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Donald C. Stone

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utilizing the Division's facilities on January 1, 1933, realize that its cooperation is a potent weapon in effective law enforcement. It is interesting to observe that several of the 24 states which maintain state bureaus of identification require in their own statutes that fingerprints shall be forwarded to the Division in the cases of individuals arrested within their jurisdiction charged with various offenses. While there is no Federal Law requiring the states to cooperate with the Division's identification work, they thus recognize the identification activities of the Federal Government as an aid to proper local law enforcement.

It is the policy of the Division of Investigation to reply to all fingerprint records within 36 hours after receipt to insure to its contributors the prompt service which is so necessary to handle effectively the cases of many individuals who are taken into custody. Also, through the medium of a section devoted to the handling of wanted notices on individuals whose apprehension is desired for any offenses, over 350 fugitives are identified each month. These are persons who are wanted for offenses ranging from petty larceny to murder, or as escaped prisoners, parole or probation violators.

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## PRACTICAL USE OF POLICE RECORDS SYSTEM

DONALD C. STONE<sup>2</sup>

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In view of the present necessity for rigid economy in city and police affairs, some police departments are asking if they can afford to install and operate a well-rounded records system. Would it not be preferable to use the money to concentrate men on outside police work? Are these inside duties really necessary? These are questions which I encounter very frequently these days.

My reply is, that rather than less need, there is more need than ever for an adequate records system which will supply to police officials facts concerning crime conditions and the results attained by their departments in coping with them. Moreover, records are essential in the day-to-day administration and control of any department. In their absence, the organization, no matter how high the caliber of its officials, will tend to disintegrate; individual officers will fail in the handling of specific cases; the department will not

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<sup>1</sup>Paper presented before the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police.

<sup>2</sup>Director, Consulting and Research Division, Public Administration Service.

be able to keep abreast of the ever-changing problems of crime. The records system is the compass by means of which police officials may guide their organizations in their attack upon lawlessness, and without which the police ship cannot be safely guided into port. Otherwise the department, must operate blindly, shooting ahead first on one course and then on another, without reaching its intended destination. I have found this to be true for European departments. It holds equally well for American forces.

There are three main purposes of a police records and identification system which I should like to discuss. These purposes are:

- (1) To maintain a control over all police business through the use of the follow-up principle which will assure that all matters requiring investigation or attention are properly cared for. This is a problem of day-to-day administration.
- (2) To provide analyses of police problems and of the work of the department so that the force may be better distributed and assigned to its duties, and the relative effectiveness of different methods ascertained. This aspect includes the use of various types of crime statistics in applying strategy to the management of police affairs.
- (3) To assist in the investigation and disposition of particular crimes through such devices as fingerprint systems, photography, Modus Operandi, files of criminal histories, and the like.

Before discussing the operation of the records and identification system in attaining these three purposes, I should like to refer to the position of a records bureau in a police organization. All records and identification services should be centralized in a single bureau and placed under a young, alert, intelligent, and progressive officer who reports directly to the chief of police. Irrespective of the size of the department, all offense reports, arrest records, summonses, lost and stolen property records, traffic records, personnel records, fingerprints, photographs, criminal histories, Modus Operandi, handwriting, missing persons, accidents, correspondence, and other records should be administered by this central bureau.

Attached to this records bureau should be a central complaint desk where citizens can bring their troubles or obtain information, and over which a continuous transaction of business may be carried on between police officers and the records bureau. At this central complaint desk should be located the main communications of the department. The telephone system and call boxes should tie up to a switchboard here and all criminal complaints be received here as well. If a radio and teletype is installed, the microphone or trans-

mitter should be at this point. Thus the complaint desk becomes the focal point for all police activity. It knows everything that is going on. It is indispensable in emergencies. Preferably it should be located adjacent to the detective bureau on one side and to the chief's office on the other.

In large metropolitan police departments the sheer size of the organization may prevent a compact layout of the records bureau, complaint desk, and communications. The above principles, however should be followed in so far as possible.

