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Investigative Plan

Introduction

This paper describes an investigative plan designed to deal with the spate of daytime robberies occurring recently in this city. The plan will draw upon the limited information obtained by our police officers in respect of each of the robberies. Aspects covered in the investigative plan will include the investigative steps needed, the technological assistance/support required, the analysis of any pattern to the robberies, the method(s) to be used to synthesize the available data, the types of investigative units to be used, and the procurement of needed supplies and equipment (which might require additional funding).

Investigative Steps Required

According to Hall (2011), investigative steps following a series of robberies in the city's jurisdictions should be as follows:

Step 1: Carefully review all the police reports from the various precincts / jurisdictions where the robberies were initially reported and the incidents handled.

Step 2: Considering all those robberies as a group of possibly related incidents, collate the list of witnesses from all the individual police reports and re-interview each witness. This might reveal common elements in the series of crimes.

Step 4: Carefully review the recorded CCTV footage from all surveillance cameras located within range of the scenes of the robberies, looking for

possible images of the perpetrators or vehicles used.

Step 5: Review existing analyses made by the police teams involved in the original incidents, looking for any identified common elements or similarities.

Step 6: Synthesize the collated robberies data, facilitating a more effective review by organizing the data in terms of factors such as the Modus Operandi (MO), the day and the time, and the location of each robbery.

Step 7: Identify and mark the locations of the offenses on a city map, looking for grouping of the locations (which may help locate the base from where the offender(s) operate).

Step 8: Request the potential availability of additional manpower / resources from any agencies to be involved in the investigation.

Step 9: Contact other city agencies, especially in outlying areas, to determine if they have seen any corresponding increase in the numbers of robberies.

Step 10: Study demographic factors such as zoning changes, major demographic shifts, opening of new businesses, etc. in order to take into account other factors that might have affected this increased crime rate.

Technological Assistance Needed

Since the early days of crime investigation when crime reports were handwritten and had to be meticulously and manually analyzed, technology has made the work of the investigators easier, particularly in the use of computers and sophisticated computer programs designed with criminal

investigation in mind. These can include databases which allow law enforcement agencies to rapidly compare data such as fingerprints, arrest records, etc.

Geographical Information Software (GIS) is another type of software which facilitates the creation by crime analysts of sometimes complex maps to help investigate the geographical aspects of crimes (“GIS Software Requirements for Crime Analysis” 2012). Our investigative plan should take full advantage of such available technological resources.

Analysis of Robbery Patterns

A consortium of five of the leading police organizations in the US developed an analysis system called “SARA” which is a four-stage procedure recommended for use in cases such as this. The procedure stages are as follows:

Scanning: By observation of reports and any patterns within them, commonalities between recurring problems or situations are more readily identified. **Analysis:** To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of any causal factors, the analysts consider three factual elements – the victim, the location, and the offender(s). Those three comprise the sides of the so-called “crime triangle.” They are not only important in the process of analyzing the crimes, but can highlight needed action for future crime prevention. For example, if the crimes were committed in badly lit areas, the appropriate authority could be contacted to make necessary improvements. **Response:** Following identification of causal factors, it is possible to address responses to at least two sides of that crime triangle. These are the strategic plans

implemented. Assessment: The analysts evaluate the effectiveness of the problem-solving activity and collect data to determine if the outcome is positive. If it is not (i. e. if the response was ineffective), then the analysts develop a new response (“ Team Community Oriented Policing” n. d.).

Data Synthesis

The data gathered needs to be synthesized to make the analysis easier and sharper. Essentially, that means removing data that is not pertinent to a series of crimes (in this instance, robberies), in order to focus on the relevant details. Synthesizing the data concentrates the interest of the investigators on common elements, so that (for example) witnesses may be re-interviewed to ask important questions, forensic evidence might be re-examined to look for substances not previously recognized as significant, cameras footage might be reviewed once more, and so on. All these aspects reviewed and re-examined help the investigators get closer to the perpetrators of the crimes by uncovering information that might originally have been overlooked or not reported.

Investigative Units Required

Effective execution of the strategic plan requires use of a range of investigative units. First there are crime analysis units (if necessary from each precinct or jurisdiction involved). Then there are the investigative units (detectives), regular patrol officers and the forensic teams (again from each local police authority). If the scale of the operations merits more resources, it may be necessary (for example) to bring in or recruit more patrol officers or other specialist personnel.

Equipment and Supplies Procurement

Again dependent on the perceived scale of the operation, it may be necessary to acquire additional computer workstations and – if not already available – the necessary GIS software to facilitate computerized mapping of the crime locations. Other requirements might include specialized database software, and analysis software such as Microsoft Access, which is used by numerous police authorities. For some of this software, additional training resources are likely to be needed, too. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, additional patrol officers (and therefore their vehicles, too), might be a requirement.

Additional Funding

It is more than probable that in order to mount such an operation as described, the city's police authority may need a special budget, over and above the regular budget already agreed and made available. In order to obtain that extra funding, the police authority will be required to make a case for it, submitting the request to the appropriate agency. There are specific funding programs available. Perhaps the most applicable in this instance is the COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services office). It offers grants for law enforcement agencies, which may be used for various purposes. Those include hiring additional community police officers, purchasing new equipment and technology, hiring civilian administrative personnel, and for the promotion of innovative crime solutions. The Department of Justice also has a number of other agencies through which grants can be made available for specific purposes (" Grants" n. d.).

According to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), under the terms of their mandate they are not permitted “ to provide direct funding for equipment purchases and training beyond that supplied under the Forensic Laboratory Enhancement program.” However the NIJ suggests sources for obtaining funding for equipment and other needs through various programs, including the following examples. Justice Assistance Grant Program: Funds obtained from this source “ may be used to provide personnel, equipment, training, technical assistance, and information systems.” Office of Justice Programs Technology Initiatives: The dedicated website provides details of access to “ initiatives and technological developments.” Information on “ Federal and private funding sources, examples of innovative funding ideas, and tips on researching funding legislation” is also provided (“ Funding for Equipment” n. d.).

Because funding is likely to be difficult to obtain in these days of fiscal belt-tightening by public / government agencies, securing any required additional funds may need support from local politicians including Senators and Congressmen, who might have some influence with agencies having the authority to disburse grants, etc.

Conclusions

It seems highly probable that to implement the strategic investigative plan set out in this document, additional technological and human resources would be necessary to put the plan as described in motion, and then to bring it to a successful conclusion. The plan as described seems to offer a practical approach to the problem, offering a good chance of success. Assuming the

city's police authority budget could not accommodate the costs of those resources that would mean applying for grants to provide the funds needed. As discussed above, there are sources of such funding, although in these times of a depressed economy, external influences might be needed to support the funding application(s).

References:

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Appendix: