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Friend or Foe?
The Role of Intuition in Interpersonal Trustworthiness and Vulnerability Assessments

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Abstract

The basic discrimination of friend and foe was likely one of the earliest interpersonal judgments to evolve (e.g., O’Sullivan, 2003). Such decisions had to occur rapidly, perhaps intuitively, to inform the best course of action for survival. Intuitive interpersonal decisions appear to be based largely on the face, which acts as the display board on which emotions and intentions are communicated, and is scrutinized during social interactions and encounters with strangers (Martelli et al., 2005). Inferences of trustworthiness, based on a stranger’s face, occur within 38ms and while confidence in judgment accuracy increases with more lengthy exposure to a face, assessments remain virtually unchanged (Bar et al., 2006; Willis & Todorov, 2006). The instantaneous and enduring nature of these assessments can color subsequent decision-making (Porter & ten Brinke, 2008a). However, evidence does not suggest that these automatic judgments are highly accurate. The evolutionary development of deception and emotional concealment has complicated such assessments so that observers can only discriminate the faces of humanitarians vs. violent criminals slightly above chance (Porter et al., 2008). Despite the apparent shortcomings of trustworthiness assessments based on still facial images, it appears that very short observations of a stranger’s behaviour can inform rapid interpersonal decisions by both human predators and prey. Observing only five seconds of a stranger’s behaviour can result in reasonably reliable and valid first impressions of a psychopathic personality, characterized by callousness, manipulation and persistent antisocial behaviour (Fowler, Lilienfeld & Patrick, 2009). Psychopathic individuals, however, are not without intuitive countermeasures. Psychopaths have mastered the art of manipulation to overcome intuitive impressions of their dangerousness, creating willing victims and convincing decision-makers to be lenient in sentencing and parole hearings (Hakkanen-Nyholm & Hare, 2009; Porter, ten Brinke & Wilson,
Further, psychopathic personality traits appear to be associated with an enhanced ability to assess stranger vulnerability and maintain superior recollection of such potential victims (Book, Quinsey & Langford, 2007; Wilson, Demetrioff & Porter, 2008). Thus, while the evolutionary development of deception has likely diminished the accuracy of certain interpersonal decisions, brief observations of a stranger’s behaviour can inform reasonably accurate insights into their dangerousness and vulnerability.
Friend or Foe?

The Role of Intuition in Interpersonal Trustworthiness and Vulnerability Assessments

Upon meeting an individual for the first time, we rapidly come to conclusions about that person’s state and trait characteristics (Martelli et al., 2005). With little additional information available, we have come to rely on intuitive assessments and quick decision rules, or heuristics, to inform the course of our subsequent interaction. These decisions, based on physical features, non-verbal behaviour, or “thin slices” of social interaction, can sometimes be accurate but can also be unreliable, leading subsequent decision-making astray (Porter & ten Brinke, 2008a). Despite the questionable validity of these split-second subconscious assessments, society in general appears to value intuition. In the courtroom, for example, “the ring of truth” is a commonly cited aspect of credibility assessments performed by Canadian judges (see R. v. Mervyn, 2003; R v. Roble, 2004; R. v. S. (R.D.), 1997). In R. v. Lifchus (1997), Justice Cory noted: “it may be that the juror is unable to point to the precise aspect of the witness's demeanour which was found to be suspicious… A juror should not be made to feel that the overall, perhaps intangible, effect of a witness's demeanour cannot be taken into consideration in the assessment of credibility.” However, there is no evidence that the use of intuition is valid in evaluating credibility. In fact, contrary to Justice Cory’s suggestion, Porter et al. (2000) found that a self-reported reliance on intuition and accuracy in detecting deception were inversely related. Continued adherence to this initial assessment can lead to a non-critical, “tunnel vision” assimilation of information and create an incorrect but highly-confident decision maker, potentially leading to wrongful convictions (Porter, Gustaw & ten Brinke, 2009).

