

Interviewing Offenders for Problem Solving

September 13, 2024

Presenters



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Lieutenant
University of Cincinnati
Police Division



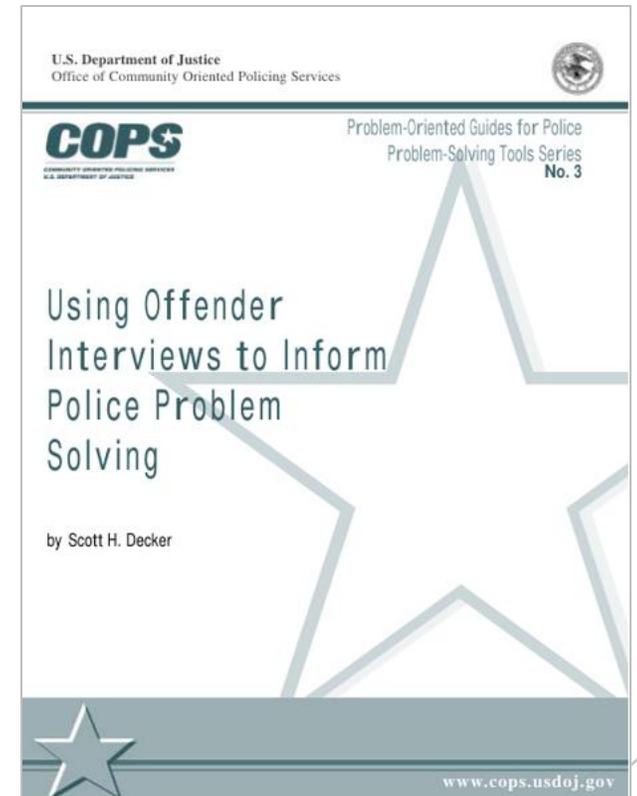
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Assistant Professor
University of Cincinnati



TL;DR

- Interviewing offenders should be integral to your POP projects
- Go to prison – That’s where the crime experts are
- Observe the environment
 - Who are the players?
 - How do they get to the board?
 - What are their goals?
 - What do they exploit to achieve their goals?



The Burglary Problem

About UC

- Public research university founded in 1819
- Main campus and two regional campuses
- 50,000 students and 6,000 faculty and staff
- Enrollment from 50 states and 114 countries
- 118 facilities across 476 acres



About UCPD

- 65 sworn officers
- 23 security officers
- 22 civilian employees
- 30,000 calls for service annually



