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Problem-Specific Guides Series  
No. 57



# Stolen Goods Markets

Michael Sutton

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Center for  
Problem-Oriented Policing



**Problem-Oriented Guides for Police  
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Guide No. 57**

## **Stolen Goods Markets**

**Michael Sutton**

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The Internet references cited in this publication were valid as of June 2009. Given that URLs and web sites are in constant flux, neither the author nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

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## About the Problem-Specific Guide Series

The *Problem-Specific Guides* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to prevention and to improving the overall response to incidents, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. Neither do they cover all of the technical details about how to implement specific responses. The guides are written for police—of whatever rank or assignment—who must address the specific problem the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who:

- **Understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods.** The guides are not primers in problem-oriented policing. They deal only briefly with the initial decision to focus on a particular problem, methods to analyze the problem, and means to assess the results of a problem-oriented policing project. They are designed to help police decide how best to analyze and address a problem they have already identified. (A companion series of *Problem-Solving Tools* guides has been produced to aid in various aspects of problem analysis and assessment.)
- **Can look at a problem in depth.** Depending on the complexity of the problem, you should be prepared to spend perhaps weeks, or even months, analyzing and responding to it. Carefully studying a problem before responding helps you design the right strategy, one that is most likely to work in your community. You should not blindly adopt the responses others have used; you must decide whether they are appropriate to your local situation. What is true in one place may not be true elsewhere; what works in one place may not work everywhere.
- **Are willing to consider new ways of doing police business.** The guides describe responses that other police departments have used or that researchers have tested. While not all of these responses will be appropriate to your particular problem, they should help give a broader view of the kinds of things you could do. You may think you cannot implement some of these responses in your jurisdiction, but perhaps you can. In many places, when police have discovered a more effective response,



they have succeeded in having laws and policies changed, improving the response to the problem. (A companion series of *Response Guides* has been produced to help you understand how commonly-used police responses work on a variety of problems.)

- **Understand the value and the limits of research knowledge.** For some types of problems, a lot of useful research is available to the police; for other problems, little is available. Accordingly, some guides in this series summarize existing research whereas other guides illustrate the need for more research on that particular problem. Regardless, research has not provided definitive answers to all the questions you might have about the problem. The research may help get you started in designing your own responses, but it cannot tell you exactly what to do. This will depend greatly on the particular nature of your local problem. In the interest of keeping the guides readable, not every piece of relevant research has been cited, nor has every point been attributed to its sources. To have done so would have overwhelmed and distracted the reader. The references listed at the end of each guide are those drawn on most heavily; they are not a complete bibliography of research on the subject.
- **Are willing to work with others to find effective solutions to the problem.** The police alone cannot implement many of the responses discussed in the guides. They must frequently implement them in partnership with other responsible private and public bodies including other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private businesses, public utilities, community groups, and individual citizens. An effective problem-solver must know how to forge genuine partnerships with others and be prepared to invest considerable effort in making these partnerships work. Each guide identifies particular individuals or groups in the community with whom police might work to improve the overall response to that problem. Thorough analysis of problems often reveals that individuals and groups other than the police are in a stronger position to address problems and that police ought to shift some greater responsibility to them to do so. Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*, provides further discussion of this topic.



The COPS Office defines community policing as “a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.” These guides emphasize *problem-solving* and *police-community partnerships* in the context of addressing specific public safety problems. For the most part, the organizational strategies that can facilitate problem-solving and police-community partnerships vary considerably and discussion of them is beyond the scope of these guides.

These guides have drawn on research findings and police practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Even though laws, customs and police practices vary from country to country, it is apparent that the police everywhere experience common problems. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, it is important that police be aware of research and successful practices beyond the borders of their own countries.

Each guide is informed by a thorough review of the research literature and reported police practice, and each guide is anonymously peer-reviewed by a line police officer, a police executive and a researcher prior to publication. The review process is independently managed by the COPS Office, which solicits the reviews.



For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at [www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org). This website offers free online access to:

- The *Problem-Specific Guides* series
- The companion *Response Guides* and *Problem-Solving Tools* series
- Special publications on crime analysis and on policing terrorism
- Instructional information about problem-oriented policing and related topics
- An interactive problem-oriented policing training exercise
- An interactive *Problem Analysis Module*
- Online access to important police research and practices
- Information about problem-oriented policing conferences and award programs.





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Debra Cohen, PhD oversaw the project for the COPS Office. Phyllis Schultze conducted research for the guide at Rutgers University's Criminal Justice Library. Nancy Leach coordinated the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing's production process. Suzanne Fregly edited this guide.





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## The Problem of Stolen Goods Markets

### What This Guide Does and Does Not Cover

This guide addresses the problem of stolen goods markets. The guide begins by describing the problem, then provides advice on how best to analyze local, national, or international stolen goods markets; reviews tactics that you can use to detect those involved in stealing, dealing, and using stolen goods; and suggests ways to assess the tactics' likely effectiveness in specific situations and locations. The ultimate aim of reducing stolen goods markets is to make it more difficult and risky for people to trade in stolen goods and thereby discourage stealing in the first place.

Most burglars and other prolific thieves steal to raise money, and to do so they need to sell whatever they steal. To obtain money by stealing things, the prolific and relatively “successful” thief must routinely complete two objectives without getting caught. The *first objective* is to steal valuable items. The *second objective* is to sell or trade the stolen goods. Ultimately, the prolific thief's main aim is to acquire something else—often drugs or alcohol—with the money gained from selling the stolen goods. While police and prosecutors commonly think of this scenario as comprising two crimes—one being theft and the other receiving stolen goods—from the thieves' standpoint, they haven't completed the action until they've acquired what they ultimately desire. Understood this way, the theft is only the beginning of the crime, not the end of it.<sup>1</sup> While other theft-related problem-oriented guides address thwarting the thief's *first objective*, this guide addresses the *second objective*.

Those who knowingly buy stolen goods do not have recourse to legal remedies and so serious violence may be used as a means of criminal dispute resolution.<sup>2</sup> Stolen goods markets are but one aspect of the larger set of problems related to property theft and illicit markets. This guide is limited to addressing the particular harms stolen goods markets create, with a focus on ordinary consumer goods. Some specialty stolen goods markets, such as those dealing in firearms, cultural artifacts, art, or endangered species,



have unique features calling for separate analyses and different responses. Related problems not directly addressed in this guide, each of which requires a separate analysis, include the following:

### **Property theft problems**

- burglary
- robbery
- general theft

### **Market-related problems**

- illicit drugs markets
- prostitution markets
- human trafficking markets
- child pornography markets
- pirated software, music, and film media markets
- fake goods markets
- illicit diamond markets
- endangered species markets
- illicit antiques, art, and cultural artifacts markets
- illicit firearms markets

Some of these related problems are covered in other guides in this series, all of which are listed at the end of this guide. For the most up-to-date listing of current and future guides, see [www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org).

This guide is designed to help police officers and other officials reduce varied theft problems with different resource levels and in various locations by promoting tailor-made solutions to specific local problems.