This is not to say, however, that intuitive interpersonal assessments have no value. It is noteworthy that some inferences based solely on a glimpse of the face have evolved to be valid.
The identification of genuine emotional expressions (especially anger) is rapid and highly accurate (Williams & Mattingley, 2006). Additionally, inferences that may inform friend v. foe and fight v. flight decisions, such as a stranger’s level of extraversion, masculinity and dangerousness appear to be correlated with objective measures of these traits (Borkenau & Leibler, 1992; Fowler, Lilienfeld & Patrick, 2009; Yeagley, Morling & Nelson, 2007). Further suggesting an evolutionary basis for some intuitive assessments, women are able to accurately rate men’s interest in infants based only on photographs of the men’s faces (Roney et al., 2006).

The goal of this chapter is to explore interpersonal intuition of human predator and prey, and consider the validity of each, in an evolutionary context.

**Trust Games: Exploring the Validity of Intuitive Trustworthiness Assessments**

The basic discrimination of friend and foe likely was one of the earliest interpersonal judgments to evolve and had to occur rapidly. In a demonstration of the expediency of these assessments, Willis and Todorov (2006) had participants view images of a face for 100ms, 500ms, one second, or unlimited time, and evaluate trustworthiness and other traits (e.g., likeability, aggressiveness). While confidence in judgment accuracy increased with increased time, the judgments remained virtually unchanged from the initial brief exposure. 100ms judgments had the greatest impact for the trait of trustworthiness, indicating their instantaneous and enduring nature. Further examinations have revealed that trustworthiness can be reliably determined after as little as 38ms of exposure to a stranger’s face (Bar, Neta & Linz, 2006).

Recent research by Todorov and colleagues has attempted to determine what information is gleaned from the face to form decisions of trustworthiness using data-driven models. A two dimensional model, combining assessments of facial valence and dominance can account for over 80% of variance in trustworthiness ratings (Oosterhof & Todorov, 2008). Impressions of
valence, or emotion, are important signals of behavioural intentions and can assist with approach or avoidance decisions. This dimension accounted for 63.3% of the variance in trustworthiness ratings. Additionally, impressions of dominance, or masculinity/maturity, can signal one’s physical strength and ability to do harm, informing the choice between fight and flight. Impressions of dominance accounted for an additional 18.3% of variance in trustworthiness assessments. In sum, this model suggests that intuitive impressions of (un)trustworthiness combine evaluations of behavioural intention, based on emotional expression, with notions of physical strength that indicate the individual’s ability to inflict the harm that his/her angry facial expression predicts.

Despite the expediency, reliability and seemingly rational decision-making process involved in trustworthiness assessments, these decisions are not necessarily accurate. One possibility is that this evaluation process evolved to do the job effectively. That is, as Willis and Todorov (2006) appear to assume, perhaps these automatic judgments of a stranger’s trustworthiness based on his/her face are accurate. However, this assumption is unfounded since the dispositional features of the target faces presented were unknown. More recently, Porter et al. (2008) asked participants to rate the trustworthiness of two groups of stranger faces - Most Wanted criminals and comparatively upstanding Nobel Peace Prize winners. Participants were only able to discriminate group membership slightly above the level of chance. Similarly, Bond et al. (1994) found that appearance-based impressions of honesty accounted for only a “kernel of truth” (4% of the variance) in the individual’s actual willingness to engage in deception and Zebrowitz, Voinescu and Collins (1996) found no relation between real and perceived honesty of men and women based on photographs taken across the lifespan. Thus, while this two
dimensional decision-making process may have evolved as a sound strategy for our ancestors, it no longer results in particularly accurate determinations of honesty.

