

SECURITY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Robert L. O'Block

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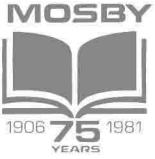
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Illustrated

The C. V. Mosby Company

ST. LOUIS • TORONTO • LONDON 1981



A TRADITION OF PUBLISHING EXCELLENCE

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Printed in the United States of America

The C. V. Mosby Company
11830 Westline Industrial Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63141

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

O'Block, Robert L., 1951-
Security and crime prevention.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Crime prevention. 2. Industry—Security measures. I. Title.

HV7431.O24 364.4 81-1353

ISBN 0-8016-3738-4 AACR2

VT/D/D 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 01/A/024

Foreword

Professor O'Block's *Security and Crime Prevention* is a text that has been needed for some time. Rising crime rates of all types have brought an awareness to both the public and criminal justice professionals that crime prevention is the only logical approach to this problem. There are two main reasons that crime prevention is the preferred antidote to crime. First, crime prevention is economical. With restricted local, state, and federal government budgets, it is neither practical nor possible to control crime by placing hundreds of police officers in every neighborhood. It is practical and possible however to utilize the skills and talents of citizens in an organized manner, for example, neighborhood watch programs, to help prevent crime. Crime prevention is also more economical from another standpoint involving crimes against businesses. Most consumers would agree that it is better to take steps to reduce losses resulting from shoplifting, bad checks, credit card fraud, and employee theft rather than pass those losses on to consumers in the form of higher prices.

Second, crime prevention techniques reduce opportunities for individuals to exhibit criminal behavior. This is perhaps the most important aspect of crime prevention, since an overwhelming majority of crime is thought to involve semiskilled or unskilled amateurs, and center around opportunities created by the victims themselves. Individuals unconsciously or unknowingly invite crime through careless behaviors such as leaving doors unlocked, flashing cash and credit cards in public, leaving car keys in the ignition, and venturing onto dark and unfamiliar streets alone. These behaviors create or increase vulnerabilities to crime, thus making people more prone to criminal attack. On the other hand, crime prevention strategies can decrease the risk of being victimized, without confinement within a self-created police state.

As intelligent and reasonable citizens, we know that crime prevention is both the most logical and economical approach to take in crime control. The preventive approach to crime uses common sense in many respects and is seemingly so simple and practical that, in the past, it was often overlooked as

an element essential to crime control. However, those who are familiar with crime prevention will not assert that it is easy to implement, that it can be achieved overnight, or that any preventive technique or device is foolproof. But we know that some tenets are essential to the success of any crime prevention program. These are:

1. The police must be the pivotal point for all crime prevention programs.
2. Citizens must carry out most crime prevention activities. A crime prevention program that does not require citizen involvement and participation will most probably fail.
3. While crime prevention can be one of the most effective tools for police-community relations, this should not become an end in itself.
4. All police officers must become experts in crime prevention techniques; all citizens must become involved in crime prevention activities.
5. Public awareness and education are essential to citizen involvement. Public education programs and materials must be developed professionally and must always reflect proven and practical experience.
6. A level and cool-headed attitude must permeate the crime prevention approach. Creating a state of public panic about crime would be ineffective and counterproductive.

Security and Crime Prevention has recognized the principles involved in crime prevention and has thoroughly discussed many, many types of community programs that have been successful in reducing crime. Also expertly addressed are crime prevention theories and specific steps citizens and businesses can take to reduce opportunities for victimization. Also presented is a much needed discussion of the role of criminal justice agencies in preventing crime. Perhaps most importantly, information gleaned from the use of this well-rounded text provides criminal justice educators, students, and professionals, as well as individual citizens, with the means to curb the increase of crime in their communities. Action taken by these groups to prevent crime can be more important than the combined efforts of all government workers and elected officials in the country. Crime prevention strategies as described in this book provide people with the power to stop crime and to stop the economic loss and human suffering that result from crimes against property and violent crimes against people. We have the wisdom to prevent many of these crimes. The human agony, loss of years of hard work and savings, and loss of pride and confidence in ourselves and our communities provide the incentive to put this wisdom to work for us. Preventing crime in this country is not a goal set too high, nor is it a goal that is unachievable. But it will take the time and effort of millions of Americans and the persistence and compe-

tent leadership of criminal justice personnel to accomplish this goal. The payoff, however, will be great, perhaps much greater than one might first expect. This should be kept in mind as this book is used and as crime prevention programs are implemented throughout the nation.

