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Victim Selection Procedures Among Economic Criminals: The Rational Choice Perspective

DERMOT WALSH

Editors’ Note

There are three chapters dealing with robbery in this volume, and we are now beginning to know almost as much about this crime as about burglary. In this chapter Dermot Walsh performs two important tasks: First, he contrasts the decision-making activities of commercial burglars and robbers, and second, he paints a vivid picture of the nature of the criminal’s sources of information and the way in which this is handled during the processes of assessment and planning which precede the criminal event. His starting point is the distinction between normative and bounded rationality, which is a persistent theme throughout this volume. Walsh goes on to report on the results of his retrospective interviews with imprisoned burglars and robbers about their techniques of victim/target selection and rejection. Although his data indicate differences in decision making both within burglary and robbery as broad crime categories, and between burglars and robbers—results that bear out the need for crime-specific analyses—some of his most interesting findings relate to characteristics common to both. He provides a fascinating sketch of the subterranean "knowledge market" where "leakmen" and "knowledge brokers" peddle information about likely opportunities to supplement that already gathered by the criminal through personal observation during his or her daily routine and via the social networks of family, work, or leisure. Walsh’s description of the stages of assessment and planning—the emergence of potential schemes and the exploration of their viability through negative thinking and flaw hunting—have much in common with the methods adopted by Carroll and Weaver’s expert shoplifters to discount situational deterrents by immediately itemizing facilitators. More generally, these techniques suggest the operation of information-processing strategies (the "editing" activities of prospect theory; contingent processing; "satisficing") discussed in part 2 of this volume. The discussion of attitudes to risk, the importance of previous experience, and the roles of luck and fatalism provide pointers to how sudden hazards during commission of the crime (and prior anxieties about these possibilities) may be handled. Similar proportions of Walsh’s samples of commercial burglars and robbers
undertook some degree of planning (cf. also Feeney, this volume), but robbers claimed significantly more determination than burglars (54% to 11%) to carry out a particular crime; this finding may explain the fact that twice as many of the former (48% to 24%) admitted to having been drunk or drugged at the time of their offenses.

Introduction: Contrasting Attitudes to Rationality

When the robbers and burglars interviewed for the present study were discussing their crimes what was very noticeable was that those who felt that they had behaved quite irrationally in their last crime were happy to say so and did not try to conceal their foolishness. For example, in a case of robbery and kidnap:

We were on the way home, coming out. He was coming out of the Kentucky Fried Chicken, took him to the beach four to five hundred yards away. Knew we should not do it, but we were that far gone ... no masks . . . told him my name! Took him to the beach, right by a Securicor security place.

There were others, however, who were operating on quite a different basis, apparently as rationally as possible:

Knew what I was going for. Securicor van ... carry a maximum of £15,000 in one bag ... by deduction ... weigh the factors. Watch different supermarkets in turn, area, availability of transport, access, number of people. Where their weak link is, one bag traveling at a time, shop floor or just before they come out of the shop. Right set of circumstances occur two to three times a week, firms don't bank every day. Going over everything I've planned, looking for possible failures, trying to come up with new plans if necessary.

Differing Conceptions of Rationality

By rationality is meant activities identified by their impersonal, methodical, efficient, and logical components. Perhaps it would help to start by specifying three of the typical law enforcement assumptions about the rationality of economic criminals as opposed to those who commit personal crimes, where the object is not primarily financial gain. One assumption is that such criminals operate on a utilitarian basis of pleasure and pain calculation. Hence increasing the pain through severity of legal sanction must surely diminish the prevalence of the activity, implying that economic criminals can be manipulated by a clinical calculation of sanction. Two other assumptions are, however, inconsistent with this: (a) that such criminals are not always rational (if they were, it is argued, they would not be content with the small gains they so often make through crime); and (b) that they are not rational because they get caught (if they were rational they would supposedly get
away with the crime). This then typically leads on to a discussion of the supposed rationality of those who evade capture, seeing them as a quite separate, more intelligent category. Yet it is possible that such people, far from being a superior, separate group, are in fact merely part of the wider whole who evade capture at timepoint A and fail to do so at timepoint B.

