

AL-PA

MANAGING  
CRIMINAL  
INVESTIGATIONS

(MCI)

FIELD TEST

LEAA Grant No. 76-NI-04-0002

EVALUATION REPORT

SEPTEMBER 1978

55103

Birmingham  
POLICE  
Department  
Birmingham, Alabama 35203

# CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE  
Birmingham, Alabama 35203



DAVID WANN  
CHIEF OF POLICE

October 9, 1978

Mr. Robert G. "Bo" Davis  
Alabama Law Enforcement Planning Agency  
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Montgomery, AL 36111

NCJRS

FEB 28 1979

Attention: Barbara Lessinger

ACQUISITION

Dear "Bo":

Enclosed are copies of the Final Evaluation for Grant #76-NI-04-0002, Managing Criminal Investigations. This report covers the period from October 1, 1976 through September 30, 1978.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Wall".


George Wall  
Acting Chief of Police

GW:rs

cc: ALEPA (3)  
John Bonner - NILECJ  
Jerry Miron - URC  
Jane Johns - Hi-Crime  
Chief Myers  
Dr. Sumrall and  
Research and Development  
Katrina Regan - Urban Institute

## OPERATION IDENTIFICATION

CALL - 254-2000

 <b>U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE</b> <b>LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION</b>		<b>DISCRETIONARY GRANT</b> <b>PROGRESS REPORT</b>	
GRANTEE	LEAA GRANT NO.	DATE OF REPORT	REPORT NO.
City of Birmingham	76-NI-04-0002	10/9/78	Final
IMPLEMENTING SUBGRANTEE	TYPE OF REPORT		
Birmingham Police Department	<input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL REQUEST <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FINAL REPORT		
SHORT TITLE OF PROJECT	GRANT AMOUNT		
Managing Criminal Investigations	\$135,000		
REPORT IS SUBMITTED FOR THE PERIOD		THROUGH	
October 1, 1976		September 30, 1978	
SIGNATURE OF PROJECT DIRECTOR		TYPED NAME & TITLE OF PROJECT DIRECTOR	
<i>Lee Hitchcock</i>		Lee Hitchcock Director of Administration	
COMMENCE REPORT HERE (Add continuation pages as required.)			
<p>Attached is the final evaluation report on the Managing Criminal Investigations Project. Also included is a copy of LEPA Form 138, Inventory Control, Non-Expendable Personal Property.</p>			
RECEIVED BY GRANTEE STATE PLANNING AGENCY (OFFICIAL)			DATE
<i>Barbara Leming</i>			10/24/78

MANAGING  
CRIMINAL  
INVESTIGATIONS

(MCI)

FIELD TEST

LEAA Grant No. 76-NI-04-0002

**EVALUATION REPORT**

SEPTEMBER 1978

Birmingham  
**B**OLICE  
**D**epartment  
Birmingham, Alabama 35203

MANAGING CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS (MCI)  
FIELD TEST

Final Evaluation

Birmingham Police Department  
Birmingham, Alabama

Sumrall and Associates  
Local Evaluator  
Birmingham, Alabama

This project was supported by Grant Number 76-NI-04-0002 awarded to the Birmingham Police Department, Birmingham, Alabama, by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

September, 1978

Project Director

Mr. Lee Hitchcock

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Dr. Raymond O. Sumrall

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MCI Field Test was conducted simultaneously in Police Departments located in Birmingham, Alabama; Rochester, New York; Santa Monica, California; Saint Paul, Minnesota; and Montgomery County, Maryland. While this report describes the program in Birmingham, it should be noted that joint meetings with these departments proved to be valuable. Additionally, the technical assistance which was provided by staff of the University Research Corporation was extremely helpful.

The program, as implemented in Birmingham, required the thoughtful participation of staff, sworn and civilian, throughout the department. Program innovations can only be successful when organizational members provide their support. Staff, at all levels of the Birmingham Police Department, and personnel from the District Attorney's office, aided in the design, implementation, and operation of the project. The department is appreciative of these efforts.

Chief James C. Parsons' (retired) interest in innovation and research was a motivating force in the department's becoming involved in the field test. His belief in participative management principles and his commitment of resources to the project provided an impetus to the success of the program.

The Training and Demonstration Division, Office of Technology Transfer, National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, provided the necessary guidance to the field test. The department is especially grateful to Mr. Louis Mayo, Ms. Virginia Baldau, and Mr. John Bonner for their assistance throughout the life of the project.

## INTRODUCTION

Recent studies in the area of the criminal investigation process have indicated some startling results. This high cost of the process has not resulted in a proportionately high clearance rate. According to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice only about 25 per cent of major crimes are cleared by arrest. Moreover, the probability of conviction after arrest approximates 35 per cent.

A study conducted by the Rand Corporation further documented this finding, along with yielding additional findings with implications for the entire investigative process. Specific reference to this study will be made throughout the body of this paper. However, the over-all results of this and other investigative research indicate that the identification of promising cases during the preliminary investigation may result in more comprehensive investigations of "solvable" cases. Secondly, the Rand Study implied that changes in the administrative structure of the typically military-bureaucratic police department to give patrol officers expanded investigative responsibilities may result in more effective use of personnel and more rapid apprehension of suspects. Additionally, more attention to detail in preparing cases for prosecution results in more convictions.

In recognition of identified problem areas in the investigative process, and these findings, the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice funded innovative programs for modifying the management of criminal investigations in five cities. The Birmingham Field Test focused on larcenies and burglaries and addressed the activities and relationships in a

police department to the criminal investigative process. The Managing Criminal Investigations (MCI) program enables police departments to experiment with a different approach to handling criminal investigations. The Birmingham project was initiated in October, 1976. By May, 1977, it was fully operational. The original termination date was scheduled to be June, 1978. However, an extension was requested and received, resulting in the project's termination date of September 30, 1978. A similar funding cycle existed in the other site cities.

The management of criminal investigations depends upon the nature and scope of the police department organization. In general, patrol officers are responsible for preliminary investigation procedures, while detectives provide follow-up on cases. However, departmental policies are often vague or non-existent in describing with specificity the patrol officers' responsibilities in conducting a preliminary investigation. The lack of specificity in the delineation of responsibilities often results in the fragmentation of the investigative process, along with curtailed interaction between the patrol officer and the detective.

In recognition of this problem; modifications were made in the organizational structure of the Birmingham Police Department in the handling of the general property crimes of burglary and larceny. Sixteen detectives were reassigned from centralized units to the four precincts, thereby rendering them more responsive to on-scene and specialized investigative needs of burglaries and larcenies. Prior to the time of reassignment, there were approximately 25 detectives assigned to the property crime division. Greater responsibility was assigned to the patrol officers for on-scene investigations.

Additional organizational restructuring occurred with the designation of four coordinating investigators (the day lieutenants), with responsibility for the supervision of property crimes at the precinct level. Other program modifications included the development of a Call Screen Model, (the General Order for this modification is included in the Appendix). The coordinating investigator utilizes the Birmingham Solvability Model to determine solvability and an appropriate case assignment. The following changes were also initiated as a part of the organizational restructuring: (1) a mechanism of conducting comprehensive reviews of current investigative efforts, (2) the development of a comprehensive training program designed to assist uniformed officers, communications personnel, supervisors, and investigators in acquiring required skills, (3) designation of the on-scene investigation as the responsibility of the responding patrol officers, and (4) the construction of a form which improved the quality of the on-scene investigation, facilitates use of the Birmingham Solvability model, and provides information for the monitoring system and program evaluation.

The Birmingham MCI Field Test consisted of five major components: Management and Reallocation Decision Making, Initial Investigation, Case Screening, Managing the Continuing Investigation, and Police/Prosecutor Relations. The following chapters provide narrative descriptions of component objectives and their related accomplishment, related literature, implementation procedures, and implications and conclusions.

## CHAPTER I

### MANAGEMENT AND REALLOCATION DECISION MAKING COMPONENT

#### Introduction

The Management and Reallocation Decision Making Component was designed to oversee the conduct of the Managing Criminal Investigations Field Test. A management team was appointed early in the project. The team consisted of top managers and appropriate support staff.

#### Rationale for the Component

The purpose of the component was to guide the initial development of the program, to interface the various operational units of the program and of the department, to monitor the conduct of the project, and to recommend or direct modifications of the Field Test as required. The component was established as a result of a strong feeling that new programs and innovations require management commitment and involvement not only in the inception phase, but also during the acquisition, implementation and evaluation phases as well. It was felt that programs had a tendency to "drift" once in place as a result of a management disengagement from operational detail. A structure that would promote programmatic investment on the part of key management officials was deemed to be critical to the success of the Field Test.

### Theoretical Base

The following concepts from the Managing Criminal Investigations Prescriptive Package were applied to the component.

- . An outcome oriented management system would facilitate productivity.
- . Strategic re-deployment of personnel and other resources could facilitate an improved investigative system.
- . Concern with day to day operations or tactics were important in carrying out procedures.

Additionally, it was felt that:

- . A participative approach to the management of the field test would be useful.

It was determined that:

- . These concepts would be unified through utilization of a planned change approach.

A variety of planned change models exists. One such model was developed by Sumrall and is included as Figure 1. Planned change assumes the identification and documentation of problems confronting police systems in investigating and processing criminal cases, the generation of new or revised policies and goals designed to address those problems, and the design, development, and implementation of program innovations as the means of achieving organizational purposes. The organization's administrators should control and direct activities and processes designed to achieve innovations. One such process is decision making. Decision making should be based on a monitoring and information system which systematically reports on program achievement, resulting in the potential for reevaluation and redirection. Both intraorganizational information and extraorganizational information are necessary data for decision making.

# SOCIAL SYSTEM PLANNING

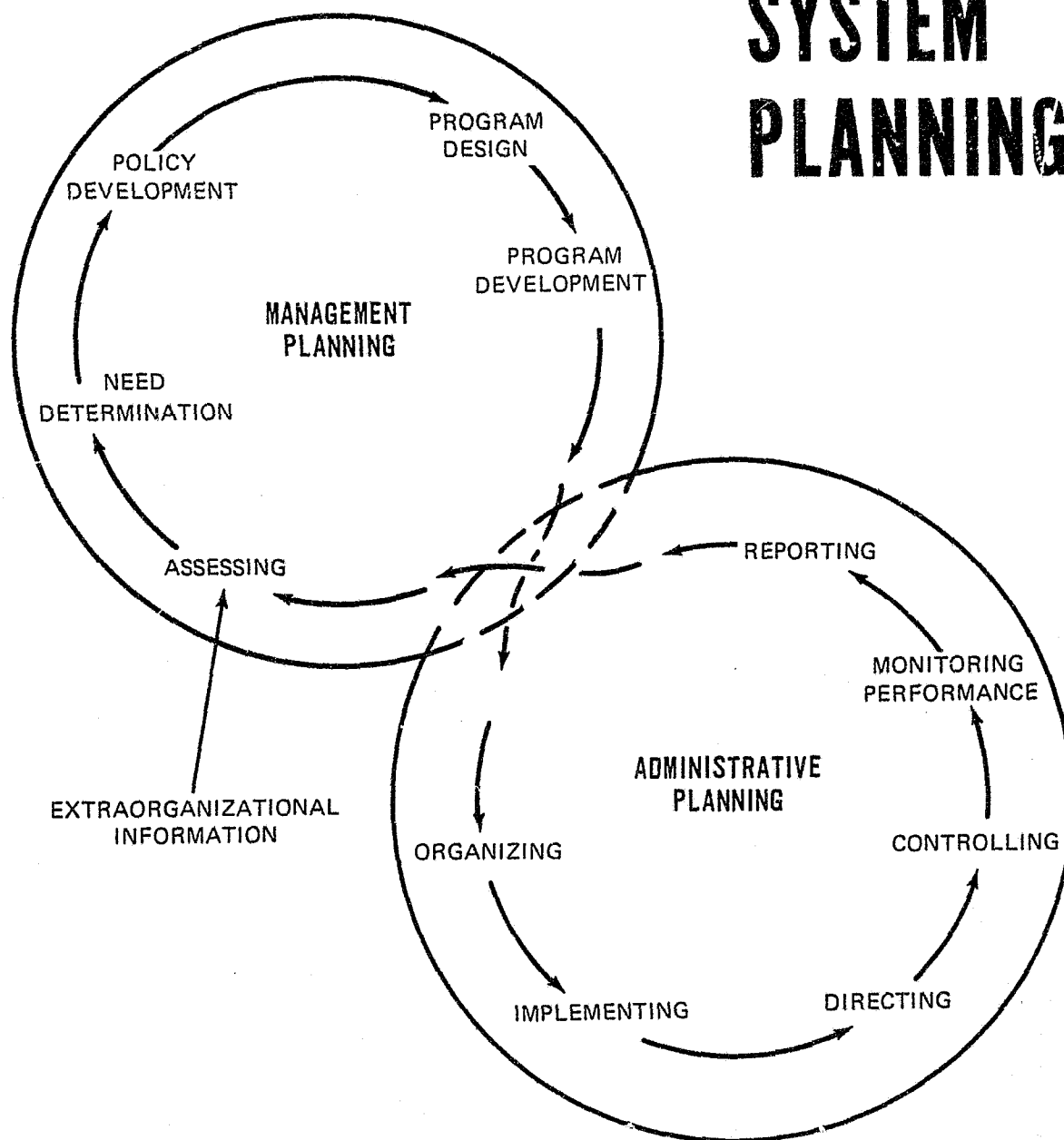


Figure 1

The process model of the Criminal Investigations Field Test as developed by University Research Corporation pictorially displays the relationship of the various components of the program. This model (Fig. 2) depicts the importance of programmatic interface at each stage of the program. Management review and involvement, facilitated by information flow, were highlighted.

These concepts proved to be useful in aiding the management team to conceptualize their role and function throughout the Field Test.

#### Implementation Procedures

Early in the project, a management team was created. The management team included the Chief of Police as Chairman, the Deputy Chief of Operations, the local evaluator, the four precinct Commanders, the Captain in charge of the detective division and investigations, the Central Coordinator, the Project Director, the Police-Prosecutor Liaison, and other staff support.

The management team guided the initial development of the project during the planning phase, and continued to review project operations throughout the MCI Field Test. Most importantly, the management team was a catalyst for interfacing all MCI components.

As problems emerged during the project, the management team recommended and directed modifications to program operations in order to assure the effective and efficient implementation of the project. The management team served an essential function in assuring that the goals developed for each component were supportive of the overall project goals.

In order to expedite the implementation of the project, the management team formulated task forces for each component. Throughout the project, the management team served as a reporting channel for the component task forces.