L. D. Hyde

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Preface

This book is concerned with the security and safety of the community, our businesses, and individual persons. It is possible for security to be achieved through crime prevention activities. This book does not consider our criminal justice system as the sole answer to crime prevention. In fact, it probably has a less significant impact on crime than do the roles of the family, the school, and the individual citizen.

This book is divided into four major sections. The first section, *An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, covers the general nature of crime prevention, current theories of crime prevention, and the effect that the family, school, and peer groups play on both crime causation and crime prevention.

Section II, *Personal Crime Prevention*, examines measures that individuals can take to prevent crime and protect themselves, their families, and their homes from victimization. This section covers not only violent street crimes but also such nonviolent crimes as deceptive advertising, medical quackery, and various other frauds. This section also devotes an entire chapter to crime prevention for the elderly who may not be victimized as often as the under-65 age group, but, when victimized, suffer much more devastating effects.

Section III, *Business Crime Prevention*, looks at crime prevention for business with an in-depth examination of both internal and external security problems. Effects of corruption in both business and government are covered, as well as the use of security surveys and target hardening procedures.

Section IV, *Community-Based Crime Prevention*, examines environmental design, various community programs, the role and relationship of criminal justice agencies, and new directions in crime prevention in which a discussion of promising new ideas, approaches, and strategies on the forefront is included.

A variety of research techniques was utilized for this book, including a review of the literature, observation, and interviews with crime prevention officers, private security administrators, and convicted criminals. Some in-

formation, such as that included in the chapter on corruption, was necessarily obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. Included in this book are chapters that some of my behavioral science colleagues may feel are too practical, such as the chapters on personal and home security. To this criticism, my only hope is that these critics never have to suffer any of the traumas of victimization.

In 1936, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck of Harvard University wrote that the title of their book, *Preventing Crime*, was “frankly optimistic, and that some may regard it as unduly so.” As with this book 45 years later, crime prevention is still a goal for optimists, the same kind of optimists who have discovered the secrets of flight, the cure of diseases, and knowledge of the mysteries of the body and who are unraveling the secrets of the universe. To those of you who are the achievers in life, set your goals, go forward, and be optimistic in this endeavor.

Robert L. O'Block

Crime is a social problem that is interwoven
with almost every aspect of American life.
Controlling it involves improving the quality of family life,
the way schools are run, the way cities are planned,
the way workers are hired. Controlling crime
is the business of every American institution.
Controlling crime is the business of every American.

—*The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*

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Section I

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

Chapter 1

The nature of crime prevention

Before the trouble comes, advice obtain;
After it has come, advice in vain.

Those words by Joseph Zabara, a thirteenth century Spanish Hebrew physician and poet, are as true today as when they were written. This phrase truly reflects an attitude of prevention and alludes to the consequences if preventive measures are ignored. There has been an interest in preventing crime for at least 4,000 years as evidenced by an ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic, which advises young men how to stay out of trouble.¹ Mankind has long been concerned with the problem of crime and its prevention. Crime as a major social problem has been attacked through the years by a number of approaches; most of the emphasis has been on seeking causation, punishment, and correction.

