

The Concept, Tasks and Principles of the Methodology of Investigating Crimes “On Fresh Traces”

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Abstract: The history of the fight against crime shows that solving committed crimes has been, and remains, one of the most difficult tasks. Remaining unsolved, crimes create conditions for increasing public danger, i.e., for committing new, sometimes more dangerous acts. One of the ways to prevent crimes is through full disclosure. To solve a crime in the shortest possible time means that a minimum of time should pass from the moment when any signs of a crime were discovered or a crime was reported to the moment of detention of a person who is suspected of committing a crime and may be accused of committing a crime. *Fresh trace crime detection* is important for preventing crimes that the perpetrators of the crime in question may commit in the future.

Keywords: Crime Investigation, Fresh Crime Investigation, Information, Shortest Possible Time Frame, Conditions, Factors

1. Introduction

Before considering the essence and peculiarities of crime detection on hot trails, in our opinion, it is necessary to dwell on the very concept of crime detection. Crime detection is one of the tasks and the most important responsibility of specially authorized bodies. It is very important to understand what it means to solve a crime, who solves it and in the process of what activity. In other words, the correct definition of the concept itself is related to the solution of procedural and organizational issues in practice (Gavrilov, 1976, p. 9).

Crime solving is a complex concept concerning: criminal procedural, operational and investigative, criminalistic and organizational issues of the organization of preliminary investigation; analysis of the crime rate and the activities of law enforcement agencies (indicators of crime solving); analysis of the effectiveness of individual units and services of law enforcement agencies in the process of crime solving (Belozarov, 1990, p. 6).

Quick and complete disclosure of crimes remains one of the most important tasks not only in criminalistic activity but also in criminal proceedings. It cannot always be successfully solved at the loss of a part, and even more so, the majority of evidentiary and other criminally significant information, and especially data indicating the identity of a possible offender, the alleged location of the offender, etc. The loss of some part of information at the very beginning of the investigation is possible for a variety of reasons (weather, etc.).

The loss of some part of information at the very beginning of the investigation is possible for a variety of reasons (weather, natural, accidental, due to incorrect actions of the persons who first discovered the crime, etc.). Among these reasons, a huge role is played by

the time factor, which is of great importance not only for the process of preservation and disappearance of traces of crime and other information about it, but also for the process of crime detection itself (Yablokov, 2005, p. 553).

The effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, according to victims of criminal offenses, is determined primarily by how quickly the perpetrators of the criminal offence were identified. And this is how the effectiveness of work is determined not only by the affected citizens and their environment, but also by the criminals themselves (and their environment). In case of failure to bring a person, after he committed a crime, to criminal responsibility, he forms a strong conviction that law enforcement agencies work badly and nothing prevents him from committing a new crime.

If within a day after the crime the person suspected of committing it is identified and detained, then for other persons planning to commit a crime, it will be a warning, a deterrent, indicating to them that it will not be possible to commit a wrongful act without negative consequences for them (Gavrilov, 1976, p. 8). Already in 1764, the Italian jurist C. Beccaria wrote: “(...) the less time elapsed between the crime and punishment, the stronger and longer will be in the human mind the connection of two ideas: crime and punishment, so that they will involuntarily represent - one as a cause and the other as an inevitable consequence” (Beccaria, 1972, pp. 283-284).

As a general rule, the more time passes from the moment of committing a crime and the beginning of actions of the investigator or bodies of inquiry on its disclosure, the more its traces-sequences usually disappear, and the persons who committed the crime have more chances to escape far and sometimes reliably from the investigation. And vice versa, the rapid beginning of the specified activity on the fact of crime allows to realize it on still fresh, not modified and not disappeared material psycho-physiological (ideal) traces, allowing to conduct fast, purposeful, continuous and effective activity in search of the criminal and his apprehension. Therefore, favorable conditions for quick and purposeful activity on crime detection are usually formed when investigative activity on it begins immediately after the crime on its well-preserved, not yet modified and not disappeared material and ideal traces. It is in such cases, at the scene and from other sources, that it is possible to obtain important information about the identity of the perpetrator of the crime, allowing for the implementation of rapid and targeted activities to search for and apprehend him or her (Yablokov, 2005, pp. 553-554).

