

# PsychLingo

Exploring English Through Psychology

February 2024, Issue no. 3

We extend our gratitude to the **Rector of the Maria Grzegorzewska University, Professor Barbara Marcinkowska** for her support and contribution towards subsidising the printing of this magazine.

## INDEX:

Letter from the Editor .....	4
Can Anyone Deceive the Legal System? .....	5
Glossary #1 .....	8
Annotations and sources .....	9
Sniffing Out Crime: .....	10
Glossary #2 .....	13
Sources .....	13
(Un)reliable Witnesses? .....	14
Glossary #3 .....	17
Annotations and sources: .....	17
Psychological Thrillers.....	19
Phenomenon.....	19
Glossary #4 .....	21
Sources .....	22

Interview with .....	22
Anna Więcek-Durańska, PhD.....	22
Glossary #5 .....	29
Body Language.....	30
Glossary #6 .....	32
Annotations and sources .....	33
How can the FBI catch liars based on their body language? .....	33
Understanding Hybristophilia: .....	34
The Nature of Hybristophilia.....	35
Stockholm Syndrome's Essence .....	35
Glossary .....	36
Prosopagnosics .....	38
& Super-recognisers .....	38
Glossary #7 .....	40
Pun Please!.....	40
Whimsical Language.....	41
Idioms.....	41
Proverbs.....	41
Last Requested Meals .....	42
Culture Club .....	43
"Promising. Young. Woman." .....	43
"To Kill a Mockingbird" .....	45
Last but not least.....	46
TED Talk.....	46

Psycho-Pass .....	46
Linguistic Tidbit.....	47
Find us elsewhere too! .....	47
Our Staff.....	48

# Letter from the Editor

*Dear Readers,*

Welcome to the third issue of our magazine. This month, we have dived into darker topics such as criminality, horror, and phobias. Interestingly, the best-selling books and TV shows in Poland usually revolve around crime, such as those by J. Nesbo or R. Mróz, and shows like *CSI LAS*, *CSI NY*, *True Detective*, and *Breaking Bad* or *Kryminatorium* podcast. The latter is the number one most-listened-to podcast on Spotify in Poland, and it talks about unsolved, difficult, dark, and often disturbing cases.

In this issue, we explore our attraction to the unknown and the excitement that crime brings. We ask questions such as what is crime, and is there a difference between crime and CRIME? We also give a bit of insight into forensic psychology, not just focusing on the negative aspects of human behaviour (but mostly on it).

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to Mrs Anna Więcek-Durańska, a PhD specialist in forensic psychology, who kindly agreed to give us an interview in which she discussed the differences in crime between sexes and the background of sex crimes. Mrs. Anna Więcek-Durańska is a supervisor and founder of "LexPsyche," a science club at our university whose activities revolve around forensic psychology. They conduct studies, have their own lectures, and visit penitentiaries. I encourage anyone interested in the psychological background of crime to join the club. Finally, I want to thank the whole team for their hard work.

*Enjoy your reading!*

# Can Anyone Deceive the Legal System?

Overview: the process of determining legal  
insanity

By Karolina Tomczak

G. Hobbitt's film *Primal Fear* focuses on Aaron, a young altar boy who is accused of murdering a catholic archbishop. During the trial, Aaron's defence tries to prove his criminal insanity. His attorney representing Aaron is convinced that he has a dissociative identity disorder. Hobbitt's picture takes the audience step by step through the process of how legal insanity is confirmed. The film makes us wonder how exactly mental illness can be used to invalidate a person's crimes. Is that really all it takes?

First, let's ask what the process of determining criminal insanity is. The procedure of determining legal insanity or criminal insanity in the Polish legal system is a process to establish the defendant's responsibility. It focuses on the ability to understand the nature of their act or control their behaviour. If a person is legally determined to be incompetent and is a perpetrator, they can't be found guilty (annotation no.1), according to Heitzman J. and Markiewicz I. While culprits are placed in prisons, criminally insane individuals may require treatment at mental hospitals.

Forensic psychiatrists and psychologists point out that criminal insanity is caused by an inability to understand social and legal norms. For example, when a person who suffers from paranoid delusions kills their alleged enemy, they understand the simple act of killing. What they don't understand is how it is unacceptable in the social and legal context (annotation no.2).

Determining an individual's mental inability to abide by societal norms involves a systematic process. Let's delve into the steps taken to determine an individual's mental inability to follow these norms.

So, what steps are taken to determine someone's mental inability to abide by these norms? Let's explore them.

1. **Preliminary diagnosis** that is typically conducted by law enforcement, court or psychiatrists. These institutions can see the premises of criminal insanity.
2. **Psychiatric examination** is commissioned by the court following a preliminary diagnosis. The defendant is subjected to the analysis of his mental well-being and capacity for criminal responsibility. The examination is conducted by a forensic psychiatrist.
3. **Expert opinion** which serves as a basis for the judge to consider the insanity factor.
4. The final step is a **criminal trial**, where the judge determines the criminal responsibility of the suspect. If the defendant is found to be legally insane, the court may order preventive measures, such as confinement to a mental institution.

However, there are other factors that contribute to the decision to place the perpetrator in an institution. There are three conditions that must be met simultaneously for this to happen (annotation no.3):

- The crime must be characterised by a high level of social harmfulness. These crimes have a huge negative impact on social safety (this includes crimes such as rape, murder, and drug dealing) (annotation no.4).
- There is a considerable possibility that the culprit will commit the same or similar crime again.
- It is established that the perpetrator was in a state of insanity while committing the crime.

There is no predetermined amount of time that the sentenced individual must spend in the facility. The progress of the patient's therapy must be reported to the judge every six months. If the treatment is successful, the court may release the sentenced individual from the facility.

What psychological symptoms could indicate criminal insanity? The term is frequently connected to different kinds of illnesses and psychosis, such as schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis (bipolar disorder) or paranoia. However, these illnesses are not the direct reason for legal insanity.

Afflictions related to them can disturb the most important spheres: intellectual (connected to decision-making) or emotional drive (which determines the acts of the culprit). What symptoms exactly could disrupt rational behaviour? According to Heitzman J. and Markiewicz I. these are:

- Hallucinations and delusions.
- Disorders of consciousness and time perception.
- Disorders of normative systems.
- Decrease of self-esteem and confidence.
- Chronic insomnia – fatigue and exhaustion.

