

THE AUTOMOBILE THEFT INVESTIGATOR

A Learning and Reference Text for the Automobile Theft
Investigator, the Police Supervisor, and the Student

By

CLAUDE W. COOK

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER

Springfield • Illinois • U.S.A.

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Investigator, the Police Supervisor, and the Student*

By

CLAUDE W. COOK

*CW-4 United States Army (Retired)
Formerly Commanding Officer
U.S. Army Crime Laboratory (Europe)*

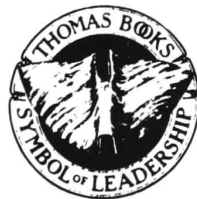
and

*Agent (Laboratory Option)
Colorado Bureau of Investigation
Distinguished Member
Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners
Member
International Association for Identification
Former Member
Colorado Automobile Theft Investigator's Association*

With a Foreword by

Robert F. Rascoe

*Lt. Col. USAR (Ret)
Det. Lieut. LAPD (Ret)*



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FOREWORD

HAVING LIVED through all but a few months of this century, I believe I am as qualified as many (and far more qualified than most) to make some observations concerning it. Contemporary historians are already making judgments as to the prime contribution of the twentieth century. Certainly there is an ample field of candidates to choose from—nuclear fission, radio, the transistor and so on. However, in my view, the twentieth century will be recorded as the age of mass transportation, and the automobile must be recognized as an intricate and important part of this.

The century was not too old when Americans began to develop an inordinate love affair with the automobile, and that passion has continued, undiminished, yet today. Certainly, I can remember the joy and pride of my first automobile and the intimate feeling of possession that came from owning it. Over sixty years and forty automobiles later I can attest that the same old feeling is still there, and I only wish my old body was in better shape to support it.

Although Americans primarily initiated this affair with the automobile, it has spread worldwide and societies founded on far different bases than ours are also succumbing to its pervasive charm. And, like us, they are finding that what one man has other men covet.

It is regrettable that almost since the first automobile appeared in the streets, the first automobile thief appeared, too. Initially, the thefts were more of the nature of joyriding for the curious and envious, but as the automobile became more sophisticated and its use more widespread, so too did the auto thief and auto-theft rings. Today, as the author so clearly points out, automobile thievery is big business and carries with it all of the attributes of big business via planning, organization and efficiency.

As an individual who has dedicated the major portion of his life to law enforcement, I cannot too forcefully stress the importance of prepa-

ration and knowledge (along with hard work) in defeating the criminal. This book presents a broad base of knowledge, with sufficient detail, to assist both the student and the trained investigator in expanding their understanding and effectiveness in matters relating to automobile theft investigation.

Robert F. RASCOE

Lt. Col. USAR (Ret.)

Det. Lieut. LAPD (Ret.)

PREFACE

IT IS HOPED that the reader will take the time to peruse the opening remarks (Foreword, Preface, and Acknowledgments) prior to his beginning with a reading of this book proper. While one often ignores such material, it is often done to our detriment. The time saved in getting to the meat of the subject matter is usually offset by our not being prepared for the type of approach to the material that the author may choose to take.

Should one's use of this text be in connection with some course of instruction, it would be even more to his advantage to read some of this material, in that he will have gained some insight as to the author's slant and approach, which may differ from that of one's instructor. It may even be (God forbid) that the instructor may be in disagreement with some statement or suggestion of the author, and the tone of the Preface may prepare you for such an eventuality.

While a book may open the door to some area of knowledge (and even allow one's foot to get inside the door), it does not of necessity follow that the reader will be permitted to view everything behind that door from all sides and in full panorama. The author may limit his coverage to specific aspects of the topic/s at hand. Generally, when a writing limits the coverage, it is done for some definite reason (or reasons), aside from the possibility that the writer may not know his subject as completely as he might, and these reasons will usually be pointed out in the opening pages, along with the writer's professed objective.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The field of automobile theft investigation is not a field that has been extensively covered in textbooks (particularly for the prospective investigator) or someone new to the field. It is for this reason that I chose to write on this topic.

When I first embarked on this undertaking, I had visions of writing a book which would be accepted as the final authoritative work in the field. I have been humbled somewhat since and have even found that a fair portion of the information that I would have like to have included must be left out. This book cannot (in any real sense) be considered as a restricted publication, although one must order a copy, rather than be able to pick it up directly from the shelves of the bookseller, where only those with a **need to know** might have access to it. When material of a sensitive nature is needed, I have indicated other sources where that particular information might be available. As such the readership for these other publications is controlled to a greater extent than is possible here.

