

# CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR AND TACTICAL PROFILING

*Modus operandi* elements of a pattern



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1

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**Arlington Police Department / Crime Analysis Bulletin**

Contact: Crime Analysis, East District CID  
817-459-5810 / [Email](#)

Bulletin No. 2212-308-E  
Issued: 12/8/2022

**Attempt to ID: Asian Restaurant Burglaries**

**Beats 440 & 480**

Five smash & grab burglaries with the same MO and suspect description occurred within a six-day span from 12/3-12/8 (Sat-Thu). The suspect has only targeted small independent Asian restaurants. All the burglaries had the front or side glass window smashed with a rock and the suspect took or attempted to take money from the cash registers.

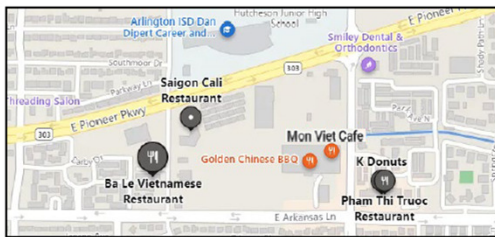
Report#	Date/Day	Time	Location	Contact
2022-03370084	12/3 (Sat)	0410-0413	1700 E Pioneer Pkwy #196, Saigon Cali (440)	<a href="#">Det. Trinh</a>
2022-03400050	12/6 (Tue)	0224-0230	1901 E Arkansas Ln #107, K Donuts (480)	<a href="#">Det. Altimus</a>
2022-03410085	12/7 (Wed)	0515-0517	2240 Browning Dr, Ba Le (440)	<a href="#">Det. Trinh</a>
2022-03410154	12/7 (Wed)	0151	1901 E Arkansas Ln #111, Pham Thi Trouc (480)	<a href="#">Det. Altimus</a>
2022-03420124	12/8 (Thu)	0145	1818 E Pioneer Pkwy #181, Mon Viet Café (440)	<a href="#">Det. Trinh</a>

**Analysis:**

- Occurring between 0100-0600 hours.
- The restaurants are located with one mile of each other.
- Suspect appears to be on foot, possibly homeless.

Patrol is asked to identify and close patrol Asian restaurants/cafes during the early morning hours.

Contact [Det. Trinh](#), [Det. Altimus](#) or Crime Analysis with any information.



2

## Objectives

- Analyze deviations in the norm of the “typical” crime.
- Articulate what is meant by *modus operandi* and how it applies to specific crimes.
- Determine what we can use from the science of “profiling” in the tactical analysis world.
- Analyze what we can expect when a pattern is interrupted.

3

## A typical robbery

### Scenario A

- Approached victim on street at night
- Pulled a knife
- Demanded money and smartphone
- Made victim unlock the phone
- Took wallet, phone, and fled on foot
- Later used victim’s credit card to buy gift cards

### Scenario B

- Approached in an alley during the day
- Brandished a machete
- Demanded purse
- Fled in waiting car
- Later opened accounts in victim’s name with credit card companies

4

## A typical burglary

### Scenario A

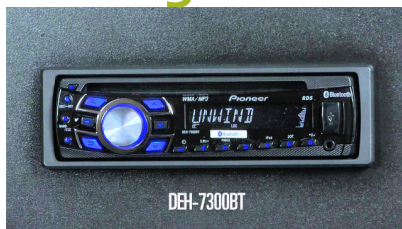
- Smashed front plate glass window, crawled in
- Seems to have only gone through living room and kitchen
- Stole 45-inch television and DVD player
- Ate some cookies on kitchen counter