As a result of psychosis, people can exhibit illogical and irrational thoughts/feelings or decisions. Legally insane people may provoke aggression and display risky behaviours and self-harm tendencies. Their conduct could be impulsive, arising from sudden anger. Psychosis will cause an increased drive for action and psychotic motivation. In a legal context, a diagnosis can significantly reduce the sentence.

To sum up, the process of determining criminal insanity is an extensive operation. It ensures that the court system can't be fooled easily and offenders will not walk free after committing crimes. Besides, this approach can not only punish legally unacceptable behaviours but also help fix them. While the legal system seeks to establish culpability and administer justice, the psychological assessment aims to understand the defendant's mental state at the time of the offence. Collaboration between legal and psychological experts is essential to ensure fair and accurate insanity determinations. These aspects are crucial for maintaining a righteous legal system. For the curious ones, I recommend watching the movie *Primal Fear*, which focuses on proving criminal insanity in the United States.

## **Glossary #1**

**dissociative identity disorder** – a disorder characterised by the presence of two or more distinct identity states, each with its own way of perceiving and interacting with the world



**legal insanity** – a legal term indicating that a person, due to a mental disorder, is not criminally responsible for their actions because they were unable to understand that their conduct was wrong.

**perpetrator** – a person who commits a harmful, illegal, or immoral act

**culprit** – a person or thing responsible for a wrongdoing or crime

**paranoid delusion** – a false belief characterised by irrational suspicion or mistrust of others

**abide by** – to comply with, follow

**law enforcement** – the collective system and individuals responsible for maintaining public order, preventing and detecting crime, and enforcing laws

**confinement** – the state of being forced to stay in a prison

**affliction** – a state of pain, distress, or suffering

**exhibit** – display, show

**culpability** – responsibility for wrongdoing

**offence** – a violation of the law

## **Annotations and sources**

1.

Heitzman, Janusz & Markiewicz, Inga. (2012). Niepoczytalność – doktryna, praktyka, skuteczność, alternatywa.

2.

Uszkiewiczowa, L. (1996). Zaburzenia raktywne i symulacja. PZWL.

3.

<https://www.infor.pl/prawo/prawo-karne/inne/279909,Popelnienie-przestepstwa-w-stanie-niepoczitalnosci.html>

4.

<https://kancelariajanus.pl/prawo-karne/spoleczna-szkodliwosc-czynu/>

# Sniffing Out Crime:

The dedicated world of police dogs and their  
training process

By Daria Fruń

*Why are Police Dogs so good at their jobs?*

*Because they're always pursuing leads.*

Even if it's a pun, it's true – police dogs perform their duties relentlessly and with great dedication, and their work has been recognised worldwide. Dogs have been accompanying law enforcement for hundreds of years, the earliest mention dating to the 14th century in France, where they accompanied city guards during night patrols.

## **What do police dogs do nowadays?**

Police dogs are trained to perform specific tasks that they are specialised in based on their predispositions. Those tasks include:

- tracking
- patrolling
- detecting drugs
- detecting explosives
- detecting human remains
- supporting rescue actions
- assigning scent tracks left on crime scenes to specific people

In Poland, dogs tend to serve eight to ten years, after which they retire and often get adopted by their handlers or transported to selected shelters. There is also the possibility of adoption by a civilian owner if they meet the necessary criteria.

### **Getting ready for service**

The lengthy process of training a police dog begins with the selection... of its future handler. Every dog usually has only one handler that oversees its training and later becomes its working partner. The handler must be caring and responsible with a gentle but stern approach. They also have to be able to take care of the dog's physical and mental health.

The next step is the selection of the dog itself. To be chosen, the animal needs to possess certain qualities. Firstly, good health and age. The dog candidate cannot be prone to sickness or have congenital defects. It also cannot be older than two years. Secondly, it needs to showcase a certain level of aggression – overly violent animals are difficult to train and tend to get easily distracted. Still, too gentle ones won't protect the handler. The dogs also need to be adequately socialised and have healthy psychological development.

As mentioned before, the dogs specialise in specific tasks, so their training varies slightly depending on what skills they need to learn and hone. It usually takes around six months and ends with an exam that is the same for all tracks – five trials that verify the most important skills all police dogs need to possess.

The first trial is the fetching test. The dog doesn't have to simply fetch a ball – it has to do so swiftly and with enthusiasm. The second trial is the olfactory test, during which the animal is required to find a hidden object that is usually imbued with human scent presented to the dog at the beginning of the test.

After finding the object, the dog must alert its handler with the correct, learned signal. The third trial is the stimuli immunity test – the dog is taken to an open area for a short walk, and suddenly, a gunshot is heard from an unknown location. If the dog remains calm and doesn't react, it passes the trial. The fourth test is crucial, as it involves defending the handler. The handler is jumped by a pretended attacker while walking with the dog. The test is meant to verify the dog's confidence, determination, protective instincts, and skills. The last, fifth, trial is a test of alertness and ability to assess the situation. The dog is leashed to a bench or a tree and left alone for a while. Then, it's approached by an aggressively behaving stranger. It is supposed to remain distrustful and defensive and to try to scare the stranger off.

Dogs that successfully complete all stages of training receive a certificate that allows them to start active service. It's valid for one year but can be extended if the dog retakes the exam and proves it still possesses all the necessary skills.

## Glossary #2

**pursue** – to follow or chase someone or something

**handler** – a person who trains and is in charge of an animal, in particular a police officer in charge of a dog

**stern** – strict

**prone to** – having a tendency or inclination to sth

**congenital** – existing from birth

**hone** – improve, polish

**fetch** – to go and bring back something

**olfactory** – relating to the sense of smell

**imbue** – inspire (with principles, ideas, etc.)

## Sources

<https://csp.edu.pl/csp/pion-dydaktyczny/10,dok.html>

<https://podkarpacka.policja.gov.pl/rze/profilaktyka/psy-sluzbowe-w-policji/45184,Psy-sluzbowe-w-policji.html>

<https://lodzka.policja.gov.pl/el2/zwierzeta-w-pre/psy-sluzb/50353,Pies-policjant-przyjaciel-i-pomocnik.html>

<https://natemat.pl/385813,jak-wyglada-zycie-policyjnych-psow>

# (Un)reliable Witnesses?

By Joanna Łukasiewicz

According to CBOS research conducted in 2023, there is a high probability that you feel safe in your neighbourhood. That would mean you're among 96% of Poles who feel the same (annotation no.1). Good for you! Leaving your bed alarmed on everyday matters is neither pleasant nor helpful, but at the end of the day, crime happens daily. A series of unfortunate events might turn you into a crime witness.