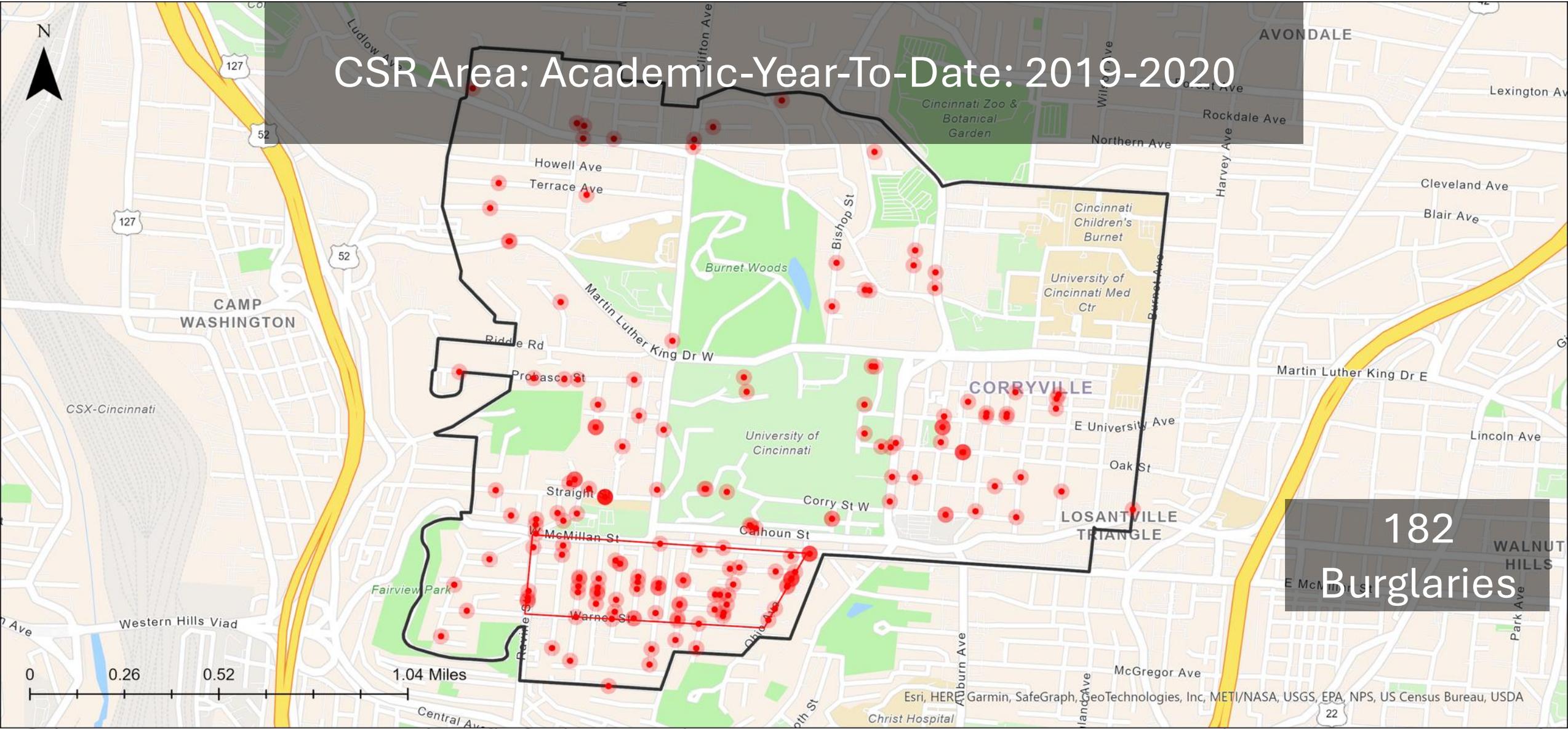
Jurisdiction



Concentration
of Student
Residence Area
(CSR)

CSR Area: Academic-Year-To-Date: 2019-2020

182
Burglaries



The Burglary Problem

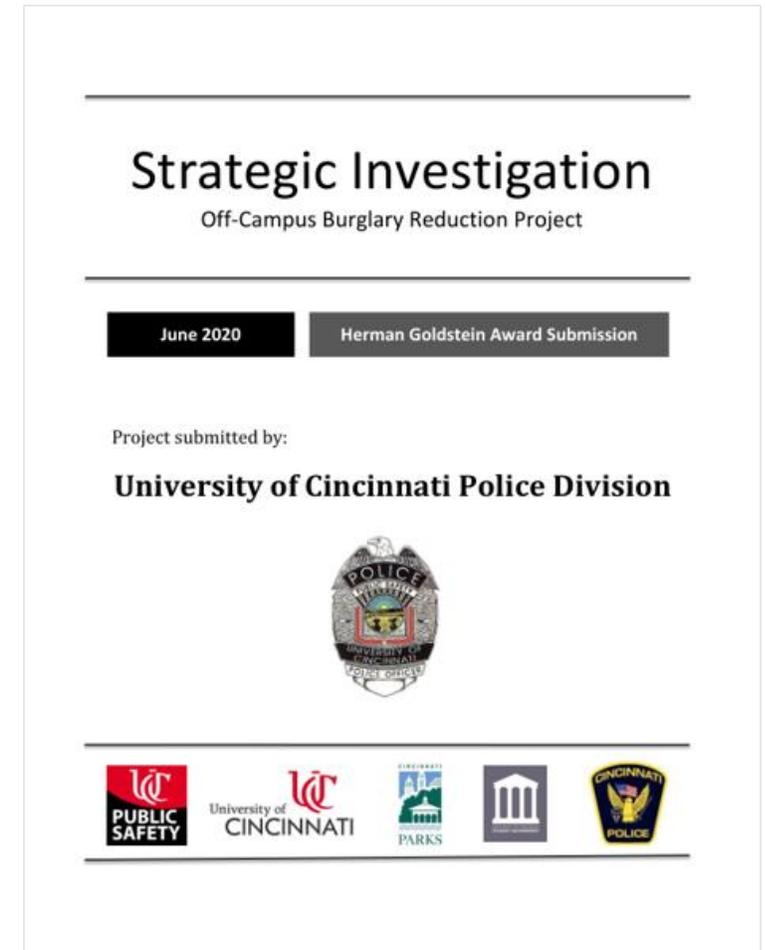
- Decades-long issue of students being victimized in off-campus housing
- Concentration on the south side of the CSR
 - 78 Reported Burglaries in a 12-month period
 - <0.5 sq mile area



What we did...

