

## MODULE 1 - WHERE ARE WE?

### LECTURE 3 – This lecture covers the subjects of COUNTING CRIME, and CATEGORIES OF AGENCIES

#### COUNTING CRIME: THE NCVS AND THE UCR – THE SAME?

Now we're gonna talk about how we count crime. In the US, we have two major national crime statistics programs (or categories) that annually document the number of some types of crimes.

The first one is the National Crime Victimization Survey, or **N-C-V-S** for short. This is, as it says, a national survey. It's conducted under the auspices of the Department of Justice, in which about 160,000 people aged 12 and over are interviewed twice a year by the US Census Bureau to learn about crime and **victims** of crime. The survey asks interviewees if they have been victims of the crimes of rape/sexual assault, robbery, assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft or household theft.<sup>6</sup> Right, it does not ask if they've been murdered recently.

Actually, for homicide information, it uses data from the Vital Statistics System of the Center for Disease Control.

The second program is the Uniform Crime Report, or **U-C-R** for short. This includes data reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigations, or FBI, by more than 18,000 **police** agencies in the US regarding the number of crimes reported to them for 28 different types of crime.

For eight of these (murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson), the police also identify how many of the reported crimes were subsequently cleared (that means solved). These are known as **Index crimes**.<sup>7</sup> (You can also Google the acronym NIBRS, spelled N-I-B-R-S, to see how the UCR is changing.)

As I am sure you've already noted, CONSCIENTIOUS TRAVELER, these two programs include the **Visible crime category only**. And remember, the **big difference** between these two programs is that the NCVS asks **people** if they've been **victims** of crime, but the UCR is the **police** telling us what crimes were **reported** to them. Also, there's some differences in the **definitions** of the crime types used by each program, so when we try to make direct comparisons between what these two programs tell us about crime, there's a little bit of **apples vs. oranges** in the mix there. But close enough for government work, I suppose.

Notice also that they're considered to be **indexes** of crime. That means they **don't count all crime**, because it's really hard to detect all crimes. And actually, we haven't figured out how to do that yet. But the crimes that they do count are used as **indicators** of the ebb and flow of the overall amounts of crime that may be occurring in our society. Rises in these indexes over time suggest that the overall amounts of crime in our society may be increasing, and vice versa.

With regard to the Victimless, Occupational, Organized and Political crime categories, there are **no national crime statistics programs** that annually document the number of crimes committed or reported. Why? Take a guess. As I said, we'll deal with this later.

### **AGENCIES: CATEGORIES OF DIFFERENT TYPES**

Now we're gonna take a look at who's responsible for conducting criminal investigations in the US. Let's start by setting forth some **WORD DEFINITIONS**, just to be clear about what we mean when we use them.

- The term "**AGENCY**" refers broadly to a **government law enforcement** organization (agency, department, office, police, etc.).

- The term "**POLICE**" includes **state, county and municipal law** enforcement agencies.

- The term "**PATROL OFFICER**" is used generically to include sworn law enforcement officers (police officers, sheriff deputies, state troopers, etc.) whose **primary duties** are related to **patrol**.

- The terms "**INVESTIGATOR**" and "**DETECTIVE**" are used interchangeably, and refer to sworn law enforcement officers whose **primary** duties are conducting **investigations**, and who normally wear **civilian clothing** rather than a uniform.

- A "**CLEARED**" crime, or a "**CLEARANCE**," generally means an offender has been **arrested, charged** with an offense, and **turned over** to the courts for prosecution. Arrested, charged, and turned over. A "**cleared**" crime is considered to be a "**solved**" crime.

- A "**CLEARANCE RATE**" is the number of crimes cleared, or solved, divided by the total number of reported crimes. For example, the police say that 100 murders were reported to them last year, and they

cleared, or solved, 65 of them. So, 65 divided by 100 = 65%. Their murder clearance rate was 65 out of 100, or 65%.