### *The Follow-Up System of Control*

No police organization can rely solely upon the individual initiative of its members to execute all of the many duties of investigation and inspection and to follow such matters through to completion. Some method must therefore be devised by the chief which will assure that all police business is conducted properly and with dispatch. The follow-up system has proved the best method designed to date. The majority of police departments observe the follow-up principle to some extent with respect to the investigation of major crimes but even here I have found many departments in which there is no thorough review of investigation reports before unsolved cases are closed or discontinued. With respect to the majority of complaints and investigations, such as a report by Mrs. Cheeseborough that the neighbors' chickens have invaded her garden, or a complaint by Mr. Gump that the radio next door is making an outlandish nocturnal disturbance of the peace, too many departments do not maintain a rigorous follow-up system. Although to a police department such complaints are minor and insignificant, the manner in which they are handled will determine the attitude of Mrs. Cheeseborough and Mr. Gump toward the police in general. When one considers that there are hundreds of these minor cases to each sensational crime, the great necessity of control at this point is readily apparent. Departments which handle these lesser matters with dispatch obtain the confidence and good will of the citizens as a whole. Moreover, I find that those departments which are lax in minor matters are also careless or inefficient in the more important problems.

In brief, the follow-up system consists of assigning to an officer in the records bureau, the head of it in some cases or even the chief himself, the responsibility for following through all matters requiring police attention to see that they are correctly disposed of. To this end he must check and file all complaints and inspect each subse-

quent report to see that the complaint is handled correctly and quickly. A card is prepared and marked as to when a supplementary or follow-up report should be received, and if not received the follow-up officer must have power to demand such reports. This officer should decide whether a case has been properly handled; whether the rules and regulations of the department have been followed; whether the reports have proper form, content, and accuracy; whether the complainant has received every service due him; whether all possible clues and leads have been followed; and in short assure himself that the chief would be completely satisfied with everything done on the case. Moreover, the follow-up officer, being located in the records and identification bureau, is in the most strategic place to assist the investigating officers. As soon as a crime complaint is received he should search the Modus Operandi files, the files of suspicious persons, the pawned property files, files of wanted persons, and other facilities provided by the records bureau. The investigating officer should confer with him at the first possible moment to see that all possible leads have been obtained.

Obviously an ordinary clerk cannot be assigned to this position. The position requires and warrants the most alert, intelligent, and able police officer available. He must know how each branch of the department operates and every angle of practical police work and scientific criminal investigation. And in addition he must have such a personality that he can obtain what he wants from his fellow officers and at the same time preserve their loyalty and good will. Chief O. W. Wilson of the Wichita, Kansas police department has prepared an excellent statement of the follow-up system for the June 1932 issue of PUBLIC MANAGEMENT, the official journal of the City Managers' Association. This article is being reprinted and I wish that chiefs throughout the country might read it.

### *Analyses of Police Problems*

The second major function of the police records system is its use in presenting police officials with analyses of police problems and police operations. The first thing that a chief should know is what crimes are being committed, the number of each kind, the time of day or week at which they occur, where they take place, and how the figures compare with those of previous periods.

Then there are such questions as what proportion of crimes have been solved. What is the tendency with traffic accidents? How do arrests and successful prosecutions compare with preceding years?

Are more or less men actually on patrol duty? And a host of other matters on which a police executive must have information if he is to make a success of the department. The chief and other superior officers should be presented with some of this information each day, some of it each week or month and the rest at the end of the year or as occasion warrants. A little over a year ago in making an installation of a records system in the Pasadena, California, police department, I designed a consolidated daily report and also a monthly report which the Committee on Uniform Crime Records of the International Association of Chiefs of Police adopted and distributed to cities all over the country. Indeed, so many cities requested a supply of them that we had a large number run off which are available to interested persons at wholesale cost. You will note that the information required by the monthly report is much more extensive than that needed daily. The daily report is suitable for cities of any size, but smaller cities, for example, those of under 25,000 inhabitants, need not go into quite so much detail on their monthly reports. I suggest that such cities condense this standard form of the Committee on Uniform Crime Records to meet their local requirements. These forms may be obtained at cost from our offices at 850 E. 58th St., Chicago.