- Focused patrol and plus-one strategy
- Successfully reduced burglary in the CSR

Read the full report



A photograph of two men in dark suits and striped ties sitting at a long table in a prison interview room. The room has a metal grid wall in the background. The man on the left is looking towards the right, and the man on the right is looking towards the left. The text "Interviewing Burglary Offenders" is overlaid in white on the image.

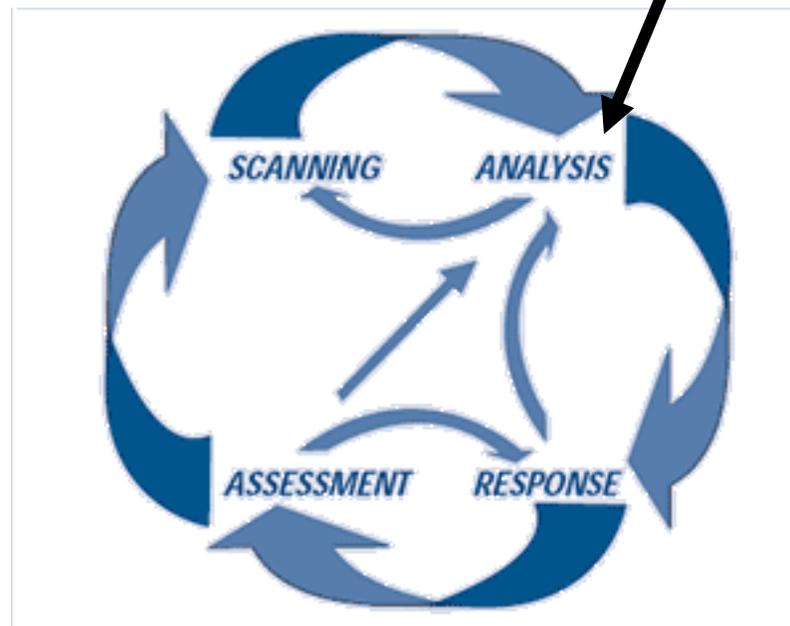
Interviewing Burglary Offenders

GO TALK TO PEOPLE!

Where this fits in SARA

- Analysis
 - You have already defined the problem
 - You need to figure out as much as you can about who, how, and why
- Observations
 - Transient community
 - Lack of Ownership

You are here.



Benefits of Offender Interviews

- Enhances existing problem-solving projects
 - Useful in the Analysis and Response Phase
- Generates new projects
- Improves officer safety
- Provides strategic and tactical knowledge



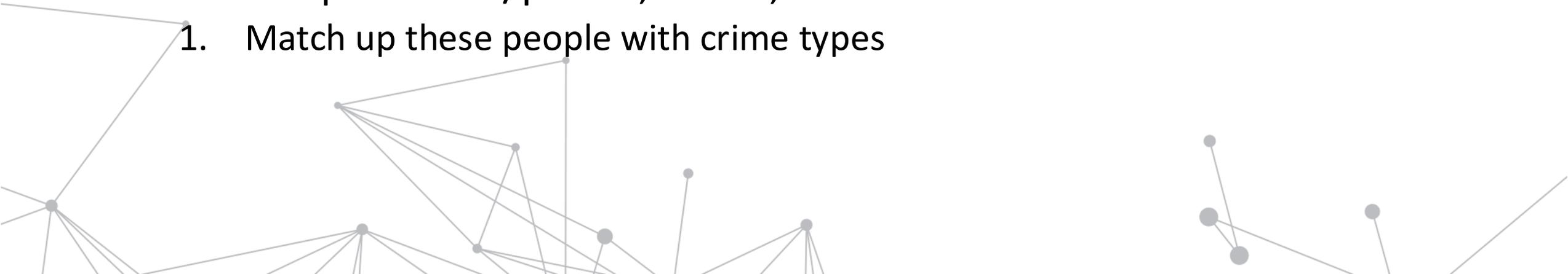
Misconceptions

- They would not be willing to talk to us
- They all had the same MO
- They all had the same motives
- The stairs



Steps for Identifying Offenders to Interview

1. Find arrestees/accomplices for similar crimes
 1. Look for people close to your problem
2. Narrow down to arrestees from your problem area
 1. This may not be possible, but it is still valuable to find people who commit the same types of crimes elsewhere.
 2. People with experience in your local environment are better
3. Search probation/parole, arrest, and corrections records
 1. Match up these people with crime types



