct but obliging manner.

His briefing was cautious because he didn’t quite know if I could help him.

‘Four days ago, on Thursday 3 March 1994, a woman’s body was found by a man walking his dog in a country lane at Bitteswell, near Lutterworth, about fifteen miles south of Leicester. She was lying on a grass verge at the edge of the village, on a rough dead-end road known locally as Woodby Lane. No attempt had been made to conceal the body.

‘The post mortem reveals that she was strangled and killed up to twelve hours before she was found. There is no evidence of sexual assault but she did have sex with someone just before she died. According to the pathologist, she was killed elsewhere and dumped some time on Wednesday night.’

The photographs of the grass verge showed her lying starkly white against the cold winter green of her surroundings.

‘How old was she?’

‘Anywhere between thirty and fifty-five.’

'You don't know?'

'That's why I've come to see you. We don't even have a name. It's been four days. If she's local then nobody's reported her missing. We've trawled the missing persons files and we've asked other forces to search their records. So far we've drawn a blank.'

'Perhaps she's from overseas.'

'Interpol hasn't come up with a match.'

I could understand his frustration. Conducting a murder investigation without knowing the victim's name is like playing snooker in the dark.

'I'm not quite sure how I can help,' I said, genuinely puzzled.

'I was hoping you might tell us something about her.'

If I hadn't known Cox so well, I would probably have laughed. He was asking me to profile an unknown victim psychologically, where the only possible source of clues was her naked body.

Normally when I work on a police investigation, there is already a wealth of detail about the method used in the crime and a reasonable amount known about the victim. This is vital if I'm properly to reconstruct what happened - not just through the eyes of the victim but also of the predator.

I have to answer four questions - what happened, how, to whom and why? And then the fifth question - who did it?

The third of these questions involves the most pain because it means discovering all that I can about the victim - her strengths, weaknesses, loves, hates and fears. Was she a careful person? Did she make friends easily? How did she dress? The closer I get to her, the greater the pain because she becomes real to me. I can walk through her mind and see the world through her eyes.

SIOs have often asked me why this is so important to me.

It's because when I know a victim, I know more about the person who killed her. I can put a precise shape to his

personality and behavioural preferences. I can move back through his life from the offence and begin drawing up a picture of his family, friends, relationships and schooling. Then, moving forward, I can draw out his occupation, habits and where he might live, how he'll be affected by the crime and if he'll offend again. If so, how and where.

This is what psychological offender profiling sets out to achieve. It is like having an empty picture frame and filling it with pieces of a jigsaw until the image is clear.

Now, for the first time in my career, I was being asked to profile an unknown victim before I could profile her killer.

The crime scene photographs were all taken in daylight. I wanted to know how it altered in the darkness. How did it look to the killer on that night?

The following evening, I drove to Bitteswell alone in my car. I had a warm overcoat on the passenger seat and the heater at full blast.

Bitteswell is an old village and its buildings look as though they've grown up between the trees like toadstools on the woodland floor. Approaching from the Lutterworth side, the left turn into Woodby Lane is on the far side of the village and is quite awkward.

The Old Royal Oak is a typical Midlands country pub, almost on the corner of Valley Lane and Woodby Lane. In the fading daylight it seemed deserted, but soon it would be a beacon for the locals, drawing them inside. The killer had been within earshot when he stopped his vehicle to dump the body.

Woodby Lane was sometimes used by courting couples and occasionally by suspected drug users, according to David Cox. The narrow strip of bitumen was flanked on both sides by hedges and fences. It was difficult to turn a car and I needed headlights to find a field gateway to reverse into. A mile or so further down, the lane petered out among a cluster of agricultural buildings.

I almost missed the bay where the body had been dumped. It was just a short way into the lane, where the narrow grass verge broadened for a distance of twenty or thirty yards. At its widest point the verge was about fifteen feet across from the edge of the road to a broken hedge and an empty field beyond.

I looked again at the entrance to Woodby Lane. From either direction it came into view quite late on a bend. This was not the place you would select to leave a body hidden, not if you were pre-planning it and not if you were moderately bright.

