

**PART 11**

# DETECTIVE PERSPECTIVES

## ON CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE

### **PART 11: BALANCING PEOPLE, PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGY**

**MURDER IS UNIQUE IN THAT IT ABOLISHES THE PARTY IT INJURES, SO THAT SOCIETY HAS TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THE VICTIM AND ON HIS BEHALF DEMAND ATONEMENT OR GRANT FORGIVENESS; IT IS THE ONE CRIME IN WHICH SOCIETY HAS A DIRECT INTEREST.**

- W. H. Auden poet & critic (1907–1973)

Just as each leg of the three-legged stool depends on the other two legs to carry their part of the load, a properly balanced combination of people, processes, and technology is needed to solve crime in today's society. Finding the right combination of people, processes, and technology and applying it in a properly balanced manner requires a deliberate and collaborative effort on the part of the CGI cross-jurisdictional team (e.g., police, forensic personnel, prosecutors).

**GAGLIARDI ARGUES THAT THE PRODUCTIVITY OF BALLISTICS UNITS CAN BE ENHANCED BY ‘FINDING THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF PEOPLE, PROCESSES, AND TECHNOLOGY’. OUR ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE SPD’S FIREARMS UNIT SUGGESTS THAT THE ADOPTION OF NEW PEOPLE, PROCESSES, AND TECHNOLOGY WAS ASSOCIATED WITH A RAPID AND SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY AS MEASURED USING CONFIRMED BALLISTIC HITS.**

- (Edward Maguire et al)

Placing public interest at the forefront of the discussion and decision-making process will shift the team’s perspective from an internal focus to an external focus. An external focus will cause the team members to think differently about potential solutions, rather than approaching the problems from their own internal perspectives. Impediments, such as inter-agency politics and “turf protection” tend to fade when the discussion is redirected externally to protecting the public. Allowing these obstacles and introspective intentions to upset the proper balance will eventually cause the three-legged stool to collapse.

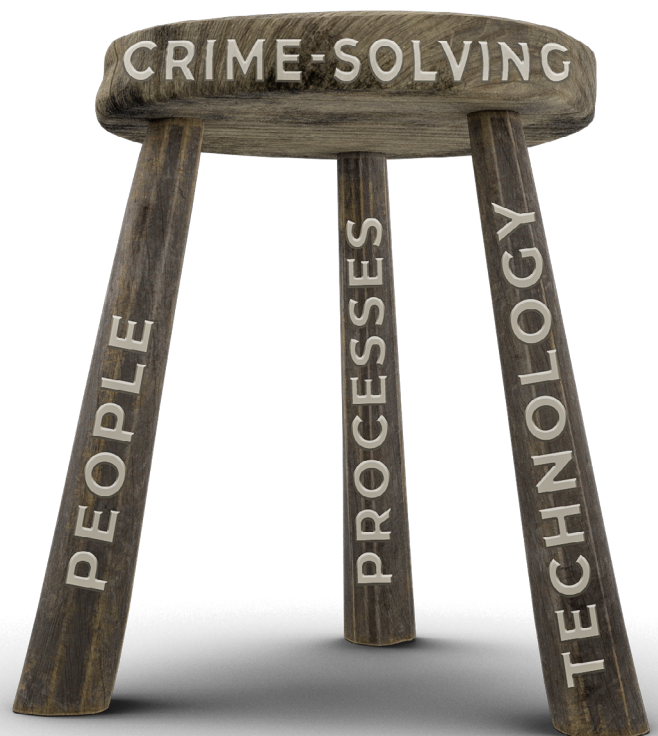
### **BALANCING THE STOOL**

A simple but effective method for helping a cross-jurisdictional team balance the people, processes, and technology needed to develop a

CGI strategy, based on best practices - such as those identified in this series - involves the use of three flip-charts.

**CHART ONE—PROCESSES:** On this chart list the proposed new actions or tactics the team members believe need to be part of the new CGI protocol. For example, the test-firing of all seized crime guns for NIBIN processing.

