

MODULE 1 - WHERE ARE WE?

LECTURE 2 –OVERVIEW AND MAJOR CRIME CATEGORIES

We begin with an OVERVIEW

Just to make sure you don't get overly excited about starting this course, I'm gonna begin here by talking about some of the things I've learned about experience over the years. I'll bet that some of you are probably relatively young and don't have much experience in policing or investigations. And some of you are probably highly experienced in these areas. As I went through the various assignments in the US and abroad as an AFOSI Special Agent, I gradually gained more and more experience in investigations. And I met **a lot of experienced investigators** in a variety of environments around the world. I found that there were many things we agreed upon, no matter what language we spoke, and that was quite comforting. But I also learned, often the hard way, that there were **many things upon which we disagreed**. Even working with investigators in my own country, and in my own organization for that matter, I learned that even the most effective investigators with different experiences and backgrounds can often strongly disagree about various aspects of the investigation process. So, it **ain't** a perfect science - yet, anyway.

I emphasize the "disagreeing" part here more than the "agreeing" part, because **my point** here is that as we travel through this course, I expect that maybe, just maybe, one or two of you might not see eye to eye with me, or with what the research says, on some little things, or maybe even many things. But hear me out. From my perspective, **that's OK**. In several ways it may actually be good, because by **scrubbing down** our differences, we may be able to get a better understanding of an issue. On some things, we may never agree, but it always seemed to me that if I'm gonna disagree about something, I should have a relatively **informed understanding** about what it is and what the main arguments and counter-arguments are. One thing investigators usually do agree on is that our job is to **get to the facts** as best we can, and then **let them lead us** where they may. I'm sure all this is tough to do for the egotists and snobs amongst us, but then I never was one of those.

Usually when I needed expert advice, I just consulted myself. But there have been times when I actually realized I was wrong about something, or at best, misinformed, and actually had to change my mind! Happens to the best of us, I'm told – repeatedly, it seems. But, by facing the truth fearlessly, I realized the errors (yes, that's plural) of my ways, made the necessary adjustments (or at least tried to), and felt I was the better person for it. I would urge all my FELLOW TRAVELERS to heed these experiences. Simply because sometimes

it can **really hurt others** when we are wrong, especially in investigations when we refuse to see it or admit it. And that can be a **pretty no-fun thing to live with** for the rest of your life.

It'd be great, DEAR TRAVELER, if we could just start off chatting about crime and police organizations that investigate crime. But **here's the thing** – as we got into these subjects a bit deeper, it'd get pretty confusing pretty fast, and at least I wouldn't be quite sure of **exactly what we were talking about** - and, conversely, what we are **not** talking about.

It'd be like trying to drive from somewhere around **California, say, to maybe someplace in the area of New Jersey, without knowing exactly where we started from, where we were going, or how to get there.**

So when we talk about **crime**, we need **categories. Simple ones!** There's lots of different types of crime, and we should know generally how they might group together. Because when we try to count some of them we use different systems. And for most crimes we don't have any systems for counting them at all! That may sound a bit disturbing right now, but hopefully it will become more understandable shortly.

Same with **police organizations** – we need **more categories (again, simple ones!)** for the various organizations that can investigate crime. There's **different** types of organizations that investigate different types of crimes in different areas of jurisdiction and at different levels of government. When we talk about them, we should generally know which ones we're talking about. Why? Because they're **different! Pay attention!**

I'm a big proponent of the **KISS philosophy**, that's **K-I-S-S, or KEEP IT SIMPLE, STU-, er, SIR!** However, I must admit that it's often easier to preach it than practice it. Nevertheless, I keep trying. In any event, the next thing we're gonna do is describe some real easy-to-understand **categories of five different major groups of crime** in the US. And in the next lecture we're going to describe how we **count them**, and then sort **police organizations** into three different **categories** – ah, because they're **different!**

Now don't go getting all **huffy or whiney** about learning categories and definitions and such! It's gotta be done, and the sooner we get to it, the faster we get through it – so let's just **DO IT!!!** Just think – you too will be a better person for it in the end, right?~~

MAJOR CRIME CATEGORIES

Crimes can be divided into **five categories**, which we will hereinafter refer to as **major crime categories – and they are Visible, Victimless, Occupational, Organized and Political.**¹

- The first category, **Visible Crime**, includes **violent** crimes such as murder, rape, robbery and assault, **property** crimes (including burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson), and **lesser disorders**, such as vagrancy, shoplifting, vandalism, mopery, and violations of local ordinances.

Estimated costs to society: ~\$450 billion/year.²

- The second category is **Victimless Crime**. These crimes include offenses such as drugs, gambling, prostitution, etc., that involve **the illegal exchange of goods and/or services.**

Estimated societal costs – just for drugs: ~\$160 billion/year.³

- **Occupational Crime** is the third category. It includes crimes committed within **legal businesses and professions** (such as white collar, fraud, graft, corruption, etc.).

Estimated societal costs: ~\$300 billion/year.⁴

- The fourth category is **Organized Crime**. These are illegal activities conducted for profit by **social networks** (gangs, etc.).

Estimated societal costs: ~\$114 billion/year.⁵

- The last category is **Political Crime**. These are crimes that **threaten the US government** (like terrorism, espionage, sabotage, treason, etc.).

Estimated costs unknown. However, just the estimated costs of the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001 can exceed \$1 trillion, especially if you include the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Also, Google the following names: **“Klaus Fuchs,” spelled K-L-A-U-S F-U-C-H-S.** The next name is **“Aldrich Ames, CIA,” LAST NAME spelled A-M-E-S.** And finally, **“Robert Hanssen, FBI,” LAST NAME H-A-N-S-S-E-N.** They’ll give you a sense of how enormously expensive and threatening to our country these types of crimes can be.

There are other ways to group crimes: for example, felonies and misdemeanors. Felonies are crimes punishable by imprisonment for a year or more. Misdemeanors are usually punishable for up to a year in jail. But the above five major crime categories are more suited to the purposes of this course.

The estimated costs that I mentioned for all these crimes are **low and outdated** at best.¹³¹ They seldom include both **direct costs**, such as the costs of items destroyed or stolen, etc., and the **indirect costs**, which deal with loss of life, delays, setbacks, health-related issues, incapacitation, incarceration, etc. If you're interested in how the costs of various crimes are determined, you can Google the subject – it's quite a study all by itself. Nevertheless, the costs I mentioned above are documented in the literature, and they **total well over \$1 trillion dollars a year. EVERY YEAR.** Big bucks – at least to me.

So now let's just be a little silly here, for the sake of perspective. Say you spend a million dollars a day, every day, 365 days a year, no holidays or days off or anything like that. That's **\$365 million dollars a year**, not exactly chump change. It'll take you about 2.74 years to spend just **one billion** dollars. Now that's a pretty penny. But in order to spend **one trillion** dollars, you'll have to spend one million dollars every day for **2,740 years**. That's a **lotta** money and a lotta years. But, according to the research, criminals cost us that in just **one year**. Every year. The point here is that crime is a big, expensive business for which our society pays dearly both in economic and human welfare terms – or more descriptively, in our blood and our treasure.

With those words ringing in our ears, let's move on to the next lecture.