## SYSTEMS APPROACH TO MCI - CONTINUING PROCESS

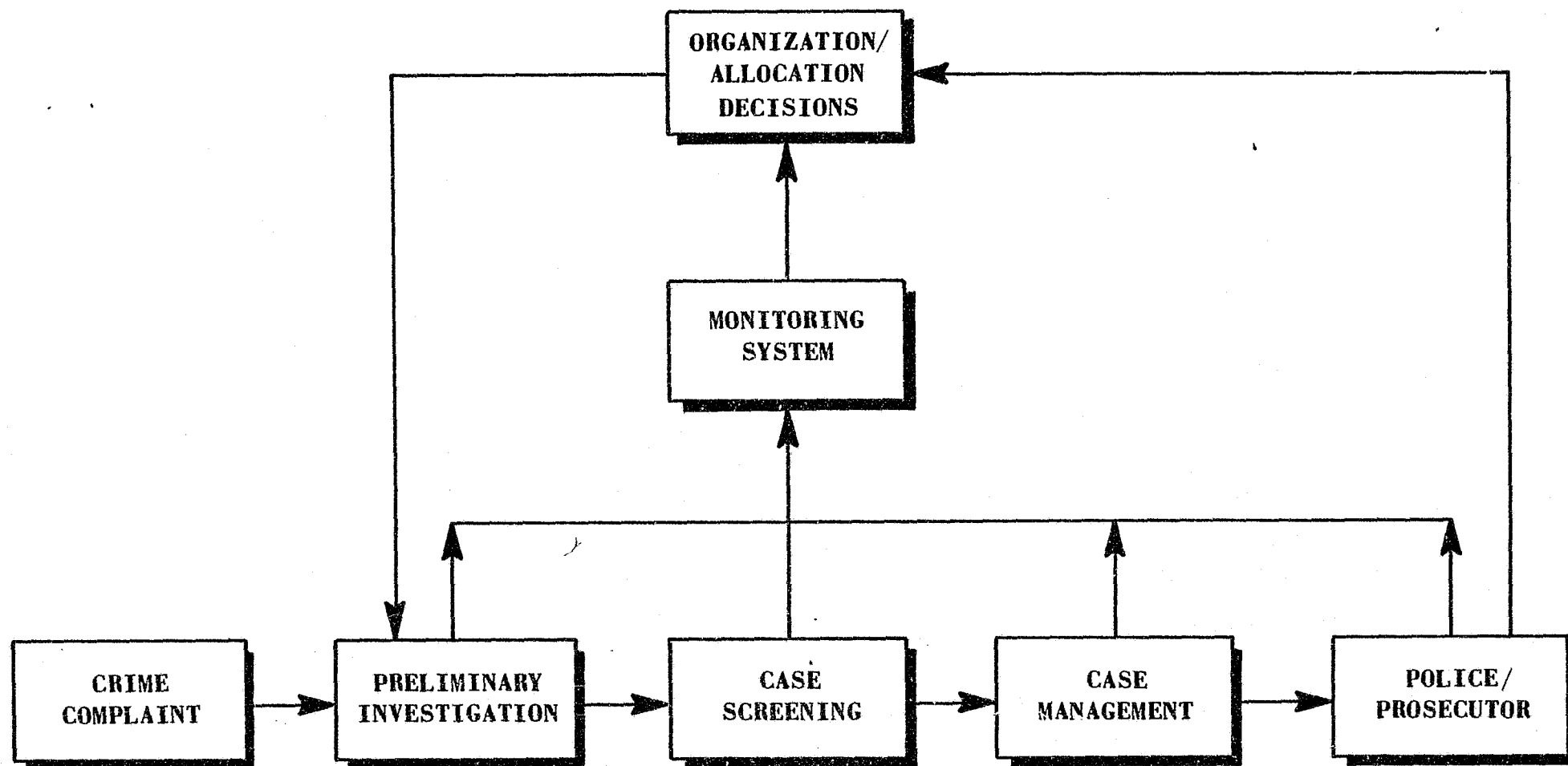


Figure 2

Early in the project, the management team developed objectives for this component. These objectives, and their corresponding levels of attainment, are as follow:

Objective I: Oversee the development of the comprehensive Field Test plan for submittal to LEAA by 3-15-77.

Assessment: To attain this objective, several activities were prescribed and conducted. Key management team members attended the MCI Executive Training Workshop during the early stages of the project. Subsequent to that workshop the management team was expanded to include key managers and support staff. The fully complemented management team then determined task force requirements and identified task force memberships. Also, at this time the management team developed the responsibilities for each task force, along with a time table for the completion of task force activities.

Meetings were conducted with component task forces, at which time an orientation to MCI concepts was provided. Task force functions, such as the development of component objectives, were delineated. The management team selected a chairperson for each task force, and assigned support staff as necessary.

After each of the task forces met and developed component objectives and activities, the management team compiled these materials, and at the same time, made appropriate revisions. A combination of all task forces and the management team reviewed the revised comprehensive plan and made necessary changes and modifications. The comprehensive program plan was submitted to, and approved by LEAA. This objective was accomplished.

Objective II: To conduct periodic management reviews of the Field Test to assure program goal achievement.

Assessment: Two major areas of activity were involved in addressing this objective. One method of assessing program achievement was by the quarterly reports as required by LEAA. In these reports, the current achievement status for each component was addressed, and problems and change requirements were noted. Any changes to be made were directed by the management team. Quarterly reports were submitted to LEAA and subsequently approved.

Another measure of program achievement was the management staff's review of monthly reports for exceptions to expectations. These reviews, both formal and informal, encompassed the use of the call screen and solvability models, the quality of written reports, and the levels of objective attainment. For example, after one month's call screen referrals fell below established standards, a study was coordinated out of the Deputy Chief's office to determine the reason(s) for decreases in case referrals. It was determined that call screen officers (and communication service clerks) needed additional training in the use of the call screen model. Training was provided and subsequent monthly quotas were met or exceeded.

Throughout the project, the management team was involved in reviewing objective attainment, and noting exceptions as they emerged. Actions were planned to deal with unexpected consequences. By the use of various monitoring techniques, it appears that this objective was accomplished.

Objective III: Transfer appropriate MCI technology to non-user departmental units.

Assessment: The management team was responsible for assessing technology transfer requirements, determining transfer methodologies, and facilitating appropriate transfers. Several instances of technology transfer can be noted in the department.

For example, the use of the call screen model has been expanded to include the handling of some inactive personal crimes and domestic disturbances. The majority of personal crimes, however, require the physical presence of an officer in order to ensure maximum information gathering, and to maintain good public relations.

The warrant assessment process, including the new case jacket with solvability factors, is now used for all criminal investigations, not only property crimes. The establishment of better police-prosecutor relations has had a beneficial effect throughout the department. Additionally, MCI training programs were provided to all personnel, as well as orientations to the MCI project and its concepts.

It appears that, at this time, adequate technology transfer to non-user departmental units has occurred. This objective was accomplished.

Objective IV: Assist non-user police organizations to acquire MCI technology transfer.

Assessment: During March of 1978, a technology transfer conference was conducted by the Birmingham Police Department. Approximately 100 representatives from police organizations across the State of Alabama participated in the conference.

The department prepared a booklet summarizing the MCI project and disseminated it to conference participants. Also included in conference presentations were visual aids, and oral commentaries on project achievement.

Conference activities were evaluated by participants. In reacting to the overall conference, the majority of participants found it "very useful," and many participants requested additional, detailed MCI publications. On the basis of this seemingly successful conference, this objective was accomplished.

### Implications of the Birmingham Experience

This component demonstrated the utility of certain management concepts in the conduct of programs in police systems. Staff at all levels of the organization were provided with an opportunity to be actively engaged in the initiation, acquisition and implementation of the Field Test, as well as being a part of the on-going evaluation of the program. It should also be noted that the Field Test engaged sworn personnel, civilian support personnel, and university-based consultants in the joint development and conduct of the program.

Other police systems should be able to make application of the Birmingham program to their own situation. However, certain issues probably should be dealt with in the implementation of this component. As an example, the openness of the department to research and evaluation, to behavioral science concepts, and to participative approaches to management would need to be assessed. Even under the best of circumstances, resistances and negative reactions to the type of ideas as discussed herein should be anticipated. Attention needs to be placed on developing cooperation between outside consultants, civilian personnel, and sworn personnel. Additionally, data such as that necessary for MCI purposes was not always easily accessible within the Birmingham Police Department. For example, it was difficult to track a particular case through the prosecution system because case numbers change from the police records' case number to the preliminary hearing case number, to the grand jury case number, and perhaps to the trial case number. Detectives are responsible for updating police records after each stage of the prosecution process, and attempts were made to ensure that records were properly maintained.

While there was a balanced blend of bureaucratic and participative approaches to problem resolution, it should be noted that a tendency existed for management staff to conduct business as usual. Normally, a strong tendency exists for problems to be dealt with by the development of standard operating procedures at the management level versus utilization of a participative approach to problem resolution. In Birmingham, it is felt that a healthy balance existed between these two approaches.

The department experienced the usual frustrations with deciding who should do the work and in motivating organizational members in carrying out the program. It is felt that the task force approach did result in considerable investments being made in the program by most members. However, key actors emerged who carried out much of the work. Probably this is unavoidable, but every effort should be made in a participative program concept to secure participation.

It should be emphasized that, as evidenced by the Birmingham experience, participative management is a feasible approach for the implementation of innovations. Attention should be placed, however, on sustaining the participative process once it is established. Personnel time restraints and faltering interests can be detrimental to the concept of participative management.

## CHAPTER II

### INITIAL INVESTIGATION COMPONENT

#### Introduction

This chapter deals with the initial investigation of a property crime as part of the total criminal investigation process. It is concerned with police activities which occur from the time a complaint is called in to the police until a preliminary investigation is conducted by the patrol unit.

#### Rationale for Component

The purpose of this component is to place an emphasis on the preliminary investigation. This purpose is embodied in the component goal which calls for a greater involvement of patrol officers in the investigative process. The importance of this component lies in the fact that future decisions regarding the solvability of a case largely depends on the quantity and quality of information collected by the patrol officer during the preliminary investigation. Additionally, this information will largely determine whether or not a case can be successfully processed through the Criminal Justice system. Therefore, as a first step in this project it was important that the goals and objectives of this component concern themselves with the needs of the patrol officer conducting the preliminary investigation.

#### Implementation Procedures

The initial step in implementing this component was the establishment of a task force which would be responsible for developing component goals and objectives. In order to ensure consideration of the

problems and needs of patrol officers, it was important to involve experienced officers and supervisors from the patrol division. The task force was established on January 5, 1977, and consisted of four patrol officers and two patrol sergeants. They were given the responsibility of assessing the problems inherent in the initial investigation process, identifying the goals and objectives for improving the performance of this process, and developing operational procedures for achieving component objectives.

The first responsibility of the task force was the identification of problem areas which would require attention when conceptualizing the MCI process. Initially, there were five problem areas noted:

1. There was insufficient time available for officers to conduct the preliminary investigation according to the perceived needs of the MCI concept. This was primarily attributed to excessive paperwork, and inadequate screening of calls by complaint clerks.
2. The report form which was being used at the time was inadequate for MCI concepts. Specifically, it was not formatted correctly for the addressing of critical issues, such as solvability analysis. The form lacked specificity; required information was entered in a subjective, narrative manner. Furthermore, the form did not require the documentation of names of witnesses.
3. There was insufficient collaboration and cooperation between detectives and officers. The main problems tended to lie in a misunderstanding of the roles, functions and problems of each other, and absence of structures which would promote teamwork.
4. There were inadequate guidelines relating to when an evidence technician should be called to the scene of a crime.



5. There was need for better understanding by patrol officers of the MCI project and their roles in the project. In most instances, the patrol officer saw himself as the initial respondent, but not as an investigator.

The task force then formulated the goal of this component. The goal of this component included the following factors: to improve the initial investigation process, to increase the quantity and quality of on-scene arrests, to enhance patrol participation in the investigative process, and to facilitate differential handling of criminal cases.

After goal formulation, objectives were developed to support the goal statement and to address the identified problems. Each of the objectives, and an assessment of their attainment, are listed as follows:

Objective I: To allocate an average of 45 minutes to the initial investigation of property crimes by the assigned patrol unit.

Assessment: One of the keys to the success of this component was ensuring that the patrol officer conducting the initial investigation had sufficient time to adequately conduct a thorough preliminary investigation. Birmingham, as is similar with other mid-sized and large cities, has a large volume of calls for police service. This volume of calls (an estimated 17,000 - 18,000 per month) prohibited the dispatching of field units to all calls for service and spending the additional time necessary at crime scenes for a comprehensive preliminary investigation. Two alternatives seemed to be substantial additions of both manpower and equipment, or reducing the demand for field units to respond to all calls for police service. Given the money problems of most cities, the second alternative seemed to be the most feasible. A policy was developed, therefore, to allow sufficient time to conduct the initial investigation. Additionally, it was formally decided to adopt an improved call screening system to handle some calls for service.

The call screen system involved an initial screening of a call for service by the operator. The operator determined if there was an immediate need for the presence of a field unit. If there was not an immediate need for a field unit, the operator evaluated whether or not the report could be taken over the telephone. If a telephone report was feasible and if the complainant agreed with this procedure, the call was transferred to a call screen officer located in the precinct where the incident occurred. This officer took the information for the report over the telephone, unless he/she decided that a field unit was needed, in which case he notified the dispatcher.

Due to the fact that it was not possible to separate officer initiated calls from citizen initiated calls, it was impossible to determine the average amount of time officers were spending on the initial investigation with any degree of accuracy. However, the general feeling of the task force members was that sufficient time was being allocated for the initial investigation and that patrol officers realized that the department placed a priority upon a quality preliminary investigation. Additionally, after training was provided to operators and call-screen officers, the call screen system is handling approximately 6% of the total calls for service.

Objective II: Develop an improved report form for use in the investigative process.

Assessment: This objective was accomplished by modifying the previously used report form. The modified form include a check list of solvability factors. Additionally, information sections related to the solvability factors were moved to the front of the report form for easier access by the officer. Prior to implementing the new report form, a training

session was held to explain the changes in the report form to each officer. The report form has been determined to be an excellent guide to the investigating officer. Additionally, it provided an adequate format for solvability analysis.

Objective III: Improve communication and working relationships between patrol officers and detectives.

Assessment: In the initial stages of the project, there was consensus among detectives and patrol officers that more collaboration was desirable. Though the working relationships seemed to be improved as a result of decentralizing property crime detectives to the precincts under the command of the precinct commander, there was no empirical evidence to support this contention. It was decided, therefore, to develop an on-the-job training program to acquaint patrol officers with the total investigation process. It was thought that this training would accomplish two things: improve the officers' understanding of investigative technology and provide an opportunity for the officer and the detective to work collaboratively. The methodology of this program ensured that each patrol officer was involved in all stages of the investigative process. The responsibility for implementing the program was given to shift lieutenants. This training project was completed in April, 1978. Though there was still no empirical evidence of a better relationship, the general feeling of both officers, detectives, and command officials was that now there exists a more cooperative effort between the two groups.

Objective IV: Improve officer decision-making regarding the calling of evidence technicians.

Assessment: The initial impressions of the task force were that the guidelines for calling evidence technicians were inadequate. However, as the project progressed, the impression shifted to one of a need for a better understanding as to when evidence technicians should be called. Therefore, a part of the MCI Orientation training was devoted to instructing officers in determining when technicians should be utilized. Additionally, on-the-job training of patrol officers helped to clarify the use of evidence technicians. It was also found that in many cases evidence technicians were utilized because of complainant demands; therefore, this procedure became more of a public relations issue than one of gathering physical evidence. While there was increased awareness on the part of patrol officers, regarding when to call evidence technicians to the crime scene, it was felt that additional in-service training on evidence technology would aid the continuing accomplishment of this objective.

Objective V: Develop and implement an orientation program on the MCI field test.

Assessment: During the month of March, 1977, a training/orientation program was developed for the MCI project. Each training session was to last for seven and one-half hours and cover the following topical areas: (1) orientation to the program; (2) preliminary investigation; (3) the reviewing function; (4) case screening; (5) case management; (6) police prosecutor relations; (7) coordinating the investigation; and, (8) orientation program evaluation.

Nineteen training programs were held during the month of April, 1977, and all personnel were trained in MCI concepts. The training program

was evaluated in June, 1977, by the operational staff, and this objective has been accomplished.

Objective VI: Compile statistical data to support monthly, quarterly, and annual component evaluation.

Assessment: Reports including statistical information on monthly, quarterly, and annual operation of the project were prepared and submitted on a quarterly basis. These reports provided the basis for the development of a quarterly evaluative report. Summaries of these statistical reports are in the appendix.

Objective VII: Compare statistical data to support prior monthly/quarterly and equivalent monthly/quarterly period of 1976.

Assessment: Data for equivalent periods of 1976 have been compiled and compared to the reporting periods indicated. Dispatch and founded crime data have been converted to computer drawn maps (SYMAP). While it was possible to compare crime trends during various periods of the project and prior to project implementation, it was not possible to infer any direct relationship of these trends to the MCI project.

Objective VIII: Assess the quality of the initial investigative report.

Assessment: The initial assessment of report quality was made by sergeants and coordinating lieutenants. After the MCI training program and the implementation of the new report forms, the consensus was that there was a marked improvement in the quality of reports. In this early stage of the project, the officer was required to collect all available information, check the solvability factor block as to whether or not solvability factors were present, and indicate whether or not the case had a high probability of being solved.