Faltering accuracy of trustworthiness impressions may be tied in part to the evolutionary development of emotional deceit. Liars frequently facilitate their deceit by altering their expressions through *simulating* (expressing an unfelt emotion), *masking* (replacing a felt expression with a false one), or *neutralizing* (inhibiting a true emotion by appearing neutral) an emotion (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). In a detailed examination of the what the face reveals during emotional deceit, Porter and ten Brinke (2008b) had participants view powerful emotional images, responding with a genuine or convincing but false expression while being judged by a naïve observer. The 697 videotaped expressions then were analyzed (each 1/30th sec frame for more than 100,000 frames) by coders blind to expression veracity. While no one was able to falsify emotions without leakage of their true feelings on at least one occasion, participants were often successful deceivers. Involuntary expressions were subtle; rarely expressed across the entire face, instead appearing in the upper or lower face only (e.g., a smirk when attempting to appear sad). However, these leakages often lasted up to a second in duration, much longer than traditionally hypothesized (Ekman, 1992). Previous studies also have found differences in the duration, onset, and offset times between genuine and false expressions of happiness and disgust (e.g., Frank, Ekman, & Friesen, 2005; Hess & Kleck, 1990). Despite the presence of various cues to emotional deceit, naïve judges are able to discriminate genuine and deceptive expressions at a level only slightly above chance (Hess & Kleck, 1994; Porter & ten Brinke, 2008b). In general, humans are better liars than lie detectors, effectively “flipping a coin” when asked to evaluate truthfulness (e.g., Ekman & O’Sullivan, 1991; Porter & ten Brinke, 2009; Vrij, 2008).
Judgments of facial valence/emotion, formulating over half of the variance in trustworthiness decisions, may be further compromised by an overgeneralization of emotional processing to neutral faces (Todorov, 2008). Approached by a stranger with an emotionally neutral face, structural facial features associated with emotional expressions are scrutinized, giving rise to dubious valence assessments. We unconsciously perceive subtle cues resembling emotional expressions on the stranger’s face and interpret these features as indicators of (un)trustworthiness. In fact, as computer-generated faces are manipulated to appear more or less trustworthy (by manipulating eyebrow position, pronunciation of cheekbones, and chin width), while remaining emotionally neutral, they are rated as appearing happy or angry, respectively (Oosterhof & Todorov, 2009). In sum, it appears that the over 60% of variance in trustworthiness assessments attributable to facial valence may be inaccurate due to proficient emotional deception by the target, the observer’s poor deception detection skills, and the erroneous interpretation of certain facial features to indicate emotion in the neutral face.

Facial dominance, or maturity/masculinity, approximates physical strength and ability to carry out malicious intentions. In contrast with facial valence, evidence suggests that the 18.3% of variance in trustworthiness decisions accounted for by facial dominance may be reasonably accurate. For example, Borkenau and Liebler (1992) reported strong correlations \( r = .75 \) to \( .82 \) between stranger perceived and self-reported level of masculinity. Similarly, Lippa (1998) found that strangers could reliably and accurately determine a stranger’s masculinity from vocal (i.e., deep voice), gesture (i.e., broad, frequent use of gestures) and postural (i.e., open leg stance) cues acquired from thin slices videos. More recently, Yeagley, Morling and Nelson (2007) found that 30-second silent videos contained sufficient non-verbal behaviour for observers to accurately assess strangers’ masculinity and social dominance. Accurate assessments of the facial
dominance dimension of trustworthiness may account for the small “kernel of truth” in trustworthiness assessments (Bond et al., 1994; Porter et al., 2008). However, while facial dominance seems apparent to the observer, trustworthiness impressions become inaccurate when flawed valence ratings are considered.