### **General Description of the Problem**

Stolen goods markets facilitate the demand that drives much property theft. Even though stolen goods dealers and consumers create the demand for stolen goods, police and crime reduction efforts remain firmly focused on thieves.<sup>3</sup> Police agencies close many property crime investigations once they arrest the thieves, and pay less attention to tracking the stolen property.<sup>4</sup>



Many stolen goods markets are so clandestine, they are harder to research and police than drug trafficking, theft, and violence, for instance.<sup>5</sup> However, much stolen goods trading goes on in relatively plain view, such as where goods are hawked openly on the streets or in pawn- and secondhand shops. At least some stolen goods markets are clearly visible, so long as you know what you are looking for and understand the criminal dynamics of what you see.<sup>6</sup>

Gathering sufficient evidence to prosecute the stolen goods middleman—the fence—is difficult as fences often hide their illegitimate activities behind legitimate business fronts. Professional fences know how to do this well and can operate for years with impunity.<sup>7</sup>

### **Harms Caused by Stolen Goods Markets**

Stolen goods markets cause a number of social harms. Some local stolen goods markets are linked to larger and more sophisticated organized criminal enterprises. Those who buy in stolen goods markets create a demand for their own victimization and also fuel the victimization of others. And since theft is not evenly distributed, legitimate merchants and residents in high-crime areas are either refused theft insurance or else pay considerably higher premiums. The price of goods in shops reflects profits lost to thieves and stolen goods markets, and merchants who refuse to trade in stolen goods are often undercut and lose business to those who do. Meanwhile, the consequent fear of crime creates uncertainty and discourages business investment, population stability, and growth necessary for local economies to thrive.<sup>8</sup> Finally, because those involved in stolen goods markets tend not to resort to the law to resolve their disputes, for fear of being found out themselves, they often resort to violence to resolve them.<sup>9</sup>

### **Factors Contributing to Stolen Goods Markets**

Understanding the factors that contribute to your problem will help you frame your own local analysis questions, determine good effectiveness measures, recognize key intervention points, and select appropriate responses.



§The supply-and-demand relationship is not always this simple. The relationship between people's willingness to buy stolen goods and others' readiness to steal them is sometimes complex (Ferman, Henry, and Hoyman, 1987).

### *Transactions*

Stolen goods trading typically involves several steps, beginning with the theft itself and culminating in an end-consumer's obtaining the stolen goods. Understanding the actions offenders take and challenges they face in each step will help you design methods to disrupt the process at several points in the crime process. Figure 1 depicts these steps.

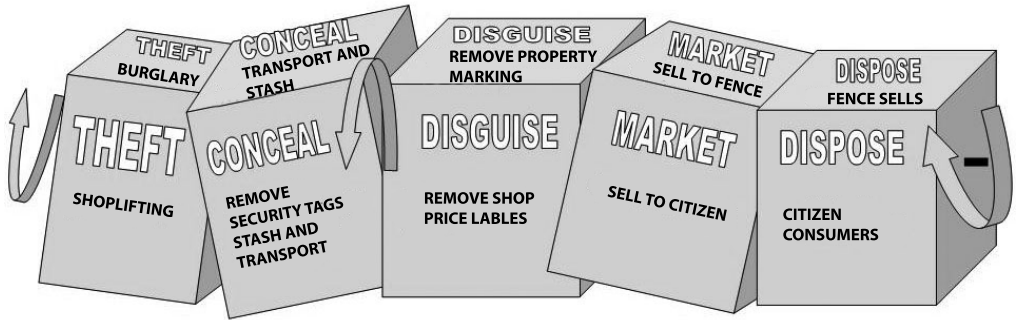


Figure 1. Chain of transactions in stolen goods markets (modified from Cornish, 1994).

### *Supply and Demand— The Key Issue in Most Thefts*

As with any market, the relationship between supply and demand for stolen goods can be complex. Generally, the demand for stolen goods increases the incidence of theft.<sup>8</sup> This makes sense because, for the most part, thieves won't steal goods unless they first know or believe other people will buy or trade for them.<sup>10</sup> General awareness that many business owners and members of the wider public are willing to buy stolen goods motivates thieves to start and continue stealing.<sup>11</sup> Young thieves learn from their families, neighbors, and peers about their community's willingness to buy stolen goods. Knowing who buys stolen goods and how to deal with them makes stealing a viable choice for some young people growing up in less wealthy areas.<sup>12</sup>





Once thieves know people are generally willing to buy stolen goods, stolen goods markets are mainly fuelled by thieves' offering goods for sale, rather than by proactive demand from dealers or consumers.<sup>13</sup> Thieves' offers to sell stolen goods have the greatest influence on how stolen goods markets operate. This is because most dealers and consumers do not actively seek out stolen goods: someone needs to offer these items to them.<sup>14</sup> Strangers frequently offer small-business owners stolen goods.<sup>15</sup>

Sometimes thieves steal items to order. This means they are asked to supply particular products or quantities by theft. Prolific fences tend to encourage thieves to increase their offending in this way. But *stealing to order* is not as common as *stealing to offer*.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Commonly Stolen and Sold Goods***

Knowledge of the "standing demand" for stolen goods affects the type of goods stolen, depending on what is most in demand at the time, and can at times lead to problem crime waves when thieves target particular highly sought items. Statistical research proves that most thieves have an ever-changing hierarchy of goods that they prefer to steal. Research with thieves themselves reveals that they rarely hoard stolen goods for more than an hour or two, at most, since they seek as near to immediate cash returns as possible—and want to avoid getting caught in possession.<sup>17</sup> This means that thieves are unlikely to steal and hoard goods that they do not currently know to be in high demand on the off chance that they will be saleable in the future. Since most thieves steal because they want money in a hurry, at the top of their list is cash, followed by items that they can easily and quickly sell for relatively high prices, such as jewelry and high-tech home entertainment equipment.<sup>18</sup>



Understanding what makes products attractive to thieves will help you anticipate new theft targets, and consequently what new products are likely to become popular in stolen goods markets.<sup>19</sup> So-called *hot products* typically have one or more of the following attributes that can be summarized by the acronym CRAVED, in that they are the following:

**C**oncealable  
**R**emovable  
**A**vailable  
**V**aluable  
**E**njoyable  
**D**isposable<sup>20</sup>

The more of these attributes a thing has, the more attractive it is for someone to steal it. However, because we know that prolific thieves rarely steal items for their own use, the last three attributes are the most important because they relate to items' worth and not just to their portability. It is this *worth* of items that makes them disposable as products that thieves can sell or swap for drugs.

The demand for and prices of goods in legitimate markets influences what products are hot in stolen goods markets.<sup>21</sup> Knowing, for example, what retail goods shoplifters are stealing, while perhaps not too important to police from a criminal investigation standpoint, might be quite important from a crime prevention standpoint, because shoplifting is often a gateway crime to more-serious theft and a fallback crime for prolific burglars to support their drug use.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Stolen Goods Market Locations and Times***

Although theft can occur any place where there is something to steal, much burglary and other theft are concentrated in particular areas, and thieves prey more often upon particular types of people in those areas.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, in both the United Kingdom and the United States, stolen goods markets can occur anywhere. But



once again, they tend to be concentrated in the least affluent areas.<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, stolen goods markets are one of the major contributing factors to criminal victimization in less-affluent areas, since thieves prefer not to travel far when selling stolen goods.