Using this system, the accuracy rate consistently stayed in the 95% - 98% range. Later in the project it was felt that a change was needed to avoid the possibility of supervisors becoming lax in their evaluations. The new process necessitated that the officer collect available information and place it on the report. The sergeant, based on the information in the report, would then evaluate the solvability of the case. If the report was incomplete, it would be returned to the officer for completion. An additional review was added in the form of spot checks of reports by the crime analysis unit. With the new evaluation procedure, the quality of the reports remained in the 95% - 98% accuracy range. Additionally, the quality of the reports remained high even though it appeared that the expectations of the supervisors for the patrol officers continued to rise. This indicated a higher level of efficiency for the overall component. It should be noted that considerable feelings existed among command officers that better quality control procedures were required.

#### Theoretical Base

The Initial Investigation component is a crucial first step in the total investigative effort. It is here that information is collected on which the decision of whether or not to continue the investigation is based. In their summary of the Rand Study, Greenwood and Petersilia state that:

The product of the responding patrolman's activities will be a report which passes to the detective unit. Depending on departmental policies and the thoroughness of the patrolman, it will be something between a cryptic incident report providing only the essential facts of the case and a complete preliminary report of all pertinent information available at the time the patrolman responded, with most departments tending toward the former. This document, then, provides the basis for any further investigative activity by the detective. (p. 8)

As the Rand Study pointed out, most departments typically prefer that the patrol officer gather only the most basic of information and return to service as quickly as possible. The implication arises that an investigator must retrace some of the steps of the patrol officer who conducts the preliminary investigation. This type of procedure is redundant and inefficient. It is also counterproductive to a major finding of the Rand Study as to how cases are solved: "The single most important determinant of whether or not a case will be solved is the information the victim supplies to the immediately responding patrol officer" (p. vii.).

Support for this position is found in several points made by Wilson and McLaren:

Promptness and speed are essential in crime investigations because the opportunity for apprehension decreases with the passage of time. The patrol division, because of its 24 hour service and complete coverage, is able to meet this need and also is available for the immediate continuation of the investigation in the event that important leads are revealed.

Preliminary investigations by patrol officers relieve the detectives of many time consuming tasks, permitting the application of their special skills to more important duties.

Patrol officers' sense of responsibility is heightened when they investigate a crime which they were charged with preventing. (p. 349)

Further support is offered by Hegarty and Kissinger from a management project in New Rochelle, New York, which involves delegating . . . "to trained patrolmen, the responsibility of conducting many preliminary criminal investigations that, in the past, have been the duties of detectives or other investigatory specialists" (p. 390).

It became essential to this project, therefore, to not only have the patrol officer conduct a preliminary investigation, but to ensure that it was of high quality. Since conducting a quality investigation, even in the initial states, consumes resources there is a need to relieve some of the pressure for responding to calls for service. The alternative here seems to dictate that some of the calls for service burden be shifted to another form of response. This naturally indicates a change in the normal operations of the department. The University City Science Center found that "patrol has become a reflex action . . . departments have chosen to let calls for service become the tail that wags the dog" (p. 96). This occurs primarily because of the police officials' belief that citizens would be unsatisfied if a police car did not respond immediately to their request for service, regardless of the type of service requested. An indication that this may be a misconception on the part of police administrators is offered by Bertram and Vargo in a study of response times by the Kansas City Police Department. Their findings indicated that citizens did not become upset because of a lack of an immediate response, as long as they were given an expected time of arrival and the police arrived at that time. This alternate response mode indicates that citizens may accept different approaches to resolving their problem if the process is explained to them (pp. 74-77).

The use of a call screening system was suggested by Gay, Schell, and Schack, in Improving Patrol Productivity Volume I, Routine Patrol: "It is the view of these authors that not all calls merit a response by a mobile unit and that not all calls require an immediate response" (p. 60). They also point out that "St. Louis, Missouri, for example has been able to reduce its dispatches by 10% by referring calls to other agencies, by resolving problems directly over



the phone, and, in some cases, by having communications personnel take selected field reports" (p. 62). The experience in Birmingham has been similar with the call screening system handling approximately 6% of the calls for service without the use of a field unit.

Gay, et.al., suggest a decision model for complaint clerks based on the "what," "when," and "who" model. This would refer to "what" type of incident is being reported or "what" is the request for service, "when" did the incident occur, and "who" was involved in the incident or "who" is/are the suspect(s) (p. 68). Though this is a very limited decision model, and, in reality, a more detailed guide is needed, it does lay a foundation for displacing the burden of calls for service from the patrol units in the field. Therefore, this displacement of the patrol workload increases the amount of time available for the initial investigation and should result in a higher quality investigation.

#### Implications of the Birmingham Experience

The Birmingham MCI project demonstrated a high degree of consistency with the literature. This is particularly true in reference to using an alternative response mode to provide additional time for the initial investigation and its resulting in a higher quality investigation. On a monthly basis the Birmingham Police Department answers approximately 17,000 - 18,000 calls for service. The Call Screen system in Birmingham since being implemented, has handled an average of 6% of those calls which would have otherwise had to have been handled by a patrol unit. This converts to a total of approximately 1,050 potential patrol dispatches per month being handled by complaint clerks and call screening officers. Therefore, this system does appear to be relieving some of the dispatch burden. Additionally, during the

task force meetings there was a general consensus that patrol officers have ample time to conduct the preliminary investigation.

Another indication of the success of the call screen system is the quality of the investigative report. After the implementation of the report forms containing the solvability factor checklist the accuracy rate of the initial investigative report remained consistently high. The accuracy rate is based on the number of reports which were accepted as needing no further work. The accuracy rate of the reports for this project were in the 97% -98% range. This accuracy rate was constant in spite of the change in the review system which tended to increase the expectations for the initial report.

This tends to support the theoretical base of this component. As suggested, the call screen system can be used effectively to displace some of the patrol workload without adverse public reaction. This, in turn, has provided more time for the patrol officer to conduct the initial investigation and to prepare a better initial report. This report, then, becomes an important first step in the overall investigation, since the decision as to whether or not a case will be investigated or suspended is based on its content.

#### Implementation Strategies

The implementation of this component, as is true with the other components, began with the establishment of the task force. This particular approach was very helpful in establishing the goals and objectives of the component. An important criteria here is that of ensuring that those who serve on the task force are knowledgeable in the needs of the patrol officers in the field. Without this, the information, objectives, and strategies developed in the meetings may well be useless. Another area of concern is maintaining continuity by keeping the same members on the task force throughout the

project. This can be difficult because of transfers to other units, promotions, retirements, and resignations. The major problem here is that when a new member is brought in, some time must be spent to bring him/her up-to-date on the work of the task force. One way of dealing with this problem is to document task force activities and furnish copies to new members.

The development of the call screen system involved some problems. These problems included the possibility that calls were not screened because of work pressures, or that insufficient data were collected to enable call screening. However, most of these were training problems, and were resolved with adequate instruction. An important consideration is that both the complaint clerks and the call screen officers should receive the same basic information during training. This is especially true in reference to the types of calls which can be handled by the call screen system. In fact, it would appear that a joint training program would be most effective.

A major problem in this component was the inability to separate the dispatch data into citizen initiated and officer initiated calls for service. This created a problem in determining how much time was used for investigation, because response time must be taken into consideration. Therefore, the evaluation of whether or not an officer had sufficient time to conduct an adequate preliminary investigation was necessarily based on the judgment of sergeants, and lieutenants.

The most effective strategy used to encourage more cooperation between the patrol and detective units was on-the-job training of patrol officers in the overall investigative process. This might have been even more effective had it been conducted earlier in the project, and might have assisted in establishing the project's acceptance.

Finally, there was a problem with assessing the quality of the initial report in the initial stages of the project. This was primarily because there was no feedback to the evaluators, in an empirical sense, as to how many reports were returned after the initial review by the sergeant, and what criteria, other than solvability factors, were used to evaluate reports. One method of dealing with this problem would have been the use of a log to indicate whether a report had been returned for further work and for what reason. This could have provided useful information for training purposes and for identifying individual problems.

#### Conclusion

The process of implementing the initial investigation component had positive effects on overall departmental procedures. The department developed a new, more efficient report form, a call screen system which relieves the patrol units of some of the pressure they face in answering calls, and the patrol officers appeared to be more aware of their role in the overall investigative process. Additionally, there was more of a collaborative effort between the patrol officers and the detectives. The activities of this component seem to have been successful in furthering overall MCI goal attainment.

## CHAPTER III

### CASE SCREENING COMPONENT

#### Introduction

The case screening component was designed to develop a mechanism for screening criminal cases after the initial investigation. The screening process involves the application of solvability factors to each case to determine the probability of case solvability. Cases which meet the criteria for solvability are assigned to detectives for further investigation, while cases with a low probability of solution are filed pending additional information, or followed up by the call screen officer via telephone.

#### Rationale for Component

The primary rationale for this component lies in the assumption that lower case loads and more effective case management will result in more adequate preparation of cases which are selected for further work and assigned to detectives. This procedure also places the decision-making process for determining which cases will receive more investigative emphasis into the hands of management, thus, enhancing the management's ability to monitor progress made in the investigation of cases.

#### Implementation Procedures

The initial step for this component was the development of the task force. This task force was composed of the lieutenants from each precinct who

were to coordinate the MCI project and conduct the screening process for case assignment. Additionally, the lieutenant assigned to coordinate the overall efforts of the project was assigned to the task force.

During the first meeting of the task force, problems of immediate concern were discussed. Several issues were identified which more specifically relate to the prior component. Among those issues of greatest concern were (1) inadequate training of telephone operators and call screen officers, and (2) the substantial workload of the call screen officers and its effect on handling the additional duties required by this project. It was decided to collect information for training the complaint clerks and call screen officers, and to employ precinct clerks to handle some of the call screen officer's administrative workload.

Also at this first meeting, the task force developed the goals and objectives for the component. The goal for this component was to utilize the case screening system to more adequately review, evaluate, and determine cases requiring additional investigative effort. The fact that early case closure might generate resentment from citizens was discussed in considerable detail. While no specific objective was developed to deal with this concern, several programming procedures were implemented. As an example, a card was developed to assist the crime victim in providing additional information or to check case status. Principally, it was decided that it would be best for the responding officer to be candid about solvability, but not caustic. The objectives of this component and their level of accomplishment were as follow:

Objective I: To design and implement a case screening system to classify cases by solvability.

Assessment: A solvability model was developed and implemented

shortly after the first meeting of the task force (Fig. 1). The model divided the solvability factors into five categories depending on their potential value in rendering an early solution to a case. Each category carries with it a course of action in terms of assigning a case for further investigative efforts. The solvability model initially included the following categories:

1. Category A—either an arrest is made at the scene or there is a positive identification of the suspect. Offenses falling into this category require that a detective be assigned to the case, personal contact with the victim and witnesses be made and a supplemental report be written. The clearance objective of this category is 80 per cent.
2. Category B—specific and distinctive description of suspect and/or vehicle. Offenses in this category require that a detective be assigned to the case, contact made with the victim and witnesses, and a supplemental report written. The clearance objective of this category is 30 per cent.
3. Category C—traceable stolen property, significant modus operandi present, identifiable prints, and a meager description of the suspect. Action required includes assigning a detective, requiring victim and witness contact, and the writing of a supplemental report. The clearance objective of this category is 10 per cent.
4. Category D—limited leads. However, this type of case may be pursued to avoid adverse public reaction, or because of the screening officer's personal judgment. A detective may be assigned; however, a desk officer will most likely provide follow-up activities. A supplemental report, and contact with the victim and witness may be made if appropriate. The clearance objective for this category is 2 per cent.

**CASE ASSIGNMENT and CASE RANKING by SOLVABILITY FACTORS MODEL**  
**(BURGLARIES and LARCENIES) Revised 7-15-77**

CATEGORY	SOLVABILITY FACTORS	ACTION REQUIRED	CLEARANCE OBJECTIVE
A	1. ARREST MADE. 2. POSITIVE ID ON SUSPECT.	DETECTIVE ASSIGNED, PERSONAL CONTACT. SUPPLEMENT REPORT REQUIRED.	80%
B	1. SPECIFIC AND DISTINCTIVE DESCRIPTION OF SUSPECT AND/OR VEHICLE.	DETECTIVE ASSIGNED, CONTACT REQUIRED, SUPPLEMENT REPORT REQUIRED.	30%
C	1. SIGNIFICANT MO PRESENT. 2. IDENTIFIABLE PRINTS. 3. MEAGER DESCRIPTION OF SUSPECT.	DETECTIVE ASSIGNED, CONTACT REQUIRED. SUPPLEMENT REPORT REQUIRED.	10%
D	1. LIMITED LEADS. 2. ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION. 3. HUNCH. 4. TRACEABLE STOLEN PROPERTY.	MAY BE ASSIGNED TO DETECTIVE BUT PROBABLY HANDLED BY DESK OFFICER. SUPPLEMENT REPORT MADE IF APPROPRIATE. CONTACT IF REQUIRED.	2%
E	1. NO SOLVABILITY FACTORS PRESENT.	LOG, REVIEWED, FILED, NO FURTHER INVESTIGATION REQUIRED. CAN BE ASSIGNED IF NEW EVIDENCE ARISE. (NOT CLOSED BUT ARE SUSPENDED)	0%

Figure 3



5. Category E--no solvability factors present. Action required includes logging and filing the case as suspended with no further investigation.

Cases in this category may be assigned if new evidence emerges.

Later in the project, the task force decided to move the solvability factor of "traceable stolen property" from Category C to Category D. The reason for this was the fact that in many cases a victim may have a serial number from stolen property, thus making it "traceable," while this fact alone did not significantly contribute to a case solution. In spite of this, solvability factors in Category C required the assignment of a detective. By moving this factor to Category D, the screening officer had an option, based on other factors, of whether or not to assign a detective to the case. In all quarterly evaluations the clearance objectives were met or exceeded. Thus, the objective was achieved. Additionally, the decision model has proven to be a useful tool for both management and decision making purposes.

Objective II: To compile statistical data on the screening process.

Assessment: Statistical data on the screening process were gathered and submitted with each quarterly report. A summary of this data is included in the appendix.

Objective III: To conduct a random survey of cases classified as D and E to evaluate the effectiveness of the initial investigation.

Assessment: The task force decided that instead of conducting structured random surveys, the coordinating lieutenants from each precinct periodically would review these cases. This process negated the need for the random survey.

### Theoretical Base

The major emphasis of this component is grounded in the decision making process, specifically in terms of the expenditure of resources to solve a criminal case. This concept is not new; many businesses and industries use the process of deciding the amount of resources (money, time, etc.) which should be used to accomplish a specific task. Similarly, this is not a new venture for the criminal justice system. The United States Bureau of Prisons implemented a case management system (RAPS) in 1969 similar in concept to the MCI project. The RAPS system used a computerized process and the experience of its treatment staff to allocate a maximum amount of available resources to rehabilitate those inmates with the greatest potential for success while using minimum resources on those with a low probability of success (p. 69). Thus, the case management approach has a proven viability, based on resource allocation, for processes in the criminal justice system. In the allocation of resources to achieve a desired result, an important aspect is that of the decision making process. Ivancevich, et.al., have stated that decisions are made on three levels: (1) the individual level, where both personal and organizational decisions are made; (2) the group level, again, where personal and organizational decisions are made; and (3) the organizational level, where formal organizational decisions are made (p. 381). For the most part, decisions on case screening in the criminal justice system have largely been made on the individual level. For example, the discretion of patrol officers is an organizational decision made on an individual level. The same principle applies to decisions made by investigators as to the amount of time (or resources) that

will be expended on assigned cases. The Rand Study found that . . . "In most departments every case is assigned to a responsible investigator with some minimal attempt at follow-up expected" (p. 9). Additionally, a major finding of the Rand Study was: "substantially more than half of all serious reported crimes receive no more than superficial attention from investigators" (p. vii). This leads to the assumption that the individual investigator is making an organizational decision on the resources to be used to seek a solution to specific cases. This individual approach, while not completely unviable, is inconsistent in case selection because each investigator would apply his/her own criteria with no specific decision model to follow. This does not negate the importance of judgment and experience in the decision making process. On the contrary, the MCI project has vested the decision making process to determine which cases will receive follow-up investigation with the precinct coordinator. Emphasis has been placed upon management's decision making regarding resource allocation, and upon a specific model which incorporates enough flexibility to utilize the experience of the decision maker. While it has been found that decision models and routinized approaches to decision making do not provide optimal solutions, Ivancevich stated that: " . . . they do result in a greater degree of coordination, protection, and reduction in cost for the overall organization" (p. 390). Therefore, in terms of the potential success of this project, the decision model itself is important to the overall project.