**Dangerous Decisions: Perceived Trustworthiness and Ensuing, Irrational Decisions**

Although trustworthiness assessments are of questionable validity, it has been proposed that they set in motion a powerful decision-making process, characterized by natural human biases, tunnel-vision and overconfidence. The Dangerous Decisions Theory (DDT; Porter & ten Brinke, 2009) predicts that interpersonal judgments of trustworthiness occur instantaneously upon seeing a face, which subjectively may be experienced as “intuition”. This rapid process of trustworthiness assessment likely was originally intended to reduce the danger to our human ancestors. However, in the modern context, the impression can lead to biased (or “dangerous”) decisions concerning the target. In the courtroom, the initial impression of a defendant’s trustworthiness has an enduring subconscious influence on the manner in which new information concerning the target is assimilated by judges and jurors. Specifically, the initial intuitive evaluation will influence subsequent inferences concerning the defendant (or other witness) by making decision-making about him/her increasingly irrational (Kahneman & Tversky, 1982). Decisions also will be influenced by an observer’s experience and personal schemas about deceptive behaviour and heuristics for detecting lies. This will generate a non-critical, “tunnel vision” assimilation of potentially ambiguous or contradictory evidence concerning the defendant. In a study of criminal investigators, Ask and Granhag (2007) found strong support for this “asymmetrical skepticism”, the tendency to be more skeptical about evidence that runs counter to one’s prior belief than evidence consistent with the belief. Kassin, Goldstein and
Savitsky (2003) found that investigators who presumed guilt asked more guilt-presumptive questions and exerted more pressure in order to obtain a confession than did investigators without such bias. As such, holding preconceived notions about the guilt of a suspect (or defendant) results in a tendency to seek confirmation for this belief (Meissner & Kassin, 2004). Further, initial beliefs can persevere even in the face of major disconfirming evidence (e.g., Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975).

While most judges and jurors probably are circumspect in their efforts to make the correct decisions concerning credibility, it may be possible to work too hard in this context; high motivation can exacerbate the level of bias in decisions about credibility. Porter, McCabe et al. (2007) identified a motivational impairment effect such that a high level of motivation in a deception detection task was negatively associated with accuracy (also see Ask & Granhag, 2007). Similarly, with other types of judgment tasks high motivation facilitates performance for easy tasks, but impairs it for difficult ones (Pelham & Neter, 1995). A high level of motivation such as that felt by a judge or juror, coupled with the complexity of credibility assessment, may serve to increase the power of the initial perception of trustworthiness and create tunnel vision decision-making.

In the first study to empirically test the validity of DDT directly, Porter, Gustaw, and ten Brinke (2008) presented mock jury participants with vignettes of the same crimes accompanied either by a photo of a defendant whose face previously had been rated as appearing highly trustworthy or untrustworthy. It was found that participants required less evidence (and less incriminating evidence) before finding an untrustworthy defendant guilty of murder. Further, when presented with major exonerating evidence (e.g., DNA implicating someone else), participants changed their verdict to not guilty 84% of the time for trustworthy-looking
defendants but only 42% of the time for untrustworthy-looking ones. These findings are buttressed by wrongful convictions exemplified by the Canadian case of Steven Truscott - a poignant example of DDT in action.

On June 9, 1959, 14 year old Truscott offered his classmate Lynne Harper a bicycle ride toward home. Dropping her off outside a near-by air force base upon her request, Truscott was the last known person to see 12 year old Harper alive. She was later found, raped and strangled to death in a nearby wood. Arrested on June 12, 1959, the lead detective in the case, Inspector Graham, described Truscott (whose photo at the time shows a face with down-turned eyebrows and pronounced cheekbones) as a “lying, sexual deviant” upon their first meeting. From that time forward, Truscott’s presumably untrustworthy appearance slanted the police investigation. The fact that Truscott was the last known individual to see Harper alive was overvalued, while evidence contrary to Inspector Graham’s initial assessment was undervalued. For example, other potential suspects, such as convicted sex offender Sgt. Alexander Kalichuk, were essentially ignored. Subsequently, Truscott was found guilty of murder. His facial response to the verdict was reported widely in the press at the time of his conviction (Sher, 2007). Inspector Graham was highly confident in Truscott’s guilt and saw that his "eyes were filled with anger, not fear" as the judge announced that he would be hanged for the crime. On the other hand, (presumably less-biased) journalists described the same reaction in a remarkably different light: "his eyes filled with tears, Steven Truscott gasped in the dock" and "the boy simply turned pale". It was not until 2007 — 48 years later — that the conviction was overturned, when the Ontario Court of Appeal declared the case “a miscarriage of justice”. This dramatic example highlights the impact of faulty first impressions and the importance of objectivity in credibility assessment.