### Scenario B

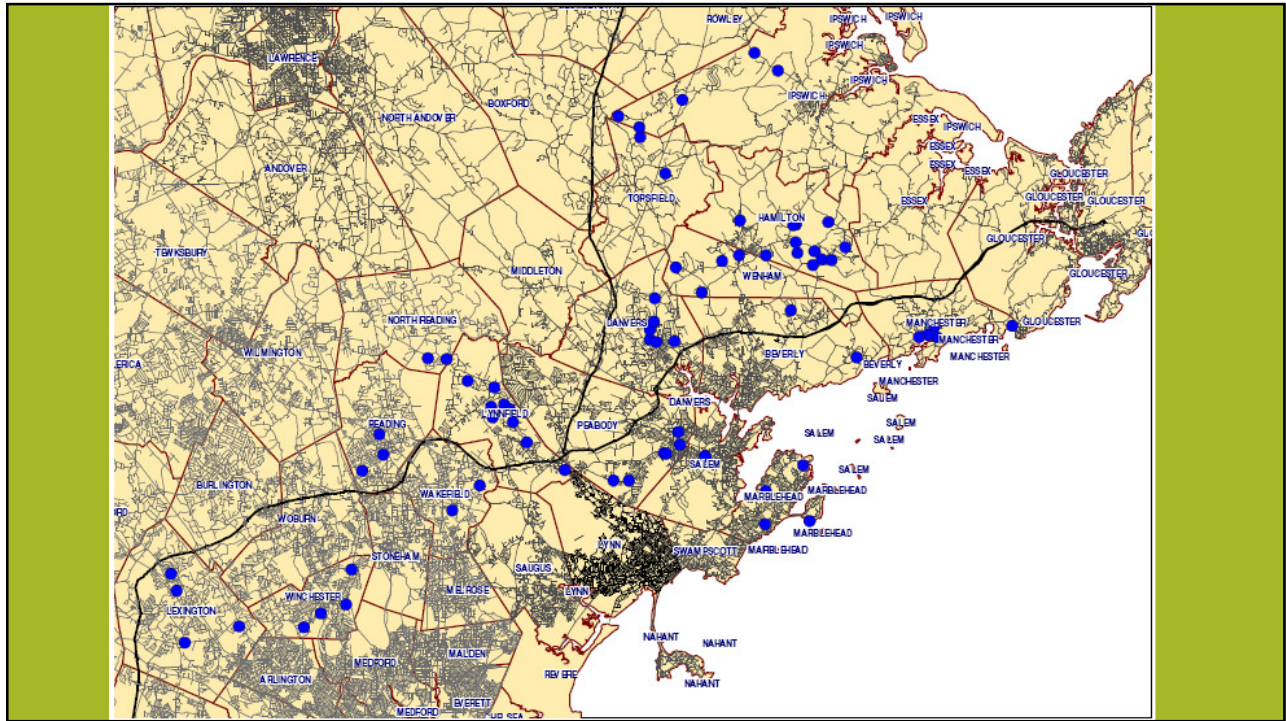
- Kicked rear door
- Ransacked living room and bedroom
- Stole jewelry and cash
- Took a pillowcase
- Exited the way he came in

