

# FORENSIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

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## Psychopathy and the cinema: Fact or fiction?

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The authors investigated the relationship between cinema and psychopathy to describe and analyze the portrayal of fictional psychopathic characters in popular films and over cinematic history. From 400 films (1915–2010), 126 fictional psychopathic characters (21 female and 105 male) were selected based on the realism and clinical accuracy of their profiles. Movies were then analyzed by senior forensic psychiatrists and cinema critics. Secondary (71%) and manipulative (48%) subtypes were the most common in the female group, while secondary (51%) and prototypical (34%) were the most common in the male group. Corresponding to the increased understanding of clinical psychopathy by professional mental health providers over time, the clinical description of and epidemiological data on fictional psychopaths in popular films have become more realistic. Realistic fictional psychopaths remain in the minority but are very important for didactic purposes in Academic facilities, as “teaching Movies.”

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