Generally in criminological theorizing a hard typological line has been drawn in the past (for example, Clinard and Quinney, 1967; Gibbons, 1968) between the rational criminal and the irrational one; this distinction is usually made on the basis of type of target opted for. Thus, Letkemann’s (1973) safebreakers, Sutherland’s (1956) professional thieves, Einstadter’s (1969) armed robbers, and Laver’s (1982) terrorists are seen as highly rational and calculating in comparison with drunks, vandals, shoplifters, or joyriders, and we are invited to accept a division between professionals and thrillseekers.

In contrast, most of Maguire’s (1982) house burglars were seen as neither professional nor amateur, but what he termed “middle-range” (1982:167) criminals, characterized by short-term specialization. Maguire also pointed out (1982:81) that professionalism is not always associated with specialization (competent habitual offenders may vary their activities), and he concluded by saying that the language used gives a false impression of rationality, and that gambling is a better model to use to describe burglary than formal rationality.

Bennett and Wright (1984) described the offender as aware of choosing to offend and commonly planning the offense, but only rational in the limited sense of what seems reasonable to the offender at the time, given the predicament he or she is in. (One might ask whether this is not all that might be expected.) Bennett and Wright argued that costs and rewards are not balanced in the case of any particular offense, nor in the case of alternative courses of action—for example to stay in, or to go out and burgle—and they pointed out that this does not match up with what the doctrine of deterrence requires. Bennett and Wright prefer the concept of limited rationality, in which it is not presumed that offenders weigh all the relevant factors every time an offense is contemplated, and in which other factors (moods, motives, moral judgments, perceptions of opportunity, laziness, alcohol and narcotics consumed, the effect of others, and their attitude to risk) apparently unrelated to the immediate decision often take over. They concluded (1984:152) that offenders are behaving rationally as they see it at the time, but that what might be perceived as rational on one occasion might not be so perceived on another.

There is an obvious confusion here (cf. Bennett and Wright) between utilitarianism as a doctrine on the one hand, and rationality as a means on the other. For example, it is perfectly possible for someone to be behaving rationally, that is, methodically, efficiently, impersonally, and so on, and yet not be behaving in a utilitarian way. Bennett and Wright
are denying that burglars use utilitarianism, and they make an implicit distinction between (a) what is objectively rational (which would automatically exclude burglary), and (b) rationality as defined by the actor at the time. They argue that burglars exhibit only the latter and hence are to be accused of "limited rationality." Such a distinction denies the salience of an individual's assessment to himself or herself, whereas, of course, in the sociology of deviance it has long been accepted that actors nearly always see their own behavior as rational; it is merely the adjudicators who disagree.

Rationality and Risk

Much more, however, has to be said about the nature of the risk that the economic criminal is up against. It may well be that even with the use of great rationality many would still be caught (and commonly, because of this, be seen as irrational), because of the nature of the risks, accidents, and errors that are an inevitable feature of planned nonconformity.

If we ask how far can risk be controlled by rationality, the answer is not "totally," but only, "quite well." The human predicament remains uncertain, and rationality does not invariably work in the ordinary noncriminal world, for example, in business and commerce. Making a parallel with the intense rationality of modern army special service groups such as the Commandos, the Parachute Regiment, and the Special Air Service, we notice frequent mission failures due to the nature of the risks built into the objective. For example, the use of glider-borne troops against occupied Norway in 1942 (Operation Freshman) failed totally despite tight planning and resulted in all personnel being killed. Yet such failure does not mean we deny rationality. We are instead prepared to accept the role of risk (weather conditions, pilot error, and so on) in this type of event.

From Wellington and Napoleon onward, military commanders have realized that rationality is not always enough and have attached great importance to such things as luck and boldness. Following this parallel a trifle further, one risk-handling technique in small-scale military attacks, apart from rationally engineering the element of surprise, is to wait for an opportunity and snatch at it (this is the kind of behavior exhibited by those who win the Victoria Cross or the Distinguished Service Order).

Present Research: Aims and Methods

I have previously written on shoplifting and house burglary as examples of economic crime, both to draw attention to the threefold interaction between offender, victim, and event in the production of crime and to
highlight the process of victim selection (Walsh, 1978, 1980). The present investigation further pursues the issue of victim selection, but for more serious economic crimes (commercial burglary and robbery), drawing more heavily on offenders’ verbatim accounts.