There might be those who feel that I have divulged more information on these pages than is really wise, even with my deliberate omissions (and thereby making available to the less law-abiding element information that could come back to haunt us). I do not feel that this is the case, however. Where I have included information that might be used by the criminal element, in most cases they already possess it, have access to it from other sources, or can gain it from other individuals like themselves. By the same token, it is information needed by the investigator if he is to be expected to do his job properly.

This is not meant to sound like a disclaimer or as an alibi for my own shortcomings and fuzzy thinking. I accept full responsibility for the intelligence made available on these pages. I regret that I could not write the fully comprehensive book I had wished to and that the reader must, therefore, be somewhat limited here, unless he has access to publications such as those of the National Automobile Theft Bureau.

This text is not written in the manner of a "how-to" book, and the reader cannot expect to follow instructions as they might be laid out in a cookbook, where, if one follows the directions, reasonable success is assured. The basic background information has been included, and implementation of any of the information or techniques related in this book is left to the good common sense of the reader. When one is tasked with the duties of an investigator, one must proceed with his work as circumstances may dictate. No set collection of priorities has been laid down (save those specific instances where evidence might be destroyed if matters were handled out of their proper order), although suggestions have been made and information for the preparation of checksheets has been included.

Most chapters in this book will be followed by a set of review questions, though the answers have **not** been included. These questions have been incorporated only as a means of enabling the reader to double-check his own recollections against the book or to nudge him into thinking for himself. No approach or technique is a totally wrong one if it works for you, provided that it is legal, ethical, and no one is injured or placed in undue danger by its implementation. There will even be times where one “lucks out” and a questionable approach or technique will pay off, but if you depend on luck you will find it a very poor substitute for knowledge and skill.

Each chapter of this text was written to cover a specific topic with **reasonable** completeness, the degree of completeness being dictated by that information needed to allow the reader to grasp the meaning and direction of what is being related, with **unnecessary** amplification being dispensed with, including only that information needed to permit one to do the job. Each chapter, generally, should be expected to “stand on its own,” without the need to build on a preceding chapter. In some few instances, where reference is made to some previously mentioned matter, the need to refer back has been specifically called to the reader’s attention.

The material covered in this text is of primary interest to those just starting out in the field of automobile theft investigation and/or those who are contemplating entering this field. A seasoned investigator, however, may pick up some new wrinkles or, if nothing else, gain a somewhat different perspective of the overall problem. The “new kid on the block” can use this book as a source of learning, while the “old hand” may use it as reference or review material. One never becomes so proficient that an occasional review of the basics is not beneficial. Those who may be completely uninitiated will discover that this field encompasses much more than they ever dreamed to be the case.

A perusal of the Contents section will give the reader some grasp of the material covered, though it will not show the depth of coverage given any specific subject. An honest attempt has been made to include the areas of major concern, and these areas have been explored only insofar as to permit one to perform his job adequately. Should the reader desire to delve more deeply into any or all facets of the work, I would be the last person to stand in his way.

Chapter 17 is comprised of a listing of terminology which may be useful in connection with automotive matters. The investigator, in the writing of reports, interviewing or interrogating witnesses or subjects,

and in presenting testimony in either criminal or civil courts, must be able to **speak the language** of the field (be it the language of the mechanic, the truck driver, or merely to present an understandable and accurate account of matters that have transpired) and be able to break this down into layman's terms. Additionally, the court reporter may find this chapter to be of considerable benefit in ensuring that he has transcribed testimony properly and that spellings are correct. While the majority of court transcripts I have had occasion to review have been excellent, I have gone over a few that were less so.

CONCLUSION

In closing, I would like to state that there are few published texts designed to furnish information needed by the automobile theft investigator. This book was written in an attempt to at least partially compensate for this lack of coverage.

I don't feel that I could close without making reference to my granddaughter, who is just becoming acquainted with numbers. When asked how old she thought God was, she figured Him to be about seven years old; grandpa, on the other hand, was fourteen. So, if my presentation appears to be a bit fuzzy in spots, what can be expected from someone who is thought to be **seven years older than God**?

C.W.C.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IN THE WRITING of a book such as this, no one can possibly give acknowledgment to all individuals, firms, and organizations who have somehow contributed information in this volume. Without these contributions, however, this book could never have been written.

I am particularly indebted to the National Automobile Theft Bureau (NATB), headquartered in Palos Hills, Illinois, who, on being informed that I was working on this project, very kindly furnished me with copies of their NATB Journal (Winter 1982-83), their 1982 annual report, assorted factsheets, and exhibited a continuing interest in the project. I, of course, already had a number of copies of their various identification manuals.