Detecting Personality Disorders Using Intuition
Just as one intuitively evaluates a stranger’s trustworthiness, the potential for a tumultuous, even dangerous, future relationship with a new person is also considered. Interpersonal difficulties are considered a hallmark of personality disorders (American Psychological Association, 2000); these difficulties may be predicted by first impressions, formed unconsciously and without intention by new acquaintances. In a study by Oltmanns et al. (2004), 30-second videos of individuals with personality disorders were viewed by strangers who subsequently estimated the “Big 5” personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) of each videotaped person. Strangers were able to accurately rate those with paranoid, schizotypal, dependant and avoidant personality disorders as lower on extraversion. Further, the presence of these personality disorders was also negatively related to ratings of likeability. A follow-up study revealed that non-verbal behaviour was relied upon most heavily to come to accurate assessments of extreme personality characteristics (Friedman et al., 2006). From an evolutionary perspective, it would be helpful to detect pathological personality characteristics in order to avoid sexual reproduction or other resource-draining relationships with these individuals. One might expect that anti-social personality would be important to detect quickly, not only to inform relationship choices, but also to avoid consequences of the prodigious use of violence exhibited by these individuals. Surprisingly, these studies found no evidence that Big 5 characteristics of anti-social personality disorder could be accurately detected from thin slice videos. However, observers could accurately predict that these individuals had a propensity to take advantage of others (Friedman, Oltmanns & Turkheimer, 2007).

Human intuition, in addition to correctly perceiving those with anti-social tendencies, appears attuned to a particular sub-set of human predators – psychopaths. Psychopathy is a
condition estimated to affect about 1% of the general population (Hare, 2006) and 15-25% of male offenders in federal correctional settings (e.g., Porter et al., 2000). Psychopathy is defined by the presence of interpersonal (e.g., manipulativeness, deceitfulness, egocentricity), affective (e.g., lack of empathy, remorse or guilt), and behavioural (e.g., irresponsibility, impulsivity, criminal behaviour) features (Hare, 2003, 2006). Relative to other offenders, psychopaths begin committing crimes at a younger age and go on to commit a wider variety of offenses, including violent crimes. Individuals with psychopathic traits also re-offend faster, violate parole sooner, perpetrate a higher degree of violence during their crimes, and commit more institutional violence (e.g., Laurell & Daderman, 2005; Porter, Birt, & Boer, 2001; Porter et al., 2003). In lay terms, psychopaths seem to have little or no “conscience” (Hare, 2006; Porter & Porter, 2007); the absence of this inhibitory mechanism, restricting most others from acting on antisocial thoughts, allows them to engage in a wide range of antisocial behaviour. Given the robust association between psychopathy, crime, and violence (see Hare, 2006), it has become one of the most important psychological constructs applied within the criminal justice system (e.g., Hare, Clark, Grann, & Thorton, 2000).

The ability to detect psychopathic traits in others would certainly confer an evolutionary benefit based on the great destruction that psychopaths tend to leave in their wake. Indeed it appears that psychopathy can be accurately assessed from extremely brief video excerpts. A recent examination by Fowler, Lilienfeld and Patrick (2009) presented raters with 5, 10 and 20 second audio only, video only, or combined modality excerpts from videotaped interviews with maximum-security inmates. Based on these short selections, raters were able to accurately assess psychopathic traits. Interestingly, participants were most accurate when provided with only 5 seconds of the interview and when only non-verbal behaviour (i.e., silent video) was provided.
This pattern suggests that our intuitive predator radar is reasonably accurate, but can quickly be taken off course by extended interpersonal exposure to a psychopath.

**A Coevolutionary Arms Race**

While there does appear to be a small “kernel of truth” intuitive assessments of stranger untrustworthiness, disorders of personality and predatory nature, and these evaluations could potentially dissuade us from future contact with such individuals, human predators are not without adaptive countermeasures. While reproductively relevant resources may be attained by individual or cooperative strategies, human predators are likely to expropriate resources from others using exploitative strategies, taking advantage of the weakest members of society (Buss & Duntley, 2008). Exploitative strategies including the use of force, deception, intimidation and coercion, may be directed at individuals who exhibit exploitability cues, particularly in situations where potential benefits are high, and potential costs, low, for the predator.