The concept of a decision model in criminal investigations was used in a project with the Rochester, New York, Police Department. In the "Rochester System," a factor in the success of the overall project was the "early case closure procedure" (Bloch and Bell, p. 45).

This procedure was used to weed out potentially worthless cases from potentially worthwhile cases, that is, cases in which follow-up investigations were likely to be productive.

To determine which cases could be closed "early" and which ones should be continued, team members prepared the standard form used by the patrol officers. If the supervisor determined that the case was sufficiently important or if any "solvability factors" or leads were found in the preliminary investigation of a crime, the investigation continued. If no "solvability factors" were reported, the case still might be left open if a supervisor decided that the preliminary investigation was not sufficiently thorough. (p. 45)

Solvability factors were used to develop a decision model for the Birmingham MCI project. This model is based on the probabilities of a particular outcome if certain data are available. Ivancevich refers to this as using "probabilistic decision rules," which infers that all known information is combined in an attempt to predict various outcomes of a particular situation (p. 384). In the MCI project, data consists of solvability factors which indicate the probability of solving a particular case, and, therefore, the amount of resources to be allocated to that case. When the information, or solvability factors, are gathered, the decision model is applied to the case for categorization and to determine what actions are required and the probabilities for solving the case. From this point, the case is monitored in the case management process.

In summary, the existence of a decision making process in criminal case management is readily apparent. However, the important aspect of the MCI project is, the placing in the hands of management, the decision of how much resources will be expended on a case to gain a solution. This should provide for better coordination of the investigative process and assure maximum effort on cases that can be solved. Higher clearance rates should occur on cases with a high degree of solvability, and the quality of cases referred to the prosecutor should be improved.

### Implication of the Birmingham Experience

Experience related to this component was consistent with current literature on the subject. An important point of the literature on decision making, which is a major function of case screening, involves the decision making model. The development of such a model was the primary responsibility of the task force in the early stages of the project. The model was developed and tested prior to implementing the actual screening process. One interesting aspect of the model is that while it is fairly rigid on one hand, it allows sufficient flexibility for input of the decision makers. For example, cases falling into Category D normally would not be routed to a detective for follow-up investigation. However, the solvability model allows for the screening officer (coordinating lieutenant) to use his experience, and judgment, if he wishes to assign the case to a detective. Therefore, for the vast majority of cases the model is followed, and at the same time, the model can be used in conjunction with the decision maker's experience.

The utilization of a solvability model permits the identification of those cases which have a high probability of being solved by concentrating on these cases, the workloads of detectives can be decreased. This leads to the assumption that the quality of work on those cases selected for further investigation should improve. However, it should be noted that lower case loads and a solvability model in and of themselves do not necessarily ensure productivity. The department has developed monitoring mechanisms to portray more accurately the productivity of individual detectives.

In the Birmingham project, the initial investigative reports are forwarded to the precinct coordinator upon completion. The coordinator then reviews the case and applies the solvability model to determine the probability of solving the case. During the project, the precinct coordinators have consistently deferred follow-up investigations on 85-90 per cent of the cases, therefore, reducing the number of cases with which the detective must deal. From this standpoint, this component has fulfilled its function by development and implementation of a decision model, reduction of investigative caseload, and the placement of resource allocation decision making with management.

#### Implementation Strategies

The implementation of this component tended to revolve around the development of the solvability model. An important criteria was that members of the task force be sufficiently experienced in investigative work to be able to identify solvability factors. Additionally, any solvability model should be constructed so as to allow flexibility in decision making. In the initial Birmingham model, a case involving traceable stolen property was placed in Category C. This category required that the case be assigned to a detective for follow-up. However, it was later realized that simply because stolen property was traceable, i.e., serial number or accurate description, this did not make a significant contribution to an early solution to the case. Therefore, this factor was moved to Category D which allowed the screening officer to use his judgment as to the possibility of locating the stolen property. This brings out another point about the decision model. The model, while being designed to handle the majority of cases in a routine manner, should contain sufficient flexibility to allow the screening officer to use his experience in determining case assignment.

An assignment aspect to consider in the development of the model was the establishment of the clearance objectives for each category. These objectives must be realistic from the standpoint that not all cases, even those in Category A, can be cleared. Objectives set too high, and rarely met, would not give an indication of success. Similarly, objectives set too low may give a false impression of success. After the program has been in effect for a sufficient length of time, the clearance objectives could be reviewed with actual figures and adjusted accordingly. This would tend to give more accurate parameters to the model and provide an indication of problems in clearance rates. This, in turn, will provide an indication of problems in the investigative process.

Another aspect of the solvability model is the possibility that it may have been used too liberally, which could have resulted in unsolvable cases being referred to detectives. This was more noticeable during the initial implementation stages, and may have been beneficial in a political sense. Citizens react more positively to police when they feel that efforts are being made to resolve their case, even though solvability factors may not be present.

Finally, the successful implementation of this component depends heavily on the success of the initial investigation and its subsequent report. If sufficient and accurate data are not present in the report, then in all probability the validity of the screening process will be affected. Therefore, it is important that the quality of initial reports be ensured by continuous evaluations.

### Conclusion

This component appears to have successfully met its objectives. The screening model has been developed, implemented, and remained in use. It was modified to use the experience of the screening officer more effectively. Currently, the model is being used to screen out 85-90 per cent of the cases which would have otherwise had to have been handled, in some form, by detectives. Data on this component have been gathered on a monthly and quarterly basis and are included in the appendix.



## CHAPTER IV

### MANAGING THE CONTINUING INVESTIGATION

#### Introduction

The component, Managing the Continuing Investigation, addresses the activity, processes, and procedures followed in handling cases which are assigned to a detective for further investigation. It deals with the case following the initial investigation phase and up to the point of the case being accepted by the prosecutorial staff for prosecution, even though case management remains important throughout the prosecution process.

#### Rationale for Component

The purpose of the component as perceived at the inception of the project was to analyze, assess, and monitor the manner in which cases are handled once they have been assigned for further investigation. It was anticipated that with carefully constructed goals and objectives the process of monitoring could be accomplished. Specifically, there was interest in ascertaining just how investigators were pursuing their investigative activity. Further, it was expected that with adequate supervision, manageable caseloads and sufficient staff that there would be an improvement in the clearance rate of cases. Success would be equated with an improved number of cases being accepted by the prosecutor.

A primary area of interest on focus on those cases which were more likely to be solved and to make more knowledgeable decisions in regard

to those cases which are considered to be unsolvable by the use of decision making processes, which have been referred to in a previous component. Case screening and solvability models, which were mentioned in the case screening component, were used in making decisions relative to where time and effort were to be applied. In addition to objective case screening it was anticipated that with the implementation of monitoring procedures the mystique of investigative effort would be better understood.

As in previous components, the Rand Study was focused upon in establishing component parameters. Earlier reference has been made to the study's finding that less than half of all serious reported crimes received only superficial attention from investigators.

Another finding of the Rand Study focused on the extent of investigative thoroughness. "In relatively few departments do investigators consistently and thoroughly document the key evidentiary facts that reasonably assume that the prosecutor can obtain a conviction on the most serious applicable charges" (p. viii). In dealing with this same issue of investigative thoroughness the study found that " . . . Police failure to document a case investigation thoroughly may have contributed to a higher case dismissal rate and a weakening of the prosecutor's plea bargaining position" (p. ix). As noted previously, of particular interest in the present study was the thoroughness with which cases were being prepared for the prosecutor.

Supporting the findings of the Rand Study, Cawley, et. al., dealt with the need for effective monitoring procedures for the continuing investigation. "In establishing the management system for continuing investigations, the overall goal should be to increase the number of case investigations of serious crimes that are cleared by prosecutable arrests of the

criminals responsible for those crimes" (p. 78). They continued by listing four objectives to guide the management of the continuing investigation:

- Assigning case investigations more effectively
- Improving on the quality of case investigation and preparation
- Monitoring the progress of case investigation and making decisions about continuation
- Evaluating results on the basis of investigative outcomes.

(p. 78)

The purpose of the original intent as developed for this component was influenced by the studies which had been conducted in the area of the continuing investigation. The question to be dealt with was how to improve upon the existing knowledge and accepted procedures. Was there a more effective and efficient way to conduct investigations?

#### Implementation Procedures

The overall goal for managing the criminal investigation was stated as follows: to improve the management of criminal investigations in order to increase the number of arrests for serious crimes and the number of cases accepted for prosecution. The specific goal for the component being discussed was to improve the case management for criminal cases accepted for further investigation and to make more adequate decisions on closure of cases deemed unsolvable.

As this goal is analyzed there are three points of decision. The first decision is an input decision—what cases should be assigned for further investigation? At this point, the use of case screening procedure would be

useful. Additionally, the screening of initial investigation reports by supervisory personnel would determine if sufficient information was available to make this decision. Has the investigative officer been as thorough and comprehensive as possible to make an effective decision on case assignment?

The second decision is a process or activity decision—how best to conduct and monitor the continuing investigation once it has been assigned. To what cases should more time be given? What additional evidentiary information would strengthen the case? At this decision point, the role of the investigator is of critical importance. For this decision to be made it would be incumbent that supervisory personnel be cognizant of investigator activity. How are investigators utilizing their time? Are they pursuing those cases which have the best chance of successful prosecution?

The third and final decision is an outcome decision—are cases being successfully investigated as evidenced by an increase in prosecutorial acceptance? The end result of this entire process should be that cases are sufficiently prepared to be accepted by the prosecutor. In evaluating the investigative activity the prosecutor deems that the case is of a quality to lead to successful prosecution. If there are gaps or voids in the investigative effort, this would be reflected in the number of cases being rejected by the prosecutor. Another outcome decision would deal with the closure of unsolvable cases. There would be little to be gained by expending time and effort on those cases which are least likely to lead to successful prosecution. The decision to suspend activity on those cases which are least likely to be solved, is supported by the findings of the previously cited Rand study.

To address the accomplishment of the component goal, eleven objectives were formulated by the component task force. The composition of this task force was precinct commanders, lieutenants from each of the precincts who were assigned to coordinate the project, and representatives from the investigative staff of the Department. The component was coordinated out of the Deputy Chief's office by a lieutenant. The discussion to follow will address each objective, an assessment of the activity dealing with the objective, and the extent to which the respective objective was accomplished.

Objective I: To utilize the solvability model to direct investigative activity.

Assessment: With the development of the Solvability Model as described in the previous component, the assignment of potentially solvable cases has gone through a process of continued refinement. As personnel in the Department became familiar with the solvability model the use of it became more appropriate. With continued appraisal and self-monitoring additional procedures were implemented to enhance its effectiveness.

In implementing the solvability model for the assignment of cases it has been noted that in isolated situations a case will be given a higher priority than the case merits. Citizens may demand, and thus receive, more attention to a case that has limited solvability potential. There is always the question as to the extent to which the public will accept such a selective process. However, in general the assignment of cases by employing the solvability factors of the model has been successful.

Improved procedures identifying responsibility and requisite accountability have also enhanced the effectiveness of the assignment of

cases. A monitoring procedure has been implemented that requires each shift lieutenant to have thorough knowledge of case activity. It should be recognized that this has been more effectively applied with day shift personnel. It has been more difficult to coordinate the lieutenants and sergeants on the other shifts.

This objective has been accomplished. The solvability model has proven to be a useful vehicle to the proper and effective assignment of cases. Supervisory personnel have been reasonably effective in monitoring the activity of those cases assigned for further investigation.

Objective II: To classify cases by priority.

Assessment: At the inception of the project it was decided that a detective would prioritize his/her assigned cases in the following manner:

1. House burglaries
2. Business burglaries
3. Purse snatching
4. Larceny from a person
5. Larceny from a house
6. Larceny from a business
7. Larceny from an auto

The system of prioritization has been effectively implemented. The ranking of cases has been carried out by the coordinating lieutenant in the precinct. The ranking procedure along with the implementation of the solvability model has been effective in the assignment of cases and the requisite activity to be given. There has not been any need to alter the rank order procedure. It has been an acceptable procedure by the detectives as well as the supervisory

personnel. However, it should be recognized that any system of priorities will be subject to the needs of a specific area of the city, the nature of the crimes being committed in a specific area of the city, and the manpower demands on the Department. An additional factor which has impacted the system of priority has been the size of the detective's caseload. Each detective has averaged approximately twelve cases per month, thus the need for prioritization is not as acute. Further, those cases where a defendant is being held in custody will require a higher priority. This objective has been effectively accomplished.

Objective III: To develop standards and procedures for evaluating the quality of investigative reports.

Assessments: In addressing this objective there has been continual reassessment and appraisal. Standards of quality were developed which focused on the inclusion of significant and necessary information to allow for knowledgeable case assignment. There has been a steady improvement in the quality of the initial investigative reports. Several procedural developments have been influential in the improved quality of the reports. On the jacket of each case folder there is a form which serves as a guide to supervisory personnel in their assessment of the report. There have also been monitoring points established at the precinct as well as in the office of the Deputy Chief. These monitoring points have been useful in detecting faulty or insufficient reports. Specifically, the reports are assessed on the extent to which there is sufficient information to classify the case, whether or not solvability factors are included and whether the investigating officer's description is thorough and comprehensive. If a report is insufficient, it is sent back to the investigative officer for further work.

The implementation of a crime analysis procedure has also been instrumental in improving the quality of reports. Under this procedure the investigative officer is required to gather more information than previously expected. The effect of this has been the availability of more information for supervisory personnel to make effective case assessment. The additional information also provides supervisory personnel with the facts that could result in case assignment, even though the case might fall below the C category.

The continued improvement of the reports has been reflected in the few number of cases that have been rejected by the prosecutor. Another indication of quality has been the small number of cases sent back by supervisory personnel for further work. During one quarter, 99 per cent of the cases were approved. Overall, there has been considerable improvement in the reports. The investigative officer must include sufficient information for the supervising sergeant to check the appropriate blocks on the case jacket. This has been achieved. A tertiary effect has been the improved interaction between patrol officers and detectives.

Over the length of the project, the accomplishment of this objective has steadily improved. As the project reaches completion, the reports are of a high quality. Few reports are being sent back for further work and the prosecutor's office is accepting an overwhelming number of cases being referred. The relationship between the police department and the prosecutor's office will be dealt with more thoroughly in the appropriate discussion of that component of the study.



Objective IV: To develop a mechanism for evaluating pre-screening procedures.

Assessment: Initially, the volume of cases being handled by the desk screening officer was determined and the type of case being handled was also evaluated on the basis of how they were being referred. Once this activity was completed it provided the basis for the development of the previously mentioned call screen model. As calls come into the department complaint clerks route appropriate calls to the call screen officer. These are calls where it has been determined that dispatching a car and officers is not warranted. As personnel were trained and have become more familiar with the use of the call screen model the diversion of calls has improved. While there is still room for improvement in the utilization of this procedure, a recent evaluation indicated that 75 per cent of the cases which could be handled by the call screen procedure were being properly handled. A factor which seemingly impacts the effective use of the call screen procedure is the amount of experience of the complaint clerks and call screen officers. The more experienced personnel appear to have a better grasp of the use of the procedure. New personnel are oriented to the procedure, however, the longer an individual works with it the more competent they become. This objective has been accomplished.