Well-preserved traces of a recently committed crime in practice and in criminalistic theory in a figurative sense are called *hot traces*. The system of urgent techniques and methods of investigative and operative-search character in situations based on the use of information contained in such traces and allowing in a short time to establish, search for and detain the criminal and solve all other tasks of investigation, has become known in criminalistics as *hot trace investigation* methodology (Ishchenko, 2007, p. 292). In law enforcement practice, the phrase “investigating the crime on fresh traces” is used figuratively (Gheorghită, 2015, p. 101).

2. The concept and objectives of the methodology of investigation of crimes on hot traces

Of all the variety of definitions of the concept of crime detection on hot trails, given by different authors, in our opinion, the most successful is given by V.E. Sidorov. He considers hot trail disclosure as a process of continuous activity of bodies of inquiry and preliminary investigation to collect and investigate the maximum evidentiary information about a crime committed in conditions of non-obviousness, the evaluation of which allows to identify the guilty person in the shortest possible time from the moment of committing this act and ensures successful subsequent investigation of it (Sidorov, 1992, p. 28).

However, analyzing the presented definition, in our opinion, some inaccuracies and *roughnesses* should be highlighted. First, the author singles out in the presented definition the process, but not the result of the activity of crime detection. Proceeding from the premise that the disclosure of a crime is an action to achieve a certain goal - the collection of sufficient evidence about the event of the crime and the person who committed it, we believe that it is more appropriate to apply terms with the semantic load of the completed action - the achieved result. In the second place, in the definition there is an allocation of the characteristic of the very activity of crime detection as continuous. Permanent activity is not in all cases understood as purposeful and effective. Uninterrupted activity can be long, but does not give noticeable results. It is possible to allow such situations when solving crimes in hot pursuit, when the activities of law enforcement agencies of the judicial authority and the preliminary investigation process may be interrupted for a short time in order to resume with renewed vigor in other directions, depending on the nature of the development of the investigative situation. Thirdly, the definition emphasizes the task of establishing the guilty person. In our opinion, here it is more appropriate to say about his detention.

Considering the organization and tactics of disclosure of crimes committed in conditions of non-obviousness, L. G. Aristakesyan considers hot trace disclosure not in connection with the result of activity, but with the activity itself. If, as a result of a quick and correctly conducted investigation of a non-obvious crime, the guilty person is established, then this process of investigation should be considered as hot trail disclosure regardless of how long such investigation took: up to three days or more. And vice versa, if before the expiration of three days from the moment of receipt of a report on the committed crime, although the perpetrator was identified, but the investigation was not distinguished by skillful and timely actions (emphasis added) of the investigator, it cannot be considered as a hot trail" (Sidorov, 1992, p. 28). Accordingly, its methodological provisions are implemented in the development of methodology for the investigation of certain types of crimes in similar investigative situations, taking into account the species and specificity of criminal acts.

In light of the gnoseological essence of the investigation of crimes on hot traces, the task is to quickly identify the person who committed the crime, to begin targeted actions to search for him, and in favorable cases, and to detain him. Consequently, this creates the most favorable conditions for the implementation of the requirement of the law of criminal procedure on the need to prosecute the identified crime. At the same time, rapid verification and investigative actions imply the creation of the most favorable opportunities for the prompt solution of all other tasks of investigation (Yablokov, 2005, p. 554).

On fresh traces, as a rule, some murder cases, rape cases, thefts, robberies, bandit attacks, hostage-taking, vandalism, road accidents, etc. are investigated (Gheorghiiță, 2015, p. 101). Such investigation takes place in specific conditions: the suddenness of the situation requiring an urgent response; lack of time for the investigator, body of inquiry to make decisions and their implementation; high dynamism of the investigation process, rapid change of the situation, investigative situations; lack of necessary information and the urgent need to urgently use all new data; opposition to the investigation, concealment of traces and circumstances of the crime. These conditions determine the basic requirements for the organization and production of *hot trace investigation*:

- 1) The fastest possible arrival of the investigative-operative group at the scene of the accident, prompt decision-making on the initiation of criminal proceedings and the beginning of the preliminary investigation;
- 2) Immediate inclusion in the work of all necessary forces and means;
- 3) A broad combination of standard programming of actions with individuality of investigation; temporary limitation of the range of clarified issues only to those that serve the purpose of progressive development of the process; strict selection of

investigative actions and operative-investigative measures and compliance with the order of those and others;

4) High intensity, promptness of investigative actions, their continuity, conducting *a broad front*, using the entire composition of the investigative-operative group;

5) Extensive use of technical means for the fullest possible collection and recording of data with minimal time consumption, prompt transfer of information to cooperating bodies; comprehensive use of the assistance of specialists and experts for the operational study of data carriers (Lavrov and Sidorov, 1989, pp. 6-9).

