



By **Barry Austin Goodfield**, PhD, MFT, FABFE, DABFM, DABPS, AAETS

KRT photo by David Furst, Abaca Press

# SADDAM HUSSEIN:

## The Unconscious Mind of The Butcher of Baghdad—New Tools Reveal What the World Does Not Know

**A**lthough forensic examiners have a vast arsenal of tools and techniques to use in investigations, all too often they overlook the clues human behaviors reveal, or, at best, they underutilize the clues. Psychological profiling cannot be empirically tested; as a result, many examiners feel such profiling is unreliable. However, there are profiling methods that are testable, repeatable, and verifiable. With 30 years of experience assisting law enforcement and the intelligence community in a very specialized type of profiling, I can say without equivocation

that the Goodfield Method has been proven consistently reliable and verifiable time and time again when used properly.

The Goodfield Method is based on the non-verbal leak (NVL), which is a repetitive, patterned head-and-neck movement that reflects an individual's unresolved, perceived trauma. This movement manifests decisions or strategies from one's past when the person encountered similar trauma. Based solely on a person's observable behaviors, the NVL is unconscious to the person, yet visible to others; it is testable. It is a way of looking at the unconscious

strategies that an individual presents in his or her total non-verbal behavior.

Establishing the NVL's symbolic meaning involves decoding the non-verbal responses into their unconscious symbolic meanings on three levels: impact, primary emotion, and primary coping strategy. These levels fully comprise an individual's expression of basic emotional strategies during interaction. Once assessed, the symbolic level gives a logical and referentially based stepping-stone for deducing the subject's personality type.



The fundamental notion is that traumas are learning points for people, as are non-traumatic events. The emphasis is on trauma because decisions regarding causality and consequence often follow traumas and profoundly impact sequent behavior. In fact, when decisions are made after traumatic events—especially unconscious decisions—they become personality cornerstones on an unconscious level.

One's perception of traumatic events drastically influences decisions regarding such basic factors as risk taking, openness to difference, expression of aggression, and contact with others (including love, sexuality, and most emotions). I call these events *perceived traumatic events* (PTEs). At an unconscious level, one's PTEs form the basis of his or her unconscious self-concept. It may be thought of as the keel of a person's ship of state. The winds of one's life can affect direction and speed, but it is the keel that gives balance to and assures stability in life's journey.

When an individual's unconscious PTEs can be determined by closely observing the NVL, you have the key to a person's unconscious process and, ultimately, to his or her personality type. Humans only have so many possible response patterns. Once developed, a predictable pattern of responses becomes an unconscious self-concept that guides our reactions to life's daily challenges. Our response patterns are generally developed early in life and are related to our PTEs.

The first PTE is *impact* (symbolic level one, SL-1). It comes into the system primarily through the eyes and is real in the sen-

sory system of the person who experiences it. At some time, a perceived crisis occurs and this shock to the system can be recorded on a conscious or an unconscious level. The impact on a person is on an intra-psychic, a psycho-physiological, or an interpersonal level. In the Goodfield Method there are six manifestations of impact: shock (eyes large), fear (teariness), denial (eyes up, trance, white below eyes), disbelief (eyes closing), pain (tearing, turn away from), and trance (eyes that stare in an unfocused way).

The *primary emotion* (SL-2) is a person's first reaction to a traumatic event, and it is what the individual wants to do, but not what he or she actually does. If the response in an SL-2 situation is anger, then the person wants to express it clearly and directly without holding back. SL-2 can be anger directed outward or inward, or it can be sadness.

The *primary coping strategy* (SL-3) is what the person actually does; it is not what he or she wants to do. It is what the person does after he or she has realized that giving in to immediate urges could make the situation even worse. It's the compromise between thought and action that worked at the time the PTE occurred. Over time, one develops similar strategies to face similar situations. The SL-3 is the person's basic strategy for handling feelings experienced throughout life when facing a PTE. SL-3 strategies include denial, trance, anger in, anger out, control by (fill in the blank), distancing by (fill in the blank), calculated emotional response (CER), and seduction.

