Offender profiling as a viable investigative tool has been graphically illustrated in a number of recent high profile New Zealand criminal investigations. This paper deals with offender profiling as applied to an investigation code named *Operation Park* which related to the activities of a serial rapist who offended in Auckland city on 58 known occasions between March 1983 and December 1994.

Between February and July 1993 three intruder rapes occurred in a lower socio-economic suburb in South Auckland. By August of that year the three rapes had been linked to a single individual by means of DNA analysis of seminal fluid left by the offender.

By April 1994 Detectives investigating this series of rapes had identified a further twenty six intruder sexual attacks, many involving rape, with similar characteristics to the three linked rapes confined to a few lower socio-economic South Auckland suburbs.

The victim ages ranged from 10 to 43 years. On each occasion the victim was attacked at night in her own home. The offender was often disguised and also often armed himself with a knife, which he obtained from within the dwelling house and which he used to threaten the victim. The sexual attacks often involved severe physical as well as sexual violence. The offender was not deterred by the presence of other persons, including adults in the houses concerned. On each occasion the offender was a stranger to the victim.

In April 1994 an investigation task force code named *Operation Park* was set up in South Auckland tasked with the responsibility of identifying and arresting the serial
rapist. Very significant Police resources were applied to this investigation. It had an
unprecedented media, public and political profile and was believed to involve
offending unprecedented in the history of New Zealand crime.

Between April 1994 when the task force assembled and November of that year a
traditionally structured Police criminal investigation was carried out. In New Zealand
in excess of ninety percent of violent crime reported to the Police is successfully
cleared. That crime which is not cleared normally involves offences where the victim
is a stranger to the offender. In each case the victims of the Operation Park serial
rapist were in the stranger category. The individual committing these crimes could be
termed a professional who went to extreme lengths to avoid identification and
detection. It became apparent to the officer in charge of the Operation Park
Investigation Task Force that traditional criminal investigation methods were unlikely
to be successful in this particular case. The serial rapist was continuing to offend and
by December 1994 was believed to be responsible for forty four intruder sexual
attacks, fifteen of which had now been linked by means of DNA analysis and a further
four had been linked by means of an identifiable shoe impression.

By November 1994 the officer in charge of the investigation and other key members
of this Task Force had conducted research into the subject of offender or criminal
profiling. Offender profiling has been researched and developed particularly within
the Behavioural Science Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United
States since the 1980s. Other significant research has been undertaken by Professor
David Canter formerly of Surrey University, United Kingdom but now Head of the
Investigative Psychology Department of Liverpool University..

Offender profiling or criminal investigative analysis (CIA) as it is now referred to by
the FBI can be defined as “the analysis of an offenders behaviour during the enactment
of his crime or crimes in order that personal and circumstantial characteristics which
are of use to the investigation may be inferred”. Profiling has a number of potential benefits to an investigator. These may be categorised as follows:

1. Linking crimes to a single individual.

2. Predicting the likely residential location of the offender.

3. Predicting the prior criminal history record of the offender.

4. Predicting the antecedent history of the offender.

**Linking Crimes**

Traditionally criminal investigators in New Zealand make judgements as to whether or not crimes are linked on the basis of *modus operandi* (MO), and physical and forensic evidence such as DNA, fingerprints, shoe impressions and witness/victim descriptions of the offender. Extensive studies carried out particularly in the United States support the view that an analysis of the offender’s behaviour with the victim during the commission of the crime, particularly in the case of rape, may be a more reliable indicator as to whether or not crimes are linked than traditional means. Intruder rapists in particular essentially have a similar *modus operandi* in that they break and enter the dwelling house of a victim who is a stranger and commit their crimes after overcoming any resistance from the victim after a surprise attack. An analysis of the offenders sexual, verbal and physical behaviour during the commission of an offence very often reveals *signatures* or commonalities which occur throughout the series of crimes.

In the *Operation Park* investigation Detectives using a behavioural analysis approach isolated a total of forty four intruder sexual attacks from a pool of in excess of one hundred fifty unsolved similar crimes and attributed those crimes to the *Operations Park* serial rapist.
Residential Location

Much research has been carried out both in the United States and the United Kingdom on the subject of serial rapists and the locations of their crimes. Of particular interest to the Operation Park investigation team was research carried out by Canter and Gregory and published in a paper headed ‘Identifying the Residential Location of Rapists’ published in the Journal of the Forensic Science Society 1994; 34:169 to 175. This spatial offence behaviour research of 45 British serial rapists identified two hypothetical models of rapists. About ten percent of the serial rapists studied fitted the commuter hypothesis, where the offender travelled from his home or base into a selected area from which he moved out when travelling to his offence venue or venues. The remaining serial rapists fitted the marauder hypothesis, where the offender moved out from his home or base to commit his crimes and then returned, going out on different directions on different occasions. Essentially this research suggests that marauder rapists generally offend within the environment in which they live, that they have a defined criminal range beyond which they do not offend and that they often create a safety zone around their residential location or base within which they also do not offend.

An analysis of the research carried out by Canter and Gregory enabled the Operation Park investigation team to predict that the serial rapist during a series of offences committed in the South Auckland suburb of Otara in 1988 lived in a relatively small triangle of 32 residential streets in that particular suburb at the time that those crimes were committed. The investigation team also believed that although the serial rapist was no longer living in that particular location, he retained an association with that particular geographical area which prevented him from committing offences in that area during his entire period of offending.

Predicting Previous Criminal History
The *Operation Park* investigation team carried out an analysis of published US and United Kingdom material available on serial rapists to determine whether or not serial stranger rapists have a common or predictable criminal background. It became immediately apparent that the typical American and United Kingdom stranger intruder rapist to all intents and purposes is identical in criminal background. The typical USA/UK stranger intruder rapist has the following general characteristics (inter alia).