To optimize the work in conditions of time deficit, the investigator needs to have at hand specific and clear methodological recommendations on planning, making versions and organization of investigation on hot trails. The process of investigation is organized through planning, which is an indispensable condition for purposeful activity of the investigator.

S.V. Kuzmin, under the planning of crime investigation, understands: “a complex repetitive dynamic thought process aimed at solving informational and cognitive and organizational and managerial tasks of preliminary investigation in exact accordance with the requirements of the law” (Kuzmin, 2000, p. 59).

The conditions, not always favorable, in which the work of the prosecution bodies is carried out, such as, for example, the limited time needed to verify the complaint and the data on which the versions of the legal nature of the facts and the circumstances of the crime are based and the decisions that are required, and the uncertainty created by the lack of information available to the body responsible for uncovering the crime and, therefore, for investigating the case, on the other hand, the reluctance of the perpetrator and other interested parties to cooperate, predetermine the requirements for the organization and conduct of criminal proceedings, particularly at the initial stage, including (See also Korovin, 2010, 116):

1) Promptness of reaction of the prosecuting body notified of the commission of the offense, which means the immediate dispatch of a competent prosecution team to the scene of the crime; the provision of the prosecution team with the necessary operational forces and means to contribute to the creation of optimal conditions for the proper conduct of the initiated investigative actions, the extensive use of technical means of criminal prosecution and operative investigation, the use of the knowledge of specialists in the investigation and subsequent examination of objects bearing traces of the crime, including the performance of technical-scientific and methodical-legal findings and forensic expert opinions.

2) Providing the prosecution team with typical programs, schemes, algorithms (See also Zakharova, 2007, p. 5) that expressly precede the activities to be carried out at the initial stage of investigation of certain categories of crimes, their preparation and tactics. Uncovering crimes on the basis of fresh evidence involves carrying out in a short period of time only procedural and extra-procedural activities, which reliably bring to light factual data (evidence) that can establish the identity of the persons involved in the crime, the circumstances and the way in which they acted. These activities must be delimited from other less relevant actions within the framework of solving the problems mentioned (Doras, 2011, pp. 527-528).

Thus, the investigation of crimes on hot trails largely depends on the organizational and forensic support of the investigative-operative group, which is provided by a quick and effective response to the received report of a crime, which includes the most experienced staff, capable of quality tactical operations consisting of urgent investigative and operative search activities, such as: inspection of the scene, examination, interrogation of the victim, questioning of citizens, and investigation of the crime.

According to the data of investigative and operative-search practice for the solution of these tasks, the most favorable situation arises when the crime is detected and the appropriate operative-search and investigative actions on it begin within the first day after

its commission (Yablokov, 2005, p. 554). In any case, the optimal immediate operational-search and investigative response to the revealed fact of crime, which should be solved on hot trails within 3-4, and in particularly complex cases - 10-12 days (See also Yablokov, 2009; Lavrov 1989, p. 6; Aristakesyan, 1978, p. 55, Gheorghită, 2015, p. 101).

According to Belkin: "to solve a crime on fresh traces means to solve this task in the shortest possible time - within three days from the moment when the signs of a crime were discovered or it was reported (in some, especially complicated cases, this period increases to 10-15 days)" (Averyanova, 2017, p. 579).

In the opinion of Kosmodemyanskaya (2000, p. 95), "fresh trace solved crimes should be considered, firstly, committed by unknown persons, secondly, the suspects are identified by the bodies of inquiry and investigation within 3 days from the moment of detection of the crime or within 10 days, if the investigative and search actions were carried out during this time continuously. When a multi-episode case is being investigated, the hot-trail disclosure process can last 15-20 days."