Recognition must also be given to an organization that was formed less than ten years back, the Colorado Automobile Theft Investigators Association (CATI), who rekindled my interest in this field of investigation. Having participated as an instructor in obliterated serial number restoration at a number of their annual training seminars and having been a member of this organization, I was able to pick up bits and pieces of information that I had not given prior serious attention to (or had forgotten about). Members of that organization also furnished some input concerning the topics included in this book, having replied to a questionnaire that was circulated prior to my beginning this writing. (Incidentally, the organization I have referred to as CATI is now called the Rocky Mountain Automobile Theft Investigators Association, if my information is correct.)

Indirectly, I owe thanks to the International Association of Automobile Theft Investigators (IAATI), though I have never been a member of that organization, nor have I corresponded with them concerning the writing of this text. Many members of CATI are also members of IAATI, and I have also had the opportunity to converse with a number of IAATI members, who like myself, were called in to serve in the capacity of instructors at the annual training seminars.

I am also indebted to Sears, Roebuck and Company, Sears Tower, Chicago, Illinois 60884, for permission to use certain information appearing in the tire interchangeability tables appearing in this book, and I will state here (as I have elsewhere in this text) that if there are any errors or misinformation connected with these charts, **the fault is mine** and Sears should in no way be deemed to be liable for such errors.

Thanks is also due to Ms. Carol Ann Lenson, a qualified automobile mechanic, employed in the automotive service department of the Juan Chavira Chevron Station in San Marcos, California. Ms. Lenson very kindly agreed to review portions of this book in an attempt to keep errors to a minimum. Ms. Lenson can in no way be held liable for the writings of a "bull-headed" old man who may have refused to take advantage of her good advice.

My friends at the Colorado Bureau of Investigation Laboratory are also due thanks for supplying me with a number of photographs used in this volume and for their assistance, both past and present. These photographs were taken for the express purpose of inclusion in this book and, knowing their caseload commitments, I really appreciate this effort on my behalf.

More than anything else, I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Robert F. Rascoe, who consented to write the Foreword for this text. Bob has been involved in various and sundry facets of the law enforcement profession even longer than I. Among other things, he is the most knowledgeable and proficient questioned-documents examiner it has been my privilege to be acquainted with. First and foremost, he has always been a cop, and his thinking is that of a law enforcement officer. I feel deeply honored, not only because of our friendship over the years, but that he should consent to write the Foreword for this text.

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**THE
AUTOMOBILE THEFT
INVESTIGATOR**

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THE automobile theft investigator is a person but rarely heard of, or encountered by, the general public. Should the average citizen be aware of the existence of the auto theft division of his city, county, or state law enforcement agency, the assumption is that this is some sort of record-keeping unit whose duty it is to furnish information and assistance to the “real cops” should the need arise. That the investigators assigned to the auto theft division are every bit as well qualified and knowledgeable professionals as those who may be assigned to the more publicized areas of the law enforcement field, has never occurred to Mr. Average Citizen. Unless he has been personally involved with an investigation of this nature, he has just never given the matter any real thought.

By the same token, a good percentage of law enforcement officers don’t really know what goes on in the auto theft division of their own department, the complexities of the problems faced, or the intense degree of personal satisfaction occasioned by successfully bringing to a close an investigation of this type.

It is no more than normal for the average patrol officer to look forward to someday moving up to a supervisory position in one of the uniformed divisions or assignment to one of the “plainclothes” divisions. The thought of wrestling drunks professionally until the day of his retirement somehow has no real appeal for him. In addition, while a good scuffle on occasion may add some zest or spice to life, it does nothing to increase one’s self-worth, nor does it increase one’s ability to pay the monthly bills. In his thoughts of advancement, however, possible assignment to the auto theft detail probably does not rank at the top of his list of preferences—if, indeed, he has even included it on that list. The tendency is more to drift into this type of work than to get there by conscious choice. In other words, the job usually comes looking for the man.

In most departments, large or small, once a “hot check” shows a vehicle to be stolen, the investigation is referred to the auto theft division, investigations division, or to someone else having more background in this type of work than the officer making the initial contact. The officer concerned will, after briefing the party or parties taking over (and possibly filling out some reports), proceed with his normal duties, the incident being a closed issue from his point of view.