As I sat in the car, I looked at the photograph of the dead woman's head and shoulders. She had a distinctive face. Whoever she was, I had no doubt that the everyday pressures and tensions of life had shaped her looks. With such strong features and the heavy coverage of the crime in the local media, surely she'd have been recognized if she were a Leicester girl.

Yet nobody had come forward. Five days had passed and instead of a name beneath her photograph there was a question mark. I felt as though David Cox had invited this woman into my home and I couldn't let her leave without finding her name.

Back in my study, I wrote a list of facts about the victim:

5' 1" tall.

Shoulder-length naturally light brown hair, permed at least six months ago and not cut for some time.

Both ears pierced.

Blue-grey eyes.

Sallow complexion.

Bust 46½", bra size 44c.

Plain silver ring on third finger of right hand.

Hips 46½".

Has never given birth to children.

Toenails unkempt.

Lower jaw protrudes causing lower teeth to overlap upper teeth.

Possibly an occasional smoker.

Weighed approximately 13 stone.

Dress size 22-24.

Waist 40".

Bitten nails, fingers not manicured.

Shoe size 2½-3.

What could she tell me about herself? Her immediate personal hygiene was good. She had been frequently sexually active. She had sex shortly before she died. Her most recent partner hadn't used a condom - there were traces of semen found in her vagina. There were no bruises or abrasions to the genitals to indicate the intercourse had been forced.

There were no defence wounds. Whoever garrotted her had been close enough to take her before she could react. There were no indications that she had been bound, gagged or restrained before being strangled.

She was far too heavy for her naked body to have been carried from a house or a flat without a high risk of being seen. There was also no bruising or marking to indicate this had happened.

Nothing about this poor woman or the scene of her disposal signalled a long-drawn-out, control-based interaction with her killer. Instead, the hallmarks of her death were scornfully indifferent expediency and anger.

Her murderer may have thought this way about her, but I didn't and neither did David Cox. One way or another, she was going to tell us who did this.

How does a woman get herself into a situation where she could just disappear from a community and have nobody report her missing?

The answer lay within the parameters of my clinical practice and the women who were sent to me by the courts,

or defence solicitors, or sometimes by an alert GP. They came because they had attacked a man, or another girl, or had begun to lose touch with their young child. They were prostitutes.

The lives of such women usually have only a very loose structure. They move around - often staying one week in Kings Cross and the next in Balsall Heath in Birmingham, or Hillfields in Coventry. They disappear from an area for days or weeks at a time and then resurface again. Some drift out of prostitution and try to get a normal job but eventually find their way back onto the streets again.

The murder victim had sex frequently, and just before she died. The intercourse had not been forced. She was killed soon afterwards and dumped on a roadside verge in an area where nobody knew her. Despite a nationwide search, nobody anywhere had reported her missing.

All of this strongly suggested that she was a prostitute.

If this girl worked as a prostitute, then it was at the lower end of the scale - on the streets, in cars and from motorway service stations. At the other end of the scale, high-class call-girls and escorts can earn as much as professional athletes. They have the looks and bodies of glamour models and actresses and they can pass in glittering company without causing embarrassment. These women don't just sell sex - they sell a fantasy.

By comparison, the woman found in Woodby Lane was significantly overweight for her height. She had a long-standing, uncorrected dental problem that affected her appearance. Her hair wasn't particularly well cut, or cared for with costly conditioners and treatments. Her complexion hadn't been well looked after by a regime of skin-care products and her fingernails and toenails weren't manicured.

Her make-up was inexpensive and applied without a great deal of subtlety or care. This was in keeping with her overall presentation.

This woman - as harsh as it may sound - did not sell dreams or fantasies. She was merely a facility for sex. She was also careless enough to allow a man who paid for sex at this level to have intercourse without wearing a condom. Girls who work at the higher end of the market tend to be more careful.

How did this particular woman find her level in prostitution? I suspect because she wouldn't have been able to establish herself in a different career. I knew that she had never given birth, so she wasn't left with a child and no other means of support.

Perhaps an unscrupulous boyfriend had wooed her into the job, or a girlfriend had shown her the ropes. She would have been easy to exploit, particularly by people who lived in the same social stratum.