Kavalieris (1989, p. 60) believes that "the time of the end of the period (while *the traces remain fresh*, depends entirely on the specific features in a given area." For example, in a town setting like Cahul, this period may be as short as 60 minutes, while in a rural setting it may be 1.5 hours. So, the conducted analysis allows us to determine the disclosure of crime on hot traces as a result of active and comprehensive activity, preliminary investigation and interacting with them forces, which provided in the shortest possible time search for the person who committed the crime, and the collection of evidence about the event of the crime and the person who committed it.

Thus, the conceptual apparatus and cognitive process of the essence of crime detection on hot trails allows to correctly analyze the activity of preliminary investigation on the investigation of crimes committed by unknown persons, as well as to develop recommendations to improve the effectiveness of such activities.

3. Factors and principles of investigating "fresh traces" crimes

Recently, more and more often in the legal literature there are publications devoted to the issues of improving the effectiveness of detection and investigation of crimes in the shortest possible time, i.e. hot trails, and the advantages of rapid and qualified investigation of crimes. Indeed, the work of criminal prosecution bodies at the initial stage of investigation and in the absence of necessary forensic information on the event of the committed crime, persons who committed it, and other circumstances of the committed act, shortcomings in the work of members of the investigative-operative group, poor interaction, including poor-quality exchange of information among the departments and services involved in the detection and investigation of crime, lead to the fact that the terms of investigation of a criminal case are delayed

As is known, the main purpose of the initial operational-search activities and investigative actions is to obtain in the shortest possible time the maximum possible information about the committed act. However, it is also necessary to take into account those factors that directly affect any investigative situation at the initial stage of the investigation.

Gheorghită (2015, pp. 101-102) mentions the fact that the following conditions and factors have an influence on the constitution of the situation that allows the investigation on fresh traces: 1) the increased social danger of the committed offense; 2) the promptness of the reaction of the prosecuting body to the committed offense; 3) the unannounced nature of the committed act and the insufficiency or lack of information about the offender; 4) the shortage of time and the possibility for offenders to leave the crime scene or even the country and remain unidentified; 5) the highly dynamic nature of the investigation process

and the rapidly changing circumstances of the prosecution; 6) resistance to the investigation by the persons concerned and the delay in the prosecution.

The above-mentioned conditions and factors determine the requirements to the organization and conduct of the investigation of crimes on fresh traces. They concern: 1) the operative taking of the decision on the commencement of the criminal case and the immediate creation of the task force of criminal prosecution; 2) the arrival, as soon as possible, of the formed task force at the crime scene and the commencement of the investigation, including the performance of special investigative measures; 3) the qualified and intensive performance of all procedural and operative investigative actions, specific to the initial stage of investigation; 4) the simplification, but within the legal framework, of procedures, methods of investigation, the performance of initial and untimely actions of criminal prosecution or special investigative measures; 5) maximizing the use of technical-forensic means in order to detect, fix and collect the traces of the crime under investigation; 6) achieving efficient interaction of the criminal investigation officer with special investigative bodies, institutions and departments, as well as natural or legal persons; 7) calling in certain situations through the media for the help of citizens of the community, locality, country (Kavalieris, 1989, p. 60).

The multifactorial nature of the information basis of such situations requires investigators to know and correctly assess their constituent elements. The following factors may be considered as such data forming such situations (See also Kramarenko and Shevchenko, 2021, p. 82; Kharitonov, 2022, pp. 94-101; Bastrykin, 2022, p. 181):

Temporal factors indicate that little time has elapsed between the commission of the crime and its detection within the specified time parameters. There is hope of finding unaltered traces of the crime. The offender could not yet practically leave the area (region) in which he committed the crime (settlement, city, district, etc.), hide far away and take measures making it difficult to track him down. There is a possibility to send a service search dog along the traces or to carry out other purposeful search and search actions (Yablokov, 2005, p. 556).

