



CRC PRESS

William R. Bell

Practical Criminal Investigations *in* CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES



Practical Aspects of Criminal and Forensic Investigations Series

William R. Bell

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Investigations**
in
***CORRECTIONAL
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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my magnificent and beautiful wife, Sherry, who has stood by me during the good times and the bad times. What a great opportunity for me to tell the world that I love her with all my heart and remain totally crazy about her.

Preface

This book is an inside look into the art of criminal investigation as it relates to crimes committed within prisons. The target audience are detectives in prison towns and criminal investigators working within the prison system. People who currently work in prison systems, not necessarily as investigators but who are the first responders to crimes committed inside the prison walls, will also benefit from reading this book.

This is not a traditional text. It contains many actual case histories told from the investigator's point of view. The intent is to prepare officers and investigators to investigate felony crimes within prisons. This nontraditional approach is geared to enhance the interest of the reader. In these case histories the names of the victims and perpetrators have been changed, not to protect the guilty, but to keep the families of the victims and perpetrators from dredging up old nightmares. All of these criminals have been prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and remain behind bars.

Many people are responsible for the knowledge contained in this book, and I have tried to recognize all of them. Unfortunately, I cannot recall every school, seminar, or salty old street cop that has provided me with knowledge over the past 34 years.

Not all crimes committed in prisons are discussed in this book. What the reader will find, though, is that crime does not stop at the prison walls. This book attempts to visualize the difference between investigating a prison crime and a street crime. These differences are sometimes subtle, but greatly affect the outcome of an investigation.

Prison investigators are at a minimum and do not have the freedom to specialize in certain areas of law enforcement. They must be able to respond effectively to every crime imaginable, from a grizzly homicide to a complex fraud case. Prison crimes become very complex when the crimes involve many different players. These players range from the convict, the officers, and a variety of family to other civilian, soon-to-be convicts. Because of these complexities, I have added chapters on intelligence gathering, undercover operations, and the use of confidential informants.

Because the prison investigator will take a case from the beginning through prosecution and many times is the advisory witness for the prosecution, I have

added a chapter on court preparation and testimony. With help from district attorneys from the 11th Judicial District, we have put together an in-depth look at what a prosecuting attorney wants and needs for a successful prison prosecution.

Sit back and enjoy your trip into the world of prison investigations with the practical applications of investigating the most violent subculture in the world—the convict.

Because of my experience with the Colorado correctional system, many of the statistics, methods, and cases reflect that jurisdiction. However, most of the methods can be generally applied, and the appendix addresses key differences in other states.

Acknowledgments

I would like to recognize former Denver police Lt. Tom Haney for being my mentor. Tom gave me the inspiration to continue on with this work and was largely responsible for me sticking to my guns. Tom is a true friend and a true cop. Tom is currently an investigator for the Denver District Attorney's office and continues to serve and protect.

Whatever I say about Vernon Geberth can never be enough. If it were not for him, CRC Press would not have seen my book. Vernon, the master of real live murder mysteries, has accepted me into his practical investigations series, and I am profoundly privileged.

Norm Cooling, the assistant district attorney for the 11th Judicial District, not only supported this book, but lent his expertise in writing a chapter on what the district attorney expects from prison investigators. Norm has been handling prison prosecutions for many years and is considered an expert in that area.

Marty Barta, an 11th Judicial District assistant district attorney, assisted in the preparation of the chapter on court appearances. Marty also was responsible for handling prison prosecution.

Don Tremmel, a Las Vegas metro homicide detective, has been a lifelong friend and was responsible for introducing me to Vernon Geberth.

At the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC), I would like to thank John Suthers, the Executive Director, and Mike Rulo, the Inspector General, for their support during the writing of this book; my immediate boss, Chief Alex Wold of the Criminal Investigation Division II, for his support and assistance; John Lutenberg for his donation of K-9 photographs; Wally Gunnels Parmenter for her guidance in my career planning; Sgt. Ricky Conway and Officer Kelly Black for allowing the use of their names to case histories; and former correctional investigator and partner Pat Crouch for his knowledge, expertise, and extremely proficient backup during operations. Special thanks go to Warden "Bobby" Johnson whose urging, support, and friendship during the writing of this book was invaluable.