You are considered a reliable witness if you are not prejudiced, you have a good view of the people involved in the crime investigated by an accurate investigative or judicial authority, and your mental capabilities were not limited at the time the crime happened. Obviously, alcohol, drugs, unbelievable amounts of stress, etc., can affect the way you memorise (annotation no.2). You are obligated to testify, so your absence when you give evidence might result in a mulct or even arrest. On the other hand, you can receive multiple forms of help from the authorities to make testifying easier for you (annotation no.3).

First: **witnessing the crime**, then: **giving evidence to the authorities**, and eventually: **the neighbourhood is safe again!**

Actually, the topic is more complicated than the little and naive formula I just wrote. Apparently, everything is never as it seems. Research on the reliability of eyewitnesses conducted over the past decades implies that, in general, eyewitness memory is unreliable (annotation no.4).

The human brain is not a computer based on a binary system (using 1 and 0) where you can easily distinguish between something true or false. A computer either stores a value of a variable (a part of a computer's memory used for storing data of a specific type) or not. You can ask the device for that information, and it simply gives it to you or informs you that you're attempting to access something non-existent. Our functioning is more similar to an electronic device with little to no storage available – a "random" value is assigned to a variable because a computer has a limited ability to store data under the circumstance of overflowed storage. Excess data causes the values of different variables to overlap.

The passage of time wipes out the details of a witnessed event – a memory becomes vague. Our brains can fill in the blanks with new content. U. Neisser and N. Harsch asked people how they found out about the Challenger's (ferry) explosion in 1986.

The people discovered the event right after it happened and could answer the questions. Surprisingly, 1 out of 3 answers were significantly different when the group were asked the same questions three years after the explosion.

It is not about the details – significant facts were different between the two versions of the story. Our brains found the unfortunate for the justice system solution to the problem of forgetting. In this case, it was logical. After all, the probability of you reading the news and your friend calling you with the information is similar, but what if you claim to know the details about something that never existed? The Boeing 747 crashed in 1992. Keep in mind that none of the TV stations recorded the event. Crombag's research conducted ten months after the plane crash showed

that some people asserted they'd seen the footage. They were able to describe the non-existent footage in great detail (annotation no.5).

Our cognition may lead us to believe that an innocent man is a criminal. We can get confused because we've seen two people in a short period of time. For example, during R. Buckhout's research, a robbed professor testified that an innocent witness of an attack was a criminal (annotation no.6).

The investigator alone plays a significant role. Research conducted by Elizabeth Loftus showed that a choice of words used in a question can affect a witness's memory. For example, you can replace the verb "hit" with "crash". Using the word "crash" implies the accident was more serious than previously thought. Some people even "recalled" a broken glass at the place of the crash, even though there were none. The more time passed since the event, the more impact the suggestion had (annotation no.7).

I found the topic of eyewitness (un)reliability shocking. Previously, I'd doubt it if you told me a person who had been attacked might have made a mistake identifying the aggressor. My understanding of reliability is derived from the DNA analogy – eyewitness identification is a piece of validated forensic evidence, just like DNA sample analysis. Both methods have limitations and procedures that need to be followed to ensure the best way to gather the information (annotation no.8). I think that distinguishing between valid and contaminated testimonies is a great challenge to the justice system, and the procedures must be refined by the best, the wisest and the most experienced detectives.



## Glossary #3

**mulct** – a fine or penalty imposed as a punishment for an offence or a breach of a law or contract.

**testify** – to give evidence or make a statement under oath in a court of law

**variable** – a factor or quantity that can assume different values or can be varied

**vague** – unclear or not clearly defined

**assert** – to state a fact or belief confidently

**forensic** – related to scientific methods of solving crimes

**testimony** – a statement, either written or spoken, given in a court of law

**contaminated testimony** – testimony that has been compromised or tainted in a way that diminishes its reliability or credibility

### Annotations and sources:

1.

Policja, P. (n.d.). Polacy czują się bardzo bezpiecznie. Statystyka.

<https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/opinia-publiczna/231719,Polacy-czuja-sie-bardzo-bezpiecznie.html>

2.

Jakubowska, K. M. (2015). Błędne zeznania świadków naocznych i nausznych jako efekt działania standardowych mechanizmów poznawczych. *Studia Z Kognitywistyki I Filozofii Umysłu*, 9(1), 5–6. <https://doi.org/10.14746/skfu.2015.9.1.01>

3.

Policja, P. (n.d.). Świadek. Policja Dolnośląska. <https://dolnoslaska.policja.gov.pl/wr1/porady/prawa-i-obowia/20749,Swiadek.html?fbclid=IwAR3MT63D8a2pPeKpCOB4j6BqwP2qCc5NzeRDXcRhBovJIUUpTIRCVYBylq0>

4.

Wixted, J. T., Mickes, L., & Fisher, R. P. (2018). Rethinking the reliability of eyewitness memory. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13(3), 324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617734878>

5.

Jakubowska, K. M. (2015). Błędne zeznania świadków naocznych i nausznych jako efekt działania standardowych mechanizmów poznawczych. *Studia Z Kognitywistyki I Filozofii Umysłu*, 9(1), 7–8. <https://doi.org/10.14746/skfu.2015.9.1.01>

6.

Ibidem, s. 9.

7.

Ibidem, s. 8-9

8.

Wixted, J. T., Mickes, L., & Fisher, R. P. (2018). Rethinking the reliability of eyewitness memory. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13(3), 326–327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617734878>

# Psychological Thrillers

## Phenomenon

By Julia Nowakowska

The psychological thriller genre has been gaining enormous popularity these days. There are books, games, movies – often about stalkers, psychopaths, cults or even serial killers. How does the story go? Well, sometimes everything is about the mystery that can be solved by finding out somebody has a mental illness. On the other hand, we have drama or action, where somebody is doing immoral things and must face the consequences of their actions. Sometimes, we can witness a character's descent into insanity. Seeing today's trends, somebody can call it the key to success – but is this popularity really a good thing? Why people are so into it? And what is the psychology behind psychological thrillers?