The lack of time generates at the initial stage of investigation certain difficulties associated with the production of a number of urgent investigative actions, the adoption by the investigator of certain procedural and tactical decisions, analysis, evaluation and use of incoming operational, forensic and other orienting information about the event. Sometimes, a large flow of information needs to be analyzed, involving a significant number of employees from different services, departments, and agencies who must work coherently and coordinate. It is this interaction that ultimately leads to a positive result and solves the crime during the duty day. The factor of time affects not only the choice of tactical decision, but also on the tactics of production of investigative action. Proper instruction of the participants of the investigative-operative group during the inspection of the scene by the investigator and setting the necessary tasks to other members of the group (operational officer, district inspector, expert criminalist, other employee), which should be solved during the production of this investigative action, make it possible not only to conduct an inspection of the scene of the incident effectively, but also to obtain a large amount of forensic information, allowing in the shortest possible time to work out the put forward at the initial stage of the investigation of the investigation of the investigation of the crime.

The time factor includes three main elements (Bykhovsky, 1976, p. 8; Gerasimov, 1975, p. 11; Kuzmenko, 1981, p. 6.): 1) the time elapsed from the moment of committing the crime until the moment of receiving a report about it; 2) the time of action of the investigative-operative group; 3) the time of existence of unstable traces.

It seems that such an element as the time elapsed from the moment of committing the crime to the moment of receiving a report about it is important for the detection and investigation of crimes on hot trails.

The timeframe of the investigative task force's activity should be understood as the period from the moment a crime report is received until the crime has been solved and the perpetrator has been apprehended, or until the initial stage of the investigation has concluded. This period is characterized by intense and focused crime detection efforts, encompassing the time required for: 1). Preparation for departure to the crime scene; 2). Departure and arrival at the crime scene; 3). Scene inspection; 4). Carrying out other urgent investigative activities and operational search measures, such as the detection and apprehension of the perpetrator. During this time, the success of not only a specific investigation but also the overall crime detection rate depends on the effectiveness of the operational search and investigative efforts (Ishchenko, 2007, p. 292).

Another element related to the time factor is related to the period of existence of unstable traces and their maximum use in the proving process. These traces can be left (see detailed Jitariuc & Rusu, 2024; Rusu & Jitariuc, 2023) on perishable, unstable products, objects or places that, under the influence of atmospheric conditions or as a result of processes occurring in them, change from one state of aggregation to another (snow, oil, etc.). Untimely detection and incorrect fixation of such traces can lead to their loss and thus complicate the investigation or lead to the crime remaining unsolved (Kavalieris, 1989, p. 60). Another factor determining the concept of disclosure and investigation in fresh traces is *the continuity of crime detection activities*. It is directly dependent on the amount of primary (initial) and subsequent information available to the operational search and investigative units. The greater the amount of information, the more opportunities there are for investigative actions and operational search measures and, thus, for continuity in activities in the detection and investigation of crimes. The absence of identified follow-up information to be verified and consolidated through investigative actions means a relative, although perhaps small, breaks in the actions of the investigating authorities. It takes some time to get additional information and continue the investigation. In this case, the breaks may be of different lengths. However, the very fact that there is a temporary break means that there is no continuity, and the investigation that follows after the break cannot be described as conducted in hot pursuit (Sysenko, 2007, p. 84).

Factual factors indicating the preservation of the crime scene and other places related to it, in full or without significant changes. There is a hope to identify traces of a crime that carry important information for the investigation (especially pointing to the person who committed the crime, his important features, his possible location, etc.), to carry out a rapid forensic assessment of this event on their basis and to obtain information for immediate search and investigation activities (search and detention of the criminal).

Dynamic factors indicating the possible rapid variability of the primary situation, in particular, the existence of unfavorable objective and subjective conditions that make it difficult to preserve the material situation of the scene and its traces unchanged; the ability of the criminal to quickly leave the village, city, region where he committed the crime, to take measures to destroy evidence, eliminate witnesses; the presence of other circumstances that affect the rapid change in the prevailing primary situation.

Territorial factors contributing to the possibility of immediate targeted search and search activities in specific areas of rural areas, towns and cities (a relatively localized crime area with limited transport links; a region, although not localized, but sparsely populated; a place cut off from adjacent territories by complex natural factors, flood, flooding, as a result of other natural disasters, etc. (Yablokov, 2005, p. 556-557).

The organizational, technical and methodological factor indicates that the operational-search and investigative authorities are provided with the necessary means of rapid notification, immediate delivery of the participants of the investigative task force to the crime scene; technical and forensic means of interacting with traces in *the express analysis* mode. Together with the availability of the necessary technical means, this factor

indicates a sufficient degree of readiness of employees for methodically thought-out urgent operational search and investigative actions within the framework of investigative teams on duty and outside them in such investigative situations (Karagodin, 2014, p. 33).

