



The decision-making process of crime scene investigators

in stolen vehicles cases

John Divoy & Sonja Bitzer



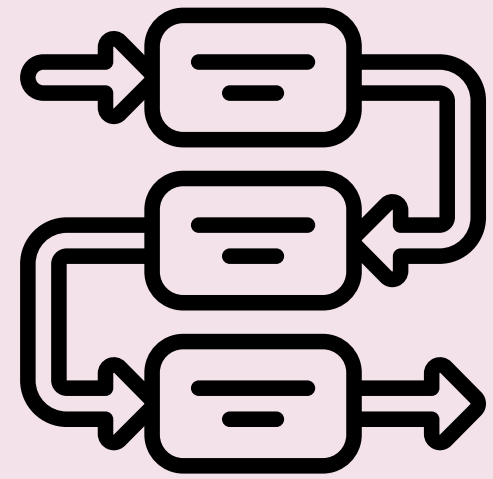
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Methodology

- A participant observation of 14 stolen vehicles
- In one specific judicial district
- Using observation, discussion and reflexivity to question the actions taken and practices



Intervention steps



1. Intervention request and contact with the requester to gain contextual information :

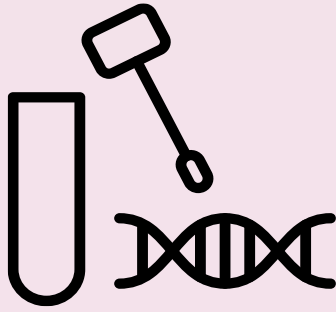
- a. Intervention request document
- b. Phone call with requester (first responders or investigators)
 - i. To know what to look or search for
 - ii. If there are specific questions about the case
- c. Phone call to the towing company



Intervention steps

2. On-site arrival & first visual inspection :

- a. Check if the vehicle at hand is the one in the request
- b. Visual inspection
 - i. To define a course of action
 - ii. To define the needed equipment
- c. Car condition evaluation and documentation (pictures)



Intervention steps

3. “Do the DNA” :

- a. 5 standard swabs for potential biological traces
 - i. On pre-defined locations
 - ii. To identify the author, as he most likely drove the car
- b. Other swabs, following the scene interpretation :
 - a. Red or brown traces
 - b. Car components touched or used by the authors

Intervention steps



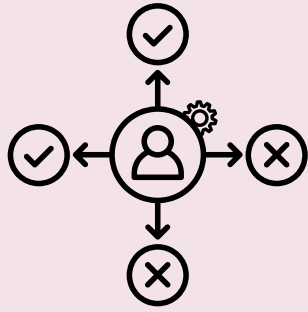
4. Fingermarks and objects :

- a. Search for fingermarks using white powder :
 - i. On non-porous supports (i.e. lateral windows)
- b. Fingermarks evaluation before or after collection
 - a. Excluding glove marks
 - b. Checking if there are enough minutiae
- c. Hypothesis constructions and other locations
- d. Search for objects used by the authors or linked to the activity



Actors relationships

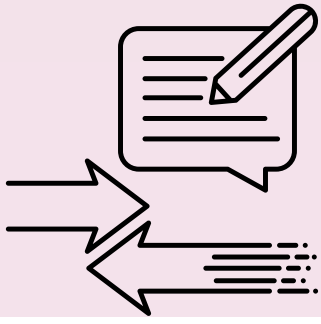
- 1. Hypothesis testing and discussions about action taken**
- 2. Taking the processing chain into account**
 - I. Anticipating criticism
 - II. Avoid lab overload / backlogs
- 3. Delegation mechanisms**
 - I. For specific procedures
 - II. For digital traces exploitation
- 4. Vehicle search responsibility**



Trace type, matrix, quality and utility

1. **A focus on the identification utility dimension (Bitzer, 2016)**
2. **Trace types**
 - I. Biological traces
 - I. On a routine, linked to Ribaux's strategic dimension (Ribaux et al., 2010)
 - II. According to the vehicle and situation interpretation
 - II. Fingermarks : Depending on their quality to allow for identification
3. **Collected objects**
 - I. Depending on their matrix
 - II. Depending on their pertinence / relation to the activity of interest (Hazard, 2014)

