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Weeding Out Terrorists

Officials Turn To Behavior Profiling To Find Would-Be Attackers

BUFFALO, N.Y., Aug. 15, 2006



(CBS) U.S. security agents are doing it on the sly, reports **CBS News correspondent Bob Orr**: They're separating legitimate air travelers from would-be terrorists.

While X-ray machines and explosive scanners focus on weapons, Transportation Security chief Kip Hawley said Tuesday that screeners are studying passengers for signs of nervousness.

"It is involuntary muscular behaviors that are across the board, that doesn't matter what you look like. You don't have to look like a terrorist to exhibit these involuntary behaviors," he says.

It's the first step in so-called behavioral profiling. The next step can be seen inside a lab at the University of Buffalo, where a research suspect is about to tell a lie.

"I'm officer Ray LaHocking and I'd like to ask you a few questions ..."

"OK," nods the suspect. "There's gonna be a person I talk to and I'll sign some forms."

So where's the lie?

Psychologist Mark Frank, who's developing a profiling technique for the Department of Homeland Security, claims he can spot a liar 90 percent of the time. **(CBS)**

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QUOTE

"If it just helps you make one or two better judgments, that could be the difference between getting the bad guy who's trying to get on the plane and not getting the bad guy."

Psychologist Mark Frank

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"When he says 'there's a person I'm gonna talk to and I'm gonna go sign some forms,' you actually see a sign of fear/anxiety that hits him at that particular moment," says psychologist Mark Frank.

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What Frank saw was a split-second tightening of the muscle in the center of the forehead.

"It's across the top of the eyes, in the eyebrows," he says. "It's part of a facial expression of fear."

The flash of fear is called a "micro-expression." It's an involuntary facial response that can betray a liar.

"When people have emotions, the same areas of the brain that are responsible for causing the heart rate to go up and your blood pressure to go up and the little sweat you get on your hands are also sending a pulse to your face," Frank says.

Frank, who's developing the profiling technique for the Department of Homeland Security, claims he can spot a liar 90 percent of the time.

"I think at this point it is at least as accurate as a polygraph," he says.

Frank says the kind of behavioral analysis he's doing in his lab can be taught to screeners in the real world with as little as 30 minutes training. Hundreds of faces have convinced him the science is solid in identifying people who might be lying.

"If it just helps you make one or two better judgments," Frank says, "that could be the difference."

Frank concedes facial profiling is not foolproof — there is no absolute way to spot a lie. At the same time, terrorists should take no comfort — there's also no such thing as a fail-safe poker face.

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Has anyone ever noticed that terrorists and suicide bombers are always young people? It is apparent that the older ones prefer life over going to meet Allah. You cannot profile zealots. Just ask the folks at Scotland Yard. Home grown and middle class.

Posted by mjv2944 at 09:26 AM : Aug 16, 2006

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I think one word might put the kibosh on this whole concept: BOTOX!

I'm always amazed at human innovation. Like people in prison making weapons from just about everything you can imagine. Soap?! Fecal matter?!

I can already hear the newscast about Botox...

What a wonderful world.

Posted by breakerbox at 04:55 AM : Aug 16, 2006

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.....
This idea is nonsensical and the product of an ignorant and confused mind. There is no medical or psychological justification for such a device. What surprises me is that a serious news organization would consider reporting it.

Are you trying to compete with Jon Stewart?

I think the real story here is that one Bush's crony's has a prototype and wants a lot of our tax dollars for his useless idea.

Any sentient person should be nervous flying as long as the Bush administration are staffing and overseeing the agencies responsible for the safety of air travel.

Posted by cadawa at 04:23 AM : Aug 16, 2006

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.....
Most people being interrogated will be nervous. Doesn't mean that they are necessarily lying or dangerous.

But psychopaths will not be nervous. They will be relaxed and charming. But by definition they *are* dangerous.

Perhaps the psychologist could develop a way to weed them out before they commit crimes -- terrorist or otherwise?

Bryan M. Knight, MSW, PhD. Hypnosis Headquarters.

Posted by drknight7 at 08:56 PM : Aug 15, 2006

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