In our opinion, an equally important factor is the efficiency factor. At the same time, it should be noted that effectiveness cannot be understood only as the full disclosure of a crime and the detention of a criminal, although this is the main task of the investigation. In this case, we are talking about conducting urgent investigative actions and operational search measures aimed primarily at finding and collecting traces and other material evidence, the loss of which can cause significant damage to the further process of investigating a criminal act.

It should be noted that in some cases, the effectiveness of an investigation in *fresh traces* may be determined by the availability of forensic rapid diagnostic tools to the investigator and/or specialist (Kramarenko and Shevchenko, 2021, p. 82). Thus, if, when visiting the scene of an incident, a specialist has all the tools necessary to identify, fix and remove traces, and the investigative task force has access to databases that allow it to obtain the necessary information through, for example, a laptop, right at the scene of the incident, then the speed of identifying a suspect can be significant. Modern information and telecommunication technologies make it possible to quickly obtain the necessary information and instantly transfer it for analysis or verification to competent persons. Filling out forensic records increases the likelihood of quickly identifying a person whose information is available in law enforcement agencies. Thus, the material and technical equipment of the investigation is also becoming one of the decisive factors for the success of the *fresh trace* investigation in the modern world.

Note that the speed of obtaining information may be significantly limited by the need to comply with applicable legal regulations. Thus, a significant part of crimes currently consists of theft of mobile communication devices, mainly smartphones. Therefore, information about the location of the stolen cell phone, tracked by the subscriber number and/or IMEI (international mobile equipment identifier), will undoubtedly make it possible to quickly track down the stolen item, as well as identify the abductor himself. In addition, criminals often have their mobile phones with them at the time of the crime or even use them for criminal purposes. Analyzing information about such devices that were at a certain point in the crime scene, especially in sparsely populated places, or comparing billing data with similar previously committed crimes, under certain conditions, makes it possible to identify the perpetrator (Bastrykin, 2022, p. 181).

It is possible to obtain information about geolocation procedurally only within the framework of the investigative action provided for by art. 1384 of Criminal Procedure Code of The Republic of Moldova (collection of information from providers of electronic communications services) (Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Moldova, RM Law no. 122 of 14-03-2003). It is not considered urgent, that is, it cannot be carried out before a criminal case is initiated, and, moreover, requires a court decision. Obviously, such restrictions do not allow the production of this investigative action during the investigation in *fresh traces*, which does not contribute to improving the effectiveness of crime prevention. However, due to its indirect nature, geolocation data is primarily aimed not at forming an evidence base, but at solving a crime, i.e. they are orienting in nature. However, it is almost impossible to obtain them as soon as possible during operational search activities, since removing information from technical communication channels also requires a court decision. From a technical point of view, obtaining information about the connections of a subscriber device and its location is not entirely correct to call removing information from technical communication channels if the source of such information is not the connection of authorized bodies to an information and telecommunications network or

terminal equipment, but data provided upon request by an organization providing communication services (Aivazova, 2020, pp. 19-27).

The combination of all these favorable factors, or each of the first with the last group of factors, form the initial investigative situations that require and allow the use of investigative and operational-search methods in hot pursuit.

If a situation arises related to a delay in obtaining the prosecutor's consent to initiate a criminal case, which prevents the start of the application of the analyzed methodology in full, it is important to keep in mind the following: in such cases, investigative actions must be carried out before such consent is obtained, and operatives, with or without the investigator's knowledge, should pay attention to conducting appropriate operational search operations. measures to identify the person who committed the crime. At the same time, in all cases, the investigator must be aware of their results.

In any case, investigative decisions and actions by investigators and operational search officers to implement these factors in accordance with the requirements of forensic methodology should be carried out as soon as possible and often in conditions of a peculiar time deficit, but with well-established employee interaction. Accordingly, the hot-foot investigation methodology, especially from the investigator, requires appropriate professional knowledge, skills, and the ability to apply heuristic thinking techniques (in which the process of solving investigative tasks is understood as going through a maze and sorting through all possible solutions, which increases the possibility of conventional stereotypical methods of action).