A close look at former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's NVL can give a good exam-

ple of analyzing the NVL to the symbolic levels and then through to the resultant personality type. Hussein exhibited behaviors of a cruel, intimidating, murderous psychopath, but the Goodfield Method reveals some things that are not common knowledge. This specific example illustrates this method's effectiveness as a tool for forensic examiners.

Based on Saddam Hussein's known actions and his NVL, along with the diagnostic criteria, it is clear that he fit the clinical category of a psychopath. Hussein adhered to the pattern or process *impulse-thought-action*, whereas other people use *impulse-thought-strategy-action*. Thus, he would have known what one thought but not cared what one felt. It is clear that he was a psychopath with paranoid features. Although there was a real threat, his behavior could plainly be classified as paranoid. While his notorious behavior shows that he was psychopathic, his non-verbal behavior was also a clue leading to this deduction.

### Saddam Hussein's Non-Verbal Leak

In the case of Saddam Hussein, he elevated his left eyebrow pulling his eyes into a tight stare, then tightened his jaw muscles and proceeded to tighten his upper lip and swallow down. This NVL would be listed as follows:

- Eyes open
- Left Eyebrow elevated
- Eyes into a tight stare
- Tightened jaw muscles
- Tightened upper lip
- Swallowed down
- Eyes open

## Saddam Hussein's Non-Verbal Leak Brought to a Symbolic Level

The referential aspect of Hussein's non-verbal leak is a tool that provides clear distinctions between body functions and the conscious and unconscious self-concepts. The fact that the unconscious can be seen via the NVL in the face and body eliminates guessing about the movement, meaning, and messages of Saddam Hussein or virtually anyone else. The muscles of his face provide clues to the true message of his unconscious. Muscles controlling the expressions around his mouth reflect, as part of the SL-3 in the NVL, anger in. The muscles affecting the closing and pursing of his lips are associated with his SL-3 control as it relates to his unconscious self-concept.

The principal muscle associated with the control and blocking of his aggression is the masseter. As his primary SL-3 was the blocking of his aggressive impulses, he developed enlarged masseter muscles. These muscles were enlarged due to his literal biting down of his initial response (SL-2) and diverting it to his SL-3 for later expression in a calculated emotional response. There was tension showing in his top lip as he literally kept a stiff upper lip, keeping his mouth shut about what he really felt.

Saddam Hussein's NVL had aspects of what we refer to as *no behavior* (point 3 of his NVL, "Eyes into a tight stare"). This makes analysis of non-verbal behavior difficult in cases such as Hussein. It is a characteristic of a psychopath to exhibit little, if any, noticeable response in situations where other people would show their feelings clearly. The no-behavior behavior results from the lack of super ego development, which is a hallmark of the psychopath. Conversely, it can also be found in individuals with a weak ego structure. In the case of Saddam, it was the ticking time bomb inside, waiting to explode, which, as history shows, detonated all too often.


The 1992 Academy Award winning film *The Silence of the Lambs*, a dark psychological thriller, gives a perfect example of this kind of no-behavior behavior:

As portrayed by Hopkins, Hannibal is both a suave, cultured gentleman and an unspeakable fiend. He is gracious and monstrous at the same time. (Hopkins also provided one of the most quotable lines in recent film history with "I ate

© 2006 MCT Source: AP Graphic: Lee Hulteng, Judy Treibler

# THE LIFE OF Saddam Hussein

Saddam was the absolute ruler of Iraq for 24 years until his capture by U.S. forces in 2003.