Auto theft investigation is not really taught at the training academies or in college courses, and texts on the subject are all but nonexistent. The rudiments may be covered in an officer’s academy instruction, to the extent of general things to be on the lookout for, but the auto theft investigator must learn his craft through apprenticeship or on-the-job training (OJT). What the officer assigned to this type of investigation needs, be he a “dinosaur” or the “new kid on the block,” is a bible. Sure, that’s what he needs, but one does not exist.

Why hasn’t the bible been written? Well, it’s because things are (and forever will be) in a transitory state. What may apply today may not have applied yesterday, nor is it a certainty that it will be applicable tomorrow. Laws change, manufacturing practices change, and practices and techniques within this and allied fields are constantly being changed, modified, or superceded.

So, where does that leave us? In pretty good shape, actually. We, who signed on to become fearless fighters of crime and/or evil, actually have a great number of sources that can be drawn upon to get the information we need to accomplish our mission. Further, if something is beyond our capability as an individual or as a small unit of the whole, there are others willing and able to come to our assistance whose resources, knowledge, and experience may be far greater than ours.

Sources of Information and Assistance

If you are among the ground troops and need to call in the artillery, here are a few of the higher-echelon units that might be relied upon for the required help. Remember, however, that they will only be giving you assistance, **not** taking the case out of your hands. The artillery may shell a target or position at the request of the foot troops, but when the shelling stops, it’s the responsibility of the foot soldiers to move in, take over, and occupy the objective. The cannons are acting in a support capacity only.

THE NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE THEFT BUREAU (NATB). This nonprofit service organization, which receives its support from associated insur-

ance companies, renders invaluable help to the auto theft investigator. Their annual passenger vehicle identification manuals and their other publications are sources of information that cannot be obtained elsewhere without extensive research and contact with automobile manufacturers, and other sources, which NATB has built up and maintained over the years. Further, the services of their branch offices and special agents furnish investigative assistance and data from their files pertaining to the tracing of true ownership of vehicles and the like, providing information where no record may be found in normal computerized enforcement networks. If the information you need concerns motorcycles or commercial vehicles, they may have such information in their files, as well; if not, they can contact (or assist you in contacting) the manufacturer or distributor to obtain the required information. NATB agents may be detailed to work with you (at your request) on large-scale or complicated investigations.

AUTOMOBILE THEFT INVESTIGATORS ASSOCIATIONS. There are a number of such organizations, both national and regional. The International Association of Automobile Theft Investigators (IAATI) is one such organization on a national level, with most state or regional associations being affiliated with it.* Monthly or bimonthly meetings are held by local and regional organizations or chapters, and many hold annual training seminars or otherwise provide training to the field. Such organizations may also have journals or newsletters which keep the membership abreast of both what is happening in the organization and information and trends bearing on motor vehicle theft. The training seminars offered by these groups are normally open to all law enforcement officers and are not limited to their membership alone. Registration fees, lodging, and the like will, of course, be charged for.

THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI). While their jurisdiction does not extend to cases of a strictly local nature, cases involving interstate transportation of stolen property (to include the interstate transportation of stolen vehicles) or vehicles involved in illegal activities where state boundaries are crossed are their concern. Should it appear that the case may be tried in federal rather than in local courts, they may wish to take over control of an investigation. By the same token, they may elect to become involved in an advisory capacity only, handling their case as a concurrent investigation with local authorities, even if the case is to be tried in federal court. Where automobile theft rings may be operating

*The mailing address for IAATI is 12416 Feldon Street, Wheaton, Maryland 20906, (301)946-4114.

and state or international boundaries may be crossed, the bureau will either act to coordinate investigations or assume control. In recent years, the bureau has become more willing to **work with** local authorities in such cases, particularly since manpower can get to be quite a problem if local agencies are shut out. The bureau also has forensic laboratory facilities which may be utilized when need be.

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT). This is a federal agency having control over vehicles in interstate commerce. They may be relied upon to furnish information pertaining to federal safety requirements of vehicles in interstate commerce as well as information on federal safety standards applicable to all vehicles. When it comes to stopping distances, required stopping systems (including backup systems), emissions, the types of glass required for use as windshields, etc., it is generally easier to contact DOT than attempt to maintain reference material on much of this seldom-used information. They also regulate tire manufacturers and those engaged in tire recapping, plus nearly all phases of the transportation field where federal regulations exist.*

FEDERAL AND STATE PROSECUTORS OFFICES. It is the duty of the federal or state prosecutor to file charges on, and prosecute, violators within their jurisdictions. They are acquainted with federal and/or state laws and can advise as to matters regarding to the bringing of a case to court. They may also be relied upon to advise in cases where multiple investigations are ongoing concerning the same party or parties. The investigator should work closely with the prosecutor's office to ensure that needed evidence is not overlooked and that the case under investigation, or up for trial, is as "air-tight" and "squeaky clean" as possible. Their offices can advise on the obtaining of warrants, when needed, and assist the investigator in numerous ways.