Objective V: To provide training to detectives which promotes improved handling of victims and witnesses.

Assessment: Throughout the life of the project this objective has been the most difficult to accomplish. Initially, as the objectives were being formulated, the Task Force had an interest in guarding against the loss of

cases as a result of victims and witnesses being improperly prepared. It was determined that a procedure should be implemented which would preclude this from occurring. A task force was created to deal with this problem. The task force did develop a procedure, the Victim/Witness Interview Report Form. The new procedure requires adequate advisement prior to each step of the criminal process. It is now required that this form be completed prior to the preliminary hearing, prior to the screening of the case by the prosecutor, prior to appearances before the grand jury, and prior to trial. This activity is being coordinated out of the Deputy Chief's office. There has been some resentment by the detectives relative to the amount of paper work which this has created; however, it has provided the necessary monitoring points to assure that victims and witnesses are properly informed.

An additional improvement has been that victims are now being notified of the final disposition of their case which was one of the major findings of the Rand Study. "Crime victims in general strongly desire to be notified officially as to whether or not the police have 'solved' their case, and what progress has been made toward convicting the suspect after his arrest" (p. ix).

A pamphlet developed by the Department has been processed to be distributed to victims and witnesses which describes the processing of a case. This should provide additional information that will impact the number of cases being lost due to poorly informed victims and witnesses. It appears that this objective has finally been achieved.

Objective VI: To improve the quality of investigative processes to assure improved prosecution rates.

Assessment: A process was developed which classified cases on the basis of which necessary elements of prosecution they contained. Several questions were addressed which focused this activity. Questions of interest included the following: What does it take to have a prosecutable case? How can one get the proper information? How can the information be compiled to assure proper presentation? How can in-service training and pre-service training be developed and improved to support this process? Does the pre-service training provided stress crime elements adequately? To deal with these questions, all patrol and investigative personnel were oriented as to the thrust of the MCI project and there was specific stress placed upon the collection of elements required for specific case types. This orientation and training has proven to be successful.

Continued refinement occurred through frequent feedback from the police prosecutor liaison who identified problems in the investigative function. The relationship between the police and the prosecutor's office has markedly improved. With the various monitoring points that have been established, poorly prepared cases are not reaching the prosecutor's office. In over 90 per cent of the cases, warrants are being issued. This represents a very creditable acceptance rate by the prosecutor of cases being brought to that office. This objective has been accomplished.

Objective VII: To improve the volume of post warrant arrests made by 5 per cent by June, 1977.

Assessment: When the MCI project began, there was a problem with post warrant arrests. Adequate and successful follow-up was not being achieved. However, there has been steady improvement in the

accomplishment of this objective. As the problem of serving of warrants has improved, the number of arrests made on a post warrant basis closely approximates or equals the number of warrants issued for this purpose. Therefore, there has been a close correlation between the number of warrants issued and arrests made. This objective was attained by establishing the following detective responsibilities: (1) Execute the arrest order; (2) Distribute the arrest order so that it can be entered into the computer system; (3) Route the warrant to the Sheriff's Department; (4) Provide information to officers regarding suspects who live within the City; (5) Conduct follow-up on outstanding warrants; and (6) Execute fugitive warrants as appropriate.

Objective VIII: To achieve a clearance rate of 80 per cent on solvable cases classified as Category A by the end of May, 1977 .

Objective IX: To achieve a clearance rate of 30 per cent on solvable cases classified as Category B by the end of May, 1977.

Objective X: To achieve a clearance rate of 10 per cent on solvable cases classified as Category C by the end of May, 1977.

Objective XI: To achieve a clearance rate of 2 per cent on solvable cases classified as Category D by the end of May, 1977.

Assessment: The above objectives—8, 9, 10, and 11—were designed to improve the clearance rates of the variously categorized cases. Each of these objectives has been accomplished. In each of the quarters the clearance rates either met or exceeded the stated objective for the respective category. In Categories B and C the clearance rates significantly exceeded the stated objective in several of the quarters. This was also true

on Category A, but to a lesser extent. In Category D, as expected, the clearance rate more closely approximated the stated objective. The solvability model has proven to be a useful and workable procedure for the effective classification of cases.

Overall, the stated objectives of this component have been successfully accomplished. The impact has been realized in more effective and efficient management of cases that are assigned for further investigation.

#### Theoretical Base

The available literature that addresses the management of cases is extremely limited. There has been minimal attention given to this activity. Nevertheless it is an area that has captured the interest of police administrators across the country. The primary question of interest is to determine just what goes on in the continuing criminal investigation. At what points do decisions need to be made? What evidentiary factors are significant to impact the solvability of cases? What do investigators do with their time?

The difficulty of quantifying the activity of the continuing investigation compounds the management process. The most common measuring stick which is applied is the number of cases cleared by arrest. While such a measurement has some limitations, it does provide an indication of individual and unit effectiveness and efficiency (Cawley, p. 82). It is assumed that the clearance of cases by arrest does serve as an indicator of how individuals and units are functioning. In order to make any intelligent decision relative to the investigative function basic information

is required. Sufficient and useful data must be collected and assessed to make judgments of the investigative activity. If this is to occur, management must assume a measure of control and awareness of what is taking place during the continuing investigation.

While it is not a certainty that substantive improvements in investigative performance will occur once management assumes control of the investigating process, it is reasonable to assume that improvements are likely. If improvements do not occur, managers would at least be able to make more responsible decisions about allocation of resources and alternative courses of action to deal with the continually escalating crime problem. Indeed, the police administrator may find that the present investigative process is an exercise in wishful thinking. (Cawley, p. 83)

In determining the kind of information that is required it has been suggested that four basic forms would accomplish this end: (1) an investigator's monthly workload report; (2) a unit monthly workload report; (3) a monthly arrest/clearance performance form for individual investigators; and (4) a unit arrest performance and prosecutor acceptance form (Cawley, pp. 82-83). This data would provide the basis for tracking and monitoring case activity.

The onus of responsibility for monitoring the investigative activity rests with supervisory personnel. He/she must have an awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of each investigator and assign cases accordingly. Once the case has been assigned, the supervisor is responsible for being knowledgeable about the activities undertaken by the personnel. The development of an investigative plan by the respective investigator should be reviewed by the supervisor and a checklist of activity monitored (Cawley, pp. 80-82).

The interrelationship between the initial investigation and the continuing investigation is critical. If there are gaps in the initial investigative report this will only serve to stifle the activity of the continuing investigation. Thus, it is important to impress upon the various members of the investigative team the need for thorough and comprehensive initial reports. From these reports a system of solvability factors can be determined which will be useful in the assignment of cases for further investigation. The development of the Rochester, New York Solvability Factor Report illustrates the utility of such a procedure and is supported in the material prepared by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI). (Greenberg, 1975). In this report, several types of cases are assessed and solvability factors noted which influence the extent to which cases are likely to be solved.

Any attempts to gain a better understanding and requisite managerial control of the investigative process will require some organizational restructuring. Several of the proposed reforms of the Rand Study address the necessary restructuring and include the following:

1. Reduce follow-up investigation on all cases except those involving the most serious offenses.
2. Assign the generalist-investigators (who would handle the obvious leads in routine cases) to the local operations commander.
3. Establish a Major Offenders Unit to investigate serious crimes.
4. Assign serious-offense investigations to closely supervised teams, rather than to individual investigators.
5. Strengthen evidence-processing capabilities.
6. Increase the use of information processing in lieu of investigators.
7. Place post arrest (i.e., suspect in custody) investigations under the authority of the prosecutor. (pp. 27-31)

It is clear from this list of proposed reforms that police departments will need to modify their present methods for investigating cases. Whether all of these reforms are subject to implementation and are feasible will vary among departments. However, the reforms do provide a blueprint for guidance.

The Manual for Managing Criminal Investigations (Cawley, 1977) provides a good guideline for police administrators to follow. The chapter on Management of the Continued Investigation is a bit limited in answering the question, how? Yet it does identify the important ingredients of this particular component of the investigative process. The material included in the chapter from Troy, New York, is an additional resource that should be useful as a model to be followed.

There is a crucial need for developing material that addresses the management of the continuing investigation. Various decision models could be constructed which would objectively quantify the decision-making process that must take place at various points. Decisions are required following the initial investigation, during the investigative process and at the point of preparing a case for the prosecutor. The literature dealing with decision-making is much more extensive and a thorough review is beyond the scope of this project. One decision model which would seemingly have some utility is that developed by Victor Vroom. Vroom has constructed a decision tree which identifies various points at which decisions are required. Further consideration of adapting such a model to police departments would be useful for subsequent research activity.

An additional aspect worthy of further exploration would be the development of a management by objectives procedure as a monitoring mechanism. The literature is quite extensive in this area and MBO has been successfully incorporated as a management tool in organizations similar to the police department.



### Implications of the Birmingham Experience

The Birmingham project has closely paralleled the material discussed in the previous section. There has been specific and directed attention to improvement upon the management of the continuing investigation. Personnel have been reassigned to supervise the project. This reassignment has occurred with lieutenants and sergeants. Various monitoring check points have been implemented to improve the supervisory function. Responsibility and accountability have been placed with the sergeants, lieutenants, and in the Deputy Chief's office. As noted in the previous discussion, the supervisor must assume responsibility for the decisions which are required within his/her area of responsibility. He/she must be cognizant of the activity of cases. This occurred in Birmingham. As the project progressed it was necessary to make several adjustments to improve upon the assignment of responsibility. As a result, a standardized system of reporting was implemented which required supervisory personnel to regularly document case activity.

With the development of the Birmingham Solvability Model, objective criteria are assigned to determine the solvability of cases. Cases are assigned an A, B, C, D, or E, classification with A representing the greatest potential for solvability. This development is consonant with the SRI study, the Rand study as well as the guidelines developed by Cawley, et. al. The use of the solvability model, in concert with the ranking of priorities, has provided direction to investigators to pursue their investigations. Cases with a low priority and limited potential for solvability are handled in a routing fashion with the desk officer making periodic follow-up.

The interrelationship between the initial investigation and the subsequent continuing investigation has been carefully dealt with in Birmingham. There has been a steady improvement in the quality of the initial

investigative reports. The development of a team orientation has been created, an approach discussed by Cawley, as well as in the Rand Study. Patrol officers and detectives have a greater appreciation for one another and they have become aware of the need for cooperation. The newly defined role of the patrol officer has also enhanced his/her image and morale of the department has improved.

Greater use is being made of the computer capabilities of the department. Cases are being monitored as to the activity of individual investigators. There is an opportunity to improve upon the use of the computer; this would free up time for the detectives to pursue those cases requiring additional activity.

The development of the call screen model has been an extremely useful innovation in Birmingham. By diverting certain calls for service, it has allowed the patrol officer more time to complete the initial investigation of those cases to which he/she is dispatched. As already mentioned, the more qualitative the initial investigation, the better the continuing investigation.

Detectives working on cases within the MCI project have been decentralized to the local precincts and are under the command of the precinct commander. Such decentralization follows one of the proposed reforms of the Rand Study. With decentralization, the supervisory function has been enhanced as well as it contributing to the improved relationships between patrol officers and detectives.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the project is the improved relationship between the police department and the prosecutor's office. This was influenced by the earlier establishment of a liaison with the prosecutor's office, but also by the improved quality of cases being brought to the

prosecutor. A very small number of cases have been rejected by the prosecutor. Cawley suggested that one of the requisite pieces of information needed by supervisory personnel was the performance of a unit as reflected in prosecutor acceptance of referred cases.

The clearance rate of cases has also been creditable. Cawley indicated that such a clearance rate could be a measuring stick of performance. Following the categories of the solvability model, the clearance rate exceeded expectations in Birmingham.

The experience in Birmingham is certainly supportive of the existing knowledge relative to case management. It has been demonstrated that it is possible to effectively monitor investigative activity. The development of the solvability model and the call screen model has provided workable models to be replicated by other departments. There continues to be some mystique around the activity of detectives, however, in the Birmingham experience significant steps have been taken to bring this activity under closer managerial control.

#### Implementation Strategies

As the project began, there was consensus on involving those individuals within the department in the decision-making process when the decision would impact them. The task force was the mechanism used in this component. Periodic meetings were held with the task force to evaluate where the project was and to elicit direction for the future. There was a conscious attempt not to impose decisions, but to let those decisions emanate from the task force. It is critical that representation of the various areas of the department be included in the composition of the task force.

Further, in the development of objectives it is important that these be realistic and manageable. At the same time, they should not be of a nature that little or no effort will be required to achieve them. The objectives set by the task force were manageable. Some were achieved more easily than others, yet this should be anticipated.

It should be recognized that there will need to be some organizational restructuring. This should not be drastic nor dramatic, but incremental. Resistance to change in any organization is going to occur and the more information that is available, the less traumatic the change will be. Acceptance of change will be enhanced if there is an awareness of the rationale for the change.

Training of personnel is a must. All departmental sworn personnel, as well as communications and records personnel, were oriented to the project. As new developments occurred, such as the implementation of the call screen model, the appropriate personnel were trained. While this might appear to be time consuming it is a necessary requirement and will minimize problems as the program progresses.

A requisite ingredient in a project of this nature is the commitment of leadership of the Department. In Birmingham this commitment was present. Without such commitment, the success of the project would have been questionable.

As problems arise they should be dealt with. Upon assessment of the problem modifications may be necessary. Yet, to avoid dealing with problems will only compound the overall operation.

In any project of this nature there are going to be problems. A major problem in the implementation of this component was the frequent changes in supervisory personnel. As new individuals came into the project there was a

need to orient them to MCI concepts. There is no way to preclude this from occurring, yet it does tend to compromise the overall progress.

In participative type decision-making, time is always a consideration. On various occasions it was difficult to get the entire task force together to deal with problems or to evaluate the project's progress. In an endeavor of this nature, it should be recognized that it will require some time commitments. As new people came into the program, often there was noticeable absence of the necessary commitment.

#### Summary

In general the Birmingham experience, as it relates to the Management of the Continuing Investigation component, was successful. The objectives which were stated were achieved and the component goal was met. Management of the continuing investigation has improved in Birmingham. However, such a statement should not be construed as to imply that there are no problems or weaknesses. There continues to be room for improvement in the supervision of investigative activity. The Birmingham project did follow the best knowledge available relative to this area and the experience has strengthened that body of knowledge. There continues to be a need to develop useful decision models which could be employed at the various states of the investigative process.

## CHAPTER V

### POLICE - PROSECUTOR RELATIONS COMPONENT

#### Introduction

Police have complete control over the investigative process up until the point where the case is presented to the prosecutor. Normally, the prosecutor's office is a separate governmental agency with its own administrative structure and its own policies and goals which do not necessarily coincide with the policies and goals of the police department. Birmingham is no exception to this general rule. In Birmingham, the District Attorney's office makes its staff members available to the Police Department seven days a week. Police officers seeking warrants are interviewed by deputy district attorneys who recommend that warrants be issued if the officers have adequately prepared the case for prosecution.

Text books that discuss the supervision of detectives often point out that arrests constitute the quantity of detective work, but that the quality of their work is judged on the number of convictions obtained. This old adage is not really viable. The policies of prosecutor's offices may preclude prosecution of any number of types of cases for reasons that are legitimate, but totally unrelated to the quality of police work on the case. One common example is in the apprehension of sex offenders who are exhibitionists. State laws almost always define the behavior as criminal (often felonies), but the operating policies of prosecutor's offices may be geared toward using the

threat of prosecution to force the offender to obtain medical care that will improve the mental health of the offender. To the prosecutor's office, a successful outcome in this type of case would be one in which the offender was not prosecuted. In such an example, the police may have done an outstanding job of investigating the incident, and identifying and apprehending the offender. Thus, it is obviously inappropriate to rely totally on conviction rates to measure the quality of detective work.