She would be of no more than average intelligence, perhaps a little below, given her inattention to her overall self-care. Her schooling would have been indifferent. She would be from a working-class family who hadn't been able to compensate for her lack of achievement and poor prospects. Nor could they stop her becoming a prostitute.

A day later, I presented my analysis to David Cox and his senior colleagues. We met in a hot and stuffy room at the new force headquarters on the western edge of Leicester.

As I finished the briefing I asked if there were any questions.

'You're sure she was a prostitute?' asked David.

'As sure as I can be with the information available.'

'And you think she's a traveller, not a local girl?'

'Yes. You'd know her if she was local.'

'So where is she from?'

'I would look at the red-light areas and big motorway service centres with established prostitution. Focus on those areas within an hour or so of Bitteswell. Whoever killed her didn't put her out for display. He dumped her for his own preservation. He wanted to get her a good way off from

where he picked her up because he knows that makes it harder for you to trace him. But there's a limit to how long he's willing to drive about with a dead woman in his vehicle. He also had to strip her somewhere en route. That's not easy in a car. I'd say an hour or so - depending on the traffic and the weather. You're probably looking at a radius of fifty miles.'

'Birmingham?' asked a detective.

'Could be. It might be Coventry, Northampton or Nottingham - anywhere with an established red-light area that's also close to trunk roads or the motorways.'

After the briefing David Cox asked if I'd prepare a psychological offender profile of the killer. In the meantime, the murder squad had been following up on the scant number of leads.

Two people, passing in a car, had seen a middle-aged man on the grass verge near Bitteswell Football Club just over an hour before the body was discovered. He was described as being in his forties or fifties, with greying hair and a short-sleeved shirt. He looked either lost or agitated.

The police had been door to door in the area and set up a mobile incident room to question motorists. At the same time, a sketch of the victim was released to the media and printed on a poster.

Despite these efforts, the body still hadn't been identified by 10 March - a week after its discovery. A new artist's impression was prepared, in colour, using a hairdresser and a beautician to give advice on how the victim looked in life.

The impression was shown nationally on GMTV. On the same day an advertisement was placed in the *Sun* newspaper, accompanied by a story asking for public help in identifying the woman. The police revealed that she might have been a prostitute from the Black Country, who worked in the Birmingham or Wolverhampton areas.

Within hours came the breakthrough that David Cox and his team had been hoping for. A family in Stafford saw the

artist's impression on TV and thought they recognized the woman. A short time later, police sealed off a nearby flat-fronted terrace cottage.

The victim had a name - Tracy Lyn Turner, aged thirty. She was a prostitute who worked out of motorway service stations and lorry stops, mainly in North London. She was last seen alive at 4.30 p.m. on 2 March, plying for trade on the southbound slip road of a service station on the M6 near Birmingham. Earlier that day she had withdrawn money from a building society and gone shopping.

Tracy was almost totally deaf and relied on an amplifier aid about the size of a personal stereo. There was no sign of it in her house, or where the body had been found.

Cox and his team now had a new challenge - to piece together all they could about Tracy's lifestyle and movements. Did she have regular clients? Who were her friends? Where did she normally work? What were her hours? Did she offer any specialist sexual services?

My role in the murder inquiry was only just starting. I now had to draw up a psychological profile of the killer, telling the police all that I could about him.

He was out there somewhere, remembering what he had done. Although he had taken a risk, he felt good. They wouldn't catch him. The slag had wanted her money, but he'd had her for free. Then he showed her what he thought of her kind. That's the good thing about slags - they know their place and there are always plenty more.

I didn't know this man's name or address, but I had met others exactly like him during consultations. I had examined their minds and listened to their rationalizations and their deviant fantasies.

Sadly, I had also interviewed women like Tracy. There is a stereotyped image in the public's mind whenever the word 'prostitute' is mentioned. People are very quick to jump to conclusions. I make no such judgements. There may be similarities in their occupation and background, but each

prostitute is a separate and unique human being. They are someone's daughter, sister, niece, wife or mother.

Yet the sad reality is that most of them suffer dreadful experiences in their daily lives. Prostitutes, as a group, make up the largest number of unsolved murder cases in Britain. I can vouch for this because I've seen more dead prostitutes than I care to remember.