OTHER DEPARTMENTAL DIVISIONS AND OR OTHER AGENCIES. Where assistance, cooperation, or information is needed, one can generally count on his fellow officers, whether from his own department or some other department or agency. Traffic and patrol divisions, or investigative divisions within the department, are there to assist, and other law enforcement agencies are no less willing to cooperate—in spite of any departmental or agency rivalries. The department of motor vehicles (DMV) may also be counted upon for any assistance that they can give. They all subscribe to the sentiment that **Good is better than evil**

*For the address of this agency, refer to Chapter 9, "Tire Information for Passenger Cars and Trucks," where the manufacturer's identification systems (DOT numbers) are also discussed.

because it's nicer and are more than happy to honor a request for assistance.

FORENSIC LABORATORY FACILITIES. As with other investigative sections or divisions, the auto theft investigators may frequently have need of the forensic laboratory facilities. The major areas where the laboratory can be of help to you will be covered later in this volume in a chapter devoted to that subject. When they are needed, their services are indispensable.

VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS, DEALERS, AND REPAIR FACILITIES. A great deal of useful information can be retrieved from time to time from dealers and repair facilities. Less frequently, you may have need to contact a particular manufacturer for specific information. You should cultivate such sources of information, even to the extent of being on a first-name basis, or have a specific contact with them.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Before we actually tackle the problem of automobile theft, becoming involved with the coverage of routine techniques and procedures, let us find out a bit about the sort of problem automobile theft really is and how great a concern it may (or should) be.

Should you, as an auto theft investigator, find yourself in a position where you may be required to make presentations before lay groups, perhaps some of this information will be of benefit in pointing out not only your concerns but may involve them, as well. All applicable information will not be covered in this chapter, but a good deal of such will be, and by selective extraction of this material, a fairly good presentation can be put together.

Some of the information given here may also be of advantage in showing your position (or that of your division) and the size of the problem to be faced when it comes to securing adequate operational funds at the time when departmental funding and its allocation is being considered.

For openers, if you are the owner of an automobile, your chances of having that car stolen during the next 12 months are 1 in 153, based on 1982 statistics, and these statistics haven't changed drastically in recent years. Somewhere in the United States a car is stolen every 29 seconds. At the present rate of theft (and current valuations), this means a monetary loss of approximately four billion dollars each year, not counting the

cost of investigations, payments of insurance claims, the costs involved in taking apprehended suspects to court, and other matters. During the year 1982, 1,073,988 automobile thefts were reported, with an average of \$3,545 as the value of each vehicle stolen.

In addition to the above, there were 1,350,456 reported thefts of contents of motor vehicles, with the average loss being \$385. Then to this must be added some 1,400,210 thefts of motor-vehicle accessories (averaging \$214 for each incident). Altogether, between actual thefts of motor vehicles, thefts of contents, and accessory thefts, this comes to well over five billion dollars per year, according to 1982 figures, which were slightly down from previous years.

Okay, what are the chances of getting your automobile back if it is stolen? Statistics show that the percentage rate (based on recovered value) is 54 percent, and don't assume that your car is going to be in the same condition, if and when you get it back, as it was at the time it was stolen—if, in fact, you get it back at all (after all, it's only a 50-50 chance that you will get it back).

To top this all off, the cases cleared by apprehension and conviction of the thief is but 14 percent. This means that 86 percent of automobile thieves get away with it, or that a thief will get away with it 86 percent of the time (which is not quite the same thing). Rarely is an individual caught on his first venture in crime (which might well argue against reduced sentences for first offenders)—it's only the first time they have been caught. Who knows what they have gotten away with up to that point?

When one starts citing figures such as those just given, people are not inclined, generally, to just take one's word for them. For this reason, Tables 1-I and 1-II, extracted from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniformed Crime Reports, Crime in the United States, 1982*, have been included here.

The next question that may come to your mind, or to the minds of those to whom you have cited these statistics, is (since the statistics show an average from all of the United States): How does our state stack up with these national averages? For this reason, we have included Tables 1-III and 1-IV, which may serve to show where your own particular geographical area fits into the overall picture. (On comparison of these last two tables, you may note that California leads the country as far as the total number of automobile thefts for the year are concerned. You might also note that California drops down to fifth place, once these figures are broken down by population.)