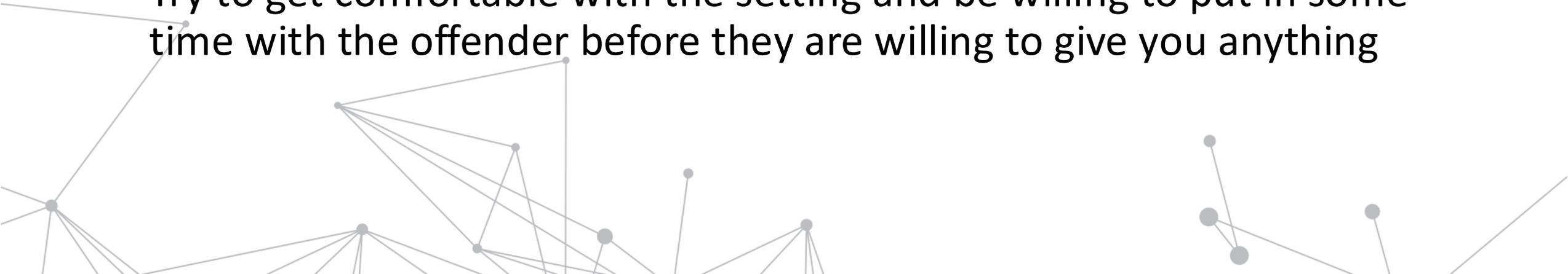
Pros and Cons of Jails VS Prisons

- Prisoners tended to be more open about their crimes and less nervous about talking to us
 - Most offenders have not been active in the area for a while
- Jails had people still active in the current environment
 - Less willing to talk about specifics



Interviewing in Prison – Tips

- Take a pen and paper
 - Some facilities will not allow you to take a computer, iPad, or mobile phone
 - A dedicated recording device is a must-have
- Act like you are getting on a flight
 - Empty your pockets before you get inside
 - Use the restroom before
- Try to get comfortable with the setting and be willing to put in some time with the offender before they are willing to give you anything



Interviewing in Prison – Tips

- Record as much as possible
- Systematically analyze your interviews
- Learn from each interview to make the next one go smoother



