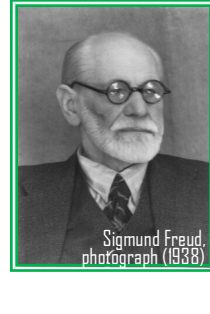


# The Freudian Slip

CSB/SJU Psychology Department Newsletter



College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University



Sigmund Freud  
photograph (1938)

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## Aubrey Immelman's Osama bin Laden Personality Profile Featured in Psychology Today

by: **Katelyn Bounds**

On May 2, 2011, the world learned Osama bin Laden had been killed by US forces in Pakistan. For several decades, people have been intrigued in figuring out Osama bin Laden and what led him to become the leader of Al-Qaeda. Dr. Stephen A. Diamond, a forensic psychologist and writer of the recurring blog "Evil Deeds" in *Psychology Today*, has written several blogs and articles regarding anger, madness, and destructive behavior. In his most recent article, "On the Violent Life and Death of Osama bin Laden: A Psychological Post-Mortem", Diamond refers to CSB/SJU Psychology Professor Aubrey Immelman's personality profile of bin Laden.

Immelman used the second edition of the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC) to construct bin Laden's personality profile (Diamond, 2011). Immelman diagnosed bin Laden as being a "malignant narcissist," which is a combination of "pathological narcissism, antisocial features, paranoid traits, and destructive aggression" (p.1). While Diamond agrees with this particular area of Immelman's analysis, he does disagree with

another part. Immelman states that bin Laden does not appear to be a "closed-minded religious fundamentalist, nor a devout, self-sacrificing martyr" but a con-artist (p. 2). While this may seem inaccurate to the average observer, Immelman states that bin Laden is "adept at exploiting Islamic fundamentalism in the service of his own ambition and personal dreams of glory" (p. 2).

In fact, it emerged after bin Laden's death that his actions did not match what would typically be expected of a religious fundamentalist; pornography was found on bin Laden's compound, which echoes tendencies in bin Laden's teenage years when he has a notorious partier, frequented nightclubs, and reportedly had prostitutes at his disposal. This means that bin Laden is more concerned with advancing his own personal goals by creating the appearance that he is a devout Muslim and gaining followers that can help him achieve his own dreams.

Diamond takes the conversation in a different direction by introducing Carl Jung's theory of complex to add to Immelman's analysis. Diamond discusses the possible "messiah complex" that

bin Laden could have been suffering from (2011). A messiah complex is a label for someone who comes to believe that they are the saviors of the people. Diamond denotes from Jung's theory that a complex "can behave like relatively autonomous 'splinter personalities' and it is "the question of whether we have complexes or they have us" (2011).

Diamond then goes on to discuss other famous examples of those who also believed that they were the messiah or God. A few examples are Jim Jones, who was a leader of the People's Temple and killed 914 people including 276 children in 1978; Marshall Applewhite (Heaven's Gate) who led his followers to a mass-suicide in 1997; and, not surprisingly, Charles Manson and Adolf Hitler. Diamond concludes his article agreeing with Immelman's analysis, writing, "identifying oneself as God or Messiah is disastrous for ego inflation... which leads to grandiose narcissism" (2011). He then adds that hopefully bin Laden's Al-Qaeda followers will not play into his messiah complex and believe he died as a sacrificial symbol, which could potentially lead to more terrorist activity (2011).

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## Recent Graduate Publishes Research

By: **Rachel Heying**

Anthony Odland, a 2008 SJU graduate, was recently published in *The Clinical Neuropsychologist* for his research on abnormal MMPI-2 profiles. Odland is currently a Psychology Trainee in the Center for Psychological Studies at Nova Southeastern University in Florida. With his mentor, Odland examined the accuracy of the MMPI-2 and wrote an article titled, "Rates of Apparently Abnormal MMPI-2 Profiles in the Normal Population." In recent years the MMPI-2, or Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (2nd edition), has added more scales to the inventory. Odland observed that as more scales are used, the higher the chances are of having a Type I error. A Type I error deals with a false positive; in this case, it would mean that a

"normal" person is misdiagnosed as abnormal.

Odland and his colleagues used a Monte Carlo simulation to test their hypothesis. The Monte Carlo method is an inferential computer simulation that relies on repeated random sampling. Here, the Monte Carlo simulation recreated the distribution of test scores, randomly resampled participants, and then calculated how many participants obtained abnormal scores. Through the simulation, they found that at the usual cutoff score of 65T, 36.8% of people would be diagnosed as abnormal on the Clinical scales, 55.1% on the Supplementary scales, and 38.3% on the Content scales. They also found that 47.4% of the normal population was tested to have

three or more seemingly abnormal scores. With statistics such as these, Odland and his colleagues were convinced that there was a large Type I error occurring in the MMPI-2 testing.

