# Managing Criminal Investigations Methods Ethics and Evidence

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## Introduction and Course Reflection

This semester was quite interesting for me. I have always had an interest in criminal justice-based studies, even before joining the degree program. I saw this course as greatly beneficial for my career as a police officer, as it allowed me to utilize the knowledge from my previous courses and this course in order to develop a deeper understanding of criminal investigative procedures. I personally believe that man-made laws that define justice and morality should be determined by Natural laws. A rational person, in my opinion, is able to differentiate naturally between right and wrong, but there are those in society, who do not adhere to those natural laws of justice and morality, therefore, man-made laws are necessary. Laws and law enforcement assist society in prohibiting acts that go contrary to nature and are unacceptable to any rational person in society. Technology has changed human society a lot, but the way society interacts with each other or views the world has not changed, therefore natural laws haven't. Before taking up criminal investigation, these were some of the thoughts echoing in my head before the lecture.

## Role of First Responders in Criminal Investigations

During a crime scene investigation, the duties and role of police officers as truth seekers and first responders are very important. In solving the case, the actions taken at an investigation's beginning are very critical, and a thorough and careful investigation is vital to ensure that any physical potential evidence is not destroyed or tainted and that key witnesses are not subsequently overlooked. An important factor that I learned during the course is that investigators have to follow a very objective, thorough and thoughtful approach, which can influence the significance of the collected evidence. The process seeks to preserve and recognize physical evidence to yield critical and reliable information to assist in the investigation. Investigations are based on three main components: interrogation, interviewing, and physical evidence. In law enforcement, the term crime has a lot of definitions to it. It would be possible to get different definitions of a crime if I were to interview different people. A different meaning would likely come up from each individual. Though, what all mean by their words may turn out to be the same if they are all summed up into one definition. Personally, I see crime as those illegal actions that an individual or a group commits that lead to violations of the law. Each committed crime leads to consequences in one way or the other. The two common models in society that determine whether illegal acts are crimes are crime control and due process. People's rights are protected in due process, where each case is handled with care so as not to implicate the wrong person. The courts are there to guarantee that the individual's rights are protected. By exercising crime control, priority is given to the safety of the community itself.

## History and Development of Criminal Investigation

In the first week of the course, I studied the history of criminal investigation and how techniques and themes have evolved along with the types of new crimes that came with modern society. Professor Dean Jones discussed several police reforms and legislative changes introduced by the UK government that have upgraded investigative standards. In the course, I studied the 2012 SPR, which was formulated because while individual police forces can tackle many threats within their own force areas, national threats such as terrorism, civil emergencies, public order, serious and organized crime, and a national cybersecurity incident, require an aggregated or coordinated response in resources from a number of police forces are brought together. National threats were identified in the 2012 SPR, and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter those threats were established (Home Office, 2015). The SPR 2012 set forth policing responses that were tougher, along with recommendations on using skilled investigators to counter child sexual abuse CSA crimes, whether they are groups, gangs, or lone offenders. These cases have been given national importance because sometimes they can become very serious and leave a deep impact on society. While studying the newly updated SPR, this was of particular interest to me since one of my motivations for selecting a career in law enforcement was having seen horrific cases of CSA that I vowed to end in my capacity. Some of the main areas that were identified as particularly important in the SPR include terrorism, classified as a Tier One risk, and organized crime, such as large-scale fraud, counterfeit goods, and online child sexual exploitation, among others. A cybersecurity incident at the national level was also identified as a Tier One Risk (Home Office, 2015). Threats to public order, Child sexual abuse, and civil emergencies were also identified as emerging threats that require a robust response from law enforcement. The SPR framework defined these crimes and suggested a 5C policing response. For example, they developed the CONTEST strategy for counter-terrorism, which law enforcement will use to develop the capacity to pursue, prevent, protect, and prepare against the threat. The 5C's of response dealt with capacity, contribution, capability, consistency, and connectivity.