Commercial Burglars

Two small groups were drawn from a local prison at an interval of 6 months. The men chosen were all those in the prison at the time whose last offense was for burglary of commercial premises (not houses). Those who agreed to take part and were interviewed totaled 45. Significantly, the refusal rate varied depending upon who asked for the offender’s cooperation. When a prison staff member made the request with the first sample, the refusal rate was 59%. With the second sample, the investigator did the asking, and there were no refusals. The focus of the interview was on how victims were chosen; that is, what characteristics and attributes a suitable victim should have, and what characteristics and attributes were seen as making a victim unsuitable and hence subject to rejection. Discussion of an aerial photograph of an industrial estate, together with a chart showing the nature and use of its buildings, formed part of the interview.

Robbers

Men from a local and a regional prison were interviewed. After a list was made of all those with current convictions (from the Nominal Index cards arranged by region of origin, as with the burglars), it was again decided to interview all of them. All were Category B (medium security), and 31 were seen in the local prison, and 38 in the regional. As with the burglars, the men were asked if they were prepared to be interviewed and were given guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality. They were given the opportunity to refuse, first in their own quarters and later in the interview room. There were 10 refusals to staff at the first stage and 3 to the interviewer at the second stage—a refusal rate of 14%. As with the burglars, the interview focused on victim selection, are 16 postcard-size photographs of potential victims in different categories (male/female, young/old, white/West Indian, and so forth) were used to stimulate discussion.

Results

The Knowledge Market

So what in fact is the nature of the risk that economic criminals are up against, and how far does the use of rationality minimize it? For
rationality to be total, how many and which pieces of information must be acquired and scanned? The list is infinite rather than finite, and in both a military special service situation and in an economic crime, beyond a certain point the planners cease to try for more information, realizing that the aggressor always has the advantage, accepting risk, and justifying the outcome by the gain only.

It is highly doubtful that economic criminals could ever have access to the mass of information needed to make either victim selection or the crime itself totally rational. Besides the potentially limitless list of hard, factual target information, there are also the hazards of the event (such as the eccentricities of the target custodian returning unexpectedly or being on the premises in the dark developing negatives, and so forth), a trip-up on any of which might be (wrongly) considered to be evidence of irrationality by outside armchair assessors, especially if the error was allegedly foreseeable.

Beginning at the beginning, what kind of knowledge market are offenders in? (There will of course be more than one in practice.) What kind of knowledge comes their way and is accessible to them? Here are some examples from the robbers: "Lived near the post office," "Knew he [a mobile shop owner] had a round [circular route visiting regular customers] on the estate," or "In lodgings, he'd been done for it before, said it was easy, he wanted the money." Some information will be derived from the social network of friends and acquaintances, and much will be occupation based, derived from somebody's job and somebody's friends.

Examples of network-derived knowledge are: "It [a payroll heist] had been done before, pretty easy, knew all about the geezer, out drinking with him," "[A jeweller's shop] sussed out by one of the other two," or "Friend of my cousin, same pub, same circle of friends, he said do I fancy doing a robbery?" Examples of occupation-based knowledge are: "I had somebody working for me who had been inside . . . he'd known about the job through someone else .. . approached me to do it with him, he was originally going to do it with them," "Co-defendants suggested it, one of them used to work there," or "It was a sex shop, I used to work there as a manager."

Commonly such knowledge will come from men and women at the grass-roots level of the work force with whom the criminal has contact: drivers, porters, cleaners, and so on. Such is the "knowledge pool" the criminal inhabits, which determines what kind of knowledge is instantly available and accessible. Other kinds of knowledge do not appear so commonly to be actively sought out.

Of course there are tipsters or "leakmen" who leak a trickle of usable information, sometimes without realizing who they are leaking it to: "People talk about their workplace . . . cash [amount] an idea forms, without them knowing, you case the place ... went a few times to the place." There are also tipsters working at the prospective target who know
full well to whom they are talking. Sometimes tipsters are talking less to future criminals than to middlemen, "knowledge brokers" who will pass the information on to a likely taker in general conversation, or to curry favor or for money ("a drink") or for status (evidence of mental acuity and being in the mainstream of life). For example: "Got set onto him," "Opportunity put our way, decided to have a go ... put onto it, I'd give them a drink if it came off... I did." Apart from the "passing on," the advice of known knowledge brokers may be actively sought on likely targets. "One come to me and asked me if I knew anything [places]. I said yes ... knew it already, I used to run past [jogging] every night, knew his [jewelry shop owner's] movements." The contact points are characteristically the cafe, the pub, the workplace, and the home. An acceptable broker must have a good pedigree and reputation, and of course relatives are preferred to others.