According to researchers, the main reasons for enjoying thrillers are positive feelings. They pointed out that people experience terror and fear, which leads to some sense of relief that is considered pleasant. Furthermore, those emotional experiences can give you a dopamine rush, leaving you wanting more. How does it work? It usually depends on

the connection we have with a character. During the story, we face their emotions, problems and actions in stressful or extreme situations, which makes us more understanding. The characters are really complicated – sometimes, we wish them the best even though they are doing horrible things. We can even panic when something is about to ruin their plan – for example, when the police are close to discovering a crime! This can lead us to reflect on our own values and beliefs. We think about it more and more. The power of a well-written story is such that it can stay with us long after we've finished it.

On the other hand, solving psychological mysteries can make you feel smart. Just like that! Psychological thrillers come up as difficult to understand before ending, so you can feel smart when you suspect the solution before it is revealed.

It is known that people like and seek positive views of themselves, so obviously, solving those kinds of problems can encourage them to follow this genre, especially when a person has nothing to do with psychology itself! Then, it is almost certain that successfully solved mysteries would boost their ego.

Is this phenomenon good? Well, of course, it depends. If we discuss just the entertaining aspect, there is nothing wrong with psychological thrillers. The problem appears when somebody starts to take them seriously and even underestimates real psychological studies. This can be especially dangerous in societies where there is no established psychological authority, such as among groups of teenagers. Then, somebody could give mental health tips or advice based on knowledge gained only from thrillers, which can even worsen the problem.

Moreover, too much exposure to thrillers could lead to stress and anxiety

or even heighten the sense of paranoia. Also, it can make us less sensitive to violence and gore.

We have to agree that the popularity of psychological thrillers is rising and, as long as they are not treated like an encyclopedia, it is not such a bad thing. What is important is to find authors that have something in common in psychology. It is much safer for our minds – those people know how to make a thriller that would not hurt us (in every meaning!). But if you are a psychologist or psychology student, you'd better not try this genre without ensuring the quality of your chosen book. From my experience, you will get increasingly frustrated with every single second.

## Glossary #4

**dopamine rush** – a sudden release of the neurotransmitter dopamine in the brain, which is commonly associated with feelings of pleasure, reward, or excitement

**heighten** – to increase, enhance

**gore** – blood that has been shed, especially as a result of violence

**paranoia** – a mental condition characterised by irrational suspicions and distrust of others

**descent into** – a gradual move to a worse situation, lower level, or less favourable state

**boost** – increase, improve

## Sources

<https://www.onlymyhealth.com/impact-of-true-crime-and-thrillers-on-mental-health-psychiatrist-explains-1695697468>

# Interview with Anna Więcek-Durańska, PhD

By Jan Wolicki

Article in collaboration with **LexPsyche** – APS  
forensic psychology club

I once heard that men commit most crimes, which is true. However, are all crimes the same and who commits them? Are there differences, and where do they come from? These questions have been bothering me, and the issue was an excellent opportunity to find some answers. Anna Więcek-Durańska, PhD., is a specialist in this field and has conducted multiple studies on the subject. She works at our university and I approached her with these questions, which gave me some interesting, surprising, and maybe disturbing answers. Please note that this is not an easy text, and there are some pieces that may be hard to read, particularly if you don't like listening to or reading about crimes and what they consist of. However, if you're interested in forensic psychology, this

is something you might enjoy. We may drift away from the topic at times, but I hope it adds to the natural flow of the text.

**Jan Wolicki:** We know that men commit more crimes than women.

**Anna Więcek-Durańska:** Indeed.

**JW:** Men are also more often victims of crimes.

**AWD:** It depends on the type of crime, but generally, yes. Looking at the conviction rates, women commit 10% of the crimes. Usually, these are crimes against property, while crimes among men also include aggressive offences, fortunately, in lower percentages.

**JW:** Can we say why men commit most of the crimes?

**AWD:** There are many factors. Psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and law deal with this issue. If someone discovers a single factor, I suppose they will get a Nobel prize. These factors include personality factors, impulsiveness, inhibition of reactions, and certain personality traits – formerly referred to as psychopathic personality, now commonly referred to as antisocial personality. We are entering the factors shaping a person – family environment, not only the one we associate with a criminal or pathology but also alcoholism, other addictions, violence, prior criminality in the family, and high tolerance for violent and aggressive behaviours in the family. Looking at criminal profiles based on male criminal activity, there is also a group of people who grew up in families theoretically functioning properly, but upon closer analysis, it turns out that, for example, the family was incomplete, with no male role model.

Several studies are showing that a stepfather is not exactly a substitute. Often, the stepson-stepfather relationship is conflicted and leads to violence. Of course, it doesn't always have to be physical violence.

**JW:** Is the situation similar for women regarding the reasons for criminal behaviour?

**AWD:** When it comes to women, the situation is more diverse. Looking at the factors causing someone to turn to a life of crime, the search for these will depend on the type of crime. For example, in property crimes (regardless of gender), the economic factor plays a role. Others come into play when we look at robberies and assaults. Different factors come into play in cases of sexual crimes, where men are more often diagnosed with various personality disorders alongside paraphilias. In crimes against minors, one-third of sexual offenders, where the victim is a child under 15, have such a diagnosis. Two-thirds have other reasons. The child becomes a substitute object, but the person is not diagnosed with paraphilia.