I sometimes ask myself how I ended up where I am, doing what I do.

When I started my career as a clinical psychologist, I had no idea that I'd eventually spend my spare time studying post-mortem photographs and walking murder scenes. My real work is about picking up the pieces of damaged lives and trying to make people whole again.

When I told police the true nature of Frederick and Rosemary West and that Tracy Turner was a prostitute, I could do so because I had seen people with very similar lives in my consulting room - where I gathered my knowledge of human behaviour and psychological functioning.

It is where my story has to start . . .

INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty-two years I have analysed and treated thousands of patients, each one of them unique as only human beings can be. The range of their problems is as diverse and complicated as human experience itself.

When I began my career as a clinical psychologist, I had no thought of specializing in the forensic (crime-related) area. Given the nature of the work, it was hardly the sort of choice to recommend to anyone.

Forensic psychology is a field of expertise that emerged from two separate strands. First it came from the special hospitals and regional secure units that are used to assess and treat people who offend as a consequence of some mental abnormality. Secondly, it emerged from the prison system, where psychologists have worked for many years with individual inmates, as well as researching the most effective regimes for running the prisons themselves.

This is not pleasant work. Often it involves treating people who have depraved and dangerous minds and who grievously hurt those around them. It also means seeing the vulnerable, deeply wounded victims of crime.

Among my most painful and difficult work has been examining young children at risk of emotional, sexual and physical injury. I also have to interview their parents and advise the courts on whether the family should remain together or if the children should be sent into the loneliness and, sometimes, ineptitude of the care system.

Very little has been written about these areas of my work. The spotlight has tended to focus on my involvement in criminal investigations, yet, since 1984, when I pioneered

the use of psychological profiling in the UK, my clinical practice – my experience as a psychologist – has been the bedrock upon which this work has been built. This first use of psychological profiling resulted in the conviction of Paul Bostock for the murders of Caroline Osborne and Amanda Weedon; it is now acknowledged that Bostock was the first person in Britain to be caught and convicted with the help of a psychological analysis and profile created from evidence left by an *unknown* offender at a crime scene, which, drawing on professional psychological expertise, painstakingly established key characteristics of the offender: his primary motivational driving forces; his intelligence, education and abilities; his emotions, personality structure and employment; his sexual, social and family relationships; the location of his current and previous homes and the geographical range he is comfortable with and will operate in; and, crucially important, the likelihood that he will offend again.

Since that first case I have travelled tens of thousands of miles in my spare time, criss-crossing Britain to assist in over a hundred investigations involving murder, rape, kidnapping, arson and extortion. I have ‘walked through the minds’ of perpetrators and provided police with the psychological characteristics that would narrow their search for potential suspects and help to stop them killing again. Although psychological profiling remains a relatively new science, it has enabled offenders to be caught in cases of serious crime including murder by strangers – something that may involve the abduction and killing of children. This new science enables a greater understanding of why people behave in this otherwise inexplicable way, so making it possible for us to see if this risk can be reduced by the earlier identification of potential offenders and the treatment of the underlying causes. With a greater understanding of why people offend in these seemingly uncontrollable fashions, it may be possible to treat a

number of, for example, rapists or stalkers in a way that would prevent them reoffending when they are released into society.

In *The Jigsaw Man* (1997), I revealed the details of my work for the police and gave an insight into the world of offender profiling. In this book I've returned to certain criminal cases and introduced new crimes to illustrate particular points about how I draw my conclusions.

My two roles have dovetailed effectively because both require an understanding of the broader psychological aspects of offending and offenders. What makes a person abduct, rape, kill, torture or abuse another human being? What were the developmental processes that moulded them and sent them along this particular path?

As a forensic psychologist, I have always known that if I could prevent just one person from committing a crime, then I would be preventing many others from ever becoming victims. For example, by the time many sexual offenders reach the middle years of their 'careers' they will have harmed over 150 separate victims. It seems a lot, but I have examined paedophiles in their early twenties who could trace back more than 400 separate child victims before being caught. Being convicted and punished rarely changes these men. They have to be analysed and treated.