In the matter of the distribution and assignment of the force, the analyses of crime conditions and police hazards prove indispensable. First of all, we must know the volume of police work during each hour of the day in order to know what is the most equitable distribution of the force on the several reliefs. In the second place, if we are to distribute the burden of work equally, we must be informed of the volume of police hazards and other matters requiring the time and attention of officers in every area of the city. By police hazards, I refer to any characteristic of the city or its population which requires constant supervision or attention by the police, as for example, high-valued property, poorly lighted streets, the congestion of a large number of criminals or delinquents in a bad housing area, amusement parks, pool rooms, social clubs, and establishments containing goods that are easily taken and identified.

Now, if beats are established all of equal size and without recognition of the volume or time required in handling these hazards and duties, burdens will fall inequitably upon various members of the department. As a basis for distributing patrol, the city should be divided into small districts containing four to eight blocks, more in the case of large cities and the police hazards, crime conditions, and

other matters requiring police attention should be charted by these districts. It is not a difficult matter to determine the average length of time that it takes to investigate crimes or other matters or to perform such duties as trying windows, doors, inspecting hotel registers, dance halls, and so on. Then by combining these districts, individual beats can be constructed which place equal burdens upon the members of the force. Moreover, in analyzing the police problems in this manner, the adequacy of the force can be more closely identified and police policies more effectively developed.

The same principles apply in the assignment of officers to special units of the force, such as traffic, and criminal investigation. Obviously traffic patrols should be established on those streets which analyses of accidents reveal to be the most hazardous. Moreover, by analyzing the types of crimes investigated by members of the detective bureau and the results obtained, not only can the adequacy of the bureau itself be determined but the relative aptitude of each officer making such investigation. By keeping an individual record of each officer we are able to determine which officers are really earning their salt and the chief of detectives also has a factual basis for returning incompetents to the uniformed force. These are just a few illustrations of practical uses of analyses of police records.

### *Records Assist in the Identification of Crime*

Now we come to the third function of records namely the assistance provided by the follow-up officer in the detection of criminals. The use of fingerprints and photography has been so well established in this country as to require no argument, although surprising as it may seem, I was recently called in to reorganize a police department in a city of 50,000 inhabitants in which no fingerprint work whatever was being done.

The part which I should like to emphasize is that fingerprinting, photography, and other identification methods are all an integral part of the records bureau, none of which can be isolated from the rest without causing severe injury to the system as a whole. I say this with special emphasis, because the tendency of many fingerprint experts is to create a separate unit shrouded in mystery. Fingerprints are only one of many identification services which must be utilized by the police department. When searching for clues, the follow-up officer or other records bureau officer should not be handicapped by having part of the records in a separate portion of the building. Fingerprint experts and other employees must all fit into

one co-ordinated unit designed to serve the entire police department.

There are two aspects of identification services which I should like to mention in particular. The first is the use of Modus Operandi and the second is the use of single fingerprints.

Modus Operandi, as a police term, refers to the identification of a criminal through knowledge of his particular methods of operation. As you all well know, a criminal usually commits the same offense in a similar manner or in any event will leave tell-tale traces behind him which when discovered may lead to his detection. An experienced officer will be familiar with the methods employed by many local and migratory crooks. However, memory cannot always be relied upon and unfortunately when an experienced officer dies his knowledge passes with him.

To make the knowledge of such officers a permanent part of the department, a system of Modus Operandi records has been developed. I find that practically all police departments of Europe are employing M. O., particularly England where it originated, and that many departments in this country both large and small are rapidly taking it up. In practice the Modus Operandi system consists of files of cards on which are classified the methods by which major crimes have been committed and major criminals operate. Let us take a case of burglary for example. A separate card is prepared for each of the following:

- (1) The kind of property attacked, that is whether it is a chain store, a bank, a freight car, etc.
- (2) The manner of entry, such as through the rear door, basement window or transom.
- (3) The means of attack, that is the kind of tool, device, or trick employed in gaining entry, i.e., ladder, rope, etc.
- (4) The object of attack, that is, the articles toward which entry was directed, such as silverware, jewelry, money, clothing, silks, etc.
- (5) And finally the trademark which refers to the personal idiosyncrasies or particular methods which serve to distinguish this criminal from other criminals who may have committed the same offenses in the same general way. I refer to such practices as the raiding of an icebox, poisoning of a dog, turning on the radio, changing clothes, or other peculiar acts.