Everyone involved in this project was concerned at one time or another about what would be an appropriate measure of the quality of the detective's work. A suggestion that was discussed on several occasions was to judge the investigation report as reflecting the detective's skill. However, there was no agreement on what qualities to look for in the report. Most continued to feel that conviction rates were an important indicator of an investigator's success despite the obvious difficulties inherent in that approach. As a compromise, the project relied primarily on measuring the quality of an investigator's work by his ability to give the prosecutor's office a prosecutable case. Birmingham uses a screening process wherein a police officer who needs an arrest warrant meets with a representative of the prosecutor's office. During the screening interview, the prosecutor makes sure that the elements of a crime are present in the case and that the police officer has done everything necessary to make the case prosecutable. If it is prosecutable, an arrest warrant is issued. Thus, this screening process is a critical event in the entire investigative and prosecution process. It does provide a point where someone goes over the case with the investigator and judges his work to be a success or a failure.

### Rationale for Component

The original proposal perceived the police-prosecutor component as the end product of the changes that would be made in department operations as the MCI concept was installed. From the first, those involved in the project were optimistic that the MCI concept would indeed constitute an improvement and that improvement would be reflected in more successful prosecution of felonies. Unlike some police departments, and this police department several years ago, the Birmingham Police Department had established (1974) a good working relationship with the District Attorney's office. A full-time court liaison officer (a detective sergeant) was assigned to work with the District Attorney's office to resolve day-to-day problems and to maintain good inter-agency relations with the prosecutor. Thus, the establishing of a good working relationship with the prosecutor was not necessary as a goal of this project. However, those concerned with this component of the project did recognize that there was room for improvement in interdepartmental relations. But, those who drafted the original proposal conceived of this component largely in technical terms of presenting a larger number of prosecutable cases to the prosecutor (solving more cases) and presenting cases that would be prosecuted more easily. Improvement in these areas was anticipated and projected.

### Implementation Procedures

The task force established for the Police-Prosecutor Relations Component was given the responsibility of assessing the problems inherent in police-prosecutor relations, of identifying goals and objectives for improving this process, and for developing operation procedures for achieving component objectives. Along with appropriate departmental personnel, a representative of the District Attorney's office was included on this task force.



The overall goal established was to assure that cases presented to the prosecutor's office for processing did represent completed investigation work in that the prosecutor would be satisfied that the police had done everything that they could be expected to do to provide the substance for a successful prosecution.

Objective I: To improve case preparation and collation by detectives.

Assessment: In discussing issues surrounding the first objective, the Task Force noted that an investigator had to keep track of a number of routine processes and manage many small details in order to have a case that could be prosecuted successfully. For example, a number of witnesses might have to be interviewed. That is a fairly obvious and important step in an investigation, but officials must actually be able to locate and subpoena witnesses when trial time is near. The Task Force believed that case collation could be greatly improved by creating a convenient checklist for the detective.

Reference was made within the Managing the Continuing Investigation Component form on each case jacket that provides a convenient checklist for both the investigator and his supervisor to assess the case status. This form was added to the case jacket as a result of the recommendations made by the Task Force.

Thus, the first objective was accomplished by developing a new form (printed on a case jacket) to aid both the investigator and his supervisor in keeping track of the many small, but vital details involved in managing a case. The Task Force members appear to be satisfied that their idea and its implementation early in the project was a useful innovation.

Objective II: To assess procedure for pre-court patrol officer case review.

Assessment: The second objective set by this task force arose from the progress of a trial. The problem usually arose when a patrol officer received a subpoena to appear as a state witness at the trial of, say, John Doe. The patrol officer dutifully appeared at Doe's trial, but has never heard of John Doe and knows nothing about the case underway. Naturally, this kind of occurrence makes a bad impression on the jury and makes it more difficult to obtain a conviction. The situation arises because of a breakdown in communication between the patrol officer and the investigator. The patrol officer's name appeared on the initial report and he was subpoenaed for that reason. What normally happened was that the patrol officer took an initial report of a felony from a victim some six to eight months before he was subpoenaed to court on the case. The patrol officer briefly met the victim and, perhaps, some witnesses. However, the offender was unknown at that time. The initial report was written up and turned over to a detective for follow-up investigation. The detective later discovered the identity of the offender, arrested him and brought the case to trial. Meanwhile, the patrol officer who did the initial report does not know that the crime has been solved and has done hundreds of initial investigations since the one in question.

The task force felt that the problem could be solved by clearly making it the responsibility of the detective assigned to the case to contact the patrol officer who made the initial report to bring him up-to-date on the progress of the case and to notify him that he may be subpoenaed to testify. Having identified a problem area and devised a solution, the task force operationalized the procedure by having a special line placed on the case jacket checklist. The intention was for supervisors to provide in-service training for investigators on the need to contact patrol officers, but the line on

the checklist would provide a permanent reminder to the detective. It would also provide a means whereby the detective supervisor could check on the detectives compliance with this procedure. The task force saw to the implementation of the checklist device and members felt that the objective was accomplished.

Objective III: To assess results of prosecution screening.

Assessment: The task force first considered the screening process and the various different outcomes that were possible. The most desirable possibility arises in instances where the screening prosecutor feels that the investigator's work is complete and recommends that an arrest warrant be issued. In some cases, the prosecutor agrees to recommend that a warrant be issued, but feels that additional investigation is needed to strengthen the case. In this second possible outcome of the screening process it is said that a "warrant is issued conditionally." A third possibility arises in instances where a warrant for arrest is not recommended but the prosecutor keeps the case alive by telling the policeman that he is willing to recommend that a warrant be issued at some later time if the officer would complete some additional investigatory steps. In this type of situation it is said that the case is "referred." The fourth and final outcome of the case screening process is the situation where no warrant will be issued even if additional work is done. It is said that the case is "rejected." Thus, the four possible outcomes of the case screening process are (1) warrant issued; (2) warrant issued conditionally; (3) referred; or, (4) rejected.

The task force discovered that no one really knew how many cases fell into the second and third categories and that it was up to the individual investigator as to whether he actually did the additional work requested by the prosecutor. Task force members reasoned that a first step in assessing the

results of prosecutor screening would be to develop a process that would accurately tally the different outcomes. After some discussion, it was decided that the screening prosecutor, in a cooperative spirit, would fill out a "warrant assessment card" by checking a block that indicated which of the four possibilities had resulted from the screening process and by writing comments on the card to indicate additional work needed, if appropriate. The cards could be tallied and could be routed to supervisors who would check periodically to see if the detectives really were doing the additional work required.

It was decided to establish a weighted monthly index that would provide a quick and easy numerical gauge of activity. The weighting scheme should accentuate the "warrant issued" outcome by providing the heaviest weight for the outcome considered to be a complete success. The second and third outcomes would be weighted less to reflect the relatively less desirable outcomes. A "rejected" case, considered to be a complete failure, would be assigned a zero. Thus, the size of the monthly index would be large and would increase noticeably if improvement occurred in preparing cases for the screening process. The index would drop if the less desirable outcomes became more prevalent. The weighting scheme is as follows:

	<u>Weight</u>	<u>No. of Cases*</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>
1. Warrant Issued	10	10 x N	_____
2. Warrant Issued Conditionally	5	5 x N	_____
3. Referred	3	3 x N	_____
4. Rejected	0	0 x N	_____

Monthly Index—Total

\*N equals number  
of cases

When dividing time frames into monthly intervals, a monitoring problem arises if additional follow-up is needed; it is somewhat unpredictable as to the amount of time that will be needed. A referred warrant occurring in May could be converted to an issued warrant in June by additional investigation. To deal with this type of monitoring problem, it was decided to run a lead index and a trailing index. The lead index for a month would reflect initial outcomes of screening. The trailing index for the same month would reflect the corrections made after initial screening interviews.

One additional methodological problem had to be considered in using an index. Different numbers of cases come in from one month to the next due to seasonal or erratic variations that have nothing whatever to do with police efficiency. To deal with this type of problem it was decided that the data collected in the lead and trailing indices would be considered to be "raw" data in need of adjustment that would eliminate erratic and seasonal variation.

The method selected to eliminate erratic and seasonal variations in data is a three term moving average. In using this statistical method, the raw data for a particular month, say June, is added to the raw data of the previous month (May) and to the following month (July). The average of the three months provides an index number that somewhat smoothes out erratic and seasonal variations. For example, if one expects property crimes to be higher during the Christmas season because of shoplifting, a three term moving average will somewhat smooth this seasonal variation by including the months of November and January with the month of December.

The indices resulting from data collected in support of the third objective of the police-prosecutor relations are shown below using the three term moving average. The "smoothed" data allows one to examine the data for trends.

SUMMARY OF INDEX DATA  
ADJUSTED WITH A THREE TERM MOVING  
AVERAGE TO SMOOTH OUT ERRATIC AND  
SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN CASE LOADS

Lead Index

<u>Months</u>	<u>Raw Index</u>	<u>Sum of Three Months</u>	<u>Average</u>
May (1977)	490		
June	345	1129	376.33
July	294	1211	403.66
August	572	1306	435.33
September	440	1644	548.00
October	556	1628	542.67
November	632	1743	581.00
December	555	1787	595.67
January (1978)	500	1473	491.00
February	318	1336	445.33
March	418	1241	413.66
April	505	1438	479.33
May	515	1425	475.00
June	405		

Trailing Index

<u>Month</u>	<u>Raw Index</u>	<u>Sum of Three Months</u>	<u>Average</u>
May (1977)	535		
June	360	1230	410.00
July	335	1335	445.00
August	640	1515	505.00
September	540	1781	593.67
October	601	1851	617.00
November	710	2011	670.33
December	700	2045	681.67
January (1978)	635	1673	557.67
February	338	1471	490.33
March	498	1421	473.66
May	585	1668	556.00
June			

The interpretation or emerging trends can best be made from the right-hand or "average" column of the trailing index. With smoothing of the data to eliminate seasonal and erratic fluctuations, one can see that improvement occurred during the first six months of the project, but deteriorated during the second six months. Any interpretation of this trend would tend to be subjective in nature, because of the lack of empirical data to support an evaluation.

Objective IV: Compile data on results of prosecution.

Assessment: Data on case dispositions for property crimes (burglaries and/or larcenies) were compiled for two time periods - one (October, November, December, 1976) near the beginning of the study period and the other (July, August, September, 1977) completing the first year of the project - in order to study the effectiveness of Managing Criminal Investigations on the results of prosecution. Original plans called for analyzing data from the entire year from October, 1976, to September, 1977; however, the large volume of cases, plus the fact that all information had to be located and recorded manually, forced the decision to only gather data for the first three months and last three months of this twelve-month period. The first step in gathering these data was to obtain lists of property crime cases assigned to the detectives for further investigation during the two study periods. The Records Department of the Birmingham Police Department provided the case numbers of cases assigned to each detective. The project staff then consulted police department records and attempted to compile the necessary data to complete a "Case Management Data Sheet" (see appendix) for every case assigned. It was discovered during the initial phase of the study that a number of the case files were either missing or incomplete. The management staff issued directives to the detectives requesting that the files be brought up to date. However, because of the nature of the criminal justice process, it was impossible to know the status of many cases. Incomplete data also resulted from two other factors: (1) several detectives retired during the study period, leaving behind some incomplete files and, thus, inconclusive results regarding final court dispositions for those cases; and (2) some cases had not yet gone through all stages of the trial process at the time the study was conducted. Therefore, although every attempt was made to eliminate missing data, it should be noted that the study was able to report on known dispositions only.



Figure 4 displays the findings of this research. One thousand, two hundred and seventy four (1,274) property crime cases were assigned to the detectives during the study period (722 during October, November, December, 1976, and 522 during July, August, and September, 1977). Records were located for 1,222 (95.9 per cent) cases. Each case was grouped into one of five categories according to its status at the time of the study:

1. Unfounded (those cases in which investigation revealed that there was not really a case involving a property crime);
2. Exceptionally cleared (those cases which were cleared administratively and were considered closed);
3. Suspended (those cases which were unsolved, but for which investigation had ceased until further evidence surfaced);
4. Open (those cases in which the investigation was continuing); and
5. Cleared by arrest (those cases in which an arrest had been made).

Of the 1,222 cases for which data were available, 88 (7.2 per cent) were classified as unfounded, 396 (32.4 per cent) were exceptionally cleared, 268 (21.9 per cent) were suspended, 275 (22.5 per cent) were open, and 195 (16.0 per cent) were cleared by arrest.

One hundred ninety three (193) of the 195 cases cleared by arrest were routed for prosecution\*, 183 as felonies and 19 as misdemeanors. Results

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\*It should be noted that arrests were made in an additional small number of cases; however, due to circumstances specific to these particular cases (for example when a person was arrested on one case and it was decided to prosecute him on another offense, the former case would be classified as exceptionally cleared; when a warrant was rejected for a certain case, the detective would re-classify its status as suspended), they were generally categorized as either suspended or exceptionally cleared. These cases obviously were not routed for prosecution.

of the preliminary hearings were available for 165 of the 183 cases tried as felonies. Fourteen cases were dropped at that stage; in 19 cases the defendant pled guilty as charged; twelve defendants were given youthful offender status; and 102 cases were bound over to the grand jury. Of those 102 cases, true bills were obtained in 90 cases. Those indicted by the grand jury, plus those tried as misdemeanors, yielded 137 cases which should have reached a final disposition. However, information was not complete on 22 of those cases, leaving 115 for which a final disposition was known. In all of these cases, the defendant was found guilty.

Evaluating case status, including court dispositions, is extremely critical in managing criminal investigations. While Birmingham has a well developed police-prosecution relationship, it does not have an ability to track cases in an efficient manner. While the department has developed a number of manual systems for assessing case status, it is apparent that an automated management information system is needed.

#### Theoretical Base for Police-Prosecutor Relations Component

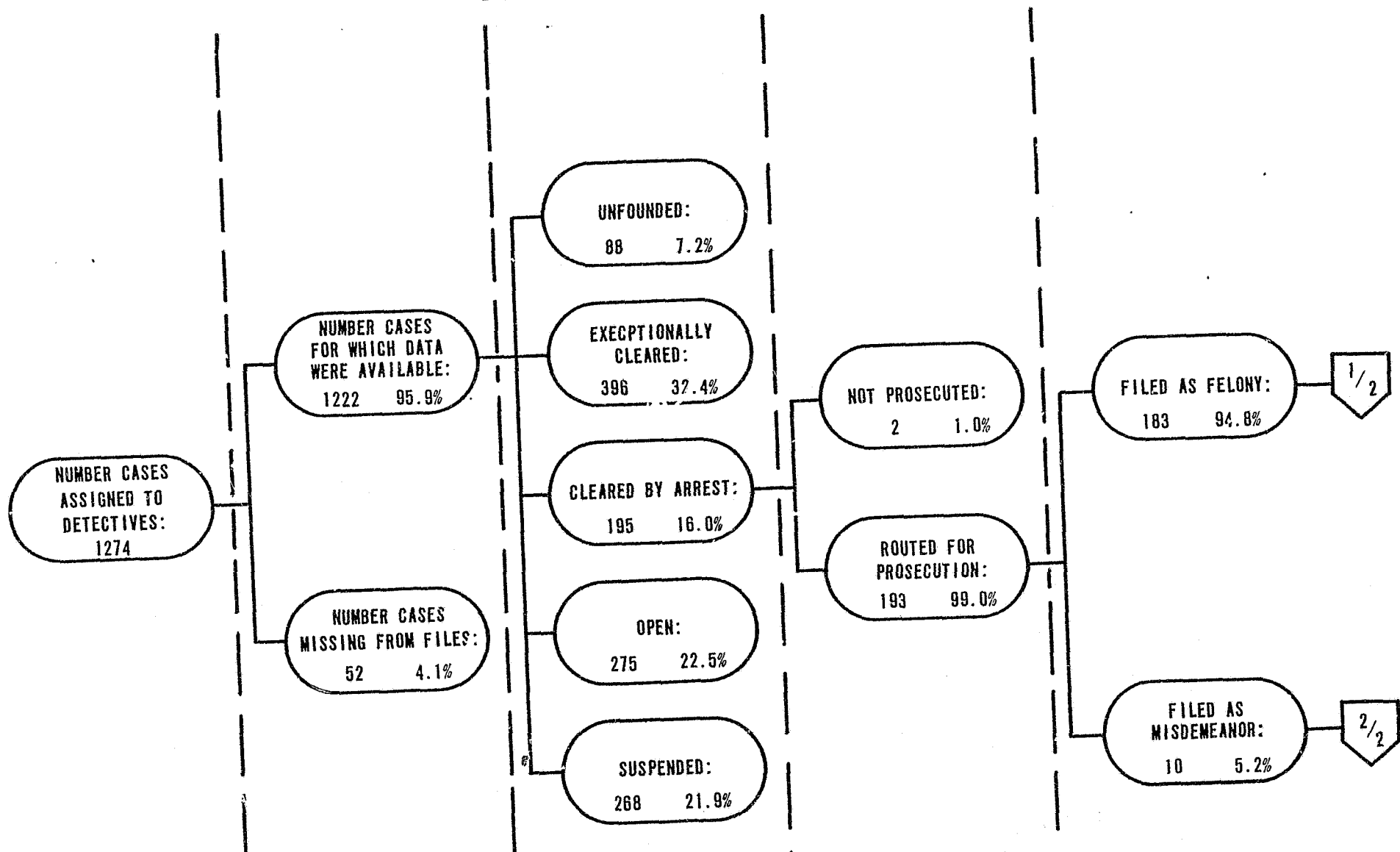
The most obvious source of theoretical basis pertaining to the police-prosecutor relations component is from the major findings of the Rand Study. Those major findings applicable here are:

On investigative thoroughness: In relatively few departments do investigators consistently and thoroughly document the key evidentiary facts that reasonably assure that the prosecutor can obtain a conviction on the most serious applicable charges.