Table 1-I

**FBI UNIFORM CRIME REPORT STATISTICS
ON AUTOMOBILE THEFT**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Thefts</i>	<i>+ Increase - Decrease</i>	<i>+ % Increase - % Decrease</i>	<i>Rec %</i>	<i>Avg. Value</i>	<i>% Cleared</i>
1957	276,000					
1958	282,800	+ 6,800	+ 3			
1959	288,300	+ 5,500	+ 2	92	\$ 829.00	26.2
1960	321,400	+ 27,600	+ 9	92	830.00	25.7
1961	326,200	+ 7,700	+ 2	90	840.00	27.8
1962	356,100	+ 29,900	+ 9	90	866.00	25.0
1963	399,000	+ 42,900	+ 11	91	927.00	26.0
1964	463,000	+ 64,000	+ 16	89	1,048.00	26.0
1965	493,100	+ 30,100	+ 5	88	1,038.00	25.0
1966	557,000	+ 63,900	+ 13	90	1,029.00	23.0
1967	654,900	+ 97,900	+ 18	86	1,017.00	20.0
1968	777,800	+ 122,900	+ 19	86	991.00	19.0
1969	871,900	+ 94,100	+ 12	84	992.00	18.0
1970	921,400	+ 49,500	+ 6	84	948.00	17.0
1971	941,600	+ 20,200	+ 2	82	933.00	16.0
1972	881,000	- 60,600	- 6	*74	935.00	17.0
1973	923,600	+ 42,600	+ 5	72	1,095.00	16.0
1974	973,800	+ 50,200	+ 5	66	1,246.00	15.0
1975	1,000,500	+ 26,700	+ 3	62	1,457.00	14.0
1976	957,600	- 42,900	- 4	59	1,741.00	14.0
1977	968,400	+ 10,800	+ 1	60	1,992.00	14.0
1978	991,600	+ 23,200	+ 2	60	2,325.00	15.0
1979	1,097,189	+ 105,589	+ 10.6	59	2,692.00	14.0
1980	1,114,651	+ 17,462	+ 1.6	56	2,879.00	14.0
1981	1,073,988	- 40,663	- 3.6	52	3,173.00	14.0
1982	1,048,310	- 25,678	- 2.4	54	3,545.00	14.0

*Beginning in 1972, recovered percentage refers to value of vehicles.

Table 1-II

**VALUE OF PROPERTY STOLEN DURING
MOTOR VEHICLE RELATED THEFT — 1982**

Motor Vehicles (1,048,310 × \$3,545)	\$3,716,258,950
Contents (1,350,456 × \$385)	\$ 519,925,560
Accessories (1,400,210 × \$214)	\$ 299,644,940
TOTAL	\$4,535,829,450

SOURCE: Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniform Crime Reports* for 1982.

Table 1-III
STATE MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT 1982

<i>1982 Rank</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>1982 Thefts</i>
1	California	164,530
2	New York	137,880
3	Texas	87,105
4	Michigan	63,009
5	Massachusetts	55,995
6	Illinois	54,523
7	New Jersey	46,620
8	Florida	44,772
9	Ohio	41,190
10	Pennsylvania	39,413
11	Indiana	17,871
12	Georgia	17,579
13	Connecticut	17,411
14	Maryland	16,724
15	Missouri	16,624
16	Oklahoma	15,532
17	Tennessee	15,442
18	Louisiana	14,637
19	Colorado	12,097
20	Washington	11,919
21	North Carolina	11,105
22	Alabama	10,777
23	Arizona	10,577
24	Virginia	10,108
25	Minnesota	9,818
26	South Carolina	8,896
27	Wisconsin	8,706
28	Kentucky	8,548
29	Oregon	7,973
30	Rhode Island	7,048
31	Kansas	5,358
32	Iowa	5,045
33	Nevada	4,977
34	New Mexico	4,279
35	Arkansas	4,262
36	Hawaii	4,181
37	Mississippi	3,918
38	Utah	3,908
39	West Virginia	3,567
40	Nebraska	2,821
41	Alaska	2,603
42	Delaware	2,478
43	Maine	2,159
44	New Hampshire	2,127
45	Montana	2,070
46	Idaho	1,688
47	Vermont	1,315
48	Wyoming	1,254
49	North Dakota	940
50	South Dakota	818

SOURCE: Federal Bureau of Investigations' *Uniform Crime Reports* for 1982.