**JW:** So, the majority of serious crimes are caused by men?

**AWD:** Yes, looking at statistics, they are. I have dealt a lot with sexual crimes, including rape, with particular cruelty. I studied men and women, minors and even clergy. It turned out that there are indeed fewer female perpetrators, but the way these crimes are committed differs. When we look at the statistics, it turns out to be almost fifty-fifty. Another complex issue arises in categorising this crime. What is considered "particular cruelty" is decided by lawyers, and we know that different sanctions apply in cases classified as more severe crimes. But back to the topic, I wanted to draw attention to motivation. When we look at sexual crime, we associate it with sexual motivation. In men, the goal is, for example,



revenge and sexual motivation come later. In sexual crimes committed by women, revenge-related motivation tends to dominate more frequently. Often, victims (3/4) are women. So, in both men and women, revenge dominates and is related to rumours, unpaid child support or infidelity. It had more of an instrumental character, aiming to humiliate the victim. It is worth mentioning that women were always with other individuals, and at least one man performed the act. But do not fall for the stereotype of the weaker sex. Women planned how to lure out the victim, the way the crime would be committed, the participants, and the tools to be used. Men usually, when it came to sexual acts, used objects found nearby, a stick, a bat, a bottle – rarely were these items brought. Pre-planned things happen with paraphilias, where someone has a specific object. Women, however, had it all planned out. They knew, for example, that they would need a rope, bought a vibrator earlier, etc. Often, they took photos, shaved the victims, recorded the act for later dissemination, defecated and urinated on the victims to humiliate them. Even if women managed the crime, they actively physically participated in the humiliation, kicking and spitting.

**JW:** So, the main difference is that women plan ahead?

**AWD:** Yes, methods and tools.

**JW:** And men do it on impulse?

**AWD:** We have a large number of men who act on impulse. Even if something is planned, the man wanders around in some place at some time, waiting for a moment to attack. Often, it's connected to controlling urges when the perpetrator and the victim know each other, have some kind of relationship, even romantic or intimate. Still, their expectations diverge or start to change regarding, for example, sexual intercourse or

whether it will occur at all. Then we see well-studied date rapes. Since I have written several articles on this topic, people, not only from Poland, turn to me. They thank me and anonymously share stories of how women sexually abused them. For example, in Poland, no proceedings were initiated because the victim was a man. If the victim were a woman, proceedings would have been initiated. Of course, it is unknown how it would have turned out, which does not change the fact that it was unjust. Men are often victims of subtle methods of sexual exploitation, be it heterosexual or homosexual. In one case, a woman drugged a man, and a sexual act was performed, where the man agreed to some of it but not to all. The police did not initiate proceedings.

**JW:** So, is there a social stigma attached to men who experience sexual violence from women?

**AWD:** I'm not sure if I agree with such a strong statement. But men certainly often face ridicule in such situations. According to statistics, women experience violence more frequently than men, but I can also refer here to victimisation studies that we conducted with the Central Statistical Office (GUS) last year for the Council of Europe. It turned out that women more often experience physical violence, often psychological and economic violence. But when we count the percentage of people experiencing violence, it is similar regardless of gender. Men more often experience psychological violence from women. It is already talked about more. Police officers are being trained, but it is still a taboo topic. I have cases of my patients who are not taken seriously. They are ridiculed. For example, a man reported that a woman hit and pushed him, leaving no marks. There was a drastic difference in physical strength, and the man knew that his reaction could be dangerous for his partner.

**JW:** What about the perspective of the judiciary and judicial practice? You mentioned that sometimes proceedings are not initiated. Are there differences in proceedings and sentencing?

**AWD:** I have done such analyses in rape cases. I have not analysed other crimes. But when it comes to rape, I compared the sentences for acts with the same qualification, and it turned out that women are slightly more leniently punished. There is a certain difference. Theoretically, it should not exist, but with judgments, there is a range and brackets, and this difference is based on them.

**JW:** While we are at it, are there any differences in the social rehabilitation process?

**AWD:** There are no differences here. Every person convicted of a sexual offence serves their sentence in the therapeutic system. People showing disorders of sexual preference are directed to appropriate facilities. We recently had a conversation with a therapist from the penitentiary in Rawicz. She told us about the course of therapy, which usually lasts a year and, in their case, about two years. But I don't know how the process itself differs. I'll probably find out.

**JW:** And how effective is social rehabilitation?

**AWD:** It depends on how we measure it. We are now doing research regarding the effectiveness of correctional and educational programmes for perpetrators of aggressive crimes. After five years of leaving prison, some had these interventions introduced, and some did not. We are comparing whether they returned to aggressive crime. I have also done such studies regarding violence, i.e., the convicted under Article 207. There were some differences. But there is a high return to prison. It is

strongly related to alcohol addiction. Imagine that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of those surveyed were addicted to alcohol. It is not that alcohol is the cause of violence, but if we do not address alcoholism, even these interventions will not be effective. There is a huge return rate for people driving under the influence. Many people are not diagnosed with addiction despite meeting diagnostic criteria. With sexual offenders, a strong emphasis is placed on dealing with addiction. In many situations, it is a trigger.

**JW:** Does it make sense to use the same therapeutic approach for different crimes?

**AWD:** Of course, therapy is approached individually, but this is how the criminal code regulates it. The interventions are the same. In the intervention itself, attention is paid to different things. In women, recidivism is lower. It is a very complex problem. What is important is stabilisation after leaving the institution, a non-addicted partner, children, and financial stability. This definitely helps.

**JW:** What people are most likely to commit crime? What is their background, and is there a difference between men and women?

**AWD:** In my studies, it was confirmed that these are usually people with primary education, basic vocational education, people with secondary education, but this is a small group. During our latest conversation, the therapist from Rawicz pointed out a certain change regarding sexual crimes in the form of paedophilia. There is a fairly large spread. We should consider whether people with higher education do not commit crimes or whether they hide them better, manipulate better.

**JW:** Are there no differences regarding gender?

**AWD:** I haven't noted such in my studies. I noted a connection with alcohol and the percentage of people with personality disorders, but unfortunately, it was not verified. I can't say.

**JW:** Thank you very much.

## **Glossary #5**

**conviction** – the fact of officially being found to be guilty of a particular crime

**crimes against property** – offences that involve the violation of property rights, such as theft, burglary, or vandalism

**antisocial personality** – a personality disorder characterised by persistent patterns of disregard for the rights of others, aggressiveness, and lack of remorse after harming others

**offender** – a person who commits an offence or a crime

**particular cruelty** – a crime with excessive cruelty or brutality

**child support** – money paid by one parent to another to help cover the costs of raising their child

**infidelity** – the act of being unfaithful to a spouse or partner

**lure out** – to entice or attract someone out of a particular place or hiding, often to catch or confront them

**proceedings** – legal actions or formal activities conducted in a court of law

**exploitation** – the act of using or taking advantage of someone

**stigma** – a symbol of disgrace or infamy

**ridicule** – the act of mocking or making fun of someone

**judicial practice** – the application of legal principles and procedures in the administration of justice

**judiciary** – the branch of government responsible for interpreting and applying the law

**social rehabilitation** – the process of reintegrating an individual back into society, often after serving a sentence

**penitentiary** – prison

**recidivism** – the tendency of a person who has been convicted of a crime to relapse into criminal behaviour

# Body Language

By Amelia Anielska-Mazur

We are constantly surrounded by information in our daily lives, even if we're not aware of it. Throughout the day, when conversing with someone, we tend to exhibit certain behaviours like standing hunched over, playing with our hair, touching our noses, or crossing our arms. We do not realise that they are a constant source of information and a form of communication.