## Organized Crime and National Security

The next important material I studied was the SOCS, the Serious and Organized Crime Strategy. During its study, I reflected on how national security was threatened by organized crime. The net losses to the economy of the UK are around 24 billion pounds a year, which deprives people of their prosperity and security and can lead to loss of life. Crime groups corrupt society and intimidate it, and the impact they leave on individuals and communities can be corrosive (HM Government, 2013). The strategy is interesting because it mainly uses the same strategy for counter-terrorism outlined in the SPR 2012 to prevent organized crime, which it classifies as national-level crime important to national security. The same 4P strategy is followed, along with defining specific characteristics of organized and serious crime.

“Organized crime is characterized by violence or the threat of violence and by the use of bribery and corruption: organized criminals very often depend on the assistance of corrupt, complicit or negligent professionals, notably lawyers, accountants and bankers”. (HM Government, 2013)

# Classification of Organized Crime Threats

I also studied how the National Crime Agency categorizes organized crime in terms of specific threats. Those engaged in organized crime are often specialists in a specific criminal trade, and many are opportunistic and have entrepreneurial qualities by nature. These crimes usually involve human trafficking, identity crime, drugs and firearms, counterfeit currency, money laundering, child sexual exploitation, etc. (NCA, 2018). The NCA published the National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organized Crime I studied in the 2017 edition. The approach taken in the new strategic assessment report is better and more clear, in my opinion, because even though the spectrum of threats has become very large and complex, three main headings are used to cover them. The vulnerability aspect consists of MSHT, CSEA, and Organized Immigration Crime. The Prosperity aspect consists of high-level money laundering, cybercrime, or some other economic crimes that can include sanctions evasion or corruption. The commodity aspect includes the illegitimate trade of drugs and firearms (NCA, 2017). The document contains a complete threat assessment for each crime listed individually in those broad categories. I studied the threat assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation in particular detail and saw that there was a high proportion of criminals who share and view pornographic imagery of children from all social backgrounds and ages, and the rise of internet communications technology, in particular, social media that is specially used more by the young has led to greater chances for offenders to organize meetings in order to lure a contact, essentially presenting new challenges to law enforcement agencies that may continue to evolve in the future (NCA, 2017). This week was interesting for me in the sense that it provided an adequate background and history for the crime investigation subjects that were to be studied in the following weeks and outlined themes in managing investigations.

# Investigative Models and Forensic Principles

The second week included theories and investigative models by Dr. Dean Jones, where I went through active and proactive modes of investigation. One of the interesting aspects of this week’s study included the intelligence-led approach to investigating the crime model that has been successful in many Western countries (Gill, 2017). To deepen my understanding, I went through the handbook for the investigative doctrine that provides definitive guidance at the national level for investigators of all levels, as characterized by PIP, on important principles of criminal investigation, regardless of the complexity or nature of the investigation itself (Paul Connor, 2018). This assists law enforcement in meeting the government's challenging target in order to bring a greater number of offenders to justice and to increase the confidence of the general public in the process of investigations. Going through the manual, I understood that the efficient investigator should develop the skill for accountable and reliable decision-making, which may have to be made under difficult circumstances, situations or pressure. The investigator's decision-making ability can be influenced by many factors that I only realized after studying them. Different measures, such as investigative mindset and evidential or investigative evaluation, can be taken (NPIA, 2012). Studying investigative strategies, I learned two main modes of investigative actions exist; the first includes a range of actions intended as a general trawl for information, and the second range of actions related to precise inquiry lines which have been produced through the inquiry; these modes are more evidence-specific and to identify the appropriate measure requires more information about the nature of the crime (NPIA, 2012). The book also contained useful guidelines for developing an Investigative mindset, a forensic strategy, and how to collect and analyze the material gathered by the police. The management techniques used in crime scenes base themselves on the 'Locard's Principle' of exchange, which states that:

"Anyone who enters the scene both takes something of the scene with them and leaves something of themselves behind. This means that every contact has the potential to leave a trace, however minuscule" (NPIA, 2012).