I hate to confuse you here, but you need to understand this – a crime **reported to the police** during 2012, for example, may actually have **occurred in a previous year** (like, in 2012 the police are informed of a body of a person who had been murdered several years earlier, but never reported). Additionally, a crime “**cleared**” by the police during 2012 may have actually occurred and been **reported to police several years prior**, but not cleared (or solved) until 2012.

Don't sweat all these categories, definitions, and such too much right now. You'll become more familiar with them as we use them in different contexts throughout the course, and you can always come back here anytime for clarification.

OK, now let's see who investigates what. There are primarily three main categories of agencies in the US.<sup>8</sup>

The first category is **local agencies** (municipal and county police, and sheriffs). They investigate mostly Visible crimes committed in their areas of jurisdiction, which would be towns, cities, and counties.

There are about 12,500 **general purpose** local agencies, and they employ about 450,000 full-time sworn officers. But only about 17% (~76,000) of them are detectives, who conduct the more serious investigations.

Also included in the local agency category is about 1,700 **special purpose** agencies that employ about 60,000 full-time officers. These agencies typically have **special jurisdictional responsibilities**, and include university campus police, tribal agencies, constables, parks, airport and transit police. Or they may have **special enforcement responsibilities**, such as natural resources, alcohol, gaming, etc. We **will not include** special purpose agencies in this course, primarily because we have very **little research data** regarding their criminal investigations processes.

The second category is **state agencies** – state police, highway patrol and such. They investigate crimes committed on state property and against state laws. Some also have forensic laboratories and computerized criminal data bases. But some of these state agencies, like highway patrols, may **not** have a criminal investigations mission.

There are 50 state agencies (one in each state) and they employ about 93,000 law enforcement officers, about 7,000, or roughly 8%, of which are investigators.<sup>8</sup>

The third category is **federal agencies**. They primarily investigate federal crimes committed on federal property and crimes that cross state jurisdictions. Some have forensic labs and control computerized national data bases.<sup>1,9</sup>

There are about 65 federal agencies with 85,000 officers, about 40% of whom are investigators.

The **US military services** also have about **6,000** investigators. Regretfully for me, we won't be talking much about the military investigative agencies in the US armed forces in this course, again because there is **so little hard research** data available regarding them. So I want to direct your attention to some videos on YouTube that are available that give you some idea of what at least the three largest military criminal investigation agencies do. In addition to the ones I mention, their video pages also contain links on the same and similar subject matter that you may be interested in.

The first video is **The OSI Story (1994) - The Air Force's NCIS, Full Documentary Movie**

This is relatively long, 32-minutes, and explains how the OSI was created in 1947, out of the US Army and the Army Criminal Investigations Command (or CID) and Counterintelligence Corps (or CIC), and were led initially by former FBI, CID and CIC agents. It covers fraud, counterintelligence and criminal investigations, but I didn't see much on drug investigations, which were really big in the 1970s and 1980s. The video features several of my former peers and also some of the operations and cases that I was involved in. The three Air Force values are service, integrity and excellence. To me, this video and the ones that follow it regarding the US Army CID and the US Naval Criminal Investigative Service (or NCIS) demonstrate these values.

The next video is the **Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) Recruiting Video** It's a short 4-minute flashy eye-catcher that's fun to watch but seems a tad more Hollywood than I was used to.

**What is US Army Criminal investigation Command?** is a well-done 10-minute video describing what CID agents do. I had the distinct pleasure of working with a number of outstanding CID agents during my career – they were great! These are exciting jobs being done by highly qualified and professional people. It was always reassuring for me to realize that, especially when lives were at stake.

**NG Inside the Real NCIS** is a 45-minute video that portrays the civilian NCIS agent's duties, minus the Hollywood hype. To me, the real-world work of agents has always been more dramatic, challenging and exhilarating than anything I ever saw in the movies or on TV, primarily because they deal with real-world people – and that's really, really great! When you see, smell, hear, and are surrounded by, chaos and turmoil, the experience is much more visceral and seared into your memory than anything you will ever see on a screen.

Now these groupings of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies are not all-inclusive. But again, for the purposes of this course, they will suffice.

OK, that about does it for this lecture. Let's move on and see what the next one is about. It just keeps getting better and better!