Within each of these Modus Operandi divisions, a classification is developed and the cards containing a brief statement of the crime and the offender are filed accordingly. All physical defects of criminals, and all names, aliases, nicknames, etc., are indexed.

When a new crime is committed, the peculiar characteristics or M. O. as it is called, are compared with similar characteristics in the



files of past crimes, thereby revealing suspects or other clues. Or if a man is in custody known or suspected of a particular M. O., the files may be searched to find out what unsolved crimes have been committed in the same way, thus providing the police with an effective wedge for questioning him.

### *Single Fingerprints*

A police subject in which I was particularly interested during my inspection of European police departments this past summer was that of Single Fingerprints. I refer to the methods used in classifying prints of individual digits, and the use of single fingerprint files in making identifications from latent prints left at the scene of a crime. Three or four police departments in this country have given considerable attention to this phase of criminal detection, outstanding among which are Los Angeles, and Berkeley, California; and Wichita, Kansas. I had heard that practically every department in Europe maintained single fingerprint files and was obtaining excellent results from them. The cities I visited confirmed this.

In Scotland Yard during the first six months of this year, 300 identifications were made solely from single fingerprint evidence. In Berlin, during 1931, 214 identifications were made from latent single fingerprints. In the City of Amsterdam, Holland, 52 identifications were made during the past year. In Paris an average of 150 identifications are made in a year. In Brussels, 12 identifications were made last year.

In studying their methods and successes, I find that we have been overlooking a very important aspect of criminal identification in this country. Even their very small police departments, particularly those in England, maintain single fingerprint files. They may not operate ten fingerprint files as this work is all done by the central clearing house at Scotland Yard, but it is the consensus of opinion that each local police unit should maintain its own single fingerprint and modus operandi files.

A single fingerprint according to Chief Inspector Harry Battley of Scotland Yard must recognize the following three essentials:

- (1) A sufficient area of the print must be available for scrutiny.
- (2) The basis of classification must be upon readily visible characteristics which can be identified even if the impression of the print is distorted or imperfect.
- (3) Single fingerprints must be filed in collections in which any one print can be classified and filed separately and thereby easily discovered when search is made by its classification formula.

Some police departments as in Berlin use the Henry System with certain refinements with respect to ridge tracing and counting as a basis for the single fingerprint classification. Scotland Yard previously employed such a system, but experience demonstrated that the ridge characteristics assumed a different appearance as the result of a difference in depressure. Moreover, even with the refinements of this system the classification was not sufficiently specific and exact to make search an easy matter.

As a result Chief Inspector Harry Battley and his assistant of the fingerprint bureau at New Scotland Yard have developed a new plan of classification which has produced excellent results. The Bureau of Social Hygiene has cooperated in publishing Chief Inspector Battley's manual of his system. This manual, called "Single Fingerprints," describes in great detail the technique of classifying the prints and using the files. I refer here only to two or three main principles which illustrate the method and value of the system.

The Battley system employs a magnifying glass fitted with a window at the base on the center of which is marked a spot and about which are inscribed seven concentric circles of three, five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen, and fifteen millimeter radius respectively. In using this glass the center spot in the window is placed upon a particular point of the impression such as the top of the core, and position readings of other points of the impression are taken by reference to the circle in which they fall.

Let us analyze first the classification of whorls for example which will illustrate the methods. The first classification is made with the use of the magnifying glass, by placing the spot in the window on the summit of the first recurving ridge constituting the core. The print is classified as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H, according to the circle on the window of the glass in which the bottom of the first recurving ridge of the core appears.