Someone's facial expressions, movements, posture, and more are all a part of our body language or so-called "nonverbals". Nonverbal communication accounts for 60-65% of all communication (annotation no.1). These unconscious signals communicate our inner thoughts and feelings and can affect how others perceive us.

This heavily relies on what traits society has assigned to certain gestures. Plenty of which we witness are forms of self-soothing – a way of calming or comforting oneself, especially when unhappy or distressed – or fidgeting – repetitive movements, mostly unintentional, as a response to boredom or stress.

The most common self-soothing gestures in body language are touching our faces or crossing our arms. The latter is mainly associated with anger or defensiveness.

*Why is that so?*

There is no way of proving someone is trying to be hostile, yet we have come to associate gestures with certain intentions. For instance, as mentioned before, crossed arms. The belief that they symbolise being on the defence comes from appearing closed-off, uninviting and anxious, unlike someone standing with their hands on their hips, which signals readiness. An open posture – focusing on exposing the trunk of the body – is indicative of openness to others.

Despite no solid confirmation of a person's intention without direct questioning, we actively analyse body language. Our unconscious continually processes these subtle behaviours, and experts in the forensic field actively use that knowledge to their advantage.

According to Joe Navarro, a former FBI agent and a body language specialist, most is revealed during face time with a suspect. During a conversation, Joe Navarro would gradually pick up on what the person is unintentionally emitting as a response to any stimuli. The things the ex-agent focused on were physical symptoms, changes in behaviour, the cognitive level, and attempts at perception management. When studying nonverbals, the aim is to focus on assessing – what the person is transmitting rather than hastily judging them.

Body language is a tool unconsciously used by everyone in their lifetime. It is one of the many ways we communicate with one another. The ability to comprehend it is a skill used in fields such as forensics, where it is used to gain a deeper understanding of the people they encounter. While we interpret certain behaviours in specific ways, however tempting they are, we cannot overanalyse what someone might be displaying with their gestures. People are not binary; thus, the same body language might mean different things in two separate people.

Ultimately, the most crucial thing is keeping an open mind and asking questions when you are doubtful of what the other person might be trying to communicate!

## **Glossary #6**

**nonverbals** – any means of communication that do not involve spoken words

**self-soothing** – the action of calming or comforting oneself, especially when unhappy or distressed



**fidgiting** – repetitive movements, mostly unintentional, as a response to boredom or stress

**face time** – face-to-face contact, conversation with someone

## Annotations and sources

1.

Foley GN, Gentile JP. Nonverbal communication in psychotherapy. Psychiatry (Edgmont). 2010;7(6):38-44.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/understand-body-language-and-facial-expressions-4147228>

[https://youtu.be/4jwUXV4QaTw?si=eX8V4MjShyof\\_WiF](https://youtu.be/4jwUXV4QaTw?si=eX8V4MjShyof_WiF)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpJcBozuF6A>

# How can the FBI catch liars based on their body language?

By Karolina Tomczak

**Physical symptoms:** Deceivers will present with increased heart rate or shaky hands and legs as a result of adrenaline rush. The adrenaline can

also be seen with grooming gestures, like brushing hair or straightening clothes.

**Changes in the behaviour:** Lying interviewees can suddenly avoid eye contact, start shaking, and change their sitting position, even if they had a straight posture at the beginning, looking you directly in the eye. It is the result of stress. Even changes in the talking speed can indicate that someone is trying to avoid the truth.

**The cognitive level:** Liars will often keep their stories short and simple. The main focuses are on what they see and hear (typically only two senses). The hoax is kept on a shallow level, so when asked about any details, fibber would have trouble coming up with the answers.

**Attempts at perception management:** Offenders will try to behave in a way they think they're supposed to, for example, they could sit very still, even unnaturally so.

**Based on:** Former FBI Agent Explains How To Detect Lying & Deception, Tradecraft, Wired.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpJcBozuF6A>

# Understanding

## Hybristophilia:

The complex attraction to criminals

By Karina Gałkowska

Hybristophilia, a term coined from the Greek word "hybris", meaning "violence" or "outrage," and "philia", meaning "love" or "attraction," refers to a phenomenon where individuals are sexually or romantically attracted to people who have committed heinous crimes. It's a concept that has long puzzled psychologists and criminologists, shedding light on the complexities of human attraction and psychology.

## **The Nature of Hybristophilia**

Hybristophilia often emerges in people who desire a relationship with, or fantasise about, individuals who have committed crimes, especially celebrities infamous for crimes like murder, assault, and other violent acts. This is an example of a type of paraphilia, a condition which is identified by abnormal sexual cravings. Nevertheless, in not all cases of hybristophilia, the presence of sexual attraction is a necessary component; the notoriety, power, and possible weakness of the criminal attract most people. Understanding the Fascination Psychologists have suggested many theories about hybristophilia. One viewpoint holds that people can be attracted to the perceived control or danger linked to criminals. On some occasions, the media representation of criminals as enigmatic or nonconformist individuals might also be something red as a contributing factor. Another motivation is that there is pleasure in some people's souls to "fix" the criminal or "save" them by changing or rehabilitating them.

## **Stockholm Syndrome's Essence**

Stockholm Syndrome – a name given to the crime in a bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1973 - is often linked to hybristophilia. Stockholm Syndrome is a psychological phenomenon where hostages start to feel

empathy, sympathy or even affection towards their captors. Such dynamic may be present in abusive relationships or when individuals feel powerless or dependent on their oppressors for survival. In hybristophilia cases, people tend to develop the same psychological relationships with criminals, seeing them as self-sacrificial, or those who are tortured. They can still empathise with the criminal, trying to understand their troubles or past trauma despite their evil deeds. Such psychological dynamics may increase the sense of attachment or devotion to the offender, further perpetuating the allure.