There is a wealth of scientific literature about human behaviour and psychological functioning and this knowledge underpins my work in the consulting room. At the same time, I learn new things every day with each patient I interview.

People often ask me how I can look at a crime scene in all its dreadful detail and know so much about the person responsible without ever having met them. I hope that I have managed to answer this question in the pages that follow by showing how my consulting-room work relates directly to the work I do for the police and the tasks I undertake now.

I have chosen the clinical cases very carefully. They are not sensationalized or meant to shock, but rather to give an insight into a world that very few people ever see.

1

'MUM ISN'T HERE. I can't find her. I keep looking.'

'Where is she?'

'I don't know.'

'Is she far away?'

'No. She should be here. I want her.'

'Tell me about your mother.'

He didn't answer immediately. His eyes were closed and the tempo of his breathing had changed slightly. Fingernails dug sharply into the palms of his hands.

'We go on picnics to Stratford-upon-Avon and eat sandwiches by the river and drink orange squash. My brother and me dangle our feet in the water and watch the bubbles where the fish are feeding.'

'After lunch, Mum lies back in a deckchair and has her "forty winks" but I don't think she really sleeps. Sometimes I lay my head on her lap and look up at the sky through the leaves. I like that.'

'In the afternoon we buy ice creams. I choose strawberry but Tom always has chocolate. You should see his face afterwards. Mum has to spit on a handkerchief and wipe his chin and his cheeks.'

'What day do you go?'

'Sunday. School the next day.'

'Do you like school?'

'I guess.' He shrugged ambivalently.

'What are your best lessons?'

'English.'

'Who's your teacher?'

'Mrs Jenkins.'

'What is she like?'

'Nice. She's always nice. She doesn't shout or get uptight.'

'What about your friends?'

'No, I haven't really got any. Not many.'

'What do you do at playtime?'

'Ordinary stuff. Sometimes there's a fight.'

'What about after school?'

'I stay out as much as possible. I don't go home.'

'Why?'

'I just don't. I go looking for Mum.'

'Why? Where is she?'

'She should be there. I want her to be . . .'

'Does she have a job?'

'Um . . . I don't think so.'

'When do you go home? You can't stay out all day.'

'No.'

'What happens?'

'It's dark inside. I don't like it.'

'What do you do?'

'I try to go to my room. I want to get to my room.'

'What's in your room?'

'Maybe I'll be OK then. Maybe I can go to sleep.'

'It's a bit early to go to sleep.'

'Yeah, I know. I'm frightened. I want Mum.'

'And . . . ?'

'I just want her.'

'But she's not there, you say. Isn't there anybody else to look after you?'

'He's there . . .'

His voice shook, and his face had become pale and strained. A long pause followed. Every muscle seemed tense as he sat forward in the chair, but still he wouldn't open his eyes.

'I'm scared. I can hear his footsteps on the stairs. I know he's coming.'

'What happens?'

'The door opens and he's standing there. I'm in the corner. He grabs me by the hair and puts his face up against mine. I can see the spit in the corners of his mouth. "Where is she?" he says. "Where is the bitch?"

"I don't know, Dad. Don't call her that."

"Ah, yes, you do know. Where is she? Whose bed is she in now?"

"No, Dad. She wouldn't . . ."

"Why are you covering for her, you little bastard? They're all the same - you'll see! Where is she?"

"I don't—"

"Lying little bastard!"

"Please no, Dad, don't hit me."

"Come with me." He drags me by the hair along the hallway to their bedroom. My head is twisted back so I can only see the ceiling and I have to walk on tiptoes so he doesn't tear my hair out. He shoves me towards the bed and throws back the bedclothes.

'He screams, "Look at it!" I don't know what I'm supposed to do. "Look at what that disgusting slut has left behind!"

'He forces my face against the mattress. What should I see?

"Smell that! Where is the bitch?"

"I don't know. Please. I want my mum."

'He forces me down and locks my head between his knees. Then he starts hitting me with his belt. "WHERE IS SHE?"

"I don't know. I don't know."

"You're not even mine, you little bastard. What do you think of that? Ask the bitch about your father. She won't even remember."

"No. No."

"Where is she? You're shielding her. You didn't come home from school because you were out running a message for her."

"No."