

# Psychological Approaches to Criminal Behavior

Process models and classification models

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## Early theories

- Somatotyping
- Physiognomy
- MacDonald (1963) triad

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## Under-arousal

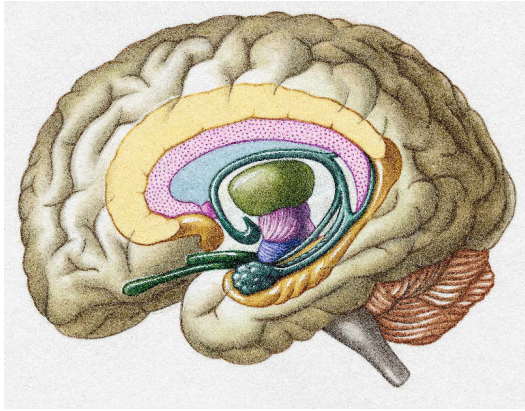
- Antisocial behavior <> low resting heart rate
- Slower EEGs, other measures
- Fearlessness theory
- Stimulation-seeking theory

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## Prefrontal cortex

- Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis
- PFC damage = pseudo-psychopathic state
- Less PFC brain matter in APD

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## Head Injury

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## Phineas Gage



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## Charles Whitman



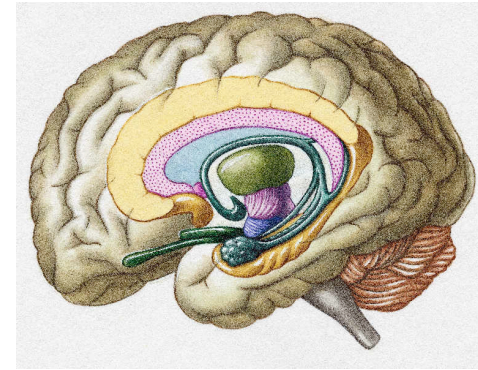
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## Pincus and Lewis

- Child abuse
- Psychiatric disorder
- Brain damage

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## Amygdala



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## Serotonin

- Inverse relationship with aggression
- Impulsivity

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## Genetics

|                                  | Biological parents<br>criminal | Biological parents<br>not criminal |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Adoptive parents<br>criminal     | 25%                            | 15%                                |
| Adoptive parents<br>not criminal | 20%                            | 14%                                |

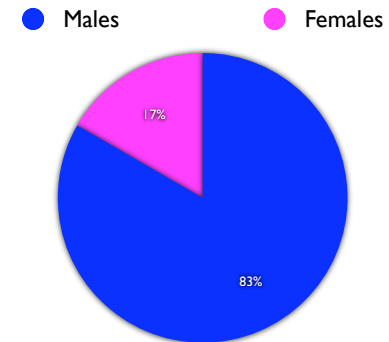
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## Hormones

- Gender differences

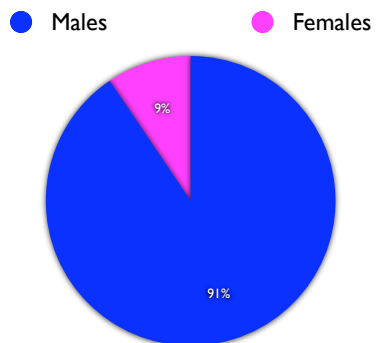
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## Correctional Population



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## Homicide Offenders



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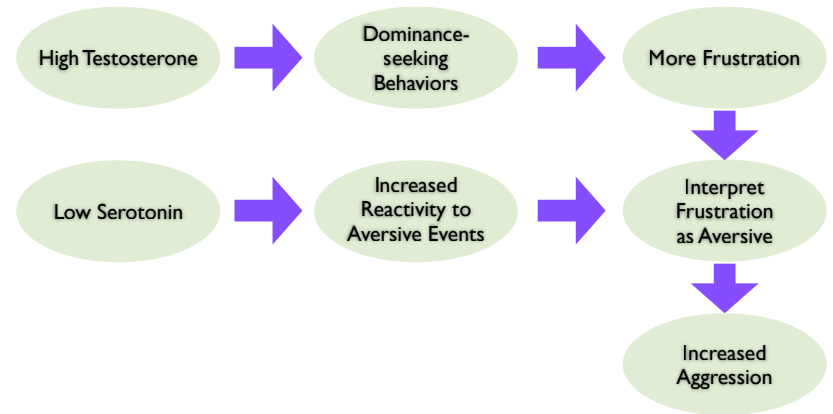
## “Young Male Syndrome”

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## Finger Length

- 2D:4D ratio
- Men: smaller 2D:4D ratio
- More masculine ratio = prenatal testosterone exposure
- More masculine ratio = dominance, physicality, aggression

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## XYY Syndrome

- Conclusion: Falsified

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## Self-esteem

- Low self-esteem = aggression?
- Not true
- Egotism/narcissism
- Ego threat

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## School Shooters

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## Sources

- FBI report: The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective
- Secret Service: Preventing School Shootings
- McGee & DeBernardo (Forensic Examiner): The Classroom Avenger
- National School Safety Center: Checklist of Characteristics

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## FBI Report

- "Leakage"
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Poor coping skills
- Failed love relationship
- "Injustice collector"
- Signs of depression
- Narcissism
- Alienation
- Dehumanizes others
- Lack of Empathy
- Masks low self-esteem
- Anger management problems
- Inappropriate humor
- Seeks to manipulate others
- Lack of trust
- Closed social group
- Change of behavior
- Rigid and opinionated
- Unusual interest in sensational violence
- Negative role models
- Turbulent relationship with parents
- No limits on child

