



The Role of the Media in Cold Cases

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ANZSOC, Perth 2019



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When is Cold Cold?

- No current investigative leads
- Periodic review
 - Advances in technologies/techniques
- Lead generation
 - Multiple avenues
 - 1 is the media, all forms



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How Many?

- NSW?



How Many?

- NSW = 700



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How Many?

- Australia-wide?



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How Many?

- Australia-wide = 2,000



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The Police and (Social) Media

- All Australia police forces have media departments
 - Liaise with production companies regarding potential projects/stories
 - Create content
 - Twitter, Facebook
 - Monitor social media

Mark Leveson @MarkLeveson · Jul 21
Bravo @NSWPF what a fantastic result for these missing people and their families. Let's hope there's a LOT more to come.

15 missing persons cases solved by new crack squad



15 missing persons cases solved by new crack squad
Fifteen missing persons cases have been solved and off the books in a year after the dysfunctional NSW M
dailytelegraph.com.au

1 4 11

Josh Butler @JoshButler · Mar 13
contacted NSW Police about this. Their response in full:

"The NSWPF regularly patrol our train stations and it is common practise to erect privacy screens for the purpose of a search. They are not strip searching tents."

Chris Dengate @Chris_dengate · Mar 13
Large police presence with drug dog and strip search tents set up at Sydney Central station.

Strip search tents. At a train station.
[Show this thread](#)



PoliceAssociationNSW @PoliceAssocNSW · Oct 2
We're aware of a Critical Incident involving multiple members occurring in #Penrith. Association representatives are on the ground providing #support and #assistance to the members involved. See NSWPF for updates. @PANSWMS

2 1

NSW Police Force @nswpolice · Feb 26, 2018
A man has been charged after a joint investigation by the Australian Border Force (ABF) and New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) into the alleged importation of almost 300kg of ephedrine, concealed in 21,000 highlighter pens. police.nsw.gov.au/news/news_arti.



4 22 31



NSW Police Force @nswpolice · Oct 8, 2016
The NSWPF sponsored McLaren 650s Spider & Bentley Continental GT doing a parade lap on the Mount Panorama Circuit at the 2016 Bathurst 1000.



4 10 41



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The Changing World of Reporting

- Social media = significant source of reporting
- Both cold and current cases
- A problem
- An opportunity

21:15 ↗



Tweet



Victoria Police ✓
@VictoriaPolice

Replying to @TravellingFeme

Do not report incidents via social media. Contact police → bit.ly/2P10GWG. In an emergency, phone Triple Zero (000)



Find my local police station
police.vic.gov.au

16:05 · 9/12/19 · [Salesforce - Social Studio](#)



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QPS as an Example

- July 2018 – June 2019
- QPS converted 100 Facebook posts into intelligence reports that were then further investigated
- + 18 Twitter posts immediately escalated to urgent 000 assist requests
 - showing the power of social media to inform the police as to current situations that need attention and avenues of potential investigation



Cold Case NSW, standard
media:
William Tyrrell





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Cold Case NSW, Facebook: Karlie Pearce Stevenson and Khandalyce Pearce



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"I can tell you it's caller 1,267 and 1,271 that provided the crucial breakthrough,"
South Australian Major Crime Detective
Superintendent Des Bray said.



- 08/2008
 - Images of Khandalyce uploaded to Facebook, showing the toddler at a motor show in Alice Springs with a POI's children
- Post-offence intelligence gathering
- But also, helping to solve the case



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Video

- YouTube, Facebook, CCTV
 - News
- Performance crimes
 - NZ mosque shootings
- Police





Twitter: Missing Persons

NSW Police Force @nswpolice · 14h
#AmberAlert Police have serious concerns for the welfare of 15-month-old **Peta Hodgson**, believed to be with her mother Sarah **Hodgson**. Last seen in Lethbridge Park on Tuesday. Anyone with information should contact Triple Zero (000) immediately. police.nsw.gov.au/news/news_arti.



1 62 16

NSW Police Force @nswpolice · Dec 4
Victoria Police believe this **missing person** may be near the **NSW** border

Victoria Police @VictoriaPolice · Dec 4
Have you seen Alanna Sargeson?

She was last seen at the Charlton Swimming Pool about 4.30pm on Friday 29 November.

Charlton Police Station on 5491 1011.
bit.ly/2sJ9rfo



6 6

AussieARA @AussieARA · Jun 9
Please sign, **Missing Person: NSW POLICE FORCE: PETITION FOR MARION BARTER** - Sign the Petition! chnng.it/5npHHw6P via @ChangeAUS



Sign the Petition
NSW POLICE: please find my mother, Marion Barter
change.org

6 6



Conclusion

- The way people are engaging with each other and the police is changing
 - Using it to leverage pressure on the police
- The police have to use the same platforms
- Two-way dialogue
 - Sharing information; police and public
 - Good source of information post-offence, short and long-term
 - Video, photos, witnesses
- All forms
 - TV, social media
- Academics work with police to maximise the benefits, minimise the negative impacts



Questions?

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