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PROCESS OF A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Criminal justice is a process, involving a series of steps beginning with a criminal investigation and ending with the release of a convicted offender from correctional facility. Rules and decision making are at the center of this process [1].

Investigation initiates from that moment that the police receives the phone call. Reports can be received by the victim itself, neighbour or anyone else that may have noticed or suspected any different movements or noises. One should be very cautiously due to the fact that the crime could have occurred any time and perpetrators could still be inside the premises or nearby. Solving crime is about finding the right balance between so called «activity» – for example, better analysis of trends in order to improve prevention – and reactivity. Criminal investigation is a reactive activity that must be oriented towards a final goal, and this can only be achieved by reducing bureaucracy and increasing efficiency [2]. Investigators should be on the alert for any persons fleeing the area, suspicious or well-known persons that are known by the police and suspicious vehicles. The first officer to respond a burglary call is usually the patrol officer. Officers should first determine whether a crime is currently in progress. When a crime is still being carried out, officer must call for more help in order to prevent the escape of the suspect/s. On the way to the scene of crime, officer should approach the burglary location without warning emergency lights or siren. After arriving, one can observe certain reliable indicators that a burglary has been or still being (for example open doors, windows). The first attendant officer should immediately preserve the crime scene, in order to maximize forensic opportunities due to the fact that there is few amount of time before the evidence will be contaminated. The crime scene should be secured and the victims are to be escorted to another area. It is made in order to ensure that victims won't touch anything

Burglar can gain access by force (open a door or a window by means of tools). It is important to discover what type of tool was used and how the perpetrator had gained entrance. When no signs of forced entry are found it may indicate that burglar entered through an open or unlocked door or might possess the keys. The next step for an investigator is to search, collect and preserve evidence. Great care must be taken when searching for evidence. The point of entry is usually the area which has a lot of evidence. When walking around the scene one must use extreme caution. Search must start from the entry. Investigator must locate what items were disturbed or removed. After the search, the type and amount of loss should be defined with thorough description. An important step in the preliminary investigation is the *Modus Operandi*. The identifications of a unique *modus operandi* are essential in investigating burglary due to the fact that most burglars commit a series of burglars using the same patterns. Investigator should look for the time, location, type of methods used to gain entrance, stolen things (for example cash only or jewelry and any particularities of the offence). Such patterns can tie and lead several burglaries to one suspect.

Preliminary investigations also include interviewing the victim, any witnesses available and the identifications of CCTV cameras. A sketch of the scene of a crime and a list of property stolen could also help toward the investigation.

Some people might think that when it comes to such crimes like burglaries, there are few witnesses but, actually there might be more than they believe. Police try to locate witnesses. Witnesses are very important in the process of solving crimes and they are key persons in such situations. Eyewitnesses are those who can provide a detailed account of the circumstances which otherwise would be lost and weaken the evidence. Although, the testimony given by eyewitnesses has often been criticized they are of a great importance for judges and jury in a litigation process.

Burglary scenes are visited by SOCO in order to maximize forensic opportunities. When searching for physical evidence at a burglary scene it will also require the help of the victim who can easily identify what has been moved and what items does not belong to the owner. Forensic recovery includes the photographing of the crime scene and the discovery of physical evidence that may include fingerprints, footprints inside and outside the house (e.g. below windows, fibers, hair, tire prints, tool marks, tools, and broken glass and paint chips and even personal items). Burglars tend to drink and eat in the kitchen of the burgled home and therefore they also leave traces of DNA on bottles or cups. Fingerprints are considered to be accurate and valuable marks in the process of identifying a human body due to the fact that the patterns and characteristics of the fingerprints are

unique. Trace evidence can establish a link between the perpetrator and the scene of crime. The Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is a great advance in scientific criminal investigation and it is possible to search criminal record for a single latent print [4].

Shoe footprints are also common physical evidence that can be found in a crime scene. Shoe footprints can provide unique wear patterns that can be compared with a suspect's shoes. Shoe print can indicate whether the suspect was running, walking or even if it was carrying something heavy. The pattern, size, personal characteristics and coincidental characteristics can make a shoe mark unique.

The most common means used to gain entrance in a residence are tools. Common tools that are used in burglary are screwdrivers, glass cutters, vice grips, pry bars, picks and augers. Tools marks are important evidence. Most criminals use the same tool in order to gain entry and thus, leave marks that can link one burglary to another.

To sum up, investigation of such crime like burglary involves several stages: investigating the crime scene, collecting and preserving available physical evidence, interviewing potential witnesses, using informants, examining records, tracing property and identifying suspects. A successful case will depend on the investigator's ability to handle clearly unrelated pieces of information in an analytical way. In order to deter the burglar, there should be more effective policing and enhanced situational prevention.

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