

## MODULE 1 - WHERE ARE WE?

### LECTURE 4 - THEORY

Now that we have categories of crimes and agencies in our heads, we're going to discuss a little about **criminal investigations theory**. Not too much or too deep, simply because there's not that much to talk about in the first place, but just enough to use as a common reference as we go through the rest of the course.

The **big idea** here is to build a **framework** that we can use to compare the different types, or **models**, of the police investigations process that have been identified in the research literature historically. This would include models like the Government Spy, the Secretive Rogue, the Classical Detective, etc. There's also other things we'll do with the framework, as you will see.

**Lemme** give everybody a little heads-up here. I may have heard occasionally from one or two of my students in the past that this was not the most enthralling part of the course. But to be honest, I have also been told that it was a real eye-opener as far as thinking about how to make the police investigation process better. Most of you will probably fall somewhere between these two views. So if you run into trouble, just try to slog through this part, and then we'll be able to do the fun part of applying it to the current, past, and future investigative approaches.

### A PERSPECTIVE – HOW MANY EMPIRES?

So to loosen everybody's brain cells up a little bit, let's do a **little perspective thing again** regarding what the scientists tell us about the world. Consider:<sup>49,50,51</sup>

- The **universe** was formed about **13.8 billion** years ago, and Earth was formed about **4.5 billion years ago**, so the Earth is only about **1/3** as old as the universe.

- **Life** on Earth appeared about **3.8 billion** years ago, and plants and animals began to emerge from the oceans and live on land somewhere in the vicinity of about **500 million years ago**.

- The first homo, or **humans, species** were thought to have evolved about **2 million years ago**.

- If the 4.5 billion years in which the Earth existed were shrunken into a 24-hour period, then the amount of time that **humans** lived on Earth has been roughly estimated to be the equivalent of **two seconds**.

So, in comparison, even though we as a species have been around for 2 million years, which is a really long time, it really has not been very long at all in the larger scope of things.

So if you're starting to wonder yet where I'm going with this, well – just humor me for a bit, **eh?** There's more. And – as they say – trust me.

Some people estimate that upwards of 30 billion species (including bacteria and such) have existed on Earth since life first appeared 3.8 billion years ago, and that 99.99% of all those species are now extinct. I don't know how they figured that out, but, **there you go**.

So now, in comparison, we're newcomers and we're among the one hundredth of one percent of all the species that have existed thus far. So whatever we are, and whatever we've done, is apparently pretty rare.

- The first cities in which humans lived began roughly 10,000 years ago. That only took 1,990,000 years after our species first evolved. **Slow learners**, eh?

- Each city had one type of government or another to control the behavior of its population.

- Over the past 5,000 years, more than 200 empires have come and gone. All of them had one type of government or another to control human behavior. <sup>52</sup>

So it took a long time for us to get here; we are among a privileged few species that currently exist on Earth, and we seem to have tried quite a variety of ways to govern ourselves so that we can peacefully live in large groups. And we're still trying. But considering all the species that preceded us, and that currently co-exist with us, we still appear to be farther ahead than any of them.

So as we plow through this course, let's just keep this perspective in mind before we go **patting ourselves on our backs** for our progress, or **kicking ourselves in our butts** for taking so long to do things. It's taken a long time and some hard-learned lessons for us to get where we are now, but we seem to be doing better than any other plants or animals – at least so far. And that's kinda cool when you think about it!

Now, a question – what’s the **most complex form of behavior** that we know of in the entire universe?

Now, an answer – after what we just went through regarding the Earth and humans and all that, surely one could argue that it is **human social behavior**, because humans are the most highly developed form of life that we know of (at least as of today – “Area 51” notwithstanding!).

And surely, one could argue that **human society and civilization** are the most complex constructs of human behavior, especially considering the 200 empires we invented so far.

Well then, when we try to **define what crimes** are, we’ll work with the idea that they are essentially **human social behaviors** that are **specified in writing by a government** as being **prohibited by human society**, OK? So the most complex form of behavior that we know of is trying to control itself.

Most of the empires we know of have had some way or form of government to define and deal with those written crimes. In our society, we created **police agencies** to **control** crime. And we created **investigators** in police agencies to specialize in bringing to justice people who **committed** crime.

Therefore, it’s the **job** of police and investigators **to deal with an aspect of one of the most complex forms** of any behavior in the universe. **This is not an easy job.** 5,000 years and 200 empires attest to this. And we’re still trying, with varying degrees of success, some would argue.