From a strategic point of view, the analyzed investigation methodology attaches particular importance to a skillful combination of algorithmic and heuristic ways to solve investigative tasks based on a good orientation in the criminalistic features of the committed act and the most accurate and reliable organization of the activities and interaction of the investigator and operational investigative staff during the investigation. Tactically, such an investigation has a pronounced search and search character, characteristic of this criminalistic activity, when a certain idea is formed about the subject of the crime, and sometimes about possible locations of his location (Yablokov, 2005, pp. 557-558).

Research on *hot traces* is characterized in that from the very beginning information about the suspect is missing. All the efforts of the respective research team on fresh traces, including the combination of procedural actions and special investigative measures, are directed in the direction of identifying and detaining the suspect (s).

The tasks of the investigation in these cases, at the initial stage, are as follows: 1) immediate carrying out of the initial actions of criminal investigation and special investigative measures specific to certain categories of crimes; 2) detection, fixing and picking up the respective traces of the crime committed; 3) establishing the identity of the suspect(s), his search and detention; 4) creating the informational and evidentiary base in order (Gheorghică, 2015, p. 102).

The following requirements should be considered among the basic principles that must be followed in the investigation of crimes in hot pursuit (see also Ishchenko, 2007, pp. 293-294):

1) All tactical, methodological and organizational decisions and actions of the investigator and operational search officers, starting from the moment of receiving a report of a crime, which contains data that allows conducting an investigation in hot pursuit, should be as fast as possible and at the same time organizationally and methodically prepared, taking into account the operational assessment of the current situation, compared with similar standard models of investigative situations. The immediate inspection of the scene of the incident, the operational search measures and investigative actions carried out simultaneously with it and based on its results must be coordinated and professional with proper technical and forensic support. It is in these situations that the principle of quick

investigative thinking finds expression in the urgency of responding to a crime event, the promptness of evaluating the information collected and the urgency of all actions;

2) The choice of the main directions and complex of urgent search and search actions in the investigation of crimes in such situations should largely be based on a professional interpretation of the revealed information, the establishment of its forensic significance and, especially for urgent actions, on the creative application of the methods of standard versions. These methods are based on the knowledge and consideration of the natural relationships between the elements of the criminalistic characteristics of different types of crimes. In the analyzed situations, in particular, it is advisable to pay special attention to the identification and evaluation of data on the subject of criminal encroachment, the method, mechanism and environment of its commission, indicating the identity of the perpetrator. It is very important, when establishing individual circumstances and facts aimed at identifying and tracing a criminal in the context of an investigation in hot pursuit, to thoughtfully group the information obtained about the identity of the criminal. For example, it is advisable to collect information about him according to the following typical scheme: installation data; connection with the subject of criminal encroachment; signs of appearance; typological data (physical strength, skills, profession, etc.); traces and objects left by him; traces possibly left on his body, clothes, etc. It is this kind of information that most often makes it possible to outline the possible territory of a forensic search and the circle of people among whom the wanted criminal may be located (Yablokov, 2005, p. 558-559);

3) Due to the limited time of the investigation process of crimes in hot pursuit, its plan should be mainly search and search and provide for the maximum intensification of investigative and operational search activities. Special attention in such an investigation plan should be paid to collecting information about the circle of persons among whom the person suspected of this crime may be located, and about the territory where his forensic search should be carried out. In the plan, it is necessary to make greater use of methodological recommendations on the system of standard versions for various types of cases available in criminology (for example, standard versions for murder cases developed by N. A. Selivanov and L. G. Vidonov (Vidonov and Selivanov, 1981), recommendations of the program-targeted method of solving murders by G. A. Gustov (Gustov, 1997) etc.);

4) The success of investigative and operational investigative activities in these situations is largely related to the widest possible use of specialist assistance and rapid forensic research methods in order to quickly and fully extract criminally relevant information from the identified traces of a crime (Gustov, 1997, p. 559);

5) The process of investigating crimes in hot pursuit can be dynamic and effective only with proper organizational, managerial and technical readiness of operational-investigative and investigative bodies for immediate urgent actions on identified crimes in the analyzed situations. The indicated readiness includes the following: the availability of the necessary conditions for obtaining information about crimes as soon as possible and the beginning of immediate investigative and investigative actions (proper organization of police duty units; availability of reliable means of communication with all stationary police units and mobile groups, an appropriate notification system for investigative and operational search authorities, mobile vehicles and forensic equipment); constant readiness of investigative and operational search personnel for immediate investigative actions; availability of permanent investigative teams on duty, etc.

