

Commentary on: Rossi D. Review of: *Geographic Profiling*. J Forensic Sci 2001;46(3):765

Sir:

In his review of my book, *Geographic Profiling* (2000, CRC Press), Dr. Donald Rossi makes a number of statements that require response. Geographic profiling is an investigative methodology that determines the most probable area of offender residence from the locations of a connected series of crimes. It provides an optimal search strategy and a basis for information management. It is not a "life saver," nor would any experienced detective believe so.

Dr. Rossi refers to a lack of empirical evidence and research findings. However, Chapter 10 of the text (particularly Fig. 10.5, p. 207) provides not only the results of a seven-year research project at Simon Fraser University, but also the operational performance from 10 years of investigative assistance provided by the Vancouver Police Department's Geographic Profiling Section. He also makes the comment that the "lengthy bibliography reveals few references to empirical research." As the bibliography contains over 1300 entries (many of them empirical studies), Dr. Rossi must be a prodigious, if not thorough, reader.

He further claims the techniques used in geographic profiling are not "mathematical" but rather "at best elementary probability." Dr.

Rossi may have been thinking the techniques are not "algebraic," as probability is a field of mathematics. It's a good thing that the probability was elementary.

Dr. Rossi, a clinical psychoanalyst, feels the criminology underlying geographic profiling is "superficial." I am not sure what he means by this, but the theories and methods are robust enough to have led to geographic profiling being implemented by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the British National Crime Faculty, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the German Federal Police (BKA), the Ontario Provincial Police, and the U.S. National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center. It has also received several awards, including one from the International Association of Chief of Police in 1999.

Dr. Rossi concludes the review with a lengthy reference to an investigative police tool introduced 25 years ago but fails to tell the reader exactly what this was. It appears that he writes with as much care as he reads.

D. Kim Rossmo, Ph.D.
Detective Inspector (Retired)
Geographic Profiling Section
Vancouver Police Department
Vancouver, BC
Canada