5

## Changes in the "normal" crime.



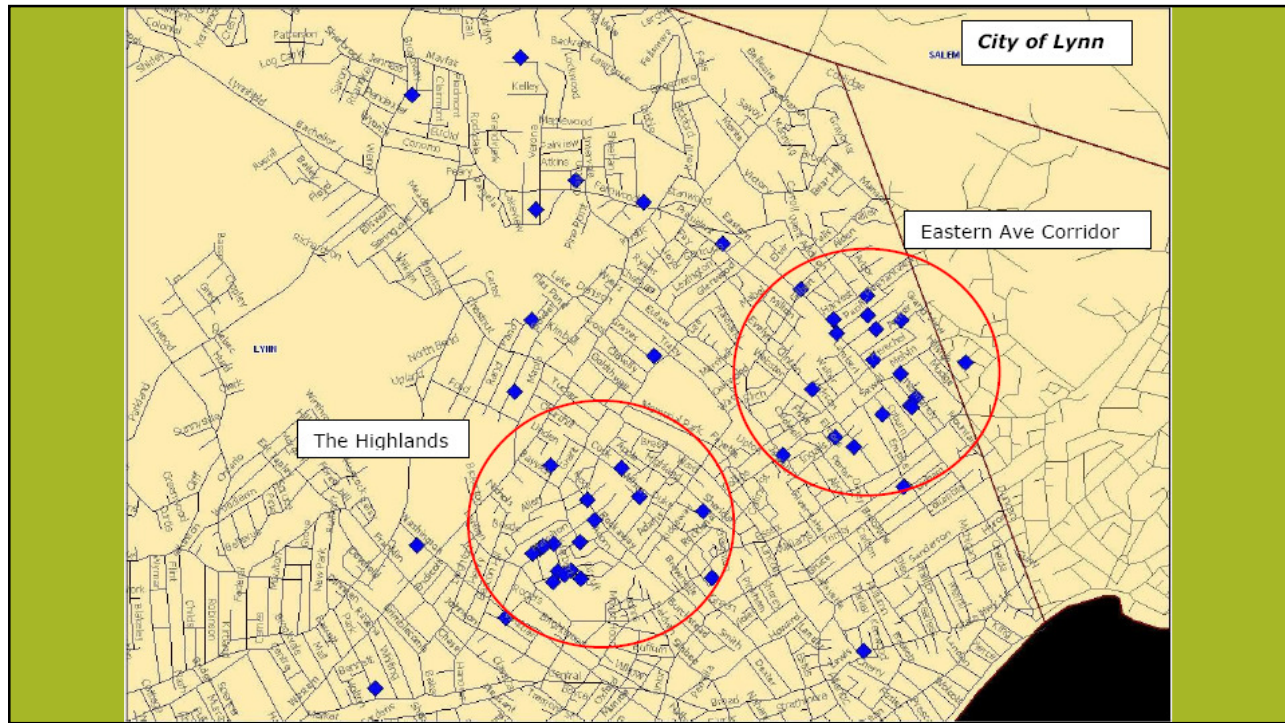
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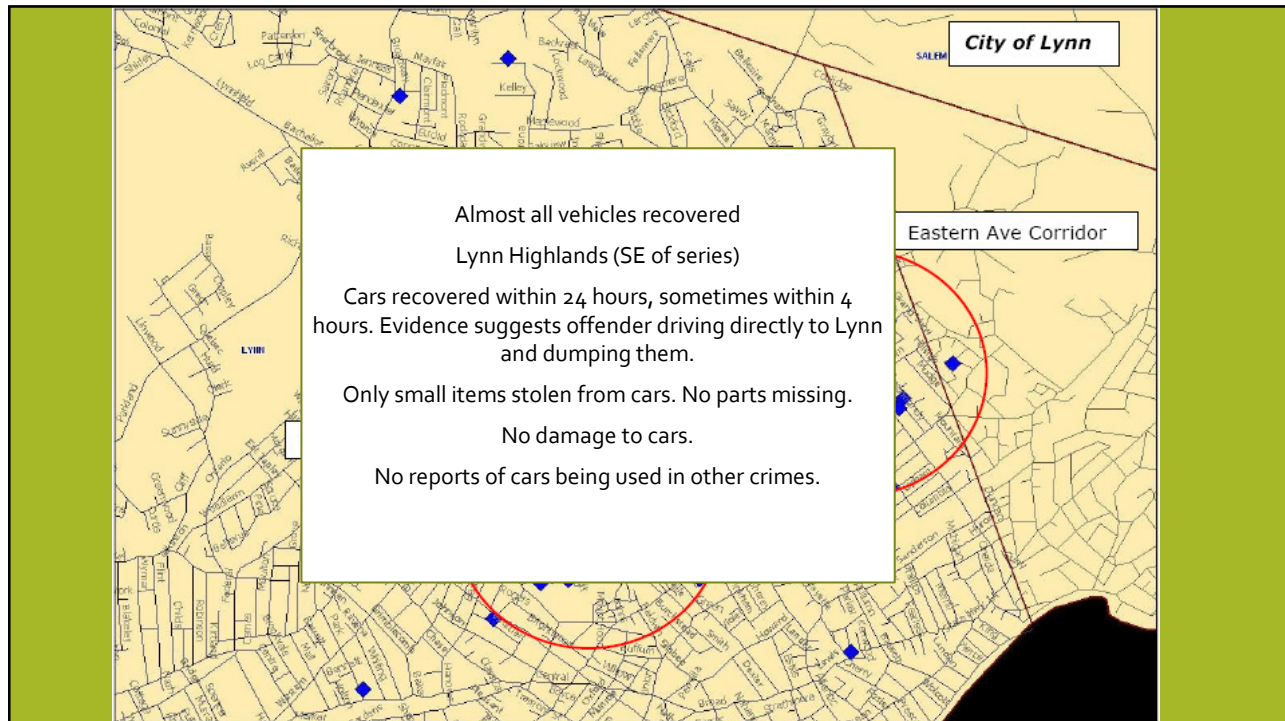
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9