The smaller spirals fall within the center circle, i. e., the "A" circle, and these are again sub-classified into five groups by reference to the type of core.

Further sub-classifications of the A, B, C, D, etc., types are made in three ways, first, according to the position of the delta upon the window of the magnifying glass with reference to the core; second, by ridge tracing, and third, by ridge counting. These three methods provide five subdivisions, namely:

- (1) By the circle reading of the left-hand delta.
- (2) By ridge tracing of the print, i. e., inner, meeting, or outer.

- (3) By the circle reading of the right-hand delta.
- (4) By ridge counting from the left-hand delta to the core.
- (5) By ridge counting from the right-hand delta to the core.

The refinements provided in this classification are very much greater than under the Henry system. By illustration, four whorls subdivided by ridge tracing under the Henry scheme may fall into any one of eighty-one sub-groups. Disregarding ridge tracing and using the special lined glass for reference to the circles in which the deltas fall, four whorls under the Battley scheme may fall into any one of 16,777,216 sub-groups.

Single fingerprints are filed only of persons guilty of breaking and entering and similar offenses in which there is a likelihood of latent prints. An extra set of prints of all such offenders is taken on thin paper at the time the regular ten fingerprint cards are prepared. Each print is cut and mounted on a card which shows the number, name of the digit, the criminal's reference number in the regular identification files, the main fingerprint classification, and the designation of the main class and sub-class to which the single print is assigned. The prints of each digit are filed in a separate drawer, as for example, all right thumbs are filed in the first drawer, classified according to whether they are arches, tented arches, etc., and sub-classified as described above. The right forefinger is filed in the second drawer, and so on.

A special sub-collection of single prints from the scene of crimes but which have not been identified is kept in all the departments that I visited. These photographic copies are classified and filed in accordance with the regular single print system insofar as it is possible to do so. At Scotland Yard it has been found that about 75 per cent of all prints found at the scene of the crime can be definitely classified and filed.

Experience has shown that the position of the print or prints upon an article will generally reveal which digit it is. Moreover, when there is but a single impression, there are certain averages with respect to the types of patterns which are found on particular digits which assist in identifying the impression.

The latent prints are lifted in several ways. In some cases, they are dusted and photographed directly. In others, they are dusted and lifted by means of a transfer paper and then photographed. A transparent transfer paper, called "Berlinier Folien" is used in Berlin and permits the direct lifting of a print and its study through the

transparent material employed, without giving a reverse picture of the ridge characteristics.

All investigating officers are trained in the search and preservation of latent fingerprint evidence at the scene of the crime. In the larger city forces, a representative of the fingerprint bureau usually goes out on every major crime in search of prints. In this way, European police departments obtain much positive evidence and solve many cases which in this country would go undetected.

### *Need of State Bureau of Identification*

Any department in a city with a population of 10,000 and over can operate Modus Operandi and single fingerprint files. In small cities they will be very simple, but will prove worth while. But what is most needed is a central clearing house for Modus Operandi and single fingerprints as well as of ten fingerprint records. Certain states do not yet maintain a central bureau for criminal identification. Such a bureau should be established immediately in every one of these for in its effect upon the solving and preventing of crimes, it will far more than repay the expenditure it entails. All police departments in each state should submit to it as they do to the Department of Justice, copies of fingerprints and statements of the Modus Operandi of offenders. The central bureau should maintain all types of personal identification files and facilities for the use of local police and other law enforcement agencies. A laboratory and other aids to police investigation are an integral part of such a unit. Specialized investigators and identification experts should be available to departments that are unable to deal with intricate cases.

The bureau should serve as a clearing house on state wide enforcement problems and submit to police departments circulars of major crimes, persons wanted, property stolen, and other aspects of police work requiring co-ordinated effort. The central bureau should maintain property identification files, receiving descriptions of stolen property from all departments as well as descriptions of property pawned or sold to second-hand shops. The property covered might be limited at the outset to watches, typewriters, automobiles, and other kinds carrying serial numbers. And finally the bureau would collect the uniform crime returns directly from police departments and submit summaries to the United States Department of Justice.