The psychopath has recently been reconceptualized as an apt intra-species predator with evolved abilities to acquire resources and sexual advantages. It has been proposed that psychopathy is an alternative mating strategy in which quantity of offspring is favoured over quality and paternal involvement is low, instead relying on maternal investment for childcare (Harris et al., 2007). In this way, precocious and coercive sexuality may be a more fundamental aspect of the psychopathic personality than previously recognized. In line with this hypothesis, research suggests that psychopaths are more likely to engage in early, frequent and coercive sexual activity, targeting reproductively viable females and forcing intercourse (Harris et al., 2004; 2007).

Sex and other resources may be acquired by manipulation, a highly evolved skill in psychopaths that allows for the successful use of exploitation strategies. Indeed, psychopathic
offenders are even able to charm and manipulate their way into lower sentences (i.e., involuntary manslaughter rather than manslaughter or murder), permissions to appeal their sentences, and undeserved conditional release (Hakkanen-Nyholm & Hare, 2009). Our recent study indicated that despite their much longer criminal histories and poorer conditional release histories, psychopaths were 2.5 times more likely than non-psychopaths to be released when they applied for parole. Similarly, psychopathic sex offenders were more than twice as likely to be released than non-psychopathic sexual offenders. Providing further support for the unwise release of psychopathic individuals, in a study of sexual murderers, offenders scoring high in psychopathy were as likely to be released as non-psychopaths despite the finding that psychopaths were likely to commit a violent crime upon release (Hill et al., 2008). Further, there is evidence that these decisions are faulty, as psychopathic offenders in both studies spent fewer successful days on release compared to non-psychopaths released (Hill et al., 2008; Porter, ten Brinke & Wilson, 2008). Given these findings, we suggest that even if a board member has a negative first impression of the offender, this (correct) intuition may succumb to the psychopathic offender’s superficial charm, which evolved to overcome the tunnel-vision involved in DDT (Porter & ten Brinke, 2008a) and leaves the decision-maker vulnerable to exploitation. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that extended interpersonal contact with a psychopath can lead to less accurate perceptions of psychopathic traits (Fowler et al., 2009). In fact, Ruback and Hopper (1986) found that parole decisions regarding an inmate’s future success upon parole actually become less accurate after interviewing the offender.

When charm is insufficient, fails, or requires too much time and energy, psychopaths have no qualms with resorting to violence to fulfill their needs. Psychopathic offenders, although known for their impulsive tendencies, reserve their most extreme acts of violence – murder – for
situations in which instrumental gains can be made. Consistent with Woodworth and Porter’s (2002) selective impulsivity hypothesis, increasingly psychopathic men are more likely to commit premeditated, goal-driven homicides. That is, although psychopaths sometimes may act impulsively, they are able to carefully plan and execute high-risk behaviour increasing the possibility of achieving a secondary goal (i.e., monetary gain) and reducing possible consequences (i.e., incarceration). In essence, a cost/benefit resource analysis is considered. Finally, it also appears that psychopathic individuals have the ability to detect, and subsequently recall, vulnerable individuals better than the average person (Wheeler et al., 2009; Wilson et al., 2008).

