

# An analysis of the novel picking cotton essay samples

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



Profiling is described as the recording and analysis of a person's psychological and behavioral characteristics, so as to assess or predict their capabilities in a certain sphere or to assist in identifying a particular subgroup of people (Merriam Webster Online). People can be profile based on their age, culture, disability, gender, occupation and race, among others. When applied in criminal justice, it is the process of inferring the characteristics of a criminal based on his or her behavior during the crime. Law enforcers and psychologists work toward developing a criminal's profile by carefully studying the evidence collected. Profiling plays an important role in successfully solving a case as law enforcers are able to narrow down the number of suspects based on the profile developed. It also helps prevent criminals from further committing crimes. However, there are times when profiling creates negative effects to the lives of the people who are included in a group profile. Like a prototype, group profiles are formed based on the shared qualities of individuals, enabling an organization to classify individuals as groups or categories. Statistics released by media also hypes up issues, making people form preconceived notions about certain groups of people. In the case of Ronald Cotton, he was profiled based on his age and race. Based on the testimony of Jennifer Thompson, and his previous criminal records that include sexual assault and other petty crimes, Cotton was among the men who were lined up in front of Thompson for identification. Thompson strengthened Cotton's profile by identifying him from the pictures shown to her, " Yeah, this is the one, I think this is the guy" (Thompson-Cannino, Cotton & Torneo). When Cotton was included in a lineup for identification, Thompson picked cotton again, stating that she " was

completely confident" (nytimes. com) that Cotton was the man who raped her. Even when another trial took place to determine Poole's guilt on the two rape cases, Thompson stuck to her original testimony saying, " Bobby Poole didn't rape me. Ronald Cotton did." (Thompson-Cannino, Cotton & Torneo). Despite the erroneous identification, law enforcers pursued in proving that Cotton was the criminal by tying the evidence, which included a flashlight found in Cotton's home that resembled the one used by the assailant, and rubber from Cotton's tennis shoe that was consistent with rubber found at one of the crime scenes (innocenceprojetc. org). It did not help that Cotton was African American known to have some previous skirmishes with the law. These made him fit to the years of prevailing stereotype on African American men. This was highlighted in the story when police detectives assured Thompson about picking Cotton, saying that " He likes white womenHe's a real scumbag (Thompson-Cannino, Cotton & Torneo). Despite years of struggle to get out of the shadow of this stereotype, Cotton stil fell victim to it. It would seem that Martin Luther King's belief that despite the Emancipation Proclamation, " the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination."

In the end, Cotton's belief in his innocence, that " he was not the monster" (Cotton & Thompson Cannino, 2009) who did it to Jennifer, finally came to light. Cotton was released from prison after DNA proved that it was Poole who raped both Thompson and Watson. This case gave way for new studies to be made based on the weight given to eyewitness identification. Eyewitnesses can be mistaken in their identification, as proven by the story Picking Cotton. These days, DNA testing proves to be a more credible and

valid evidence in cases. According to a report by Innocence Project, over 230 people have been exonerated through DNA testing in the United States, with 75% of those wrongful convictions involving eyewitness misidentification (innocenceproject.org).

Looking at my personal experience, I can remember being profiled based on my age. Because I look stressed at times, people sometimes mistake me as a young married man with a baby. Although I repeatedly tried many times to conceal traces of my stress, such as applying concealer on my eyebags, people still think of me as a young married man having problems with my baby. There are also times when people think of me as a young professional who is

starting on building his career. These are times when I feel like dressing up just for the sake of making myself feel good. However, people fall under the misconception that because I look formal, I am out to take a break from work. Sometimes, when I am dressed casually, acquaintances think of me as a person who does not give much credit to the way I dress. Even at parties, friends would tell me that I should do something about my choice of clothes, that even though I am young and still a student, I should give people a good impression by dressing up properly. I admit that choosing clothes can be sometimes tedious, but I tend to let my mood dictate what clothes to wear. It is a bit difficult to dress up nicely when you are feeling poorly because of lack of sleep. Even though clothes can contribute to improving my worn out look, I simply find it too stressful to spend longer time than necessary in choosing clothes. However, I always make it a point that no matter what I am wearing or how I am feeling, I am nice to others and that I don't stink. I want

people around me to see me as a person who is friendly and approachable, and that I care about hygiene. No matter what I'm wearing or how tired I may be, I make it a point to clean myself and present myself to others the best way I can.

In my friend's situation, he has considered being profiled as a rude and violent person because he is Russian. Like most Russians, he is a big man with a big booming voice. In some instances when we are playing, his voice seem to get loud when he gets excited about something. It makes people look and turn, thinking that he is mad and fighting with someone. This is sometimes the reason why he does not talk that much when we are with friends. There are also times when women try to distance themselves from him in public places like trains and buses. Some of our female friends that it is probably because he is a man, and a big one at that. Although sometimes I also see women moving away from me, especially when I look like I haven't slept for a full week, I feel sorry for my friend that it always happens to him. I feel bad when this happens to me, so I more or less have an idea about how it might be for him everytime this happens. And because he is Russian, some people are also wary of him because of his Muslim religion. If I think about living in his shoes even for a day, I would not know how to deal with it without losing my control. However, according to my friend, he just try not to get affected by all of it. After all, he said, there is nothing he can do about his size and his culture. He was born Russian, and even if he migrates to several countries, he will still be Russian. And much as he wants to do something about his height and size, it is simply impossible. After seeing these reactions from people since his adulthood, he has learned self-control and

instead tried to be more gentle, helpful and kind to the people that he meets.

Like many other things, profiling has its benefits and disadvantages. It can help put perpetrators put behind bars and that alone is very beneficial in keeping the society safe. However, profiling also makes people judge others unreasonably. I believe that people should not judge or be judged based on their profile, because whatever is manifested in the physical is not always the same with how a person is inside. It is more important for people to keep an open mind and accept the differences that every person has.

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