What is so bad about a Type I error on the MMPI-2? Odland highlighted several of the potential consequences of misdiagnosis with the MMPI-2. Not only would patients be given unnecessary and inappropriate treatment, but they may lose privileges such as driving a car, living alone, and working. The MMPI-2 is used to screen potential employees in several areas, including pilots, firefighters, policemen, medical students, and even seminary students. If their test results label them as "abnormal," they are unlikely to obtain the job they want.

With high chances of misdiagnosis, the consequences could be severe.

To lessen the chances of false positives on the MMPI-2, Odland suggests using fewer scales when interpreting MMPI-2 profiles. As he and his colleagues found in this study, the addition of more scales lessens the validity of the test, rather than increasing it as originally thought. He recommends that the Clinical scales be used as the dominant scales in interpreting the MMPI-2, believing that it will provide a smaller chance of Type I errors resulting in misdiagnosis. If the MMPI-2 interpreters follow this suggestion, it is possible that the test would be more accurate in diagnosing patients as abnormal.

**Congratulations to Anthony on this great accomplishment!**

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## Coordinator's Corner

by: **Katie Brown**

As we near completion of the first month of this new academic year, I'd like to take this opportunity to offer you my best wishes and introduce myself as the Psychology Department Coordinator for the 2011-2012 academic year.

For those unfamiliar with the Coordinator position, this unique opportunity is offered to a recent CSB/SJU

psychology graduate as a one-year temporary employment opportunity in the Psychology Department. My current position as Coordinator allows me to be a resource to undergraduate students in a semi-advisor role. I graduated from CSB/SJU just four short months ago with a Psychology major and Gender & Women's Studies minor. Not long ago I was experiencing some of the same excitement, worries and anxieties you may be feeling.

Throughout my undergraduate career I had many psychology-related experiences including participation in psychology research opportunities, research presentation, honors thesis, teaching practicum, student employment, and study abroad, among others. I would love to share any insight I may have gained as a result of these experiences with interested psychology students.

Please feel free to contact me at [kbrown@csbsju.edu](mailto:kbrown@csbsju.edu), extensions 3314 or 5484, or stop by my office in Peter Engel 121 or Richarda P34. Also, make sure to visit our website <http://csbsju.edu/Psychology.htm> and continue to read The Freudian Slip.

I hope the start of your school year has been going well and wish you all the best of luck in the upcoming year!

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## American Psychology-Law Society at CSB/SJU

by: **Evan Lowder**

Welcome back to campus CSB/SJU psychology and SJU political science students! My name is Evan Lowder and I am a senior psychology major at St. Ben's and your new Campus Representative for the American Psychology-Law Society. Throughout this year, I will be distributing new and upcoming research, conference opportunities, and other information on a wide range of psychology and law-related topics. I will also serve as the primary contact between the AP-LS and the CSB/SJU community.

A bit of background: The AP-LS is a division of the American Psychological Association that is made up of individuals who are interested in the interdisciplinary field of psychology and law. Its primary goals are to increase "scholarship, practice, and public service in psychology and law". The AP-LS Campus Representative Program was created specifically to increase student membership and involvement within the AP-LS and greater field of psychology and law. Today, over 50 schools are represented by the AP-LS Campus Representative program.

My goals in spearheading this program on our campus are threefold. First, I'd like to get

about the field of psychology and law! There are a great number of real-world problems that can benefit from the joint study of psychology and law and many graduate schools that prepare students to effectively address these problems in their future careers. I hope that by participating in this program, CSB/SJU students will begin to seek future careers in this field.

Second, I hope that CSB/SJU students will see this program as a way to get involved with a psychological professional association. Membership in professional associations serve as a great way for students to become engaged in current research, connect with scholars in a given field, and explore opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable to them. Finally, I hope that this program will help increase the visibility of CSB/SJU students in the field of psychology and law. The AP-LS strongly emphasizes the importance of undergraduate student involvement in its association, and I hope that CSB/SJU students will take the opportunity to get involved and represent our community on the national stage.

Questions? Comments? Want to get involved in the AP-LS? Feel free to contact Evan at [emlowder@csbsju.edu](mailto:emlowder@csbsju.edu).

**Resources to check out:**  
<http://www.ap-ls.org/about/APLS/Membership.php>: Want to Become a Member of the AP-LS? Student membership is \$15/year, which includes a subscription to the Law and Human Behavior journal  
<http://www.ap-ls.org/education/ClinicalDoctoral.php>: Interested in Graduate School in Psychology and Law? Check out the "Guide to Graduate Programs in Legal and Forensic Psychology" on this page  
<http://www.ap-ls.org/conferences/apls2012/index2012.php>: Want to Attend the 2011-12 AP-LS Conference? Student Volunteers receive a waived conference fee.

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