10

## How: *Modus operandi*

- Location of entry
- Method of entry
- Tools used
- Weapon used
- Property stolen
- Words spoken
- Injury inflicted
- Property damage
- Staging
- Undoing
- Signature



11

## *Modus operandi* questions

- How does the offender commit the crime?
- What's unusual about the way the crime was committed?
- What's unique about the way the crime was committed?
- Do these factors tell you anything about the offender's characteristics?
- Do these factors help lead to a response strategy?
- Are all of the offender's actions necessary to commit the crime (signature)?

**USING  
LATIN  
PHRASES  
TO LOOK  
SMART  
IS MY  
MODUS  
OPERANDI**

12

## Criminal profiling



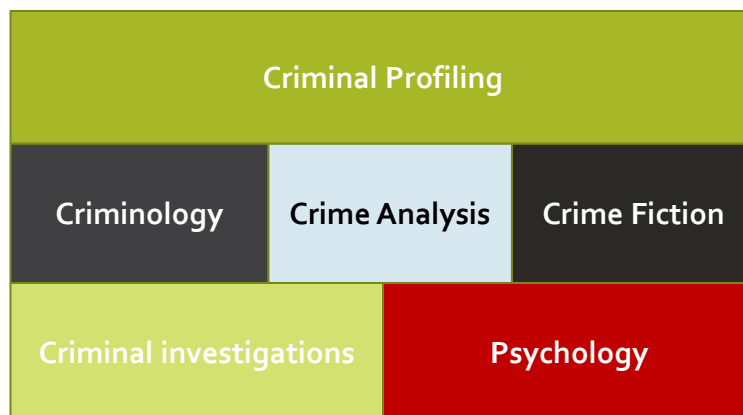
An assemblage of information, some known, **some inferred**, about a crime, crime series, person, group, or location, with the goal of providing information to support offender apprehension, offender conviction, offender rehabilitation, and crime prevention.