**CHART TWO—PEOPLE:** On this chart list the people the team members believe are needed to carry out the listed processes, according to the type of skill required to execute the process. For example, the team members might estimate that to implement the proposed protocol of test-firing all recovered crime guns for NIBIN processing – based upon current rates of recovery - would require two additional firearm examiners and three NIBIN lab technicians.



**CHART THREE—TECHNOLOGY:** On this chart list the systems and tools that the team believes will be required for use by the people who will perform the processes. This chart can also be used to consider technology solutions which have the potential to speed up processes and help make people be more productive. The introduction of new technology can often reduce the number of new people required.

### WORKING THE CHARTS

The following is a glimpse into how one working group found a way to sustain the comprehensive submission and processing of NIBIN CGI by “working the charts”. Some of the cross-jurisdictional team members listed the requirement to test-fire all “crime guns” recovered in the county for NIBIN processing on their process chart.

On the people chart, one team member estimated that the affected forensic laboratory would need at least five additional specially-trained personnel to perform the test-firing and data entry. The team immediately reached a consensus that the hiring of five additional resources was highly unlikely. On the other hand – absent another solution - the new process to test-fire all recovered crime guns for NIBIN processing would be unsustainable without the required number of people to do it.

As they fixated on the three charts, they noticed that the technology chart was blank. That raised the question of whether or not some type of

technology could help reduce the requirement for the five additional resources needed to test-fire the recovered firearms and process them through NIBIN.

The question of technology, initiated a discussion among the team to understand more about the need to hire five additional lab personnel to conduct the process under consideration. They learned that the test-firing process was viewed by some members of the team as something that could only be done at the laboratory and therefore the lab would need more people. Some innovative out-of-the-box thinking on the part of the team led to the recognition that advances had been made in portable test-firing systems that were safe, smaller, and less costly than a stationary water tank currently in the lab.

The team considered a solution that would use portable test-firing devices to remove that process outside of the lab. All they needed for a NIBIN entry was a fired cartridge case so they wouldn't need access to a water tank. Furthermore the test-firing could be conducted by the police range officers, currently working across the county, who were highly experienced in the handling of firearms. This action would remove the test-fire burden from the lab. The lab would then be responsible for only one part of the new process—the entering of the test-fired exhibits into the NIBIN database.

Based on a revised workload estimate, it was determined that the lab would only need to hire one new employee to keep up with the data entry rather than five—a number that would prove much more achievable for a sustainable solution. That’s exactly what they did.

One ground-rule that kept all members of the cross-jurisdictional team actively engaged in constructive and innovative thinking, was established at the beginning of the exercise. It assured all team members that unless a suggestion requiring significantly more effort on the part of one team member’s group - could be balanced in terms of people and/or technology - the proposal would fail. For two of the key team members, it removed the fear of being “dumped on” with more work and no people to do it. They uncrossed their arms and moved their chairs back - closer to the table.

In summary, the people involved must embrace cross-jurisdictional TEAMWORK, their processes or TACTICS should be policy-driven and measured, and the data generated from the TECHNOLOGY systems in use must be layered and leveraged. The CGI produced from all of these efforts must be analyzed and disseminated to investigators timely - to be of the most value for not only solving violent crimes but preventing future ones as well.



**NEXT UP ON DETECTIVE PERSPECTIVES:**  
**The final installment, Part 12 of 12: Are You a Champion, a Leader or Both?**

#### SOURCES:

1. P. GAGLIARDI, THE 13 CRITICAL TASKS: AN INSIDE-OUT APPROACH TO SOLVING MORE GUN CRIME, 3RD ED. (COTE ST-LUC, QC: ULTRA FORENSIC TECHNOLOGY INC., 2019)
2. EDWARD R. MAGUIRE ET AL., TESTING THE EFFECTS OF PEOPLE, PROCESSES, AND TECHNOLOGY ON BALLISTIC EVIDENCE PROCESSING PRODUCTIVITY. POLICE QUARTERLY, 19(2), 2015, 199-215. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1177/1098611115618374](https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611115618374)