Jails and penitentiaries have been overcrowded for decades and, as the 1921 writings of Kate O'Hare point out, the "crime wave" is nothing new:

Newspapers and magazines have been busy for the past few months discussing a disturbing social phenomena which they call the "crime wave." Judging from the reports of the press, crime has increased in the United States in an alarming manner during the last year. The jails are full, the criminal court dockets are overburdened and penitentiaries are crowded to capacity. Rare indeed is the newspaper that has not demanded more effective policing, more stringent laws, and more drastic penalties for the detection and punishment of crime.²

For many years the field of medicine has been trying to prevent disease. One might ask why a similar effort has not been applied to crime prevention. Unfortunately, there is still a great deal of emotionalism associated with crime, and this interferes with our ability to make unbiased decisions and to

¹Burma, John H., *How To Understand Criminology and Penology*. Girard, Kansas: Haldeman-Julius Publications, 1943, p. 1. Little Blue Book No. 1819.

²O'Hare, Kate Richards, *Crime and Criminals*. Girard, Kansas: Frank P. O'Hare, Haldeman-Julius Collection, 1921, p. 1.

4 *An interdisciplinary perspective*

conduct unbiased research. Crime is not merely a physical problem with one direct cause as are many illnesses. Crime involves complex emotional, psychologic, social, and environmental variables and, therefore, prevention is not simply a matter of developing a “vaccine” or “antidote” to crime.

The crime prevention movement in America is only now beginning to achieve a new permanence as increasing crime rates make more and more streets unsafe, and more and more courts and penitentiaries become overcrowded. Since crime is a *social* problem, the police are unable to contain the crime problem within a socially tolerable level by themselves. Therefore, alternatives to arrest, conviction, punishment, and rehabilitation of criminals are being sought as methods of prevention. There are now many forces involved in crime prevention, as Fig. 1-1 demonstrates.

The general public still does not totally recognize that the causes of crime lay within such variables as societal structures, socioeconomic conditions, lack of self-discipline, methods of child-rearing, and the very home environment that parents provide for their children. Before it was realized that diseases are caused by bacteria and viruses, people employed witch doctors and medicine men to effect a cure by driving out evil spirits. Similarly, until the



Fig. 1-1. Approaches to crime prevention.

knowledge of crime causation filters down into the elementary school books and becomes a common basis of knowledge, we will continue to see a reactive approach to crime rather than the proactive approach of prevention. Any approach to dealing with crime other than prevention is self-defeating.

DEFINITIONS OF CRIME PREVENTION

There have been several definitions offered for crime prevention. It has been described as "any organized activity aimed at keeping unlawful behavior from occurring originally or keeping such behavior to a minimum and thus avoiding police intervention; or any organized activity aimed at deterring unlawful behavior."³ Akers and Sagarin define crime prevention as "actions taken to forestall crime beyond or instead of the threatening or the application of legal penalties."⁴ Empey has defined crime prevention as an attempt to: (1) identify those institutional characteristics and processes most inclined to produce legitimate identities and nonpredatory behaviors in people; (2) restructure existing institutions or build new ones so that these desirable features are enhanced, and (3) discard those features that tend to foster criminal behaviors and identities.⁵ The National Crime Prevention Institute defines crime prevention as "the anticipation, recognition and appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of some action to remove or reduce it."⁶ Vestermark and Blauvelt state, "prevention means, practically speaking, reducing the probability of criminal activity."⁷ Although there are slight variations of the definition of crime prevention, most of them are explained in goal-oriented language, that goal being the prevention of crime.

INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF CRIME PREVENTION

The field of crime prevention by its very nature transcends the bounds of any one discipline. It does not fall totally within the bounds of pure criminal justice since many concerns of security and crime prevention also include psychosocial, economic, and architectural aspects. Security and crime prevention are true eclectic subjects; criminology itself draws from all areas of

³Pursuit, Dan G., et al., editors, *Police Programs for Preventing Crime and Delinquency*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas, 1972, p. xi.

⁴Akers, Ronald L., and Sagarin, Edward, editors, *Crime Prevention and Social Control*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972, p. viii.

⁵Empey, Lamar T., "Crime Prevention: The Fugitive Utopia," in *Crime: Emerging Issues*, James A. Inciardi and Harvey A. Siegal, editors. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977, p. 104.

⁶"Understanding Crime Prevention." *The Practice of Crime Prevention*. Louisville, Ky.: National Crime Prevention Institute Press, Vol. 1, 1978, no. 1-2.