Thieves generally prefer to sell stolen goods locally,<sup>25</sup> and they sell most stolen goods within 30 minutes of their theft.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, a concentration of local thefts might (but not necessarily) indicate the relatively close proximity of a local market for those goods. It must be noted, however, that while this is something worth exploring in the first instance, it should not be done at the expense of neglecting other possibly more important markets farther afield.

Stolen goods trading takes place at odd times of the day and night as much as it does during normal business hours.<sup>27</sup>

### *Stolen Goods Buyers*

In addition to professional fences, average citizens buy stolen goods. At least in the United Kingdom, buying stolen goods, like many other offenses, is a crime most often committed by those who are young, single, male, relatively unskilled, and living in relatively deprived areas.<sup>28</sup> These, of course, are simply those who are, overall, statistically the most likely to be offered and to buy stolen goods. At any time, business owners who are not professional fences may buy stolen goods. The same is true for tradespeople and anyone else within any population of “ordinary folks” who find it hard to resist the chance of a bargain with no questions asked.

### *Public Tolerance of Stolen Goods Markets*

Whereas most citizens are intolerant of thieves and of stealing, they tend to be more tolerant of stolen goods buyers and sellers because they are seen as entrepreneurs providing the valuable local service of making goods available at bargain prices.<sup>29</sup> In addition, many so called “ordinary folks” ask no questions, or accept the standard “it fell off a truck” lines, when offered deeply discounted valuables. Even if they do not buy, most are unlikely to report people selling goods in this way.<sup>30</sup> Police cannot afford to ignore the prevailing community attitudes toward buying stolen goods.<sup>31</sup>



### *Links with Illicit Drug Use*

In the United Kingdom, some 29 percent of arrested thieves are heroin or cocaine users, and these are the most prolific offenders, probably responsible for more than three-fifths of the illegal income generated by selling stolen goods.<sup>32</sup> However, drug dealers are often reluctant to exchange drugs for stolen goods.<sup>33</sup> This means that stolen goods markets play at least as important a part as regular illegal hard drug use in explaining high theft rates and, therefore, represent an equally important opportunity for crime reduction initiatives. That said, drug dealers do accept certain kinds of property in exchange for drugs, and they also buy stolen property.<sup>34</sup> Drug dealers are known to buy, in particular, stolen expensive designer wear and jewelry for their own use.<sup>35</sup> Buying and selling stolen goods is, for many offenders, a gateway offense into buying and selling drugs.<sup>36</sup>

### *Stolen Goods Market Types*

Stolen goods markets tend to have particular local, as well as national, characteristics in terms of what thieves steal and how those involved conduct transactions.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, reducing these markets calls for locally tailored solutions.

There are six stolen goods market types that are distinctive in the ways that thieves, dealers, and consumers operate.<sup>38</sup> No one market type is more serious or important than another in terms of the role it plays in promoting theft. The six market types are as follows:

- **Commercial fence supplies.** Thieves sell stolen goods to commercial fences operating out of shops, such as jewelers, pawnbrokers, and secondhand dealers.
- **Residential fence supplies.** Thieves sell stolen goods (particularly electrical goods) to fences, usually at the fences' homes.
- **Network sales.** Thieves pass stolen goods on, and each participant adds a little to the price until a consumer is found. This may involve a residential fence, and the buyer may be the final consumer or may sell the goods on again through friendship networks.



- **Commercial sales.** Commercial fences most usually pose openly as legitimate business owners while secretly selling stolen goods for a profit, either directly to the (innocent) consumer or, more rarely, to another distributor who thinks he or she can resell the goods for additional profit.
- **Hawking.** Thieves sell directly to consumers in places such as bars and pubs or door to door (e.g., shoplifters sell cigarettes, toiletries, clothes or food).
- **“eSelling.”** This market type involves selling stolen goods through private websites such as Craigslist or through online auction sites such as eBay. This gives thieves access to buyers they would not otherwise reach. Thieves may sell goods directly to the public online or else sell through a business fence in an offline commercial fence supplies market. The business fence then sells the goods using the Internet.<sup>§</sup>

<sup>§</sup>For further information on “eSelling,” see Wilbur (2004), Skelton (2005), Tuckey (2007), Talamo et al. (2007), and Newman and Clarke (2003). See Davis (1998) for a useful guide for police officers investigating Internet-facilitated crime.

By and large, offenders—particularly those operating within network sales markets—are flexible in how they use available markets.

### *Sellers’ Dilemmas*

Understanding the dilemmas those dealing in stolen goods face is useful in designing prevention and control strategies.

The stolen goods seller’s dilemma is that to increase his chances of making a profit, he has to increase his risks of getting caught. The seller can choose to sell only to people he knows, which reduces his risks of getting ripped off or detected but restricts his sales and buying opportunities. Or the seller can sell to strangers, which allows him access to more potential customers but also increases his chances of getting arrested or ripped off.<sup>39</sup> This dilemma applies to both the thief and the dealer (the fence), but the business-owning commercial fence also has to simultaneously gain the confidence of thieves with whom they deal, while maintaining a clean public image.<sup>40</sup>

These conflicting demands of access and security determine to a large extent the structure of local stolen goods markets.



## *Fences*

Some stolen goods dealers are professional fences who conceal their activities behind legitimate business fronts. Others are not, but operate instead out of their own homes or else on the move, using, for example, networks of associates linked by mobile phone. In other markets, consumers and innocent dealers may buy directly from thieves rather than through a fence.

Fences tend to specialize in selling in particular market types, but some sell in more than one market type. For example, fences operating in commercial fence supplies markets deal at home as residential fences, but also be involved in network sales<sup>41</sup> or even “eSelling,” particularly where stolen items not sold through their legitimate retail business are being traded.