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## Secret Service Report

- Attackers make plans
- Attackers talk about their plans
- Warning signs are common
- Attackers were encouraged by others
- Bullying can be a factor
- Attackers had easy access to guns
- No common profile

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## Forensic Examiner Report

### Exclusionary traits

- Female
- City
- Homosexual/bisexual
- School activities
- Success in school
- Class clown
- Popular/outgoing
- Has girlfriend
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Physical/mental handicap
- Severe mental illness
- Frequent fights
- Tattoos/piercings
- Belligerent with authorities

### Inclusionary traits

- White, middle-class male
- Rural/small community
- Loner/social outcast
- Guns in the home
- Negative/unstable self-esteem
- Rejected “geeks/nerds”
- Small, physically unimposing
- Average or above average IQ
- Narcissistic
- Sensitive
- Interest in violence/violent fantasies
- ~~Targers~~ Targets females and successful
- Recent multiple stressors
- Stalks females

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## National School Safety Center

- History with and interest in weapons
- Violent TV, music, movies, books
- Depressed
- Threatened or attempted suicide
- Cruelty to animals
- Drug or alcohol use
- History of serious disciplinary problems
- Has bullied or been bullied
- Shows anger/frustration in school essays
- Blames others for problems

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## Commonalties?

- Narcissism + Depression  
= Entitlement, rejection, frustration, anger
- Violent fantasies/materials
- Access to and interest in guns

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## MTC:CM3

- Massachusetts Treatment Center: Child Molester Typology, ver. 3
- Knight & Prentky (1990)
- Axis I
  - Degree of fixation on children
  - Social Competence
- Axis II
  - Involvement with children, familial vs. extra-familial
  - Type of contact: sexual only, interpersonal
  - Was victim physically injured

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- Axis I: High fixation, low social competence
  - male victims, experienced sexual abuse themselves
  - true pedophiles
- Axis II: Low contact, high injury
  - more victims
  - more stranger victims

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## Situational vs. Preferential molesters

- |                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| • Situational            | • Preferential |
| • Regressed              | • Seduction    |
| • Morally indiscriminate | • Introverted  |
| • Inadequate             | • Diverse      |
|                          | • Sadistic     |

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## Theory of Sex Offenses

(Finkelhor)

- Emotional congruence
- Sexual arousal
  - Penile plethysmograph
- Blockage
- Disinhibition

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## Implicit Association Test

[implicit.harvard.edu](http://implicit.harvard.edu)

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## Male Partner-Abusers

(Holtzworth-Munroe)

- Family-only
- Dysphoric-borderline
- Generally violent-antisocial

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## MTC: R3

- Opportunistic
- Pervasively angry
- Sadistic
- Sexual non-sadistic
- Vindictive

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## The Confluence Model

(Malamuth)

- Hostile masculinity
- Promiscuous-impersonal sex

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## Sexual Offense Recidivism

### Predictors

- Sexual deviance
- Antisocial personality
- Hostility
- Lifestyle instability

### Nonpredictors

- Violent offenses
- Abuse during own childhood
- Denial of crime
- Empathy for victim

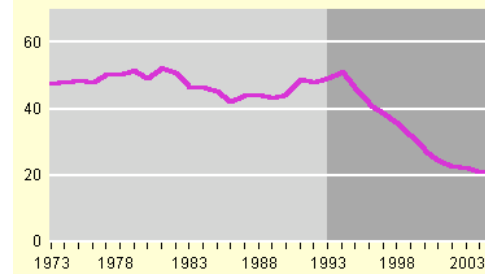
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Crime is down!

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### Violent crime rates

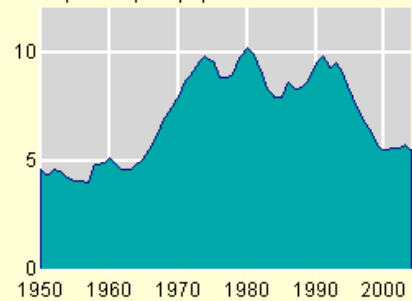
Adjusted victimization rate  
per 1,000 persons age 12 and over



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### Homicide victimization, 1950-2004

Rate per 100,000 population



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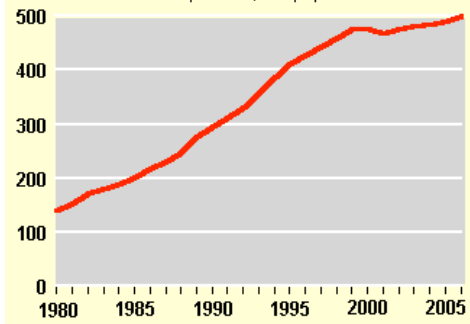
## Why is crime down?

- Increased incarceration?
- Abortion?
- Lead?

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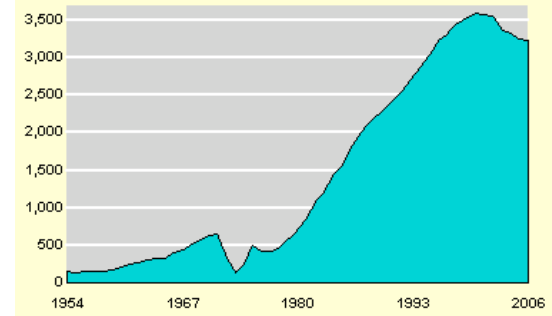
### Incarceration rate, 1980-2006

Number of offenders per 100,000 population



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### Prisoners on death row, 1954-2006



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