In fact in a free society, it seems to be especially difficult to balance the **security** of the society against the **rights** of the individual.

In our modern society, we can fire a **missile** from the bottom of the ocean, fly it miles high into the air and the stratosphere, and target it to singe the hair off a gnat’s butt 10,000 miles away. But up until just recently, when crime and unrest occurred in our society, we, the people, armed our cops with **clubs** that were invented 2 million years ago, and with **guns** that’ll shoot you dead pretty quick, and expected them to use those tools to **control the most complex form of behavior** in the universe. Bludgeon and kill management, I suppose. They say that if the only tool you have is a hammer, then every problem starts to look like a nail. Seems like that’s a tad too basic for today’s modern society, so we may need to re-think some of our priorities there.

But this is a problem we have been wrestling with for over the past 25 centuries since at least the time of the Greek philosopher **Socrates**, who lived during the period 470 – 399 BC. If you haven't been impressed with all this yet, just remember, if you had started spending that **one million dollars a day** when Socrates was born, you still would not have spent one trillion dollars.

And criminals cost us one trillion dollars in blood and treasure, EVERY YEAR!!! So when we get to thinking about crime and society, a little perspective can come in handy. Crime really hurts, and we've been trying to deal with it for a long time, and **all the further** we've got is that it costs us over a trillion bucks a year.

So now that you're thoroughly convinced about how difficult, and maybe expensive, it is to control human behavior, let me just mention some **theories about crime**, such as demonological, classical, positivist, social, critical, integrated, etc. We're not gonna get into these here, don't worry, but they do provide fascinating insights into human criminal behavior and they're examined in detail in other venues. You also can Google them if you like, to learn a bit more about them. Some of them are pretty neat. Others – maybe not so much. But they all can provide valuable perspectives regarding the human condition.

### **SO CRIME EXISTS ONLY IN THE PRESENT**

Now with regard specifically to **criminal investigations**, there are **no well-developed theories**. But that won't stop us from talking about them, will it? Nope, it won't even slow us down. So we'll start with what I call a **theoretical perspective** of criminal investigations in the following way:

- Crime is a human social behavior.

- Crime **occurs** and **exists** only in the **present**. It doesn't exist in the past or the future. It just doesn't.

In fact, nothing does. Human behaviors exist only in the present, as they occur.

- Therefore, after a crime occurs, information about it can exist only in:

1. The memories of **PEOPLE**, and

2. **THINGS**, like physical evidence

- **People** sources of information can be categorized as VICTIMS, WITNESSES, INFORMANTS and OFFENDERS.

- A **thing** like physical evidence is what we call a **crime artifact**. It **requires people** to provide information about it based on their memory of a past crime, and to take action on in order to make connections between the thing and a past crime. Things, or artifacts, cannot do that stuff by themselves – they need people.

So for example, say I **spontaneously kill someone with a knife**, and then stand next to the body with the knife in my hand. You, CURIOUS TRAVELER, a **people**, come along, see the body, and then see the knife in my hand. Being the perspicacious person that you are, you begin to suspect foul play. Based on your memory of what you saw, you might conjecture that I used the knife in my hand to kill that person. You saw **things, or artifacts**, of what you conjectured may have been a crime (the dead body, knife wounds, the knife), and you saw me holding the knife. And then in your mind you constructed a scenario linking my apparent behavior to the crime. OK, great! You caught me with **blood on my hands**, so to speak. And your report all this to the police. **I'm done for!**

Now let's suppose that you never did come along, and that I just immediately dropped the knife and walked away after my **dastardly** deed. Let's also suppose that, in due course (days, years), the body disappeared somehow (use your imagination here – animals, rain/tide, decomposition, **body snatchers**, whatever), but that the knife laid, undisturbed, where I had dropped it. Cheap knife, I guess. Who, besides me, would ever suspect what the knife **thing artifact** did, or connect it to the dead body or to me? Nobody, because no living people, other than me, ever saw what happened. No rocks or trees or elephants or anything else, either. Only me – a **people**. And I ain't tellin.'

Therefore, we conclude that the **primary source** of crime-related information is **people**.

- Only people can **link** things to past crime behaviors.

- Only people can **remember, report and document** past crime behaviors.

- Only people can **investigate, prosecute, convict and sentence** other people who committed crime.

- Rocks, trees, elephants, and all those 60 billion other species that ever existed in the world could not ever do this. Only people. **Got that?** Hurry up now, we're moving ahead.