Known offender

Unknown offender

13

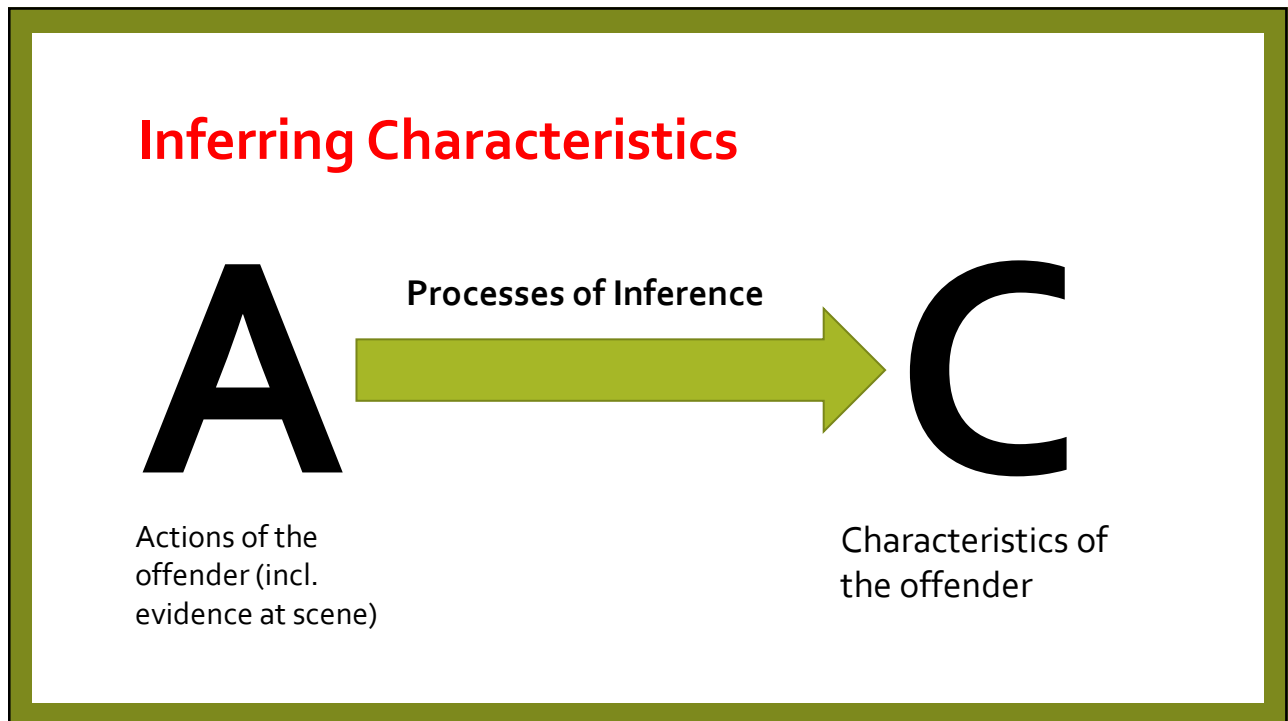
## The building blocks of criminal profiling



14



15



16



## Elements of "A"

- FBI's four elements
  - Choice of the victim
  - Crime scene and evidence
  - Organization level
  - Pre- and post-offense behavior
- Five Ws of crime analysis
- What the offender did *not* do

Identify visual clues at crime scene

## Things to consult

- Physical evidence
- Victim testimony
- Witness testimony
- Recordings/Imagery
- Contextual information

Phot  
time

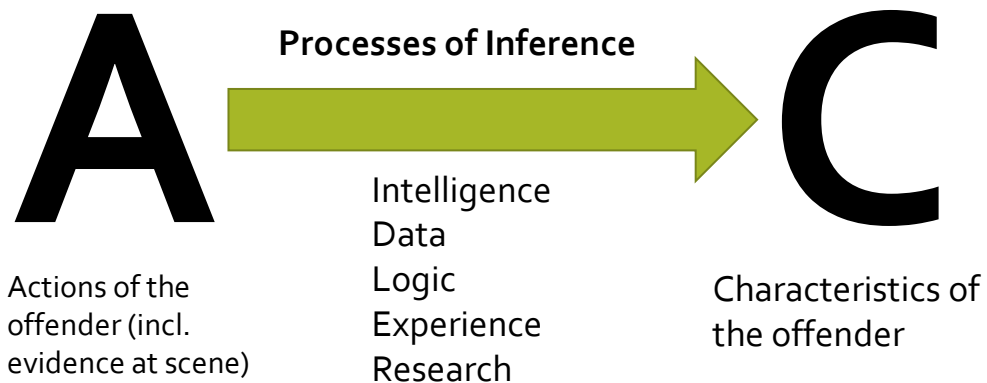
17

## Elements of "C"

- Physical characteristics
  - Race
  - Sex
  - Age range
  - Build
- Social characteristics
  - Family background
  - Marital status
  - Employment
  - Criminal history
- Psychological characteristics
  - Mental illness
  - Sexual maturity
- Behavior before, during, and after crime
- Motivations
- Geographic location
  - Residence or home base
  - Before or after crime
- Future plans
  - Likelihood
  - Specific location or target
- Likely reactions
  - To various interventions
  - To interrogation