Although hybristophilia might look harmless or even romanticised in pop culture, it poses serious consequences. Those exposed to criminals are susceptible to abuse, exploitation and even violence. In addition, romanticising criminals feeds into toxic generalisations and diminishes the pain of the victim and their families.

Summing up, hybristophilia is a complicated and often misinterpreted phenomenon demonstrating the intricacies of human attraction and psychology. Our curiosity towards obscure human behaviour is natural, but at the same time, we must be alert about the possible harm that studying these topics can cause. Through uncovering the base elements which cause hybristophilia, psychologists, along with society, strive to prevent its unwanted outcomes and to establish relationships based on reciprocity and compassion.

## **Glossary**

**heinous** – extremely evil, horrible

**assault** – a violent physical attack

**paraphilia** – a condition characterised by abnormal sexual desires or activities, often involving non-human objects, suffering, or humiliation

**notoriety** – the state of being famous or well-known, especially for something bad

**hostage** – a prisoner taken by kidnappers and held until the kidnappers get whatever they're asking for

**captor** – the person that takes someone as a hostage

**oppressor** – someone who treats people unfairly and cruelly and prevents them from having opportunities and freedom

**deed** – an act

**allure** – attraction, charm

**susceptible** – easily influenced or affected

**obscure** – not clear

**reciprocity** – a relationship in which two people (or groups) help and support each other, providing mutual advantages

# Lifestyle Corner

# Prosopagnosics & Super-recognisers

Can a mother not recognise her daughter, from whom she separated a quarter of an hour ago? Can a husband mistake his wife for a hat? Unfortunately, yes! The aforementioned two cases are examples of cognitive dysfunction caused by neurological disorders. Such dysfunctions are called visual agnosias.

When someone mistakes their wife for a hat, they suffer from a very serious neurological disorder. This condition was described by an American author of popular science publications and medical professor, Oliver Sacks, in *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, which became an international bestseller.

Recently, a younger-generation Polish politician complained in the media that he has difficulties recognising faces and is struggling with prosopagnosia ("prosopon" in classical Greek means "face").

Scientists lean towards the belief that prosopagnosia is associated with certain disorders in specific areas of the brain, especially in the fusiform gyrus.

On the flip side of the face recognition spectrum, we find super-recognisers – individuals with extraordinary face recognition skills. Unlike those who have difficulty identifying even the faces of their close ones,

these super-recognisers can easily recall the features of people briefly encountered, even years ago.

The super-recognisers have piqued the interest of the British police. The UK press extensively covered the effective methods of Scotland Yard in apprehending and incarcerating elusive shoplifters, hooligans involved in street or stadium riots, or convicted criminals evading serving their sentences.

What does this police practice of Scotland Yard entail, as well as the approach of other law enforcement agencies following the footsteps of Londoners in the United Kingdom and other countries?

For example, a super-recogniser reviews recordings documenting hooligan brawls that have occurred around a club's stadium even in the past few decades. Later, they take a place in the stadium's monitoring booth and observe the audience gathered in the stands. Without difficulty, they point out those troublemakers who committed crimes in the past and are currently watching sports events. Surprisingly, they can even identify those troublemakers who were almost completely masked. Even small, uncovered portions of their faces from the past are sufficient to identify them.

Super-recognisers' abilities are of interest to criminologists or, psychologists and, engineers and computer scientists who seek inspiration to improve artificial intelligence algorithm-based monitoring systems ensuring public safety.

*But that's a topic for another story!*

## Glossary #7

**agnosia** – a neurological disorder characterised by an inability to recognise or interpret sensory information, such as objects, people, or sounds, even though the sensory organs are functioning normally

**pique** – to provoke, stimulate, or arouse interest

**apprehend** – to seize or arrest a person suspected of committing a crime

**incarcerate** – to imprison or confine someone within a jail or prison

**elusive** – difficult to catch, define, or understand. It often refers to something that is evasive or hard to pin down

**riot** – a violent disturbance characterised by a group of people engaging in destructive behaviour

**evade** – to escape or avoid, particularly by using cunning or deceitful tactics

**shoplifter** – a person who steals merchandise from a retail store

## Pun Please!

Why did the thief wear blue gloves? He didn't want to be caught red-handed.



Why do thieves have a hard time understanding people? They always take things literally.

# Whimsical Language

## Idioms

**Be caught red-handed** – be caught in the act of committing a crime or breaking a rule

**To come clean** – to reveal the truth about something that has been kept secret. We often use this expression to talk about legal confessions

**To face the music** – to accept the responsibility and punishment for something

**The jury's out** – the jury is deliberating and deciding on a verdict. We can also use this idiom in a non-legal context to talk about something that has yet to be decided on

**A scapegoat** – someone who is blamed for something they didn't do

**To take the law into one's own hands** – to punish someone (often violently) instead of allowing the criminal justice system to determine someone's punishment

**The long arm of the law** – the power and authority of the police and the justice system

## Proverbs

**A drowning man will clutch a straw** – when someone is in a difficult situation, they will take any available opportunity to come out of it

**A leopard doesn't change its spots** – people can't change their character, especially bad

**As you sow, so you shall reap** – your actions – good or bad – determine what you get

**A tree is known by its fruit** – like a tree is known by the fruit it bears, people are known by their character and actions (and not by their appearance)

**Curses, like chickens, come home to roost** – the consequence of wrongdoings always catches up with the wrongdoer

## **Last Requested Meals**

In the United States, where, in some regions, the death penalty is still exercised for the most cruel crimes, inmates on death row get to pick their last meal before execution. Oftentimes, they pick something that brings them memories and comfort or something they have never tried before. Some choices, though, seem quite extraordinary, difficult to explain and simply put: weird.

**Here are the most unusual requests for the last meal the American Criminal Justice System has received:**

- "*Justice, Equality, and World Peace*" – Odell Barnes' request to this day unfortunately remains impossible to grant. There is no information regarding what he had received instead.
- *A Vegetarian Pizza (to be donated to the homeless)* – Requested by Phillip Workman, a vegetarian pizza was to be donated to a homeless person in Nashville. While the prison denied his request,

several homeless shelters in the area received pizzas in response to Workman's request.