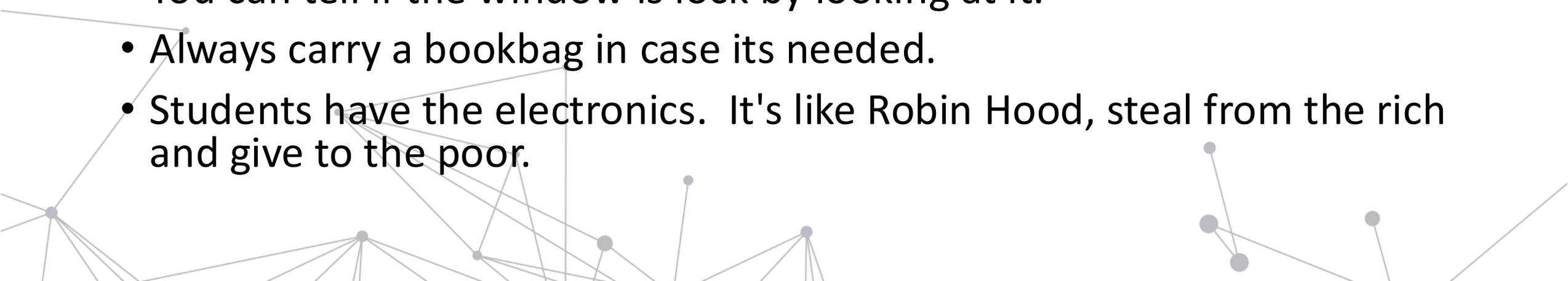
Creating Offender Analysis

Burglary Problem Solving Project Offender Profile Analysis													
Juvenile Delinquency	Criminal History	Substance Abuse	Mental Illness	Motivator	Fences Property	Transportation Means	Living Arrangements	Attractors to UC Area	MO	Victim profile	Items Taken	Pathways	Time
No	20's, drug trafficking, 30's 1st burglary, TFA, bike theft, (7) burglaries, caught every time	Alcohol & Cocaine	No	Drug Habit	Dope Boys	Foot & Car	With other drug users, Ravine & McMicken	Bars: Mac's, Cock & Bull, Dive Bar, meets students, they use too, learns where parties are, lots of drugs around UC	Acts alone, Knocks on door to see if anyone is home, 4/10 doors/windows open, prefers side, back of house, sometimes hides property in woods, has broken window	Locals: UC easy hit, knows V - routines, hits when V - at parties, V - unfamiliar with area & change addresses a lot	TV's, Game Systems, Electronics	Ravine St	Night, dark
Yes	Always in trouble as a juvenile, throwing rocks, breaking windows. Burglarizes	Crack cocaine	No	Drugs and money	He calls the drug dealer, they come pick him up. He has had them tell him, "if you come across, XXXX, call me."	Foot & Bus	Homeless, Bounces around from place to place with others that use drugs.	College students have the latest and best of everything. There's money to be made. It's like Robin Hood, steal from the rich and sell to the poor.	He walks around during the day so it looks like he belongs. He will make one pass down a street and can tell what house to burglarize. He will then enter the rear of a home from a street over. If a door or window is not open he will try somewhere else. He can do 50 in a month. He has done 1,500 easily over his life time.	If he sees mail in the mail box over multiple days its an indicator no one is home. White people leave their lights on and you can see in and through the house at everything they have. People usually leave in the evening after work or for school. Good time to burglarize. Looks for the dark houses.	Electronics and jewelry	He will walk up Clifton hill or Ravine from downtown or take the 17 bus	When it's dark, 7-10 PM because students are at class
Yes	1st arrested at 15 YOA	No, has smoked marijuana	No	Money, couldn't get a job to earn money. He needs a new pair of shoes or a phone	He sells the property on apps, like Let It Go or if he is downtown he will ask people on the street	Foot	Stayed in the Youth Shelter often and half way houses through JFS	Houses with items to steal in them. He won't steal from where he is living in Avondale or the hood.	He has been doing it for a while. He can tell if a window is locked or not by looking a which way the lock is turned. He will circle the block a couple of times to case a place out. He has committed burglaries by himself, but he prefers to do it with others. He has the person he cares least about with him knock on the door. He has been in a house up to an hour. He always carries a book bag. He has physically broken in using something from the property; rock, et.	He likes nice houses. He would look for basketball rims in the driveway or yard. It's an indicator they have kids, and have other things like electronics in the house. He will not burglarize houses in the area in which he lives.	TV's, laptops, designer clothes, game systems	Likes the nice homes in the Ludlow area	All times of the day

Offender Analysis Template

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What offenders told us

- Check the windows. One is always open.
 - You have to walk around and act like you belong in the area to blend into the community.
 - Homes are empty on Friday's and Saturday's because the kids are at the bars or other parties.
 - Most people downtown know UC is an easy hit.
 - You can tell if the window is lock by looking at it.
 - Always carry a bookbag in case its needed.
 - Students have the electronics. It's like Robin Hood, steal from the rich and give to the poor.
- 
- A decorative network diagram at the bottom of the slide, consisting of several grey dots connected by thin grey lines, forming a complex web-like structure.

02/13/2024 11:39:29 pm TUE



02/13/2024 11:38:41 pm TUE

Dr i v e w a y



02/14/2024 04:48:59 am WED



Porch

How we used what we learned

- Student Communications
 - Student Engagement Flyers
 - Social Media Posts
- Informed Directed Patrol Strategy

Since 2016
1,011 burglaries
have been reported around campus.
Nearly **ALL** were **preventable.**

Repeat offenders say the following about the UC neighborhood:

- They know the area better than you, and they often find students to be easy targets.
- Students often have valuable technologies, such as laptops and gaming systems.
- It can be easy to learn personal information by having causal conversations, allowing them to get a sense of where students live, and how long they'll be gone.
- They "knock and snatch." Burglars will knock on your door to see if someone is home. If someone answers, they will make up a reason to be there.
- Students often leave their doors and windows unlocked.

Know your area, know your neighbors

- Meet your neighbors. Know who they are and help each other keep an eye on the neighborhood.
- Ask neighbors to keep a close watch on your home if you'll be gone.
- Call the police if you see something suspicious.

Lock your doors and windows

This is one of the easiest and effective ways to reduce your risk of burglary.



The above map shows burglaries reported near campus from 2016 to 2019.

Conclusion

- Offender interviews provide unique insights
- Bridges gap between police and researchers
- A valuable tool for strategic problem-solving
- Requires careful planning and execution



Thanks for Listening!!

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