1. First convicted of any criminal offence at the average age of 15 years.

2. First convicted for the crime of rape at the average age of 25 years.

3. Approximately ninety percent fit the Canter and Gregory marauder hypothesis.

4. Almost invariably the rapist has a history of juvenile offending.

5. Almost invariably an intruder rapist has previous convictions for house burglary.

6. At the time of his arrest for the rape series for which he was responsible he is unlikely to have a previous rape or sexual related conviction.

7. The rapist’s victims are, in the vast majority of cases, strangers who have been identified as vulnerable by prowling activity.

8. The individual will generally continue to offend until arrested or prevented from offending by some other means.
A study of individual New Zealand offenders convicted for at least one intruder rape was carried out to determine whether or not a New Zealand offender has similar characteristics and background to his American and British counterpart. Twenty nine of the offenders studied had a single intruder rape conviction and three had two or more intruder rape convictions. The relevant results of this study showed that the New Zealand intruder rapist has the following characteristics:

1. Average age at first ever criminal conviction, 16 years.

2. Average age at first rape conviction, 24 years.

3. Percentage convicted of any sexual offence prior to the commission of the first rape, 18 percent.

4. Percentage convicted of house burglary prior to committing their first rape, 90 percent.

In each of these cases the offender fitted the marauder hypothesis in that he offended within the environment that he was living. In the majority of cases the first ever criminal conviction was for house burglary and the victims were strangers to the offender, identified by prowling activity.

From the studies carried out the Operation Park investigation team concluded that the serial rapist that they were hunting was a predictable individual who could be identified and arrested by isolating persons of a particular physical profile who had a recorded history of house burglary and an identifiable association with the various residential suburbs where crimes had been committed between 1988 and December 1994.
In order to isolate a viable pool of suspects from whom a blood sample for DNA analysis would be requested an *Operation Park* offender profile data base was set up at the Task Force Headquarters. The investigation team prepared a ten point profile of the offender, see Annex A.

Criminal charge record details of every male person between the ages of 20 and 40 years charged with any criminal offence in the Greater Auckland area between 1 January 1976 and 12 December 1994 were electronically obtained and loaded into the *Operation Park* profiling data base. This amounted to five hundred and sixty five thousand, one hundred and thirty one individual records and once these had been validated and cross-matched the data base contained the records of one hundred and fifteen thousand unique individuals.

The next step was to exclude individuals who could not be the serial rapist. Firstly all those individuals who did not fit the physical profile of the serial rapist, who was known to be a New Zealand Maori or Pacific Islander aged between 20 and 40 years were excluded. The next step involved the exclusion of persons who were confirmed to have been in custody on the date that a DNA linked rape had been committed.

This exclusion process reduced the number of unique individuals in the data base to approximately three thousand. A first priority list of suspects was drawn from this group and comprised persons with a recorded criminal history of house burglary, with a known association with at least one of the residential suburbs where a crime or crimes had been committed and who fitted set physical parameters.

This first priority suspect list had been prepared by 7 February 1995 some two months after the data base had been set up. Each individual on the list was approached and consented to supply a blood sample for DNA analysis. Each was excluded as a result of forensic analysis. In April 1995, two months after the production of the first list, a person Joseph Stephenson Thompson was identified in a subsequent priority list. In
May 1995 he supplied a Detective with a Buccal swab for the purpose of DNA examination. He declined to provide blood citing religious reasons. The following month the forensic scientist responsible for the Operation Park case advised that the result of the analysis of the Buccal swab was such that Thompson’s DNA profile was consistent with the DNA profile of the offender. On 15 July 1995 after consolidation of the DNA analysis Thompson was subjected to a Police interview. He confessed to being responsible for forty two of the forty four crimes that had been attributed to him by the investigation team and a further eight intruder sexual attacks which because of their historical nature were not available for the investigation team to analyse. He pleaded guilty to all charges and was sentenced to a record thirty years imprisonment with a non-parole period of twenty five years. At the time of his sentencing his offending involved the greatest number of serial stranger sexual attacks identified in the British Commonwealth.

Following his conviction Thompson confessed to a further five intruder sexual attacks and three outdoor sexual attacks, a number of which had never been reported to the Police. At the time of his arrest Thompson was a 36 year old factory hand, of New Zealand Maori extraction who came from a deprived background and had a verifiable history of being physically and sexually abused as a child.

It is extremely interesting to compare Thompson to the typical USA/UK stranger rapist. Thompson was first convicted of a criminal offence at the age of 15 years, the charge involving house burglary. The first rape in his series occurred at age 25 years. He perfectly fitted the marauder hypothesis in that his offences occurred within the environment that he was living at the time. He has a history of juvenile offending. At the time of his arrest he did not have a prior conviction for any sexual related criminal activity but had a recorded history as a house burglar. He identified victims through prowling activity and in each case he was a stranger to the victim. During 1988 and 1989 Thompson lived with his parents at an address contained within the predicted triangle of thirty two streets in the residential suburb of Otara mentioned earlier in this
paper. The prediction that that particular geographical area retained some relevance to him was borne out by the fact that his mother and father lived in separate residential addresses within that triangle at the time of his arrest.

Listed in Annex B under the heading ‘Thompson’ are the results of the offender profiling offences listed in at Annex A.

**Conclusion**

The application of offender profiling to this particular case was responsible for identifying this serial offender within a few months. Thompson had committed sexual attacks between 1983 and December 1994 without ever coming to the notice of the Police. This investigation demonstrates that the application of offender profiling to the crime of serial rape is an extremely viable and valuable investigative tool. Offender profiling may enable managers of serious criminal investigations to deploy available resources in a logical and structured manner which gives the greatest opportunity for a successful conclusion.