Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated

Use this workbook to take notes as the module moves along. There is a separate workbook for each module.

During the late 60’s and early 70’s there was an ever-increasing number of sexual assaults, rapes, and murders in America. This led the FBI to set up the Behavioural Science Unit in Quantico in 1972. The terms Offender Profiling and Serial Killer emerged as a result of this

An FBI agent, Robert Ressler, is credited with coining the term "serial killer" in 1974. This came about when Ressler heard an officer describing crimes occurring as a series. Ressler recalled that the movie industry referred to short films on a particular subject as ‘serial adventures’. These series of films never had a satisfactory conclusion and always ended on a cliff-hanger and built tension. Just as these films built tension, each crime in an offender’s series increased the criminal’s tensions and never satisfied the criminals’ fantasies.

**Notes on the setting up of the Behavioural Science Unit.**

Additional reading: <https://www.criminaljusticeprograms.com/articles/the-history-of-criminal-profiling/>

**Organized and Disorganised classifications.**

Ressler and Douglas created the terms ‘Organised’ and ‘Disorganised’ to categorise violent serial criminals. They suggested that serial offenders would fit into one of the two behavioural types which could be linked to various attributes. They outlined a range of characteristics of those who carried out each crime type or particular types of behaviour and created a link between the two.

**Notes of Organized and Disorganized behaviours.**

Additional reading: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/wicked-deeds/201806/organized-versus-disorganized-serial-predators>

The early classification system created by the FBI has been invaluable in paving the way to creating profiles of offenders. However, the early work has been criticised by other academics. Some have suggested that linking aspects of a crime to aspects of an offender in this way is too simplistic and not well tested.

**Notes of the limitations of this classification system.**

Additional reading: <http://www.leotrainer.com/serialtypology.pdf>

**Additional notes.**

**Relevant book:**

Mindhunter: Inside the FBI Elite Serial Crime Unit Nov 2017

by John Douglas and Mark Olshaker

**Interesting website:**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FBI_method_of_profiling>

**Sample essay questions:**

Discuss why the early work of the FBI in profiling was important.

Why has the FBI classification system been criticized?