There are several types of fences, including the following very useful typology constructed by Lewis (2006) to outline the specific dynamics of different types of commercial fencing operations:

- **Level-1 fence:** A thief sells to a level-1 fence (often a storeowner such as a pawnbroker or jeweler), who then sells the goods in his store or else sells them to another fence.
- **Level-2 (wholesale) fence:** A level-2 fence buys from a level-1 fence and then often cleans up and/or repackages the goods to make it look as though they came legitimately from the manufacturer. These are very clandestine operations that are perhaps most likely to be found when working back from a level-3 fence bust (see below). Those who operate stolen car rings also fall within this fencing subtype.
- **Level-3 fence:** A level-3 fence takes repackaged goods from level-2 wholesale fences and diverts the goods to retailers. At times, major retailers will find themselves buying back the very goods that were stolen from them.<sup>42</sup> Level-3 fences have been known to sell perfume, cosmetics, razor blades and shoplifted designer goods in this way.<sup>43</sup>



Commercial fences use their business front to recruit thieves who come in offering them stolen goods. (This is the commercial fence supplies market operating at Level-1.) They also mix stolen goods in with their legitimate stock. Somewhat perversely, this helps to sell legitimate stock, as people think they are getting a genuine bargain if goods are stolen, even when they are not. (This is the commercial sales market at Level-1.)<sup>44</sup>

### *Most-Basic Fencing Principles*

Understanding the unique dynamics of particular offending can help identify and also understand the behavior of less visible offenses and offenders that facilitate more visible crime problems such as theft. For a professional fence to operate and avoid arrest, he needs to coach promising thieves to avoid detection and maximize profits. He must conceal his stolen goods trading behind a legitimate trading front. He should remain willfully ignorant about whether the goods that he buys from other dealers are stolen. He must try to offload stolen goods quickly to avoid detection, but also know when it is safer to store them and sell them later. He must avoid getting caught in possession of stolen goods, but if he is, he should know how to make it difficult for police to prove that he knows the goods are stolen. He must be careful not to work with police informants and limit the number of people who know about his business. He must never admit to knowingly trading in stolen goods if the police question him. And, if all this fails, he must have money for a good lawyer if police arrest him.<sup>45</sup>

### *Operation Methods*

Inexperienced thieves tend to sell mostly by hawking to strangers in public places or selling to only one residential fence they know.<sup>46</sup> Problem drug users in particular commonly find it hard to find fences who will deal with them.<sup>47</sup> The most experienced and prolific offenders tend to have the most ways of selling stolen goods in a variety of markets.<sup>48</sup> A study of experienced residential burglars found that they most often sold stolen goods to known fences, friends, or relatives rather than strangers.<sup>49</sup>







## Understanding Your Local Problem

All the information provided above constitutes only a generalized description of stolen goods markets. You must combine the basic facts with a more specific understanding of your local problem. Analyzing the local problem carefully will help you design a more effective response strategy.

To understand the dynamics of the stolen goods markets in your own area, interview known offenders and informants.<sup>§</sup> It is important to talk with those who steal, sell, deal, and use stolen property, as well as those who might know about them. See Appendix B for a sample offender interview relating to stolen goods markets. You should routinely solicit the following groups for information:

- current, recently active, and ex-offenders (thieves, burglars, fences, drug dealers, drug users);
- prisoners (convicted of burglary, theft, handling stolen goods and drug use or dealing); and
- confidential informants.

You should also ensure that the general public can easily and confidentially report suspicious activity related to stolen goods to the police.<sup>50</sup>

Evaluation of the Market Reduction Approach in England found that reviewing old case files and interviewing officers in the field can also reveal intelligence about offenders and fencing hot spots.<sup>51,§§</sup>

Where possible, you should analyze at least a few years' worth of such data, because this will reduce the likelihood of making strategic decisions based on temporary and uncharacteristic data peaks or troughs.<sup>52</sup> In addition, you should analyze crime location data for fencing incidents using crime pattern analysis techniques on geographic information system software.

<sup>§</sup>See Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 3, *Interviewing Offenders To Inform Police Problem-Solving*, for further guidance.

<sup>§§</sup>You can analyze qualitative data about stolen goods market locations and operators using qualitative research software.



The importance of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the kind recommended here cannot be overstressed if scarce resources are to be best deployed where they are most likely to be effective. And the SARA model of problem solving (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) should be used in order to reach the right solution to your particular theft problem.

The kind of research outlined above may not be possible for police officers facing competing demands for their time. This particular *expertise/time not available* risk factor should be analyzed very early on in the planning and design of your stolen goods market reduction initiative. Possible solutions to this, if it is a foreseeable problem, may be to work in formal partnership with freelance academics or some other kind of crime analysis unit such as in university, police or government departments.

The best solution to a local stolen goods problem may not be the most immediately feasible and intuitive one, but may instead come as a unique breakthrough borne of complex and painstaking analysis.

## Stakeholders

In addition to local criminal justice agencies, the following groups have an interest in the stolen goods trading problem, and you should consider the contribution they might make to gathering information about the problem and responding to it:

- *Business associations* (e.g., representing retail merchants, bars, scrap dealers) have an interest in preventing merchants who trade in stolen goods from undercutting legitimate merchants' market share and may know which merchants are suspected to be trading in such goods.
- *Retail loss prevention professionals* have an interest in reducing losses from diversions of legitimately purchased wholesale merchandise into the illegitimate stolen goods markets.
- *Crime reporting hotlines* (e.g., Crime Stoppers) may have information on particular suspected thieves and fences, as well as emerging trends.



- *Internet governance and crime-reporting clearinghouses.*<sup>§</sup>
- *Tax authorities* are interested in stemming lost tax revenue attributable to stolen-goods trading and may have information about suspicious business enterprises.
- *Regulatory agencies* know what sorts of regulatory laws might apply to businesses suspected of trading in stolen goods.
- *State and national police agencies* might know how local stolen goods markets are connected to larger, more sophisticated criminal enterprises.

<sup>§</sup>See [www.e-victims.org](http://www.e-victims.org)

## Asking the Right Questions

The following are some critical questions you should ask in analyzing your particular stolen goods markets problem, even if the answers are not always readily available. Your answers to these and other questions will help you choose the most appropriate set of responses later on. Some of these questions can be answered only through in-depth interviews with thieves. It is important to note that these questions should be asked before new anti-fencing initiatives begin and then again once they have had a chance to bite. By way of example, after an anti-fencing initiative, any recorded falls in theft, accompanied by (1) a decrease in perceptions of ease of selling and buying among offenders and/or (2) increases in risks and decreases in the perception of the rewards of selling and buying stolen goods, would indicate that it is the police operations that have had the desired effect on falling theft levels rather than some other cause. Such measures are most important in finding out what works in reducing stolen goods markets and when seeking to attribute causes to falling theft figures. Similarly, such qualitative data may also explain increases in theft levels if offenders reveal the existence of new buoyant markets for stolen goods.



### *Stolen Goods Markets*

- How much stolen goods trading is occurring in your jurisdiction? (Remember that official police recorded crime data are of little help here since the public rarely report such offenses, and many receiving-stolen-goods cases are actually cases in which thieves have pled guilty to a lesser charge when evidence of the original theft is weak.<sup>53</sup>) Therefore, qualitative data of the kind recommended in the Understanding Your Local Problem section above are invaluable.
- What types of stolen goods markets are dealing in particular types of stolen goods?
- Are certain types of markets shrinking or even shutting down? Are new types of markets emerging?
- Where are the markets for particular types of stolen goods?
- What is the typical discount rate for stolen goods? Is this increasing or decreasing?
- What proportion of goods stolen in your jurisdiction do you estimate are then sold in stolen goods markets, as opposed to being used by the thief, recovered by police, or discarded?
- How easy and quick is it for *thieves* to find a buyer for their stolen goods?
- How easy and quick is it for *fences* to find a buyer for their stolen goods?
- How do thieves transport stolen goods to fences?
- What do thieves typically do with property immediately after stealing it (e.g., sell it or trade it immediately on the street, hide it while searching for a buyer, sell it immediately to a pawnshop or fence)?
- How often do thieves need to dump goods that they could sell?



