



Ahead in Hollywood

We're going to be hearing more about North America from our regular writer Una Riley. A lot more.

I never thought the wider world of security would lead me to Hollywood. As the new USA correspondent for the magazine it seemed only right that the first article should have a movie twist. In my opinion there is no better programme to demonstrate the coming together of the non-fictional and fictional world of security than with the hit series – Criminal Minds. I recently met with Jim Clemente, writer, producer and technical advisor on the show since the beginning. Clemente is a former FBI Supervisory Special Agent, (SSA) member of the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) and the Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) which is the FBI department that the Criminal Minds programme is based upon. In the TV series the BAU provide behavioural-based investigative and operational support by applying case experience, research, and training to complex and time-sensitive crimes, typically involving serious



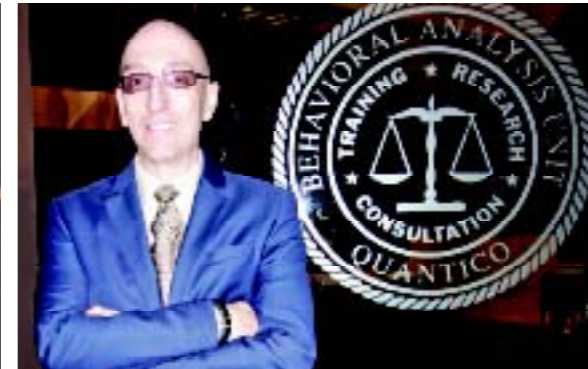
Una Riley has worked on behalf of many security industry associations. She is Master Emeritus of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals and separately a Past Master of the Guild of Public Relations Practitioners.

acts or threats of violence. The BAU assistance to law enforcement agencies is provided through the process of 'criminal investigative analyses'. Criminal investigative analysis is a process of reviewing crimes from both a behavioural and investigative perspective. It involves reviewing and assessing the facts of a criminal act, interpreting offender behaviour, and interaction with the victim, as exhibited during the commission of the crime, or as displayed in the crime scene.

Show and reality

The real headquarters of the BAU are in Quantico, Virginia as depicted in the series. Criminal Minds premiered in 2005 and is one of the top award-winning series on American TV today. I asked Clemente to explain the most similar and the most disparate aspects of the show from the reality of the BAU. Clemente said: "The most disparate thing about TV is that everything that a cop does is effective and it happens in seconds ... with no bureaucracy." We both laughed at the prospect as he went on to say:

"In fact, in the real world it is all bureaucracy and it's making sure that you are crossing every 'T' and dotting every 'I' because in the end you want to prosecute the case. Hollywood likes to show mavericks and people who buck the system and yet get the job done regardless. The characters always go over the line and break the law but in the real world those people end up in jail. So it's the most excruciating thing for any real cop to see that sort of thing because it is not what they do. They have to work within the law and still get everything done so it is much more difficult and more challenging than anyone can ever imagine. The way everything is set up in reality is so litigation-based that there is a constant awareness and a strong element of fear concerning going off on this or that tangent as it will create a problem for somebody else down the line. The rules have now become so restrictive that it is basically very difficult for cops to do what they do. In fact he or she ends up doing 25 per cent actual investigation and 75pc justifying it on paper ... and that's not good for anybody. So



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you got some people who do the job and catch up but they are very careful ... very careful about crossing certain lines. So that's the most crazy thing you literally have to make a decision sometimes in a fraction of a second that can mean a matter of life or death for the victim that is out there waiting for you to rescue them."

Trust in instinct

Clemente went on in his deep New York drawl. "There comes a stage where you have to trust in your educated gut instinct on occasions and don't get bogged down with a billion choices that might present themselves." This philosophy is as a result of him contracting cancer after 9-11. In the aftermath of clearing through the debris both at the Twin Towers and at the Pentagon he contracted bone marrow cancer, with other members of the emergency

response teams. He described that after his bone marrow transplant and when his life was almost taken away from him that he learned to listen even more to his educated gut feel that he had learned over the years of investigating sexual and violent crimes. He explained that he acquired the knowledge to have the confidence to pick out the details of things. He went on: "I got very good at that. It is a case of focusing on those little things and not all this noise on the outside." He spoke about having the ability to focus on all the minuscule nuanced aspects that everybody else might just brush aside; he believes those are the areas where the most important clues are to be found. I asked if he found it easy to get that "gut-feel" onto the screen. He smiled and said: "What I find is that it is easier when I write it than when I try to transmit it to other people to write it. However, fortunately in the process

it is a team effort on Criminal Minds and I explain this to the new writers as they come in and the experienced writers as years go on. Some of them initially catch on quicker than others, some of them get that feeling and they understand it better but I always get the chance to read what they write and I get the chance to give them little nuanced edits, sometimes they think that I am just changing words as a wordsmith but no ... this is a very subtle thing the way a character goes about doing a certain thing ... we don't make assumptions, we make reasonable conclusions based on the evidence." I asked if it got frustrating when he was visualising a scene for the writers and they go off doing a writer thing, instead of a cop thing. Clemente laughed and said: "Yeah ... it happens every now and then. There was one classic case where it ended up where the actors felt like they were saying psychopathy and

Previous page: Una Riley and Jim Clemente in front of the Criminal Minds tour bus. Above from left: Clemente on set; at the sign of the BAU on set; and with actress AJ Cook. Below: Familiar to millions of Criminal Minds viewers, the on-set aircraft fuselage

Photos courtesy of Una Riley





Who's who in Criminal Minds

A list of the characters, the actors playing them, and their position.