Table 1-IV

**STATE MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT REPORT FOR 1982
PER 100,000 POPULATION**

<i>1982 Rank</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Vehicle Thefts per 100,000 Population</i>
1	Massachusetts	968.6
2	New York	780.8
3	Rhode Island	735.7
4	Michigan	691.7
5	California	665.5
6	New Jersey	626.8
7	Alaska	594.3
8	Texas	570.1
9	Nevada	564.9
10	Connecticut	552.2
11	Oklahoma	488.9
12	Illinois	476.3
13	Florida	429.8
14	Hawaii	420.6
15	Delaware	411.6
16	Colorado	397.3
17	Maryland	392.1
18	Ohio	381.7
19	Arizona	369.8
20	Missouri	335.8
21	Louisiana	335.6
22	Pennsylvania	332.2
23	Tennessee	332.0
24	Indiana	326.6
25	New Mexico	314.9
26	Georgia	311.7
27	Oregon	301.0
28	Washington	280.8
29	South Carolina	277.7
30	Alabama	273.3
31	Montana	258.4
32	Vermont	254.8
33	Utah	251.5
34	Wyoming	249.8
35	Minnesota	237.6
36	Kentucky	233.1
37	New Hampshire	223.7
38	Kansas	222.5
39	Maine	190.6
40	Arkansas	186.0
41	North Carolina	184.5
42	Virginia	184.1
43	West Virginia	183.1
44	Wisconsin	182.7
45	Nebraska	177.9
46	Idaho	174.9
47	Iowa	173.7
48	Mississippi	153.6
49	North Dakota	140.3
50	South Dakota	118.4

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

The police can't be everywhere at once, so it only follows that automobile owners must take some steps to protect their own property. They can do so by making it more difficult for a thief to steal their vehicle.

Some of the things that can and should be done by the owner of a motor vehicle to help protect his property are listed in the following:

1. When leaving your car unattended, lock the car and keep the key(s) in your pocket or purse. (Nearly one in five vehicles stolen during the past year were left unlocked.)
2. Park with the front wheels turned sharply to either the right or left. This makes it more difficult for the vehicle to be towed away.
3. If your vehicle has front-wheel drive, put on the emergency brake when parked and place your gear shift in "park." If you have a stick shift, pull on the emergency brake and shift into reverse or low gear. By so doing, all four wheels will be locked, making it more difficult to tow your car.
4. Be sure that all windows are completely closed and that the doors are locked.
5. Put all packages left in the car out of sight. Also, CB radios, tape decks, and other items that can clearly be seen from outside the vehicle tend to invite theft.
6. If you have a theft-deterrent device (such as an alarm system or devices to cut off either the electrical or fuel systems), activate it prior to leaving your vehicle.
7. If you have a hood lock (Fig. 1-1) (some means of preventing access to the engine and electrical wiring under the hood of the car) separate from the hood release which may be located under the instrument panel of the vehicle, it should be kept locked at all times when you do not need to open the hood yourself.
8. Park in a well-lighted area.
9. When parking in a commercial lot or garage, leave only the ignition key with the attendant. Keep all other keys in your possession. Ensure that the key number does not appear on the key that you leave with the attendant. (This number indicates the combination of cuts of the specific key and is usually stamped onto a knockout portion located on the bow of the key to facilitate easy removal. Such numbers are generally found on factory supplied keys, and you are advised to remove this knockout at the earliest convenience. If you are having duplicate keys made, the locksmith would prefer to work

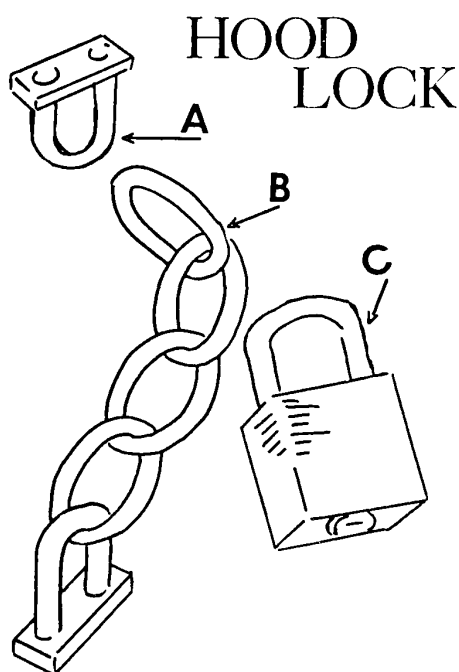


Figure 1-1. Shown are the components of a hood lock setup. The shackle (A) is secured to the center front portion of the hood of the vehicle's engine compartment. The shackle with attached chain (B) is attached to the frame or lower portion of the engine compartment. The chain (B) is threaded through the shackle (A) and secured with the padlock (C), making it impossible to raise the hood for more than a few inches unless the padlock is removed.

directly from a key furnished him to duplicate and really has no need of the information on the knockout.)