**1937**  
Born in the village of Tikrit, north of Baghdad

**1957**  
Joins then underground Baath Socialist Party

**1959**  
Part of failed Baathist coup attempt; flees to Syria, Egypt

**1963**  
Returns after Baath Party takes control of country in coup

**1968**  
Named chief of internal security; his cousin is president

**1979**  
Takes control in bloody coup; launches major purge of Baath members

**1980**  
Invades Iran; war lasts eight years; hundreds of thousands killed

**1988**  
Uses chemical weapons during Kurdish rebellion; kills an estimated 5,000 people

**1990**  
Invades Kuwait; army driven out five months later by U.S.-led coalition; agrees to U.N. weapons inspections

**1996**  
Orders killing of two sons-in-law who had defected to Jordan

**2002**  
Allows weapons inspectors back to Iraq after U.N. threat of iserious consequences

**March 17, 2003**  
Gets 48-hour deadline from President Bush to leave Iraq; war begins March 20

**July 22, 2003**  
Two sons killed in shoot-out with U.S. forces

**Dec. 13 2003**  
Captured in hole by U.S. forces near Tikrit

**Oct 19, 2005**  
Goes on trial for killing 148 Shiites in retaliation for assassination attempt in Dujail, Iraq

**April 4, 2006**  
Faces charges in second trial for 1988 crackdown on Iraqi Kurds

**Nov. 5, 2006**  
Sentenced to death for Dujail killings

**Dec. 26, 2006**  
Iraq's highest court rejects appeal; says Saddam must be hanged within 30 days

**Dec. 30, 2006**  
Saddam is executed at 6:05 a.m. Iraqi local time

his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti," which was followed by an inimitable slithering slurp.) (Berardinelli, 2000)

Without the super ego, the person lacks what could be termed the conscience, the internal check that keeps the cultured gentleman from becoming the unspeakable fiend.

### Saddam Hussein's Symbolic Level of Response

- SL- 1 Impact—pain/disbelief
- SL- 2 Primary Emotion—anger
- SL- 3 Primary Coping Strategy— calculated emotional response

### The NVL Statement on the Symbolic Level

We can deduce that Hussein might say, "I feel distrust and disbelief, and it makes me angry. I, however, control my anger and search for a rationalization to give it open and full expression." How is this deduced from his NVL? We can deduce "I feel distrust and disbelief" from Hussein's

point 2, left eyebrow elevated, and 3, eyes in a tight stare. We garner the statement "It makes me angry" from point 4, the tightening of his jaw muscles. Point 5, the tightening of his upper lip, reveals "I, however, control my anger," and point 6, swallowing down, provides us with "I search for a rationalization to give it open and full expression." Saddam Hussein's clinical diagnosis, like all evaluations done using this method, is based solely on his non-verbal responses and the symbolic levels of his NVL.

Hussein's SL-1, -2, and -3 results do not suggest that a person with similar responses to the world will adopt the same strategies as the *Butcher of Baghdad*. They reveal that when extreme behavior is known to exist and a criminal profiler is called into a case, he or she is able to deduce the unconscious strategies and predict the behavior and actions of the person being profiled with a higher degree of exactness. The profiler strives for accuracy and predictability, so he or she can provide practical suggestions for law enforcement.

# Guilty as charged

Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein (right) and two co-defendants have been sentenced to death by hanging by the Iraqi Special Tribunal for their roles in the execution of 148 people after a botched 1982 assassination attempt.



## Sentencing highlights

**Saddam sentence:** Distinction made between high-ranking officials who ordered attacks and lower-level officials who carried them out

- Death for murder
- 10 years for forcible deportation
- 10 years for torture
- Executed December 30, 2006

## Co-defendants



**Awad Hamed al-Bandar**  
Death by hanging  
Executed  
January 15, 2007



**Barazan Ibrahim al-Tikriti**  
Death by hanging



**Taha Yassin Ramadan**  
Life in prison



**Abdullah Kazim Ruwayyid**  
15 years in prison



**Mizhar Abdullah Ruwayyid**  
15 years in prison



**Ali Dayim Ali**  
15 years in prison



**Mohammed Azawi Ali**  
Cleared of charges

Source: McClatchy Washington Bureau © 2006 MCT

The NVL is based on observable data. This, of course, is not possible when there is no known photograph or video record of the subject available. In most cases, some description eventually surfaces during the investigation. In the case of the *Night Stalker* (Richard Ramirez), I worked off a composite sketch made by a survivor. It provided a treasure trove of information, as the survivor had a PTE that burned an image of key impressions into her memory.