⁷Vestermark, Seymour D., Jr., and Blauvelt, Peter D., *Controlling Crime in the School: A Complete Security Handbook for Administrators*. West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker Publishing Co., Inc., p. 115.

society—science, education, law, religion, sociology, social work, political science, economics, and public administration.⁸

Crime prevention disciplines

Crime prevention must be approached in an interdisciplinary manner if it is to be effective. The contributions of the major fields involved in the crime prevention effort are listed in the following section.

Education. Early recognition of young students experiencing problems in school can help prevent juvenile delinquency. School-related difficulties are highly indicative of problems at home that interfere with learning and ability to complete school work. Learning disabilities or defects in the socialization process can also contribute to future delinquency.

In addition, criminal justice education must be increased and advanced at the college level. Improved training courses as well as advancements made regarding the academic understanding of various social problems can contribute to crime prevention.

Architecture. Architecture can play a role in crime prevention through the design of safer buildings using more crime-resistant materials. The importance of crime prevention measures in the incorporation of building and home designs must be realized by all architects.

Psychology. Psychology is making continuing contributions in the area of crime prevention by increasing our understanding of human behavior.

Criminal justice. As a new academic discipline, criminal justice is in the forefront of promoting crime prevention. Criminal justice is also critically examining the various components of our criminal justice system and promoting the upgrading of its personality.

Systems analysis. By directing a proper amount of attention toward a systems approach, research in the crime prevention area will be increased, thereby assuring that efforts and measures have been evaluated as to their effectiveness before being implemented. Therefore, programs and projects would have a demonstrated impact on crime and delinquency problems and would be undertaken with more confidence. Ineffective programs would be avoided without a waste of resources.

Law. Formulating laws that are in the public interest, expediting court processes, and establishing laws for the betterment of the citizenry are ways in which the discipline of law can improve crime prevention efforts.

Biology and medicine. By increasing our knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the human body and its reactions to various stimuli, and by

⁸Inciardi, James A., and Siegal, Harvey A., editors, *Crime: Emerging Issues*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977, p. 1.

coming forward as expert witnesses in cases of medical quackery, for example, biologists and medical personnel can do much to help prevent crime.

Electronics. The field of electronics has played a significant role in crime prevention through the development of security and protection devices that both enhance personal safety and protect physical structures.

Political science. Political scientists seek to identify political strategy and solutions to the crime problem usually by the allocation of resources.

Sociology. By broadening our understanding of society, its interactions, and processes, and using this knowledge to reduce the need and motivation of individuals to deviate, sociology has contributed much to crime prevention.

Crime prevention as a field of study and inquiry should not be limited to the most obvious crimes, such as burglary, robbery, and rape, but should also include the study of other ways through which individuals are criminally victimized. These include such nonviolent crimes as deceptive advertising, medical quackery, confidence games, corruption in government, restraint of trade, and efforts by professional associations to stifle competition and thereby criminally set artificial prices. The principles of prevention of crime in this book are meant to include those circumstances in which the individual is victimized by another individual, group, organization, business, or government, both violently and nonviolently.

ROLE OF PRIVATE INDUSTRY IN PREVENTION

Private security

The goal of private security has always been to prevent or deter crime, while the statutory goal of the police has been—and still is—to enforce the law. The job of private security personnel is not to apprehend anyone after a crime has been committed; they seek to prevent the crime from ever occurring. While it is true that police spend a major portion of their time in “preventive patrol,” the effectiveness of this procedure has recently been questioned, and prevention is still regarded as a secondary goal of law enforcement. Although many police chiefs have expressed interest in prevention, their efforts until now have been hampered by the lack of a suitable knowledge base. The private security industry will continue to play a critical role in crime prevention. Facilities such as nuclear power plants, as well as many other businesses and industries, must continue to be protected by the private security industry.

Insurance industry

The insurance industry can also be a major force in crime prevention. Both private security and the insurance industries have a vested interest in controlling crime. Further, each also has more potential financial resources