Derek Morgan, Shemar Moore, Supervisory Special Agent / Tactical Trainer; Aaron Hotchner, Thomas Gibson, Unit Chief / Senior Supervisory Special Agent; Jennifer Jareau, AJ Cook; Supervisory Special Agent; Elle Greenaway, Lola Glaudini, Supervisory Special Agent; David Rossi, Joe Mantegna, Senior Supervisory Special Agent; Spencer Reid, Matthew Gray Gubler, Supervisory Special Agent; and Penelope Garcia, Kirsten Vangsness, Technical Analyst / Communications Liaison.



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psychopath too much so they just inserted the words psychotic. It has a lot of the same letters so they thought it meant the same thing but it is worlds apart in terms of behaviour and what we were searching for. When I actually saw the final cut where they were just flitting back and forth between the words psychopath and psychotic! I was like, where did that come from ... it was not on the page but they

thought they were mixing it up a little bit." Still laughing he went on: "Yes, it does get a little frustrating at times but you know you just have to let it go sometimes." Clemente explained that in the writer's room one of the most significant things he tries to teach is that no longer should they be interested in only physical evidence. Instead they have to look at the behaviour. The BAU gets called in when there is no physical evidence pointing to a defendant.

'Wet work'

"What's important to us is that this defendant chose a knife! He is willing to work up close and personal he is willing to not be bothered by wet work because it is messy ... stabbing somebody repeatedly where there is blood everywhere, transferred blood. He has to get rid of the evidence but does not mind that. Maybe he is impulsive enough to think about that or maybe he is forensically sophisticated to get rid of the trace evidence and get out of there undetected. So it tells us so much if he cleans up right on the spot ... we know he's not impulsive and that he is actually thinking of what's going on and he probably planned this and he knew what to do. Because if somebody gets involved in a situation on the spur of the moment where they get caught up in the heat of the moment

and end up stabbing somebody to death they don't always have the presence of mind to clean up, and take the knife with them and to get rid of the evidence by taking that with them. But psychopaths are so calm in that situation and they think calmly through the most horrendous events that would sent most human beings off on a tangent ... they think very clearly and calmly."

Choices reveal

Clemente then reeled off the names of many psychopaths, criminals and their particular crimes and MOs [modus operandi]. He outlined behavioural patterns and psychopathic personality traits and the way the writers are taught not only to look at crime scenes but also victimology. I asked him to explain victimology. He replied: "Victimology is the study of the victim. The choice of a particular victim at a particular time at a particular place in a particular manner for a particular purpose. All those choices reveal something about the offender ... what he wants, what his skill level is, what his education level is, what his criminal sophistication level is...his ability to get access to that victim, it tells us something about him."

Criminal cunning

Clemente explained all the reasons why certain criminals choose certain types of victims and how revealing it is from a behavioural aspect. He also talked in depth about crime scenes and locations and the sophistication of criminals and their cunning. Even though Clemente is no longer an FBI agent and a BAU SSA he only has the highest regard for the bureau and is passionate about ensuring that the integrity is upheld to the best of his ability when shooting Criminal Minds.

I asked Erica Messer, the Executive Producer of Criminal Minds, what Clemente had contributed to the programme by way of his security background and expertise. Messer replied: "Jim Clemente has been with us since day one. And he is a huge part of why this show is such a great success because he knows our struggle is to make the show dramatic every week and as we all know we are in Hollywood." Messer smiled as she went on: "He will say 'I understand that but this may be pushing it'! So first and foremost we want to protect the FBI because we have the honour of telling stories of a real unit and we don't want to upset anyone who does that job for a living. Jim did that job for a very long time and for the first five seasons of this show was still an active member of the BAU. Jim continues to contribute immensely with his consulting. So as I mentioned it is an honour to be able to tell the stories of the men and women who are fighting the bad guys every week and every day. We don't want to do anything that would disrespect them or what they do in any way."

Accurate message

Clemente added: "Also Criminal Minds have been very respectful about making sure they get out the right message about what the BAU does ... they do not steal cases, they are there to help the law enforcement officers no matter how big the department or how small and the programme has been really good about getting that accurate message across. The standard MO in Hollywood tends to be to trash law enforcement ... right and to say the 'FBI is coming' to dominate the case. Not in Criminal Minds; they have been very careful to ensure that the ethos of the BAU is maintained by illustrating that they are there to help law enforcement." □



Above: Jim Clemente between Criminal Minds actors Joe Mantegna and Thomas Gibson.

Top from left: Clemente around the set; and with executive producer Erica Messer

Photos courtesy of Una Riley

More about Criminal Minds

For photos and clips of the show, visit the website of US broadcaster CBS: www.cbs.com/shows/criminal_minds. You can watch it in the UK on the Sky Living channel.