## *Offenders*

### **Thieves**

- Who deals in particular types of stolen goods, which markets are they dealing in, and how?
- What do thieves perceive to be the *risks* of selling stolen goods?
- What do thieves perceive to be the *rewards* of selling stolen goods?
- How do thieves avoid being detected when selling stolen goods?
- How do thieves learn where to sell stolen goods?
- How safe do thieves feel transporting and stashing stolen goods?
- How safe do thieves feel when dealing with a fence?
- How concerned are thieves about getting caught?
- How much do thieves know about police operations against stolen goods dealing?

### **Fences**

- Who are the fences (e.g., professional, quasi-legitimate merchants)?
- What do fences perceive to be the *risks* of buying stolen goods?
- What do fences perceive to be the *rewards* of buying stolen goods?

### **Consumers**

- Who in your jurisdiction tends to buy property that they know or should suspect is stolen?
- What do consumers of stolen goods perceive to be the current risks of buying them?
- What do consumers of stolen goods perceive to be the current rewards of buying them?



§See Problem-Specific Guide No. 58, *Theft of Scrap Metal*, for further information.

### *Targets*

- What types of goods are commonly being sold in stolen goods markets? Which types of targeted goods are newly popular? (Monitoring international, national, and local changes in the supply, demand, and price of certain goods and commodities can help you anticipate new theft and stolen goods trading problems. For example, global shortages of various metals have preceded surges in metal theft many times in the past.<sup>§</sup>) Simply keeping an eye on newspaper and other news items may reveal trends in this area. For example, a surge in reporting of strange thefts of cast iron road and side-walk drain covers, large bronze sculptures, metal road signs and copper wiring from electricity sub-stations and railway sidings are all examples of the upsurge in scrap metal theft caused by global shortages at the time of writing. Police agencies without resources for monitoring such factors might form useful collaborative research partnerships with university departments specializing in the effect of market trends upon crime, or those with an interest in developing such expertise.

### *Locations and Times*

- Where are the fencing operations located within your jurisdiction?
- Are there seasonal variations in the types of goods traded in stolen goods markets (e.g., snowblowers in winter, lawn mowers in summer, stereo equipment and laptop computers at the beginning of universities' academic years, textbooks at the beginning of semesters and just before exam periods)?



## **Tips for Understanding Local Stolen Goods Markets**

- Interview a sample of people who work in the wholesale and retail goods sectors. Without talking about crime, find out how and why goods are rejected by or shipped away from the retail stores that originally bought them, and where they end up.
- Map possible stolen goods market hot spots. Discuss with colleagues, informants, offenders, ex-offenders and other experts such as government officials or criminologists why certain areas might be conducive to stolen goods markets.
- Photograph store signs in your jurisdiction that seem to invite thieves to sell stolen goods there. Again, discuss with crime experts of the type listed above.<sup>§</sup>
- Conducting representative surveys of theft victims and of the general public at the county, city or town level is expensive, is time-consuming, and due to the specific characteristics of local crime problems offers little useful information for local initiatives.

<sup>§</sup>These tips are modified from Felson (2002).



## Measuring Your Effectiveness

Measurement allows you to determine to what degree your efforts have succeeded, and suggests how you might modify your responses if they are not producing the intended results. You should take measures of your crime problem *before* you implement responses, to determine how serious the problem is, and *after* you implement them, to determine whether they have been effective. You should take all measures in both the target area and the surrounding area. A longer time frame is usually necessary for measuring the impact of responses to stolen goods markets.<sup>54</sup> For more-detailed guidance on measuring effectiveness, see Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 1, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers*.

Although seeking to reduce theft, burglary, and robbery by reducing the stolen goods markets that motivate thieves is a simple and compellingly logical idea, the reality is more complex. Stolen goods markets are remarkably adaptable to efforts to close them down. Goals are often difficult to achieve, and even if positive results are achieved, they can be hard to measure with certainty.<sup>55</sup> It is important therefore to set achievable, measurable goals.

The following are potentially useful measures of the effectiveness of responses to stolen goods markets. These measures are divided into two groups: those that measure the impact on the problem (outcome measures), and those that measure your agency's responses to the problem (process measures).

### *Outcome Measures*

- Reduced incidence of theft, burglary, and robbery
- Reduced incidence of trading in stolen property

### *Process Measures*

- Increased time and difficulty selling stolen goods
- Increased arrests, prosecutions, and convictions for charges related to stolen goods markets
- Decreased public tolerance for stolen goods markets





## **Responses to the Problem of Stolen Goods Markets**

Your analysis of your particular stolen goods problem should give you a better understanding of the factors contributing to it. Once you have analyzed your problem and established a baseline for measuring effectiveness, you should next consider possible responses to address it.

The following response strategies provide a pool of promising ideas for addressing your particular theft and stolen goods market problem. The strategies summarized in Appendix A and those outlined in more detail here are drawn from a variety of research studies and police reports. Several of these strategies may apply to your community's problem. For example, it is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable local analysis and wider research knowledge. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem. Do not limit yourself to considering what police can do: consider also whether others in your community share responsibility for the problem and can help police better respond to it. In some cases, you may need to shift the responsibility of responding toward those who can implement more-effective responses. (For more-detailed information on shifting and sharing responsibility, see Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*.)



## **General Considerations for an Effective Response Strategy**

1. **Adopting a comprehensive approach to stolen goods markets.** A comprehensive approach to policing stolen goods that is occurring in the U.K. known as the Market Reduction Approach,<sup>56</sup> addresses both supply and demand for stolen goods, and addresses the offenders who actively participate in stolen goods markets, the people who facilitate stolen goods markets, and the places and networks in which stolen goods markets occur.
2. **Establishing and sustaining multiagency partnerships.** The police working alone will be less effective than those working with agencies that can bring into play other intelligence, regulatory authority, and capacity to affect business practices. A working group comprising partner agency representatives from diverse areas such as retail loss prevention, revenue, business licensing, environment and trading standards can coordinate a large initiative and keep it on track. Particularly important is facilitating local prosecutors' active involvement at your initiative's planning and development stage so that police enforcement efforts achieve their maximum effect.<sup>57</sup> Adopting a written interagency data-sharing protocol at an early stage of the partnership can make future analyses and operations run more smoothly.<sup>58</sup>
3. **Improving investigations of stolen goods markets.** Although this guide does not focus on crime investigation methods, improving your agency's capacity to investigate theft, burglary, robbery and stolen-goods trading cases can be important to overall control of stolen goods markets. The following suggestions for improving criminal investigations relate to stolen goods markets:



- Consider setting up a specialized stolen goods market investigative unit. Specialized investigators can develop the necessary criminal intelligence, expertise, and resources to acquire evidence necessary to arrest and prosecute professional fences. Such specialization is obviously not feasible for smaller police agencies but might nonetheless be possible through joint agency task forces. Take care to guard against stolen goods investigators' being diverted to investigations and activities unrelated to stolen goods markets.<sup>59</sup>
- Avoid enlisting known fences as confidential informants because fences recruit and encourage local thieves to steal more frequently.<sup>60</sup>
- Apply for warrants to search the homes of those arrested for theft, burglary, or robbery for stashed stolen property. If the arrested person is on probation or parole, the supervising agent may be able to authorize or conduct such a search.
- Encourage police officers to routinely ask thieves where they sell stolen goods. While most will be reluctant to divulge such information, some will reveal at least some of the ways they sell stolen goods.
- Enlist technology for investigative purposes. Trying to identify thieves and fences by investigating suspicious classified ads is resource-intensive and seldom productive.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, searching Internet-based goods markets (such as eBay or Craigslist) and doing automated pawnshop record searches to seek out specific known stolen goods offered for sale are more efficient approaches and likely to be more productive.<sup>62</sup>
- Encourage neighborhood groups to report suspicious local trading activities, for example, and consider setting up or using existing crime-reporting hotlines, offering rewards for information leading to the conviction of those buying and selling stolen goods.