10. Keep your driver's license and registration on your person to prevent use of these documents to either sell your car or to impersonate you should they be challenged by police.
11. Should you leave your house keys, registration (or other papers with your name and/or address) with your unattended vehicle, you may well return home to discover that you have been the victim of a burglary.
12. If you have a garage, use it. Lock both the vehicle **and** the garage door(s). (This not only makes it more difficult for someone to steal your car, but it may prevent theft of any items stored or kept in the garage. Further, where one has an attached garage adjoining his living quarters, entry to the garage puts the burglar out of sight should he wish to attempt entry to your house proper.)

Even though all of the above precautions are observed, there can be no ironclad guarantee that your vehicle will not be stolen or that vehicle theft rates will appreciably drop. While it may provide some degree of protection for your vehicle, it may well be that the thief will merely pass up taking yours in favor of one that is less well secured. With the professional car thief, however, if he really wants **your** car, he can most likely get it (a saying among car thieves is: “If I want it, it’s mine”).

ANTI-THEFT (AND ALARM) DEVICES

The installation of theft-deterrent devices serves to delay a thief and buy time. Time is the enemy of the criminal. The more time is consumed in an attempt at theft (or other depredation), the more likely the thief is to be seen or apprehended, and he may well pass up an attempt at a theft and look for easier game. A number of devices are available that either emit light or sound an alarm, as well as devices that interrupt either the fuel or electrical systems of the vehicle. Most such devices can be installed by the purchaser or can be mounted at any competent repair shop.

All such devices may serve their purpose, and the installation of such a device may result in a reduction of insurance theft premium, but the really dedicated thief (given sufficient time) is capable of stealing any vehicle. If a professional car thief accepts a commission to steal a vehicle of given make and model (the specifics may even include body color, upholstery type, and given accessories) and your car answers that description, possibly being the only one of that type immediately available, your automobile is as good as gone.

RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN YOUR BAILIWICK

Bailiwick is a good word. It is one that denotes territory or jurisdiction — one’s “stamping ground.” Now, just what is the bailiwick of the automobile theft investigator? A lot depends on local ground rules, but by-and-large it covers just about the whole enchilada — everything from soup to nuts that can remotely be associated with some means of transportation.

While he is referred to as an auto theft investigator, he actually must deal with the theft of all sorts of motor-driven vehicles plus trailers and

items that might be associated with such. Automobile theft may be the one most prevalent type of investigation he must handle, but he may also find himself responsible for investigations concerning stolen motorcycles, motor-driven cycles (scooters and mopeds), commercial trucks and trailers, trailers of all types (which are not motor vehicles in themselves but are dependent on some form of motor vehicle for their motive power), even boats and such off-road vehicles as construction and farm equipment. Many of the vehicles with which he may be concerned do not have the same licensing procedures and degree of control as the more conventional automobile does. Licensing and registration may not be required for certain of these "vehicles," and if so, it may be by some agency other than DMV.

It is not that the auto theft division is used as a dumping ground for the handling of some of these oddball types of theft, it's just that auto theft is better equipped to handle them than the other divisions might be. Remember this the next time you become involved in the investigation of a stolen racing sulky used in harness racing or the theft of a sailboat which may not even have an engine for propulsion.

The automobile theft investigator may well become involved in investigations concerning the trafficking in other forms of stolen property (usually stemming from an investigation involving a stolen vehicle), frauds relating to stolen vehicles (including nonexistent vehicles which have been registered from paperwork only, insured, and reported stolen in order to make a claim against an insurance firm), even arson as it may relate to a vehicle involved in an incendiary fire. During the course of a routine stolen vehicle investigation, he may discover evidence of other matters which are more properly the concern of other investigative sections or divisions, such as homicide, sexual assault, arson, narcotics, and theft, and must advise members of these other sections and assist them in following up with the investigations of such other crimes as may be indicated.

He must be aware of the type of work handled by other sections or divisions, and the manner in which they operate, in order that he will know who to call upon once indications of some other type of criminal offense is discovered. He must know how these other units operate, in order that he will not jeopardize their investigation while proceeding with his own. Additionally, he must be aware of the limits of his own expertise and know who (and when) to call for assistance.

Like all investigators, he must establish routines to be followed in conducting his investigations and ensure that these procedures are not