On investigative thoroughness: Police failure to document a case investigation thoroughly may have contributed to a higher case dismissal rate and a weakening of the prosecutor's plea bargaining position. (pp. vii-ix)

# PROSECUTION RATE ANALYSIS

Page 1 of 3



# PROSECUTION RATE ANALYSIS (Cont.)

Page 2 of 3

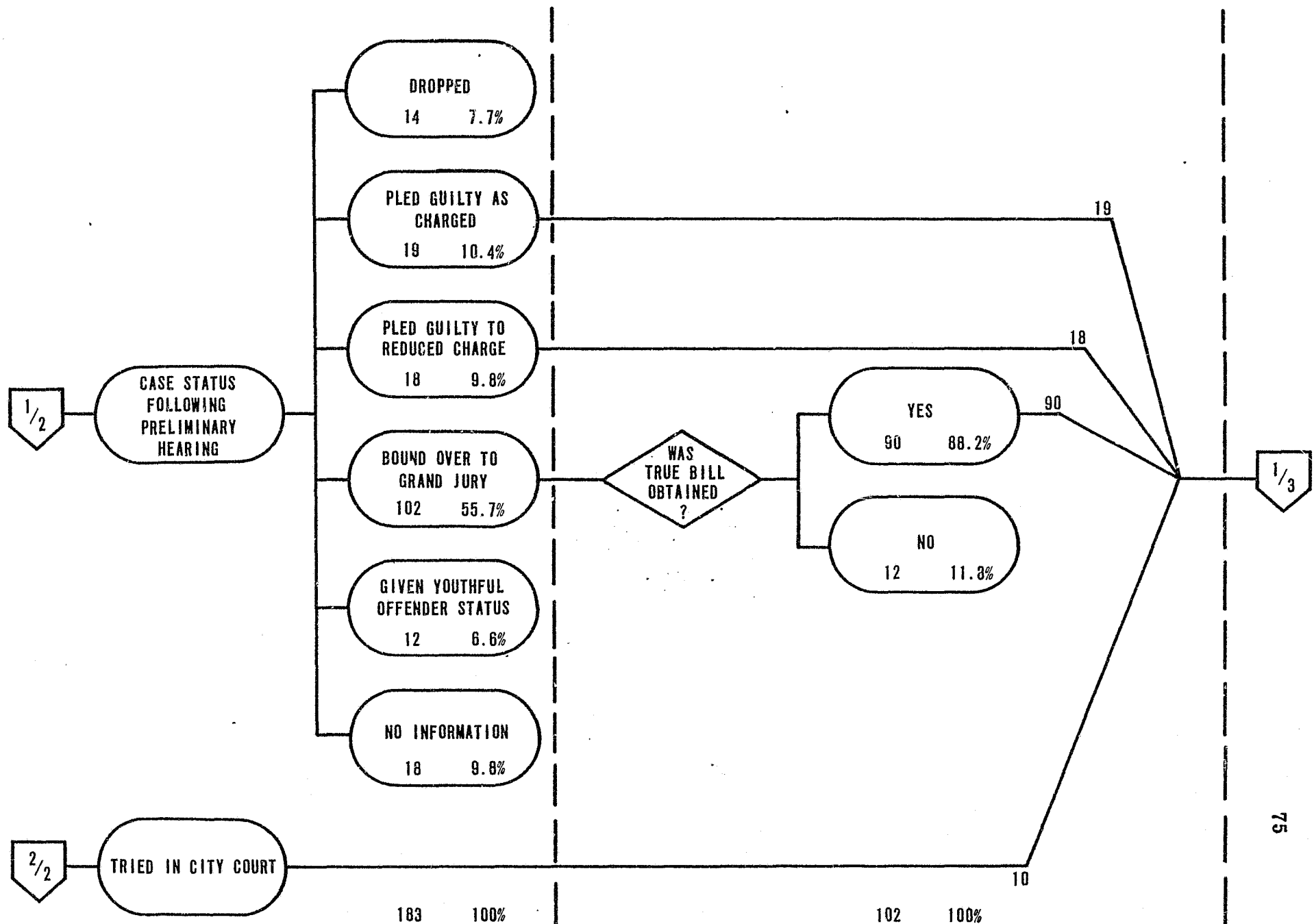


Figure 4 (cont.)

# PROSECUTION RATE ANALYSIS (Cont.)

Page 3 of 3

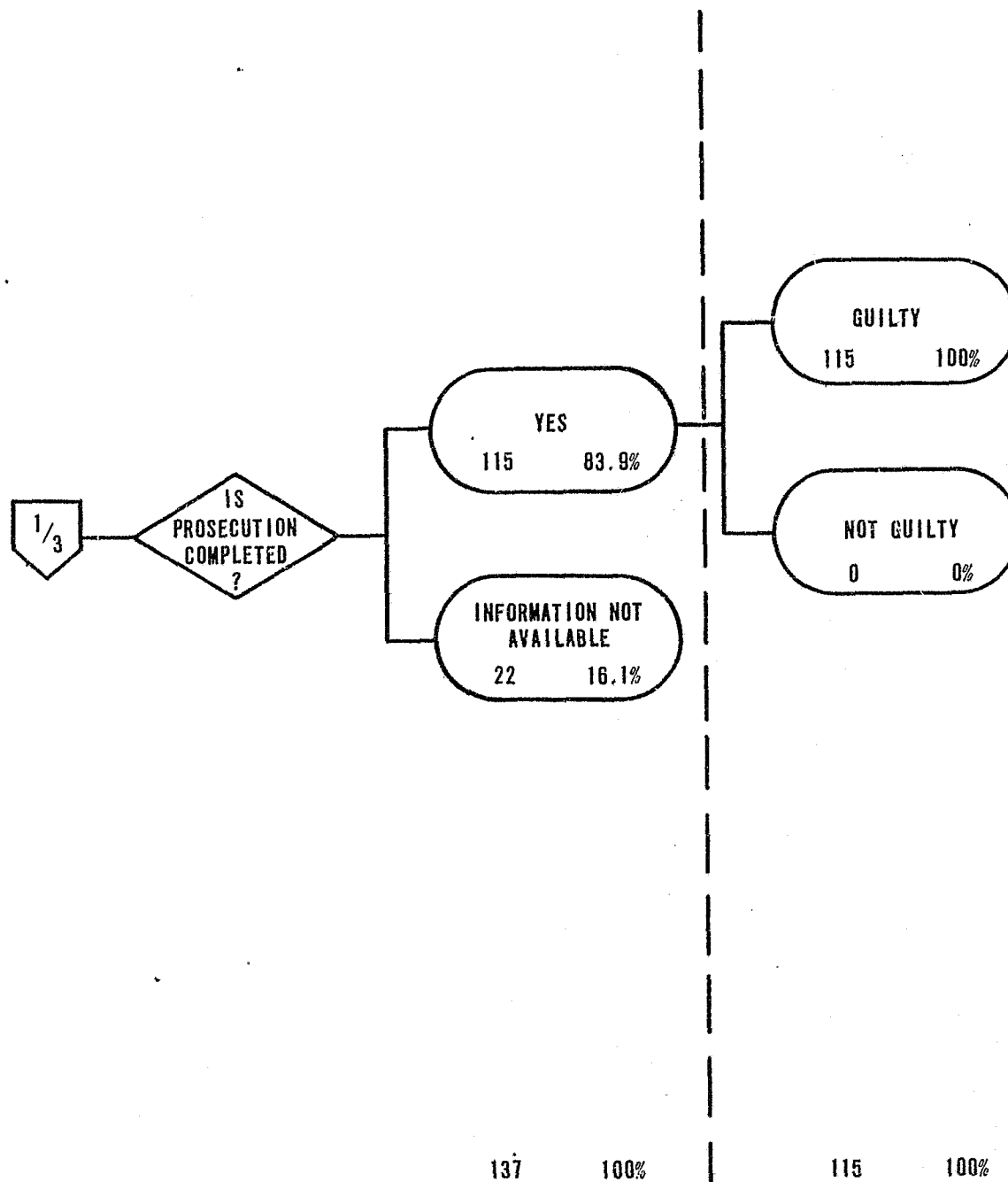


Figure 4 (cont.)

On the first proposition listed above, Rand has identified 39 evidentiary questions that a prosecutor presumably would consider necessary for effective case presentation. They base this proposition on their finding that all 39 questions are covered in only 45 per cent of the cases (p. viii). On the second proposition listed above, Rand notes substantial differences in two jurisdictions studied: one jurisdiction had stringent case screening and investigative thoroughness which resulted in 60 per cent of the offenders pleading guilty to the charges as filed. A second jurisdiction, apparently with less stringent case screening and less thorough investigation, had about one-fourth of all cases dismissed after filing and only 33 per cent of the defendants pled guilty to the charges as they were filed (p. ix).

Rand purposes reforms to cope with the faults that they believe they found in the system. Their reform recommendation applicable to their major findings noted above is to "Place post-arrest (i.e. suspect in custody) investigations under the authority of the prosecutor" (p. xii). Their reasoning is that the prosecutor is interested in proof beyond a reasonable doubt while the police arrest just on probable cause. Since the prosecutor's evidentiary needs are much difficult from those of the police, Rand researchers figure it would be more efficient for the prosecutor's office to provide its own investigators. Thus, in those frequent situations wherein the arrest in the case is made by the responding patrol unit, the police department investigator would not be involved in the case at all (p. xii).

In published criticism of the Rand Study, (Gates & Knowles) the two major findings noted above are referred to as "Major Finding 9" and "Major

Finding 10" (p. 24). In assessing "Major Finding 9", Gates and Knowles complain mainly about Rand drawing a sweeping conclusion from looking at a mere two jurisdictions and making statements about these two jurisdictions without supporting evidence.

These critics point out that Rand erred by believing that strict screening is the only (or most important) variable influencing investigative thoroughness. In assessing "Major Finding 10", Gates and Knowles label it as the "most puzzling of the Rand major findings in that statements in the report repeatedly contradict it" (p. 74). These critics note that the Rand researcher's report of the findings leading to the "Major Finding 10" admit that no conclusions could logically be drawn from their data. Later, they inexplicably reverse themselves and use the data as basis for yet another major finding.

The Rand researchers were allowed to reply to the critics (Chaiken & Petersilia). In defending "Major Finding 9", the researchers admit the weaknesses of their research design, but maintain that their overall impression is still that investigative thoroughness is an important area for improvement (pp. 66-67). In defending "Major Finding 10", the researchers simply say that the critics misunderstood them (p. 68).

#### Implications of the Birmingham Experience

The debate between the critics of the Rand Study and the Rand researchers cannot be resolved here. However, it is appropriate to comment on the Birmingham experience as it relates to the Rand major findings applicable for the police-prosecutor relations component.

The issue of investigative thoroughness does not seem to be a major issue in Birmingham. At the outset of the project, representatives of the district attorney's office (as well as the District Attorney himself) were included on the task force for police-prosecutor relations. No one on the task force, whether police officer or prosecutor, felt that investigative thoroughness was a significant problem. Project staff did attempt to stimulate discussion of the 39 evidentiary questions noted in the Rand Study. However, Birmingham prosecutors showed no interest in discussing it or in having Birmingham police trained in the use of the 39 item list. The reason for their lack of concern apparently stemmed from their satisfaction with their present system. In the case screening process, a prosecutor sits down with an investigator to go over the details of the case. The prosecutor has his own checklist that has been developed in this local office. The prosecutor fills out his form as he discussed the case with the investigator and satisfied himself that all necessary evidentiary questions have been answered in the investigation before issuing an arrest warrant. If the investigation has been lacking, the prosecutor can issue a warrant conditionally, refer the case (agree to issue a warrant later if the investigator will complete extra work), or reject the case.

As the project got underway, the Warrant Assessment Card was developed and project staff began to be able to see why the prosecutors had not considered investigative thoroughness to be a problem. Very few cases were rejected outright. It is typical for one or two cases per month to be rejected out of 50 to 60 cases subjected to the screening process. A fair number of cases fall into the classification of "warrant issued



conditionally." In this classification the case needs additional investigative action even though the prosecutor is willing to issue a warrant. However, the need for additional work on the case does not stem from lack of investigative thoroughness. Typically, the investigator knows that additional work must be done, but wants the warrant to be issued so the offender can be taken into custody before he disappears or commits additional crimes.

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**CONTINUED**

**1 OF 2**

APPENDIX

CALL SCREEN OFFICER ACTIVITY REPORT

Quarter	Complaints Received By Telephone	Handled Without Car	Required Car	Complaints Made In Person	Handled Without Car	Required Car	Total
3rd	3,785	3,074	711	1,030	846	184	4,815
4th	4,032	3,597	435	755	580	75	4,787
5th	2,649	2,590	59	140	130	10	2,789
6th	3,251	3,216	35	211	206	5	3,462
7th	3,029	2,965	64	296	290	6	3,325
TOTAL	16,746	15,442	1,304	2,432	2,152	280	19,178

NOTE: Of those cases received by the Call Screen Officers, 37% were by telephone, and 13% were received from walk-in complainants. Of those complaints received by telephone, 92% were handled without dispatching an officer, while in 8% of these complaints a car was required. Of those complaints received from walk-in complainants, 12% required the dispatching of an officer, while 88% of walk-in complaints were handled by the Call Screen Officer.

DATA RELATED TO MANAGING THE CONTINUING INVESTIGATION

Quarter	Total Cases Processed	Assigned To Detectives	Routinely Handled By Desk Officer	Initial Classification					Total Arrests	On Scene	Post Warrant	Other
				A	B	C	D	E				
3rd	2,516	368	2,148	150	76	85	388	1,817	143	123	16	4
4th	4,384	585	3,799	219	140	153	762	3,110	169	137	28	4
5th	4,207	593	3,614	173	142	184	912	2,796	247	191	29	27
6th	4,296	564	3,732	188	110	197	1,022	2,779	162	127	25	10
7th	3,897	494	3,403	166	122	140	897	2,572	188	153	25	10
TOTAL	19,300	2,604	16,696	896	590	759	3,981	13,074	909	731	123	55

NOTE: Of the total number of cases processed, 13.5% were assigned to detectives, while 86.5% were routinely filed or handled by a desk officer. In regard to the initial classification of cases, 4.6% were classified as A, 3.1% were classified as B, 3.9% were classified as C, 20.6% were classified as D, and 67.7% were classified as E. Of the total arrests, 80.4% were made on the scene of the offense, 13.5% were made after a warrant was secured, and 6.1% were made in other manners.