## Specific Responses To Reduce Stolen Goods Markets

§This is required by law in New South Wales Australia. See: [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Businesses/Specific\\_industries\\_and\\_businesses/Pawnbroking\\_and\\_secondhand\\_dealers/Computerised\\_records.html](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Businesses/Specific_industries_and_businesses/Pawnbroking_and_secondhand_dealers/Computerised_records.html).

§§The term “secondhand dealers” is intended to include such operations as antique shops, flea markets and “swap shops” (Newfoundland and Labrador Government, 2006), and consignment stores. Not all such operations call for identical regulations, but local analysis should indicate which operations are prone to trading in stolen goods.

§§§The U.K.’s city of Nottingham enacted a comprehensive law to control stolen goods markets. See [www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6602&p=0](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6602&p=0).

4. **Regulating and inspecting pawn- and secondhand shops.** Police and other relevant officials should routinely visit and inspect pawn- and secondhand shops to encourage compliance with laws designed to inhibit stolen goods markets.<sup>63</sup> Local statutes and ordinances might be drafted to require pawn- and secondhand shops to submit transaction records to police daily and, ideally, in an electronic format that police can automatically compare against police reports about stolen goods.<sup>§</sup>

Statutes and ordinances that regulate how pawnbrokers and secondhand dealers<sup>§§</sup> conduct business can make it more difficult for thieves to sell them stolen goods.<sup>64</sup> At a minimum, such laws should require pawnbrokers and secondhand dealers to conduct all in-shop purchases on camera in public areas of their businesses, retain these CCTV recordings for at least three months and make them available to police on request, and demand and record valid proof of identification from sellers and maintain transaction records that are open to police inspection.<sup>65,§§§</sup> Other laws should ban people from reselling merchandise door to door, at least without having a proper business license.

5. **Conducting reverse-sting operations.** Rather than set up conventional fencing sting operations, conduct reverse-sting operations that entail police officers’ posing as thieves selling stolen goods to fences,<sup>66</sup> or else use known thieves who agree to wear a wire when selling to a fence.<sup>67</sup> Unlike antifencing sting operations in which police buy stolen goods, reverse stings are both more likely to be effective and less likely to backfire by promoting more theft.<sup>68</sup>
6. **Conducting publicity campaigns to discourage buying suspected stolen goods.** Publicity campaigns to discourage citizens from buying what they should suspect are stolen goods are intended to reduce the demand for stolen goods that drives many theft problems.



You should carefully design and pretest publicity campaigns—including those involving TV, radio, print media, posters and stickers, leaflets or the Internet—to ensure that you’re changing attitudes in the intended, rather than the opposite, direction. What works in the use of media to change attitudes is complex and likely to be counterintuitive.<sup>69</sup> Attempts to convince the public not to buy stolen goods may actually backfire and make the problem worse.<sup>70,§</sup>

Even well-designed and well-implemented publicity campaigns to discourage participation in stolen goods markets will not solely suffice to address the problem, but rather must be done in combination with other responses that disrupt and reduce the markets.

7. **Encouraging those who facilitate stolen goods markets to report thieves and fences.** Encourage people who are in the position to learn who is stealing and selling stolen property—for example, taxi drivers, bartenders and liquor merchants, barbers and offenders apprehended on other charges—to report thieves’ and fences’ identities. You might need to offer them cash or other incentives for this information. Take care, however, not to leave them vulnerable to intimidation or retaliation from those whom they report.<sup>§§</sup>

Encouraging the general public to report incidents in which people approach them on the street or at their homes, offering to sell them deeply discounted goods, can lead to arrests of those selling stolen goods.<sup>71</sup>

A word of caution: Be wary of driving stolen goods markets deeper underground. Assess the possible unintended consequences of cracking down too hard on stolen goods markets if it means that those buying stolen goods get deterred from seeking police assistance or cooperating in investigations of more-serious crimes.

§See Response Guide No. 5, *Crime Prevention Publicity Campaigns*, for further information about how to design and assess crime prevention publicity initiatives.

§§Evaluation of the Market Reduction Approach in England (Hale et. al., 2004) found that taxi drivers and bar owners may be particularly reluctant to report those selling stolen goods because they feel intimidated by such criminal customers. What this research reveals is that any initiatives seeking to routinely gather intelligence from such sources will need to satisfactorily reassure potential informants that their confidentiality and safety has been given primary rather than secondary priority.



§See Response Guide No. 7, *Asset Forfeiture*, for further information.

8. **Closing down fencing operations.** In addition to using criminal law, explore enforcing civil laws such as those that govern taxes, fire safety, public health, building structures and maintenance, nuisances, business licenses or zoning to compel property owners to either cease fencing operations or close the operations entirely. Under some circumstances, you might also be able to enforce criminal and civil statutes relating to organized criminal enterprises, such as the U.S. federal Racketeering-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statutes or equivalent state laws.
9. **Seizing assets connected to stolen goods markets.** If you succeed in building a criminal case against a fencing operation, you should explore the feasibility of also seeking the seizure and forfeiture of assets linked to the criminal enterprise. §

## Responses With Limited Effectiveness

10. **Improving systems for disposing of recovered stolen goods.** Police agencies recover and store large amounts of property, some of which is known to be stolen; some suspected, but not proved, to be stolen; and some not even reported as stolen. Although returning stolen property to its rightful owner does little to reduce theft or control stolen goods markets, it nonetheless can improve victims' satisfaction with police service and help reduce the often large property inventories in police custody.

Historically, police efforts to link recovered property to reported thefts and to rightful owners has been difficult and time-consuming.<sup>72</sup> There is some promise that modern information technology can make these efforts more efficient. New police property-tracking software programs and Internet-based property-tracking systems can make it easier to link recovered property to reported thefts and to rightful owners.

When police agencies can't link recovered property to its rightful owners, they often seek to return that property to the local community via charitable donations or auctions. This is



especially common with recovered bicycles.<sup>§</sup> The merits of such initiatives are beyond the scope of this guide, but a couple of words of caution are in order: some recovered goods might no longer be safe or desirable for consumers, and local businesses that sell the same goods the police are giving away or selling might lose sales for those goods.