# Crime Scene Management and Forensic Strategy

Therefore, the crime scene is secured in a number of ways to contain those traces. I understood the importance of the use of a proper forensic strategy that can help the investigative officer augment the potential of recovered materials during the examination phase. The College of Policing portal also offers a collection of useful resource material that I accessed for issues related to major investigations and public protection. The standardized administrative procedures for major investigations provided clear guidance and information on the procedures that can be used in an MIR or Major Incident Room. The responsibilities of each member of staff who will work in an MIR are highlighted, which can lead to a successful investigation outcome.

# Leadership and Investigation Management

I understood the importance of a Senior Investigative Officer or a detective officer's role. "He is to be the leader of the team, provide investigative focus, coordinate and motivate the team, and be accountable for every facet of the inquiry whilst managing a whole host of specialist resources to maximum effect." (ACPOS, 2005)

Furthermore, the responsibilities of the SIO, the Deputy SIO, managers, finance managers, action managers, and registrars are outlined in an investigation. Further sections include how to manage identification information with regard to names, surnames, sex, locations, telephones, vehicle registrations, and SIM Cards. Additionally, there is guidance on financial and resource management along with DNA screen administrative guidelines (ACPOS, 2005).

# Complex Homicide Investigations

In the third week of the course, I was introduced to some case studies of complex investigations. I got to study a real-life case of a murder investigation process from start to finish, using the murder investigation manual 2006. This was one of the most important case studies of the course and required an in-depth understanding of the investigative process. I understood that investigators face unique challenges while investigating different forms of homicide (James, 2016). One of the challenges is due to the serious nature of the crime of homicide itself. Investigators, I feel, are under a lot of pressure to identify the perpetrator of the crime as early as possible, and bringing him to justice is a priority both for the police as well as the public, which can put the SIO investigators under pressure. The manual also defines the different types of homicide, such as domestic homicide, the course of crime homicide such as in burglary or robbery, gang homicide, confrontation or jealousy, racial violence, terrorism, and reckless attacks (ACPO, 2006).

I read about the different strategic phases that homicide investigations usually have. The first of them is the initial and instigation response that encompasses officer deployment to the site of the homicide incident. The actions they take to secure the scene, preserve life, locate the material or arrest offenders are all part of the phase. The second phase is the investigation, which involves developing the necessary strategies for the investigation in order to gather evidence or material required to prove the incident to be a case of homicide. It also involves arresting and identifying suspected people and obtaining physical evidence and material for their prosecution (Marshall, 2012). The third phase is Case management, which includes post-charge enquiries, arranging the material collected for the defence and prosecution, and handling of witnesses.

There are some types of cases that can become highly complex in nature owing to the high amount of information that stands to be processed before reaching any conclusive result (Jones Dean, 2008). Studying these complex cases, I found them to mostly occur due to the size and scope of the incident, such as a terrorist attack. A greater public interest in a particular incident can also be a factor that is exhibited throughout the trial process (ACPO, 2006). Investigations can also become complex, or sometimes, the evidence material available to the investigative officers is insufficient to allow any substantial progress in the case. The different forms of Surveillance techniques that were discussed in the lectures included identifying the suspect's accomplices, eliminating or identifying actual culprits or suspects, and delivering information on their lifestyles and habits. They can be utilized to monitor or identify witnesses as well by monitoring significant locations (ACPO, 2006). An additional information resource that was part of my study here was the 'Core Investigative Doctrine'; it is a practice advice document from the NIA that delivers decisive guidance at a national level for all investigators as codified by the 'Professionalizing Investigation Programme' (PIP) on vital principles concerning the investigation of crimes (NWP, 2014).

# Operation Yewtree Case Study

This week I got to study another case study regarding the complex investigative procedures involved in the operation Yewtree joint report. In October 2012, 'The Metropolitan Police began an investigation into a crime that involved accusations of sexual abuse of Children by a celebrity called Jimmy Savile. The case was historic in nature, and the operation was noted for "dealing with alleged abuse on an unprecedented scale" by the media. The investigations were conducted in a way that empowered an astounding number of victims to report sexual exploitation and come forward about any childhood incidents that they experienced or saw occur. Information was provided by hundreds and hundreds of people who came forth to assist in the investigation of Operation Yewtree. The NSPCC and the police came to the conclusion after the investigation that Jimmy Savile was a prolific sexual predator in the UK who had abused and offended a large group of victims. Since I had been following all the media hype about the case, I was highly interested to know how such a historic criminal investigation had been carried out. I studied the entire report and corroborated media reports regarding the incident, and I had some insightful discussions with the instructor about it. Approximately 600 people have come forward, and I understand the importance of the police helpline. In this case, the NSPCC Helpline led towards collecting the bulk of the contacts needed to investigate suspects in Operation Yewtree to provide information to the investigative team (David Gray, 2013).