- *A Single Olive With the Pit Inside* – Victor Feguer requested only a single olive (specifically) with the pit still inside. His wish was granted, and after he died, they found the pit inside his pocket. It turns out he told guards he hoped an olive tree would grow from his grave as a sign of peace.
- *A Lump of Dirt* – This unexplainable request was made by James Edward Smith and (very surprisingly) denied by the prison. He settled for a cup of yoghurt instead.

**By Martyna Lekan**

# Culture Club

## "Promising. Young. Woman."

Recently, I had a chance to rewatch a movie I recall quite fondly. The feature film I am speaking of is the 2020 crime movie gem *Promising. Young. Woman.*, directed by Emerald Fennell – also known for this year's release *Saltburn*.

Initially, I got hooked by the trailer, as well as Bo Burnham – American comic, filmmaker and actor – being present in the film.

It is important to mention the movie centres heavily around the themes of rape, sexual assault as well as depicts scenes of violence which may be distressing to some viewers.

We follow our main character, Cassandra Thomas (played by star Carey Mulligan), a bright coffee shop worker with a peculiar habit of going out to clubs pretending to be drunk while completely sober. The movie slowly unravels the motives behind Cassandra's actions, capturing the viewers' attention with intrigue. What caused such behaviour in a promising, young woman like her?

The movie does not shy away from presenting its feminist commentary. Besides the story itself, we get numerous shots actively ridiculing the way women get used as objects of sexual appeal in media.

A striking grotesque contrast is prevalent between its themes of femininity, eye-candy visuals, recognisable pop songs and social commentary on ignorance. The abovementioned motives do a wonderful job of taking the viewer's attention away from the main plot point, only to hit you like a bucket of ice water back to the main plot. The ending itself is most definitely a great shock to any first-time watchers.

In my opinion, Cassandra is an example of a femme fatale. A woman who brings misfortune and doom to – not only but mostly – men who dare to cross her path of revenge. Executing it with mathematical precision, not leaving room for error. It is worth remembering that, in the end, our main character is only a human.

Altogether, it would be bold of me to call this movie a masterpiece. However, I cannot deny that it is an incredible piece of media to consume. Quoting Cesar A. Cruz, a Mexican poet and academic – "Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable." I presume *Promising. Young. Woman.* does exactly that. Outraging those who do not understand the message behind the movie, giving a sense of justice

to those who need it. It is something worth experiencing if you find yourself capable of handling it.

**By Amelia Anielska-Mazur**

### **"To Kill a Mockingbird"**

Although it is not a self-help or scientific book, it is a piece of beauty. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the first one I ever read in English. Back then, none of us had even considered becoming a psychologist, teacher, or lawyer. It was everything that I could want from a book. It was moving, simple, and, at the same time, as deep as it could get. Even years after reading it, I still find new meanings, ideas and problems it touches upon. The main plot (according to some) is a trial of a black man, and the protagonist's father is defending him, which at the time is quite difficult and causes ostracism for him and his family. The protagonist is developing her own sense of morality in a world that does not agree with her inner voice and the values instilled in her by her father. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a study of human behaviour and morality. In some sense, it is a psychological book. I could write about it for ages, but I don't want to spoil it for you. I encourage you to read it and experience it for yourself. If you liked *Catcher in the Rye*, I believe this book leaves it far behind.

Happy reading!

**By Jan Wolicki**

# Last but not least...

## TED Talk

### “Exploring the mind of a killer”

Jim Fallon, February 2009

Psychopathic killers are the basis for some must-watch TV, but what really makes them tick? Neuroscientist Jim Fallon talks about brain scans and genetic analysis that may uncover the rotten wiring in the nature (and nurture) of murderers. In a too-strange-for-fiction twist, he shares a fascinating family history that makes his work chillingly personal.

Link:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/jim fallon exploring the mind of a killer](https://www.ted.com/talks/jim_fallon_exploring_the_mind_of_a_killer)

## Psycho-Pass

Japanese cyberpunk psychological thriller animated series.

### **Synopsis:**

Psycho-Pass is set in a futuristic Japan governed by the Sibyl System, a powerful biomechatronic computer network which endlessly measures the biometrics of Japanese citizens' brains and mentalities. The resulting assessment is called a Psycho-Pass, which includes a numeric Crime Coefficient index, revealing the citizen's criminality potential, and a colour-coded Hue, alerting law enforcement. When a targeted individual's number exceeds the accepted threshold, they are pursued, apprehended, and either arrested or killed by the field officers of the

Crime Investigation Department of the Ministry of Welfare Public Safety Bureau. (...)

**Beware! The series is R-rated.**

## Linguistic Tidbit

Although "*distrustful*" and "*mistrustful*" are synonyms, there is a slight difference in their meaning and usage:

- "**Mistrustful**" – Used when an individual's lack of trust is based on intuition, such as when meeting someone new and feeling an unexplained sense of suspicion...
- "**Distrustful**" – Used when skepticism is supported by past experiences or facts. For example, if you have evidence of someone being dishonest, "distrustful" would be the appropriate term to use.

## Find us elsewhere too!

### Visit PsychLingo Online

Link: <https://linktr.ee/psychlingo>

### Check out our Instagram

Username: psychlingo

### Write to PsychLingo

Email us to: [psychlingo@aps.edu.pl](mailto:psychlingo@aps.edu.pl)

# Our Staff

**Editor-in-Chief:** Jan Wolicki

**Deputy Editor-in-Chief:** Martyna Lekan, Julia Nowakowska

**Editorial secretary:** Amelia Anielska-Mazur, Martyna Lekan

**Graphic and layout design:** Martyna Lekan, Julia Nowakowska

**Typesetter:** Martyna Lekan

**Column Writer:** Wiktoria Wiśniewska

**Lifestyle:** Joanna Łukasiewicz

**Glossary and Exercises Editor:** Amelia Anielska-Mazur

**Article Writers:** Amelia Anielska-Mazur, Daria Fruń, Karina Gałkowska, Martyna Lekan, Joanna Łukasiewicz, Julia Nowakowska, Karolina Tomczak, Jan Wolicki

**Editorial and linguistic supervision:** Anna Treger, MA and the Maria Grzegorzewska University Professor Bronisław Treger, PhD