Accordingly, the methodology under consideration should include a well-thought-out tactical and methodological system of interaction between investigators and operational search officers. Only a sufficiently high level of interaction can ensure investigation in such situations in a fast time mode with an appropriate search coverage of the necessary territory. The most effective form of interaction between an investigator and operational search officers in the context of an investigation in hot pursuit is its conduct by the investigative

task force. It is especially fruitful if such a group is created for permanent work in such situations. The composition of such mobile groups may vary depending on the type of crime committed and the specifics of the investigative situation. In addition to the traditional members (criminal police officers, forensic specialists, a dog handler with an official search dog), the group may include other persons (a forensic scientist, an explosive device specialist, a psychologist, etc.). At the same time, the specifics of the composition of the operational search unit of such a group is that its members must not only be professionals in investigative work, but also possess the qualities necessary to skillfully overcome opposition to the investigation, including armed resistance on the part of the criminal;

6) The analyzed methodology should provide for the widest possible use of public assistance in the investigation, in particular, to obtain orienting information about the identity of the offender, his possible location, the search for the suspect and stolen objects, the identification of witnesses and the conduct of individual investigative actions (Gustov, 1997, 559-560).

4. Conclusion

The investigation of crimes "on fresh tracks" is essential to ensure an effective response of law enforcement bodies, contributing both to the Prevention of other crimes and to strengthening society's confidence in the ability of authorities to react promptly. The critical period immediately after a crime is committed determines both the preservation of essential evidence and the increased chances of quickly identifying and detaining perpetrators.

The investigation of crimes "on fresh traces" depends on several key factors: the promptness of the response of the Criminal Investigation Group, the effective use of forensic techniques, effective coordination between the different structures involved and rapid access to critical information, including from databases and technological sources. Temporal, dynamic, territorial and technical-organizational factors play a decisive role in the success of investigations.

Investigations should be based on a combination of algorithmic and heuristic methods, given the specifics of the crime. The organization of task forces and the use of modern technologies are a determining factor for efficiency. The method of Investigation "on fresh traces" requires the adoption of quick but well-founded decisions, the Coordination of all available resources and the observance of the principle of continuity of investigative activities.

The success of the investigation depends on the prompt involvement of the prosecution group and close collaboration between authorities, forensic experts and, in certain cases, the community. This becomes essential in cases where information obtained from public sources can speed up the identification of perpetrators.

The use of information technologies and databases allows to speed up the process of identifying suspects, and rapid diagnostic equipment increases the efficiency of collecting and analyzing samples. However, legal restrictions on the use of certain technical methods may delay the investigative process at the initial stage.

Based on the above, it is necessary to indicate the general tasks facing investigative and operational-search units in the process of uncovering and investigating crimes in hot pursuit.:

- 1) Suppression of initiated crimes;

- 2) Identification and procedural consolidation of traces that have arisen as a result of a criminal act, which are carriers of information about it, and at the same time preventing the possibility of their disappearance or destruction under the influence of objective and subjective reasons;

3) Identification and establishment of the location of victims and witnesses for the purpose of interrogation, which will allow to obtain the most complete and objective information about the criminal event before the process of erasure from memory has begun.;

4) Using the collected information to put forward investigative and operational investigative versions in order to organize operational investigative measures aimed at identifying, searching for and detaining the person who committed the crime before he fled the area of the crime, searching for sources of evidence, analyzing and evaluating available evidence for use in the investigation, as well as determining opportunities, directions, and tactics for discovering other evidence.

The solution of these tasks will allow the investigating authorities to consolidate in a timely manner and maximize the use of the collected evidentiary information to investigate crimes in hot pursuit. At the same time, the tasks of solving crimes can be successfully solved only on the basis of proper interaction between investigative and operational search units, proper organization and coordination of their actions, and timely information exchange. This is due to the fact that in the process of investigating crimes, the investigator or the organization for Crime Investigation receives information of a different nature, resulting from urgent investigative actions or operational search measures.

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