The causality of personality has many aspects. One might wonder how a person can become capable of such dastardly acts. In a recent article entitled "Mind, Brain, and Personality Disorders," Glen Gabbard (2005) made the following observations:

The etiology of borderline personality disorder is probably multifactorial, but extensive research supports the notion that early abuse and neglect may be a significant factor in many cases. Early childhood separations, chaotic home environments, insensitivity to the child's feelings and needs, emotional discord in the family, and trauma of varying

degrees have all been implicated in the etiology. (18)

Although he was addressing borderline personality disorder, similar factors are contributors to the psychopath's etiology.

### Saddam Hussein's Clinical Profile

The psychopath does not develop a capacity for depressive anxieties or for guilt from concern that his actions can hurt others. This explains the lack of response on a non-verbal level. Saddam Hussein's swing from the rifle-firing leader on a balcony to the benevolent man stroking a frightened child's head on CBS television demonstrates the range of possibilities that typify the psychopath. He demonstrated his unique management style in a meeting when a general gave unwelcome advice. Saddam ordered him to stand and then shot him six times. Stories abound regarding Hussein's violent actions and his orders for others to commit violent actions. Consider the actions for which he was tried and hanged:

On July 8, 1982, Saddam Hussein was visiting the town of Dujail (50 miles

north of Baghdad) when a group of Dawa militants shot at his motorcade. In reprisal for this assassination attempt, the entire town was punished. More than 140 fighting-age men were apprehended and never heard from again. Approximately 1,500 other townspeople, including children, were rounded up and taken to prison, where many were tortured. After a year or more in prison, many were exiled to a southern desert camp. The town itself was destroyed; houses were bulldozed and orchards were demolished. (Rosenberg, 2005)

Saddam Hussein's NVL showed he had an unconscious core of distrust and disbelief. The consequence was that no one could get close to him. It was also a factor in the development of antisocial strategies that manifested themselves so clearly in cold, calculated, vicious behavior. For example, Saddam unemotionally and, with absolute assurance, systematically manipulated his son-in-laws to return from Jordan, where they had fled. They feared retribution after making remarks about

his weapons program. Jerrold Post, former CIA Analyst and psychiatrist, remarked:

In February 1996, in what might be characterized as “assisted suicide, Iraqi style,” both men and their wives returned to Iraq after Saddam provided assurances that they would be safe and forgiven. Within 48 hours of their arrival back in Iraq, both men had been murdered. (Post & Baram, 2002)

Frank Fisk, a journalist for the London-based Independent, wrote,

There is about Saddam Hussein a peculiar ruthlessness, an almost calculated cruelty, perhaps even an interest in pain. It wasn't enough to order the murder of his sons-in-law after their return from exile in Jordan. They had to be dragged away with meat hooks through their eyes. It wasn't enough to order the hanging of the *Observer* journalist Farzad Bazoft in 1990; Bazoft was to be left unaware of his fate until a British embassy official turned up at the Abu Ghorraib prison to say goodbye. (Fisk, 2000).

### Hussein's Personality Type

In the Goodfield Method of analysis there are 12 hypnotized personality types. In the methodology, Saddam Hussein is within personality type seven. It is important to note that not all people who are within this category are ruthless tyrants or, for that matter, psychopaths. Hussein's case is that of a personality at the extreme limits of psychopathology so that his actions resulted in behavior with a proclivity to a specific clinical diagnostic category. In his case, it is an extreme manifestation of a type seven.

The type seven, or *observer* personality, is a witness not taking part in the events that go on around him or her. This ability to stand back and observe individuals and events makes him or her a powerful person when it comes to facts, information, and data about people and places. He or she is often a critical player in major decision-making situations and is often found at the center of policy decisions. His or her strong ego often puts him or her in the center of the fray where action is required. A type seven personality knows what is necessary to obtain his or her objectives, but often watches others' actions rather than leading a group. He or she is a keen observer and is insightful about the dy-

namics of the situations in which he or she becomes involved. He or she will not hesitate to speak up when he or she feels the time is right, and he or she quickly notices who agrees with his or her viewpoint and who does not. When such persons want to be, they can be the center of attention, showing power, skills, and outstanding organization abilities.