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CLEARANCES BY SOLVABILITY FACTORS

Quarter		A	B	C	D	E
3rd	Initial Classification	150	76	85	388	1,817
	Classification When Cleared	121	51	32	39	48
	% Cleared	81	67	38	10	3
4th	Initial Classification	219	140	153	762	3,110
	Classification When Cleared	176	87	47	95	139
	% Cleared	80	62	31	13	5
5th	Initial Classification	173	142	184	912	2,796
	Classification When Cleared	181	90	89	79	75
	% Cleared	105	63	48	9	3
6th	Initial Classification	188	110	197	1,022	2,779
	Classification When Cleared	180	70	73	48	55
	% Cleared	96	64	37	5	2
7th	Initial Classification	166	122	140	897	2,572
	Classification When Cleared	164	86	47	42	57
	% Cleared	99	70	34	5	2
TOTAL	Initial Classification	896	590	759	3,981	13,074
	Classification When Cleared	822	384	288	303	374
	% Cleared	92	65	38	8	3

Objectives for clearances were A-80%; B-30%; C-10%; D-2%; and E-0%.

CLEARANCES BY SOLVABILITY CLASSIFICATION

Quarter	Total Number Of Cases Cleared	Classifications of Cases When Cleared				
		A	B	C	D	E
3rd	291	121	51	32	39	48
4th	544	176	87	47	95	139
5th	514	181	90	89	79	75
6th	426	180	70	73	48	55
7th	396	164	86	47	42	57
TOTAL	2,171	822	384	288	303	374

Of the total number of cases cleared, 37.9% were classified as A when cleared, 17.7% were classified as B, 13.3% were classified as C, 14.0% were classified as D, and 17.2% were classified as E.



# RESULTS OF PROSECUTION SCREENING

Quarter	Number of Cases Referred to Prose- cution	Warrant Issued		Warrant Issued Conditionally		Warrant Referred		Warrant Rejected	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
3rd	98	73	74.5	21	21.4	0	0.0	4	4.1
4th	159	111	69.8	35	22.0	7	4.4	6	3.8
5th	204	151	74.0	43	21.1	6	2.9	4	2.0
6th	154	117	76.0	32	20.8	2	1.3	3	1.9
7th	159	129	81.1	27	17.0	0	0.0	3	1.9
TOTAL	774	581	75.1	158	20.4	15	1.9	20	2.6

## CASE MANAGEMENT DATA SHEET

1. Complaint number: (1-7) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
2. Offense: (8-9)
  - (1) \_\_\_ Burglary-business
  - (2) \_\_\_ Burglary-residence
  - (3) \_\_\_ Burglary-vehicle
  - (4) \_\_\_ Burglary of interstate vehicle
  - (5) \_\_\_ Larceny from vehicle
  - (6) \_\_\_ Larceny from business (other)
  - (7) \_\_\_ Larceny from residence
  - (8) \_\_\_ Larceny from person
  - (9) \_\_\_ Larceny of bicycle
  - (10) \_\_\_ Purse Snatching
  - (11) \_\_\_ Petty Larceny
3. Date of offense: (10-16) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
4. Suspect: (17-31) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
5. Suspect known to victim: (32)
  - (1) \_\_\_ yes
  - (2) \_\_\_ no
  - (3) \_\_\_ unknown
6. Detective case assigned to: (33-34)
  - (1) \_\_\_ Sgt. T. R. Hulslander
  - (2) \_\_\_ Sgt. A. J. Cornelius
  - (3) \_\_\_ Sgt. H. Evers
  - (4) \_\_\_ Sgt. W. C. Walker
  - (5) \_\_\_ Sgt. Princeton Pate
  - (6) \_\_\_ Sgt. H. L. King
  - (7) \_\_\_ Sgt. D. A. Beasley
  - (8) \_\_\_ Sgt. Gerald Hill
  - (9) \_\_\_ Sgt. John Cousins
  - (10) \_\_\_ Sgt. T. E. Joiner
  - (11) \_\_\_ Sgt. R. L. Berry
  - (12) \_\_\_ Sgt. J. B. Trammell
  - (13) \_\_\_ Sgt. R. S. Whitehouse
  - (14) \_\_\_ Sgt. H. L. McKay
  - (15) \_\_\_ Sgt. C. R. Jones
  - (16) \_\_\_ Sgt. W. T. Parkes
  - (17) \_\_\_ Sgt. W. W. Rease
  - (18) \_\_\_ Sgt. V. G. Johnson
  - (19) \_\_\_ Sgt. J. C. Wilson
  - (20) \_\_\_ Sgt. H. T. Walker
  - (21) \_\_\_ Sgt. J. C. Farrell
  - (22) \_\_\_ Sgt. E. A. Dodd
  - (23) \_\_\_ Sgt. B. L. Patterson

7. Case status: (35-39)  
(1) ☐ open  
(2) ☐ suspended  
(3) ☐ exceptional clearance  
(4) ☐ unfounded  
(5) ☐ cleared by arrest
8. Date of clearance: (40-45) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
9. New offense, if changed: (46-52)  
(1) ☐ Burglary and Grand Larceny to Burglary only  
(2) ☐ Burglary and Grand Larceny to Grand Larceny only  
(3) ☐ Burglary and Grand Larceny to Buying, Receiving  
and Concealing Stolen Property  
(4) ☐ Burglary to Malicious Mischief  
(5) ☐ Burglary to trespass  
(6) ☐ Grand Larceny to Buying, Receiving and Concealing  
Stolen Property  
(7) ☐ Grand Larceny to Petty Larceny  
(8) ☐ No change
10. Has an arrest been made? (53)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no
11. If yes, date of arrest: (54-59) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
12. Was the arrest made on the scene? (60)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no
13. Was the arrest made after the warrant was obtained? (61)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no
14. Action taken by the detective: (62)  
(1) ☐ filed as felony  
(2) ☐ filed as misdemeanor
15. Has warrant been obtained: (63)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no  
(3) ☐ N/A
16. Was the warrant granted conditionally? (64)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no  
(3) ☐ N/A

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17. Was the warrant referred? (65)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no  
(3) ☐ N/A
18. Was the warrant rejected? (66)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no  
(3) ☐ N/A
19. Case status: (67-70)  
(1) ☐ prosecution initiated  
(2) ☐ prosecution initiated, pending arrest  
(3) ☐ Prosecution initiated, pending preliminary hearing  
(4) ☐ referred to city court
20. Has the preliminary hearing been held? (71)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no  
(3) ☐ N/A
21. What is the case status following the preliminary hearing? (72)  
(1) ☐ dropped  
(2) ☐ pled guilty as charged  
(3) ☐ pled guilty to a reduced charge  
(4) ☐ bound over to the grand jury  
(5) ☐ N/A
22. Was a true bill obtained? (73)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no  
(3) ☐ N/A
23. To which court was the case referred? (74)  
(1) ☐ city court  
(2) ☐ circuit court  
(3) ☐ county court

NEW CARD

24. What is the court case number? (1-10) \_\_\_\_\_
25. Was the case prosecuted as charged: (11)  
(1) ☐ yes  
(2) ☐ no  
(3) ☐ N/A
26. Was the case (12)  
(1) ☐ dropped  
(2) ☐ plea bargained  
(3) ☐ N/A

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27. If the case was plea bargained, the plea was reduced from: (13-19)
- (1) ☐ Burglary to attempted felony
  - (2) ☐ Burglary to trespass
  - (3) ☐ Burglary and Grand Larceny to attempted felony
  - (4) ☐ Burglary and Grand Larceny to Buying, Receiving, and Concealing Stolen Property
  - (5) ☐ Grand Larceny to Buying, Receiving, and Concealing Stolen Property
  - (6) ☐ Grand Larceny to Petty Larceny
  - (7) ☐ N/A
28. Is the prosecution completed? (20)
- (1) ☐ yes
  - (2) ☐ no
29. Final Disposition (21)
- (1) ☐ guilty
  - (2) ☐ not guilty
30. Was the individual fined? (22)
- (1) ☐ yes
  - (2) ☐ no
31. What was the amount of the fine? (23-27)
- 
32. Was the individual sentenced? (28)
- (1) ☐ yes
  - (2) ☐ no
33. Type of sentence: (29)
- (1) ☐ sentence
  - (2) ☐ probation
  - (3) ☐ sentence and probation
  - (4) ☐ N/A
34. Length of sentence (in terms of years): (30-31)
- 
35. Length of probation (in terms of months): (32-33)
-

# BIRMINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

INTER - OFFICE COMMUNICATION

92

July 28, 1977

POLICE 92

TO: All Personnel  
FROM: James C. Parsons, Chief of Police  
SUBJECT: General Order (4-73) Call Screening -  
Revised 7-27-77.

Purpose: To define call screening and provide guidelines for officers performing this assignment.

This order will consist of the following numbered-subsections:

- I. Establishment of a Call Screen Operation
- II. Method of Action
- III. Conclusion

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CALL SCREEN OPERATION

Due to the work load, it is no longer possible to dispatch a Field Unit on every call received by the Police Department. Therefore, it is necessary to institute a Call Screen Operation to more efficiently utilize police resources. Some calls received, such as requests for offense reports to be made on hubcap thefts, requests for house checks, etc., can be handled by telephone, thereby relieving Field Units for more serious matters.

II. METHOD OF ACTION

- A. Call Screening will provide for the taking of certain reports directly on the telephone by officers assigned in the precincts. It is not an objective of this operation to deny citizens necessary police assistance. On the contrary, the public should receive emergency service more quickly. Additionally by relieving Field Units of minor calls, etc. other non-emergency calls will receive a faster police response. The call screen will be operational 24 hours a day. Under no circumstances will a Communications Service Clerk or a Call Screen Officer refuse to dispatch a Field Unit if requested by the complainant.
- B. COMPLAINTS TO BE HANDLED

Generally, the following types of reports will be handled by Call Screen Officers.

- 1. Auto Accessory Thefts
- 2. Thefts from Motor Vehicles where no forced entry is involved
- 3. Missing persons, run-a-ways

(NOTE) If the missing person or run-a-way is a small child, a Field Unit shall be dispatched to locate him and to take the report. This also applies to persons whose mental capabilities are impaired. If foul play is suspected, send a Field Unit. On missing persons under age of 14 and over 60, send a Field Unit.

4. Malicious Mischief Reports, except vandalism to a school, church or government property.
5. Lost Property Reports.
6. Vacation (house) Checks.
7. Other calls for information where the civilian Communication Service Clerk is unable to furnish the information requested.
8. Reports telephoned in by citizens from outside the city.  
(NOTE) Offenses that occur in the city, but that are reported by persons from outside the city, will be handled by the Call Screen Officer.
9. Larceny from residences when no forced entry is made or no suspects are known.
10. Prisoner escape reports will be handled by telephone, unless unusual circumstances dictate the need to send a Field Unit.
11. Cancellation of stolen cars when recovered by another jurisdiction. These can be handled by telephone when information is received from an officer of the jurisdiction, not the victim.
12. Threats, annoying and obscene phone calls, as long as there is no immediate danger present to the complainant.
13. Barking dogs, vicious dogs, dogs at large, dog bite report.
14. Refusing to pay licensed businesses if the suspect has left the scene.
15. Cancellation of Runaway/Missing Person Reports. When notification is received of the return of a runaway or missing person, Call Screen can handle the report after first contacting either the Records Bureau or Youth Aid in order to check the original report to verify the address and telephone number of the complainant. Once this is accomplished, the screening officer will call the complainant back, to verify the return and complete the necessary report.
16. Follow-up of previously reported events. Calls received pertaining to added information for any event previously reported, will be referred to the screening officer for completion of the necessary supplementary report. However, a Field Unit will be dispatched if circumstances dictate the need. For example,

Family  
Services  
Div.

if an owner recovers his own bicycle and there are no extenuating circumstances, the supplemental report could be handled by telephone. On the other hand, if a suspect has been developed, then a Field Unit will be dispatched.

C. INITIAL PROCESSING OF INCOMING REQUEST FOR POLICE SERVICE

1. The Communications Service Clerk or the Call Screen Officer answering the phone, must first determine if there is a need for the presence of a Field Unit.
2. When it is determined there is no immediate need for a Field Unit, the complainant will be advised that it is possible to make the report by telephone. If the complainant agrees, the call will be handled by the Call Screen Officer or be transferred by the Service Clerk, to the Call Screen Officer, who will make the necessary report. The Communication Service Clerk will remain on the line and inform the screening officer that a call is being transferred to him. The Communications Service Clerk will obtain the name, address, telephone number and the type of complaint from the complainant prior to transferring the call to the screening officer. She will fill out a dispatch card and stamp it twice, once when she determines the call can be handled by call screen and again when she makes contact with the screening officer. The card will then be forwarded to the dispatcher.

The screening officer when completing the report, will use the radio to contact the dispatcher to get a complainant number and to inform the dispatcher of the disposition code. Before terminating his conversation with the complainant, the screening officer will give the party the complaint number for the report.

The dispatcher when given the disposition code, will time stamp the dispatch card.

3. If the Call Screen Officer is busy and not immediately available to make a report or the call cannot be transferred, the Service Clerk will ascertain if the complainant will agree to call back. If the complainant agrees to this, the Service Clerk will obtain the complainant's name, address, phone number and type of complaint. A dispatch card will be filled out, stamped once, then again when the Call Screen Officer is contacted, then forwarded to the dispatcher. As soon as possible, this will be given to the Call Screen Officer of the precinct where the complaint occurred, who will call the complainant in fifteen (15) minutes. If no Call Screen Officer is available to make the call



back in fifteen minutes, a Field Unit will be dispatched to the complainant.

4. When a call is received at a precinct and it is determined by the Call Screen Officer that it is necessary to send a Field Unit, he will obtain the necessary information and give it to the Communication Service Clerk for relaying to the dispatcher.
5. On calls transferred to a precinct, the Service Clerk will note on the dispatch card in the space designated "Unit Assigned," the call numbers of the precinct.
6. On calls transferred to a Screening Officer from a Service Clerk, where the Screening decides a Field Unit needs to be dispatched, the Screening Officer will use the radio to contact the dispatcher.

D. REVIEW OF CALL SCREEN OFFENSE REPORTS

1. Reports taken by Call Screen Officers will be completed on standard report forms.
2. Reports completed by Call Screen Officers will be reviewed by the precinct Sergeant and forwarded to the Report Review Section.

E. STATISTICS TO BE MAINTAINED ON CALL SCREENING

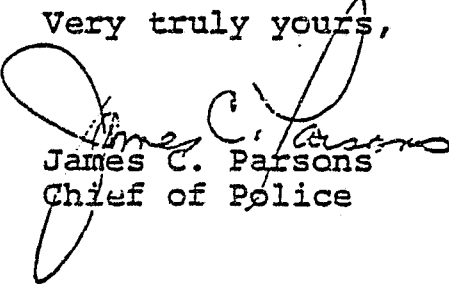
1. A total of all complaints processed by Call Screen will be maintained by the Call Screen Officer of the precinct ~~CALLS FOR SERVICE~~
2. All ~~calls~~ received by the Call Screen Officer will be logged on the Call Screen Activity Report. The Call Screen Activity Report will indicate the signal code, the complaint number, the complaint received in person or by telephone, complaint handled with or without responding patrol unit.
  - a. Call Screen Activity Report will be maintained for three consecutive shifts (example: 7:00 a.m. 7:00 a.m.)
  - b. A copy of the completed 24 hour activity report will be forwarded daily through channels to the Office of the Deputy Chief of the Operations Bureau.

III. CONCLUSION

This order has been prepared to provide general guidelines and basis instructions for Call Screening. It is not intended to restrict personnel assigned to Call

Screening from using their own ingenuity in devising  
procedures beneficial to the success of this program.

Very truly yours,



James C. Parsons  
Chief of Police

JCP:kld.

**END**