Assessment and Planning

When we discuss the preliminaries to the decision to commit the crime we are not talking so much about direct choice as about a general discussion, with a possibility emerging, a target, and a means. This may or may not be sparked off by proffered knowledge coming from a leakman via a broker, but may instead relate to Brantingham and Brantingham's (1984) concept of "awareness space," that is, the area that a person is familiar with by virtue of his or her daily movements, together with its opportunities for crime.

The putative scheme may come from a leakman, a broker, or a general review of the situation. However it originates, the scheme is then scrutinized and assessed with free-ranging negative thinking, in which a catalogue of objections are itemized and considered. There is then a phase of flaw hunting, searching for chinks in the "impregnable" security system that protects the target (for example, realizing that "banditproof" glass can be shattered with an industrial rivet gun), and looking for what might in the broadest sense be termed "the window of vulnerability"—the one feature the target custodians have neglected to provide for.

Locating this window is a very rational process. It will certainly determine the method (whether burglary or robbery, for example), the modus operandi, and, in turn, usually the day and the time. A preliminary plan will then generate a further, more specific, negative-thinking, flaw-hunting session. If the draft plan can stand up to this test, then it will be used, once the right team can be assembled and doubts and reservations about the reliability of newcomers overcome.

Flaw hunting as a total process uses fuzzy logic with elided syllogisms. That is, the values contained in the propositions that make up the syllogism are not always precisely quantifiable. (An example of such a value might be any item that is vague in itself, but which nonetheless has
Although in its normal form a syllogism might be, "If A = B and B = C, it follows that A = C," in a criminal situation an offender will often just say in effect, "A = B, therefore A = C," eliding the middle proposition, B = C, usually because of its obviousness to those who habitually make this kind of assessment. For example:

First proposition: "On this warehouse there are alarms of such-and-such a type."
Second proposition (which is elided): "Type such-and-such can be neutralized by electromagnets."
Final proposition: "Therefore take the magnets to neutralize the alarm system."

Conclusions are often stated first, and the middle reasoning is left out to suit the customary form of such assessments, so that as speech the example above becomes, "Take the magnets—there are alarms" or words to that effect. Merit marks are awarded for excessive pessimism and suspiciousness, and a generalized paranoia is used to look for "catches."

It is a tentative, leisurely, suspicious approach.

As the plan evolves it entails weaving through the barriers set up by the target custodians. The mean pathway through the obstacles is sought. This planning has three characteristics: (a) direction—it is purposeful; (b) evasion—avoiding rather than confronting hurdles and big locks head-on; (c) breadth—a maximum breadth compatible with overreaction to obstacles, evading them on the assumption that they will be there. For example, a statement such as, "It's bound to be locked" entails giving that feature a wide berth.

**Intuition and Experience**

The final check, which can be employed right up to the last second before the crime but is usually done sooner, is that derived from intuition, past experience, and hunches. Bruner and Postman's directive state theory (Allport, 1955) would imply that people never confront totally new situations, that there are always a history and a background that supply the actor with working hypotheses which are continually subject to revision as he or she grapples with reality. The past experience that economic criminals bring to their next crime, whatever its origin—from the media, from folklore, or from personal experience of similar actions—may be of high quality, salience, and perceptivity. Such operators know when a set of circumstances "does not feel right," for some intangible, intuitive reason. They similarly know when it feels very suitable indeed. From an armed robber:
It is like playing a game where, although the odds are against you, something inside you says you're going to win anyway. If you're giving the cards out and know what the cards are, the other person hasn't got a chance.

Effectively this is conceding that rationality is not enough ("something inside you"). If we ask how do such people react when their rationality does not work, even when bolstered with intuition, the answer usually emerges in terms of luck and fatalism.

**Luck and Fatalism**

Fatalism is represented by the use of the slang phrase "come on top," which means sudden chaos and imminent hazard to the offender. Fatalistically it is accepted that things may come on top for any reason, and this is not seen as either in the control of the offender or due to lack of foresight, but just "one of those things."

Back lanes give plenty of cover, roof windows, they're rarely belled up [equipped with alarms], you could use the roof. If it come on top, plenty of ways to run away, plenty of ways in and out.

Errors and accidents are accepted as part of the general injustice of life, so prevalent as not to be deserving of further comment. Two robbers robbing a shop wore crash helmets with tinted visors to frustrate identification. Only in the shop did they discover that they could not hear each other talking because of the helmets. After wounding the shop owner with an axe, they fled because of their communication difficulties. The man who had inflicted the axe wound made no comment about his feelings about the discovery of his temporary deafness.