§See Problem-Specific Guide No. 52, *Bicycle Theft*, for further information.

§§See Response Guide No. 6, *Sting Operations*, for further information.

### 11. **Conducting traditional anti-fencing sting operations.**

Conventional sting operations against stolen goods markets entail deploying police officers to pose as buyers to catch thieves selling stolen goods. This might be done through fake pawnshops, clandestine fencing operations, or online in electronic goods markets.<sup>73</sup>

Sting operations have been one of the predominant responses police have used to address stolen goods markets. Many such antifencing operations have focused on commercial fences.<sup>74</sup> These tend to be short-term operations in response to theft sprees.

The majority of the best available research strongly suggests that you should avoid police storefront antifencing stings because they require huge amounts of resources and do more harm than good.<sup>75</sup> Stolen goods sting operations can have the unintended effect of encouraging more theft in the area to meet the perceived new demand.<sup>76,§§</sup> Moreover, they often provide an infusion of cash that winds up in local illegal drug markets. When a new fencing sting operation opens in an area, unsuspecting thieves might prefer to sell there because of the convenient location (the farther thieves have to transport stolen goods, the greater the chance of getting caught).<sup>77</sup> In addition, if the sting operators offer what thieves perceive to be good or fair prices, they might be induced to commit more thefts to boost their income.<sup>78</sup>

Reports of successful sting operations often fail to fully examine the wider harm they cause<sup>79</sup> and are often little more than self-promotional how-to manuals.<sup>80</sup>



12. **Promoting property-marking schemes.** Property-marking has never been proved to reduce theft largely because thieves will steal marked property and fences and citizens will buy it. Despite the sometimes bold assertions commercial companies make about their property-marking products' success, and despite the fact that property-marking is relatively easy to do, independent academic research concludes that property-marking does not reduce theft.<sup>81</sup> Property-marking remains a favored police response to theft, and police officers often justify it on the grounds that it is good for public relations and helps in property recovery. However, even this is completely unfounded, and such property-recovery schemes can easily consume entire budgets set aside for targeted crime reduction, while being completely ineffective at returning property.<sup>82</sup>





## Appendix A: Summary of Responses to Stolen Goods Markets

The table below summarizes the responses to stolen goods markets, the means by which they are intended to work, the conditions under which they should work best, and some factors you should consider before implementing a particular response. It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem.

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If...	Considerations
<i>General Considerations for an Effective Response Strategy</i>					
1	22	Adopting a comprehensive approach to stolen goods markets	It reduces both the supply and the demand for stolen goods	...it's based on known effective practices	It can be difficult to maintain a focus on stolen goods markets as opposed to the traditional focus on original thefts
2	22	Establishing and sustaining multiagency partnerships	It improves communication and coordination among key responders	...working groups coordinate activity and maintain focus, and written protocols establish clear responsibilities and authority	Partner agencies can have differing priorities and goals; large partnerships can be difficult to manage and sustain
3	22	Improving investigations of stolen goods markets	It increases the risks of apprehension to offenders	...detectives and officers are open to changing conventional investigative practices	It may require additional resources to devote to stolen goods markets



Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If...	Considerations
<i>Specific Responses To Reduce Stolen Goods Markets</i>					
4	24	Regulating and inspecting pawn- and secondhand shops	It increases offenders' effort to sell stolen goods and their risk of apprehension	...merchants can comply with regulations relatively simply and efficiently, and police enforce regulations consistently and fairly	It may require new legislative action requiring careful police justification; it may require merchants to buy new computerized records and data sharing systems; it may require additional police investigative resources
5	24	Conducting reverse-sting operations	It promotes greater compliance with regulations restricting the purchase of stolen goods	...police conduct them regularly but at unpredictable intervals, and they focus them on problematic locations	It may require additional investigative resources
6	24	Conducting publicity campaigns to discourage buying suspected stolen goods	In conjunction with wider anti-fencing initiative it reduces the demand for stolen goods and increases offenders' efforts to sell them	...they are carefully designed and tested before full implementation	It can waste resources if it's ineffective or backfires by encouraging more offending; it can be expensive
7	25	Encouraging those who facilitate stolen goods markets to report thieves and fences	It increases offenders' risk of apprehension	...informants are provided adequate incentives to provide information and safe avenues to do so	It can increase informants' risk of intimidation or retaliation from offenders
8	26	Closing down fencing operations	It increases offenders' efforts to sell stolen goods and reduces the wholesale demand for them	...police shut down a sufficient number of—or sufficiently large—operations	It requires careful and perhaps resource-intensive investigations
9	26	Seizing assets connected to stolen goods markets	It denies offenders the rewards of trading in stolen goods	...antifencing operations have sufficient assets on hand to deter future offending	Some state asset-forfeiture laws are restrictive and difficult to enforce



Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If...	Considerations
<i>Responses With Limited Effectiveness</i>					
10	26	Improving systems for disposing of recovered stolen goods			It is unlikely to reduce theft or stolen goods trading; it may be too resource- intensive
11	27	Conducting traditional anti-fencing sting operations			It can have the unintended effect of increasing local demand for stolen goods
12	28	Promoting property-marking schemes			Thieves tend to steal and consumers tend to buy even marked property. When police presence returns to normal, crime rates rise to previous levels.





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## **Appendix B: Sample Stolen Goods Market Offender Interview**

The following questions can be asked in the present, rather than the past tense, if interviews are conducted by a skilled social scientist questioning active offenders while offering the interviewees full ethical assurances of anonymity. English constabularies using the Market Reduction Approach employed outside academic consultants to interview offenders in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire,<sup>83</sup> Operation Radium in Kent<sup>84</sup> and the We Don't Buy Crime initiative in West Mercia.<sup>85</sup> Police officers and other police employees may not be in a position to offer the same assurances of confidentiality.

1. What sentence did you receive for your last theft offense?
2. What kind of things did you steal?
3. From where did you steal?
4. How often did you steal?
5. How did you decide what to steal?
6. Did you know what you were going to do with the items before you stole them?
7. What did you do with what you stole?
  - Take the buyer to the goods?
  - Take the goods to the buyer?
  - Take the goods onto the street, looking for buyers?
  - Use a mobile phone to find buyers?
  - Take the goods to a friend who knows buyers?
8. How did you know to whom/where to sell?
9. Why was it easier to sell to that person/place?
10. How did you learn the best ways to sell stolen goods?



11. Where did you (and others) sell the following types of stolen goods?
  - Jewelry?
  - Electrical goods?
  - Shoplifted items (clothes, cigarettes, food, alcohol)?
  - Guns?
12. To how many different people did you sell?
13. For each type of stolen good, how did you sell?
  - Hawking in a public place, door-to-door, in bars, at flea markets?
  - Network sales (through friends and contacts)?
  - Commercial fence supplies?
  - What kind of businesses? Corner shops, jewelers, pawnbrokers, secondhand shops?
  - Residential fence supplies?
  - Family, friends, acquaintances?
14. Did people buy stolen goods without asking any questions about where they came from or proof of identity?
15. Do you think the shopkeepers knew the goods you were selling were stolen?
16. How easy was it to sell each type of stolen goods?
17. Did police ever catch your fence/dealer?
18. Did you ever need to dump goods?
19. How did you know where to take stolen property?
20. How long did it take you to get rid of property?
21. If you had to store/stash goods, where did you do that?
  - Own home?
  - Friend's/relative's/partner's house?
  - Vehicle?
  - Lockups?
  - Empty houses?