### Final Thoughts

On a television-screen grab taken from the Iraqi national television station Al-iraqia, a video showed the moments leading up to former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's execution on December 30, 2006, in Baghdad. The former Iraqi president was executed by hanging at 0600 (0300 GMT) in a secure facility in the Northern Baghdad suburb of Khadimeya.

To most people it is unimaginable that a person could behave in the way Saddam Hussein did. Today, Kim Jong-il, Robert Mugabe, Seyed Ali Khamane'i, and, of course, Osama Bin Laden fill the pages of our newspapers and our television screens with language and logic that defy our comprehension. To enter the minds of such people is both difficult and essential. A person must put aside the logic and values with which he or she has been raised. We must confront and ultimately defeat those who would impose their will on our society. Understanding the NVL can be a valuable tool and even a weapon in that fight. The forensic examiner stands as the new Centurion at the gates of the 21st century.

### References

- Woods, K., Lacey, J., & Murray, W. (2006). Saddam's delusion: The view from the inside [Electronic version]. *Foreign Affairs*, 85. Retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20060501faessay85301/kevin-woods-james-lacey-williamson-murray/saddam-s-delusions-the-view-from-the-inside.html>
- Berardinelli, J. (2000). The Silence of the Lambs: A film review by James Berardinelli Reelviews. Retrieved from [http://www.reelviews.net/movies/sl/silence\\_lambs.html](http://www.reelviews.net/movies/sl/silence_lambs.html)
- Bullock, A. (1981). *Hitler*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Fisk, R. (2000, December 30). Saddam Hussein: The last great tyrant. *The Independent*.
- Gabbard, G. O. (2005a). Mind, brain, and personality disorders. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 162(4), 648-655.
- Gabbard, G. O. (2005b). *Psychodynamic psychiatry in clinical practice* (4th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Goodfield, B. A. (1999) *Insight and action, the role of the unconscious from personal to international levels*. London: University of Westminster Press.
- Goodfield, B. A. (1984). *Special homicide task force San Francisco Police Department, the night stalker: A psychological analysis of a composite sketch*. San Francisco, CA: Author.

Sampson, S. (2005, July 18). Charging Saddam. KnowledgeNews.net. Retrieved 2007, from <http://knowledge.news.net>

Post, J. M., & Baram, A. (2002). *Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press.

Rosenberg, J. (27 Oct. 2005) "Top 5 crimes of Saddam Hussein" *About.com*. Retrieved 2007, from <http://history1900s.about.com/od/saddamhussein/a/husseincrimes.htm>

Zanarini, M. C., & Frankenburg, F. R. (1997). Pathways to the development of borderline personality disorder. *Journal of Personality Disorder*, 11(1), 93-104.

### About the Author

**Barry Austin Goodfield, PhD**, is a profes-



sor, international lecturer, and author. He has advised presidents, prime ministers, and other top leaders on crisis management and conflict resolution and stress reduction.

He helped negotiate the Baltic crisis and the conflict between Chechnyan leaders and President Yeltsin. He continues to share his methods and train other top professionals who specialize in the nonverbal language of the human mind. He has spent 30-plus years identifying and codifying unconscious signals. His work is based on the only patented psychotherapeutic process, which he developed in the 1970s using advanced video techniques. Dr. Goodfield has helped senior corporate executives, attorneys, ranking international civil servants, and cabinet-level officials on five continents. He has profiled war criminals for law enforcement, prosecution staffs, and international courts. He is a member of the American Psychological Association, a Fellow of the American Board of Forensic Examiners, a Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Medicine, and a member of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress. During his time as a visiting professor at the Diplomatic Academy of London, University of Westminster, he published *Insight and Action: The Role of the Unconscious in Crisis from Personal to International Levels*. He has been lecturing for the Foreign Service Program of Oxford University in England. He currently splits his time between his institutes in Europe and France and his professional training duties and clinical practice in Glendale, Arizona. He may be contacted via email at [bgoodfield@aol.com](mailto:bgoodfield@aol.com). For more information visit [www.goodfieldinstitute.com](http://www.goodfieldinstitute.com).