18

## Inferring Characteristics

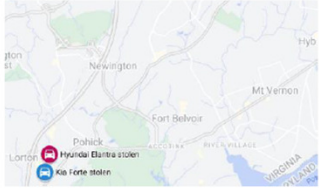


19

## How to get better at profiling

- Always ask what you might infer from the know facts
- Merge crime and intelligence capabilities, improve access
- Learn more about crime, criminals, and their environment
  - How can a car with an electronic fob be stolen?
  - Why do thieves target catalytic converters?
  - What are the origins of drugs sold in your community?
- Ensure that you have open access to your RMS data in its original relational form
- Get plugged into a service that allows you full-text access to research articles
- Practice your [logical inference skills](#)
- Show products to officers and investigators before publication

20




2023-1290048 – Rock used to shatter front glass door

2023-1330028 – Appears to be hammer strikes to the front glass door

**Note – The City of Alexandria and City of Falls Church have had incidents with a similar MO**

Incident	Date	Time	DOW	Crime	Address	Patrol Area	Vehicle/Business
2023-1290034	05/09/2023	23:00 - 05:00	Tuesday	Auto Theft	9807 Hagel Cir	641	Kia Forte
2023-1290048	05/09/2023	04:34	Tuesday	Burglary	5707 Seminary Rd	421	Tobacco Mart
2023-1330066	05/13/2023	02:00 - 10:20	Saturday	Auto Theft	7815 Lewis Chapel Cir	640	Hyundai Elantra
2023-1330028	05/13/2023	02:40	Saturday	Burglary	6440 Brandon Ave	610	Tobacco & Vape
2023-1330042	05/13/2023	02:39	Saturday	Auto Theft	7026 Rhoden Ct	600	Hyundai Elantra
2023-1330060	05/13/2023	Unknown (Overnight)	Saturday	Burglary	6127D Backlick Rd	610	Tobacco Plus

FCPD has had 3 recent incidents of Tobacco Store burglaries involving suspects arriving in a stolen vehicle. 2 Hyundai Elantras and 1 Kia Forte were stolen, all with the ignition punched and the right rear window shattered, consistent with the MO of the "TikTok Challenge." These stolen vehicles were subsequently driven to Tobacco Stores where the front glass window of the business was shattered and various vape products were taken. In two incidents, surveillance video shows suspects are a group of 4 males, likely juveniles. If you have any information or have similar incidents, please contact Crime Analyst Joanna Baranello.



**Crime Analyst Joanna Baranello**  
6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale VA 22003  
O: 703-333-3549  
Joanna.Baranello@fairfaxcounty.gov

Created: May 17, 2023  
Case Number: Multiple - see matrix


April 2023

21

## Series interruption

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**Cessation**



**Resumption**

**Adaptation**

- Sees police officer
- Nearly gets caught
- Has to exert more violence than usual
- Suffers injury
- Loses a tool or weapon
- Encounters unexpected resistance
- Sees media coverage of pattern

22

## Displacement and Diffusion

Type	Displacement	Diffusion
Geographic	Robbers move to other streets outside of the target zone	Street robberies decrease both inside and outside of the target zone
Temporal	Robbers switch to the daytime in the target zone	Both daytime and nighttime robberies decrease
Target	Robbers strike commercial establishments instead	Both street robberies and commercial robberies decrease
Tactical	Robbers adapt by purse snatching instead of "mugging" targets	All types of thefts and robberies decrease in target zone
Crime type	Former robbers switch to shoplifting from stores	All types of crime decrease in the target zone

23

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24

# Thank you!

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Crime analysis	Hot spot policing
Data access	DDACTS
Data management	COMPSTAT
Crime mapping	Pattern intervention
Crime statistics	Problem-solving

  
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