22. How did you transport what you stole?
  - Car?
  - Public transportation?
  - On foot?
  - Bicycle?
23. Did you ever swap stolen goods for drugs? Or trade stolen goods for anything else?
24. Did you work alone or with someone else?
25. Did you earn money from selling stolen goods shared with someone?
26. Did anyone ever ask you to steal to order? What sort of property?
27. Did you ever ask someone else to sell something for you? Who (*don't need to know names*)? What sort of property?
28. What did you do with any money you got from what you stole?
29. Why did you steal and sell stolen goods?
  - For cash to party (alcohol, drugs, prostitution)?
  - To support other people?
  - For fun and excitement?
  - To support a drug, alcohol, gambling, or other addiction?
30. What did community members think of buying stolen goods? Did they ask? Did they turn a "blind eye"?
31. Were you aware of the police when you were stealing or selling stolen goods? Did you take precautions not to get caught?
32. Did you have any strategies to ensure that buyers were not going to inform police?
33. What did you know about police operations against thieves and dealers?
34. How concerned were you about your chances of getting caught?
35. How long did it typically take you to sell your stolen goods?



36. Were or are you aware of any markets closing down as a result of police intervention?
37. Were or are you aware of any increased police interest in where stolen property was or is sold?
38. Did property-marking deter you from stealing? Were there particular types of marking that deterred you more than others?
39. Did you get a good return for the goods you sold?
40. Did prices for particular goods go up? If so, did that affect what you stole?
41. Did prices for particular goods go down? Did that stop you from stealing such things?
42. What do you think affected/affects price changes?
  - The market got/gets swamped with stolen stuff?
  - Street prices went/go down?
  - Fashions changed/change?
  - Prospective thieves feared/fear detection?
43. Are there any goods that you used to steal, but no longer would? If so, why?





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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Walsh (1976).
- <sup>2</sup> Sutton (1998), p. 68.
- <sup>3</sup> Plate (1975); Sutton (1995).
- <sup>4</sup> Kerckhoff and Kleinknecht (1980); Walsh (1976).
- <sup>5</sup> Steffensmeier and Ulmer (2005).
- <sup>6</sup> Sutton (2008, 2003a, 1998).
- <sup>7</sup> Steffensmeier and Ulmer (2005).
- <sup>8</sup> Walsh (1976); Pennell (1979); Weiner, Besachuch, and Stephens (1981); Harris, Hale, and Uglow (2003); Hale et al. (2004); Sutton (2008, 1995).
- <sup>9</sup> Reuter (1990, 1985); Venkatesh (2006); Rosenfeld (2009).
- <sup>10</sup> Tremblay, Clermont, and Cusson (1994).
- <sup>11</sup> Sutton (1998).
- <sup>12</sup> Steffensmeier and Ulmer (2005).
- <sup>13</sup> Sutton (1998); Felson (2002).
- <sup>14</sup> Sutton (2008, 2003a).
- <sup>15</sup> Sutton (1998).
- <sup>16</sup> Sutton (2002).
- <sup>17</sup> Sutton (2008, 2003a, 1998).
- <sup>18</sup> Johnson, Natarajan, and Sanabria (1993); Clarke (1999).
- <sup>19</sup> Sutton (2003a); Gill et al. (2004); McKinnon (2006); Nahmias (2006); NACS (2007); Talamo (2007); Reno (2008); Finucane (2009).
- <sup>20</sup> Clarke (1999).
- <sup>21</sup> Tremblay, Clermont, and Cusson (1994); Sutton and Schneider (1999); Gill et al. (2004).
- <sup>22</sup> Sutton (2008); Sutton, Schneider, and Hetherington (2001); Schneider (2005b, 2003).



- <sup>23</sup> Pease (2002).
- <sup>24</sup> Sutton (1998); Felson (2002).
- <sup>25</sup> Langworthy and Lebeau (1992); Sutton (1998).
- <sup>26</sup> Sutton (2008, 2003a).
- <sup>27</sup> Steffensmeier (1986); Sutton (2008).
- <sup>28</sup> Sutton, Hodgkinson, and Levi (2008).
- <sup>29</sup> Pengelly (1996).
- <sup>30</sup> Henry (1981); Hobbs (1989); Foster (1990); Sutton (1998).
- <sup>31</sup> Henry (1981, 1978); Parker, Bakx, and Newcombe (1988); Hobbs (1989); Foster (1990); Sutton (2003b, 1995); Clarke (1999); Felson (2002).
- <sup>32</sup> Bennett, Holloway, and Williams (2001).
- <sup>33</sup> Sutton (2008, 2003a, 1998).
- <sup>34</sup> Struzzi (1998).
- <sup>35</sup> Sutton, Hodgkinson, and Levi (2008).
- <sup>36</sup> Ferman, Henry, and Hoyman (1987); Auld, Dorn, and South (1986).
- <sup>37</sup> Sutton (2008, 2003a).
- <sup>38</sup> Sutton (1998).
- <sup>39</sup> Eck (1994).
- <sup>40</sup> Blakey and Goldsmith (1976).
- <sup>41</sup> Steffensmeier and Ulmer (2005).
- <sup>42</sup> Lewis (2006).
- <sup>43</sup> Webby (2008).
- <sup>44</sup> Lanter (1999); Steffensmeier and Ulmer (2005).
- <sup>45</sup> Steffensmeier and Ulmer (2005).
- <sup>46</sup> Cromwell, Olson, and Avery (1993); Sutton (1998).
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- <sup>62</sup>Talamo et al. (2007).
- <sup>63</sup>Hale et al. (2004).
- <sup>64</sup>Larsen (n.d.); Justice Technology Information Network (2007).
- <sup>65</sup>Sutton (2008).
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- <sup>72</sup>Whitehead and Gray (1998); Sutton, Schneider, and Hetherington (2001).
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<sup>75</sup> Langworthy and LeBeau (1992); Sutton (2008, 2003a).

<sup>76</sup> Langworthy (1989); Langworthy and LeBeau (1992); Pennell (1979). For contrary evidence, see Raub (1984).

<sup>77</sup> Langworthy and LeBeau (1992).

<sup>78</sup> Sutton (2003a, 1998); Felson (2002).

<sup>79</sup> For example, see Cotter and Burrows (1981).

<sup>80</sup> Smith, Sheridan, and Yurcisin (1991).

<sup>81</sup> Knutsson (1984); Sutton (1998); Harris, Hale, and Uglow (2003); Hale et al. (2004); Bent Society (2008).

<sup>82</sup> Whitehead and Gray (1998).

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