Responsibility and contingency



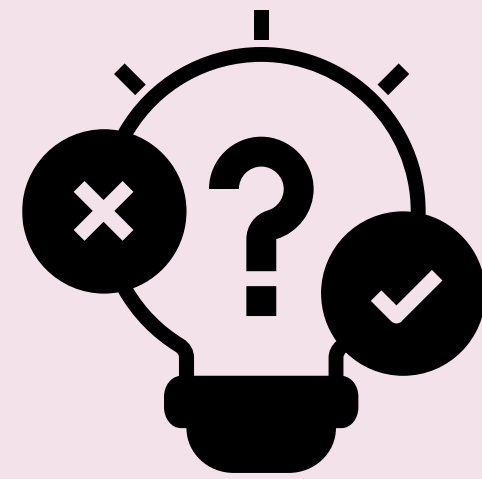
1. A routine and contingent work

- I. Constructing hypothesis and reflexions on-site
- II. A peer-reviewed validation
- III. Depending on the case specifics

2. A shared responsibility taking the process as a whole into account

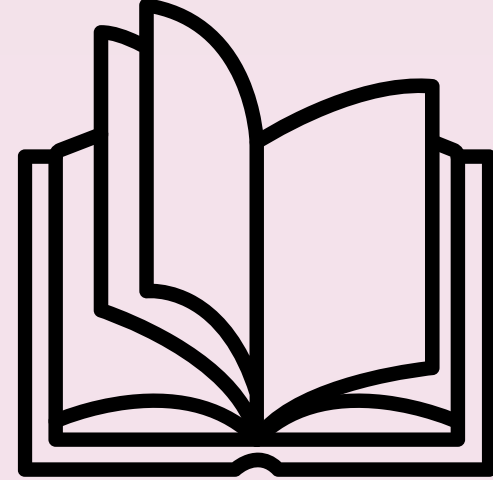
- I. Between the CSIs and their requesting authority
- II. With responsibility considered as being able to explain your actions (Freely translated from Jonckheere, 2013)

Conclusion



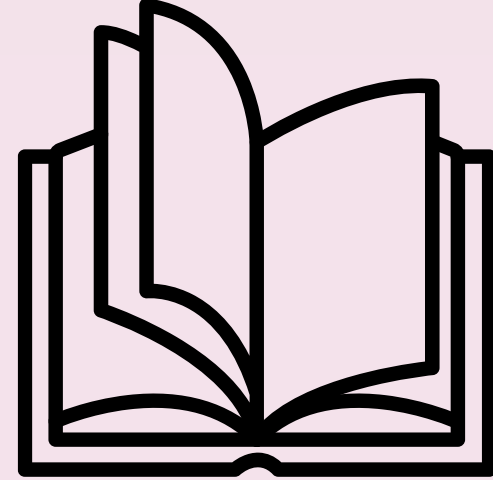
- Routine investigations guided by the utility dimension
- Peer-reviewed, shared and collectively built interpretations
- The interest for an interdisciplinary approach, using theoretical framework from forensic science and criminology

References



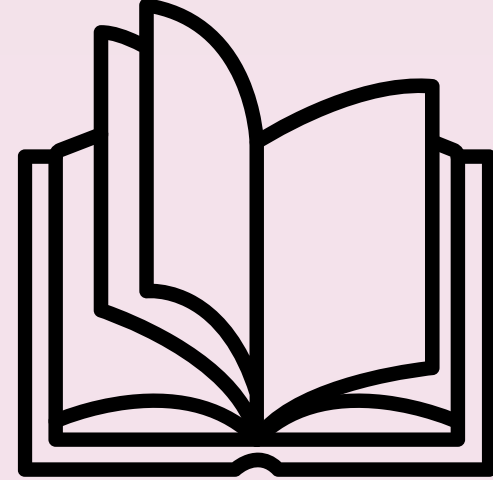
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Thank you for your attention !

John Divoy : John.Divoy@uclouvain.be

Sonja Bitzer : Sonja.Bitzer@uclouvain.be



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