Those who were drunk or drugged at the time of the robbery saw the errors that then ensued as being an inevitable part of living such a life, and they seemed to find comfort in the fact that although they were not proper robbers, others were; there were other men who did robbery properly according to the rules. In the robbery sample, 48% were drunk or drugged at the time of the offense, compared with 24% of the commercial burglars.

**Commercial Burglars as Rational Offenders**

How much rationality can be sieved out from these accounts? Or is the rational robber or burglar merely a myth to reassure the irrational?

The commercial burglars were shown an aerial photograph of an industrial estate, together with a chart identifying the nature and use of each building, and were asked to comment on which of the 49 premises shown were likely in their view to be selected as targets. From the results of this exercise three findings are of interest. There was a stated
preference for edge as opposed to center targets, confirming Brantingham and Brantingham’s (1975) findings. There was also a strongly identifiable concentration on the issue of surveillability, confirming Bennett and Wright (1984). Finally, 53% of men gave responses showing logical and methodical assessment as opposed to the intuitive feelings and emotional reactions displayed by the rest. For example:

No, because it is open ground and [car] lights passing over it might silhouette you. No, they wouldn't leave it open if there was anything worth taking; no, except the stores, it's isolated, metals are profitable."

Consideration must be given here to what at first seems a small point. The use of rationality imposes a greater strain on the criminal than the use of intuition or hunch, in that one's self-esteem is put on the line if, using rationality, the attempt still fails. With hunch-crime, however, if the criminal is caught, failure can be explained by saying that on this occasion he was not really trying. When the criminal really is trying, knows it, and fails, the result is to be instantly confronted with one's own inadequacy. This seemed to show with commercial burglars in that those using rationality were conscious that it restricted them more (perhaps to a time, for example, or a method), and they experienced much more fear and anxiety during the crime than the criminals working on a hunch.

Robbers as Rational Offenders

Although Petersilia, Greenwood, and Lavin (1978) discovered that about a quarter of their sample could be described as planning robbers, within this group 52% had planned their robberies, and of these 25% had planned for months or years, with days or weeks being the commonest planning time. Significantly, too, the robbers in general showed a much greater determination to carry out the robbery than did the commercial burglars in relation to their crimes. Of the burglars, only 11% said that nothing would put them off, compared with 54% of the robbers. The typical way for all robbers to choose their victim was through knowledge acquired through employment, residence, observation, or gossip (47%). The second most popular way was by intuition. More planners used knowledge than did opportunists, and more opportunists than planners used intuition.

With regard to planning in robbery it must be accepted that if robbers admit in court to having planned their offenses, longer sentences are more likely to be awarded. It may then be that admitting to having planned is similarly concealed in the interview context for verisimilitude. Those who have planned and still failed would also perhaps prefer to classify themselves as opportunists.

When discussing target choice and related matters, the form of the comment and the reasoning, too, differ from those used by the commer-
cial burglars. There appears to be less reasoning and a greater concent-
tration on social rather than technical issues. For example, "Third party
who suggested it had gone to the chemist's and the guy opened the side
door to him. He said if you knocked on the side door he’d open it," "His
boy used to work there at the supermarket, he knew the actions that was
taken; son told the father who involved me," or "Planned it, it was a shop,
first the getaway route, then I worked backwards [to a suitable victim]"

Conclusions

Methodological Problems

Interviewing offenders appeared to be the most useful technique for
assembling data on commercial burglary and robbery for several reasons.
Because offenders are the source of the crime it would seem absurd not to
avail oneself of their versions of what they were doing and why. Linked
with this, other methods of data collection, valuable as they may be,
would seem to both skirt the issue and generally be impractical for crimes
characterized by great secrecy and brief commission time. Finally, there
appeared to be a general dearth of information about offenders who do
these crimes, but many unexamined assumptions.

Captive offenders were chosen rather than those at liberty because of
the twin difficulties with the latter of obtaining sufficient numbers and
sufficient privacy for realistic interviews free of audience effect. A choice
of either group has attached to it a similar list of problems: (a) potential
unrepresentativeness of the subjects; (b) subject response difficulties such
as that of coherently summarizing complex (and possibly emotional)
events and the possibility that materially quite different accounts would
be given to different interviewers; (c) recall problems in discussion of past
events (condensing, distorting, rationalizing, and so forth); (d) reticence
concerning disclosure of trade secrets; (e) the deliberate use of deceit; (f)
an analysis problem of the nature of patterns perceived in such data.

