

Autumn/Winter 2011 Directive

Part 1: Crime & Investigation

Crime fiction, movies, TV series and current affairs media routinely depict the use of forensic DNA technologies to identify victims and perpetrators of crime. News coverage often highlights the actions of police (and other authorities) and the ways in which technologies are used to track down those who are responsible for crimes. In this directive we would like you to draw on your knowledge to give us your opinions about crime and how crimes are solved.

We are interested in your views on crime whether in the news or in fiction. We are particularly interested in your thoughts on the use of DNA in criminal investigations.

Please start each part of your directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number, sex, age, marital status, the town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Remember not to identify yourself or other people inadvertently within your reply. It is probably best to use initials instead of real names.

Finding out about crimes

Where do you get your information about real life crimes from (for example, newspapers, television, radio, the internet)?

What news coverage, issues or stories about crime have interested you recently? Can you please tell us why?

Do you read crime fiction, watch crime films or television dramas? Please give examples of any that you read or watch and explain why you enjoy them.

Your personal experience

Do you have any experience of a crime being investigated or solved? How did you handle the experience? Were the police involved? You may not wish to be too frank in this section for obvious reasons, but it would be helpful if you could describe as much as you think wise.

DNA, Forensic Technologies and Crime Investigation

There are many different ways the police tackle crime. We would like to hear your thoughts on some of the forensic techniques used, with particular reference to:

- DNA technologies
- Fingerprint Identification
- CCTV
- Social Media Surveillance

Are you aware of some of the above more than others? Has your opinion on the methods above changed over time? If so, why?

Are you aware of any other technologies and methods for tackling crime? Do you think tackling crime has become easier? If so, why? If not, why not?

What comes to your mind when you think about DNA both in and outside of the police context? What do you mostly associate DNA with?

Do you think that it is necessary for the police and other authorities to use these techniques? Which methods of police investigation do you think are most effective? Which least?

The future of criminal investigation

What developments would improve criminal investigations?

Crime Perpetrators

One often hears 'bad' genes being blamed for 'bad' actions ('it's genetic' or 'it's in the genes'). Do you think there is any connection between criminal behaviour and genes?

Special task

We would like you to record for a week all the references to DNA, forensic testing and any other method used to solve crimes that you encounter. If you can, please tell us in which week you complete this task. These references can be from television, newspapers, books, conversations etc. Do any of the references you collected capture your interest? If so, why? Do they entertain? Inform? Educate? Or something else?

Part 2: Civil disobedience

The focus of the second part of the directive is civil disobedience, social unrest and protest movements.

We are particularly interested in your thoughts on the

riots over the summer and the recent occupations in London and around the rest of the world.

Please remember that these questions are only prompts. Your thoughts about all forms of civil disobedience are welcome.

**Please start part 2 of your directive
reply on a new sheet of paper with
your MO number and a brief
biography.**

Please note that at the time of writing the directive the occupation of the area outside St Paul's Cathedral is ongoing. The situation may change as the weeks go on.

You and protest

To start it would be useful if you could let us know at bit about your experience of protests. Are you or have you ever been involved in **any** protests or campaigns? Please give details.

Where do you get information about social unrest and protests from? For example: newspapers, television, radio, the internet.

The riots

Were you affected or involved in the recent riots? If so, please explain how. Perhaps there were riots in your area?

What was your immediate reaction to the riots? Did your reaction change as time passed?

Did you talk about the riots to anyone? Who?

What did you think about the wider reaction (politicians, the police and the media) to the riots?

In your opinion, what caused the riots?

What about the aftermath? Please share any thoughts about the operation to clean up towns and cities after the riots.

Do you think that the business owners who were affected have been fairly compensated?

What do you think about the treatment of the rioters by the courts? If you can, please share any thoughts about the legal process to prosecute those involved in the riots.

Could something similar happen again? How could it be avoided?

The 'occupy movement'

Have you been affected or involved in any of the recent occupations?

Do you know why the protesters are occupying public areas? Are you clear about the protesters objectives?

What do you think about the wider reaction to the occupation movement? Please consider the reaction of politicians, the police, the media, the church and the people who work in the city.

Do the protesters have the 'right' to occupy land, such as the area outside of St Paul's cathedral in London?

Can any connections be made to the recent riots and the current occupation movement?

And now some general questions...

Is there a 'correct' or a 'good' way to protest? Do some causes justify civil action, while other causes do not? If so, which causes?

Should the police have more powers to control civil disobedience?

At the time of writing this directive it looks likely that some public services will be disrupted by strikes on 30th November 2011. Please share any thoughts about this. We would also welcome some general comments about striking.

Part 3: You and the 1980s

Since the Mass Observation Project was launched in 1981 we have issued 93 directives covering over 250 themes. As I write this directive, I am struck by some of the parallels between some of the questions Mass Observation asked in the 1980s to the directives we are issuing today and in recent years (the royal wedding in summer 1981, shop closure and unemployment in autumn 1981, attitudes to USA in autumn 1984). In part three of this directive we would like you to reflect on the 1980s – the decade that launched the Mass Observation Project!

Please start Part 3 of your directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number and a brief biography.

Please note that this directive is NOT aimed at only those Mass Observers who lived through the 1980s. We are interested in all of you, whenever you were born and whatever you were doing.

However, if you were alive in the 1980s please begin your response by explaining what your life was like during the decade. Where were you living? What were you doing? Did this change over the decade? What was the most significant thing to happen to you and your family during the 1980s?

Can you remember what you were doing on New Year's Eve in 1989? How did you feel?

For everyone... How do you look back on the decade?

What do the 1980s mean to you? Please could you jot down ten separate words or phrases that conjure up the 1980s in Britain for you?

What do you think were the most important events and news stories of the 1980s? Are any of these still relevant in 2011?

Are there any key films, television programmes, songs, or fashions that you associate with the decade?

Please post your response to: **The Mass Observation Archive, FREEPOST BR 2112, The Library, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 1ZX** Or by email to: moa@sussex.ac.uk

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