# Digital Investigations and Emerging Crime

In the following weeks, I went through digital investigation techniques and received insight into how technology is emboldening criminals to take advantage of the opportunities it provides to them, whereas law enforcement is lagging behind in those manoeuvres. I realized how important for every police officer was to have the ability to tackle crime with the sort of digital elements that are now commonplace. What is interesting yet concerning is that Policing such encrypted spaces like WhatsApp is expensive, yet social media is providing a giant, crowded space to which crime in the community is increasingly drifting. Digitalization can enable police to do more with less but create side effects that can stretch the intellectual bandwidth of any responsible decision-maker; for this purpose, it is important to understand the digital footprint, i.e. all digital services users leave behind a data trail. Having proper digital capabilities can potentially drive law enforcement to fundamental changes in operating services and models as well as their responsibilities and roles in society (ThinkDigital, 2015). Another important study to facilitate learning that I consulted was the 'Good Practice and Advice for Managers of E-Crime Investigation' The report mentioned that the analysis and collection of digital evidence is a rapidly developing and dynamic area of police work and in the foreseeable future it will continue to remain so. There will have to be close liaisons between private sector bodies and law enforcement in order to find and provide a coordinated and consistent approach. The ever-increasing demands that managers require to maintain awareness include technical support and digital forensic services in order to streamline investigations today (ACPO, 2008).

# Critical Incident Management

I participated in a critical incident management exercise utilizing the Hydra immersive learning and stimulation system. This system tackles the problem by creating a situation for teams to improve and practice decision-making, as well as leadership and communication skills in a simulated environment that replicates real critical incidents and their complexities (Liverpool.ac, n.d.). I trained in this system in the workshop to be able to handle critical incidents. Critical incidents or CI are defined as "any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community." (COP, 2013). These critical incidents are often serious, high profile, and relate to homicide. CIM, or 'Critical Incident Management,' provides training to respond in a way that can satisfy the victim's needs and those of his community and family. It can also provide training on how to achieve a proportionate and effective outcome to an incident. We also learned how early intervention can be effective if there is a likelihood of a case escalating into a critical incident so that a significant loss of confidence can be prevented (McGarry, 2011).

# Prosecution and Case Management

In the last week of the course, I studied some materials on prosecution and case management that helped me to develop insights into how law enforcement coordinates with the institutional elements of the criminal justice system. The experience of witnesses, victims, and the public is essential in order for offenders to be brought to justice. There were five modules that I learned during this study: case and charging preparation, trial management hearing, managing offenders and enforcing sentences, possible justice consequences following an investigation, and witness and victim care. I learned basic prosecution procedures and how the prosecution processes are first initiated from the moment a crime is made part of the police report. How evidence is collected to ascertain the incident's events and point to those involved, and how witnesses are used to collect statements in order to support the other evidence. After the evidence is gathered, the two vital stages before the first hearing are the prosecution process and the decision to charge. The person who is charged with a crime is either released on bail or remanded in custody before being presented in front of the jury in court (COP, 2013).

# Conclusion and Professional Learning

Overall, in this course, I gained a lot of insights into how criminal investigations are managed and handled. I thoroughly enjoyed the course because It allowed me to accumulate a lot of important information, such as the steps to take when arriving at a crime scene and how the backgrounds of criminals can cause them to get in trouble with the law. One other important thing that I learned in those other courses was what prison life consisted of, what effects it has on those incarcerated and how inmates have a high chance of recidivism once released. Needless to say, I came into this course with a lot of prior information at hand, but the knowledge I acquired greatly empowered me in my future role in law enforcement.

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