Michigan Department of Corrections Warden John Prelznik is also a friend and a mentor. John, who is noted as a profiler of serial killers, has lent his support and knowledge in learning to understand the criminal mind.

Thanks to all the officers from the many police departments that have kept me alive through my years, especially the ones who gave me knowledge and provided backup during many undercover operations. If I have forgotten any of you in this list, forgive me as I am considered by some as “older than dirt”:

Dearborn Police Department, Dearborn Michigan/Detroit Police Department, Detroit Michigan (especially 16th precinct narcs and the old stress unit)/Wayne County Sheriffs Department, Wayne County Michigan/Michigan State Police/Colorado Department of Corrections Investigators and SORT team/Canon City Police Department, Canon City Colorado/Fremont County Sheriffs Department, Colorado/Colorado Bureau of Investigations, Colorado (Pueblo, Denver, and Montrose offices)/Adams County Sheriffs Department, Colorado/Colorado Springs Police Department, Colorado Springs Colorado/Drug Enforcement Agency, Colorado Springs Colorado/Alcohol Tax and Firearms, Colorado Springs Colorado/Westminister Police Department, Westminster Colorado/Aurora Police Department, Aurora Colorado/Denver Police Department, Denver Colorado/Delta Police Department, Delta Colorado/Montrose County Sheriffs Office, Colorado/El Paso County Sheriffs Department, Colorado/Pueblo Police Department, Pueblo Colorado/Pueblo County Sheriffs Department, Pueblo Colorado.

I would like to thank Detective Sergeant Eric Cullum of the Dearborn Police Department, Sergeant James Rockey of the Dearborn Police Department, retired, and his wife Cindie Rockey for being there when I needed them. Only we know all they have done and I love them.

Special thanks to Becky McEldowney, Naomi Rogosin and Joette Lynch of CRC Press LLC for helping me through the red tape of the publishing world.

About the Author

Coming from a family whose involvement with law enforcement dates back to the Civil War, William Bell's own education and career spans more than 30 years. Greatly influenced by his father, a retired police inspector, he began with the Dearborn, MI, Police Department where his responsibilities included work in road patrol, SWAT, undercover narcotics, and pattern crime.

For nearly 20 years, the author has been employed by the Colorado Department of Corrections where he ultimately gained his expertise with the Criminal Investigation Division. He is noted for taking the investigation of prison crime into the streets.

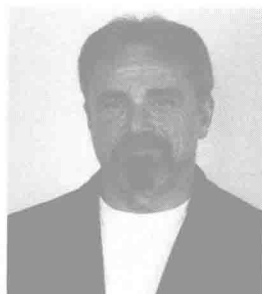


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Introduction to Prison Investigations

1

Crime Does Not Stop at the Prison Doors

Have you ever heard the expression, “Lock them up and throw the key away?” Many people think this when they consider the fate of the convicted felon. In truth, current statutes ensure that convicted felons spend more time in prison than in past years.

In past years convicted felons served only a small portion of their sentences in prison. Violent crime increased and the public demanded that these violent offenders be put away for a longer period of time. Legislators, answering this call, enacted laws that kept violent offenders in prison longer. Of course, with this added time served, the inmate population increased. This increase in inmates demands more prisons and more prison employees.

The layman may think that once the offender is locked up the community at large no longer has to worry about them. These laymen may feel that the convict is the problem of the prison and they have nothing to worry about. This is not the case. Crime does not stop at the door of the prison. Criminals do not cease their criminal activity because they are imprisoned. The crimes they commit while incarcerated are not always confined within the prison walls. Criminal activity may even increase upon incarceration. Today’s convict is more violent, more sophisticated, and more dedicated to crime than ever. Prisons are hotbeds of criminal activity and training grounds for the criminals. Inmates test, daily, their criminal skills against the department of corrections and the community.