**Intuitive Detection of Human Vulnerability**

Although human vulnerability can be inferred by all, criminal offenders and psychopaths in particular appear to have a heightened ability to correctly identify victims and a propensity to act upon this intuitively-acquired information. An early study by Grayson and Stein (1981) found that criminal offenders came to a consensus in their perceptions of the most “muggable” individuals, based solely on video of their gait as they walked a New York City sidewalk. Those who were considered most vulnerable were more likely to move their body unilaterally (i.e., left arm and left leg swing in unison) and lift their feet while those perceived unsuitable as victims moved their body contralaterally and swung their feet as they walked. Although this study did not examine the validity of the offenders’ assessments, others suggest that previous victimization (which is one of the strongest predictors of future victimization; Classen, Palesh & Aggarwal, 2005) is associated with abnormal non-verbal behaviour. Parks, Hequembourg and Dearing (2008) found that female victims of childhood sexual abuse showed non-verbal signs of social discomfort and anxiety when interacting with male strangers. In a more recent study using
Grayson and Stein’s (1981) walking paradigm, male participants agreed upon whom they would choose as potential victims of sexual exploitation based on short videos of women walking (Sakaguchi & Hasegawa, 2006). The women chosen generally walked slowly, with a short stride. Further, researchers found a positive relationship between being chosen for sexual exploitation and the women’s self-reported frequency of being approached for sexual purposes.

Recent studies that have examined the psychopath’s ability to hone in on vulnerability have highlighted the superb interpersonal intuition experienced by this predatory sub-group. Perceptions of vulnerability based on gait appear to be enhanced in those with psychopathic personality traits (Wheeler, Book & Costello, 2009). Psychopaths are also superior at detecting vulnerability based on thin slices of social information. After watching videos of social interactions lasting only two minutes, offenders were able to assess vulnerability (using a proxy measure of assertiveness) with some accuracy (Book, Quinsey & Langford, 2007). Further, there was a positive relationship between accuracy in predicting vulnerability and psychopathic traits. That is, psychopathic offenders were best able to detect potentially “easy” victims based on a thin slice of their interpersonal style. Interestingly, psychopathic traits have also been linked to enhanced memory for vulnerable individuals, presumably in order to facilitate future exploitation (Wilson, Demetrioff & Porter, 2008). Certainly, psychopaths take advantage of their superior intuition, targeting the weakest individuals for criminal exploitation. For example, psychopathic stalkers are likely to choose vulnerable victims (those with relationship problems and limited access to external resources) and achieve some instrumental purpose by stalking (Storey et al., 2008).

Conclusion
A review of the current literature suggests that the validity of intuition is varied and depends upon the state or trait characteristic under assessment. For example, while emotional facial expressions can be masked or falsified making the assessment of genuine emotion difficult for the observer, physical signs of dominance/masculinity are nearly impossible for a deceiver to manipulate. In this way, trustworthiness assessments, while containing a “kernel of truth”, are of questionable validity due to the evolutionary development of deception (Bond et al., 1994; Porter et al., 2007). Given that faulty intuition appears to be a result of conscious sabotage by the targeted individual, it may be that intuitive assessments will be particularly accurate in situations where the evaluated elements (e.g., facial features, non-verbal behaviour) are not known to be relevant, are uncontrollable by the target and/or disguising these features confers no benefit to the target. That said, intuitive assessments, regardless of validity can set into motion a biased decision-making process, further plagued by tunnel-vision and overconfidence. Particularly in complex assessments of credibility, faulty intuition about defendant trustworthiness can lead to dramatic consequences such as wrongful conviction (Porter & ten Brinke, 2008a). On the other hand, evolved intra-species predators have adapted the ability to persuade others of their trustworthiness even when intuition correctly advises the potential victim otherwise. Psychopaths have also acquired the keen ability to detect vulnerability from thin slices of non-verbal information, recall potential victims, and offend against these individuals in ways that confer the greatest benefit to themselves while minimizing potential negative consequences (Fowler et al., 2009; Wilson et al., 2009; Porter & Woodworth, 2002).

Rapid evaluations of personality certainly warrant further study given the consequences that these first impressions can have on subsequent decision-making (i.e., Porter, Gustaw & ten Brinke, 2009). Further, a greater understanding of the psychopath’s predatory aptitude may lead
to strategies for concealing one’s vulnerabilities from detection as well as improved sentencing and release decisions in the forensic context. As we study these issues, human predators and prey continue to engage in an evolutionary arms race, attempting to hide true characteristics from the intuitive eye of their opponent.
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