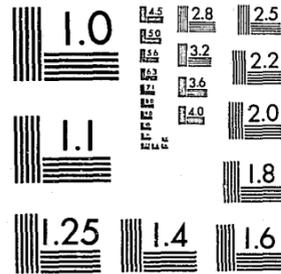


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**The Uniformed Crime Investigator**

# FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN

MARCH 1984, VOLUME 53, NUMBER 3

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ACQUISITIONS



The Cover: As a means to control rising crime rates and provide improved service to the community, one police agency developed a Uniformed Crime Investigator Program. See article p. 1.

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Operations



## The Uniformed Crime Investigator A Unique Strategy to Protect and Serve

By  
LT. GENE N. BERRY

Commander  
Operations Bureau  
Police Department  
Oceanside, Calif.

"Cooperation and coordination are  
main ingredients to the success of the program."



Lieutenant Berry

was not satisfactory. A program had to be developed that would stabilize these statistics and overcome the public's concern of crime.

Unfortunately, the following scenario is a common daily occurrence in cities and towns across the United States:

A house or business has been broken into and the victim calls for police assistance. The police arrive and begin their investigation. They ask a few questions, take photographs, and if fortunate, lift fingerprints from the scene. But in most cases, unless the case is of major importance, the officer files the report with the Investigations Division the following day, leaving the citizen confused, frustrated, and wondering why nothing else can be done.

Initial responses by law enforcement personnel have been limited traditionally because of their many and varied responsibilities. They are charged with handling calls for service, making arrests where appropriate, and performing lifesaving acts when necessary. Time does not allow the responding officer to do more than gather preliminary information. In addition, patrol officers investigating crime scenes usually do not possess the necessary equipment or specialized training required for a detailed crime scene analysis. This can be attributed to a lack of "job specific" training courses or budgetary restraints. For these reasons, the Uniformed Crime Investigator (UCI) Program was developed. Not only is it one answer to a community need, it also improved the department's response to a wide variety of crimes.

The UCI program is similar in one respect to training courses for field evidence technicians or crime scene investigators. However, in these programs, other "experts" are called in to assist if more than evidence collection, preservation, and cataloging is needed in an investigation. This, in turn, can generate an overtime cost factor if off-duty detectives or other personnel become involved.

The UCI program goes beyond these common practices. UCI's obtain search/arrest warrants, interview and interrogate victims or suspects, and make composites of wanted subjects. They are charged with the responsibility to do all that is necessary at the initial call to bring the case to a successful completion. For example, the UCI arriving at a crime scene evaluates the incident and determines what investigative action will be taken. He has total responsibility and control unless the incident is of such importance or magnitude that detectives and other investigating personnel are needed. If this occurs, the responsibility for the crime scene rests with the "call-out" detective and crime scene personnel will be given specific duties to perform. If the case does not require extensive followup, it will not be directed to the Investigations Division. In these instances, program personnel are responsible for total crime scene management and resolution. (See fig. 1.)

The Uniformed Crime Investigator Program was designed to accomplish three major goals:

- Raise the quality of "front end" investigations,
- Raise the quantity of prosecutable crimes, and
- Raise the level of service to the community.

Figure 1

#### Major Functions Performed by Uniformed Crime Investigators

- 1) Total crime scene management,
- 2) Crime scene photography,
- 3) Develop latent prints using powders and chemicals,
- 4) Conduct interviews/interrogations,
- 5) Obtain search/arrest warrants,
- 6) Collect, preserve, and catalog physical evidence,
- 7) Crime scene sketch,
- 8) Collect body fluids,
- 9) Make impressions,
- 10) Make composites using the "Identi-Kit" process,
- 11) Conduct neutron activation tests,
- 12) Attend autopsies,
- 13) Operate artificial lighting systems,
- 14) Maintain field activity records, and
- 15) Conduct followup investigations.

#### Quality of "Front End" Investigations

Without question, the most important aspect to a successful conclusion of a crime scene investigation is at the scene of the incident. Here is where the focus of attention is directed. If proper techniques are not applied or a thorough understanding of the ultimate goal is not clear, the end result will be manifested in higher crime statistics and lower crime clearance rates.

Once a crime scene has been contaminated or given only a cursory examination, the investigator's job becomes more difficult. It is more difficult to go back and reconstruct the scene, to return and relocate victims or witnesses, or to remember who said what about whom. The appropriate time is at the moment the responding officer first arrives at the scene. Total crime scene management and commitment of available resources begin here.