Although none of these problems was glaringly apparent, equally it
was not to be expected that in their nature they would be. In any event it
was felt that the invisible distortions implied by such problems would be
far outweighed by the general gain accruing from letting offenders tell
their own story. Large differences, or patterns of questionable validity, are
in any case always subject to close scrutiny and cross-checking by later
studies, particularly in an area where so little has so far been established.
However, on the specific issue of rationality it may be that although men
would talk in highly rational terms when interviewed in the privacy of a
prison cell, they might very well not do so if they were selecting a target
for a live operation.
Extent of Rationality Displayed

Reading all the target selection comments from the interviews together, we find that each man mentions rational facts, and if we read the comments as a whole we get an impression that all the angles are covered. Yet closer examination shows that rather than each criminal covering all the points for his crime, considering area, target, victim defenses, and so on seriatim, what is happening is that each man has bees in his bonnet about particular items and disregards others totally. We do not know whether this is because he has not thought of them, although this is unlikely, or that his past experience suggests they can be disregarded and he has not mentioned them for this reason, but if he is lucky enough even operating on this basis, he still "wins."

The concept that we are fumbling for from Bennett and Wright is perhaps limited, temporal rationality. Not all these men are highly intelligent, and few are equipped to calculate Bentham-style, even supposing the information were available. Yet it is very common for rationality to be used. Of course it is partial and limited rather than total, but at the time the actor feels he has planned enough and weighed enough data. Not all the statements about logic and method can be dismissed as bogus rationality. These men are doing their best to calculate, but in the end, risk and imponderables mean that they will often fail. Many of the other group, which includes drunk and drugged people, may also by their own lights, holding the influence of intoxicants constant, be feeling at the time that they are behaving rationally, too.

Offending as Rational Behavior

We are in danger of assuming that an absurdly stringent definition of rationality would be usable in crime by the men who actually do it. In the nature of the task, the kind of rationality used by the civil engineer will not be discovered. To say this, however, is not to imply that no rationality is used at all. It is a matter of degree, and it would be well to spend less time dwelling on supposedly irrational features than on rational ones, but not to expect that rationalism and utilitarianism are the same thing.

Supposedly the small gains of many economic criminals are proof of irrationality, but there are two alternative explanations. One emphasizes the difficulties inherent in making predictions of exact gains in advance; the other emphasizes that, small though the sums may be, they may still be adequate for the offender's immediate requirements and hence subjectively much larger than they appear. Gunn and Gristwood (1976) in a general comparison of robbers with other criminals serving long sentences found few differences between the two groups, but they made the point that for all those serving long sentences a high prevalence of early family problems or psychiatric illness is found, and this of course would be expected to detract from the rationality of such men.
Rationality in the sense of being logical and methodical is commonly present apparently among economic criminals, but it is not a pure distillate. Although where it is used it is seen by the operator to be working utilitarianism, it is far from being pure utilitarianism. The use of a rationality that seems at the time adequate, but may subsequently be seen by the offender to be in error, differs from purer forms in that the boundaries that are set to the problem of victim selection are much narrower than pure rationality requires. If certain critical factors have adequate perceived outcomes, this is a sufficient basis for action; the net is not broadly spread. What usually erroneously convinces assessors that there is less rationality than there is, is the presence of accidents and errors. However, many of these would still occur even if the purist forms of rationality were used, because of the risk element.

Implications for Further Research and Policy

This type of study seems to indicate that criminal decision making is both patterned and exposable; moreover, such research is inexpensive. It would then seem desirable to conduct repeat studies with refined methods with different interviewers to see if the patterns persist.

Policy signposts based on a single study must be highly tentative. Having said this, those emerging would include: (a) offenders for these crimes vary in rationality from outright "senseless" behavior to being as rational as circumstances permit; (b) high-rationality offenders are usually activated by target-relevant knowledge about one specific victim (people or premises) originating in employment, residence, or social network (local connections seem most common, and the perpetual flow of such detailed local knowledge must be accepted); (c) high-rationality offenders can be seen as relentless flaw hunters seeking and commonly finding vulnerability in even the most complex security system.

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