In today's law enforcement approach to solving crimes, merely taking an investigative report for detectives to follow up later is not enough. Whether they are the victim of a major crime or a simple theft, citizens expect the police to do all that we can immediately. In either event, the citizen believes he has been wronged and he expects a visible, concerted effort to help him.

#### Quantity of Prosecutable Crimes

If the first goal is met and preliminary investigations are upgraded, then perpetrators are more likely to be identified and connected to crimes. Physical evidence that has been collected, victim statements that were taken, composites that have been constructed, and search or arrest warrants that have been obtained all play a role at the front end of the investigation in identifying criminals.

Law enforcement personnel know that in many cases, several crimes are the end result of a few people. Repeat offenders are often directly responsible for a series of criminal events. By connecting those violators to crimes with good preliminary work, the number of prosecutable crimes will rise. This, in turn, will help to bring the arrest clearance rates up to an acceptable level.

#### Level of Service to the Community

The key feature of this program is that it is highly visible, action-oriented, and is received enthusiastically by the public. The citizens observe, first hand, a portion of the criminal justice system in motion. They see their law enforcement agency being responsive to their needs. Immediate, favorable, and positive reaction is the result of these improved crime control tactics.

#### Operations

Twelve officers were selected to participate in the program, including two women. The officers are uniformed patrol officers assigned to the field 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Supervision of these officers is jointly coordinated between patrol field sergeants and Operations Bureau sergeants. Operations sergeants participated alongside UCI personnel during the training phase. While they also handle patrol duties, they monitor and supervise investigations handled by UCI officers, who are primarily responsible for crime scene investigation work. However, when not engaged in UCI work, they handle any and all patrol duties.

It is absolutely essential that the function of the UCI program be fully understood. On one hand, UCI officers are performing patrol duties; on the other, they are performing investigative functions. Cooperation and coordination are main ingredients to the success of the program. The emphasis of the program is placed on the goals to be achieved. If constantly guided by the end results, the major objectives of the program will be met. An interchange of ideas and information with constant updating is necessary among UCI personnel, investigative personnel, and patrol officers. Open channels of communication must be maintained.

For a program of these dimensions to be successful, it is crucial that lines of responsibility be well-known and recognized throughout the organization. But even this must be preceded by one other major factor—total support of the agency's administrator. Without his backing, a po-



**“Training is the backbone of a successful UCI program—extensive training at the beginning, ongoing training as the program develops.”**



*Above: Evidence collection methods and proper use of equipment are taught to UCI personnel.*

*Left: Crime scene photography is a major function of the uniformed crime investigator.*

tentially high source of public approval and department satisfaction will wallow in a quagmire of confusion and laxity.

Although the UCI program was designed to raise the quality of preliminary investigations and to do whatever was necessary to complete the case at that time, certain crimes do not lend themselves to the actions of UCI personnel alone. Because particular crimes will always involve follow-up work, it is necessary to identify those crimes where investigators and other experts will always be needed.

Four major areas were identified—homicides, assaults where death is likely to occur, officer-involved shootings, and arson. These cases involve time-consuming, in-depth investigations beyond the parameters of the UCI operation. They entail vast amounts of personnel, equipment, and expertise. It may be days, weeks, and months before they are dispositioned. This program was not designed to handle these types of incidents, although UCI personnel would be involved extensively in a support role at the initial crime scene.

**Training**

Training is the backbone of a successful UCI program—extensive training at the beginning, ongoing training as the program develops.

Several field evidence technician courses were reviewed as the basis

for the training program. However, our needs greatly exceeded the standard courses available, since UCI personnel would do more than collect physical evidence, using all available resources to complete the case at the first response whenever possible.

It became evident that we would have to train our own personnel and design our own training curriculum. Although some classes offered by the California Department of Justice Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) met our needs, the number of officers away from their regular duties while attending these courses would deplete patrol field strength. This was unacceptable. Also, budgetary considerations were another problem, since we were faced with a budgetary freeze. Reimbursements for P.O.S.T.-approved classes are returned to the city's General Fund, not the police department's training budget.

Our training had to be relevant to the needs of the department, instill confidence among the officers, public, and district attorney's office, and most of all, be reputable. We designed an 88-hour course of instruction which involved classroom instruction and extensive field work, drawing instructors from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the San Diego District Attorney's Office, the San Diego County Crime Lab, and in-house experts such as identification technicians and investigators familiar with "Identi-Kit" composites.

Before the training began, we met with each of the instructors and discussed what we envisioned for our program so that they could tailor their training to our needs and goals. They were also asked to consider our capabilities.

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**"The Uniformed Crime Investigator Program . . . can enhance public relations and bring the community and law enforcement agency into a shared light of total crime scene control and community responsiveness."**

**Resistance**

Any change within an organization, especially a major field operational change, provokes some resistance and negativism among the rank and file, and this was true with the conceptualization of the Uniformed Crime Investigator Program. General investigative personnel feared encroachment upon their investigative techniques and that their expertise would be challenged. Most of all, they feared that UCI field work would generate additional case workloads for them. These were legitimate concerns, but concerns which have not materialized, even though our program is still in its early stages of development. This is why it is important for close working relationships to be developed between division commanders and among divisional personnel to keep the intent of the program intact. Program personnel and others involved must be encouraged to establish a coordinated and cooperative working relationship if the specific program objectives and departmental goals are to be met.

Contrary to the beliefs of investigators, case loads have not increased substantially. Instead, significantly more physical evidence is collected and more extensive initial investigations are conducted. Efforts by UCI officers have alleviated followup work for investigators and thus freed them for other duties. Also the work of UCI's has enabled investigators to follow up immediately on leads which have been developed.

**Program Monitoring**

First-line supervisors need to be thoroughly familiar with the program

and its objectives. They must also be made aware of the type and extent of training given to UCI's and the limitations placed upon them by their equipment and experience. These supervisors must establish liaison with other departmental units, especially the investigative personnel, and UCI officers themselves should be encouraged to institute "lines of communications" with other support groups.

The program has been monitored closely and suggestions and criticisms evaluated to increase the program's effectiveness. Monthly meetings are used to identify operational field problems, reinforce program goals, and raise the efficiency of the unit and its individual officers.

**Equipment**

Full departmental support and suitable equipment go hand in hand for a successful end product. A significant community program that will impact the reputation of the law enforcement agency must be properly prepared and equipped. Several other law enforcement agencies, county crime laboratory personnel, knowledgeable camera experts, and other individuals associated with private laboratories were solicited for equipment suggestions. The final result was that we were able to combine several well-informed opinions into a feasible equipment inventory. This, coupled with the training, would meet the objectives of the program.

**Conclusion**

The Uniformed Crime Investigator Program became operational in March 1983, and since that time, UCI officers are handling 125 to 150 incidents a month. While most of the UCI field work does not initially produce a sus-

pect, thorough preliminary crime scene work has produced excellent results in connecting perpetrators to a series of crimes.

The major impact of the UCI program has been realized in the property crime section of the Investigations Division. A large amount of physical evidence has been collected, and arrests have been made as the result of these investigations. Additional side benefits of the program are the availability of UCI officers who have specialized training to act as instructors for other field officers, which has a positive effect on the quality of work produced. The program can also be viewed as an enhancement for career development.

Society's expectations are high whether it concerns what individuals expect of themselves or from others. These expectations, combined with budgetary problems for the public sector, make our jobs difficult but not impossible. We must look within ourselves and organizations for new ideas. We have a commitment to our communities to provide the best service possible without asking for additional monies. If added financial help must be requested, then we must be constantly aware that the public will expect a fair and equitable return.

The Uniformed Crime Investigator Program can bring positive feedback to the department. It can enhance public relations and bring the community and law enforcement agency into a shared light of total crime scene control and community responsiveness.

**FBI**

**The Forgotten Victim  
Stress and the Police  
Dispatcher**

**" . . . the immediate attention and decisive action required in law enforcement telecommunications is a source of critical stress for police dispatchers."**

By  
**JAMES D. SEWELL, Ph. D.**

*Director  
Office of Management  
and Planning Services  
Florida Department of Highway  
and Motor Vehicles  
Tallahassee, Fla.*

and  
**OFFICER LINDA CREW**

*Police Department  
Tallahassee, Fla.*

Over the past several years, the law enforcement community, and to a degree, society in general have turned their attention to the serious phenomenon of police stress. Significant research has been undertaken to explain the problem, identify specific stressors confronting today's officers, and suggest proper methods of stress management.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, however, little attention has been focused on the stress experienced by the law enforcement support system, i.e., dispatchers, complaint clerks, clerical personnel, crime scene and evidence technicians, and other nonsworn personnel who are so critical to the success of the law enforcement mission.



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**END**